it is not surprising that the Century editors cut it. Still, emerging from these pages is a more candid look at Dreiser the individual; thus, even his seemingly lackluster commentary proves to be worthwhile for those willing to wade through the material.

And speaking of wading through material—that is exactly the image that comes to mind when we think of Bardeleben as she worked to restore the text and to provide an impressive apparatus for the Dreiser Edition. Voluminous end notes, both historical and textual, as well as a lucid commentary on the history of the book aid readers as they discover for the first time the secrets of Dreiser's European experience. People and places that would otherwise remain a mystery come to life and take on a form that is as real as Dreiser himself because of Bardeleben's hard work. The result is an accessible and useful volume that will be appreciated for years to come. More than ninety years overdue, this is an edition that truly impresses.

—Donna Packer-Kinlaw, University of Maryland, College Park


This welcome and extremely valuable addition to the Dreiser canon contains 74 face-to-face interviews spanning the years from January 1902 (when the 30-year-old author of Sister Carrie was interviewed by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch while visiting with his wife Jug's family in Missouri) to January 1946 (when the Communist Party organ People's World published an article by Esther McCoy based on conversations with Dreiser in the last few months of his life).

The interviews took place at Dreiser's residences in New York and Los Angeles—one was partially conducted in the back seat of an open car as Helen Richardson drove Dreiser and his interviewer around Brooklyn—and also in St. Louis, Philadelphia, Michigan, Texas, and Indiana, as well as Berlin and Paris during Dreiser's European jaunts. They make for enjoyable reading and are consistently informative and revelatory. How does one account for this, given what would seem to be inherent limitations of the genre? The answer is that Dreiser, a former newspaperman himself, was a good interview subject. He seems to have enjoyed the attention greatly. Also, his interlocutors (many of whom were female and to whom Dreiser made advances in at least one instance) were good writers themselves, and, in contrast to journalistic practice today, the interviews were often con-
ducted and written in a stately, deliberate, and mannered fashion, eschewing glibness in tone and superficiality of coverage. Finally, the interviews tended to be comparatively long pieces, allowing for a certain depth and level of detail.

It is interesting to see, retrospectively, how highly Dreiser was thought of in his day: a titan of literature, “one of the greatest of American novelists” (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1918) and “the grim realist who shocked pre-war America with ‘Sister Carrie’ and changed the national literature” (New York World-Telegram, 1934), to say nothing of being a controversial, provocative and, therefore, sought-after interviewee, a writer whose sexual frankness and battles against censorship attracted great interest on that score alone.

The descriptions given of Dreiser’s mien and appearance, the close-up glimpses we get of him, are fascinating and remarkably consistent from writer to writer and article to article. “[H]is English can be gratingly unmelodious” (New York Evening World, 1914). “He frequently presses his hair backward in the manner of a small boy training his hair” (New York World, 1925). “The man is tall and husky, a lumbering fellow who towers above you. . . . His conversation . . . is liberally besprinkled with ‘d’you see?’ and ‘don’t you know?’ (Haldeman-Julius Monthly, 1925). “Dreiser’s head is too heavy for his powerful, rather well-proportioned body. His full lips, a little sullen, pout back from strong, white teeth which clip off his words; a schoolboy pompadour staggers back from the high, over-crammed forehead, with a certain air of pugnacity” (Denver Post, 1926). “Dreiser’s manner is gentle and mild; almost diffident. His voice is very soft” (Musical America, 1929). His habit of continually unfolding and refolding his handkerchief is often remarked upon.

The odd reminiscence or biographical fact captured by individual interviewers reveals tantalizing glimpses of Dreiser’s behavior in social situations. For example, in 1932, when Dreiser visited San Francisco to speak at a rally for the imprisoned labor leader Tom Mooney, the San Francisco Chronicle reported, “The welcoming reception was over and the author was relaxing as he leaned against the highboy in his room at the exclusive and expensive Hotel Mark Hopkins. In his hand he held a glass of Scotch whisky, which every now and then he replenished without inviting his companions to join him.” Other pieces capture Dreiser being Dreiser—in 1935 at his estate, Iroki, for example, stripping and jumping into the cold water of his pool for a bracing swim on an autumn afternoon while his male interviewer tried not to notice his nakedness.

Discussion of the writing process per se does not seem to have interested
Dreiser much, indicating perhaps that writing was something that (though he labored at it) he did instinctively, without thinking much about it. Occasionally, though, his offhand remarks throw light on his habits. For example, he told one interviewer, “I find I can write many hours consecutively without rest.” But Dreiser was happy to offer opinions on literary topics in general—he seems to have been especially partial to the Russians, particularly Dostoevsky. He seems, the editors note, to have been more inclined to place himself in the tradition of nineteenth-century European tragic realism than of Zoloesque naturalism. He frequently mentions his favorite books and authors, many of them now largely forgotten. Dreiser told one interviewer that he was not a deep reader: “I do not read much. Just enough to feel the tendency of the times.”

Dreiser often comes across in these pages as smug, intellectually shallow, and self-important—despite his protestations of disdain for recognition, riches, or social status. He often appears to be out of his depth when posing as an authority on matters literary, historical, or academic, or when pontificating about political, economic, and social questions of the day. On occasion he would make anti-Semitic statements either overtly or by innuendo while at other times expressing profound admiration for Jews and their culture. He was given to crude stereotyping of Jews as well as of other races and nations. The tone of the interviews became increasingly strident and belligerent in his later years, with anti-capitalist rants, harsh and derisive criticisms of America and democracy, and, as World War II approached, anti-interventionist and virulently anti-British statements. He would respond with outright contempt for views expressed by interviewers daring enough to challenge him.

Locating and inventorying Dreiser interviews is in itself a daunting task. The editors provide the following essential inventory in a bibliography at the back of the book:

- A total of 184 fully identified interviews are listed, 73 of which are included in this volume.
- Twenty-one hitherto undiscovered interviews have been identified (out of the above total of 184). Twelve of these newly discovered interviews (two translated from the original French) are published in this volume.
- Four interviews are listed that exist in manuscript form only. One of these, hitherto undiscovered, is included in this volume.
- Twenty-one interviews are listed for which a clipping exists but that could not be located or verified.
- Twenty-two additional items cited in Part F (Interviews and Reviews...
Speeches) of the Dreiser bibliography by Pizer, Dowell, and Rusch have been reclassified under the category “Items Other Than Interviews,” since they are reports of speeches or lectures by Dreiser and not interviews per se.

- Seven of the 74 interviews included in this volume have previously been reprinted (in one case partially) in secondary sources, with the remainder being reprinted for the first time.

The editing and scholarly apparatus of this volume are consistent with the Dreiser Edition’s high editorial standards. The index is detailed and very useful, since it includes topically-oriented (subject matter) as well as name entries. One error I did note is that a footnote on page 149 refers to a character in The Titan, Berenice Fleming, as “Beatrice” Fleming.

The editors deserve the thanks of Dreiserians for unearthing and compiling these very revealing interviews. They have the immediacy and candor of old snapshots.

—Roger W. Smith


Quick: what do Theodore Dreiser, Margaret Atwood, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Lillian Hellman, and Brill Building songsmiths Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller have in common? All are crime writers, having based one or more imaginative works on actual criminals and their celebrated or obscure crimes.

Compiled entirely by the author, a retired lawyer, true crime aficionado, and crime writer himself, and based largely on the holdings of the Borowitz True Crime Collection donated by him to the Kent State University Library Special Collections, this entertaining and idiosyncratic collection of brief entries on crime writers and their work is something between an annotated bibliography, literary encyclopedia, and descriptive catalogue. Entries are arranged alphabetically by author and numbered for each subsequent entry. Thus, items D.35 and D.36, bracketed by entries on Fyodor Dostoyevsky and John Dryden, offer longish entries on Dreiser’s An American Tragedy and the Cowperwood trilogy, respectively. Borowitz’s annotations, which range between 100 and 1000 words, depending variously on the notoriety of the crime or the literary merit of the work arising from it, usually offer a