

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing the conflicts in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and Frank Norris' *McTeague*, I would like to draw some conclusions in this chapter. First of all, from all the conflicts happen in both of these novels, it is seen clearly how the characters are helpless against some forces which control their lives. Both novels reveal that humans are unable to control and make decisions for their own lives.

In the first novel, *Sister Carrie*, there are four social conflicts. In the first three social conflicts, Hurstwood is the external force that controls Carrie's life. In the first social conflict that happens between Carrie and Drouet, Hurstwood deceives Carrie and takes her away from Drouet. This action makes her unable to reconcile with Drouet. In the second social conflict, Carrie is forced to run away with Hurstwood. His action of moving her to New York, a place where she has no acquaintance at all, has closed her opportunity to gain help from others. Therefore, Carrie has no option but to lean on him for her needs. Furthermore, in the third social conflict, Carrie is forced to work, as Hurstwood is unwilling to

take any job available. While in the fourth social conflict, Carrie is forced by her internal force, her greed, which always drives her to pursue more wealth and success. However, this internal force leads Carrie to her unhappiness as she is wrecked alone in her life.

Besides the social conflicts, Carrie also experiences an inner conflict. In the inner conflict, Carrie faces some dilemmas about whether she should accept a loan from Drouet or not. However, she finally accepts the money as she needs it and she has no other choice.

In the second novel, *McTeague*, there are six social conflicts. In the first social conflict, between Marcus and McTeague, McTeague fails to reconcile with Marcus as he cannot give him the money that he wants. It might happen simply because it is not his money. For that reason, Marcus hates McTeague severely and he becomes the external force that leads McTeague to his downfall. In the second, third, and fourth social conflicts, McTeague is suppressed by an external force, which is Trina. She controls his life by refusing to help him financially. It makes him not be able to achieve what he wants. In the fifth social conflict, McTeague is controlled by the internal force, which is his need of social dominance to kill Trina. In the last social conflict that happens between him and Marcus, McTeague is controlled by the external force; Marcus, to end dead in the remote desert as he is cuffed with the dead body of Marcus. Though, he has successfully beats him down, McTeague cannot run away from his fate of ended pathetically.

Besides the social conflicts, there are two inner conflicts in the novel *McTeague*. In these inner conflicts, McTeague is controlled by his internal forces.

In the first inner conflict, McTeague is forced by his internal force, need of sex, to sexually harass Trina, while in the second inner conflict, McTeague is forced by his need of shelter to leave the mine.

From the resolutions of the conflicts mentioned above, it is seen clearly how Carrie's and McTeague's life are controlled by certain forces that leave them no choice but to follow those forces, thus they are at the mercy of forces larger than they are, as what the naturalists believe. This is the first similarity between these two novels. Second, both of the protagonists end their situations pathetically; Carrie is unhappy despite of her success, while McTeague is haunted by death as he is cuffed with a corpse in a remote desert.

In addition, there is another similarity between the novels. The similarity is that both of the novels focus on the influence of the internal force to control one's life. In *Sister Carrie*, initially, it seems that the protagonist is controlled more by the external forces; Hurstwood and Drouet are the determining factors in the conflicts Carrie experiences. However, as I read and analyze the conflicts further, I could see that actually, Carrie's internal force which is her greed is the most prominent drive that controls Carrie's life. I see that she could be allured by Hurstwood and Drouet simply because both of them represent what Carrie obsesses, i.e. money. This drive drags her to cling on to these men of fortune. Same as in *Sister Carrie*, in *McTeague*, the protagonist's internal force, which is lust, is the determining force in controlling the protagonist's life. I can see that the external forces in several conflicts are only a trigger for the internal force inside him to emerge. As can be seen in all social conflicts, the external forces; Marcus and Trina, make McTeague's animal drive wakes up with the result of him killing

them. Even his downfall, I believe, is caused by his giving in to his lust towards Trina which eventually leads to his trouble with Marcus.

Apart from the similarities above, there is also a difference between the novels. The difference lies on the protagonist's motive in possessing a lot of money. In *Sister Carrie*, the protagonist, Carrie, is so infatuated with money. She works very hard to become rich because she feels that she cannot live without money. She believes that through money she will be able to get all things she wants, included happiness. Money is her sole goal. In *McTeague*, the protagonist, McTeague, wants to have Trina's money simply because he loses his job. Before losing his job, McTeague does not consider money as the most important thing in his life. He is contented with his earning from his job as a dentist, though he does not earn a very big income from it. His goal is simply to be happy with his marriage life. However, his loss changes everything. Being forced by the uneasy condition, he haunts Trina's money as he has no money at all.

Finally, from these conflicts, I conclude that no matter how severe we try to fight against the nature, we will always lose, as we are helpless over it. These are many lessons to learn from what happens to Carrie and McTeague. I learn that nature has its own design in one's life and we just need to follow the path provided by nature. This idea of nature's design on one's life, in my opinion, is also applicable for us in contemplating about our lives. I used to wonder why people have different situations in life, for example, not all people are rich and not all people are successful. We cannot always achieve what others achieve though we have tried so hard. Then, I find that it is simply because we are placed in a different design, as naturalists believe. Nature has a different design for each

person, and unfortunately, we are not able to have control over it. Therefore, some of us are forced to live an unfortunate life and are unable to change any part of it.