
Frank Norris Studies

No. 13, Spring 1992

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Gnawing the File: Recent Trends in *McTeague* Scholarship

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I wish to trace recent criticism of *McTeague* through one large, untidy issue: the theory of Naturalism and the changing ways scholars have tried to use it to illuminate Norris's story of San Francisco.

A convenient starting place is the introduction to Carvel Collins's 1950 Rinehart edition of *McTeague*.¹ This edition brought *McTeague* to college classrooms in following years and helped fuel a revival of interest in it. His introduction, even now, seems fresh and solidly written. In only eleven pages, Collins sketches a definition and a history of Naturalism; summarizes key phases of Norris's career and claims a place for *McTeague* as a pioneering work of American Naturalism; comments on its composition, including some analysis of revision; presents a reading of the text as "the destruction of an innocent" (p. xiii); and brings the whole discussion back to the framework of Naturalism by comparing Norris and Zola.

Collins writes a distinguished, jargon-free prose which at first may fill us with nostalgia for a simpler age. He provides assurances via simple, off-hand definitions which are probably those which we still give our undergraduates. But these certainties have refused to remain fixed in later scholarship; and, indeed, looking closely at Collins's introduction, we find the already fraying seams. Twice on the first page Collins remarks, as if in asides, on the difficulty of defining Naturalism; and later, he observes the amalgamation in *McTeague* "of the Naturalism he borrowed from Europe with the primitivism which was characteristic of his place and time" (p. xiv).

Criticism of *McTeague* since 1950 has continued to be plagued by the apparent loose fit of Naturalism with the novel which is supposed to be its classic American example. By 1971 Edwin Cady was frustrated by the whole enterprise, and thundered out a series of negatives:

Nobody was a naturalist. There really are no naturalists in American literature. Everybody born

after the Civil War felt and responded after his fashion to the terrible pull of a sensibility in the grounds for which nobody finally believed.²

Other major scholars in the sixties and seventies were unwilling to perform such radical surgery, and tried to weigh the claims of Naturalism and the individual texts. In a carefully nuanced essay, Louis J. Budd meditated upon Naturalism, objectivity, and irony; he found most naturalistic novels less ironic and more compassionate than usually recognized.³ His central text was *McTeague*. And the dean of Norris scholars, Donald Pizer, in his book-length study of the author, found a "major hindrance to a full and clear reading of Norris' fiction . . . the almost inevitable tendency to begin all discussions of his work with an examination of his Naturalism."⁴ Norris was not a "boy Zola" for Pizer; indeed, there are few similarities between Norris and his professed model. But Pizer develops his own definition of American Naturalism, which is built on a careful reading of the texts, and he anticipates many later scholars in his analysis of the tension within Naturalism, which he sees not just as sloppy thinking, but as a source of rhetorical power for Norris and his contemporaries. In 1977, when Pizer wrote a preface to his own edition of *McTeague*, he stated aptly that in "recent decades, there has been an increasing effort to come to grips not only with the vexing but still productive question of the distinctive nature of Norris's Naturalism in *McTeague*, but also with the configuration of his themes and techniques independent of the tendencies of a particular literary movement."⁵

Pizer stands as mediator between two groups of later scholars who abandon his judicious balancing act, and whom I divide crudely into *anti-Naturalists* and *neo-Naturalists*: that is, those who see the theory of Naturalism entirely as a "hindrance" for the study of texts like *McTeague*, and those who see it as "still productive" and indeed indispensable.⁶

I

Most anti-Naturalist studies of *McTeague* begin with a refusal to make "tedious repetition of naturalistic shibboleths" (Don Graham, p. 43), or state that the "traditional view of Frank Norris as a principal American

proponent of literary naturalism has proved to be inadequate to a full understanding of his work" (Ron Mottram, p. 574). After using such formulae to declare their party allegiance, and gesturing in the direction of their major predecessors, critics will announce their purpose, which has been, usually, a close reading of the text, with the goal of showing that, whatever its flaws—its effects calculated in "decibels and gross tonnage"—*McTeague* is a more carefully wrought work than it first appears. With a few exceptions, anti-Naturalists have shown at least residual traits of the new criticism, with the underlying assumption that a successful reading of a work will demonstrate its unity, resolve apparent contradictions, and reveal the high level of the author's artistry. Most of the anti-Naturalists, moreover, provide sympathetic treatments of Norris's hero, following Collins in seeing him as an underdog and victim, giving light emphasis to his brutality and to the murder of Trina.

Suzu Bernstein Goldman's 1972 essay, "*McTeague: The Imagistic Network*," is a representative early piece of anti-Naturalist Norris scholarship. Her close reading of images of food, liquid, fights, teeth, hands, prisons or bonds, and music, links with the image patterns usually noted by earlier readers: gold, animals (especially dogs) and machinery. By establishing a tightly controlled web of images, Goldman is able to claim "that Norris was a far more conscious artist than we have yet realized." As a test of this claim, she shows that the notorious "death in the desert" ending, to which Howells and many readers have objected, is carefully anticipated by image patterns, which reach their resolution in the last chapter. Note, for example, how gold has been linked to sunlight many times before the blinding glare of Death Valley.

Don Graham's *The Fiction of Frank Norris* (1978) was, I believe, the first book-length study of Frank Norris based on the anti-Naturalist approach. In his introduction, Graham recalls Norris's own remark that "One is even led to regret the very invention of the terms of 'romanticism,' 'realism,' 'naturalism'" (p. 1). In his chapter on *McTeague*, Graham begins by dissociating himself from readers who see the text as a "purely naturalistic novel embodying such standard assumptions as sexual determinism, atavistic degeneracy, the influence of sordid milieus, and the operation of chance"; he thus links himself to such scholars as Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., Louis J. Budd, and Suzu Bernstein Goldman, who "testify to the novel's craftsmanship and humanity" (p. 43). His close reading of the text is extended by careful and original research into the culture of the period in the San Francisco Bay Area. Graham's approach is to look for "aesthetic documentation"—references to art, especially visual art—to

find the key issues of Norris's novels.

There is, of course, a wide range of aesthetic documentation in *McTeague*, largely drawn from popular culture—mass produced commodity art—as seen in the interiors of rooms (McTeague's, Trina's, and later their apartment), and the show at the Orpheum Theater. Graham praises Norris for his use of popular culture, which he finds "one of the most successful . . . in American fiction in the nineties, easily matching Stephen Crane's skillful dramatization of lowbrow culture in *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, and anticipating Dreiser's equally skillful employment of similar materials in *Sister Carrie*" (p. 46). Though of course we, and Norris, find the dentist's taste in art and music pathetic at best, Graham follows Louis J. Budd in asserting that Norris does not undercut with irony the pleasure that McTeague finds in that art. His taste may be bad, but it is real. Indeed, one of the key oppositions of the book is that between the real aesthetic pleasure McTeague takes in objects (his engraving, the gold tooth, concertina, canary) and the shallowness of Trina's tastes. Though Trina's sensibilities seem to dominate their marriage, it is she who is willing to convert all of their pretty things to cash, even to pawn Mac's concertina. Not surprisingly, McTeague is portrayed consistently by Graham as a "sympathetic bottom dog" (p. 43), and Trina's murder is scarcely mentioned.

Ron Mottram's "Impulse Toward the Visible: Frank Norris and Photographic Representation" extends Graham's work on "aesthetic reference" and popular culture. Looking over some of the same materials—Trina's photographs, the movie at the Orpheum—Mottram raises very useful questions about the relationship of Realism, Naturalism, and photography. Mottram notes the extensive reference throughout Norris's canon to photography and to early peephole and projected cinema, and speculates about the author's possible knowledge of the experiments by Muybridge at Stanford. Particularly interesting are Mottram's claims that not only photography, but primitive motion pictures influenced Norris's aesthetic sensibilities. This is a startling claim, since *McTeague* anticipates by several years the first feature-length narrative films.

In the most recent scholarly book on Norris, Barbara Hochman's *The Art of Frank Norris, Storyteller* (1988), the obligatory anti-Naturalist disclaimers have become the entire first chapter, "Norris's Dubious Naturalism." The first sentence clearly states the thesis of the book: "This study grows out of the conviction that the imaginative force of Frank Norris's work is not to be sought in his naturalist concerns, but rather in a cluster of preoccupations that

center on the vulnerability of the self" (p. 1). Her chapter on *McTeague* explains the various strategies—habits, rituals, obsessions—used by characters to protect the vulnerable self. This unifying principle—for Hochman, like most scholars in this group, justifies her method by proving unity—draws Maria and Zerkow, Old Grannis and Miss Baker, into a larger coherency. Unlike most anti-Naturalists, Hochman gives Trina's story nearly equal weight to that of her husband.

This sampling of the anti-Naturalist school concludes with a maverick essay, William E. Cain's "Presence and Power in *McTeague*"—a work which in fact stands between the two groups I am defining. Cain seems only partially aware of the anti-Naturalist tradition, does not begin with the usual formulae, and misses an obvious connection with Louis J. Budd, the scholar who most clearly anticipates his analysis of Norris's qualified ironic stance toward his characters. But Cain shares with the anti-Naturalists a belief that "Norris is a better, more interesting stylist and strategist than either his backer or foes usually suggest" (p. 201). This complexity is demonstrated by subtle Shakespearean allusions, especially to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Othello*. When the narrator exclaims "Ah, the pity of it!" upon McTeague's gross kiss of Trina in the dental chair, for example, we are to hear an echo of Othello's lament when he learns of Desdemona's betrayal. Yet Cain's analysis does not lead him to claim a greater unity for *McTeague*. The distinction is important. Cain's sensibilities are post-structuralist, not new critical: it is the *disunities* of the text which interest him and which he needs to explain. He finds this explanation in Norris's fascination with power. Of course this fascination is seen in characterization, events, and the explanations the narrator offers to the reader; this is obvious. But the ideology also explains Norris's interventions in the text; his "strenuous style, surging metaphors, and wrenched syntax . . ."; his "impulse to overwhelm and conquer . . ." (pp. 212-13). This participation in a network of power and ideology is explored by recent scholars in what I call the neo-Naturalist school.

II

The neo-Naturalists share a belief that Naturalism is not a provincial, short-lived movement, but part of a major shift in values which creates the order and sensibility of the modern world. Thus Harold Kaplan begins his 1981 study, *Power and Order*, with this manifesto:

There is a tendency among critics and students to think of literary naturalism as a closed chapter of modern literary history, except for some archaic survivals. That is wrong on two counts, one of them being the obvious point that much modernist writing,

whether called "symbolist" or "expressionist," "subjective" or "surreal," found its creative energy by reacting against the stylistic and philosophic implications of naturalism. Yet, much deeper than the negative differences, there is a continuity in modern imaginative culture with the work of the naturalists. Our understanding of these literary traditions is greatly enriched when we find, as I propose, that the major literary contribution of naturalist thought is a myth of power and conflict charged with apocalyptic themes of order and chaos, creation and destruction, purgative crisis and redemptive violence. (Pp. x-xi)

Kaplan's book is valuable in restating the historical importance of Naturalism as part of major shift in western thought away from idealism to this new order based on power. *McTeague* is discussed only in passing, as part of the larger theme.

Ronald E. Martin's study of the same year, *American Literature and the Universe of Force*, makes a similar claim for the historical importance of Naturalism as part of a conceptual model which dominated western thought. This model, for Martin, was a "transitional landmark" (p. xiv), which has largely collapsed of its own inconsistencies, as is appropriate, since it was one of the bad ideas of the turn of the century, like the racism it reinforced. Martin gives a chapter to Norris, whom he sees as an inconsistent thinker who accepted the universe of force model naively and uncritically, and used it only for its dramatic potential. Martin acknowledges that the universe of force cannot explain all that is compelling in Norris's work, and even suggests the appropriateness of a Jungian model for understanding his appeal to our imagination. Thus Martin in fact has much in common with my anti-Naturalist school.

Of the group I survey, only John Conder is comfortable working entirely *within* the texts of social Darwinist philosophers and writers influenced by them. Conder's study builds on earlier work by Pizer, Cady, and Charles Child Walcutt. Determinism as a theme in naturalistic fiction, Conder claims, in contrast to Martin, is more coherent than thought by earlier critics. His thesis is that there is a philosophical tradition in the west which attempts to reconcile determinism with free will—the so-called "soft" tradition (William James' dismissive term), which includes Hobbes and Bergson. Thus he sees a range of views toward determinism—hard and soft views—which helps explain apparent inconsistencies within American literary Naturalism. Conder, then, like many of the anti-Naturalists, is a coherency seeker. His chapter on *McTeague*, linking

is a coherency seeker. His chapter on *McTeague*, linking the text to larger naturalist themes, organizes the text's imagery—tooth, canary, concertina—to show the skill and consistency of Norris as a craftsman, much as the anti-Naturalists do. In Conder's view, *McTeague* is an exercise in hard determinism, which position, however, Norris did not finally accept, so that *The Octopus* reveals a switch to the soft school with which he was more comfortable.

Recent neo-Naturalists see Naturalism as a function of the deep structures of society at turn of the century, and excavate with the power tools of structuralism, deconstruction, or Marxism. Walter Benn Michaels' *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism* is a tortuously complex reading of American culture of the time as a response to the chronic financial crisis initiated by the demonetizing of silver in 1873. The issue for Michaels is not the opposition of gold and silver interests, but the way both groups shared a common capitalistic fantasy by believing in "real money," or the intrinsic worth of precious metals. Not surprisingly, Michaels' interest in *McTeague* is in the misers, Trina, Maria, Zerkow, and the paradoxes of meaning created by money which is never spent.

June Howard's much praised and influential *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism* approaches Naturalism as a literary genre, with certain assumptions about class, race, and gender coded into it by the phase of capitalism which produced it. We should not be surprised that, in an age when the *bourgeoisie* was threatened by immigration and massive economic change, the fear of loss of class status is dramatized over and over in naturalistic plots. Howard shows that middle-class assumptions are inherent in the narrative voice and implied author and audience of naturalistic works, even for writers like London and Dreiser, whose class origins and political beliefs would suggest otherwise. A persistent pattern in Naturalism is the denial of humanity to the Brute or the Other (both terms taken from Norris) as expressions of *bourgeois* insecurity. In her reading of *McTeague*, as we might expect, Howard stresses this Otherness of Mac, the denial of his full humanity. In this we find a reversal of Collins's reading, and Budd's, and those of most of the anti-Naturalists, who find Mac sympathetically portrayed.

III

As I read this body of criticism I was struck by a still valid truth articulated in Don Graham's preface: most criticism of this period, especially of Norris, reflects a strange mixture of pleasure and pain. Perhaps these novelists make us so uncomfortable because they place us at the fault line where

several basic and irreconcilable ideas of our civilization meet: mind and body, free will and causality, humanistic ideals and self-interest. Facing one of these cruxes, the greatest American mind of the age, William James, refused to choose a painless escape, and cried: "It may be a constitutional infirmity, but I can take no comfort in such devices for making a luxury of intellectual defeat. . . . Better live on the ragged edge, better gnaw the file forever."⁷ Norris might have liked that image; in fact, he wrote a file-gnawing scene into *Moran of the Lady Letty*. Gnaw the file forever: it's not a bad motto for the Frank Norris Society.

Notes

¹(New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., Inc., [1950]), pp. vii-xviii. Subsequent page references appear within the text. The place of publication and name of the publisher changed frequently in later printings.

²Edwin H. Cady, *The Light of Common Day* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 45.

³Louis J. Budd, "Objectivity and Low Seriousness in American Naturalism," *Prospects*, 1 (1975), 41-61.

⁴Donald Pizer, *The Novels of Frank Norris* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. vii-viii.

⁵Donald Pizer, "Preface," *McTeague* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1977), p. ix.

⁶The anti-Naturalist studies mentioned below include the following: Don Graham, *The Fiction of Frank Norris: The Aesthetic Context* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978); Ron Mottram, "Impulse Toward the Visible: Frank Norris and Photographic Representation," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 25 (1983), 574-96; Suzy Bernstein Goldman, "McTeague: The Imagistic Network," *Western American Literature*, 7 (1972), 83-99; Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., "The Comedy of Frank Norris's *McTeague*," *Studies in American Humor*, 2 (1975), 88-95; Barbara Hochman, *The Art of Frank Norris, Storyteller* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988); William E. Cain, "Presence and Power in *McTeague*," *American Realism*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 199-213. The neo-Naturalists include: Justin Kaplan, *Power and Order: Henry Adams and the Naturalist Tradition in American Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Ronald E. Martin, *American Literature and the Universe of Force* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1981); John J. Conder, *Naturalism in American Fiction: The Classic Phase* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984); Walter Benn Michaels, *The Gold Standard and the Logic of American Naturalism* (Berkeley

and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987); June Howard, *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985). Page references to these works are cited within the text.

⁷William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (New York, 1890), I, 178-79.

The Damnation of *McTeague*: Frank Norris's Morality Play

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With *McTeague*, Frank Norris quite knowingly swam against the current of popular taste, conscious that his material as well as his treatment of it did not comply with polite requirements of the "safe" first novel. Norris, however, had a higher god than convention to serve, as he later made clear in the markedly ethical essays of *The Responsibilities of the Novelist* (1903). It is ironic that, while Victorians were outraged by the author's unflinching presentation of the ungentle truths he saw around him in San Francisco, it is what Donald Pizer calls Norris's "intense moralism" that in fact shaped his novel. As Pizer explains, Norris's conviction was that the writer must be "conscious of the social involvement of art and of its function as an instrument of social control and improvement."¹ Or, as Charles Child Walcott earlier termed it, *McTeague* represents "a peculiar fusion of American moralism and European naturalism."² Norris, like Emile Zola, wished to shock and outrage his readers; but, again like Zola, he presented to them an instructive drama of human existence as he knew it so that they might gain insight into both the reality and the moral dimension of actual experience.

McTeague's roots can be traced, however, to a more elemental and primitive source than that of French Naturalism. For the novel dramatizes the ethical struggle which was the primary subject of some of the earliest literature of the "Anglo-Saxon race" whose prowess the writer so revered: the psychomachia, that antique method of psychological analysis and literary representation of the battle between good and evil impulses for the control of the soul. Both *McTeague* and Trina fall victim to two of the traditional Seven Deadly Sins, lechery and avarice—*McTeague* more primitively than she because in his atavistic state he is initially closer to the beast in himself than is the more "refined" Trina. Yet Norris's ultimate aim is to demonstrate that no

one is immune to the bestial, or evil, urgings that persist "beneath the veneer of civilization"—as active in the 19th century as they were in the Middle Ages and before. In fact, in *McTeague* there are two thematic thrusts which are precisely the legacy of the medieval morality play and its allegorical successors in the English literary tradition: moral didacticism and the social criticism implicit in it.³

The dentist *McTeague* is an innocuous creature at the novel's outset. His few occupations do not tax his weak intellect: He practices primitive dentistry, eats bad food at the local diner, drinks "steam beer," plays "six lugubrious airs" on his concertina and sleeps the peaceful sleep of the innocent.⁴ Untested as a moral entity, *McTeague* is very much an "Everyman" figure. From the start, however, Norris foreshadows his protagonist's eventual downfall through careful application of the novel's insistent gold imagery, attached to *McTeague* well before he manifests the desire that will claim first his soul and finally his life. George M. Spangler has identified avarice as "the theme of the novel,"⁵ and his reference to the now-cliché statement "the love of money is the root of all evil" relates *McTeague* directly to the earliest extant English morality play, *The Castle of Perseverance*, in which the words "*radix malorum est cupiditas*" first appear. Indeed, *McTeague's* latent vulnerability to the power of gold is quickly evoked in the particular details used to describe both him and his environment. The many references to his yellow hair would not be significant were it not for the ubiquitous gold imagery of the novel. In this case, *McTeague's* blondness is a suggestion that he manifests physically an aura of the element that will come to dominate his experience. Further, his canary chitters in its "gilt" cage, and *McTeague's* fondest dream, "his ambition," is someday to own a huge "gilded" molar to hang from the corner window and thus advertise his office. His ownership of "a steel engraving of the court of Lorenzo de Medici" (p. 3) yields, as it were, a wealth of symbolism, for by selecting this particular image to loom over *McTeague* Norris allows himself, first, a reference to "the Golden Age of Lorenzo" and the fact that the Medici fortune was built upon banking. Second, it seems far from coincidental that Lorenzo is associated with the idea that Reason should triumph over the bestial aspects of human nature.⁶

The internal psychomachic struggles of Norris's characters are played out in the terms familiar from the morality play. The word psychomachia itself defines the type of imagery used by writers who employ it thematically; *Psychomachia* is the title of the influential 4th century work by the poet Prudentius—a long narrative epic in which the Seven

Deadly Sins and Seven Cardinal Virtues literally go to war for the possession of man's soul. Traditionally, a Vice-figure, representing one or more of the Sins, approaches an Everyman figure, attempting to seduce that character into sinful behavior. He or she succumbs at least once during the course of the play. Often, animal imagery is used by a playwright to symbolize man's physical nature overruling his rationality.

For example, in Ben Jonson's *Volpone*—a morality-patterned drama which bears more than one similarity to Norris's novel—the major Vice-figure is "the fox"; in *Othello*, the Moor wonders whether Iago has the cloven hooves of the devil; in Thomas Middleton's *The Changeling*, the depraved Beatrice is described as a "crocodile"; in Phillip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Overreach, willing to trade his daughter's chastity for a title, is "both a lion and a fox." If the Everyman figure is able to escape the domination of his physical desires and become spiritually motivated, it is by means of a representative of Goodness—allegorically, one or more of the Cardinal Virtues—who draws the character toward redemption. If he remains in the grip of evil, as is the more commonly-seen pattern in the moral plays beginning in the Renaissance (an initial step in the development of tragedy), the didactic message of the literature is still expressed: the Everyman figure is pointed to as a negative example for those in the audience concerned with the fate of their souls. This is the case in *McTeague*, for all of Norris's characters who succumb to evil suffer as a result of it and ultimately face death.

An examination of McTeague's first encounter with the evil impulses within him reveals both the pattern and the language of the typical morality play "temptation scene." This battle occurs for the dentist when Trina sits unconscious and sexually vulnerable in his operating chair:

Suddenly the animal in the man stirred and woke; the evil instincts that in him were so close to the surface leaped to life, shouting and clamoring.

It was a crisis—a crisis that had arisen all in an instant; a crisis for which he was totally unprepared. . . . Within him, a certain second self, another better McTeague rose with the brute. . . . There in that cheap and shabby "Dental Parlor" a dreaded struggle began. It was the old battle, old as the world, wide as the world—the sudden panther leap of the animal . . . and the simultaneous arousing of the other man, the better self that cries, "Down, down," without knowing why; that grips the monster; that fights to strangle it, to thrust it down and back. . . .
. . . The struggle was bitter. . . . But for all that he

shook his huge head from time to time, muttering:
"No, by God! No, by God!"

. . . Suddenly he leaned over and kissed her, grossly, full on the mouth. . . . By the time he was fastening the sheet of rubber on the tooth, he had himself once more in hand. . . .

But for all that, the brute was there. . . . From now on he would feel its presence continually; would feel it tugging at its chain. . . . Why could he not always love her purely, cleanly? . . .

Below the fine fabric of all that was good in him ran the foul stream of hereditary evil, like a sewer. The vices and sins of his father and of his father's father, to the third and fourth and five hundredth generation, tainted him. The evil of an entire race flowed in his veins. (Pp. 18-19)

As bestial and angelic powers war for control of McTeague, he behaves exactly like an Everyman figure besieged on the one side by a Vice-figure and on the other by Goodness: he vacillates, feeling tortured by impulses barely under his control. Next, using the religious imagery which is characteristic of the moralities, Norris has McTeague call out to God to keep him from committing what he instinctively knows would be "sacrilege." The dentist loses the first battle in this war with lechery, the "brute" or "panther." However, McTeague tries to re-establish the dominance of his better nature when, immediately upon Trina's awakening, he asks her to marry him. In his still-vital innocence, he attempts to channel his sexual impulse in a socially acceptable way and thereby alleviate his guilt. Still, lechery seems to have had its way in that McTeague's sexual drive remains a primary reason for his lapse from virtuous bachelorhood into what will prove a ruinous marriage.

In Trina, because she is more intelligent and "civilized" than McTeague, the terms of the psychomachia are expressed in a more sophisticated way. At the point in the novel where she insists that McTeague break a lease which he has unfortunately signed and that he pay, without her assistance, the thirty-five dollars rent for which the couple is liable, her avarice is still in its incipience. However, the psychomachic struggle within her is clearly evident:

She began to be sorry she had refused to help her husband. . . . perhaps . . . she had been in the wrong. Then it occurred to her how pretty it would be to come up behind him unexpectedly, and slip the money, thirty-five dollars, into his hand. . . .

She took a ten-dollar piece from the heap and put the rest away. Then she paused:

"No, not the gold piece. . . . He can have the silver." . . . Then suddenly all her intuitive desire of saving, her instinct of hoarding, her love of money for the money's sake, rose strong within her.

"No, no, no," she said. "I can't do it. It may be mean, but I can't help it. It's stronger than I." . . .

She was a little troubled, however, as she went back into the sitting-room and took up her work.

"I didn't use to be so stingy. . . . I've become a regular little miser. It's growing on me, but never mind, it's a good fault, and, anyhow, I can't help it." (Pp. 118-119)

Trina, like McTeague, vacillates between her better and worse impulses. But unlike McTeague's visceral turmoil—because "to reason with it was beyond him" (p. 19)—hers is intellectual. Her attempt to compromise by offering her husband ten instead of thirty-five dollars is immediately counterbalanced by her hope that he will refuse the money. Finally, greed gets the better of her and she concedes her weakness. That Trina rationalizes twice during this battle with herself—once by saying she can't afford to give McTeague the money and secondly by calling avarice "a good fault"—is important in terms of the traditional psychomachia: it addresses the morality playwright's focus on man's tendency to disguise a fault as a virtue and thus to make obedience to vice seem acceptable. It is significant that this tendency originates in the *Psychomachia* itself and that Prudentius selects the personified Vice "Love of Possession" as the one who disguises herself:

. . . In appearance

she becomes the Virtue men call Thrifty. . . .

With this Virtue's likeness the false

Bellona equips herself, so as to be thought not a greedy pest but a thrifty Virtue. . . .⁷

Trina finds that she can rationalize her questionable behavior through the euphemistic suggestion that "Economy was her strong point" (p. 77). It is also interesting that once she has given herself over entirely to acquisitiveness, her words echo those of the Vice Covetous in *The Castle of Perseverance* after he has taken control of the play's Everyman figure. Trina tells herself: "And I'm going to get more; I'm going to get more, more, more; a little every day" (p. 173). Covetous mocks his victim, *Humanum Genus*, thus:

"More and more," say yet, have do;

Till thou be dead and dropped down

. . . "More and more," say yet, I rede;

To more than enow thou hast need. . . .⁸

Once Norris has established the primary flaws in Trina's and McTeague's characters, he demonstrates the close

relationship between lechery and avarice and shows that they are ultimately the same thing—the beast in man which struggles with reason—by having the couple fall victim to one another's weaknesses. McTeague, again, is the simpler character. As has been noted, he begins in lechery and turns to marriage for satisfaction. The problem "solved," he finds his animal needs again determining his behavior as Trina's money replaces Trina as the object of desire. Egged on by Trina's stinginess, his preoccupation with money develops to the point where, in the final stage of the novel, he is associated with gold in the most sensational manner: having "struck gold" in the Panamint Mountains, he finds he must tear himself away from the prospect of one fortune while he literally holds another won by homicide in his hands. Trina's experience is more complex in its psychological significance. Her initial responses to McTeague, when he first kisses her and on their wedding night, are "natural, clean, spontaneous. . . . Trina knew that she was a pure girl; knew this sudden commotion within her carried with it no suggestion of vice" (p. 50). But the cause of the "commotion" is sexual arousal, nonetheless; lechery drives her too toward the unsuitable match with McTeague. As both McTeague and she are increasingly controlled by emotion instead of reason—her avarice provoking his sadistic wrath—she becomes masochistic, her desire growing more abnormal in proportion to his brutality. As Norris puts it, Trina eventually begins to express only two emotions: "her passion for her money and her perverted love for her husband when he was brutal. She was a strange woman during those days" (p. 174).

To underscore the connection between these two passions Norris often uses sexual imagery to describe avaricious behavior. He makes it clear that Trina's love of money has usurped any last vestiges of her love for McTeague when gold literally takes his place:

Her avarice had grown to be her one dominant passion; her love of money for the money's sake brooded in her heart, driving out by degrees every other natural affection. . . .

Trina cashed [a] check and returned home with the money—all in twenty-dollar pieces as she had desired—in an ecstasy of delight. . . .

"Oh-h, you beauties!" murmured Trina, running her palms over them, fairly quivering with pleasure.

. . . "Oh, don't I love you! . . ."

. . . While she was about her work . . . a brusque access of cupidity would seize upon her. Her cheeks flushed, her eyes glistened, her breath came short....

... Next she laid herself upon the bed and gathered the gleaming heaps of gold pieces to her with both arms, burying her face in them with long sighs of unspeakable delight. . . .

... She lay on her bed, her eyes closed, her face buried in a pile of gold that she had encircled with both her arms. . . .

... One evening she had even spread all the gold pieces between the sheets, and had then gone to bed, stripping herself, and had slept all night upon the money, taking a strange and ecstatic pleasure in the touch of the smooth flat pieces the length of her entire body. (Pp. 198, 199, 200, 201-2)

Another specific relationship can thus be seen between the novel and morally didactic drama, in particular, the opening scene of Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, in which the corrupt Volpone's worship of his wealth is so similar to Trina's:

Good morning to the day; and next, my gold!—

... O thou son of Sol,

But brighter than thy father, let me kiss,

With adoration, thee, and every relick

Of sacred treasure in this blessed room.

... Thou art virtue, fame,

Honour, and all things else.⁹

Like Trina, Volpone speaks to his gold as though it were a lover. Using the same oxymoronic terms as Trina when she calls avarice a "good fault," he refers to great wealth as "virtue," also disguising evil as good. Because he is a Vice-figure in an externally rendered psychomachia, Volpone goes on to corrupt others, finally suffering for it when the forces of the virtuous characters triumph; and, as in Trina's case, the source of his downfall can be traced to his adoration of material goods.

At the point at which both of his major characters have given themselves over inexorably to vicious inclinations, Norris focuses on the delight they begin to take in their irrational behaviors. Trina shows that she is beyond redemption when she declares again that she "will—never—forgive" McTeague, not for leaving her, but for stealing her money (pp. 198, 201). Her worship of gold has already been demonstrated, but she also expresses a perverse happiness when she denies herself because of her stinginess, as in eating her scraps from breakfast for lunch, "enjoying the meal with greater relish because it cost her nothing" (p. 167). McTeague, too, is gleefully empowered by evil. Alcohol "made him vicious," so much so that "when he had drunk a little more heavily than usual, he found a certain pleasure in annoying and exasperating Trina, even in abusing and hurting her" (p. 171). More than once a "vicious twinkle" comes into

his eyes when he is about to cause her pain. This enjoyment of evil for its own sake is characteristic of the traditional Vice-figure and is also evident in the Mankind-figure once he has come under the Vice's power. To return again to *The Castle of Perseverance*, the Vice Backbiter, for example, is most overtly happy when he has wreaked havoc among the other characters, calling out, "this is good game!" (l. 1829). And once *Humanum Genus* is in the grip of vice he announces,

Mickle mirth I move in mind . . .

In dale of dole till we are down,

We shall be clad in gay gown;

I see no man but they use some

Of these seven deadly sins. (Ll. 1251, 1255-58)

The socially critical writer in any age may achieve his purpose by connecting evil and "sport" to create a distance between the audience and a character who embodies those traits that the writer wishes to critique. The result is moral outrage which precludes the formation of emotional ties between the reader and the depraved character. In the case of this novel, the aims of Naturalism are also served. Norris's objectivity is augmented by his depiction of the extent to which Trina and McTeague have degenerated: "It would have been easier for the McTeagues to have faced their misfortunes . . . when they could have found a certain happiness in helping each other and sharing each other's privations" (p. 160); ironically, their happiness is engendered when they are the *cause* of one another's privations.

It is not only in his descriptions of Trina's and McTeague's behavior that Norris uses the language and imagery of the psychomachia. The relationship between the maid Maria Macapa and the rag-picker Zerkow, built upon Maria's tales of a lost service of gold plate, emphasizes the destructive power of greed, particularly in that the characters' bestial natures are focused upon. Zerkow's obsession is made quite clear in his initial description: "He was the Man with the Rake, groping hourly in the muck-heap of the city for gold, for gold, for gold. It was his dream, his passion . . ." (p. 25). Here Norris makes a direct reference to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, specifically to the Man with the Muck-Rake or the allegorical figure of Greed. Christiana is told of him, ". . . his Muck-rake doth show his Carnal mind. And whereas thou seest him rather give heed to rake up Straws and Sticks . . . then [*sic*] to what calls to him from above . . . it is to show that Heaven is but as a Fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial."¹⁰ Maria shares Zerkow's vice, particularly in her persistent combing of others' flats in her search for valuables. In fact, to emphasize more graphically

the lack of any spiritual dimension in these characters, Norris foreshadows a key scene between the couple by describing two angry mongrels:

They dragged their respective kennels to the fence, and through the cracks raged at each other in a frenzy of hate; their teeth snapped and gleamed....

What a massacre should the two ever meet!

Meanwhile, Maria was knocking at Zerkow's miserable hovel. (P. 71)

A massacre does in fact ensue after their marriage, in the desperate physical warfare (paralleling Trina and McTeague's) that ends with Zerkow's murder of Maria and his subsequent suicide.¹¹ Norris also has Zerkow express his love of money exactly as Trina does. When Maria launches into her tale of the lost gold service, Zerkow responds,

"And it rang when you hit it with your knuckles, didn't it?" . . .

"Sweeter'n any church bell," continued Maria.

"Go on, go on, go on," cried Zerkow, drawing his chair closer, shutting his eyes in ecstasy. . . .

The red-headed Pole was in a fever of excitement.

. . . As he listened, with closed eyes and trembling lips . . . the sharper grew his desire. (Pp. 72-73)

Vice and virtue are again ironically juxtaposed as the sound of ringing gold is referred to as superior to that of a church bell. As in Trina's case, the lust for money takes the place of Zerkow's physical desire; however, the imagery is darkly comic when the reader realizes that Zerkow is "courting" Maria, yet all of his sexual energy is focused not on the woman but on her story, which is in effect what he actually marries.

Finally, moral didacticism, implicit criticism of a depraved materialistic culture, and Norris's championing of an existence centered on reason, order and decorous interaction can all be seen when one looks at the other love relationship in the novel, that between Old Grannis and Miss Baker. Certainly, just as not all relationships descend into the chaos and terror of McTeague's and Trina's or Maria's and Zerkow's, neither are all as Platonic or elevated as the old couple's. But Grannis's and Miss Baker's behavior serves not just to "offset the misery of the other love-making" as Franklin Walker asserts;¹² more importantly, it creates a specific contrast between the purely spiritually and the purely bestially motivated characters in the novel. When the reader last sees the old couple, they have finally come together and have ascended to a realm which Norris describes using paradisiacal imagery: "They stood at length in a little Elysium of their own creating. They walked hand in hand in a delicious garden where it was always autumn" (p. 185). The

point is made most clearly when one takes a last look at McTeague. For if the old lovers are in heaven, he is surely in hell—chained to Marcus Schouler's corpse, without transportation or water, already weakening from thirst and all "about him, vast, interminable, stretched the measureless leagues of Death Valley" (p. 249). That Norris does not provide a happy medium between the Abyss and Paradise indicates not only that he has borrowed from the canons of the morality play but also that, like his medieval predecessors, he found little hope in the prospects of materialism for human happiness. Naturalism is therefore, in *McTeague*, not to be separated from moralism: for the grim reality that the novel presents is inextricably bound up with Norris's ethical judgment of the modern human condition.

Notes

¹*The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), p. 83.

²Maxwell Geismar, "Frank Norris: And the Brute," in *McTeague*, ed. Donald Pizer (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 333.

³While Norris's literary studies at Berkeley and his continued interest in drama later in the 1890s have received little emphasis in scholarship, *McTeague* is redolent with signs of Norris's familiarity with how both vices and vicious individuals had long been given dramatic treatment.

⁴*McTeague*, ed. Donald Pizer (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 1. Subsequent page references to this edition appear within parentheses.

⁵"The Structure of *McTeague*," in *Critical Essays on Frank Norris*, ed. Don Graham (Boston: Hall, 1980), pp. 89, 92.

⁶One of the most famous paintings commissioned by Lorenzo, Sandro Botticelli's *Pallas and the Centaur*, reveals the Medici philosophy and explains Lorenzo's presence in Norris's novel. In his *History of Italian Renaissance Art* (New York: Abrams, 1987), Frederick Hartt has analyzed this depiction of a goddess subduing a centaur as follows: "[This] goddess of reason appealed to . . . the intellect. . . . The animal part of the centaur could easily symbolize the darker side of human nature, which must be tamed by wisdom" (p. 330). Also significant is that the goddess's gown is decorated with the six golden balls of the Medici, directly relating both the reverence of intellectuality and the symbol, gold, which are thematic in the painting, to the major theme and symbol in *McTeague*.

⁷Ed. Emanuele Rapisarda. (Centro di Studi Sull'Antico Cristanesimo: Universita di Catania, 1962), ll. 551-2, 557-59.

⁸In *English Morality Plays and Moral Interludes*, ed. Edgar T. Schell (New York: Holt, 1969), ll. 2772, 2775-76. References to subsequent lines in this edition appear within parentheses.

⁹In *Eight Famous Elizabethan Plays*, ed. Esther Cloudman Dunn (New York: Random House, 1950), pp. 219-337.

¹⁰*The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), p. 200.

¹¹Norris echoes this use of animal imagery when he describes the envious and greedy Marcus Schouler's fight with McTeague at the picnic: "God damn you! Get off of me," he cried under his breath, spitting the words as a snake spits its venom. . . . With the oath Marcus had twisted his head and had bitten through the lobe of the dentist's ear" (p. 133). And it is heard once again when McTeague kills Trina: "Usually the dentist was slow in his movements, but now the alcohol had awakened in him an ape-like agility. . . . Beside herself with terror, Trina turned and . . . fought for her miserable life with the exasperation and strength of a harassed cat" (p. 210).

¹²*Frank Norris: A Biography* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1932), p. 228.

Edwin Markham in Frank Norris's *The Octopus*

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The more one pokes and pries in the canon of Frank Norris, the more one penetrates the "soft" surfaces of fictions to discover "hard" realities. Repeatedly—one is tempted to say continuously—verification of Norris's aesthetic in "Fiction Is Selection" is found: what Norris selected from actual experience to arrange in an unique manner suddenly reveals itself, and one goes on, wondering what turn-of-the-century reality will next be found. Yone Noguchi and Joaquin Miller prove the counterparts of the poets at the Bohemian Club described in *The Octopus*. Shelgrim, from the beginning, was recognized in San Francisco as Collis P. Huntington; but Huntington made yet another contribution to the novel, one finds when examining the copy of the novel that Norris inscribed to his mother. When Presley dines at the Cedarquists' mansion late in *The Octopus*, a full description of interior decor is presented. In the right margin of p. 591, Gertrude Norris wrote "C.P.H's" next to "This ceiling was a maze of golden involutions in very high relief, that adjusted themselves to form a massive framing for a great picture, nymphs and goddesses, white doves, golden chariots and the

like, all wreathed about with clouds and garlands of roses."¹ So, now we know how Huntington's dining-room looked.

One special function of the real-world referents in *The Octopus* is that they become the means of evaluating Presley via comparison and/or contrast. We learn that Presley despises aesthetes such as Walter Pater and the trivial poets of the little magazines to which Annie Derrick is devoted; but after Norris articulates his own biases thus, Presley himself illustrates the same kind of poet for whom Norris expressed scorn in "An Opening for Novelists," the dilettantish type associated with Gelett Burgess's toy magazine, *The Lark*. As Don Graham has shown, Presley's poetic reverie at the close of Chapter 1 identifies him as a similar kind of poet, and he certainly is having a *bona fide* "poetic" experience then—though not an original one. The mental-emotional phenomenon described is directly relatable to—or cribbed from—Mallarmé's "L'après midi d'un faun."² Anticipated thus is Shelgrim's dissection of Presley as the merely repetitive, unoriginal individual who simply verbalized Millet's painting known as "The Man with the Hoe." Slammed accordingly is not only Presley but the actual author of the 1899 poem in question, Edwin Markham.

There is, however, another twist to the familiar fact that Norris was melding Presley and Markham in this instance. For Presley's poem does not bear the title "The Man with the Hoe" but another, "The Toilers." It would at first seem that Norris—as Dreiser did—either decided or agreed with his publisher that too direct a reference to real persons and things should be avoided. Yet, that is not the actual case. For Markham was also the author of another, less well known poem entitled "The Toilers," and it is not a coincidence that Norris chose that title for Presley.

Edwin Markham's *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* was published in 1899 and by Doubleday & McClure Company—the firm by which Norris was employed and which published his *Moran of the Lady Letty* (1898), *McTeague* (1899), and *Blix* (1899). One may reasonably assume that he handled Markham's book. In keying to this other poem in the volume, Norris provided yet another indication of just how derivative a poet Presley is, and he found still another way to indicate his regard for Markham. "The Toilers" reads thus:³

The Toilers

Their blind feet drift in the darkness, and no one is leading;
Their toil is the pasture, where hyens [*sic*] and harpies are
feeding;
In all lands and always, the wronged, the homeless, the

humbled

Till the cliff-like pride of the spoiler is shaken and crumbled,
Till the Pillars of Hell are uprooted and left to their ruin,
And a rose-garden gladdens the places no rose ever blew in,
Where now men huddle together and whisper and harken,
Or hold their bleak hands over embers that die out and
darken.

The anarchies gather and thunder: few, few are the fraters,
And loud is the revel at night in the camp of the traitors....

Say, Shelley, where are you—where are you? Our hearts are
a-breaking!
The fight in the terrible darkness—the shame—the forsaking!

The leaves shower down and are sport for the winds that
come after;
And so are the Toilers in all lands the jest and the laughter
Of nobles—the Toilers scourged on in the furrow as cattle,
Or flung as a meat to the cannons that hunger in battle.

As may be seen, the quality of the verse is approximately
that which might be expected of Presley.

Notes

¹(New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1901), p. 591.
Gertrude Norris's copy is in the Frank Norris Collection, The
Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

²*The Fiction of Frank Norris* (Columbia: University of
Missouri Press, 1978), pp. 69-74.

³"The Toilers," *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems*
(New York: Doubleday & McClure Company, 1899), pp. 112-
113.

Current Publications: Update

Thomas K. Dean
Cardinal Stritch College

Presented here is a ninth installment designed to
complement *Frank Norris: A Reference Guide* (1974). The
arrangement of items is chronological and alphabetical within
years. Please forward new and omitted items to Thomas K.
Dean.

Milton, John R. *The Novel of the American West*. Lincoln:

University of Nebraska Press, 1980, pp. 101-106. Norris
transplants European Naturalism into the Western in *The
Octopus*, resulting in a story about man versus the land
rather than man versus society as in traditional Westerns.

Nygren, Edward J. "The Almighty Dollar: Money as a
Theme in American Painting," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 23
(1988), 129-150. *McTeague* portrays money as a corrupting
influence (p. 136).

Conn, Peter. *Literature in America: An Illustrated History*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 292-294.
As a typical American Naturalist, Norris makes eclectic
combinations of scientific determinism and older traditions
of realism and romance.

Hern, Mary Ellen W. "Picknicking in the Northeastern
United States, 1840-1900," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 24 (1989),
139-152. The picnic scene in *McTeague* is related to
late-century interest in the health benefits of picknicking (p.
145).

Spangler, George M. "The Idea of Degeneration in
American Fiction, 1880-1940," *English Studies*, 70 (1989),
407-435. Themes of degeneration in literature from 1880 to
1940 are a rejection of the earlier myth of regeneration in
America. Vandover's degeneration is due to unstable
middle-class moral values in the face of determinism as well
as art's inability to redeem. Magnus Derrick's degeneration
in *The Octopus* is due to the absolute power of the railroad
and the new order of American business, as well as
Magnus's own exploitation of the land.

Andries, Lise. "Les Rapaces: Le Roman d'une Epoque,"
La Quinzaine Littéraire, No. 551 (March 31, 1990), pp.
18-19. Reviews a French edition of *McTeague* translated by
Françoise Fontaine, focusing on the greed and violence in
the novel.

Apthorp, Elaine Sargent. "Sentiment, Naturalism, and the
Female Regionalist," *Legacy*, 7 (1990), 3-21. Female local
colorists who are often dubbed Naturalists use the
sentimental novel's sympathy between character, author,
and reader, while male Naturalists, like Norris, insist on
objective detachment from their material. Compares
McTeague to Mary Wilkins Freeman's "A Mistaken Charity."

Covington, Robert N. "Law as Text: A Response to
Professor Michael Ryan," *Vanderbilt Law Review*, 43 (1990),

tycoons (p. 1791).

Davison, Richard Allan. "Zelda Fitzgerald, Vladimir Nabokov and James A. Michener: Three Opinions on Frank Norris's *McTeague*," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 9 (Spring 1990), pp. 11-12. Quotes Fitzgerald's and Nabokov's negative reactions to *McTeague* and Michener's recognition of the novel as a minor classic.

Sessions on Frank Norris 1992 ALA Convention

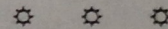
Two sessions on Norris are scheduled for the American Literature Association's annual convention in San Diego, 28-31 May. Richard Allan Davison will serve as the chairperson for a session on the 1897 set of parodies that Norris wrote for the Christmas issue of *The Wave*, "Perverted Tales." The speakers are Benjamin F. Fisher, Gary Scharnhorst, Lawrence Berkove, Stanley Wertheim, Douglas K. Burgess, and Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. The chairperson of the second session is Thomas Blues. Focusing upon Frank Norris's female characterizations will be Paul Giaimo, Paul Civello, and Jesse S. Crisler.

Frank Norris Society members already belong to the American Literature Association and no additional dues are required. Should you wish to attend the San Diego convention, contact Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., at 904-644-1522. He will provide you with information regarding reservations at the Bahia Resort Hotel.

News About Members

Edwin Haviland Miller reports that he is well advanced on the manuscript of his biography of Norris. *Jesse S. Crisler* is at work on a book on Norris's art work; he plans to include reproductions of all known drawings, illustrations, cartoons, and the sole surviving painting. *David Teague* is working along similar lines with a dissertation on Norris and the visual arts. *Don L. Cook* and other members of the William Dean Howells edition published by Indiana University Press announce the imminent publication of three volumes of Howells' literary criticism. *Richard Allan Davison* is completing a book on Charles and Kathleen Norris to be published by The Book Club of California. *Lawrence*

Hussman is finishing a book on Dreiser and is still threatening one on Norris. *Joel Myerson* has turned over his encyclopedic *Walt Whitman: A Descriptive Bibliography* to the University of Pittsburgh Press where it is now being copy-marked. *Joseph R. McElrath, Jr.*, has in press *Frank Norris Revisited* (Twayne Publishers) and *Frank Norris: A Descriptive Bibliography* (University of Pittsburgh Press). *Earle Labor* is at work on a full-scale biography of Jack London for Macmillan. *Robert C. Leitz III* is working with *Milo Shepard* and *Earle Labor* on a three-volume collection of the complete short stories of Jack London for Stanford University Press. *Milo Shepard* has produced a wonderful Zinfandel in his 1989 Jack London Ranch vintage, published by *Kenwood Winery*. Gary Scharnhorst's *Bret Harte* will soon be available from Twayne Publishers. *Lucia Kinsaul* has discovered and transcribed for a forthcoming issue of *Dreiser Studies* a long letter from English publisher Grant Richards to his mother; it describes Norris's protégé at length—and as possibly the rudest American author Richards had encountered. The paper on narrative technique in *The Octopus* that *Charles Duncan* delivered at last year's ALA convention is scheduled to appear in an expanded version in *American Literary Realism*. *The Centennial Edition of the Writings of Frank Norris* (complete works in 10 volumes) is now in process at Florida State University; in preparation are two volumes of the early short works.



Frank Norris Studies is a publication of the Norris Society and is issued twice per year for the members. Membership for individuals requires the payment of dues of ten dollars per year to The Frank Norris Society, Department of English, Florida State University, Tallahassee FL 32306-1036 (904-644-1522). Library subscriptions at the same rate may be directed to this address or initiated through the EBSCO or FAXON subscription services.

Manuscripts should be addressed to either of the editors: *Jesse S. Crisler*, Division of Language, Literature & Communication, Brigham Young University—Hawaii Campus, Laie, Hawaii 96762; or *Robert C. Leitz, III*, Department of English, Louisiana State University in Shreveport, Shreveport LA 71115. Members of the Editorial Advisory Board include: *Don L. Cook*, Indiana University; *Charles L. Crow*, Bowling Green State University; *William B. Dillingham*, Emory University; *Donald Pizer*, Tulane University; and *Barbara Hochman*, Tel Aviv University. *Joseph R. McElrath, Jr.*, Florida State University, is the managing editor; *Melanie Gormley* is editorial assistant.