

The Presence of Joaquin Miller in *The Octopus*
Benjamin S. Lawson
Albany State College

Frank Norris's setting of *The Octopus* in the San Joaquin Valley is an unwitting inscribing into the novel of a presence which he elsewhere in the book wittingly employs to define character, theme, and general theoretical issues. For, Western writer Joaquin Miller (1841?-1913) appears in *The Octopus* in various guises: not only is he a character in the novel, but the novel itself is partly a commentary on his career. Miller's fame as a "Western" artist in the late nineteenth century made it possible for Norris to use him as a means of raising the question of what is authentic in art and, more particularly, what kind of artist would be able to give true expression of the essential character of the American West.

Although there is some doubt that Norris was ever a guest at Miller's home,¹ there is little doubt that it is Miller who appears in the San Francisco salon of the fictional Mrs. Cedarquist as "a certain bearded poet, recently back from the Klondike." Miller immediately comes to mind as he declaims his verse, "perspiring in furs and boots of reindeer skin."² As O.W. Frost observes, Miller was "probably the nation's most noted argonaut" in 1897, and the eighteen letters about his travels to and in the gold fields of northern Canada, published in the San Francisco *Examiner* and several other newspapers, were considered a "prized correspondence."³ Don Graham expresses too little certainty when he says that Miller is "possibly" the model for this poet.⁴ Moreover, Miller had been promoting himself, his writing, and his region for thirty years as "the poet of the Sierras," the exotic "child of the West." To project this persona, Cincinnatus Miller adopted the name of a Mexican bandit and, to quote the *Academy* in 1898, typically appeared costumed "in sombrero and serape, with unshorn locks, and riding boots reaching to his waist."⁵

The strength of Norris's impulse to expose such manifestations of "the Fake, the eternal, irrepressible Sham" (p. 314) is exhibited in a less direct way as well. We may draw a practical inference from the fact that such figures as Miller and, as Don Graham as observed, Yone Noguchi, are extraneous to the central movement of the novel. Norris would pursue his prey even at the cost of digressing. Their art is, finally, that irrelevant. They are not even in attendance at the particular artistic gathering at which Presley, the aspiring poet of *The Octopus*, is introduced to the world of women's clubs and reading circles. Instead, they are merely mentioned as sometime habitués of the salon.⁶ Directly, they are worth only a brief allusion.

Even so, Miller does perform a major function in

the novel when he is brought to mind as providing a parallel or contrast to Presley's career. The self-reflexivity of the novel has been noted by Jay Martin ("In one sense, the subject of the novel is the way the epic can be brought into being"⁷) and by Donald Pizer ("*The Octopus* is both a sermon on western literary regionalism and an example of it"⁸). Since Miller tried to and Presley desired to write a regional epic, it is only appropriate that they both appear in Norris's epic about writing epics. Presley wants to experience Western life in order to write a grand panoramic poem, the "Song of the West." The first immensely popular volume of verse by Miller, published in 1871, was similarly titled—*Songs of the Sierras*. Both Presley's proposed work, and, by extension, Miller's book, suffer, in Norris's view, from being overly literary, sentimental, and romantic. Despite his rejection of their typical fare, Presley has been influenced by the "little magazines"; among important romantic influences on Miller were, for example, Swinburne and Byron.⁹ Only Norris can get it right and in his "Epic of the Wheat" compose the work which Presley is in the end groping toward.¹⁰

In a sense, Presley is a Joaquin Miller who may some day mature into a Frank Norris. Van Wyck Brooks phrases the point similarly in *The Confident Years*: that Presley's divided impulses suggest actual poets as different from one another as Joaquin Miller and Robinson Jeffers.¹¹ His early plans come to nothing when the Eastern-educated Presley finds it impossible to reconcile his imported image of the West with what he is actually observing. The conflict is so great that he literally cannot begin to write. Miller's pen, on the other hand, flowed freely, as he was confident that he was being "true" to the West of his imagination and that he had shown the world "her valor and her dignity, her poetry and her grandeur."¹² Miller continued to hold the romantic notion that poetry is a passion beyond reason and the Poe-like concept that "there are things that are sacred from severe prose."¹³ Miller's songs consequently soared above the mundane, and thus the "real"; Presley's prospective verse, on the other hand, would treat reality made compatible with the ideal. A "confirmed dreamer" (p. 27), Presley searches "for the True Romance, and, in the end, found grain rates and unjust freight tariffs" (p. 13), just as Norris did. Early in the novel, however, Presley lacks the perspective to enable him to perceive the romance and the mundane in the everyday as well as the controlling influence of impersonal forces, like that which is "stronger and more penetrating than everything else, the heavy, enervating odour of the upturned, living earth" (p. 130). Like Norris, Presley increasingly stands for "life, not literature."

As he becomes politically involved in the com-

munity and overcomes his artistic paralysis, Presley stands further in contrast to Miller. Though Miller did confront Western social issues in his prose (e.g., *Life Among the Modocs* [1873]), he believed that poetry served "higher" purposes. Presley's theories of literature change as he is forced to confront the problems of the ranchers. The result of his emotional involvement and heightened social awareness is a popular propagandistic poem, "The Toilers." In this progression toward becoming a Frank Norris, then, Presley passes through an Edwin Markham phase, since it is Markham's well-known poem "The Man with the Hoe" (1899) that is obviously the model for "The Toilers." The excitement caused by the conflict between the People and the Railroad forces Presley to abandon his original plan to write an epic poem on the romance of the West and to put aside "his books of poems—Milton, Tennyson, Browning, even Homer—and [to address] himself to Mill, Malthus, Young, Poushkin, Henry George, Schopenhauer" (p. 307). Presley, whose increasing militancy transforms him into a speech-making, bomb-throwing "red," begins to consider himself one of the folk. But this new identity does not serve him well: "Everything to which he had set his mind failed—his great epic, his efforts to help the people who surrounded him, even his attempted destruction of the enemy" (p. 567). If Presley's artistic expression is inhibited by the jarring contrast between the Real and Ideal, in the world of the Real he remains an outsider, an "over-literary" dreamer. The choice for art is, ipso facto, a choice for separation from the Valley. On the other hand, while he is an activist his poetry suffers because he loses artistic disinterestedness and gives his life over to other aims. Only as the novel closes does Presley begin to perceive a world in which all parties are at the mercy of impersonal forces and in which he could write the great epic that Norris has now already written for him.

Joaquin Miller was, thus, one standard by which Norris judged literary intention and accomplishment. As much as Miller, Norris had a grand conception of the West and of "The Epic of the West." But to Norris, Miller had falsified that experience, that vision, in a belated romanticism, a sham and sensational poetry, and in self-promotion. Norris elsewhere complained that "because 'melancholy harlequins' strut in fringed leggings upon the street-corners, one hand held out for pennies, we have come to believe that our West, our epic, was an affair of Indians, road agents and desperadoes."¹⁴ (The poem which perhaps best fulfills Norris's idea of a Western epic, John G. Neihardt's *A Cycle of the West*, was not begun until 1915.)¹⁵ But in 1900, Joaquin Miller, even though not universally admired, possessed a fame (and notoriety) as man and writer that made him impossible to ignore. Norris's only option was in some fashion to deny the influence and importance of Miller. The theorizing in *The Responsibilities of the Novelist*, the fictional poet of *The Octopus*, and the accomplished novel itself are Norris's denials of being in any way indebted to a Joaquin Miller who wrote that "possibly I have blazed out the trail for great minds over this field," the West.¹⁶

Miller—*American Poet* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1953), p. 201. Don Graham, in *The Fiction of Frank Norris: The Aesthetic Context* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), p. 79, finds no reason to believe that Norris ever visited Miller.

²*The Octopus: A Story of California* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1901), pp. 312-13. All subsequent references will be to this edition.

³Joaquin Miller (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967), pp. 108-09.

⁴*The Fiction of Frank Norris*, p. 79.

⁵"Joaquin Miller, Browning, and the Prince Imperial," 12 February 1898, p. 181. According to Frost, p. 56, Miller named himself after Joaquin Murietta.

⁶That the Japanese poet Noguchi, not named but satirized as another false and posing versifier, is the other poet in this scene has been logically and convincingly argued by Graham. This establishes another connection with Miller, since Noguchi had lived from 1896 until 1900 in Miller's cabin in the hills above Oakland (Graham, pp. 75-79). In the short story "Dying Fires" Norris also criticizes literary talk and a California writer who, as Miller did for a time, abandoned the Western sources of his inspiration. "The Frontier," writes Norris in the essay "The Frontier Gone at Last," "has become conscious of itself, acts the part for the Eastern visitor; and this self-consciousness is a sign, surer than all others, of the decadence of a type, the passing of an epoch" (*The Responsibilities of the Novelist* [New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1903], p. 73).

⁷*Harvests of Change: American Literature, 1865-1914* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 75.

⁸Donald Pizer, ed., *The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), p. 101.

⁹Frost, pp. 92, 94.

¹⁰See Martin, p. 76.

¹¹*The Confident Years: 1885-1915* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1952), p. 221.

¹²*The Ship in the Desert* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1875), p. x. Modern readers, in fact, conclude that the West must have contained more poetry than did Miller's verse. In "The Tale of the Tall Alcalde" the town of Renalda lies "Where mountains repose in their blueness, / Where the sun first lands in his newness, / And marshals his beams and his lances, / Ere down to the vale he advances" and so forth. The lines appear in *Songs of the Sierras* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1871), p. 197.

¹³*Overland in a Covered Wagon*, ed. Sidney G. Firman (New York: D. Appleton, 1930), p. 40.

¹⁴"A Neglected Epic," *The Responsibilities*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁵The five sections of Neihardt's poem appeared

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¹M. Marion Marberry, *Splendid Poseur: Joaquin*

between 1915 and 1941. They were published together in 1949. See Edgeley W. Todd, "The Frontier Epic: Frank Norris and John G. Niehardt," *Western Humanities Review*, 13 (1959), 40-45.

¹⁶*The Ship in the Desert*, p. xi.

Some Light on Gertrude Doggett Norris's
1894 Divorce Suit
Richard Allan Davison
University of Delaware

Since there is little substantial factual evidence in print concerning the circumstances leading to the divorce of Gertrude Doggett Norris from Benjamin Franklin Norris, newly discovered items in the *San Francisco Morning Call* and *The Chicago Tribune* are of more than passing interest. They are especially vital to biographers of their novelist sons, Frank and Charles G. Norris. No one has explored either the details of the separation or the nature and extent of its impact on their lives and works. Because of limitations of space this paper will focus on factual data that will provide some of the groundwork for future biographical and critical explorations.

When Mrs. Norris filed her complaint against her husband, he had just taken a trip around the world—part of the way, it appears, in the company of a woman whom he later may have married. (That the woman's name was Ruby was suggested by Charles G. Norris's son, Dr. Frank Norris, Jr., and his wife Allie, to whom I am once again indebted for indispensable information on the Norris family.) Charles, born 23 April 1881, and not yet thirteen, was living with his mother in San Francisco. Frank was then a twenty-three-year-old senior at the University of California at Berkeley. They were accustomed to the upper-middle-class security provided by their father's money and the family's social status. Although there is little direct comment in the available Norris letters regarding the family's post-1894 uncertainties and insecurities, evidence of the traumatic effect of the separation and its dire financial implications for both Frank and his brother permeates their writings. Dramatic financial loss with profound consequences is crucial in Frank's *Vandover and the Brute*, *McTeague*, *The Octopus*, and *The Pit*, as well as in many of Charles's novels, including *Salt*, or *the Education of Griffith Adams*, *Brass: A Novel of Marriage, Hands*, and *Bricks Without Straw*.

Clearly the abandoned Mrs. Norris felt pressured to file her complaint, but, as always, and certainly in matters of divorce, there is more than one version of the story. The three recently discovered newspaper items reveal part of the marital tension, including accusations, denials, and counter-accusations. I reproduce the accounts in their entirety without emendation.

The following appeared in *The San Francisco Morning Call* on 4 January 1894, p. 3:

WANTS HER SHARE

Benjamin F. Norris Sued
by His Wife.

LARGE COMMUNITY PROPERTY

Said That Norris Is Trying to
Defraud Her.

REFUSED HER MAINTENANCE.

The Wife Wants \$800 a Month for
the Support of Herself and
Her Two Sons.

A new move in the quarrel existing between Benjamin F. Norris, the well-known Chicago jeweler, and his wife, Gertrude, was made yesterday by his wife, who brings suit in the Superior Court for the appointment of a receiver.

The complaint states that the parties intermarried in Chicago in May, 1867, and that in May, 1892, the husband willfully deserted his wife, and has not since returned to her. There are two children as a result of the marriage, Benjamin F. Norris, Jr., aged 23, and Charles Gilman Norris, aged 12 years.

It is alleged that since the parties married they have accumulated considerable community property. There is the half interest held by the defendant in the jewelry firm of the F. Norris, Alister & Co. of Chicago, which interest is stated in the complaint to be of the value of \$150,000. Besides this there is real property in San Francisco, consisting of lots on Post, Geary, Ellis, Baker, Washington, Buchanan streets and San Jose avenue. This real property is valued at \$75,000, and there is said to be a mortgage upon it for \$40,000, but the complaint states that the property is so far improved as to give Norris a net income of \$600 a month after paying all expenses as well as the interest on his mortgage.

The wife complains that her husband, for the purpose of preventing her receiving support or alimony from this real property, has made arrangements with the firm of Madison & Burke—which is made a party to the suit—to have the property disposed of with power of attorney granted to Mr. J. Burke. And it is alleged that unless an injunction be obtained the property will pass into other hands, and Mrs. Norris will be unable to lay her hands on anything tangible. She is now said to be without means.

For nine years past Mr. and Mrs. Norris made their residence in San Francisco, but in October, 1892, Norris started on a trip around the world. During his absence, states the complaint, the expense of maintaining the family in San Francisco was defrayed by checks drawn by Norris in his wife's favor upon the First National Bank of San Francisco; that prior to October 1893, Norris allowed his wife \$175 a week, but since that date he has reduced the allowance to \$75 a week. Besides, he has, within the past few days, stopped payment of the last three checks of \$75 each, and one for \$50 which he had forwarded to his wife for the support of the family.

It is alleged that Norris has told his eldest son, who is now a student at the University of California,

that unless he did his best to induce his mother to consent to a divorce without opposition he (the father) would disinherit him. Norris has also used the same threats to his wife by means of an agent, telling her that unless she consents to a divorce he will withdraw all support from her.

On these grounds Mrs. Gertrude Norris asks that a receiver be appointed to take charge of the community property; that an injunction issue restraining either Norris or Madison & Burke from interfering in the matter; that the custody of the minor child, Charles Gilman Norris, be awarded to her, and that during the pendency of the action a reasonable allowance be made to her for the support of herself and the children. Incidentally she mentions \$800 a month as a reasonable sum for maintenance. The firm of Garber, Boalt & Bishop have taken up her cause.

The notice in the 4 January 1894 *Chicago Tribune*, p. 2, tells a somewhat different story. There is, for instance, no mention of either Frank or Charles, and the *Morning Call* husband who "willfully deserted his wife" becomes a man "imbued with a desire to get rid of matrimonial shackles."

MRS. NORRIS PETITIONS FOR ALIMONY Wife of Chicago Jeweler Secures an Injunction in a California Court

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., Jan. 3—Gertrude G. Norris, wife of a wealthy Chicago jeweler, obtained an injunction from the Superior Court today restraining him from disposing of his local real estate until some Judge awards her a monthly income. Benjamin Norris is the senior member of the firm of B.F. Norris, Alistair & Co., wholesale jewelers of Chicago. According to his wife's story he has become imbued with a desire to get rid of matrimonial shackles. For that purpose he has sent an agent to this city to induce his wife to agree to permit him to obtain a divorce from her without opposition on the ground of desertion. Defendant, moreover, has told her that unless she agrees to liberate him he will proceed to place her in such a position that she will be unable to get any portion of his property. Mrs. Norris declares that her husband owns real estate in this city worth \$75,000. From this property he derives a net income of \$800 a month. Besides his interest in the jewelry business, his firm is worth \$154,000 and the net profits of his business are \$50,000. He receives half of that sum as his share. She says that until recently he allowed her \$175 a week for support of herself. In October he cut the allowance to \$75 a week and three weeks ago stopped these payments. Mrs. Norris thinks she is entitled to about \$800 a month alimony and asks the court to render a decree directing the defendant to pay her that monthly sum.

[Mr. Norris commenced divorce proceedings in Chicago two weeks ago charging desertion.]

In the 5 January 1894 *Chicago Tribune*, p. 8, is a terse item that may reveal B.F. Norris's first public response to his wife's suit:

Norris Says He Offered a Large Sum

B.F. Norris declares that he offered his wife \$100,000 worth of San Francisco property in order to secure a quiet separation. His wife has applied for an injunction in San Francisco, asking the court to prevent him from selling any of his property. Mr. Norris denies the charges against him made in connection with the suit.

These three items add significantly to a surprisingly small amount of detailed information on the complex marriage of the wealthy self-made jeweler and the frustrated professional actress. A more thorough search of the newspapers and documents of their day will doubtless reveal additional information vital to a better understanding of an extraordinary family that embraced their contemporary worlds of both business and the arts.

Review: Frank Norris: Novels and Essays.

Edited by Donald Pizer. The Library of America. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1986. 1232 pp. \$27.50.

Stephen C. Brennan

Louisiana State University in Shreveport

Like its predecessors in the Library of America Series, *Frank Norris* brings together authoritative texts in an attractive handsewn, clothbound volume. Besides Norris's three most naturalistic novels—*Vandover and the Brute*, *McTeague*, and *The Octopus*—editor Donald Pizer has included twenty-one of Norris's critical essays, the six parodies titled "Perverted Tales," a chronology of Norris's life, and historical notes. Regrettably, though, Pizer was not asked to write a critical introduction placing Norris in context. Moreover, some readers may object to Pizer's including *Vandover* rather than *The Pit*, which supposedly signifies the boyish Naturalist's coming of age as Critical Realist. But Norris has earned his place in literary history primarily as a Naturalist; and the present volume represents the historically important Norris and reveals him to be a writer and critic worthy of more respect than he often gets.

Although Norris's fellow-Naturalist Theodore Dreiser once called *The Pit* a "bastard bit of romance of the best seller variety" while praising *McTeague* and *The Octopus*, it was the latter works that Norris himself, in essays like "Plea for Romantic Fiction," considered popular romances. For Norris, however, Romance was not the trivial thing it was for Dreiser; it could be a serious, tragic form that penetrated "the black, unsearched penetralia of the soul of man." There is bathos here and in his other essays, but behind the bathos, the calls for "virile" literature, and the naive insistence that "We don't want literature, we want life," lies a sharp critical mind. Norris valued Naturalism's search for "Truth," but it differed from mere "accuracy" and resulted from an individual temperament diligently applying itself to the "mechanics" of fiction and to the careful selection of concrete details. He believed in fiction's moral purpose, but knew he could achieve it only by absorbing himself in the "page-to-page progress of the narra-

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ive" and, above all, by telling a "good story." Hardly a naive proponent of Zola's "experimental" method, Norris understood the problematic status of fiction, and he anticipated influential critics of our own day—including Pizer—by identifying Naturalism with its Romantic form and effect rather than its mechanistic determinism.

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If Norris's criticism warrants a more respectful reading of his fiction devoted to lycanthropy, greed, and sexual perversion, his parodic "Perverted Tales" would at first seem to be just good fun. Who could ever read Stephen Crane quite the same way after encountering sentences like this one in Norris's "The Green Stone of Unrest": "A pale wind mentioned tremendous facts under its breath with certain effort at concealment to seven not-dwarfed poplars on an un-distant mauve hilltop"? It has been argued, however, that parody expresses a writer's anxiety of influence. Written in 1897, while *McTeague* was yet unfinished, the "Perverted Tales" perhaps helped Norris create a space for his own style. When Norris argues in "Fiction Is Selection" that too much "polish" is a bad thing and that "in roughness there is strength," he is not defending primitivism; he is, rather, asserting the necessity of artfully dissembling artlessness. Norris's crudities are not all planned effects. But if we take them as signifying "life" and not "literature," we will be assuming the role Norris envisioned for his readers and will perhaps be more willing to experience the "Truth" and drama of his fictional world.

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Frank Norris's "Metropolitan Noises"

Joseph R. McElrath, Jr.
Florida State University

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On six occasions the same conclusion has been reached—by Walker (1932), Gaer (1934), Lohf & Sheehy (1959), Katz (1973), Morace (1976), Poncet (1977), and McElrath (1988). The bibliography provided by each includes as Norris's the unsigned "Metropolitan Noises," *The Wave*, 16 (22 May 1897), 9. And yet the essay is largely unknown: it has never been reprinted.

Like many of the *Wave* writings which appear to have been hastily typeset and printed without proofing, the piece solicits editorial speculation regarding what were most likely the manuscript readings—as will be seen in the notes that follow. They record the textual particulars that have been emended.

Metropolitan Noises

The Gamut of Sounds Which Harass the Ears of San Franciscans.

Perhaps it is because of the irregular cobbling of the streets, or perhaps because of the clearness of the atmosphere, or of the absence of certain anti-nuisance regulations, but for some reason or other this San Francisco of ours is one of the noisiest cities between the oceans. Put your head from the office window some day about 11 o'clock, or, failing that, pause for

an instant as you read these words and listen to the sound the city makes in its living. You will notice there are two parts to this sound, two registers as one might say. First there is the multifarious staccato notes, brief, incisive, a world of little sharp, high-keyed ear-jars, but, under these, below these (you would not¹ hear it at first, and it takes some little application to catch it), comes a low pitch bourdon,² a protracted³ baser hum, arising, God knows where. You may hear this diapason from the city better at night, and it is much the same sound as that thrown off by the sea or by the wind in a forest or by a distant multitude.

It is a vast, huge, soothing murmur, rather agreeable than otherwise—a sort of music. The other register is the one that harries you. Listen to it long enough and it will "get in your nerves." A physician told me once, that in all the range of science there was nothing more irritating to a nervous patient than noise.

That's why you will now and then see tan bark before some of the city's houses, where some nervous patient is lying sick. It will not do, it seems, to stop this patient's ears with wax or cotton. It is surprising to know that your ears are not your only sound transmitters. You can picture sound waves striking against the teeth and against the "mastoid process," the round bone behind the ear.

Did you ever notice how plainly you can hear the ringing of the bell of a cable car? As you sit in your office window, for instance, you can distinguish the shrieking of that little saucer of metal as plainly as you can catch the hideous rattling of that load of iron rails or the roll of that huge truck. It appears that the reason for this lies in the fact that the vibrations of the bell are rhythmic and will carry farther than those of the rails or the wheels of the truck, which are not. But it is great gamut for you, the noises of this city's thoroughfares. I suppose there is a part of us, after all, a certain savage, primitive, uncouth part, that rejoices in noise, for noise's sake. Else would we all live in the country, beyond ear-shot of the load of rails, the jangling of cable-car bells, the chanting of newsboys, the demoniac yells of the "fresh stawberry" hucksters, or the incantation of the "rags-bottles-sacks" man, where we would never be obliged to hear a brake yelp against a dusty tire, or dodge the scissors-grinder at his awful trade.

Perhaps you will never quite appreciate the importance of the noises of the city's streets until you shall fall ill—especially of a nervous complaint. Then you will realize the weight of my physician's words when he said that nothing could be more harrowing and more hurtful to a nervous patient than noise. In some highly organized subjects it will produce hysteria, mild insanity, becoming, in fact, a positive physical torture. The lower the type, however, the less irritating is the⁴ effect produced. With the savage, noise is music and music noise, but delicate and highly specialized organisms can be influenced by sound as mercury is influenced by temperature. Ears such as this can find music where you and I would only find noise. That is, in scientific terms, they⁵ can distinguish the rhythmic quality of the vibration, for in this lies the only difference between music and mere noise, noise being only a series of vibrations

which have no rhythm.

Notes

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Current Publications: Update

James R. Giles
Northern Illinois University
Thomas K. Dean
University of Iowa

Presented here is a fourth 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 James R. Giles and to Thomas K. Dean.

Poncet, André. *Frank Norris (1870-1092)*. 2 vols. Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1977. A study of Norris's life and works, distinguished by close analysis of all phases of the career and an unprecedented use of biographical and historical detail.

Martin, Ronald E. *American Literature and the Universe of Force*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1981, pp. 146-83. Argues that Norris presents a "universe-as-force" concept in *The Octopus* in a naive, enthusiastic, and absolutist manner which stands in contrast to the skeptical attitude displayed by Henry Adams. Notes the intermittent appearance of the "universe of force" notion in the earlier writings. Observes the absence in *The Pit* of the "reassuring thought of force's ultimate benevolence" with which *The Octopus* ended. Concludes that no "perspective ever quite prevails in his work or ever wholly integrates his vision."

Leitz, Robert C., III, and Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. "A New Short Story by Frank Norris," *American Literary Realism*, 17 (1984), 1-11. Reprinting of a previously unknown short story, "As Long As Ye Both Shall Live," from the 4 June 1899 San Francisco *Sunday Examiner Magazine*. Discusses the story, an ironic tale addressed to "the 'summer girls' readership," as "Blix turned inside-out."

Bliss, Anthony S. "Frank Norris in Oregon," *Bancroftiana*, 89 (August, 1985), 6-8. Account of discovery by James D. Hart of a collection of books once owned by Norris's widow Jeannette but "removed from a direct family connection to wind up abandoned in a storage vault in Oregon." Of the 101 volumes now in The Bancroft Library, "sixteen were signed by Norris" and "twelve were inscribed to him by their authors."

Davison, Richard Allan. "Sinclair Lewis, Charles G. Norris, and Kathleen Norris: An Early Friendship," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 31 (1985), 503-10. Account of friendship between Sinclair Lewis, Charles and Kath-

leen Norris, and William Rose and Teresa Bener. Based on unpublished interviews of March, 1956, and September, 1957, with Kathleen Norris and on unpublished Lewis letters to Charles Norris from 1921, 1923, and 1929.

Howard, June. *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985. A "new historicism" approach to turn-of-the-century American literary naturalism. Focuses on Norris' contributions to four major characteristics of naturalistic fiction: emphasis on "the brute within" (especially *Vandover*), the narrator as impotent spectator (especially Presley in *The Octopus*), the fear of "proletarianization" (primarily *Vandover*), and the plot of decline (*Vandover*).

Machor, James L. "Epic, Romance, and Norris' *The Octopus*," *American Literary Realism*, 18 (1985), 42-54. Argues that the structure of *The Octopus* is flawed by a shift from an epic mode in the first three-quarters of the novel to a romance mode in the conclusion.

Miller, Edwin Haviland. "Frank Norris's *The Pit* as Autobiography," *University of Hartford Studies in Literature*, 17 (1985), 18-32. A Freudian reading of *The Pit*. Argues that the novel is a veiled recounting of the sexual tensions between Norris's parents, climaxed by the trauma of the father's desertion of the family. Sees Sheldon Corthell and Landry Court as reflections as Norris's complex Oedipal feelings

Crisler, Jesse S. "Editing the Letters of Frank Norris," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 1 (Spring, 1986), pp. 1-4. Discusses the textual and presentational problems related to a new edition of Norris letters: e.g., establishing copy-texts, determining sequence, and defining what constitutes a "letter." Also reflects upon what the correspondence reveals about Norris's multifaceted personality.

—, ed. *Frank Norris: Collected Letters*. San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1986. Building upon the foundation of Franklin Walker's 1956 *Letters of Frank Norris*, Crisler presents 124 letters and 41 inscriptions, including 25 new letters and 30 new inscriptions.

Hart, James D. "The Freshman Themes of Frank Norris," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 2 (Autumn, 1986), pp. 1-2. While Norris's freshman themes at the University of California have been lost, the notebooks of his composition teacher, William Dallam Armes, have been recovered. Presents Armes' record of Norris's compositions and his comments.

Hochman, Barbara. "Loss, Habit, Obsession: The Governing Dynamic of *McTeague*," *Studies in American Fiction*, 14 (1986), 179-190. Narrative and thematic continuity in *McTeague* can be found not in traditional interpretations of evolutionary determinism, but in the fact that the novel is organized around the characters' attempts at stabilizing their lives against loss and flux. Stability is achieved through repeated behaviors, but the habitual unfortunately develops into the obsessional as the threat of loss increases and becomes

more stressful.

Hug, William Joseph. "Frank Norris and Formula Fiction: The Author and Two Early Novels Examined in the Context of Formula Stories and the Popular Attitudes They Express," *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 46 (1986), 3034-A. Norris appears a conventional writer when examined in the context of formula fiction and popular thought. *Moran of the Lady Letty* and *McTeague*, though, demonstrate Norris's "innovative use of formula to express popular beliefs in evolution and Anglo-Saxon superiority."

Leitz, Robert C., III. "A Christmas in the Transvaal": An Addition to the Norris Canon," *Studies in American Fiction*, 14 (1986), 221-224. Reprints a previously unrecorded reminiscence of Norris' experience in South Africa which appeared in the San Francisco *Sunday Examiner Magazine* (December 17, 1899). Norris recounts an incident which demonstrated the superiority of a British constable over a typical Boer policeman.

McElrath, Joseph R., Jr. "Frank Norris and *The Wave*: 1894," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 1 (Spring, 1986), p. 4. Reports that nothing attributable to Norris's hand is discoverable in the 1894 issues of *The Wave*, though there were two previously unrecorded pieces about his activities at the University of California. Reprints both.

Mezzina, Francis Mark. "Frank Norris' *Wave* Writings," *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 47 (1986), 179-A. Identifies and presents the complete texts of Norris' 94 *Wave* writings in 1896. Five new pieces not previously attributed to Norris are included, as are extensive notes offering evidence for this version of the canon.

Michaels, Walter Benn. "Corporate Fiction: Norris, Royce, and Arthur Machen." In *Reconstructing American Literary History*. Ed. Sacvan Bercovitch. Harvard English Studies 13. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986, pp. 189-219. Explores the concept of the "corporate entity" or "corporate personality" in Norris' *The Octopus*, Josiah Royce's *The Feud at Oakfield Creek*, and Arthur Machen, Jr.'s "The Corporate Personality" as it affects the ideas of materiality and immateriality in all aspects of the novels. In *The Octopus*, the corporation becomes not a body of production as Norris suggested, but an immaterial entity with an insatiable appetite for consumption.

Mitchell, Lee Clark. "Little Pictures on the Lacquered Surface: The Determining Vocabularies of Norris's *Vandover and the Brute*," *Papers on Language & Literature*, 22 (1986), 386-405. *Vandover's* experience is determined not by heredity or circumstance but by the narrow set of concepts revealed via the language employed as he defines his life.

Norris, Frank. *Frank Norris: Novels and Essays*. Ed. Donald Pizer. New York: The Library of America, 1986. Includes *Vandover and the Brute*, *McTeague*, *The Octopus*, twenty-two essays, a chronology of Norris' life, and textual notes.

———. *The Octopus: A Story of California*. Introduction by Kevin Starr. New York: Penguin Books, 1986. The introduction addresses the historical background of the events of the novel, Norris' biography, contemporary reviews and later critical assessments, and the interrelationships between Norris, Zola, and naturalism.

Poncet, André. "Procédures de Sémantisation dans la Production du Texte de *McTeague*," *Etudes Anglaises*, 39 (1986), 50-61. Discusses the functions of the repetitions in the text of *McTeague* and their transformations in meaning which mark important developments in the narrative discourse.

Seltzer, Mark. "The Naturalist Machine." In *Sex, Politics, and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. Ed. Ruth Bernard Yeazell. Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1983-84, New Series, no. 10. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, pp. 116-147. Late nineteenth-century naturalism is marked by anxiety over the means of production and reproduction, and it seeks to set up a counter-model of generation ("the naturalist machine") that eliminates the female from the force of generation. Thermodynamics—the conservation and conversion, rather than creation, of energy—is the basis of this counter-model. Norris is highly concerned with displacing generative capabilities in the realm of "force," as is seen in *The Octopus* and *Vandover and the Brute*.

Crisler, Jesse S. "Norris's Departure for Johannesburg," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 3 (1987), pp. 4-5. Establishes the date of Norris's departure from San Francisco to South Africa and the nature of his arrangement with the San Francisco *Chronicle*.

Crow, Charles L. "Bruce Porter's Memoir of Frank Norris," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 3 (1987), pp. 1-2. A diplomatic transcription of the memoir Bruce Porter sent to Franklin Walker.

Davison, Richard Allan. "Charles G. Norris, Kathleen Norris and *Vandover and the Brute*: A New Letter," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 3 (1987), pp. 2-4. Describes the intra-familial activities regarding the posthumous publication of *Vandover*, presenting a letter from Kathleen Norris to Frank's mother which was designed to convince her that she should grant permission for the use of the manuscript.

Dawson, Hugh. "McTeague as Ethnic Stereotype," *American Literary Realism*, 20 (1987), 34-44. Much of *McTeague's* characterization depends upon Irish-American stereotypes at the turn of the century.

Debouzy, Marianne. "McTeague: Quelques Points d'Histoire et d'Idéologie," *Revue Française d'Études Américaines*, 31 (1987), 31-40. Explores historical and ideological facets of *McTeague* in terms of how they function as components of the narrative rather than as independent "facts."

Fisher, Benjamin Franklin, IV. "The Pit as a Play," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 4 (1987), pp. 4-7. Details

and evaluates the differences between Norris's novel and Channing Pollock's adaptation of it for the stage, including information on the performance, critical reception, and other dramatic adaptations of Norris's work.

Hart, James D. *A Student Theme by Frank Norris*. Berkeley: Wesley B. Tanner, 1987. This keepsake of 100 copies commemorating the Norris Society luncheon at the Bohemian Club presents a facsimile of a forty-fifth theme written by Norris at Harvard University. As explained by Hart, the text is directly related to a passage in *Vandover*.

[Martin, William.] "The Literary Frank Norris (1870-1902)," *The Phi Gamma Delta*, Fall, 1987, p. 22. Description of Norris's life and writings.

Lundén, Rolf. "The Undeserved Neglect of Charles G. Norris," *Studia Neophilologica*, 59 (1987), 25-39. Survey of Charles Norris's career as a committed social critic, adept craftsman, and important cultural figure. Focuses on his subject matter, style, influences upon him, and working methods. Includes a detailed analysis of *Pig Iron*.

McElrath, Joseph R., Jr. "Frank Norris and *The Wave*, 1895," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 3 (1987), p. 4. *The Wave* twice refers to Norris in 1895. The foci are on an early collection of his short fiction, his journalistic work in South Africa, and his authorship of two *Wave* articles that he did not sign.

—. "Norris's Attitude Toward *Sister Carrie*," *Dreiser Studies*, 18 (1987), 39-42. Discusses the degree to which Norris's support of *Sister Carrie* may have changed after he learned of the new attitude of his superiors at Doubleday, Page & Co. toward the manuscript. Cites a paragraph on Dreiser and Arthur Henry from John O'Hara Cosgrave's "Things and People" feature in the 28 July 1900 San Francisco *Wave* as evidence that Norris's support of Dreiser's manuscript most likely remained strong.

—. "Frank Norris at Del Monte: Two New *Wave* Essays from 1895," *American Literary Realism*, 20 (1987), 56-70. Presents two edited texts of *Wave* essays by Norris, both with the title "The Country Club at Del Monte." Explains why the two pieces not signed by Norris can be attributed to him.

Michaels, Walter Benn. *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, pp. 189-219. American economics of the late 19th century serves not as background to or context for literature but is connected structurally to the economic culture of the time and its concepts. Norris's fiction is examined in terms of structural patterns regarding the ideas of freedom of contract and the corporate personality.

Mitchell, Mark L., and Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. "Frank Norris's *The Pit*: Musical Elements as Biographical Evidence," *Papers on Language & Literature*, 23 (1987), 161-74. Analyzes how Norris "employed high-

cultural musical allusions as he shaped his principal characterizations and enhanced his themes." Argues that Norris's musical sophistication provides a significant new biographical datum.

Newman, Robert D. "Supernatural Naturalism: Norris's Spiritualism in *The Octopus*," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 4 (1987), pp. 1-4. Argues that the mysticism of the Vanamee subplot is not inconsistent with the empirical nature of the social reform novel. Provides examples of several specific ways in which various forms of supernaturalism were seriously incorporated in social and scientific theories in the 19th century and later.

Pettersson, Torsten. "Deterministic Acceptance Versus Moral Outrage: A Problem of Literary Naturalism in Frank Norris' *The Octopus*," *Orbis Litterarum*, 42 (1987), 77-95. Norris's call for social reform and acceptance of determinisms cannot be reconciled. The inconsistency can be traced to Norris's intellectual background: Calvinism, Naturalism, and American evolutionary philosophies generated conflicting impulses which are observable in the works of other Naturalists as well.

Frank Norris Studies is a publication of the Norris Society and is issued twice per year for the members. Membership for individuals and institutions requires the payment of dues of ten dollars per year to The Frank Norris Society Inc., Dept. of English, Florida State University, Tallahassee FL 32306-1036. Manuscripts should be addressed to either of the editors: Jesse S. Crisler, Communications, Brigham Young University—Hawaii Campus, Laie, Hawaii 96762; or Robert C. Leitz, III, 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; James D. Hart, The Bancroft Library; Donald Pizer, Tulane University; and Barbara Hochman, Tel Aviv University. Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., Florida State University, is the managing editor.