THEODORE DREISER'S "GLOOM" AND ESTELLE BLOOM KUBITZ'S "I AND ONE OF THE OTHERS": AN EDITION

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ABSTRACT

Theodore Dreiser was one of the most important American writers from the period of 1900 to the 1930s. Of signal importance to understanding Dreiser's life and works are the years he lived in Greenwich Village, 1914 to 1919. He left his wife, Sara, and established a bohemian life of extravagance and sexual adventure, forming simultaneous liaisons with dozens of women, most of whom seeking to establish their own literary careers. He shamelessly exploited their desire for mentorship by seducing them even as he employed them to type and edit his manuscripts. Estelle Bloom Kubitz was one of the most significant of these women and also one about whom little is known.

That Kubitz was simultaneously in love with Dreiser and repelled by him is evident in letters to her sister and in an unpublished manuscript, "I and One of the Others," where Dreiser appears as S.O.B. and Kubitz as Miss DamnPhool. Dreiser himself began an account of his relationship with Kubitz entitled "Gloom," intending it to be part of his serialized novel "This Madness" (1929) but left it unfinished. This thesis is a biographical introduction to "Gloom" and "I and One of the Others." Both texts advance an understanding of the Dreiser-Kubitz relationship by revealing Dreiser's attraction to Kubitz and the effects his promiscuity had on her.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Missy and Alec for enduring my preoccupying interest in Theodore Dreiser and Estelle Bloom Kubitz and whose patience and encouragement have made my academic pursuits possible and worthwhile.

INTRODUCTION

Theodore Dreiser was one of the most important American writers from the period of 1900 to the 1930s. His works, especially Sister Carrie (1900), Jennie Gerhardt (1911), The "Genius" (1915), and An American Tragedy (1925), became a cause célèbre in the battle over modernism, and especially in the campaign against sentimental and romantic writing and what H. L. Mencken dubbed the Puritanism of our culture. Since their publication, Dreiser's novels, essays, autobiographies, plays, and other writings have attracted continual critical attention, signaled by the ongoing Dreiser Edition, several biographies (including another now in press), dozens of book-length studies of his work, four collections of his letters, an international scholarly society, and a 35-year-old scholarly journal devoted to his life, works, and times.

Of signal importance to understanding Dreiser's life and works are the years he lived in Greenwich Village, 1914 to 1919. During that time he was uncommonly productive, publishing nine books, drafting manuscripts of at least six others, and issuing dozens of essays, plays, and short stories in the nation's leading magazines. This was also a turbulent time in Dreiser's personal life. He left his wife, Sara, and established a bohemian life of extravagance and sexual adventure, forming simultaneous liaisons with dozens of women, most of whom were seeking to establish their own literary careers. He shamelessly exploited their desire for mentorship by seducing them even as he employed them to type and edit his manuscripts. Estelle Bloom Kubitz was one of the most significant of these women and also one about whom little is known.

Kubitz met Dreiser in 1916 when her younger sister Marion, who was involved with Dreiser's friend and champion H. L. Mencken, introduced her to Dreiser, because she thought it would be fashionable if both sisters became lovers to famous writers. Dreiser employed Kubitz as his secretary, in which capacity she worked on a number of literary projects, including the

typescripts of <u>The Hand of the Potter</u>, his sympathetic play about a sexual deviant, the revisions of the short stories that appeared in <u>Free and Other Stories</u>, the sketches that appeared in <u>Twelve Men</u>, and the manuscript and revisions of his autobiography <u>A Book About Myself</u> (<u>Newspaper Days</u>).

At some point during her affair with Dreiser and probably without Dreiser's knowledge, she made a typescript of his diary for 1917–18, which provides a detailed picture of his daily routine and writing habits during his years in Greenwich Village along with his relationship with Kubitz, and his liaisons with other women. The diary was published in 1983 as part of his <u>American Diaries, 1902-1926</u>. In reading this diary, I was struck by the masochism involved in making this transcript, for Dreiser is characteristically blunt in his descriptions of his lovers' abilities and shortcomings.

As a number of Dreiser's critics have pointed out, Dreiser tended to identify the creative process with sexual energy, and he was a vocal proponent of what he termed sexual "varietism" as a natural part of the human condition. He believed that having sex with multiple partners stimulated his writing abilities and what makes Kubitz an appropriate means for examining Dreiser's experiment in "varietism" is that she was an apparently enthusiastic participant who also wrote about her experiences.

That Kubitz was simultaneously in love with Dreiser and repelled by him is evident in letters to her sister and in an unpublished manuscript, "I and One of the Others," where Dreiser appears as S.O.B. and Kubitz as Miss DamnPhool. Dreiser himself began an account of his relationship with Kubitz entitled "Gloom," intending to include it as part of his serialized novel "This Madness" (1929) but he left it unfinished. Because the relationship occurred during a time and place of historical significance to American culture, "Gloom" and "I and One of the Others"

function as historical documents that not only reveal the mutual influence and nature of the relationship, but also the representative value of the relationship to understanding Greenwich Village culture during the 1910s.

This thesis is a biographical study of Dreiser's relationship with Kubitiz, which provides an introduction to the publication of "Gloom" and "I and One of the Others." Both texts advance an understanding of the Dreiser-Kubitz relationship by revealing Dreiser's attraction to Kubitz and the effects his promiscuity had on her.

In 1919, Theodore Dreiser began writing semiautobiographical sketches for what would become A Gallery of Women (1929). The sketches are a veritable "Who's Who" of his female acquaintances and lovers, most of whom Dreiser knew during the years he lived in Greenwich Village. Of the *roman a clef* quality of the book, Irene Gammel writes, "So sensitive and transgressive was Gallery's subject matter that some fictional transformations, including new names, were needed to conceal and protect the identities of the real-life women behind the text" (153).

He had conceived the book to be a companion to the sketches of his 1919 book Twelve Men and related his enthusiasm for it in a letter to H. L. Mencken: "God what a work! if I could do it truly—The ghosts of Puritans would rise and gibber in the streets" (Riggio 344). Indeed, he did do it truly, so much so that the furor it elicited from many of its real life models dominated criticism of the book and even provoked Ruth Kennel, Dreiser's tour guide while visiting Russia in the fall of 1927 and the subject of the "Ernita" sketch, to write a scathing review of the book entitled "Hell Hath No Fury Like a Woman Scorned" (Gammel 156).

Even though A Gallery of Women never achieved the commercial and critical success of some of his other short fiction collections like Free and Other Stories (1918) and Chains: Lesser

Novels and Stories (1927), Gallery remains one of Dreiser's "most important—and most neglected" books for its honest, at times painful, portrayal of the recently constituted "New Woman" (Gammel 153). Its strength, however, lies in its presentation of such grainy topics as abortion, drug addiction, infidelity, and child abandonment as byproducts of the newfound independence of women.

The ten-year composition period yielded more sketches than A Gallery of Women could handle. Not wanting to drawer the extra sketches, Dreiser sold three of the sketches ("Aglaia," "Elizabeth," "Sidonie") to Hearst's International-Cosmopolitan for publication as a serialized novel entitled "This Madness." Subtitled "An Honest Novel about Love by the Man Who Wrote 'An American Tragedy,'" "This Madness," like A Gallery of Women, contains sketches about women Dreiser knew. However, the three sketches in "This Madness" are more overtly sexual than those in A Gallery of Women. Dreiser essentially details his sex life with these women and in the process reveals an uncontrollable madness to satiate his sexual appetite.

Because of their autobiographical bases, each of the sketches in A Gallery of Women and "This Madness" invites an exploration of the relationships Dreiser had with their real life counterparts. "Aglaia" is based on his relationship with Lillian Rosenthal, "Elizabeth" on Anna P. Tatum, and "Sidonie" on his relationship with stage actress Kirah Markham, all of whom were Dreiser's lovers during the time he lived in Greenwich Village. While the women in each of these sketches are diverse both in personality and in the dynamics of their relationships with Dreiser, they are unified by Dreiser's sexual and psychological domination of them.

As evidenced by Dreiser's diary of 1917-1918, Estelle Bloom Kubitz was the most significant of his lovers while Dreiser lived in Greenwich Village. Kubitz was Dreiser's secretary and lover during the years 1916 to 1919. They met in August 1916 shortly after her younger

sister Marion wrote to suggest, "how jolly if you had an affair, with your willing and quiet and unaggressive disposition; with some man like that [a famous writer] and we could all be together" (qtd. in Martin 38), thus beginning a relationship emblematic of Greenwich Village's free-love movement during the nineteen teens and early twenties. Such fulsome and eager participation helped shape Dreiser's reputation as one of the movement's most enthusiastic (and notorious) participants. Why, then, did Kubitz not make it into his "honest novel about love"? Dreiser did in fact begin an account of his relationship with Kubitz intended for "This Madness" entitled "Gloom," but he never finished it. Given the simultaneous liaisons Dreiser had with other women during his relationship with Estelle, who better than she to represent the theme of "This Madness"—"the inability to remain faithful to one woman" (Lingeman 323)?

While "Gloom" shows no promise of having been an abandoned masterpiece, it illustrates perhaps better than any of the twenty-three sketches written for or published in "This Madness" and <u>A Gallery of Women</u> Dreiser's capricious attitude towards women as malleable "play things." Despite her willingness to engage in an affair with Dreiser, Kubitz was unable to turn a blind eye to his infidelity, which created conflict in the relationship and seems to have impelled Dreiser to conclude that Kubitz, variously known as Bert, Bo, Bill, and Gloom in Dreiser's diary, threatened his promiscuous lifestyle, which he summed up in the final entry of his Greenwich Village diary:

> Return to her apartment and give her her choice of leaving or behaving. Her manner changes at once. Doesn't want to leave me. Will try and do better. I am very tired. Bert is really not self-sufficient. She needs a man—must have one. I feel sorry for her, truly, but what can you do in this world, which is so unbalanced, all running after the few successful, all ignoring the hopelessly poor

> or unsuccessful or defective. Life is made for the strong. There is no mercy in it for the weak—none. (256)

Two versions of "Gloom" exist in the Theodore Dreiser Papers at the University of Pennsylvania: a twenty-nine page holograph and an emended typescript of seventeen pages with inserted holograph leaves. The original title assigned to both versions is "Camilla," which is cancelled in favor of "Gloom." Additionally, the title "Ruth" is cancelled on the typescript version. "Gloom" was a nickname given to Kubitz by her sister Marion for her love of reading Russian novelists, a love, Edward Martin observes, "easily transferred to Dreiser's works," which have been quite popular among Russian readers (Martin xxxv). It is unclear who made the typescript from the holograph, but the handwritten emendations are Dreiser's.

The sketch's writing frame, style, and voice are consistent with those of the three sketches in "This Madness," and references in the texts to both "Sidonie" and "Aglaia" confirms Dreiser's intention to include "Gloom" as part of the serialized novel. "Gloom" begins with a lengthy overture establishing the narrator's internal musings and the circumstances under which his relationship with Kubitz began. Much of "Gloom" is a philosophical reflection by the author on the "mystery of life," specifically how serendipitous actions lead us in seeming incongruous directions. And it is through reflection that the narrator reveals a yearning for the "most exotic and different kind of companionship" ("Gloom"). Unabashedly, Dreiser's disingenuous longing is motivated by his need to fill the sexual void created by the termination of his relationships with Sidonie and Aglaia. Dreiser's attraction to Camilla, the fictional Kubitz, began when an acquaintance described a sexual adventure in which Camilla once suggested she and her sister swap partners for the evening. Though the "swinging" episode is treated as hearsay in "Gloom," and no correspondence exists to suggest that Dreiser's mental voyeurism of Kubitz and her sister

Marion ever occurred, it becomes a preoccupying fantasy for him. He also uses the episode to launch into a moral diatribe against the "evil Camilla" for her presumed debauchery. Ironically, while acting as a moral judge when criticizing Camilla, he reveals how such behavior has consumed him. Dreiser likely assigned the "orgiastic" behavior to Camilla out of a kind of sexual wish fulfillment because Estelle herself would not have participated in such events ("Gloom").

When Dreiser finally meets Camilla, he extends his sexual fantasy to include her intellectual attractiveness and describes her as a kind of vampish secretary:

> And an interesting fact was this that in spite of a clinging and rather décolleté dress which seemed intended to provoke sensual attention to her charms she had a certain clerky or brisk and upstanding office air such as somehow suggests one who comes with documents and notes, your charming, well-tailored stenographer, as it were. Yet with this other thing—intense sensuality. ("Gloom")

He then becomes aroused at the prospect of giving her a job and then seducing her: "A stenographer, typist I could use to be sure. But—one so chorybantic and passional—surely not. For when would any work be done" ("Gloom"). Both the holograph and typescript of "Gloom" break off in mid-sentence after Dreiser's initial meeting with and observations of Kubitz.

Dreiser's biographers have tended to view Kubitz as one of Dreiser's many transitional lovers between first wife Sara White and Helen Richardson, who was his mistress from 1919 until 1944 when he married her. Such limited treatment is justified considering he only lived five of his seventy-four years in Greenwich Village. Robert Elias' seminal critical study of the author, <u>Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature</u> (1948), does not mention her. W. A. Swanberg's biography <u>Dreiser</u> (1965) devotes a mere six sentences to Kubitz. The second volume of Richard

Lingeman's biography Theodore Dreiser: An American Journey, 1908-1945 (1990) expands the discussion of Estelle's relationship with Dreiser to include the now infamous diary entries, but even he overlooks the importance of the relationship in terms of Greenwich Village culture. Moreover, devoting space to each of Dreiser's many liaisons during his years in Greenwich Village, not to mention his entire life, would be a monumental task for a biographer and would undermine the representational aspect of biography.

The most in-depth study of the Kubitz-Dreiser relationship to date is Edward Martin's In Defense of Marion: The Love of Marion Bloom & H. L. Mencken (1996). Martin's concern for Kubitz is primarily confined to her importance in understanding her sister Marion's relationship with Mencken. Still, his research offers insight about the Bloom sisters' early years growing up in rural Maryland and enhances this study by filling in the gaps in Kubitz's life unexplored by Dreiser's biographers.

Estelle's importance extends beyond her relationship with Dreiser, for she is also representative of many women of the time, and her struggles with Dreiser reveal the difficulties in reconciling the conflicting demands of sexual freedom and social respectability. As suggested by Kubitz's affair with Dreiser, men continued to demand sexual exclusivity in their partners while insisting on their "right" to sexual adventure.

Ross Wetzsteon succinctly identifies the philosophy that culminated in the birth of free- love and the double-standard that accompanied it in his book Republic of Dreams, Greenwich Village: The American Bohemia, 1910-1960:

> In 1914, to take a not untypical example, a buxom Villager named Babs, sympathizing with the plight of those young men unfortunately forced to resort to prostitutes for the happiness that was their birthright as

> Americans, persuaded a number of her friends to freely give their bodies to anyone who asked, a movement that proved as short-lived as it was enthusiastically encouraged. […] Prominent Village intellectuals constantly experimented with ways to reconcile erotic independence and emotional commitment. (18)

While there is no short supply of lovers in Dreiser's daisy chain, Kubitz is the most significant for several reasons. First, her relationship with Dreiser was largely confined to the years he lived in Greenwich Village. This was perhaps the most productive time in the writer's life. The source or sources of this uncommon productivity, including personal and professional relationships, is of great interest to scholars because it reveals how those relationships influenced his compositional process. Just as Sara White was Dreiser's lover during the composition of Sister Carrie (1900) and Helen Richardson during much of the composition of An American Tragedy (1925), arguably two of his greatest works, Kubitz was his lover during his productive years in Greenwich Village. Greenwich Village itself is important as the locus of a free-love movement that influenced the culture of its inhabitants, an ideology that greatly added to the turbulence in Kubitz's relationship with Dreiser. Second, the emergence of the "New Woman" is of historical importance to understanding the shifting roles of women in American society during this time. Kubitz probably never thought of herself as a "New Women," certainly not of the radical ilk. Yet she exhibited many of the tenets of the "New Women" doctrine, including independence, sexual freedom, and intellectual and financial ambition, all of which contributed to a Dreiser's attraction to her. Finally, Estelle is the most prominent of his lovers during this period, and the extant documents related to her life and her relationship with Dreiser provide a solid foundation to examine their relationship.

"Gloom" does not venture into the reasons for Kubitz's attraction to Dreiser, at least not directly, because Dreiser assumes attraction to him as a given, as it is for the other women in "This Madness." Kubitz was drawn to his celebrity, but more important, she was a fan of his writing. In this regard, Dreiser took advantage of his position as a famous writer by luring ambitious young women to be his lovers. Kubitz's attraction to Dreiser may be understood, in part, by formative experiences that occurred in her youth.

Born in 1886, Estelle Bloom grew up in New Windsor, Maryland, a small town northwest of Baltimore. With five other siblings—two older sisters (Goldie and Rena), a younger sister (Marion), and two younger brothers (Truman and Preston)—Kubitz and her family lived in relative poverty. Her father, Adam, a miller turned country schoolteacher, owned a small dairy that he operated with his wife Mary. In 1898, at the age of thirty-eight, Kubitz's father shot himself. In an unpublished autobiography, written in 1923 for her then husband Arthur Williams, Kubitz attributes her father's death to the unbearable pressures of religious obedience instigated by a recent "uproar" caused by a "bedraggled run-down moth-eaten evangelist":

> They got my father. If there ever was a good man, it was he. But they persuaded him he was a sinner, that he had been a sinner all his days. And he, poor easy-going soul, believed them. He grew more and more morose, and one morning about 11 o'clock he went up to a room over the dairy, where he had had fun carving and turning bits of wood on a lathe in his odd moments, and tried to kill himself with a shotgun. He made a bad job of it, a few shots went into his belly, but he didn't die till 8 o'clock that night. I think Mother's eternal nagging had something to do with it,

> but when we talked to her about it in later years she painted a picture of marital harmony and sweetness and light that would have made Jesus Christ, Esquire, jealous. "We never had a word in all the years we were married." (Autobiographical Narrative)

Even though the Bloom family attended church services regularly, Kubitz's reflection here reveals her contempt for the institution she blames for her father's suicide. Clearly, too, this passage demonstrates the tenderheartedness with which she regarded her father. Likewise, the frequent turbulence in her relationship with Dreiser was rooted in the discordant value systems that each held: Kubitz's need to maintain a semblance of a conservative religious upbringing and Dreiser's revolt against it, which was prompted by his own father's fanatical religiosity. That she believed her mother's "eternal nagging" had something to do with her father's suicide suggests that Kubitz harbored misplaced ill feelings toward her mother. When she wrote the autobiography she would have recognized and maybe even felt that her own nagging had pushed Dreiser away from her. Nonetheless, the absence of Kubitz's father and the void his death created helps to explain her attraction to older, paternal men, including Dreiser, who was fifteen years her senior when they met in 1916. Kubitz seems to have forgiven her mother as indicated by the numerous visits she made to New Windsor as an adult, including several with Dreiser, and her affectionate recollection of the arduous labor her mother went through to keep things going after her father died:

> We children bellyache now because we can't remember any tenderness from her in our early childhood, but she was worn to a frazzle. She worked incessantly. I was the goat. Marion was too young, and she was always a lazy little devil, any way, and the two older girls were sewing

> and keeping their hands white and clean, so she never let up on me. Sure as shooting, every Monday morning found us in the cellar at the washtubs at 4 a.m., Tuesday we ironed, Wednesday and Thursday she dragged me to the garret to clean, and let me tell you she cleaned, too. (Autobiographical Narrative)

The financial hardships the Bloom family endured after Adam Bloom's death, and more specifically, Mary Bloom's struggles at all costs to provide for the family, is central to understanding Kubitz's motivation for leaving New Windsor. She witnessed first-hand the difficulties a woman faced in a husbandless world, but also saw that it was possible to make it without one. However, Kubitz's belief in self-sufficiency often conflicted with her need for security: she acted hastily when it came to either. Kubitz was also growing more dissatisfied with the prospect of living out her days in the provincial town of New Windsor. That coupled with the enticing glitzy fashion and culture that accompanied the expanding urbanization of America also motivated Kubitz to wonder about life beyond New Windsor.

Her first excursion outside New Windsor occurred when she was eighteen. While working as a telephone operator at a local general store, Kubitz met a soldier more than twice her age who was on leave visiting his sister. He and Kubitz hit it off. When she told him that she had never been out of New Windsor, he suggested they take a day trip to Baltimore. Estelle's mother thought favorably of the man (Kubitz had been taking him to church) and gave her permission to go. At the last minute, her mother changed her mind and said, as Kubitz later recalled, "Well, if you go you need never darken my door again." Under an intense weight of guilt, Kubitz traveled with the soldier and, in her words, "never went back" (Autobiographical Narrative). Kubitz's defiance of her mother, although heartbreaking to her, began a period of

independence and responsibility for which she was unprepared. With some money given to her by a neighbor, Kubitz returned to Baltimore. She struggled to find work and eventually got a job at a shirt-factory making $2.50 an hour, considerably better than the $5.00 a month she earned working as a telephone operator in New Windsor.

During her first few years in Baltimore, Kubitz's quest for a good-paying job was tempered by her quest to find a man whom she could marry. After working at the shirt-factory, she got a job working in a department store during the day and another job at the Henrietta Exchange working at night. Although she had modest success finding work, Kubitz "had nobody to go to for anything" and began to entertain thoughts of getting married (Autobiographical Narrative). She was not committed to the idea of marriage then but saw it as a back-up plan should she be unable to support herself:

> I was beginning to think this independence stuff for a woman wasn't so hot, and might have been thrilled at another offer of marriage and have ended my career as a rural free delivery mail carrier. (Autobiographical Narrative)

Kubitz's cynicism was short-lived. She found a job as a stenographer at Chesapeake Iron Works, which began her apprenticeship into the work she would later perform for Dreiser. She also began reading what she called "good books," having recently joined the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Kubitz's voracious appetite for reading, which quelled the boredom caused by not having money, proved to be beneficial in attracting Dreiser, who valued well-read women.

While working at Chesapeake Iron Works, she met a German immigrant by the name of Hans Kubitz. In her autobiography, Kubitz describes Hans as "a very romantic figure" from one of those "magic lands" (Autobiographical Narrative). She explains her attraction to him: "You

see, foreign lands were beginning to figure in my dreams, just as the great city of Baltimore had figured—until I saw it" (Autobiographical Narrative). In 1912, at the age of twenty-six, she married Hans and became Mrs. Estelle Bloom Kubitz. It seemed that Kubitz had resigned herself to the security marriage afforded. She continued to work at Chesapeake Iron Works, which was a source of contention for the Kubitz family: "All the Kubitz wives were expected to do was wash and iron and scrub floors and cook and wash dishes," Kubitz recalled (Autobiographical Narrative).

Hans eventually lost his job at the iron works, which set into motion the eventual demise of the marriage. After a brief solo visit to the Kubitz family in Germany, Kubitz returned and found her unemployed husband full of ideas about traveling around the world to find work. He left and Kubitz stayed behind. Han's adventures proved too much for Kubitz to handle and after months of intermittent separations, Kubitz sought a divorce. Locating Hans was difficult and initiated the first of many serendipitous events in Estelle and Dreiser's relationship.

Shortly after Hans disappeared, Kubitz moved into an apartment with her sister Marion in Washington, D. C., where an "exciting world seemed to lie before them" (Martin xxxiii). Their excitement was fueled by a chance meeting with H. L. Mencken at the Baltimore Sun offices. Kubitz and Marion went to the Sun offices in search of help with locating the elusive Hans Kubitz. Mencken seems to have been the first to encourage the Bloom sisters' literary ambitions. He suggested that they submit their writings to the Smart Set of which Mencken was then book reviewer, a job for which Dreiser had recommended him. Dreiser and Mencken had met in 1908 when Dreiser, then editor-in-chief of the women's magazine The Delineator, asked Mencken to ghostwrite a series of articles on child care for the magazine (Lingeman 18).

Dreiser's relationship with Mencken would be the most important in his professional career and remains one of the most significant friendships in the history of American letters.

Marion and Mencken became fast friends and by 1914 they had began an affair. Through Marion, Kubitz became close friends with Mencken; in terms of examining Dreiser and Kubitz's relationship, Mencken's importance cannot be overemphasized. He was Kubitz's sympathetic advisor during the turbulence that marked her affair with Dreiser and it was Mencken to whom Estelle entrusted her papers, especially those related to her relationship with Dreiser. The most significant of these documents was a transcription of Dreiser's Greenwich Village diary. In a note dated October 14, 1938, H. L. Mencken wrote the following:

> This curious document was handed to me in 1920 or thereabout by Dreiser's secretary. Whether she gave it to me because she was then on bad terms with Dreiser and eager to make him look foolish or because she thought that the diary would aid me in my writings about him I don't know. I put it aside and forgot it completely, and it was only the other day that I disinterred it. It seems to me that it may be of interest to someone writing about Dreiser in the future. It at least reveals his state of mind at a critical point in his career. (American Diaries 148)

When considered in the context of Mencken's note, Kubitz's transcription of the diary is insignificant. As Dreiser's secretary, Estelle transcribed many documents, including personal ones. Kubitz figures prominently in the diary, as do Dreiser's liaisons with other women: thus the diary confirmed her growing suspicions of Dreiser's commitment and the entries also reveal her increased insecurity that augmented her depression over her troubled relationship with Dreiser. In a letter of Dec. 9 (n.y.) to Mencken, she writes,

> You know The Superman has been telling me all along that he hasn't been with another woman—even commentsed on without any encouragement from me, saying he didn't understand it, that he'd never done it before, etc. And I believed it! Jesus, I'd believe anything, to be happy.

That she might have made the transcription to make Dreiser look "foolish" is likely because although Mencken was well aware of his friend's promiscuous lifestyle, the diary confirmed it in explicit detail. Because the original of the diary has yet to be discovered, if it exists at all, one wonders whether it is complete transcription.

Kubitz seems not to have excised those intimate details about her own fluctuating mental state observed by Dreiser, as one might expect. The emendations she made are largely deletions of Dreiser's detailed shopping lists and other financial records. Her retention of the letters and notes that Dreiser himself often attached to entries is consistent with a practice found in his other diaries. Moreover, a comparison of the writing syntax between Estelle's transcription and other entries from his diaries is likewise consistent. James L. W. West III discusses the issue of authentication in the "Editorial Principles" section of American Diaries and states that Kubitz corrected Dreiser's frequent spelling and punctuation errors, as she customarily did, but it's impossible to know whether she omitted any entries (48). It is likely that the chronological breaks in the diary are simply periods when Dreiser did not make any entries.

Why, then, did Kubitz undertake to copy what would become over fifty heart-wrenching pages of single-spaced entries that simultaneously affirm and deny Dreiser's love for her? She likely wanted to hurt him by making the transcription in the hope that, as Mencken prophetically speculated, it would be of interest to someone writing about Dreiser.

In making the transcription she subjects herself to such mordant entries as, "We [Dreiser and Kubitz] lie on bed awhile, and she weeps still more, and finally we fall to screwing. Work at this almost an hour. [Referring to an earlier tryst.] During afternoon I come four times, Louise [Campbell] seven or eight" (158). Reading such comments would have devastated even the most open-minded of Greenwich Village's free-love disciples. Throughout much of the diary Dreiser writes of Kubitz as "cold," "depressed and silent," and "heavy in mood," no doubt because she suspects his infidelity, which, although he writes extensively of it, he rarely acknowledges to Kubitz (149, 177). By retaining Dreiser's observations of her as emotionally manic, no doubt the result of her growing suspicions, she appears fragile and abused, which may have increased Mencken's sympathy for her while also increasing his disdain for Dreiser's bohemian lifestyle. Her exclusion of Dreiser's long, detailed lists reveal disdain for this habit: "Here follows long list of what he bought, with price" (Diaries 153). Nearly all of the letters and notes copied were those from other lovers including Bertha Halloran and Louise Campbell, both of whom Dreiser met in 1917. Louise Campbell became one of his most devoted manuscript editors, most notably for her work on The "Genius". The inclusion of their letters reinforces Kubitz's diminished role in the relationship even further. Estelle's naïveté may have led her to think that having the diary would give her leverage to smear Dreiser's reputation for his indiscretions, when in reality its dissemination would have confirmed what Dreiser often boasted about and what many had already suspected: that he maintained, expertly, multiple sexual partners.

The diary transcription is a defining event in the relationship and reveals Kubitz's tendency towards masochism that repeatedly surfaced during the three years she and Dreiser were together. Kubitz's own account of her relationship with Dreiser, an unpublished one-act play entitled "I and One of the Others," confirms their masochistic tendency and provides a

counterpart to the diary entries and "Gloom," in which she offers a summation of Dreiser and their relationship.

"I and One of the Others," as its title suggests, is about Kubitz's awareness of Dreiser's infidelity and the conflict that ensues when having to compete with Louise Campbell for Dreiser's commitment. Completed by July 17, 1917, "I and One of the Others" was a writing exercise in which Kubitz attempted to explain the relationship to Mencken and, perhaps, provide herself with the strength and courage to leave Dreiser. After he read it, Mencken chastised her in a letter of July 20, 1917:

> If you fall for that bunk again I'll have you arrested. When you went back last time I wrote to M. [Marion Bloom] that you were ripe to be read out of the human race. [. . .] I was staggered when I heard that you had gone back, following the episode of which I was a witness. You have wasted your time and got nowhere. Incidently, why don't you write something for us? Your comedy is excellent. [. . .] The old boy wanted me to take him back to Baltimore, but I refused. You are well rid of that affair. (qtd. in Martin 64)

Although Mencken and Dreiser were good friends and remained so after Dreiser's affair with Kubitz ended, Mencken was astonished that Kubitz would tolerate Dreiser's mistreatment and lack of respect. In one of the last letters Mencken wrote to Kubitz that dealt specifically with her relationship with Dreiser, he reveals utter despair and disappointment:

> [. . .] What in hell is the matter with you? I wash my hands of you, take off your ring, feed your portrait to the dog, and set you down a vulgar hussy if you succumb again. What chance have you got there? You are a plain slave, and

> deserve to be treated as a slave. I don't blame D. [Dreiser] in the slightest. He is simply taking advantage of the terms you fix yourself. (qtd. in Martin 111)

"I and One of the Others" reveals Kubitz's internal conflict as she wrestled with whether or not to leave Dreiser. Although she worked for and was romantically attached to a famous writer, she was tormented by his need to be with other women, which seems to have created the conditions for the masochism in the relationship.

The play begins with an affectionate exchange between S.O.B. [Dreiser] and Miss DamnPhool [Kubitz], which reflects Kubitz's wish that despite his philandering he will commit to her exclusively:

> S.O.B.: Honey, you looked better today than I ever saw you.
>
> D.P.: What makes you say that?
>
> S.O.B.: Oh, I have no reason except that you did look better. What did you do to yourself?
>
> D.P.: *(in an effort to make it easy for him—?????)* Oh, it's because I'm so happy up here. We get along so well, and I have you all to myself. And, Oh, Theo, tomorrow morning we're going to have a chicken liver omelette. You love them so.

Rather quickly, though, the mood disintegrates when Dreiser tells Kubitz he needs to travel to New York on what he calls "business." The "business" at hand, as Kubitz observes, is a sexual encounter with Louise Campbell (Martin 63). "I and One of the Others" demonstrates Dreiser's unwillingness to embrace monogamy and Kubitz's inability to leave him. In the skit, he and Kubitz are on an extended holiday visiting her sister Goldie and her husband Harry at their farm in Maryland. They made several visits to the farm during the course of their affair, as

did Mencken and Marion, which seeking a respite from the day-to-day stresses of living in New York and Baltimore. The visits also allowed the Bloom sisters to stay connected to their former lives, which had changed drastically in the last few years.

Many "New Women" of the time wrote one-act plays to illustrate the psychological effects free-love had on involved participants: eager men and reluctant women. Neith Boyce's Constancy (1915), based on Mabel Dodge's relationship with John Reed, centers of Rex's abandonment of Moira for another woman and his presumptive return to resume his relationship with her. Moira, however, is unwilling to dismiss his philandering and tells him she no longer loves him. Rex wrongly assumes that because he has given Moira permission to be "free," his unfaithfulness is justified:

> Rex: […] Did I want you to give up your interests and your friends? Did I want you to see nothing and nobody but me? Didn't I want you to be free of me and let me be free of you—sometimes.
>
> Moira: In love one cannot be free. I was constant to you every moment, while I loved you.
>
> Rex: While you loved me. That's not my idea of constancy.
>
> Moira: No, your idea of constancy is to love a hundred other women and at intervals to come back—to me. (279)

Kubitz's concerns in "I and One of the Others" echoes Moira's sentiments of reconciling loving someone who is not wholly committed. Unlike Moira, though, we know Kubitz returns to Dreiser, and because of her masochistic devotion "I and One of the Others" was figuratively produced frequently during the course of their relationship.

Dreiser's infidelity was not Kubitz's only concern. Much of the dialogue, although focused on Dreiser's lack of commitment and infidelity, is motivated by a subtext that reveals Kubitz's dedication to Dreiser, the writer. As she tells SOB, "I've worked and played with you for a year now, and done ten times as much of your work as you have" ("I and One"). Kubitz's unreciprocated commitment evolved during her three years relationship with Dreiser. She believed the secretarial work she did for Dreiser contributed to the perpetuation of Art, eventough Dreiser's need to have multiple sexual encounters (to recharge himself for the work of writing) made her commitment to his work painful. Although her romantic relationship with Dreiser ended in the fall 1919, she continued to type and edit his manuscripts until she remarried in 1923. In a letter of January 22, 1921, she adamantly suggests he return from his extended "holiday" in California to resume their creative collaboration:

> You know you haven't done any work out there worth speaking of; I mean in comparison with what you can do and have done. I realize, perhaps better than anybody else, that you needed to go away when you did, for many reasons, chief of which perhaps was myself. [...] Do you remember the years during which, day after day, without thinking it extraordinary, we turned out one or two chapters daily, short stories occasionally, essays, philosophizings [sic], reading worthwhile things, walking and talking and getting our ideas into some sort of usable shape? [...] Come back and let's do "The Bulwark", then the "American Tragedy," and write some stories to keep us going while we do these two things. (UP)

In addition to Kubitz's commitment to Dreiser's works, her letter reveals a desire to return to a painful relationship. She desperately wanted Dreiser to commit to her and she sacrificed self-respect in an attempt to achieve that end. Her remarriage marked the end of not only her

personal relationship with Dreiser, but also her professional relationship. Although married, she remained unhappy. She frequently wrote to her sister describing the revulsion she had for her new husband, partly because she now believed marriage made her average, and partly because her husband lacked the intellectual sophistication of Dreiser. She eventually became a recluse, and after undergoing a double mastectomy, began drinking heavily. While the cultural climate of Greenwich Village afforded Kubitz the opportunity to work for and fall in love with a famous writer, the same culture made her a victim of Dreiser's promiscuity.

"Gloom" and "I and One of the Others," while furthering our understanding of Dreiser and his relationship with Kubitz, represent polar aspects to their affair: "Gloom" marked the beginning of his relationship with Kubitiz; and "I and one of the Others" documents the end. Dreiser believed, perhaps disingenuously, that sex bolstered his creative abilities and he was fearful of ending his relationship with Kubitz for this reason; he continued his affair out of fear of sapping his creative abilities and Kubitz was simply unable "quit" him.

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A NOTE ON THE TEXTS

Two versions of "Gloom" are extant in the Theodore Dreiser Papers at the University of Pennsylvania: a holograph manuscript and a revised typescript. Because the revised typescript best represents Dreiser's intentions for "Gloom," it is the copy-text for my transcription. The typescript consists of seventeen leaves of numbered pages and inserted holograph leaves. Dreiser cancelled the typed title "Camilla" in favor of "Ruth," which he then cancelled for "Gloom," both of which were written in longhand.

Dreiser's emendations to the typescript are largely deletions of text, which he cancelled with a single line, and additions he added in longhand either in close proximity to its intended location or in the margins. Most of Dreiser's textual additions have accompanying lines or arrows to indicate their intended locations. Occasionally, because of the quality of my copy of the text, marginalia have appeared illegible and its intended location indecipherable. For those instances, I have added a textual note to explain its approximate location and to identify those words that are legible. When I have been unable to decipher a handwritten word, I have inserted the abbreviation "illeg." enclosed within brackets. Occasionally, Dreiser failed to complete punctuation of revisions of text—most frequently, not supplying appropriate terminal punctuation. For those instances, I have silently added terminal punctuation. When necessary for clarity, I have inserted appropriate punctuation within brackets. Finally, I have retained Dreiser's spelling preferences and have not corrected obvious misspellings.

"I and One of the Others" presents few editorial challenges, for the manuscript is a clean, typed fair copy with no holograph emendations. In preparing the text for publication, I have italicized both parenthetical stage directions and scene cues. When Kubitz prepared the

typescript, she prefaced it with a note to Mencken and followed it with another note to him. I have indicated these notes by setting them off from the text.

"GLOOM," BY THEODORE DREISER

Gloom

As do most who are incapable of a single love in a lifetime she appeared in an interlude in her life—and mine. This was after Sidonie—considerably after, when for months after wandering here and there I fell into a psychological funk with myself and life, asking, say: "Where the lyric rapture, rhythm, the self-acknowledged joys of earlier days. Dead? Evaporated into thin air? Not a thing to show for them save gloomy memories?["] True, there was Aglaia—usually near in her city home, and always helpfully and lovingly to be depended on—only for the present in Italy. And others attractive, but often too casual and impersonal, especially for a temperament that had been feeding upon and consoling itself with the exceedingly personal. For a change, therefore, I had been working hard by day, and betimes at night for divertissement browsing here and there. Yet always with the mystery of life before me. Why are we here? How? This too mysterious combination of atoms, electrons[,] quantums which is us and which are forever stirring, —combining, dissolving, re-combining into what we see—or what we think that we see. But why for? And at whose urge? How ridiculous to say that that which looks to be a process of thought here is without thought in the generative process, —an accident. A saloon at the corner; cars rumbling down the street but most carefully directed; autos, trucks and all the constructive processes thereof and yet therewith, via moments of pleasure or pain—a sense of beauty or of ugliness, of advance or delay, in this affair of life in general or of my own in particular; in short thoughts about the complete futility—as eternity goes—of everything—nothing really accomplished, —nothing really done unless being for awhile a minute spicule of this ever shifting scene is something.

So much was I affected by all this at the time that once I took a pen and wrote:[1]

The dark,

The rain,

The wind,

And there _too_ cold regrets

That now,

Without—

Within

My soul

Clatter and mourn and squeal

Against my life—

Its follies,

Its defeats.

x x x x x x

And yet,

This misery ended;

Rain, no more,—

Nor sun

Nor mood,

Nor hope,

Nor pain,

Nor life,—

Where then shall I—

Where then shall I—

Again,—

To make my heart to know its beat,

My soul itself,

My life its lust,

Where then shall I

Find rain,

Or wind,

Or dark,

Or woods,

Or vain regrets

To whip,

And mourn

And squeal

And make me live.

As you see I was taken with the virus of inquiry and dissatisfaction. And so in the midst of this—and very likely because of it, a yen for the most exotic and different sort of companionship. X, say, and his "hasheesh evenings" at which one swallowed a glass or two of his brown dust and water and went off into the most amazing phantas-magorias of mind or space. Mario Peixitarro and his gatherings of human misfits—sports or eccentrics—who because of some slight maladjustment in the process of gestation were compelled throughout their life to slip about among the disdainful eyes of men and women scorned because of what they could not help—, because they were not, to be exact, exactly as other men or women—but both in one. Yet surely blameless as I was prepared to contend with any man, come who might. And then

Delphine Scholl with her collection of mediums, materializations, wood and grain interpreters and some crooks—a large and dubious company. Also Annette C—- with her feverish, crazy orgies of writers, critics, poets, painters, sculptors—the craziest and most unstable, argumentative group of any. Yet, at last, at one of these, and when I was most spiritually if querulously concerning myself with life and its future, as well as mine own[,] remembered coming up with one Lucile Dexter, of Washington, often afterwards as releasing lever or yolk of all that followed.[2] She was a bacteriologist connected with a Washington hospital whom previously I had met once in the company of a critic friend of mine, also of Washington. And she, in the course of our talk this night, mentioning a certain friend of hers and the Washington critic's—Camilla Grove, the sister of the closest female friend or best girl of the said critic—who chanced then and there to be in New York.

But (and here is an interesting thing) although I had never met either of these two—the critic's girl or her sister Camilla, I had from one or two earlier conversations with him learned of something in connection with them which now and instantly fixed both in my mind. For previously—and without his ever once mentioning any names—he had once described two sisters, very much like the two Miss Dexter was describing, one of them a chemist—the critic's friend, the other,—her sister, secretary to a Washington politician. But how had he described them? As "birds", no less—bacchanal, passional— the "flaming youth" type, sharing the then Washington political pleasure world, its nocturnal and less respectable side. He and a friend of his, whose name I have long since forgotten, had as he then told me encountered them somewhere—a hectic, orgiastic party. After that there had been between this critic and a friend of his and these two sisters clandestine and plainly very pagan orgies during one of which occupying adjoining suites—there had been a proposal on the part of this same Camilla of an

exchange of partners, her sister being one. Now whether the profound exchange was actually made or not I cannot now recall. What I did recall and clearly was that because of my notions in regard to all this at the time I was mentally prejudiced against this girl, who afterwards I assumed to be this same Camilla. More, if I remember what this critic[,] who was talking of her and her sister[,] to me said there was a wanton this and that—a girl who having a young husband who was compelled to work nights in one of the government bureaux was not only without sufficient fairness to be loyal to him, but worse could in his absence indulge in such shameful orgies as have just been indicated. And yet, in so far as the critic himself was concerned, I had not been able to gather that he himself was deeply shamed by his part in this rather material affair. On the contrary later he once suggested to me that if ever I came over to Washington and was interested, while there to make an evening of sorts why there were these two girls. Only now, as I wish to make clear and as you may have gathered from the text[,] this same critic[,] and this some two years later[,] was affectionately attached to the (comparatively) good sister—not Camilla. And that this same Camilla and this critic, to say nothing of her sister and this critic, were now on the best of terms. At the time I was talking to Lucile Dexter who was telling me of this critic and his two sister friends I was somewhat sardonically moved by all this;—a little later not so much. For you see by then I had met Camilla. And whatever her sensual or emotional crimes as suspected by me at first[,] yet never actually proved, I was interested by her. For, believe it or not, in the totality of her appearance there was little of the common troll about her—such as I had expected to discover. On the contrary in connection with an extremely brisk and still very youthful personality—a decidedly inquiring and well furnished mind—the kind of mind which was decidedly and even darkly taken up with the mystery as well as the knowledge of life and which had apparently been seeking for light if not a solution from the beginning.

The occasion of this first meeting was a dinner and supper party to which this same critic who had first spoken of the two hoyden sisters had invited me. And in the course of it, and largely because she did not sit next to me I examined her with great care. So this was the girl who had been thus paganly described. Such the stories told of her. And yet here she was, the intimate friend of this same critic who had described her to me—her sister his social playmate—And with the rumor attached that someday he was certain to marry her. I looked at her critically, distrustfully even and yet because of as I say her electric energy—or ebullience—as well as a decidedly agreeable face and figure I was favorably impressed. For who was I to be catechising so closely?

Cut through the hypocrisies and the make-believe and bunk in almost any—not all, perhaps[,] circles and what have you? Besides was I at this moment really wishing to turn reformer and make the world right? I was not. It was no more than a passing spectacle to me—a thing that had been functioning in a most unsatisfying way for thousands of years and would continue so to function no doubt—the onward and upward people to the [illeg.] not with standing[,] so to be sitting in judgment on the very complicated issues here involved was scarcely in my line. In consequence and saving perhaps a lift of an eyebrow I said nothing. The one thing that did make for some of the curiosity on my part was the repetition on the part of this same Miss Dexter[,] who was also present[,] that this same Camilla was interested in meeting me. Indeed! And although she and her sister and the critic were now good friends apparently and he a relatively intimate friend of mine who now and then troubled to look me up I was recessive because of being dubious. I wanted to know much more about her.

What![3] And after that picture of her deceiving her husband and transcending or transgressing the ordinary and more respected customs of this very earthy and physical

relationship! Never! I did not do—or had not as yet done—any such thing and would not therefore enter upon any social relations of any kind with one who had. I would be busy. I would not be able to find the time. And some such excuse I offered.

Nonetheless, some three or four weeks later—and on my part, quite unwitting of what was in store for me—I did meet her, the critic aforementioned inviting me to a party at which both sisters were to be. And in his company. There was a dinner, much talk and dancing and drinking. And throughout this, and as much because of as in spite of the troublesome incident of the neglected husband and the adjoining rooms, I found myself looking at her not a little. And much to my surprise, moral if not otherwise, I found her as attractive as any, if not more so. There was—and this in spite of her illicit past—

which had brought her to twenty-four years of age a more interesting or vital and youthful feel about her. No doubt there was an incurable zest for romance that shone forth from her eyes, her smile and her various gestures, no doubt all—(and this a long while)—practiced in front of a mirror—every least lift or twist or gesture of chin, eye-lids, eye-brows, lips, hands, shoulders, hip. And yet, with a practiced naturalness, if I may so phrase it, which suggested that all these were at least in part natural to her in her youth, yet had been cultivated and emphasized because they were charming, effective and so useful in the battle between the sexes—on the field of romance. Not only that, but she had an exceedingly quick, if slightly ironic, wit—a wit or perhaps I had better say humor that was as kindly and generous as it was undeceived. I could not help smiling over some of her quips and jests, any more than I could deny her alertness and even downright wisdom, for she had it. There was, as I recall it now, a very melancholy and to me mentally reducing play by Andreyeff—Anathema—on the boards of some little theatre in New York, and once during dinner, since she was sitting opposite me, she leaned over to ask if I had

seen it. And because I was curious as to her mind we discussed that. And I could not help saying to myself—but this very wise and shrewd and attractive girl is the same, who etc. Naturally I was puzzled for the two seemed a little incongruous—and do to this hour. Next, although older by two years than her sister, as I had learned, she was actually younger in spirit. Much. And an interesting fact was this that in spite of a clinging and rather decolleté dress which seemed intended to provoke sensual attention to her charms[,] she had a certain clerky or brisk and upstanding office air such as somehow suggests one who comes with documents and notes, your charming, well-tailored stenographer, as it were. Yet with this other thing—intense sensuality. In addition, when she danced, she stood in marked contrast to those who with willowy and intoxicating movements, langourous and warm, suggested the eternal feminine; for unlike them she was always alert, erect[,] quick and far more proficient at a tap or Charleston like solo than most of the others although in the other dances she swayed about gracefully enough. To me at the time she rather than not suggested a practical vitality or force which should not permit one to dream langourously and yet, as I am here prepared to testify she could and did evoke dreams in me. But at this time I studied her principally with one thought in mind. So this was the evil Camilla—the central figure of the pagan orgy that had heinously been described to me. But where now was the young husband—so badly used—for I had already heard that she had deserted him. And what could she have to say for that, or herself. Evil Camilla! Yet since I was of the party I danced with her as with others and found her, as I expected, looking meaningfully into my eyes. Evil Camilla. And yet because of a temperament that I was finding much more alluring than I had imagined it would be, saying to myself, "Well, you are attractive and different—a forceful and independent person. But, apart from just this, of

what use to me?[”] A stenographer, typist I could use to be sure. But—one so chorybantic and passional,—surely not. For when would any work be done.

Yet before the evening was over[4] we two found ourselves apart, talking novels, plays and poetry. To my astonishment—and of all things she had read and read and read—Russian, Scandinavian, French and German things, but mostly Tolstoy, Ibsen, Gogol, Dostoievsky, Andreyeff, Saltykov—as I could see, since her preference lay there—a long company. And expressing—yet only in a lively, optimistic way even their fatalistic view point[—]Zola, Romain Rolland. But when? How? Distinctly she was still quite young—only twenty-four and such solemn and even gloomy literature. And yet with this zest for actual material living for which she was obviously taking her share. Oh, evil Camilla.

One of the explanations she offered when asked—I forget when—then or later— was that she was as swift as well as a greedy reader, disposing of whole serious tomes in a night—or a day. “But you work don’t you, by day?”

“I’ve always worked.”

“And you play some.”

“Yes, I do that to.” Once more the eyes.

[“]But I am a swift, almost greedy reader. A book a night is nothing for me.[”] Or a day you mean, I countered (in my mind) thinking of her caress as I was imagining it.

“Well, you are a better man than I am,” I added. “At your age I had scarcely heard of all these people.”

“Oh, but you thought things out for yourself and I have never been able to do that.”

Yet presently—in the course of a week or two more, this did come about since another evening was arranged somewhere at which she appeared. And on this second occasion, unlike

the first one, we talked and talked freely. She had, apart from her very forceful and attractive personality, a wide knowledge of books and plays as well as poetry which interested me as peculiar for one of her years and disposition.

Pretty good, I thought, thinking that she must have thought a great deal out for herself—much more that had I at that time, and I still think so.

Now after this conversation there was a walk somewhere—from this particular place to where these two sisters were stopping—the critic and Camilla's sister on ahead, myself and Camilla trailing on behind. And talking, talking. But our vibrant exchange of[5]

"I AND ONE OF THE OTHERS," BY ESTELLE BLOOM KUBITZ

July 18, 1917.

Hen, dear, you're a brick—but he's gone anyhow. Here's how:[6]

COMEDY ENTITLED

I AND ONE OF THE OTHERS.

SCENE: *Old SOB lying in the hammock after you all had gone, after twisting his handkerchief frantically for an hour or so, and walking from the house to the barn and from the barn to the house. Miss DamnPhool has been commanded to sit at his feet in the swing while he reclined gracefully in the hammock.*

SOB: Honey, you looked better today than I ever saw you.

DP: What makes you say that?

SOB: Oh, I have no reason except that you did look better. What did you do to yourself?

DP: *(in an effort to make it easy for him—?????)* Oh, it's because I'm so happy up here. We get along so well, and I have you all to myself. And, oh, Theo, tomorrow morning we're going to have a chicken liver omelette. You love them so.

SOB: You're awfully sweet. But what made you look so lovely today?

DP: Oh, you only thought I looked better because you have only the cows and chickens to compare me with.

Silence. More twisting of handkerchief and frenzied swinging to and fro.

SOB: *(without looking up)* I think I'll go to New York on the morning train.

DP: Yes? What for?

SOB: I have to go up on business. I'll be back Thursday morning. Why not meet me in Baltimore Thursday morning and we'll get some things for you that you need.

DP: No.

DP gets up to go into the house.

SOB: Where yuh going?

DP: To get a drink.

SOB: Are you coming back, honey?

DP: Oh, yes.

DP flies into the house and finds Goldie sitting by the window.

DP: Well, did you hear it?

GOLDIE: What?

DP: The old SOB sprung it. He wants a team to catch the eight train in the morning.

GOLDIE: *(disgusted with SOB—and with DP)* Are you going to let him go?

DP: Yes.

GOLDIE: Well, you're a damned fool. After the way you've waited on him and worked your head off for him.

DP: Well, this is my chance to break, and blame it all on him, and incidentally make him hate the cause of it—Louise.

GOLDIE: Stella, if you ever have anything to do with him after this, you're off my books.

DP: I'll be off my own, too.

GOLDIE: You're a fool.

DP: I know it. I've been for a year now, am just getting next to myself.

Harry meanders in. DP tells him the sad story. He goes out to the hammock.

SOB: Smith *(like Smith was his English butler)*, can I get a team to go to the train in the morning?

HARRY: Sure. What time you want to go?

SOB: On the eight train.

HARRY: All right. But why didn't you go with Henry?

SOB: Oh, I didn't want to. I'd have crowded them *(three in a seven passenger car)* and besides, I would have had to spend an extra night away.

Harry come in and tells me about a special delivery letter Mr. SOB had had him mail that morning to Louise—after borrowing the stamps for it from me the night before. DP goes upstairs to get a drink of Scotch to bolster her up for the fray and lies down on her little bed. SOB comes up, nervously looking for her. Sits down on the bed.

SOB: It's a scream. Can't I even go away for a minute without a scene? I have business in New York and have to go.

DP: Where's the scene? I was just tired.

SOB: Oh, no you're not. You're mad. And about nothing. I have business in New York.

DP: Yes? Rather sudden, isn't it?

SOB: Yes. But I'll be back Thursday morning. *(playfully)* Do you think you can exist without me twenty-four hours?

DP: Yes.

SOB: *(looking at her suspiciously)* Well, I have business in New York, or I wouldn't go.

DP: Let's go downstairs.

SOB: No, honey, let's talk this over.

DP: There's nothing to talk over.

SOB: Yes there is. I have busi—

DP: You're going to Baltimore and you know what I told you before we left New York—that there would be no lighthearted skipping off for you without me, and that there would be no patient wifely waiting for me safely back on the farm. So, you see, there's nothing to talk about. It all settled itself.

SOB: You're a scream. I can't stand this. I have to be free. I can't be tied down by any silly thing like this. It cramps me. etc. etc. etc.

DP: Oh let's go down. I told you there was nothing to talk about.

SOB: *(virtuously)* No, let's have this out. If I have to be in your sight every minute, we'd better quit.

DP: I thought you understood that's what we are doing when I told you that there wouldn't be any wifely waiting for you when you return from such a pilgrimage. I know that you're going, that nothing I could do or say would stop you, and that I wouldn't do or say anything to stop you. So you see again there's nothing to talk about. Let's go down.

SOB: Then you mean that this is the finish?

DP: Does it take a brick house to fall on you? Does it have to be said in the plainest English and be sworn to before a notary? Let's not quarrel. We're grown people. I can't change you and you won't change yourself, and I can't change myself—at least to be taken to your heart one day and the next canned.

SOB: I wouldn't do that.

DP: You've done it a few times, or else told me I would have to stand for anything you chose to do or get out.

SOB: When did I do that?

DP: Oh, die. I'm going downstairs. A life is no more to you than a blade of grass.

SOB: That's not so. I think a lot of life.

DP: Yes, life. I said, "a life." I'm going down.

SOB: Then you mean that this is the finish?

DP: Yes.

SOB: You mean that, donyou?

DP: Yes.

SOB: The hell with you.

He goes downstairs, mad at last. DP starts to typewrite his History of Myself, and comes up against a word that she can't make out. She goes to ask him what it is.

SOB: It's "bog-fire." Come here. I want to talk to you. Do you mean that you want to quit?

DP: Jesus, how many times do you want to hash it over? This isn't the first time that something of this sort has happened, and I've told you over and over that endurance can come to an end, and that some day it would all go up in smoke.

SOB: Well, when shall I go?

DP: You said you were going in the morning. I suppose this business is too important to be put off long enough to pack up and leave decently? You know these are my people, and we can't treat them like dogs!

SOB: Then you don't want me to come back?

DP: If you're in a hurry and can't get packed up tonight, why then, you'll have to come back, won't you?

SOB: Will you be here?

DP: I don't know.

SOB: Where are you going? What are you going to do?

DP: I don't know. I haven't thought out everything, quite. Anyway, don't worry about me. I've got to look out for myself. Whether I'm here or not you can pack your things, can't you? I'm not making any promises.

SOB: Well, this is a scream. I can't go away for twenty-four hours on business without a quarrel. I think we'd better quit.

DP: Yes? You're late. I thought that was decided.

SOB: *(meditatively)* It's a scream. It's a scream. Can't even go away on business.

DP: Cut it. I've worked and played with you for a year now, and done ten times as much of your work as you have, and yet this business I'm to know nothing about. I'm not a correct English servant you're dealing with. I'm a raw American, than which you think nothing can be worse, and I'm just raw enough to want some return for what I do for you and am to you.

SOB: Well, you get it.

DP: How?

SOB: Why, I'm with you most of the time.

DP: *(politely)* Yes?

SOB: Yes.

DP: Yes, after you have spent the day receiving frails of all sizes and descriptions all day while you have slumped me with work so that I can't even go to a picture show, and you won't take me. But let's cut this arguing. It all solves itself. I'm tired fighting myself to stand for your doings, and I'm not going to try any longer. You're you, and I'm myself.

I know how far I can or will go, and I've tried to impress it on you. Let's go.

SOB: But I want to talk about it. If we have to be fighting all the time we'd better quit.

DP: Jesus! So I've tried to tell you.

SOB: Then you mean to quit me?

DP: I mean not to be tortured by you, and by any skirt who whistles, "Here, Fido," to have you fly to her and forget your work, your outing on the farm that you wanted so much, and me, when I've made it possible for you. You say you're doing better work, more of it, and that you have a line on life that you never had before. It all goes to pot when some chorus girls whistles, "Here, Fido," and there you are. I've told you that your work is going down, and it is, and you know you've kind of put in a punch since you've been here away from the chorei.

SOB: Oh, is that so!

DP: You're damned tootin' it's so.

SOB: But I have to go on business.

DP: Cut it.

DP goes upstairs. SOB follows after a while with his toothbrush in his hand.

SOB: I'd better pack my grip before it gets dark.

DP: ————

SOB: Would you wear the linen suit or the grey one?

DP: I don't know.

SOB: Well, which do you think is the better one to wear?

DP: I don't know.

SOB: Do you mean it when you say you're going to quit me?

DP: Oh, hell!

She goes down to the swing. He comes along and makes her take the hammock—other times none of us dares to look at it. She lies down. After a time he goes and sits with her.

SOB: I don't know why you quarrel all the time.

DP: I don't. We've been getting along like a pair of June brides. You know I was turned out by my people for bringing you up here, and told never to come on the place again. Goldie flew in the face of all of them and kept us on, solely to help you. Now some actorine comes along and breaks it all up. Work flies, I fly, everything flies. Lead me to the actorine! I'm going to bed.

SOB: But why can't you be decent?

DP: If I were I wouldn't know you.

SOB: Why can't you be nice? Don't you want to be nice to me?

DP: I am. Far too nice to be cornered in a deal like this.

SOB: Why can't you love me like you ought to?

DP: Oh, I thought you were going to say like you love me. Ha! I don't know how I ought to love you. There are no altruists—outside of books.

SOB: Oh, yes, there are. I know some.

He meant Lill.

DP: Oh, no, you don't. She's a belly-crawling, belly-wallowing damned fool.

SOB: She's as good as you are.

DP: Perhaps. In her way. That way isn't mine. I've told you before what I thought of

such insects. Anyway, it's no use to talk. There's nothing to talk about. That's a pretty tree there, isn't it?

SOB: But why can't you understand me?

DP: *(with a chuckle)* I do. That's an old one. I learned that from Laura Jean Libbey back in 1900. Isn't the sun beautiful on those trees.

SOB: It's a scream. I can't go away for twenty-four hours on business without a fight. I can't stand this.

DP: No? I've often thought there ought to be a tax on useless conversation. Don't the trees look fresh and clean and new after the rain?

SOB: *(a thought comes to him, the oldest one in the world—stockings)* What size stockings do you wear?

DP: Forty.

SOB: No. Tell me. Or why don't you meet me in Baltimore Thursday morning?

DP: No. These people work hard for all they get. Now they're busy and can't be taking the horses and themselves out of the fields to carry us to and from the trains whenever we take a notion to go off for a holiday. They pay for all they get up here—if they take a farm they pay for it, if they take a wife they pay for that, and they haven't any sympathy for any such expeditions as this.

SOB: Oh, hell, it's a scream.

DP: Yes.

SOB: Don't you want to come back to New York and live and work with me?

DP: I've never lived with you.

SOB: Oh, cut that stuff!

DP: All right. I'm going to bed.

She went in and started the Victrola—"Goodbye Forever" etc. Jim comes in.

JIM: He says to bring it out on the porch and play.

She plays on and on. T' hell with him. He comes in. They go to bed.

MORNING.

SOB: Shall I wear my linen suit or my grey one?

DP: ————

SOB: Shall I take an umbrella?

DP: I don't know.

SOB: Would you take a raincoat?

DP: I don't know.

They have one cup of coffee, and that only because it is already made. He was to have a chicken liver omelette, but t' hell with him. After the coffee DP goes into the kitchen and sits by the stove. He puts his head in at the door.

SOB: I think I'll go up to the barn and get in the runabout.

DP: All right. Good bye.

SOB: Come here.

She goes. He kisses her beautifully, and goes out. He is seen stalking up towards the barn with his linen suit on that she washed and ironed for him to save him money (and on a July day!) because he's down on his uppers and is thinking of getting a newspaper job. He is carrying his little "decoy" bag, and ambling along like he was a white man.

Hen, what would you do with a SOB like that? Here I brought him up here, have been

turned out of house and home for it, won the contempt of Harry, Goldie, the children, have worked like a dog to lighten the work which our being here made, besides being 'way ahead of him in his work. I've washed and ironed and cooked and washed dishes, been a wife, a coy little darling, a mother, a slave, for him.

He can go t' hell, nicht?

You bet!

And don't think that all the lice have more than two legs.

TEXTUAL NOTES

1. **So…wrote** Dreiser wrote, “a scribbling, futile [illeg.] and wholly [illeg.]” below this sentence with no discernible line or arrow to indicate an intended location.

2. **Dexter** Dreiser cancelled the name “Pierce” and inserted “Dexter” here but inconsistently revised subsequent instances of the name. For clarity and consistency, I have silently changed “Pierce” to “Dexter” elsewhere in the typescript.

3. **What!…troublesome** Dreiser cancelled nine sentences of text from “What! And after […]” to “[…] in spite of the troublesome,” stopping mid-sentence at the bottom of the page. He failed to continue the revision on the next page, making it impossible to know which succeeding lines he wanted to delete or whether he planned to insert additional lines. I have retained the cancelled text for textual continuity and because it aids in contextualizing the narrator’s initial reluctance to get involved with Camilla.

4. **Yet…over** Dreiser copied verbatim page nine of the typescript up to and ending with this phrase on an inserted holograph leave. He probably intended to revise the text of the typescript after this phrase since he cancelled “night” for “evening” on the typescript and “evening” appears on the inserted leaf, although he did not cancel the text on the typescript.

5. **But…of** Both the holograph manuscript and typescript end here.

6. **Hen…how** In the space above Estelle’s note to Mencken she wrote, “Keep this for me. I’ll follow it very soon.”