

The “California Naturalists”: Memory as Spiritual Renewal and Other Parallels in London, Norris, and Steinbeck

Jesse S. Crisler
Brigham Young University

Identifying works and authors, especially those producing material during roughly comparable historical periods, through isolated similarities has become a commonplace pastime for critics. Thus, standard anthologies loosely group writers as different in tone as Charles W. Chesnutt and Bret Harte, as opposite in aesthetics as Sarah Orne Jewett and George Washington Cable, and as conflicting in purpose as Kate Chopin and Joel Chandler Harris under the barely serviceable rubric of “local colorists.” Similarly, discovering the debts writers owe to their authorial progenitors, especially when obscurity enshrouds or unlikelihood swathes such debts, has catapulted many fledgling scholars to lasting fame, if not tangible fortune, as astute and perceptive savants whose well-read erudition enabled them to boldly go where no critic had gone before. Indeed, the more remote the putative influences, the happier both discoverers and their peers seemingly are; whether the later writer demonstrably read the earlier hardly matters when abstruse questions of literary authority are at stake. In some instances, however, either empirical parallels between certain authors or clear “line[s] of descent” between writers of chronologically successive periods do legitimately exist (Lutwack 47). Linkages

of both varieties, for example, connect Frank Norris, Jack London, and John Steinbeck, an authorial triumvirate Richard Cracroft has labeled the “California Naturalists.” Still, although examining the lives and canons of these three writers has categorized more or less evident affinities among them (including parallels in biographical detail, similarities in literary taste, interest, and influence, correspondences in philosophical outlook and method, admiration of belletristic achievements, resemblances in and/or plagiarism of narrative events or ideas, and accidents of either history or fiction), perhaps the most significant connection among them centers generally on their expression of sometimes wintry world views in terms which have come to be defined as Literary Naturalism and, perhaps paradoxically given the nature of those views, on their common use of memory as a means by which characters experience spiritual renewal.

As he so often did in his long and distinguished career as knowledgeable biographer and trenchant critic of “literary California,” Franklin Walker provided the ostensible last word on the biographical connection between Frank Norris and Jack London a quarter-century ago. In the first place, Walker noted that both entered the University of California as “special students” (22), since neither had fulfilled all necessary entrance requirements for admission because of inadequate high school preparation—Norris at San Francisco Boys High School and earlier at Belmont Academy, where a broken arm suffered in an intramural football game abruptly abbreviated his tenure (and where London later worked in the Academy’s laundry, a miserable and back-breaking episode chronicled in *Martin Eden* [1909]), and London at Oakland High School, in which he enrolled at the unlikely age of nineteen. After study at both Berkeley and Harvard, Norris secured a position as assistant editor of the San Francisco *Wave*, a slick-paper weekly published, according to its masthead, for “those in the swim”; besides these heavy editorial duties he also contributed a variety of reportorial pieces, interviews, short stories, and translations to each issue. Not long after Norris quit *The Wave* for pastures in the East he deemed greener for aspiring writers, London submitted a story to the same periodical

(Walker 16). Finally, despite relatively ignominious academic records at Berkeley, both writers cordially responded to invitations to return to their alma mater as successful writers: Norris read a then unpublished short story, "Two Hearts That Beat as One," on September 12, 1901 ("College" [1]), just weeks before his untimely death on October 25, while London, after chiding the English Department for requiring lifeless reading assignments of its hapless enrollees, learned to his chagrin that a lengthy extract from his own *The Call of the Wild* (1903) constituted one such assignment (Walker 23).

Of course, Walker did not collect all the biographical connections between Norris and London, for their lives are strangely alike in several other ways. First, both became members of San Francisco's elite Bohemian Club, participating in its dramatic extravaganzas. Second, when Norris left San Francisco in early 1898, he did so to accept employment with maverick publisher S. S. McClure as both correspondent for *McClure's Magazine* and manuscript reader for the rising publishing firm of Doubleday and McClure. In time, *McClure's* ran pieces by Norris and subsequently, over a ten-year period, by London. After the success of *McTeague* in 1899, McClure supported Norris financially while he researched *The Octopus* (1901), just as, later, impressed with the success of *The Son of the Wolf* (1900), McClure supplied a retainer of \$125 per month to London to write *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902), his first novel (Sinclair 65). Notwithstanding McClure's faith in his protégés, he refused to publish any of five articles Norris composed while covering the Spanish-American war under his employ, and he ultimately sold the rights to London's initial novel to Lippincott's, which eventually published it (Sinclair 90). Finally, Norris and London shared another disappointment. In July 1902, hoping to sail around the world to gather raw material for a projected novel to be titled *The Wolf*, Norris and his wife, Jeannette, first shortened their anticipated voyage to a trip to India and then cancelled it altogether because of Jeannette's sudden illness. Five years later, London and his second wife, Charmian, also truncated a planned circumnavigation of the world, opting instead for a cruise to Hawaii and the South Seas in London's own ketch, the *Snark*.

While no critic has produced an investigation similar to Walker's of biographical affinities between either of these turn-of-the-century writers and their successor Steinbeck, many nonetheless obtain. Though few of these are biographical, those which are seem telling in retrospect. For instance, Norris travelled to Harvard in the late summer of 1894 specifically to enroll in a course in creative writing taught by famed professor Lewis E. Gates; similarly, Steinbeck took a series of courses at Stanford geared to teach him how to write fiction, one of which was taught by Edith Mirrielees, a well-known short story writer who in time became associated with the famous Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in Vermont (Parini 34-35). At Harvard, Norris followed a rigorous regimen of writing which included short themes submitted thrice per week, a longer effort every two weeks, and a still longer piece every six weeks, developing solid writing practices which held him in good stead as a habitually consistent writer until he died. Likewise, Steinbeck at Stanford adopted the habit of daily writing, a discipline he maintained throughout his life, even when in other aspects he leaned toward excess (Parini 36). In one significant particular Steinbeck's life also mirrored London's. Unlike Norris, who until his parents' divorce was the scion of a jewelry business, London and Steinbeck had to fend for themselves. London largely supported himself in a startling variety of odd jobs in Oakland and elsewhere, just as Steinbeck during his college years also worked at whatever he could in Oakland and the Salinas Valley (Lisca 25)—as a sugar company maintenance man, a department store clerk, a surveyor, a ditch digger, and, predictably, a bindlestiff, from all of which, like London before him, he gleaned material he would later transform into enviable fiction.

Just as some details of Norris's and London's lives are similar, so were some of their literary tastes and interests. For example, that both admired Kipling's particular brand of adventure story comes as no surprise (Walker 22). Norris expressed that admiration through Condy Rivers, protagonist in *Blix*, published in 1900, who "tasted the intense delight of revealing to another an appreciation of a literature hitherto ignored" by reading Kipling aloud to his female "pal" Travis Bessemer (74-75); that same year, on October 27, London

reported to a friend that he too had fallen under Kipling's sway: "There is no end of Kipling in my work. . . . I have even quoted him. I would never possibly have written anywhere near the way I did had Kipling never been. True, true, every bit of it" (Labor, Leitz, and Shepard 216). Both writers had also read Zola, particularly *Germinal* (1885), which Norris imitated in *The Octopus* and London in *The Iron Heel* (1908) (Walker 21). Norris and London read as well the disparate pair of Bierce, whom London knew and Norris parodied in *The Wave* ("Perverted"), and Browning, whose poems Norris's mother read aloud in meetings of the San Francisco Browning Society. London felt that Browning's poetry along with Swinburne's added a certain elegance to one's personal bookcase (Sinclair 30), and both instantly appeal to young Martin Eden. Steinbeck also shared a literary predilection with Norris. Jay Parini quotes a friend of the novelist who states Steinbeck had read the "great French and English" writers apparently eagerly (39), as had Norris, judging from copies of works by Flaubert, Zola, Fielding, Sterne, Johnson, Eliot, and other European writers in his personal library.

But Perhaps the clearest indication of congruent literary taste between Norris and London comes in the form of a memorandum London wrote to himself about Norris. Now a part of miscellaneous papers in the Huntington Library's staggering Jack London collection, the note reminded London to "See Norris in CRITIC of May 1902," a reference to a series of seven articles by Norris collectively entitled "Salt and Sincerity," which ran in monthly installments of the *Critic* between April and October 1902. In the installment in question, Norris championed a version of reader-response criticism long before it had earned that appellation: "Who cares which of the *Waverleys* Sir Walter thought his best? . . . The author's point of view is very different from yours—the reader's. Which one do *you* think the best? That's the point" (196). Further, he maintained rather idealistically that in the court of blind critical judgment, bathed by a necessary "lapse of considerable time," the informed public, even if one-eyed, remained king and "will always decide justly" regarding the fate of literature (197). If, as his memorandum suggests, London presumably agreed with Norris's senti-

ments, then that could in part explain London's seemingly uncanny lifelong ability to produce what his public desired to read. London's memorandum also looks forward to another connection between himself and Norris involving the *Critic*. In its September number the *Critic* carried the sixth of Norris's series as well as "Again the Literary Aspirant" by London. These essays, as novelist Henry Blake Fuller, their contemporary, remarked in a discussion in the *Chicago Evening Post*, while similar in content, differ markedly in purpose. Norris trumpets his faith in the critical acumen of the "Plain People," prophesying that if "the modern novelist does not . . . address himself directly to them intelligently and simply, he will fail" (222), a note he first sounded a few months earlier in the piece prompting London's memorandum. In the intervening months, however, London seems to have modified his presumed approval of Norris's position, for in his essay he supports the idea that only well-trained critics, those Fuller described as being "sufficiently informed regarding the broad trend of culture and events to have some adequate realization of the limited value of the mere passing moment in its relation to the general course of time" (9), can fairly judge literary quality.

Quite naturally, the observable resemblance in literary valuation among Norris, London, and Steinbeck suggests an equally obvious correspondence in their philosophical credos as naturalistic writers, for, while the debate over the particular brand of Naturalism each exhibits rages, few would argue that none of the three was indeed *not* a Naturalist. Thus, though Norris, in emulating his mentor Zola, and London, in infusing large doses of Marx and Spencer into his works, each wrote novels reflecting their respective purposes, the work of both today seems more firmly rooted in American Naturalism than in anything else. An early seed of influence on both at Berkeley later characteristically matured in their fiction. As Donald Pizer and others have shown, Norris, having encountered the ideas of eminent scientist Joseph Le Conte in a course he took from him at the University of California, unhesitatingly incorporated at least some of Le Conte's philosophy in his early stories and novels. Whether London, like Norris, also read Le Conte during his year at the university is not as clear; that he did know

about Le Conte's teaching, however, is evident, since in *Martin Eden*, Professor Caldwell in a self-pejorative confession extols Le Conte's plea for greater breadth of learning among those who consider themselves educated: "I am too classical, not enough up-to-date in the interpretative branches of sciences. . . . I wonder if you'll believe that I've never been inside a physics or chemistry laboratory? . . . Le Conte was right" (241).

Those intimately familiar with the texts of Norris and London know that they also shared a belief in other philosophical tenets. While any of several of these could be examined, one perhaps more interesting than most is their odd conviction of the inevitable triumph of the Anglo-Saxon "race." Not only politically incorrect by today's standards but biologically untenable as well, this idea imbues the work of both writers. For example, in his essay "The Frontier Gone at Last" Norris applauds the wholesale slaughter of Caribbean natives, blithely ignoring the fact that their successful annihilators hailed from southern rather than northern Europe. London supports the idea of Anglo-Saxon conquest even more baldly in *The Valley of the Moon* (1913), in which protagonist Saxon Brown, as "a flower of Anglo-Saxon stock," can surmount any hurdle life throws in her path because she is a true "thoroughbred" (129).

Philosophical parallels are likewise abundant between Norris and Steinbeck. Joseph Fontenrose compared Steinbeck's well-known response to land and earth to an "awareness of and sympathy with the non-human, with the physical and biological environment in all its power and magnitude, dwarfing and absorbing humanity," a quality he found "visible" in Norris's work (3). Leonard Lutwack in a discussion of Norris's essay, "A Neglected Epic," suggested *The Grapes of a Wrath* (1930) as a lineal descendant of *The Octopus* (47), a kinship Warren French also surveyed (18), while William Rose Benét in a review of *In Dubious Battle* (1936) averred that its "vigorous realism" recalled *The Octopus* (10). Finally, Robert DeMott, mourning in his discussion of Steinbeck's reading that "little has been written" concerning the nature of the "relationship" between Norris and Steinbeck, argued that Steinbeck "shared certain thematic and aesthetic affinities with Nor-

ris," notably in *The Grapes of Wrath* (165).

Lamentably, scholars have not as sedulously tallied like philosophical bents between London and Steinbeck. Prominent exceptions are R. S. Hughes, who contended that Steinbeck aspired to be another Jack London, that is, a successful purveyor of thought-provoking adventure tales (9), and Parini, who asserted that Steinbeck, while in college, dreamed of languid excursions to exotic parts of the globe modeled on those of London (29).

A look at which of each others' books these writers personally admired usefully bridges analysis of their philosophies and scrutiny of the other writers they either praised or echoed in their own work. Having died the youngest and earliest of the three, Norris failed to document whether he had read any of London's stories; he could not have read any of London's novels, since the first did not appear until late in 1902, after his death. London, on the other hand, recorded his appreciation of at least four of Norris's novels. Commenting on April 30, 1899, on Norris's recent employment with the McClure syndicate, London asked of fellow California writer Cloudesley Johns, "Have you read his *Moran of the Lady Letty*? It's well done" (Labor, Leitz, and Shepard 72), succinct praise which he underscored two months later in a subsequent letter, dated July 5, 1899, in which he predicted Johns would "enjoy Rose-Seley's criticism of Frank Norris, and Frank Norris's rejoinder" (Labor, Leitz, and Shepard 93). London evidently appreciated Norris's spirited retaliation against Rose-Seley's ridicule of his maritime blunders, written not so much to defend obvious errors he had made in *Moran* (1898) as to castigate Rose-Seley for his failure to recognize literary artistry in action (Leitz 120). Two years later, not yet having attained the success he himself would soon achieve, London praised Norris more overtly, specifically, and extensively in a review of *The Octopus*, a copy of which he owned (Hamilton 16); commending Norris for an impressive first volume in his "Epic of the Wheat," London ended the review by noting that Norris's novel consummated "the promise of *Moran* and *McTeague*" ("Octopus" 47). Later, in 1914, when thoughts of Norris and his work had all but disappeared from America's collective reading mind and his younger brother Charles G. Nor-

ris issued what most critics today assume to be Norris's first written book, *Vandover and the Brute*, London both echoed his earlier judgment of Frank Norris and paid even more vigorous tribute to him in a telegram dispatched to Charles on April 15: "Vandover and the Brute is Frank Norris from A to Z. In it is all his ripe promise which he so splendidly fulfilled[.] Vandover and the Brute was twenty years ahead of its time and today it is just in its time. All lovers of Norris will hail it with deepest satisfaction" (Labor, Leitz, and Shepard 1329).

Like London, Steinbeck also respected Norris as an accomplished predecessor, if copies of *McTeague* and *The Octopus* in his own library serve as indicators of his regard (DeMott 84). While his library additionally contained copies of two London books, *The Call of the Wild* and *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), Steinbeck's reference to these works in one of his own novels more clearly reveals his favorable estimate of them (DeMott 69). In *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) Miss Molly Morgan, the valley's new teacher, institutes several educational innovations with her young charges, among which is a daily half hour of oral reading of "boys books," including works by Scott, Zane Grey, and James Oliver Curwood, as well as London's two most popular novels, all of which her students judged "not baby stories . . . but exciting, grown-up stories" (42).

A short step from admiring another's work is imitating it. James R. Giles directed attention to a resemblance between Ross Wilbur, hero of Norris's *Moran*, and Vance Corliss, protagonist in London's *A Daughter of the Snows* (22), both of whom undergo transformations from effete society blades, whose primary concerns gravitate toward debutante balls and polo matches, to aggressively masculine heroes, as evidenced by Wilbur's exultation when he knifes a Chinese pirate and would-be thief and by Corliss's jubilation when he realizes he has successfully decked a barroom bully with only his fist for a weapon. (In like vein Frona Welse, London's representative of the fin-de-siècle "new woman" in *Snows*, mirrors her counterpart, Moran Sternerson, Norris's female Viking throwback in *Moran* [Giles 22].) Walker pointed out a similarity between Wilbur and another London hero, Humphrey Van Weyden of *The Sea-Wolf*, concluding that their mar-

itime experiences (beginning with their being shanghaied near or in San Francisco Bay and culminating in their metamorphoses into lean, but sensitive fighting machines) roughly correspond (16). Less comprehensive than London's imitations of *Moran* is the reform Martin Eden undergoes when he, like McTeague before him, bows to the forceful whim of a beautiful woman, losing first his taste for steam beer (Watson 139) and then relinquishing altogether his addiction to tobacco in his bid for Ruth Morse's affections, both recalling Trina Sieppe's modification of McTeague's desire for cheap tobacco and steam beer. Echoes of *McTeague* run as well through *The Valley of the Moon*, in which Billy Roberts serenades Saxon on their train ride home from a day spent together at a bricklayers' picnic in Weasel Park with "a lugubrious song of many stanzas" (41), reminiscent of the "six lugubrious airs" McTeague sang each Sunday afternoon accompanying himself on his concertina (3). Even more compelling as evidence of London's imitation of Norris is Billy's marriage proposal to Saxon. What he lacks in romantic phrasing Billy offsets with impassioned fervor when he cries, "Say, Saxon . . . It's no use my holdin' it any longer. . . . What's the matter with you an' me gettin' married" (96), an offer recalling that of McTeague, who in an access of emotion as courtly as Billy's articulates his own proposal to Trina as she confusedly awakens from the effects of ether in his dental chair: "Listen here, Miss Trina, I like you better than any one else; what's the matter with us getting married" (24). Faced with such gallant offers, how could either heroine refuse?

Nor are examples of Steinbeck's imitation of both Norris and London difficult to find. Elaine Ware described a number of parallels between *McTeague* and Steinbeck's "Flight," a short story Hughes also compared to London's "To Build a Fire" (9). But evidence that Steinbeck patterned one of his major works at least in part after *McTeague* is even more pointed. A thorough analysis of language, diction, and plot in comparable scenes in Norris's novel and Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) led Richard Allan Davison to the conclusion that Steinbeck closely modeled the fight between the slow-witted Lennie Small and the boss's bantam-weight son Curley on a quarrel Marcus

Schouler, once McTeague's best friend, provokes with McTeague that ripens into a wrestling match (21-23). Marcus, resentful over being bested by McTeague in the match, anticipates Mike Tyson's offended rage by biting through his opponent's earlobe, to which the normally goodnatured but powerful McTeague responds by gripping Marcus's arm forcefully enough to break it. Steinbeck replays the scene, assigning the role of aggrieved bully to Curley, who, suspecting that Lennie laughs at him for failing to corral his sultry wife, smashes his nose, thereby causing Lennie, urged by his pal George Milton, to crush Curley's hammering fist in his huge hand. A second instance of Steinbeck's imitation of *McTeague* in *Of Mice and Men* occurs during the prestrangulation dialogue between Lennie and Curley's wife when, fearful that George will find out he has petted his puppy to death (as he had formerly killed a series of small animals) and prevent him from tending rabbits on their mythical ranch, Lennie listens absently to her tale of an imagined acting triumph which ended somewhat incongruously in her abrupt marriage. Their conversation vividly reminds one of Norris's similar study in abnormal psychology, the premurder dialogue between Zerkow, the red-haired Jew with grasping prehensile fingers in *McTeague*, and his wife Maria, the Mexican maid-of-all-work, whom Zerkow, still fanatically fascinated by Maria's previous mental meanderings of a lost ancestral fortune of gold dinnerware, refuses to credit not only that she no longer remembers her oft-repeated litany of the gold service but that she also disavows having ever recited it. Instead, Maria accuses Zerkow himself of madness, just as Curley's wife accuses Lennie.

A penultimate aspect in which these writers resemble each other rests on two charges of plagiarism levied against them. By far the more complicated, the situation involving Norris and London, has been explained in some detail by Walker and others. S. T. Clover, editor of the *Los Angeles Express*, originally discovered the previously unnoticed similarity between Norris's story, "The Passing of Cock-eye Blacklock," published in *Century's* July 1902 number, and London's "Moon-Face," appearing in the *Argonaut* on July 21 that same year. Both hinge on a relatively unusual plot device, the retrieval by a pet dog of a stick of

dynamite which the dog's master had cast into a body of water, hoping to kill as many fish as possible but instead killing himself. Since London's story was printed after Norris's, his having plagiarized the idea from Norris seemed probable (Walker 17). Though Clover probably desired to exonerate London, he managed, instead, to muddy already cloudy waters still further by mentioning yet a third story which turned on the same incident: the November 1901 issue of *The Black Cat*, a periodical specializing in adventure fiction, carried "An Exploded Theory" by Charles Forrest McLean, in which a dog retrieves a lighted cartridge from a pool of water east of Seattle where his master had thrown it after a disgruntling day of fishing without measurable result (Walker 18). While the master eludes death in this version, the parallel to it of both Norris's and London's efforts was damning. Fortunately, when William S. Caldwell subsequently proclaimed that he had written a fourth story depending on the identical device for the *California News*, also in November 1901, far from creating even more eddies in a by now vertiginously spinning whirlpool, Caldwell at last supplied a believable explanation for presumed plagiarism by both Norris and London by relating that his own source had been a newspaper article which he had clipped to recast as a fictional sketch (Walker 18). A few years later, when McClure asked London to respond to still another accusation of plagiarism, London denied the charge in a letter dated April 10, 1906, reminding McClure with some mirth of this earlier, more complex incident and advising him that he, like many other writers, routinely massaged articles they read in newspapers into the fiction they published: "Norris and I had read the same newspaper account, and proceeded to exploit it" (Labor, Leitz, and Shepard 569).

Not as involved as the Norris-London episode, the charge by Steinbeck's contemporary F. Scott Fitzgerald of plagiarism of material in *McTeague* for *Of Mice and Men* is no less interesting. Edmund Wilson first disclosed Steinbeck's minor borrowings from Norris in 1940, including transferring both the method and type of Zerkow's maniacal badgering of Maria for continual retellings of her ancestors' fabled gold dishes into the scene in which Lennie obsessively pesters George with

ceaseless requests for an oral description of their common dream of owning a small farm (840). Ironically, Wilson himself pilfered his "evidence" of Steinbeck's theft from Fitzgerald, who in a letter to Wilson, dated November 25, 1940, which accompanied Fitzgerald's own marked copy of *McTeague*, termed Steinbeck a "cagey cribber" (Bruccoli and Duggan 612). Using that copy, Davison comprehensively explored the precise nature of Steinbeck's reworking of Norris's material, charitably determining that he simply "play[ed] variations on a source" rather than actually stealing from it (223), and even more tolerantly relegating Wilson's own plundering of Fitzgerald to a mere note, simply remarking that in Wilson's discussion of Steinbeck's "borrowing" from Norris, "Fitzgerald's name is not mentioned" (225). But what Wilson planted others have patiently watered. Most recently within the broader context of literary influence, John H. Timmerman in a balanced appraisal reviewed the issue of whether Steinbeck filched anything—plot, event, or even idea—from Norris, deciding that, while "several passages from *M c T e a g u e* . . . may support Fitzgerald's charge" (271), Zerkow's compulsive wish to hear Maria's story incessantly repeated entirely lacks "any of the tenderness George shows toward Lennie" (272).

Historical accidents form an arena for a final series of links among these three novelists. Norris, for example, wrote an early poem entitled "Crepusculum," later collected by Ella Sterling Cummins Mighels in *The Story of the Files* (1893) and accompanied by a brief comment on Norris as poet (359–60); coincidentally, in London's *The Valley of the Moon* Saxon experiences great excitement when she learns that ten fugitive poems by her mother, Daisy Wiley Brown, an early emigrant to California, had appeared in the same Mighels volume (345). Later in the novel, Mark Hall, loosely based on George Sterling, pronounces Saxon's mother "a true poet" (398). Elsewhere in *The Valley of the Moon* Billy recalls that his father told him he shot grizzlies in the mountains "up north of Sacramento" (319), an adventure Norris, who not long before he died wrote to his publisher that he could "shoot bears from the windows" of a mountain cabin recently acquired, would doubtless have relished (Crisler 203). (Incidentally, Steinbeck was born in Salinas in

1902, just eight months before Norris penned this letter not far away in San Francisco.)

Unlike the connections explored thus far, there are others in which all three novelists play simultaneously. For example, all three failed to graduate from college. All served as war correspondents, Norris in the Spanish-American War, London in the Russo-Japanese War, and Steinbeck in World War II, each writing dispatches or articles about what they saw. All frequently took stories from people they met in their own lives: Norris gathered material for his fiction from a variety of unusual sources, such as the retired sea captain in San Francisco whose story he records in *Blix*; London paid a young Sinclair Lewis for nearly thirty plots in 1910 and 1911, eventually using at least five of them (Hendricks and Shepard 483); and Steinbeck gave a bum who related his story to him on the road two dollars for the right to mold it into fiction (Parini 32). All also placed themselves in their novels: Norris appears near the end of *McTeague* as “a tall, lean young man with a thick head of hair surprisingly gray,” a fair description of his own physical exterior at the time he was completing the novel (280); in *The Valley of the Moon* London inserts himself and Charmian as Jack and Clara Hastings who sail a skiff named, like his own real boat, the *Roamer*, take Saxon and Billy aboard for a few hours, and appreciatively acknowledge Saxon’s recognition of Jack as a “war correspondent in the Japanese-Russian War” (428); and Steinbeck figures in *East of Eden* (1952) as a grandson of a major character, Samuel Hamilton. All three writers had interest in and acquaintance with things nautical they later incorporated in their works: *Moran*, *Blix*, and *A Man’s Woman* (1900); *The Sea-Wolf*, *Martin Eden*, and *The Cruise of the Snark* (1911); and *Cup of Gold* (1932), *Sea of Cortez* (1941), and *Cannery Row* (1945). All began their careers as students: four poems, eight stories and sketches, a play, and an article by Norris appearing in various Berkeley student publications; ten articles and stories by London published in *The High School Aegis*, a literary magazine at Oakland High School; and two stories and three satirical poems by Steinbeck appearing in two Stanford student periodicals. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, all considered themselves Californian by birth, education,

and, had they thought of it, the grace of God. Of course, Norris had not actually been born in California but in Chicago, but he did little to dispel the popular notion of his California nativity, once even gratuitously manipulating the facts of his background to suggest a more concrete connection to California than he could really claim, brazenly stating that he "was 'bawn 'n raise' in California" (Crisler 57), a biographical example of joining those one seems unable to beat.

So closes this extensive consideration of an intricate inter-authorial association. Yet in the words of Henry James in *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903), are not some of these correspondences so many "trivialities of youth, simplicities of freshness, stupidities of ignorance, small possible germs, but too deeply buried" to be of real importance (66), that is, are not many of these examples, numerous though they must seem, characterized more by their superficial nature than by their essential worth? The answer to this rightly posed question is not a simple one, for, while many of these affiliations among Norris, London, and Steinbeck might qualify as insignificant, shallow, weak, even nugatory, others decidedly do not, and all at least possess intrinsic appeal for students of these writers who perforce must be interested in any information supplied or conclusions drawn about them. Taken as a whole, then, these parallels coalesce into an appropriate canvas of such specific narrative and thematic consequence that examples of its employment by all three writers pervade their best-known works.

As Literary Naturalists, all three conceived fictive worlds that were quite bleak, describing dismal conditions surrounding characters who struggle in vain against them. A case in point is Mr. Sieppe, Trina's blustering father in *McTeague*, a voluble but largely ineffective martinet. A man who perceives life as a perpetual series of military contests, Sieppe approaches even the most mundane tasks with an insecurity obstreperously masked by a steady stream of commands issued to his family. Norris's introduction of him typifies his behavior: "Mr. Sieppe toiled and perspired. Upon him devolved the responsibility of the excursion. He seemed to consider it a matter of vast importance, a veritable expedition" (48). During a family outing Sieppe's inadvertent

destruction of his son's birthday present, a toy steamboat, foreshadows his later inability to make an adequate living in Oakland and his subsequent failure to turn his "third interest in an upholstering business in the suburbs of Los Angeles" into a success (112). When mounting debt forces Sieppe to mortgage his house, he characteristically determines to emigrate to New Zealand in the hope of better prospects. Sieppe's problem, Norris implies, is not the unfairness of malevolent Nature but his own inability to conduct his life well by using to advantage what talents or gifts he has. Thus, if living is the contest he imagines it to be, his defeat by his environment is self-inflicted because he has refused to learn how to participate profitably in the game.

London likewise peoples his novels with characters beleaguered by forces they refuse to combat efficiently. Such a character is Ruth Morse, whom Martin Eden misguidedly considers his ideal love, and for whom he sacrifices a great deal. Ruth, though not an aristocrat, enjoys the privileges of education and taste which her father's wealth and her mother's position in society have conferred on her. When her brother Arthur introduces the virile but uncouth and unschooled Martin into her world, she finds herself powerfully attracted both to his robust masculinity and his lusty strength. Inevitably, the two sides of Ruth's nature clash: on the one hand, she approves of the progress Martin makes under her tutelage toward becoming civilized; on the other, she finds resisting his animal appeal difficult. In the world of romanticized fiction, Ruth would have tamed this barbarian, after which both would then have lived happily. But in London's naturalistic world, Ruth receives a more realistic treatment. When an unfair story in an Oakland newspaper paints Martin as a shiftless socialist, Ruth succumbs to parental demands as well as to the comfort of her known world rather than challenge information which her parents instantly believe but which she knows to be patently incorrect. She breaks her engagement to Martin, symbolically rejecting the opportunity he represented for a fuller life than the spoiled existence she had accepted as her right. Like Sieppe, Ruth performs inadequately, primarily because she is neither secure nor passionate enough to achieve goals she imagines she desires. To have married Martin, either as she first found him

or as he later becomes, would have meant a wholesale restructuring of Ruth's ideals, a tall order which she fails to fill.

Steinbeck also draws characters against a naturalistic background. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Al Joad idolizes his older brother Tom, newly released from a stint in the state penitentiary. At sixteen, Al seems capable, resourceful, and eager to help his family secure employment in golden California. Nursing their rattletrap truck across various environmentally unaccommodating western states like a nervous hen coaxing reluctant chicks across a busy street, Al exults with the others when at last they arrive in storied Central Valley and can begin looking for the "work" that has talismanically lured them during their journey. However, though Al is as willing to work as the rest, unlike them, he possesses a fatal flaw: he is selfish. Normally, this flaw manifests itself harmlessly either in irrepressible sexual desire or in a need for his prowess as a skilled mechanic to be lauded. But Al's true nature asserts itself when the proverbial chips are down and the Joads hit rockbottom, their meager funds depleted, Rose of Sharon's baby dead and she too weak to walk, their truck mired in mud, Tom wanted by the law, and Pa unable to make even rudimentary decisions. When Ma instinctively turns to Al as the one dependable male remaining to help her herd her dwindling family to the safety of higher ground, Al disappointingly elects to remain with the Wainwrights, his fiancée's family, who possess neither Ma's vision nor her determination. And so like the other undependable men in the novel, Al also flunks life's test, abandoning his mother when she most needs him.

However, such characters comprise only one side of the naturalistic fiction of Norris, London, and Steinbeck; within this bitter context these Naturalists also delineate characters who, instead of succumbing to life's apparent despair, embrace living fully, trusting the common thread of memory, whether their own, another character's, or even their fictional creator's, to lead them not to the spiritual desolation to which the Mr. Sieppes, the Ruth Morses, and the Al Joads so easily assent, but to the spiritual restoration paradoxically available even in a naturalistic world. A consideration of representative characters who through the lens of memory discover spiritual renewal elucidates by

far the most salient correspondence among these writers. As master storytellers, Norris, London, and Steinbeck learned early how to transfer their own authorial memories effectively to their fiction. Thus, Norris's visit to the Big Dipper Mine in the High Sierras to complete *McTeague* yielded fruit as one of several settings in that novel, just as his familiarity with an "accommodation street" (2), located a mere block below Van Ness Avenue (which one side of his family's house in San Francisco overlooked), later translated into faultless description in the same work. Similarly, the details of the Cliff House, B Street station in Oakland, the Orpheum, and Scheutzen Park, all of which he had frequented as both a teenager and college man in the Bay Area, he vividly re-created in *McTeague*. Nor was this technique limited to *McTeague*: he drew upon his own experiences as a Harvard student for early passages in *Vandover*, while for *The Pit* he relied heavily on recollections of his boyhood in Chicago, recollections a later visit there while researching the book revived. Meanwhile, London tapped similar resources of his own, as the countless autobiographical details in *The Call of the Wild*, *Martin Eden*, and *The Valley of the Moon*, among other works, attest. Indeed, Charles Walcott stated that London turned so often to his own life for subjects for his fiction that "increasingly [he] became a man yearning for the past" (15). A couple of decades later, with *The Pastures of Heaven*, Steinbeck duplicated this practice, inaugurating his love affair with California's beautiful Salinas Valley and its individualized settlements and subsequently spreading out geographically to base subsequent novels such as *Of Mice and Men*, *Cannery Row*, and *East of Eden* on memories of his ties to other locales, all in a constant quest to "revisit" his own past (Parini 2).

In addition to illustrating authorial memory at work, novels by Norris, London, and Steinbeck explore deeper mysterious aspects of memory; indeed, memory functions as a component that ironically adds spiritual dimensions to their naturalism. Instinct, for instance, a form of memory often suppressed, lures *McTeague* back to California's mining country near Colfax because he never actually forgot his childhood spent there. After killing Trina and stealing her five thousand dollars in gold pieces, he boards the Overland train from San Francisco,

thence a stage from Iowa Hill, finally moving by foot into home country. Norris comments that "not once did instinct deceive him" (279) in his return, "straight as a homing pigeon," to his past (281). A scant two weeks later, however, McTeague's "sixth sense" takes over, and he quickly follows "animal cunning," an atavistic streak even more primal than instinct had been (285); as the novel winds to its ineluctable conclusion, Norris refers to McTeague's "sixth sense" continually. Of course, his instinct to survive at any cost, the atavistic compulsion to wander into the blistering, arid sands of Death Valley, does not save him in the end, as Marcus, compelled by a vengeful desire so strong that he too acts instinctively in stalking McTeague into the desert, eventually accosts him. Yet, in a curious twist, Marcus, not McTeague, is killed in their frantic tussle, prompting the reader to query if Norris's point may be that McTeague, though now evidently doomed miles from aid, might have avoided both Marcus and death had he followed his "sixth sense" more quickly and systematically, for he had lost precious time exploring the Panamint Range for gold with his partner Cribbens, time which Marcus meanwhile employed both wisely and well in pursuing his elusive quarry. Norris clearly implies, ironically, that instinct might have saved McTeague, helping him to rebuild his life. His untimely rejection of the "sixth sense," which had previously served him well, consigns him to the same class as Sieppe—but with one important difference: as a dentist in San Francisco McTeague had learned to use the strength and other talents he had gained as a car-boy in successful ways, something Sieppe never mastered; thus, when a second opportunity to put instinct into practice confronted him, he should have taken it, thereby gaining a spiritual second lease on life.

London descends to the animal world to explore the mysteries of memory and instinct. Buck, the magnificent half-St. Bernard, half-Scotch shepherd dog, follows instinct advantageously in *The Call of the Wild*. Removed from a soft, undemanding life at Judge Miller's and thrust into a "kill or be killed world" in the Northland (396), Buck quickly recalls his primordial past, "the memories of his heredity that gave things he had never seen before a seeming familiarity;

the instincts (which were but the memories of his ancestors become habits) which had lapsed in later days, and still later, in him, quickened and became alive again" (379). Easily adapting himself to this wild and fierce environment, Buck soon assumes the coveted pride of place among whatever group of dogs fate places him. Like McTeague, he makes his new circumstances work for him; unlike McTeague, he consistently capitalizes on his instincts. When his final master, John Thornton, extends unanticipated love to Buck, he responds in kind, but when Thornton's death erases "the last tie" to man and the superficialities associated with Thornton (415), Buck answers the "irresistible impulses seiz[ing] him" (407), leaping to "the many-noted call, sounding more luringly and compellingly than ever before" (415), once more establishing himself as chief among his fellows, wolves now as opposed to other dogs. Where primordial memory's knock finds McTeague wanting, Buck through such memory recovers an immemorial proclivity buried deeply in himself which restores him to a latent spiritual past.

For Steinbeck individual instinctive memory does not play as prominent a role as does the collective recollection of a particular group. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, when the Joads hesitantly enjoy the relative comfort of the government camp at Weed-patch, the realization that their inability to gain employment could well force them to leave it prompts both Ma and Pa to recall their former home in Oklahoma in two distinct ways. Where Pa remembers ducks flying south, doves lighting on fences, blackbirds sitting on wires, Ma recalls "the choppin' block back home with a feather caught on it, all crisscrossed with cuts, an' black with chicken blood" (441). Thus, Pa's memories focus on their home's surroundings, while Ma's emphasize home itself. Apprehending that her happiest memories revolve around family—feeding them, nurturing them—Ma also understands that these same memories can in time reshape themselves not only to accommodate additions to and reductions from her family but also to welcome to the family's quite literal bosom total strangers such as the starving man Rose of Sharon breast-feeds at the novel's end. In bearing a child, Rose of Sharon has entered with Ma an eternal communion of women

which, while it does not exclude men wholly, complicitly functions outside the male realm, depending, rather, on the collective wisdom of all women. Faced with the old, weak man in the barn where the Joads shelter, "the two women look . . . deep into each other. The girl's breath [omes] short and gasping," as she responds affirmatively to her mother's unexpressed request (618). For both women, this event marks an enigmatic moment of spiritual renewal born of months of adversity suffered during their long journey from the Dust Bowl.

A similar instance of shared memory, this time between husband and wife, occurs near the end of Norris's *The Pit*, when Curtis Jadwin, after forgetting his wife Laura's prescheduled birthday at home and losing his attempted corner on wheat, returns to Laura, who has just endured the worst day of her life. Somehow knowing that his memory of his loss will very possibly seal the madness on the brink of which he has teetered all day, Jadwin retreats, whispering to his wife, "Honey, it's dark, it's dark. Something happened. . . . I don't remember," to which Laura, aware that her near consent to her would-be lover Corthell's implied offer to elope must never be acknowledged, answers in an almost identical vein of shamed withdrawal, "It's dark. . . . It's dark, dark. Something happened. Yes. I must not remember" (411). Silently admitting their joint errors, they determine to leave Chicago and the bad memories it contains in favor of building a new life in the unknown West, founded not on the selfishness and insincerity of their immediate past but on the love they recall from their earliest married days. As Jadwin tells Laura, "We started right when we were first married . . . and we're starting all over again" (417); in doing so, they will erect their new faith on the concurrently recollected foundation of their old.

London exhibits a variation on collective memory in *The Valley of the Moon*. Contemporary British writer Robert Barnard observes that "we say we remember things, but after a time just the saying it has created a static picture in our minds that stands for the real memory" (23-24), a comment that summarizes what constantly recurs to Saxon. Her mother's vivid retelling of both her own pioneer experiences and Saxon's father's war stories retelling imprints both so firmly on Saxon's mind that she identifies herself inextricably with her mother. So close is

this empathy that Saxon often relates her mother's tales in plural first-person—thus to Mrs. Mortimer she reports, “We fought off the Indians” at Little Meadow (345)—thereby manifesting her tacit conviction that both she and her mother underwent these experiences, conveniently forgetting that she had not yet been born. This conviction, fanciful though it is, further persuades her that she, like her mother, can successfully negotiate any obstacle. Animated by the spirit of her parents and endless generations of Anglo-Saxon parents before them, Saxon instinctively overcomes such obstacles—sudden miscarriage, spousal abuse, near starvation, and emotional depression—emerging stronger and more spiritually secure because of it.

Closely related to collective memory is selective remembrance, a condition which characters in novels by all three writers also display. After McTeague and Trina marry, Trina effects such a sweeping moral reform of his routine that he relishes his changed habits, easily exchanging his former routine for the seemingly more sophisticated delights which accompany life with Trina. Unfortunately, such preferential and instinctive recollection soon breeds resentment when the disclosure of McTeague as an unlicensed dentist drastically reduces their income; however, for the first three years of their marriage McTeague had been happier than ever before, primarily because he had unconsciously supplanted old memories with new ones. White Fang in London's novel of the same name shows the positive effects of selective memory on the bestial level. Unlike Buck, White Fang conscientiously represses his wild instincts in becoming domesticated, eventually forgetting even his mother as he serves successive masters. Instead, his brain registers “a succession of memory pictures” (151), to which he adds more frames as his allegiance to man solidifies. When Weedon Scott permanently ships White Fang back to the Southland in California, he honors his new training so completely that he earns the sobriquet “Blessed Wolf” from Weedon's mother and sister (325). Never again will primeval call lure him away, for he has found true happiness, lying “with half-shut, patient eyes, drowsing in the sun,” his consciousness awash with memories not of his old life but of his current one (327). Adam Trask, protagonist of *East of Eden*, also tastes

the sweet fruit of selective memory. Of all men, Adam merits the right to be angry at the hand life has dealt him. Deceived by his wife, Cathy, who slept with his brother Charles on their wedding night, left with unwanted twins to raise when Cathy deserts him, and saddled with a half-built mansion he will never complete, Adam could fairly have shaken his fist at fate. Yet he eventually awakens to life's beauty through the patient ministrations of Lee, a loyal employee, and Sam Hamilton, a good-natured friend. When news of the death of his wife, by _____ then a rich madam in the seamy line of brothels in Salinas, reaches him, that appreciation for life comes full circle, as he sheds tears for her despite her many betrayals. Assuredly, had he felt so inclined, Adam could have dredged smug bitterness from his recollection of Cathy's despicable behavior, but he chooses not to dwell on her sins, finding solace and spiritual fulfillment in his memory of the woman he once and still loved.

Thus far, this examination of various novels by Norris, London, and Steinbeck has demonstrated that while memory spiritually animates selected characters, it customarily does so in a limited fashion, either during a single period or phase of a particular character's life. In *Martin Eden*, however, London breaks this mold by presenting memory as a narrative continuum which dictates the course of a character's entire existence, allowing him to reinvent his own persona in a quest for spiritual renewal grounded in remembrances, both old and new. Assiduously essaying to fit Ruth Morse into the culturally diverse cavalcade of women with whom he has previously been intimate, Martin soon comprehends that his earlier experiences with the opposite sex had in no way prepared him for the likes of her, for "[n]ever had he seen such a woman" (5): after meeting Ruth and her mother, he consciously and "swiftly dismiss[es] the kaleidoscope of memory" of his past encounters (13). Based merely on the appearance of a type of woman foreign to him, Martin willingly "receiv[es] the flood of impressions that [i]s pouring in upon him and being mentally annotated and classified" (15); that is, he is ripe for personal reinventions, a task he assigns himself even before quitting the Morse household after his initial visit:

“He couldn’t fake being their kind. . . . Whatever happened, he must be real. He couldn’t talk their talk just yet, though in time he would. Upon that he was resolved” (19). Under the sway of this alien influence, his “sensation usurp[s] reason, and he . . . quivers . . . with emotions he had never known, drifting deliciously on a sea of sensibility where feeling itself [is] exalted and spiritualized” (27), altogether an apt image to describe the unaccustomed mood of an experienced sailor such as Martin. Meeting Ruth thus establishes a new pattern for Martin, one which he will continue to observe through much of the novel. Indeed, upon leaving Ruth’s house, Martin is “in an ecstasy, dreaming dreams” of the future as he “reconstructs . . . the scenes just past” (25): past, present, and future have merged for him into a seamless tissue of memory. In time, purified by the twin cauldrons of intensive self-education and incessant composition, Martin necessarily moves beyond Ruth in taste, learning, and ability, but he never ceases to envision his life as an ongoing memory of his original self, constantly teaching him how to reorder his existence. His decision to commit suicide, therefore, becomes an eminently logical one, since a review of his life—first infatuated with Ruth, then striving to learn to write, and finally attaining success—reminds him that the “Mart Eden” of his memory, the “sailor” he once was content to be, is the “real” man, while the writer he has become is the “sham” (386). This supreme moment of spiritual self-discovery ironically prepares him for death as the only possible end of a life dedicated to reinventing itself repeatedly as new sensations metamorphose into old memories.

A final manifestation of memory as the engine of survival and spiritual renewal in Norris, London, and Steinbeck is two-pronged, involving both false or falsely projected reminiscence and the sometimes fatal absence of memory altogether. Maria Macapa in *McTeague* provides a signal example of both conditions, for not only do her unlikely memories of a wealthier past beguile her into creating an illusory ancestry, but her inability to recapture that memory after undergoing childbirth also proves her ultimate undoing by her deranged husband, himself a victim of the allure of hollow memory. In like manner, Vandover illustrates the dual effects of false and absent memory. Unlike

Maria, Vandover remembers almost none of his past, not even troubling to "collect" the few "scattered memory pictures" he retains (5). Predictably, near the end of his life, when lycanthropy, a malady he contracts as a result of his own debauchery and lassitude, has reduced him to a pitiful creature, "every day he [finds] it harder and harder to remember things" (296). Where Vandover and Maria cannot recover their lost memories, a third Norris character triumphantly can. The story of Vanamee, the ascetic shepherd in *The Octopus*, fittingly exemplifies memory made flesh through repeated exercise of the powers of mental persuasion. Vanamee convinces himself that Angéle, the living child of his dead fiancée, also named Angéle, whom Vanamee loved so passionately that her death almost destroyed and certainly has consumed him, has replaced her mother as the channel for his desire and his love, resulting in a kind of sublime spiritual serenity which suggests that even specious memory, correctly applied, can result in satisfaction for characters in naturalistic novels.

Both London and Steinbeck also construct characters who benefit from the effects of either absent or false memory. When his pug-nacious support of the teamsters' strike in Oakland lands Billy Roberts in jail in *The Valley of the Moon* and leaves his wife Saxon financially destitute, where once Saxon's memory of her mother's heroic exploits would have sustained her in such dire circumstances, now she endures the interminable month of Billy's incarceration by substituting "lapses of memory" for memory itself in order to retain her sanity (246). Fortunately, Saxon's mental legerdemain works, as once again memory or, rather, its absence, grants her spiritual peace. In *Of Mice and Men* false memory sustains spiritual survival. Lennie's "rabbits," regardless of how real he imagines them to be, remain spurious, the created memory of an overactive imagination. Even so, his illusions probably afford Lennie as much comfort as he can hope to enjoy, gaining him George's protection in the process: at his death Lennie is as contented as he has ever been in his life, fantasizing for one final time on his private "place" where with George he "live[s] on the fatta the lan'" (116).

In his lyrically elegant autobiography *Speak Memory* (1951),

Vladimir Nabokov declares that “[o]ne is always at home in one’s past” (85). If so, then not only are the characters created by the “California Naturalists” comfortably “at home” in their memories, but so, too, are their creators. Alike in many ways, these three writers are perhaps most similar in that each, though in his own way a Naturalist, offers his characters a means for spiritual revival through successful reliance on or manipulation of memories, a revival which gradually extends beyond the characters to readers of their books who, surprised perhaps to find it in novels traditionally classified as naturalistic, esteem them the more when they realize that all three writers have succeeded in transcending a category clearly too confining for them. That they also parallel each other in many other aspects of their lives and work only enhances their joint use of memory for narrative and thematic (even spiritual) purposes.

WORKS CITED

- Barnard, Robert. *Out of Blackout*. 1984. Woodstock, VT: Countryman P, 1995.
- Benét, William Rose. “Apple Pickers’ Strike.” *Saturday Review* (1 Feb. 1936): 10.
- Brucoli, Matthew J., and Margaret M. Duggan. *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. New York: Random House, 1980.
- “College Democracy Voorsanger’s Theme.” *The Daily Californian* 15 Sep. 1902: [1].
- Cracroft, Richard H. E-mail to Jesse S. Crisler. 31 Jan. 2000.
- Crisler, Jesse S., ed. *Frank Norris: Collected Letters*. San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1986.
- Davison, Richard Allan. “Of Mice and Men and McTeague: Steinbeck, Fitzgerald, and Frank Norris.” *Studies in American Fiction* 17 (Autumn 1989): 219–26.
- DeMott, Robert J. *Steinbeck’s Reading: A Catalogue of Books Owned and Borrowed*. New York: Garland, 1984.
- Fontenrose, Joseph. *John Steinbeck. An Introduction and Interpretation*. New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1963.

- French, Warren. "The 'California Quality' of Steinbeck's Best Fiction." *Jose Studies* 1 (1975): 9-19.
- Fuller, Henry Blake. "Frank Norris and Jack London on Literary Art and the Multitude." *Chicago Evening Post* 6 Sep. 1902, part 2: 9.
- Giles, James R. "Beneficial Atavism in Frank Norris and Jack London." *Western American Literature* 4 (Spring 1969): 15-27.
- Hamilton, David Mike. "The Tools of My Trade": *The Annotated Books in Jack London's Library*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1986.
- Hendricks, King, and Irving Shepard. *Letters from Jack London*. New York: Odyssey P, 1965.
- Hughes, R. S. *John Steinbeck: A Study of the Short Fiction*. Boston: Twayne, 1989.
- James, Henry. *The Beast in the Jungle*. 1903. *The Novels of Henry James*. 26 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909. Vol. 17. 59-127.
- Labor, Earle, Robert C. Leitz, III, and Milo Shepard, eds. *The Letters of Jack London*. 3 vols. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1988.
- Leitz, Robert C., III. "The Moran Controversy: Norris's Defense of his 'Nautical Absurdities.'" *American Literary Realism* 15 (Spring 1982): 119-24.
- Lisca, Peter. *The Wide World of John Steinbeck*. New ed. New York: Gordian P, 1981.
- London, Jack. "Again the Literary Aspirant." *Critic* 41 (Sep. 1902): 217-20.
- . *The Call of the Wild*. 1903. *The Portable Jack London*. Ed. Earle Labor. New York: Penguin, 1994. 347-417.
- . *The Cruise of the Snark*. New York: Macmillan, 1911.
- . *A Daughter of the Snows*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1902.
- . *The Iron Heel*. New York: Macmillan, 1908.
- . *Martin Eden*. New York: Macmillan, 1909.
- . "Moon-Face." *Argonaut* 51 (21 July 1902): 36.
- . "The Octopus." *Impressions Quarterly* 2 (June 1901): 45-47.
- . *The Sea-Wolf*. New York: Macmillan, 1904.
- . *The Son of the Wolf*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1900.
- . "To Build a Fire." *Century* 76 (Aug. 1908): 525-34.
- . *The Valley of the Moon*. 1913. Intro. Russ Kingman. Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1975.
- . *White Fang*. New York: Macmillan, 1906.
- Lutwack, Leonard. *Heroic Fiction: The Epic Tradition and American*

- Novels of the Twentieth Century*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1971.
- McLean, Charles Forrest. "An Exploded Theory." *The Black Cat* No. 74 (Nov. 1901): 38-40.
- Mighels, Ella Sterling Cummins. "California Writers and Literature." *The Story of the Files*. San Francisco: Co-operative Printing, 1893. 359-60.
- . *Literary California*. San Francisco: Harr Wagner, 1918.
- Nabokov, Vladimir. *Speak Memory*. 1951. Rev. ed. New York: Pyramid Books, 1966.
- Norris, Frank. *Blix*. New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1899.
- . "Crepusculum." *Overland Monthly* 19 (Apr. 1892): 347.
- . "The Frontier Gone at Last." *World's Work* 3 (Feb. 1902): 1728-1731.
- . *A Man's Woman*. New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1900.
- . *McTeague*. 1899. Ed. Carvel Collins. New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1950.
- . "A Miraculous Critic." What Mr. Rose-Seley Does Not Know About Literature, with Special Reference to 'Moran of the Lady Letty.'" *San Francisco Sunday Examiner Magazine* 25 June 1899: 30.
- . *Moran of the Lady Letty*. New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1898.
- . "A Neglected Epic." *World's Work* 5 (Dec. 1902): 2904-06.
- . *The Octopus*. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1901.
- . "The Passing of Cock-eye Blacklock." *Century* 64 (July 1902): 385-391.
- . "Perverted Tales." *The Wave* 16 (Christmas [18 Dec.] 1897): 5-7.
- . *The Pit*. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1903.
- . "Salt and Sincerity [VI]." *Critic* 41 (September 1902): 267-70. Rpt. *The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris*. Ed. Donald Pizer. Austin: U of Texas P, 1964. 221-26.
- . "Salt and Sincerity [III]." *Critic* 40 (May 1902): 447-50. Rpt. *The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris*. Ed. Donald Pizer. Austin: U of Texas P, 1964. 195-200.
- . "Two Hearts that Beat as One." *Ainslee's* 10 (Jan. 1903): 52-58.
- . *Vandover and the Brute*. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1914.
- Parini, Jay. *John Steinbeck: A Biography*. New York: Henry Holt, 1995.
- Pizer, Donald. "Evolutionary Ethical Dualism in Frank Norris' *Vandover and the Brute* and *McTeague*." *PMLA* 76 (Dec. 1961): 552-60.
- Rose-Seley, J. F. "Miraculous Moran. What Frank Norris Does Not Know about the Sea." *San Francisco Sunday Examiner Magazine* 18 June 1899: 30.

- Sinclair, Andrew. *A Biography of Jack London*. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.
- Steinbeck, John. *Cannery Row*. New York: Viking, 1945.
- . *Cup of Gold: A Life of Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer*. New York: Robert M. McBride, 1932.
- . *East of Eden*. New York: Viking, 1952.
- . "Flight." *The Long Valley*. New York: Viking, 1938. 45-70.
- . *The Grapes of Wrath*. 1939. *The Grapes of Wrath: Text and Criticism*. Ed. Peter Lisca. New York: Viking, 1972. 3-619.
- . *In Dubious Battle*. New York: Covici-Friede, 1936.
- . *Of Mice and Men*. 1937. New York: Bantam, 1955.
- . *The Pastures of Heaven*. 1932. New York: Bantam, 1951.
- . *Sea of Cortez: A Leisurely Journal of Travel and Research with a Scientific Appendix*. New York: Viking, 1941.
- Timmerman, John H. "'The Shameless Magpie': John Steinbeck, Plagiarism, and the Ear of the Artist." *The Steinbeck Question: New Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Donald R. Noble. New York: Whitson Publishing, 1993. 260-78.
- Walcott, Charles Child. *Jack London*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1966.
- Walker, Franklin. "Frank Norris and Jack London." *Mills College Magazine* 56 (Apr. 1966): 15-23.
- Ware, Elaine. "'Struggle for Survival' Parallel Theme and Techniques in Steinbeck's 'Flight' and Norris's *McTeague*." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 21 (Summer-Fall 1988): 96-103.
- Watson, Charles N. *The Novels of Jack London: A Reappraisal*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1983.
- Wilson, Edmund. "The Californians." *New Republic* 103 (16 Dec. 1940): 839-40.
- Zola, Émile. *Germinal*. Paris: Charpentier, 1885.



Big Dipper Mine, Iowa Hill, California
(Courtesy of Joseph R. McElrath, Jr.)