

## Bruce Porter's Memoir of Frank Norris

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Bruce Porter (Edmund Cushman Porter, 1865-1953), minor literary figure and artist, was a member of the San Francisco group "Les Jeunes," producers of the *fin de siècle* publication *The Lark* (1893-1897). He was a friend of Frank Norris, imaginatively linked, as the document below illustrates, to the creation of *The Octopus*. Norris made Porter the model for the shepherd Vanamee, and drew much of the novel's mysticism from Porter's beliefs.<sup>1</sup> More distantly, the aesthete Sheldon Cortwell in *The Pit* is also based on Porter.

In his research for his dissertation at the University of California, later to become *Frank Norris: A Biography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1932), Franklin Walker wrote to as many of Norris's surviving friends and relatives as he could locate. Bruce Porter's response was this undated and previously unpublished manuscript, now in The Bancroft Library at Berkeley.<sup>2</sup> Readers of the biography will recognize the extensive use made of the memoir by Walker. Porter's words are paraphrased or quoted directly (usually without quotation marks) on pages 134, 138, 144, 240-242, 244, 260, and 306.

This document is an excellent first-hand account of Norris's creative process, especially of the curious symbiosis he established with talented friends. It also gives a vivid picture of the genesis of *The Octopus*.<sup>3</sup>

Strange, that the quickest memory I have of Frank—(—the picture summoned when I think of him—)—is of a slouched figure in an Inverness cape, passing beneath a blown gas-light in the winter dusk and in a down pour of rain. It was a momentary impression from a 'dummy' seat on the Sacramento St Cable, in the old San Francisco of the earliest '90s—Some poignancy of drama in the figure of the unknown young man hit me: and the next day I painted the impression into a sombre little canvas and called it "Spring Floods"

He laughed dismissively, of my my impression & my title, when I told him, years later: and I smile now, as I recall his chagrin, when he learned that the picture had been destroyed

Where, when & how I first met him I cannot remember: likely enough on a Sunday evening at the Cosgraves<sup>4</sup>—perhaps casually at the Bohemian Club<sup>5</sup> (where neither of us properly fitted)

He<sup>6</sup> was at work on Cosgrave's 'Way': doing a variety of things in an extra inclusive journalistic job— But that job gave him the chance to do the thing he wanted to do,—a short story a week. But he gave the effect of being intensively 'worn-out'. tired out; "written out," according to his own declaration—

He came with increasing frequency to the studio, mornings, when there was the uninterrupted chance to talk of what he was doing, what he planned to do. Grimly fulfilling every demand of the job: his story for the week, came to be discussed, plotted, beaten out, for the inexorable hour of 'going to press' in the studio and between us He'd present his plot and likely enough take mine but he only once accepted my development of it.

The story was of a tailor, squallid at a basement window, who looked up, year after year, into a poplar tree on the sidewalk above him: unconscious that his spiritual sustenance was drawn from the

life of the tree: the tree is cut down: and the tailor turns insanely upon his wife and murders her.<sup>8</sup>

It proved to be not the best of his stories, and I learned then, that what I could best offer for his purposes, was the the instigating flash and let him manage the illumination—

Burgess and I were fooling with "The Lark".<sup>10</sup>

Frank made no connection with that sprightly publication and came into no particular relation with the group that gathered about it

But, when we had killed 'The Lark' and Burgess had gone on to New York to harvest a surprised reputation, I read a letter of his success to Frank at luncheon. To my amazement that vivid face went ash-grey, and beating the table with clenched fists—Damn him! Damn him! He's got it and it belongs to me!"

I knew then, why he could not 'Lark' with literature: that there was in him, a fierce determination that was the measure of his gift, and that his defined, hard goal was never out of his vision.

We picked up the intimacy again in New York (in 1899, I think)

I had gone on there, for a term of work, in a studio in the 'Benedict' and found him established in a big room diagonally across on the south side of Washington Square.

In this proximity, he dropped in upon me at odd hours: mostly neighbouring midnight, when he saw my light turned on.

He, apparently, had no life outside his work and refused every social contact.

He had won a first place with the triumph of 'McTeague' and there was eagerness on all sides—waiting to see and hail him<sup>11</sup> But, ill, intense, he had promptly dedicated him self to a bigger work—<sup>12</sup> He was brooding the complete Trilogy of 'Wheat'—and was getting the warp of 'The Octopus' on to the loom. He was bothered, tangled in loose threads

He burst into my room one morning before five o'clock—flung himself at the foot of my bed. Exhausted & satisfied. He had made his leap an hour before,—had cleared his entanglements and had his story & his form, and couldn't contain himself at daylight.

From that moment he used me as a spring-board: He'd sit for hours listening to the compelled memories of a California he had missed. Then, suddenly, he'd pounce! Here was what he wanted!—here was what he could use!

Scattered through the 'Octopus' are actual names & the accompanying incidents he seized upon, out of my childhood memories—

'Blum' for instance was the true name of a Jewish Store Keeper. Who became a grain dealer and manipulator & who was even then a living figure in his community—of importance—But no persuasion—no warning of a libel suit would make him resign 'Blum' That name was 'his' and he took it and left the trepidations to me.<sup>13</sup>

He was a 'tiger' for names.—A tiger crouched to spring. While he waited for an incident that, as he put it 'belonged to him'.

When you produced it, it set him on fire. He grasped the bone in his jaws, and retired with it into the lively solitude of his realistic imagination, built up the skeleton, clothed it with flesh, and the man walked, in that peculiar world of Frank's brain, as a reality.

Now here is the deeply interesting question regarding Norris and writers of his kind—From observations of his processes I believe that 'Realists' of the order of Balzac—Zola—Crane—Norris have the smallest possible dependance upon actuality

All they require, is the instigation from reality: and the curtain rises upon the lighted stage within the brain—(a stage 'set' complete)—and the characters begin their drama, with never a second reference to the actual, nor a single 'prompting' from the world beyond the wings.

With Frank—I never heard him participate in or contribute to the analysis of any man or woman who was under discussion—What he seized upon, was some oddity of manner or habit or predicament—(a crisis in the human drama) & that sufficed him.



The instances in his stories, where he attempted delineation of a man or woman whom he knew, and brought them, furnished with their own personalities, upon his prepared stage: they, in every instance I can recall, awkwardly back<sup>14</sup> the act in which they appear.

He twice 'did' me; and after the second misrepresentation, offered me my copy of 'The Pit' with his arm posed for defence of his laughing face.

He had to wholly create his characters—on what ever rag or tag he had picked out of the life about him—More than the inevitable right *hint* embarrassed him—cumbered his imagining.

Well, he left New York too ill to do more than sit gaunt & shaken in the hansom that carried us to the station. Established in his section, he revived to a grin: 'Bruce, see that?'—as he waved a little swagger stick between his hands—"I'm going to walk down Sutter St, swinging that!—And they'll say "Thats Frank Norris!"

I never liked him better than at that moment, pitiable in his weakness, going 'home' to his boyish reward, for the struggle and the travail—but with his goal attained.

It happened that I was never alone in his company again—until, again, on his hour of departure.

He came into the studio in San Francisco, haggard and despairing.

His wife was in hospital: had been operated upon—was out of danger, he told me—and we lunched together and then walked to the Hospital.<sup>15</sup>

Outside the door, we stood for a moment:

'Bruce—Im afraid!'

I gave him the formal assurances: 'His wife had come through—every thing was well'

'Yes—but Im afraid!'

'Afraid of what, Frank?'

'Im afraid of Death!'

He turned and the door closed behind him; and I never saw him again.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>See Charles L. Crow, "The Real Vanamee and His Influence on Frank Norris' *The Octopus*," *Western American Literature*, 9 (1974), 131-39.

<sup>2</sup>Part of the Franklin Dickerson Walker Collection, the manuscript is here presented with the permission of The Bancroft Library and James D. Hart, Director.

<sup>3</sup>Here follows a diplomatic transcription. The text with its replications, misspellings, and irregular punctuation is faithfully reproduced, except for the following features: cancellations are not transcribed and only the possibly significant ones are reported in notes; the differing lengths of Porter's dashes are not approximated; multiple underlinings of words are not indicated; and marginal annotations in a second hand, presumably Walker's, are not reported.

<sup>4</sup>John O'Hara Cosgrave (1864-1947) was the editor of *The Wave*, a San Francisco weekly magazine. Franklin Walker, working from other sources, concludes that Norris and Porter met at Martinelli's Cafe on 1 May 1896, when "Les Jeunes gathered to celebrate a successful year of publication of the *Lark*" (*Frank Norris: A Biography*, p. 134).

<sup>5</sup>A San Francisco men's club, founded in 1872 and originally composed primarily of journalists, the Bohemian now draws its membership from California's wealthy elite. See its entry in James D. Hart, *A Companion to California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>6</sup>Porter cancelled "had a job" after this word.

<sup>7</sup>Norris was an assistant editor of and contributor to *The Wave*. Some of his writings for it were collected by Oscar Lewis in *Frank Norris of "The Wave"* (San Francisco: Westgate Press, 1931).

<sup>8</sup>This "story" has not been located. However, Norris uses the plot Porter describes in the essay "Fiction Is Selection" which appeared over the pseudonym "Justin Sturgis" in *The Wave*, 16 (11 September 1897), 3. It has been reprinted by Donald Pizer in *The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 50-53. Porter's letter is conclusive evidence that the identification of Sturgis as Norris is correct. I am indebted to Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., for identifying this troubling reference.

<sup>9</sup>Written over, partially illegible.

<sup>10</sup>Frank Gelett Burgess (1866-1951), was a member of Les Jeunes, an assistant editor of *The Wave*, and the celebrated author of the comic poem, "The Purple Cow." His cartoons of "Goops" were widely appreciated. His credits also include being a novelist, for example, *The Heart Line* (1907). See his entry in James D. Hart, *A Companion to California*.

<sup>11</sup>After this sentence Porter wrote and then cancelled "The publication of 'McTeague' and there was eagerness of all aides to see and hail him."

<sup>12</sup>"Work" appears to be written over "book." After this word Porter cancelled "and the start had been made on 'The Octopus.'"

<sup>13</sup>Perhaps the "trepidations" prevailed, after all. Did "Blum" evolve into S. Behrman? See *Frank Norris: A Biography*, p. 261, for Walker's linkage of S. Behrman to a "friend" of Porter.

<sup>14</sup>It may be that "balk" is the intended reading here.

<sup>15</sup>Jeannette Norris had an appendectomy in September, 1902. Norris died a month later, following a similar operation.

#### Charles G. Norris, Kathleen Norris and *Vandover and the Brute*: A New Letter

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Although the full story of the genesis, composition and eventual publication of Frank Norris's *Vandover and the Brute* (1914) may never be told, new information, including a previously unknown letter from Kathleen Norris (1880-1966) to Gertrude Doggett Norris (1841-1919), makes for a richer story than has been previously realized.<sup>1</sup>

Both Frank and his brother Charles G. Norris (1881-1945) expressed doubts that the reading public would receive *Vandover* favorably. Frank's defensive statement in his letter of 27 November 1899 to his English publisher Grant Richards concerning the novel that he probably wrote in 1894-1895 suggests his own serious reservation regarding publication: "Mr. Robert McClure tells me he has turned over to you a M.S of an unpublished novel of mine called *Vandover & the Brute*. What do you think of it. I am afraid it is hardly available for any publisher just yet."<sup>2</sup> In 1907 critic Dennison Hailey Clift announced in San Francisco: "There is one unpublished novel that Norris wrote at the time of his literary beginnings . . . The realism is too intense and too true to life to render its publication possible."<sup>3</sup>

How long Charles worked "to render its publication possible" before he succeeded is not clear, but a letter he wrote six years later in December, 1913, to Frank's widow Jeannette Black Norris (then Mrs. Frank Preston) suggests that before he placed *Vandover* with Doubleday, Page and Company he had already submitted the manuscript to at least ten publishers, to four for publication in book form and to six for serialization in their magazines. By 1913 Charles was already a highly successful manager and savvy promoter of his wife Kathleen's career as short story writer and novelist. In his letter to Jeannette, accompanying a thousand dollar check to her from Doubleday, he wrote:

It has been much more difficult to sell *Vandover* than I imagined. I was completely unsuccessful in disposing of serial rights. . . . It was not the price, however, but the fact that the story was so gloomy. . . . Of course you know, between you and I, it is a terrible book. There is no love interest. The story is not connected and you



soon lose interest in the hero, and it ends in catastrophe worse con-founded. . . .<sup>4</sup>

There is a clear discrepancy between Charles's private judgment of his brother's manuscript and his public espousal of it, including the sales pitch he must have been giving to the publishers. Two letters discovered among the papers of the Norrises also suggest that Charles's problems in getting *Vandover* into print were not solely with editors and publishers. They were also familial. He had to deal with typical pre-World War I American conservatism in both the reluctance of his strongminded sister-in-law and the objections of his formidable mother Gertrude who embodied American propriety as forcefully as did Theodore Roosevelt, and who for over forty years had spent much of her considerable energy in what were often successful attempts to control her sons' lives and reputations. Kathleen's 27 November 1908 letter from San Francisco to Charles (then her fiance) in New York City makes clear the opposition of both Jeannette and Gertrude, as she relays Gertrude's fear that Jeannette "would not send" him the *Vandover* manuscript.<sup>5</sup>

Even later, as revealed in a letter from Kathleen to Gertrude herself, written in December 1913, Gertrude, who earlier, unlike Jeannette, supported Charles's 1909 publication of Frank's less controversial stories in *The Third Circle*, still did not want anyone to publish *Vandover*.<sup>6</sup> Only another, equally forceful and self-confident personality was able to neutralize Gertrude's opposition. Charles's wife by 1909, and by 1913 herself the author of numerous short stories (some of which were collected in the 1912 *Poor Dear Mrs. Kirby*) and the popular novels *Mother* (1911) and *The Rich Mrs. Burgoyne* (1912), Kathleen was no neophyte. By this time she commanded the respect of her redoubtable mother-in-law and had the leverage to change her mind. The letter Kathleen wrote to Gertrude was a persuasive one. It contains enough new and revealing information about the thrust of conservative American didacticism in both the Norris family relationships and their ambivalent attitudes towards *Vandover* and *the Brute* to warrant printing in its entirety:

Mrs. Benjamin Franklin Norris  
December 1913

My dear C.G.'s mother, your lovely letter came today, and I am very happy and proud that you like "Holly Court" and its writer. We are uptown at the Park Avenue Hotel—of happy memories—and I am much the better for massage<sup>8</sup>—beginning to walk about, and feel that the end of this long C (here I am writing *siege* "C.G.?"—) *siege* is in sight. Frank is city-mad and too sweet and clever for words, and we are all enjoying the change.<sup>9</sup>—But I am terribly sorry to realize how you feel about *Vandover*, and it's about that that I am writing. I read it in the original, before C.G. had spoken to J.B. about terms,<sup>10</sup> before one other person had spoken of it, and when I honestly believed that no publisher would handle it, (because there is no woman in it, and because the circumstances of its publication are so unusual.)<sup>11</sup>

What I mean is that before I could possibly have had any secondary motive in the matter—(and what I had heard of *Vandover* predisposed me to dislike it)—the book made a *deep* impression on me. For the days that I was reading it I could think of nothing else—and at the end—a *wonderful* end—I could only say to C.G. that it seemed to me Frank at his best—Frank when his great gift was simply bubbling inside him. Perhaps publishers *couldn't* handle it as it was—and ten years ago—but there is hardly a strong Amer-

ican novel that isn't *far* worse today—it is so much better than Maxwell's much-admired "Cotton Wool"<sup>12</sup> and Mackenzie's "Youth's Encounter"<sup>13</sup> (both of its type) that no comparison can be made at all.

As it stands now, (and the loyal younger brother read it with "Mama's" eyes, I assure you) it is the amazing revelation of that weakness that is so much worse than wickedness—eating like an acid through an inheritance of wealth and youth and amiable intent—a book never to be accused of puerility [sic] (for there is no sex unpleasantness in the story at all!) but one to put into a boy's hands as a terrible warning.<sup>14</sup>

Don't think that I am saying this merely to defend my boy—I go about telling everyone that it is Frank's strongest style, and I honestly believe it will teach a tremendous lesson—C.G. has cut out the unpleasantness ruthlessly—and Frank himself had revised and cut it enormously.<sup>15</sup>

A most extraordinary experience it was, reading that school-boy's writing—written before the world had ever heard his name—it seemed so fresh and alive—so hard to connect in one's thoughts with that quiet shaft in Piedmont—I wish there were some way of dedicating this book to Billy<sup>16</sup>—but C.G. says there isn't—so it must be "a ring without a poesy"—Kiss the dear little girl for us both—I wish she could see her noisy young cousin, who thinks New York was made for him!

Affectionately your  
K

This letter to Gertrude in support of Charles's tenacious campaign to publish *Vandover* reveals Kathleen Norris as typically charming, tactful, energetic and informed. She was no doubt as persuasive with Jeannette, whom they finally convinced to grant publication rights to Doubleday. For without the combined efforts of Charles and Kathleen Norris *Vandover* might well have remained an unpublished potential embarrassment to the Norris family and a high-risk manuscript to the publishing world. And the reading public would have had neither the poesy nor the ring.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>My thanks to James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, The Bancroft itself, Frank Preston, Frank Norris's literary executor, and Dr. Frank Norris, literary executor for both Charles G. Norris and Kathleen Norris, for permission to reprint the material from the Norris collections. For a brief summary of Charles G. Norris's part in the publication of *Vandover*, see Hart's introduction to his edition, *A Novelist in the Making: A Collection of Student Themes, and the Novels Blix and Vandover and the Brute* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 47-49. I am now completing a more extended account of the publishing history of *Vandover*.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted from Jesse S. Crisler, ed., *Frank Norris: Collected Letters* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1986), p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>"The Artist in Frank Norris," *Pacific Monthly*, 17 (March 1907), 321-322.

<sup>4</sup>Original in the Charles G. Norris Collection, Bancroft.

<sup>5</sup>This is one of a series of numbered letters Charles and Kathleen wrote to each other between September, 1908, and March, 1909, when they were separated by the continent. The letters are now part of the Norris Collections, Bancroft.

<sup>6</sup>Original in the Kathleen Norris Collection, Bancroft. Charles had previously promoted his brother's stories and persuaded John Lane Company to publish them with an introduction by Will Irwin.

<sup>7</sup>I have been unable to identify this reference.

<sup>8</sup>Kathleen was then receiving treatments for a severe attack of arthritis.

<sup>9</sup>Charles's and Kathleen's only natural son and only surviving natural child, Frank Jr., was then three.

<sup>10</sup>J.B. refers to Jeannette Black, Frank's widow.



<sup>11</sup>Kathleen undoubtedly knew of Charles' machinations in their efforts to publish *Vandover*.

<sup>12</sup>*In Cotton Wool* (Appleton, 1912) is a popular novel by William Babington Maxwell (1866-1938), exposing the degeneracy of the idle rich. Like *Vandover*, Leonard Calcraft lives a life of self-indulgence which leads to his physical and mental deterioration.

<sup>13</sup>A novel by Sir Compton Mackenzie (1883-1972) about the rite of passage of a boy up to his eighteenth year. Although *Youth's Encounter* (Appleton, 1913) ends on a positive note, Michael Fane, like *Vandover*, is torn by the temptations of religion, art and women.

<sup>14</sup>Although *Vandover* may in fact be Frank Norris's warning to a hypocritical Victorian American society (see Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., "Frank Norris's *Vandover and the Brute*: Narrative Technique and the Socio-Critical Viewpoint," *Studies in American Fiction*, 4 [Spring 1976], 27-43), Kathleen is probably suggesting to her mother-in-law that it is a warning against drunkenness, promiscuity and gambling.

<sup>15</sup>The extent of Frank's revisions and Charles's alleged deletions and additions is still a controversial issue among Norris scholars and critics.

<sup>16</sup>Kathleen's reference is to the eleven-year-old Jeannette ("Billy") Norris, Frank's and Jeannette's only child. She was eight months old when Frank died.

## Frank Norris and *The Wave*: 1895

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As noted in "Frank Norris and *The Wave*: 1894" (*FNS*, No. 1 [Spring 1986], p. 4), the 1894 *Wave* offered new biographical data, and a search of the 1895 issues has provided a similar yield. Twice is Norris the subject in the "Personalities and Politics" feature. In the first instance (14 [12 October 1895], 6), the topic raised is the progress of Californian "intellectual lights," and celebrated are Juliet Wilbor Tompkins and Ina D. Coolbirth. So is William Doxey for initiating a subscription series in which four books would be published per year. A most important datum for Norris biographers is then presented: apparently, Norris's failure to publish a collection of stories in 1897 was not his first.<sup>1</sup> "Frank Norris, one of the most promising of our writers, has had a volume of short stories accepted by Lovell, Coryell, and, I venture to believe, will have a reputation with the appearance of his book." As we know, neither the volume to be published by that New York firm nor the reputation materialized then. Another, earlier set-back in Norris' career is now a part of the record, shedding more light on the discouragement he felt when his second attempt to become the "California Kipling" fell through.

The second treatment of Norris (14 [2 November 1895], 6) proves an even more substantial source of information as it alludes to the still undampened expectation of Norris' leap to fame via a collection of short stories, confirms that Norris did indeed have an arrangement with the *San Francisco Chronicle* prior to his departure for South Africa, and also makes available heretofore unnoted empirical evidence for Norris' authorship of two 1895 *Wave* essays.<sup>2</sup>

Not for the mines alone has South Africa potent attractions. C. P. Huntington asserts that, were he young again, he would adventure to the country of Cecil Rhodes and repeat there his triumphs; our best engineers are flocking to Johannesburg [sic], and there is

announcement yet of but one return, that of Mr. Wiltsee, whom fortunate investment has converted into a half-millionaire. The latest to leave California for that Southern clime is Frank Norris, who goes to the Transvaal for purposes of literary observation. He is to send letters to the *Chronicle*, and from them it may be possible to obtain a fair impression of that region. Mr. Norris, I have long believed, is one of the men destined to win a reputation. He writes in a manner essentially literary. He has an excellent style and a trained faculty of observation. For this paper he described the recent shooting function at Del Monte in the manner of an artist—the proper blending of reflection and description such as a writer should present. He has written several short stories, some of which the *Overland* has published; a volume of his manuscripts has recently been accepted by Lovell, Coryell & Co. He is to be in South Africa two months or more, and I am sure his descriptions will make excellent reading.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup>In *Frank Norris: A Biography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1932), p. 160, Franklin Walker records only the failure of the collection apparently intended for 1897 publication by William Doxey. This collection, entitled *Ways That Are Dark*, was described as "now in press" by Eleanor M. Davenport, "Frank Norris," *University of California Magazine*, 3 (November 1897), 80-82.

<sup>2</sup>The description of a "shooting function" mentioned below appears at the end of the unsigned article, "The Country Club at Del Monte: Impressions of an Observer," *The Wave*, 14 (7 September 1895), 7; it was preceded by a first installment with the same title and signed "DILETTANTE" on p. 7 of the 31 August issue. André Poncet first attributed the pieces to Norris in *Frank Norris (1870-1902)* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1977), vol. 2, 843; but he did not confirm the attribution with the evidence presented here. These two essays will be reprinted for the first time in a forthcoming issue of *American Literary Realism*.

## Norris's Departure for Johannesburg

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"Frank Norris and *The Wave*: 1895," above, alludes to Norris's departure from San Francisco in the capacity of special "correspondent" for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, a position the young journalist would subsequently enjoy again when the McClure syndicate dispatched him as a member of its fleet of reporters sent to Cuba to cover the Spanish-American War in the late spring of 1898. Unlike *McClure's Magazine*, however, which never printed a line of Norris's observation of the Cuban conflict, the *Chronicle* published six articles on Africa by Norris between 19 January and 15 March 1896, each complete with several original illustrations by the author. Since both the nature of his "arrangement" with the *Chronicle* and the exact date of his departure from California have been subjects of debate for many years among Norris scholars, the full text of a paragraph appearing in the "Locals" of *The Berkeleyan* (5, No. 43 [1 November 1895], [4]) is here presented in an effort to resolve both controversies. "Monday" would have been 28 October, since 1 November fell on a Friday:

Frank Norris '94 departed for Africa last Monday. He is to be correspondent to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and will write a series of articles on "The Picturesque Side of African Life." His success in this line is well deserved.

*The Berkeleyan*, the current student newspaper for the University of California, had reason to brag on the "success" of Norris who for four years (1890-1894)



had attended, but never graduated from, the University. He was one of "their own" not only as a former student but as one of their authors who was making his way as a professional writer.

#### Current Publications: Update

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Presented here is a second installment designed to complement *Frank Norris: A Reference Guide* (1974). The arrangement below is chronological and alphabetical within years; the next issue of *FNS* will include a continuation. Please inform the editors of omitted items and, if possible, forward copies for annotation. Copies of works described as "not examined" will be especially appreciated.

Edgar, Randolph. "An American Zola," *Neale's Monthly*, 3 (1914), 415-18. Sketch of Norris's life tracing the history of his publications. Features an unique anecdote regarding the submission of "A Caged Lion" to Lawrence Vassault, an editor of *The Argonaut*: Norris slid it under the door and fled.

Poncet, André. "Aux Sources du 'Grand Roman Américain,'" *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Nice*, No. 3 (1968), pp. 35-54. Describes writings in *The Wave* on the the principles relevant to the creation of authentically American art and particularly the "Great American Novel."

Tsunematsu, Masao. "McTeague: A Probe into Man's Dualism," *Studies in American Literature*, 7 (1971), 57-66. Not examined.

Bernadette, Jane. "Frank Norris: Adapting Naturalism." In *American Realism: A Shape for Fiction*. New York: Capricorn Books, 1972, pp. 284-87. Norris defined the inadequacy of Realism in the Austen-Howells tradition, arguing that Romanticism provided a fuller scope. *The Responsibilities of the Novelist* became a textbook of young Naturalists who moved beyond the confines of Howellsian Realism.

Moorty, S. S. "Frank Norris and Scott Fitzgerald: Two Sides of the Same Coin," *Utah Academy Proceedings*, 53 (1976), 29-34. While the two authors may be compared, Fitzgerald expresses a pessimism contrasting with Norris' optimism.

—. "Norris and Fitzgerald as Moralists." In *Studies in American Literature: Essays in Honour of William Mulder*. Ed. Jagdish Chander and Narindar S. Pradhan. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976, pp. 119-26. Norris and Fitzgerald embody a moralistic frame of reference in their works.

Morace, Robert A. "Frank Norris' Letter to F. B. Millard," *Quarterly News-Letter* (Book Club of California), 41 (1976), 90-92. First reprinting of a "letter" published in the *S.F. Examiner* in which Norris identifies *Ben Hur* as the best novel produced by an American author

and *A Modern Instance* as the best interpretation of American life.

Stone, William B. "Idiolect and Ideology: Some Stylistic Aspects of Norris, James, and DuBois," *Style*, 10 (1976), 405-25. Norris "took refuge in a form of determinism, based upon materialism," for his ideology, and this conditioned his prose style.

Watson, Charles N., Jr. "Sexual Conflict in *The Sea-Wolf*: Further Notes on London's Reading of Kipling and Norris," *Western American Literature*, 11 (1976), 239-48. The depiction of sexual disorientation in *Moran* was an influence on London's handling of the same phenomenon in *The Sea-Wolf*.

Banta, Martha. "They Shall Have Faces, Minds, and (One Day) Flesh: Women in Late Nineteenth-century and Early Twentieth-century American Literature." In *What Manner of Woman*. Ed. Marlene Springer. New York: New York University Press, 1977, pp. 251-55 and 265. The heroine of *McTeague* represents one of six female literary types, the "Bitch" who gratifies the male but at the same time complicates his life by making demands upon him.

Katz, Joseph. "Eroticism in American Literary Realism," *Studies in American Fiction*, 5 (1977), 35-50; reprinted in part in Graham, ed., *Critical Essays*, 1980, below. Discusses the indirect handling of erotic elements in early Realistic fiction, presenting the Sheldon-Laura relationship in *Pit* as a case in point.

Kwiat, Joseph J. "The Social Responsibilities of the American Painter and Writer: Robert Henri and John Sloan; Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser," *The Centennial Review*, 21 (1977), 19-35. Norris flourished in an era in which many artists assumed a new degree of social responsibility as revealed in "The Responsibilities of the Novelist" and through Presley of *The Octopus*.

Marquit, Doris Grieser. "Nature and Human Nature in Frank Norris," *Gypsy Scholar*, 4 (1977), 53-65. Norris was not at his best in the philosophically abstract *The Octopus* but in *McTeague* and *Vandover* where he depicted the brutal characteristics of human nature and the natural order.

McElrath, Joseph R., Jr. "The Erratic Design of Frank Norris' *Moran of the Lady Letty*," *American Literary Realism*, 10 (1977), 114-24. The peculiarities of *Moran* resulted from Norris's desire to write both an adventure romance and a parody of that subgenre.

Pizer, Donald, ed. *McTeague: A Norton Critical Edition*. New York: Norton, 1977. A critically edited, annotated text of *McTeague* followed by a selection of primary data and critical essays.

Silet, Charles L. P. "Theodore Dreiser's Introduction to *McTeague*," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 8, No. 1 (1977), 15-17. Explains that Dreiser's introduction to *McTeague* became a "muddled attempt" to celebrate Henry Blake Fuller's importance in the development of Realism.



Stronks, James B. "Addenda to the Bibliographies of Stephen Crane, Dreiser, Frederic, Fuller, Garland, Herne, Howells, London, and Norris," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 71 (1977), 362-68. Nine addenda to *Frank Norris: A Reference Guide*.

Wead, George. "Frank Norris: His Share of Greed." In *The Classic American Novel and the Movies* Ed. Gerald Peary and Roger Shatzkin. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1977, pp. 143-51. Praises *McTeague* and argues against those who blame Norris for the weaknesses of Von Stoheim's *Greed*.

Westbrook, Wayne W. "The Great Corner in Hannibal & St. Jo.: Another Look," *American Literary Realism*, 10 (1977), 213-14. Defines three terms not explained in John K. Swensson's introduction to Norris's "The Great Corner" (*American Literary Realism*, 4 [1971], 205-06).

French, Warren, ed. *Vandover and the Brute*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978. A photo-offset printing of the first edition, introduced by French as a novel representative of the literature emerging in the 1890s as the genteel tradition was collapsing.

Graham, Don. *The Fiction of Frank Norris: The Aesthetic Context*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1978. Examines the novels in terms of the richly allusive aesthetic contexts and their significant relationship to the characterizations and themes.

—. "Frank Norris and Les Jeunes: Architectural Criticism and Aesthetic Values," *American Literary Realism*, 11 (1978), 235-42. The aesthetic theories embraced by Polk, Peixotto, and Porter were expressed by Norris both in his architectural and literary criticism.

Kwiat, Joseph J. "The American Painter and Writer's Credo of 'Art for Truth's Sake': Robert Henri and John Sloan; Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser," *Journal of American Culture*, 1 (1978), 285-300. Norris's credo was "art for truth's sake" and this may be seen especially in the points of view he assigned to his artistic characters such as Condy Rivers, Presley, and Cortell.

McElrath, Joseph R., Jr. "Frank Norris: A Biographical Essay," *American Literary Realism*, 11 (1978), 219-34; reprinted in Graham, ed., *Critical Essays*, 1980, below. Focuses on Norris's development from an *enfant terrible* to a more conventional writer and person as he approached middle age.

—. "A Source for Norris's 'A Deal in Wheat,'" *American Literary Realism*, 11 (1978), 141. Norris appears to have appropriated an incident in Richard Harding Davis' *The West from a Car-Window* for the plot of "A Deal."

Spangler, George M. "The Structure of *McTeague*," *English Studies*, 59 (1978), 48-56; reprinted in Graham, ed., *Critical Essays*, 1980, below. The unity of *McTeague* may be seen when one notes that the "structuring idea" of the first half is that "sexual love is creative" and that,

in the second half, a fear of female sexuality precipitates a "nightmare of degeneration and death."

Stronks, James B. "Supplements to the Standard Bibliographies of Crane, Dreiser, Frederic, Garland, London, and Norris," *American Literary Realism*, 11 (1978), 133. Cites three items not in *Frank Norris: A Reference Guide*.

Tatum, Stephen. "Norris's Debt in 'Lauth' to Lemattre's 'On the Transfusion of Blood,'" *American Literary Realism*, 11 (1978), 243-48. Notes parallels between Norris's and Lemattre's works and speculates on how Norris may have come to read Lemattre's essay.

Davison, Richard Allan. "A Reading of Frank Norris's *The Pit*." In *The Stoic Strain in American Literature: Essays in Honour of Marston LaFrance*. Ed. Duane J. MacMillan. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979, pp. 77-94, 209-11. *The Pit* reveals Norris's concern for the "potential tragedy involved in a lack of communication among individuals," and it pictures the consequences of disharmony with the "tenets of stoicism and the moral forces of the universe."

McElrath, Joseph R., Jr. "Allegory in Frank Norris's *Blix*: Its Relevance to *Vandover*," *Markham Review*, 8 (1979), 25-27. Examines the allegorical statements of Travis' "redeeming" role in Condy Rivers' life in *Blix* and suggests that Turner Ravis of *Vandover* is not one of Norris's "ideal women."

—. "Frank Norris: Early Posthumous Responses," *American Literary Realism*, 12 (1979), 1-76. Collection of magazine essays and newspaper articles on Norris published shortly after his death.

Messenger, Christian. "Frank Norris and the College Sportsman," *American Literary Realism*, 12 (1979), 288-94. Norris was an early popularizer of the social philosophy of American collegiate sports.

Miller, Edwin Haviland. "The Art of Frank Norris in *McTeague*," *Markham Review*, 8 (1979), 61-66. The characters of *McTeague* may be viewed in terms of oral, anal, and genital phases of human development; they regress to the oral and anal levels when under stress.

Monteiro, George. "Addenda to the Bibliographies of Cather, Conrad, DeForest, Dreiser, Forster, Hardy, Hawthorne, London, Norris, Poe, Wharton and Whitman," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 73 (1979), 478-81. Identifies a review of *McTeague* not noted in *Frank Norris: A Reference Guide*.

Freedman, William. "Oral Passivity and Oral Sadism in Norris's *McTeague*," *Literature and Psychology*, 30 (1980), 52-61. *McTeague*, Trina, and Marcus repeatedly demonstrate their oral-erotic nature.

Graham, Don, ed. *Critical Essays on Frank Norris*. Boston: Hall, 1980. Surveys and evaluates Norris scholarship in an introduction, reprints typical reviews of Norris's novels, and presents a collection of significant interpretive articles.



Marovitz, Sanford E. "Bridging the Continent with Romantic Western Realism," *Journal of the West*, 19 (1980), 19-28. "A Neglected Epic" and *The Octopus* indicate that Norris was not capable of realizing his intention to put into fiction the American West as a locale of both a heroic past and a noble future.

McElrath, Joseph R., Jr. "Frank Norris's *The Octopus*: The Christian Ethic as Pragmatic Response." In *Critical Essays on Frank Norris*. Ed. Don Graham. Boston: Hall, 1980, pp. 138-52. Two themes emerge in *The Octopus*: that the complex problems of modern socio-economic experience defy immediate solution; and that adherence to the Christian ethic is the only practical way to begin social amelioration.

Morace, Robert A. "Frank Norris and the Magazine Experience," *Markham Review*, 9 (1980), 64-67. Response to Kwiat, "Stephen Crane and Frank Norris" (1976), above: Norris's journalistic experience was different from that had by Crane and Dreiser.

—. "New Fiction, Popular Fiction, and the Middle/Moral Way," *Fiction International*, 12 (1980), 232-46. Article on John Gardner including discussion of Norris's concept of "the responsibilities of the novelist."

—. "The Writer and His Middle Class Audience: Frank Norris, a Case in Point," *Journal of American Culture*, 3 (1980), 105-12; reprinted in Louis Filler, ed., *Seasoned Authors for a New Season* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press, 1980), pp. 144-51, and in Graham, ed., *Critical Essays*, 1980, above. The middle-class readership of *The Wave* shaped the character of Norris's writings.

Munn, Debra. "The Revision of Frank Norris's *Blix*," *Resources For American Literary Study*, 10 (1980), 47-55. Describes the ways in which Norris improved *Blix* when he revised the serial version for book publication.

Oehlschlaeger, Fritz H. "An Additional Source for Frank Norris's *A Man's Woman*," *American Literary Realism*, 13 (1980), 93-96. Identifies instances in which Norris used Nansen's *Fram over Polhavet* for details.

Pizer, Donald. "Frank Norris and the Frontier as Popular Idea in America," *Amerikastudien* 23 (1980), 230-39. In his literary essays and *The Octopus*, Norris synthesized Adams' and Turner's opposing interpretations of the American frontier experience.

Yamamoto, Masashi. "The World of Frank Norris's *The Octopus*," *Chu-Shikoku Studies in American Literature*, 16 (1980), 32-41. Not examined.

Bremer, Sidney H. "Lost Continuities: Alternative Urban Visions in Chicago Novels, 1890-1915," *Soundings*, 64 (1981), 29-51. Considers the differences between male and female writers' attitudes toward Chicago, observing that works like *The Pit* focus on the city as a subject rather than use it as a setting.

Davison, Richard Allan. "Frank Norris and the Arts of Social Criticism," *American Literary Realism*, 14 (1981), 77-89. Describes Norris's point of view regarding social criticism in art, noting how *The Octopus* reveals

that Norris saw Edwin Markham as simplistic. Also considers how Norris's manner of depicting injustice may have influenced D. W. Griffith.

Love, Glen A. and David A. Carpenter. "The Other Octopus," *American Literary Realism*, 14 (1981), 1-5. Points out the parallels between *The Octopus* and John R. Robinson's 1894 expose of the railroad which was also entitled *The Octopus*.

McElrath, Joseph R., Jr., and Katherine Knight, eds. *Frank Norris: The Critical Reception*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1981. Presents reviews of Norris's works. "Introduction" traces the progress of Norris's career.

Micklus, Robert. "Ambivalent Warriors in *The Octopus*," *Western American Literature*, 16 (1981), 115-23. The conclusion of *The Octopus* is troublesome because Presley is a passive observer whose ineffectuality tells against his credibility and because Vanamee's highly detached point of view is too abstract.

Miller, Edwin Haviland. "The Art of Frank Norris in *Vandover and the Brute*," *Markham Review*, 10 (1981), 56-63. Focuses on the motifs introduced in the train-station scene at the beginning of *Vandover* and traces their development through the novel in terms of how they reveal Van's psychological condition.

Morseberger, Robert E. "The Inconsistent *Octopus*," *Western American Literature*, 16 (1981), 105-13. The *fin de siècle* was a complex period and *The Octopus* powerfully embodies the intellectual inconsistencies typical of the time.

Shroeder, John. "The Shakespearean Plots of *McTeague*," *American Literary Realism*, 14 (1981), 289-96. Observes Norris's use of Shakespearean plot elements and notes verbal echoes.

Stewart, Bill. "A Modern Mephistopheles: *McTeague* and the Faust Legend," *University of Mississippi Studies in English*, N.S. 2 (1981), 93-97. Norris used many variations of the Faust story in *McTeague* to state its "vulnerability of human nature" theme.

Ware, Thomas C. "Gold to Airy Thinness Beat: The Midas Touch in Frank Norris's *McTeague*," *Interpretations*, 13 (1981), 39-47. While individual scenes are effectively drawn, *McTeague* does not provide a convincing picture of human conduct.

Cain, William E. "Presence and Power in *McTeague*." In *American Realism: New Essays*. Ed. Eric J. Sundquist. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, pp. 199-214. Focuses on the "spectacular presence" of Norris in *McTeague* as he exercises his power to overwhelm the reader. Cites virtually all of the traditional negative criticisms of Norris's style, but argues that Norris's weakness is actually found in the limitations of his mind. Norris misses the "meanings that radiate outward from the spectacles" he creates.

Etulain, Richard. *A Bibliographical Guide to the Study of Western American Literature*. Lincoln: University of



Nebraska Press, 1982, pp. 212-17. Cites 77 studies of Norris.

French, Warren. "Frank Norris (1870-1902)." In *Fifty Western Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*. Ed. Fred Erisman and Richard W. Etulain. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982, pp. 347-57. Provides a biographical sketch, a discussion of Norris's themes, a survey of criticism, and primary and secondary bibliographies. The thematic essay describes problems in interpreting Norris and suggests ways to approach his canon.

Graham, Don. "Naturalism in American Fiction: A Status Report," *Studies in American Fiction*, 10 (1982), 1-16. Refers to *McTeague* as reflective of the tendency in Naturalism to present unenlightened and uncertain characters and to embody the characteristics of the Romance.

Horwitz, Howard. "To Find the Value of X': *The Pit* as Renunciation of Romance." In *American Realism: New Essays*. Ed. Eric J. Sundquist. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, pp. 215-37. *The Pit* fails because it tries to harmonize the marriage and speculation plots and because speculation *per se* is "absorbed by natural law" so as to accommodate the "wheat theme." Norris's "search for harmony" among the antithetical elements of the novel marks its "true failing."

Jolly, John. "The Genesis of the Rapist in *The Octopus*: Frank Norris's Revision of *Vandover and the Brute*," *Western American Literature*, 17 (1982), 201-11. *The Octopus*, read in light of *Vandover*, reveals that Vanamee was the rapist who later "alters history" to "restore the broken thread of his life," rising to a "higher plane of existence." The novel thus indicates Norris's "progression to a Romantic, quasi-Eastern world view."

Jones, Daryl. "Norris, (Benjamin) Frank(lin)." In *Twentieth-Century American Writers*. Ed. James Vinson. London: Macmillan, 1982, pp. 575-78. Presents a list of Norris's writings and a biographical sketch of Norris as a Western fictionalist.

Leitz, Robert C., III. "The Moran Controversy: Norris's Defense of His 'Nautical Absurdities,'" *American Literary Realism*, 15 (1982), 119-24. Explains J.F. Rose-Soley's 1899 attack on *Moran* and reprints for the first time Norris's rebuttal.

McElrath, Joseph R., Jr. "Frank Norris." In *American Realists and Naturalists*, vol. 12 of *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Ed. Donald Pizer and Earl N. Harbert. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1982, 379-97. A biographical and interpretive essay emphasizing the concept that Norris responded to the changes occurring in Western thought at the turn of the century.

Morace, Robert A. "Dreiser's Contract for *Sister Carrie*. More Fact and Fiction," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 9 (1982), 305-11. In part a rebuttal to Jack Salzman's "The Publication of *Sister Carrie* Fact and Fiction" (1967),

above, regarding Salzman's "unwarranted attack" on Norris for "betraying Dreiser."

Poenicke, Klaus. *Der Amerikanische Naturalismus: Crane, Norris, Dreiser*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982, pp. 76-102, 144-45. Review of the scholarship on Norris.

Poncet, André. "Anti-Racist Strategies in Frank Norris's Fiction." In *Les Américains et Les Autres*. Ed. Serge Ricard. Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1982, pp. 55-63. Norris's use of racial stereotypes for the Jew, the Latin, and the Oriental reveals an anti-racist strategy and a critical attitude toward the Anglo-Saxon mystique.

Schonfelder, Karl-Heinz. "From Benjamin Franklin to Frank Algernon Cowperwood: Changes in the Image of the American Businessman," *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 30 (1982), 213-18. Norris's Realist-Romantic orientation prevented him from creating realistic portrayals of the capitalist. Shelgrim is a flat character; Jadwin is imaged as a romantic hero, though "the background of the *Pit* and cutthroat competition are realistically drawn."

Sommer, Robert F. "Norris' *McTeague*," *Explicator*, 41 (1982), 39-40. Focuses on the term "accommodation street" in *McTeague* and speculates on Norris's intended meaning. Explains the literal, sociological, and Darwinian denotations possible. Relates the latter to *McTeague*'s and Trina's "retreat into an atavistic slough."

Toher, Martha Dimes. "The Music of the Spheres': The Diapason in Frank Norris's Works," *American Literary Realism*, 15 (1982), 166-81. Focuses on the attention given to sound in Norris's works and particularly its manifestation in the diapason which represents vitality, energy, and experience in the natural order. This expression of life's forces must be acknowledged and comprehended by Norris's characters if they are to succeed.

Wilson, Christopher P. "American Naturalism and the Problem of Sincerity," *American Literature*, 54 (1982), 511-27. A cardinal tenet of popular naturalists like Norris, Phillips, London, and Sinclair was sincerity—an essential for forceful, trustworthy, and progressive writers with a "masculine voice."

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