

## *Ship Manifest, the Lady Letty:*

The past year has been a good one for American literary naturalism, and I have it on fine authority (Madame Sosostri) that Norris, Crane, London, Dreiser, and Garland are enjoying themselves immensely. And for good reason, for there is much noteworthy news:

First and foremost, the fall semester saw the publication of the first issue of the new journal *Studies in American Naturalism*. We here at ALN want to congratulate the editors of SAN, Keith Newlin and Stephen Brennan, for bringing this fine journal to life, and we wish them and the journal continued success.

In addition, I'm pleased to pass along the pleasant news that ALN is being fully indexed in the MLA Bibliography, and in the future we hope to be able to make back issues of ALN available in pdf form through the web (so stay tuned for that).

Finally, we here at ALN are looking forward to the ALA Symposium on American Literary Naturalism this coming October. For more information on what will likely be the highlight of 2007 for scholars of American literary naturalism, see the call-for-papers included in this issue of ALN.

There are many fine folks who deserve thanks for helping to put this issue of ALN together, and I cannot list them all, but special thanks go to Larry Hussman, Toby Widdicombe, Joseph Church, Gary Totten, Yoshinobu Hakutani, and Jeanne Campbell Reesman for their fine contributions to this issue. And my continued thanks go to Steven Frye for his tireless assistance. I would also like to thank everyone who took the time to write to me about the inaugural issue of ALN last October: I truly appreciate all of the feedback.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the ALA in Boston in May, and at the ALA Symposium on American Literary Naturalism in October. Till then, I hope you enjoy issue number two of ALN.

Naturally,  
Eric Carl Link

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## Teaching American Literary Naturalism in Poland

Larry Hussman

Warsaw in 1993 certainly seemed a favorable physical environment for teaching a university course in American Literary Naturalism. Poland had only recently emerged from its communist past and the city's grim, gritty façade could have readily served as the back-drop for Stephen Crane's *Maggie*. With the exception of the magnificently restored 13<sup>th</sup> Century Old Town, Warsaw was a patchwork of ugly, neglected, Stalinesque municipal, commercial, and residential structures. These sorry sites were clustered around the Palace of Culture, a tall tower foisted on the Poles by the Russians years earlier and a pile so unattractive it spurred the truism that the best view in town was from its top because from there you couldn't see the building itself. The Polish economy at the time was struggling to come to grips with its new, market driven base, as witness the mind-boggling exchange rate of 127,000 zlotys to the dollar. (A former student visited me at one point that year and I took her to an elaborate meal in one of the posh dining rooms of the newly built Marriott hotel. When the waiter arrived with the bill I threw down a one-million-zloty note, including the tip. My companion was much impressed. Only later did she discover I had spent less than four dollars on her). In those days too, homeless newcomers from countries to the east joined local unfortunates begging for handouts at every street corner. The sidewalks were nearly always a muddy mess. The interior of the building housing the University of Warsaw's Institute of English Studies, the venue in which I was to teach, featured a labyrinth of narrow, forlorn hallways leading to paint-peeled, cramped classrooms crammed with mismatched chairs. But the Poles' hopes for a better future were symbolized by the imposing structure that formerly housed Communist Par-

ty Headquarters. It had recently been converted into the Warsaw Stock Exchange.

A Fulbright grant timed to coincide with my early retirement from Wright State University had brought me to Poland this first of several times. My duties included teaching semester-length naturalism courses for both advanced undergraduates and Masters-degree candidates. For the preceding twenty-five years I'd been performing the same task in American academic settings, so I knew some of the difficulties involved, including the considerable length of several of the genre's seminal novels. Since I was unsure of the students' reading skills, I decided to assign them only short works for class discussion, which I would augment with lectures about the long novels and about naturalistic philosophy. In addition, I included classroom time for viewing various film adaptations, though this proved tricky because of the unreliability of the Institute's ancient TV sets and temperamental VCRs. The readings included, among others, Garland's "Mrs. Ripley's Trip," Crane's "The Open Boat," Norris's "A Deal in Wheat," Dreiser's "Free," London's "To Build a Fire," Wharton's *Ethan Frome*, Cather's "Paul's Case," and Steinbeck's "The Harness." The lectures focused on, in addition to Crane, Norris, and Dreiser, writers such as Anderson, Farrell, Wright, and (to illustrate the continuing relevance of naturalist ideas), Oates, Updike, and DeLillo. Some of Crane's poetry made the syllabus too, along with Edgar Lee Masters' and Edwin Arlington Robinson's. Among the films viewed were *Greed*, William Wyler's *Carrie*, *A Place in the Sun*, *The Call of the Wild*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and the Gary Sinise-directed *Of Mice and Men*, the latter then showing at local theaters. Since the European model of higher education has always been dominated by the lecture system, and because, for most of my students, I was their first American instructor, it took them a few weeks to adjust to my method of instigating class discussion through questions. It took far less time for me to learn that nearly all of the students

were notably bright. As they overcame their initial shock at being called on and answered my questions, their responses were invariably thoughtful and perceptive.

Besides my early uncertainty about reading skills, I wasn't sure how the naturalists' philosophy of deterministic meaninglessness and rejection of free will would be received by my predominately Roman Catholic charges. But the first few class discussions dissipated that worry, along with any lingering doubts about the students' spoken English (I'd been told before arriving that, though my knowing a little tongue-twisting Polish would help in navigating the city, it was to be avoided in the classroom). I immediately discovered that most of the students' personal points of view meshed seamlessly with the writers they were studying. Unlike U.S. collegians who typically resist naturalistic ideas, these students readily accepted them, though they were at first surprised to encounter such gloom among "privileged" American writers. A bit later in the first semester I commented to a Polish professor at the Institute about the students' ready acceptance of dark determinism, and he told me that the stereotype of the Poles as religiously devoted retained currency only outside Europe. The Catholic faith remained entrenched in rural areas, he said, but Polish urbanites were solidly secular. When I protested that the adulation of John Paul II throughout his native country tended to clash with this characterization, my new colleague informed me that the pope's magnetism had much more to do with nationalistic pride than faith. The pontiff, my informant insisted, was viewed as a kind of religious rock star, but one that the people, like many American Catholics, felt free to ignore regarding the belief system and rules of conduct promulgated by the Church. Moreover, Poland's tragic history, I was told, had served to render its citizens casehardened, terminally tough, and prone to questioning all authority, secular or religious. One deeply moving personal experience particularly brought home the

logic of such a stance. Another colleague, an American woman poet who had taught in Poland for twenty years, took me on All Souls Day to the large, crowded cemetery where most of the Warsaw Uprising dead are buried. I'll not soon forget that grey-autumn late afternoon, the wind blowing brown leaves against the simple tombstones and threatening the small-candle flames alight on each one. My companion pointed to a particular marker that read simply "Soldier, fourteen."

I later found, though, that however strong-willed the students might be, they were also capable of a striking empathy for suffering. This was demonstrated most forcefully by their reaction to the Steinbeck films. (Polish students have a keen interest in and sophisticated approach to movies, as would be expected since their country has such a rich motion picture making tradition). The scene in *Of Mice and Men* where Candy's dog is shot induced several students' audible sobs and when the lights went up after George kills Lenny (played so superbly by John Malkovich), there was not a dry eye evident. I don't wish to leave the impression that my Polish students were chronically morose, however. In fact, they displayed a keen sense of ironic, understated humor not unlike the British variety. They especially appreciated, for example, my recounting of Norris's comic renderings of McTeague's single-digit IQ and his wry ridicule of the dentist's attempts at art appreciation, represented by his dreams of the giant, golden tooth, his cherished stone pug dog, and his purchase of the Medici family portrait because it had "a great many figures in it for the money." During the screening of *Greed*, the love scene between Mac and Trina sitting on the sewer lid, little Owgooste's pants wetting and subsequent spanking, the desert-defying canary, and other facets of the film registered high on the students' laugh meters.

Among the required readings, the students' favorites were the Crane, London, Cather, and Steinbeck stories. They found it more difficult to relate to Dreiser, whose work, especially

“Free,” demands a greater breadth of experience than that of the others assigned. These responses were not unlike what one would expect in exposing American students to the same reading regimen. Interestingly, however, the Polish students proved more dismissive of Dreiser’s late spiritual affirmation, about which I devoted part of a lecture, than American students tend to be. This I took to be another measure of their greater affinity with the naturalistic hypotheses and suspicion of religious rejoinders. Moreover, the papers they wrote most often projected a personal perspective that meshed with naturalism, sometimes highlighting comparisons between American naturalists and their Polish or other European counterparts. Nearly all of the students wrote quite well for non-native speakers of English, allowing for the frequent omission of articles, which do not exist in Polish.

Since that first year in Warsaw I’ve returned to Poland to teach five more times, including two Fulbright years in Lublin, and freelance gigs there, and at a new social psychology school in the capital, as well as back at the University of Warsaw (which has now surpassed the Jagellonian University in Krakow to rank as the country’s premier higher education institution and one of the very best in Central Europe). There have been dramatic changes over that stretch of time, most notably in Warsaw. Postmodern skyscrapers have sprung up throughout the city, along with a couple of huge, glitzy malls and many new, color-splashed apartment buildings. The few Catholic monks who still walk the streets are likely nowadays to wear Birkenstock sandals on their feet and Nike jackets over their cowls. The exchange rate sometimes noses below three zlotys to the dollar, further testimony to the greatly improved economy. Some of the grim old triggers of naturalist mood and thought remain, however, including the University of Warsaw English Studies Institute’s dismal quarters, the dingy international airport, the crumbling central railway station, and, of course, the still

looming Palace of Culture. Not to mention the relentlessly bitter weather between November and May. (The Poles are fond of telling a joke about an old woman living near the ever-shifting international border who was told that once again the lines had been redrawn and that now she was living in Germany rather than Poland. At which point she supposedly replied: “Oh, thank God! I don’t think I could have taken another one of those Polish winters.”)

The teaching situation, though essentially the same as it was in 1993, has changed in some ways since. Enrollments in my classes have undergone one of the most notable shifts. Now, eighty to ninety-percent of the students are female because most of the males have gravitated to business and law programs. The remaining literature majors think a bit differently about the United States these days. They are no longer as convinced of American exceptionalism as they were earlier. The Polish unemployment rate, which has remained relatively high, and the great advances made by the original EU countries, have set job seekers thinking of emigrating to England or Ireland, much less so to the U.S. At the same time, the post-independence Polish experience with capitalism has made the students more understanding of the chronic disillusionment displayed so often by the characters in our naturalists’ texts. And American literature offerings at Polish universities continue to attract intellectually curious, exceptionally gifted students. (This is also true in Lisbon, where I taught in between Polish positions, but where the students’ identification with naturalistic ideas is less pronounced. Exceptionally gifted, with one glaring anomaly, that is. How can I forget the Portuguese student who wrote a paper in which he quite seriously argued that F. Scott Fitzgerald believed in God, not based on his use of the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg in *The Great Gatsby*, which might have been marginally plausible, but on the fact that several of the characters in that novel use expressions like “Oh my God!” and “By God!”) But again,

what has remained most strikingly steadfast among Polish students has been their easy acceptance and appreciation of determinist philosophy and fiction. Their attitude in this regard was most recently displayed when I asked a class at the University of Warsaw last spring if they were disturbed or depressed by all of their assigned reading and the logical conclusion to be drawn from it that, in Nietzsche's words, "God is dead." A particularly sharp male student responded, with his classmates' emphatic concurrence: "We don't miss Him."

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## On Teaching Naturalism; Or, How You Teach Is What You Get Toby Widdicombe

### By Way of an Introduction

It's been 29 years since I started teaching. It's been 22 since I got my Ph.D. in American literature with an emphasis in critical theory. In those two decades and more I have taught all the major naturalists—Crane; Dreiser; London; Norris—and have done so to widely differing audiences: lower-division non-majors; lower- and upper-division English majors; and graduate students (creative writers; rhetoricians; literature students). I've taught at three state universities and one private technical college. I was educated in both Britain and the U.S.

Despite the variety in my career (or perhaps, frankly, because of it), I have found that certain common threads do stand out in the way I teach naturalism. I'll try to tease them out here into a set of guidelines. In an amorphous

way, they are in the back of my mind whenever I teach naturalism. I'm not often consciously aware of them as I teach, but they are definitely there.

### Use Definitions

In the first issue of *ALN: The American Literary Naturalism Newsletter*, Clare Eby said she didn't "find definitions of naturalism useful in the undergraduate classroom" (11). For me they have always been tremendously helpful as a starting point and, often, as a point of contention—something that produces both heat and light. So, for example, I often go to a couple of standard handbook definitions of "literary naturalism" in order to emphasize the scholarly disagreements that exist over the key term and to show that any critical term is a construct—a sort of necessary evil—and that sometimes received opinion is just plain wrong.<sup>1</sup> Some of my students seem to imagine that naturalistic writers themselves had the "standard" definition at their elbow when they wrote and should be criticized for not fitting the naturalistic "template." Of course, *ex post facto* should be trumped every time by *in medias res*, but many students (even grad students) seem to forget so important a fact. That is why I always have my students read Zola's "Le roman expérimental" (1880) to see what a practitioner from the period has to say.

As far as the handbook definitions of naturalism go, Harmon hits the right note by seeing naturalism as a term usefully illustrated by the work of Eliot, Hardy, Norris, Crane, London, Dreiser, and Zola. He usefully sees naturalism in O'Neill's work, but strangely has nothing to say about Steinbeck or Wharton or Nathanael West. He offers an excellent litmus test of a definition, however, for the works that any class on naturalism might examine:

[T]he naturalist strives to be objective in the presentation of material; amoral in the view of the struggle in which human animals find themselves, neither condemning

nor praising human beings for actions beyond their control; pessimistic about human capabilities—life, the naturalists seem to feel, is a vicious trap; frank in the portrayal of human beings as animals driven by fundamental urges—fear, hunger, sex. (330)

Murfin and Ray likewise indicate that the naturalists felt life was a “trap,” but this time it’s “inescapable” rather than vicious (389). Their list of naturalists diverges from Harmon’s: Gone are Eliot and Hardy and London, and in their place is Gissing. Baldick emphasizes the French origins of naturalism more than the others and actually traces the idea back to the Goncourt brothers’ novel *Germinie Lacerteux* (1865). More than the others, too, he links the idea with realism (naturalism is “a more deliberate kind of realism” [146]). The usual suspects have returned (Norris and Dreiser and Zola), but Crane, Hardy, and Eliot are no longer members of the fellowship. However, a great many new ones are: de Maupassant, Daudet, George Moore, Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann, Gorky, and Chekhov (147). Kershner adds Joyce, Lawrence, Anderson, and Hemingway, but then rather startlingly asserts that “‘pure naturalism’ in Zola’s sense dies before the turn of the [twentieth] century” (49). That’s news to me. Kuiper offers the briefest of definitions, but interestingly adds Hamlin Garland to the Naturalist Club while implicitly criticizing such writers for failing to “suppress an element of romantic protest against the social conditions they described” (800). Take that all you late-nineteenth-century mill workers in Massachusetts and all you slum dwellers in New York! Clearly Jacob Riis got it wrong in *How the Other Half Lives*.

I describe these various definitions in some detail here (and we study them briefly in class) in order to provide a template against which to measure the achievements of the writers themselves. Useful as some handbooks’ work is, it dwindles next to the immediacy of the imagination. It all pales, for example, next to Crane’s

wonderfully knock-down, drag-out description of the fight between the Swede and Johnnie in “The Blue Hotel” or his extended riff on human insignificance that shortly follows it:

He [the Swede] might have been in a deserted village. We picture the world as thick with conquering and elate humanity, but here, with the bugles of the tempest pealing, it was hard to imagine a peopled earth. One viewed the existence of man then as a marvel, and conceded a glamour of wonder to these lice which were caused to cling to a whirling, fire-smitten, ice-locked, disease-stricken, space-lost bulb. The conceit of man was explained by this storm to be the very engine of life. (348)

### Use the Particulars of Place

I’ve been lucky enough to have lived and taught in three states in this country: California; New York; and Alaska. Each has led me to teach naturalism in markedly different ways. When I taught at the University of California Santa Barbara, the Placer County scenes in *McTeague* always worked well. Everyone had been out in the desert at some point; they knew what the environment was like. In New York (Long Island, actually), the urban settings of Crane’s *Maggie* or Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* needed little or no introduction. In particular, Hurstwood’s decline and suicide in the Bowery in *Sister Carrie* resonated with my students. It wasn’t actually that they’d been to that part of the city very often, and few had experienced such squalor in their lives. Yet, they felt they could have, and that made the novel “teach” well. The same could be said for the street scenes in Crane’s *Maggie*, except that the fit is actually a lot closer. Consider the following, which describes Jimmie’s experiences as a truck driver in Lower Manhattan:

In the lower part of the city he daily involved himself in hideous tangles. If he and his team chanced to be in the rear he preserved a demeanor of serenity, crossing

his legs and bursting forth into yells when foot passengers took dangerous dives beneath the noses of his champing horses. He smoked his pipe calmly, for he knew that his pay was marching on.

If his charge was in the front and if it became the key-truck of chaos, he entered terrifically into the quarrel that was raging to and fro among the drivers on their high seats, and sometimes roared oaths and violently got himself arrested. (139)

Substitute cars and taxis and delivery vans for the horse and carriage, and such a scene as this plays itself out repeatedly in New York. My students knew that, and “got” the novel’s meaning better as result.

Now that I live in Alaska, the brutal climate in Crane’s “Blue Hotel” and London’s “To Build a Fire” always translates into great discussions. When you live in a state where temperatures (in Fairbanks, for example) can stick at minus 50F for a week and hunting for many offers a subsistence way of life, even London’s horrendous environment (lower than minus 75) seems survivable. Of course, as with *Sister Carrie*, most students don’t *actually* experience that temperature often, but they feel that they could—and that’s in itself enough. Everyone in this state has their stories of people dying from hypothermia or being stomped by moose or drowning in the Gulf of Alaska or the Bering Sea. Alaska does have the highest rate of on-the-job deaths. This is not a state in which to make stupid mistakes.<sup>2</sup>

### Use Other Genres

Although I teach American literature courses regularly, much of my professional time and intellectual energy these days are taken up with utopianism. I edit *Utopian Studies* and co-edit *Utopus Discovered* (the former is the journal and the latter the newsletter of the Society for Utopian Studies). That interest in all that grew from More’s singular achievement allows me to use dystopia as a genre to contrast with natu-

ralism. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Zamyatin’s *We*, *Brave New World*, and Nabokov’s *Bend Sinister* do, of course, differ in crucial respects from the work of Crane, Norris, Dreiser, and the rest, but all judge the phenomenological world of the “NOT ME” (as Emerson put it in *Nature*) as at best indifferent and in many respects profoundly hostile (8). The fact that with the naturalists it’s largely the environment and with utopians it’s much more other human beings and society is sometimes a distinction without a difference. It is often, too, a distinction that begs the question, and examining such question begging is frequently the best way to get students to think hard about what they are studying. If utopianism is not something that’s useful or feasible, then realism, transcendentalism, and romance are genres that help students understand naturalism by means of contrast. Howells’ definitions of realism (of which there are too many to mention), Emerson’s *Nature* (or, for that matter, Thoreau’s *Walden*), and Hawthorne’s Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, work well as positional statements which—in this case—define naturalism by contrast.

### Use Theory

Back in the mid-1970’s I was taught by my professors at Cambridge University an analytical method that was rigorous but had advanced in many respects little beyond the groundbreaking work of I.A. Richards’ in *Practical Criticism* (1929) or F.R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition* (1948). Why change the well-tryed and reasonably true? Now there are more overarching theories of literature out than I can count in the fingers of both hands. Just about any of them can be useful in tackling the questions of meaning in naturalistic texts, but I always begin my undergraduate courses with reader-response. At its crassest level, that theory has become little more than a chance for students to talk about themselves; at best, it becomes a means for a class to show the extraor-

dinarily wide range of legitimate meaning that any given text yields. In this respect, naturalism works particularly well because of its intentionally heightened effects. It's possible (probable alas?) for students—even graduate students—to lose patience with a psychological realist such as Henry James. It's almost beyond belief if a student doesn't react in some measurable way to *McTeague*, *The Octopus*, *Vandover and the Brute*, or *The Pit*. And what goes for Norris surely goes for the other naturalists.

At the graduate level, I become more concerned with issues of interpretation. I begin with Paul H. Armstrong's proscriptive PMLA essay, "The Conflict of Interpretations and the Limits of Interpretation" (1983) for what it offers as tests for the reliability of interpretation. I like, then, to introduce two theories that invigorate discussions about naturalism: Deconstruction and Marxism. Both can fairly easily be presented in the form of stipulated definitions with examples. The former works particularly well because it uproots many students' firmly held conviction that meaning denotes only intended meaning. They become uncomfortable with Derrida's views about the open-endedness and slipperiness of language. The latter unsettles students with its emphasis on class and its depiction of humanity as socially constructed. The naturalists emphasize many of the same concerns in fictional form. Given fiction's creation of a "safe" zone in which ideas can be argued over quite intensely, naturalism's radical critique of humanity's place in the universe and its detestation of much human behavior always sparks debate. And then if that proves insufficient, I always like to go back to New Criticism and look for a moment at the text as an isolated creation. We do some close readings and discuss, for example, why Crane should have inserted ten dollar words into *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, a proletarian novel if ever there was one. So we discuss, for instance, this sentence: "She [Maggie] spent some of her week's pay in the purchase of flowered cretonne for a lambrquin" (146). Two new words for students'

vocabularies and a valuable discussion about the inexhaustibility of desire.

### Emphasize the Journey

Early in my career I wrote elaborate lesson plans and lectured a great deal and discussed much less. Now, the reverse of those emphases is the norm for me. I have found that the problem with elaborate lesson plans is that you judge yourself according to how much of the plan was covered and not on how much active learning took place. The problem with lecturing is that students can find out more detailed information more readily in textbooks, critical studies, and—these days—on the Internet. So, I only lecture now to point out where my reading of a given text is eccentric to the main line of interpretation or to provide some essential background that helps in analyzing the particular work or works that are up at bat that day. The discussion drives the direction that the search for meaning takes. Frequently that discussion begins with one or two students reading out their responses to a question with which I begin the class. My teaching of naturalism (or, for that matter, any other literary movement or issue) isn't as free-form as it sounds. Of course I have certain way points that we ought to reach, and I do have a goal for any given class period, but that is as far as it goes. As long as students have understood the outline of naturalism's major ideas as expressed in representative texts as well as in the theories of scholars and practitioners, I'm happy.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The classic example is the misunderstanding of the idea of "negative capability." The usual definition has always suggested to me that those who offer it have spent more time looking at other handbooks (a sort of recursive circle) than they have studying Keats's letters, in one of which he actually coined the term. Keats wrote "*Negative Capability*, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries,



doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason” (21, 27 [?] December 1817; 43). Shakespeare is his example of the “Man of Achievement” who displays this capability. Coleridge is the counter example. What Keats is saying is that great writers suspend (moral) judgment on that which they create. That much is reasonably clear. Harmon ducks the issue—of what Keats meant—by simply quoting from the letter (334). Murfin and Ray go off course by suggesting that “[w]riters possessing this ability have the capability to negate their own personalities—to get outside of themselves—in order to perceive reality (especially human reality) in its manifold complexity” (290). Where does Keats say that? Kuiper is equally given to flights of fancy by defining the phrase as follows: “An author possessing negative capability is objective and not driven by intellectual or moral didacticism” (802). Baldick alone shows the appropriate degree of uncertainty when he prefaces his definition with the word “seems” (147).

<sup>2</sup> Alaskans are proud—as is the protagonist of “To Build a Fire”—of enjoying the cold. Recreation in winter includes drinking martinis while sitting out and watching the Kenai River freeze over. A local journalist put it well very recently: “We wear as a sort of badge of honor our abilities to push through Alaska’s extreme weather and terrain and enjoy the outdoors in spite of it” (DeVaughn).

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“Excellent People”:

## Naturalism, Egotism, and the Teaching of Crane's *Maggie* Joseph Church

It is inevitable that you will be greatly shocked by this book but continue please with all possible courage to the end. For it tries to show that environment is a tremendous thing in the world and frequently shapes lives regardless. If one proves that theory one makes room in Heaven for all sorts of souls (notably an occasional street girl) who are not confidently expected to be there by many excellent people.

—Stephen Crane's inscription on a copy of *Maggie*

I teach *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* in "Visions of Reality in 19C American Fiction," an upper-division course in which we try to come to some understanding of the differing psycho-philosophical assumptions of several important writers of the period—Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, James, Jewett, Freeman, Chesnut, Chopin, and Crane. To help clarify my approach, I begin the semester by outlining the dialectical history of Western metaphysics' efforts to expound the real. Building thereon, I then briefly concentrate on accessible aspects of Sartre's phenomenological ontology (the for-itself and in-itself) in *Being and Nothingness* and especially on Schiller's "two fundamental laws" of being set forth in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Arthur Lovejoy provides a convenient summary of Schiller's argument:

there are two forever conflicting tendencies in [human being], the "two fundamental laws" of a being which is both rational and sensuous—which has, in Kantian terms, both a noumenal and a temporal Ego. The one is a demand for pure unity, for "form" in the abstract—the *Formtrieb*, as Schiller calls it; and since it is alien to time, it is adverse to change. . . . The oth-

er, the *Stofftrieb*, is the demand for diversity, for fullness of concrete, particularized content; and it necessarily manifests itself in the life of an incomplete and temporal being as a perpetual impulsion toward change, towards the enrichment of experience through innovation. . . "it embraces all material existence and all that is immediately present to the senses." Though these two elements in man are forever at war, they are equally indispensable. . . . (*The Great Chain of Being*, 302).

Drawing eclectically upon this material, I present the course's working hypothesis in the following premises. Human being, human consciousness, abhors its own demise, its finitude in time-space, and thus demands that in some form reality embody the infinite. Consciousness therefore requires *freedom*, being unlimited, undefined (Schiller's *Stofftrieb*, *unbegrenzt*). But at the same time it also requires individuality, definition, an *identity* (*Formtrieb*). Since, as students quickly grasp, these requirements logically contradict one another, "are forever at war," we humans, it appears, face a painfully unresolvable impasse. However, given the force of our ontological requirements we nonetheless and however unconsciously persist in our desire for being. An apparent solution? obtain a measure of being by dropping or minimizing one of the requirements and living the other. Thus, the course proposes, human beings tend to side primarily either with identity or with freedom. With the latter, one seeks the infinite by endeavoring to exist without definition, being one-with-the-One; with the former, one pursues the infinite by conflating one's identity with an Absolute (God, Reason, Absolute Spirit, World History). And inasmuch as either side involves an essential lack, one spends much of life working to obtain wholeness by way of various, often unconscious, stratagems (personal symbolism, relationships, etc.).

Having thought a good deal about these nineteenth-century authors' writings and lives, I start out with what I take to be comparatively categorical examples of the effort to have being, postulating in close readings of their fictions that Poe very much affirms identity (his intellectual, competitive, masculinist Auguste C. Dupin exemplary), whereas Twain greatly esteems freedom (protean Huck, floating, indifferent to identity, adopting and dropping personas, races, and genders as changing circumstances dictate). As the semester proceeds, I suggest qualifications, positing that Jewett sides with identity but that as a woman in the nineteenth century she finds no ideal upon which to model herself except man-the-subordinator and suffers accordingly: her fictions dramatize efforts at transcending that identification and attaining identity as a woman (consider Sylvia in "A White Heron" surmounting the grandfatherly great pine by herself and rejecting the ornithologist; and the narrator in *Country of the Pointed Firs* subordinating older men [e.g., Captain Littlepage] and identifying herself with a mature, wise woman, Almira Todd). I next venture that Hawthorne sides with freedom but as a man in the nineteenth century already bound up with a guilt-haunted history (his destructive and cursed progenitors and his own early psychological demons), however much he longs for the freedom of Eden and "eternal summer," in most of his fiction he gloomily pictures forms of entrapment, freedom's impossibility in this world.

Deeper into the semester we take up the work of Crane together with that of his contemporary Mary Wilkins Freeman, hypothesizing that both embrace a reality emphasizing identity so long as it is limited. Both writers, I argue, psycho-philosophically oppose egotism, and in their infrequent optimistic moments envision a transcendence of finitude in the coming together of the many (who have forsaken self-centeredness) as one—think of the humble Penns in Freeman's "Revolt of 'Mother'" and the self-abnegating castaways working together

in Crane's "Open Boat." But, like Hawthorne, Freeman and Crane in general remain pessimistic. To them it often seems a world of destructive egotists, in need of reform, where one must struggle to avoid annihilation. To humble oneself in this world invites the others' immediate exploitation. In their tales Crane and Freeman champion the exploited, though sometimes, it seems, with an enthusiastic attack itself threatening artistic arrogance.

At this juncture, as we begin to read *Maggie*, I introduce students to literary naturalism and explain why, given Crane's mode of being (and to a lesser extent Freeman's), he would find its interests appealing. In many ways, of course, *Maggie* exhibits the principal elements of naturalism.<sup>1</sup> It depicts a hostile environment—the *fin-de-siècle* Bowery—in which social and economic forces go far toward determining the lives of its struggling inhabitants. This crowded setting convulses with violence and crime, poverty and sensual excess. Crane renders it a godless place, bereft of the supernatural, where base and banal instincts reign, people prey upon one another, and a caricatured religion itself only manifests and sustains arrogating self-importance (the mission-church speaker exempts himself from among the fallen while accusing his audience of human degradation; the pompous clergyman rejects needful Maggie because he thinks her a prostitute; Maggie's mother elevates herself inside a hollow Christianity of cant while helping to destroy her daughter).<sup>2</sup> And, typical of literary naturalism, Crane's novella presents us with developmentally impoverished characters who, barely literate, have a severely limited capacity for reflection either about their actual circumstances or about themselves. Lacking any real power, they use their bodies—fist-fighting, seduction (early on Pete speaks ominously of being "stuck on [Maggie's] shape" [19]), prostitution—to succeed, and, thereby, further convulse an already hellish existence.

Given Crane's "vision of reality," his esteem for self-limitation (salutary humbling of

the ego) as the means to a transcendent being-with-others, and his pessimism about its prospects, I hold that he finds corroborative images in literary naturalism's representations of a failed world, a nightmarish vision of the unreal, in which ego abounds. I suggest further in our discussions that more than most Crane informs his naturalism with exceptional psychological insight regarding the pervasive subtlety of egotism. The points of the discussion are these: 1) ideally the ego limits itself but in doing so in this world suffers exploitation and abuse by others; 2) the individual at first resists counter-attacking because of guilt incurred for asserting self-interest; 3) at some point, however, it occurs to the comparatively innocent one that he or she is justified in stopping the egotistical one who precipitated the abuse; 4) putatively free to limit the egotism of the other, the justified individual now attacks without guilt and subtly asserts his or her ego without reserve, precipitating yet more violence and violation and exacerbating the tumult. Life becomes all-against-all, everyone pridefully justified. For example, guilt-free Jimmie and Pete exult in assaulting anyone who troubles them: "Dere was a mug come in deh place deh odder day wid an idear he wus goin' teh own deh place! . . . Say, I jes' jumped deh bar an' deh way I plunked dat blokie was great. See? Dat's right! In deh jaw!" (18); "I met a chump deh odder day way up in deh city . . . . When I was a-crossin' deh street deh chump runned plump inteh me, an' den he turns aroun' an' says, 'Yer insolent ruffin'. . . . 'Deh hell I am,' I says . . . An' den I slugged 'im. See?'" (19-20). Maggie's bellicose mother similarly obtains ostensibly guiltless pleasure in assailing her offending "bad girl" (58): "what a ter'ble affliction is a disobed'ent chil" (57). And Maggie herself, dimly enraged at the oppressive forces surrounding her, objectifies them in the owner of the sweatshop, and would have him vanquished: "The air in the collar and cuff establishment strangled her. . . . She felt she would love to see somebody entangle their fingers in the oily beard of

the fat foreigner who owned the establishment. He was a detestable creature" (25). She manages to evade the charge of egotism only by foregoing a direct attack on her exploiters and instead using Pete, her "knight" (20)—who can "put to flight . . . antagonists" (17)—to assail others for her. Thus, indicates Crane, like many, Maggie tries to have it both ways: she effaces herself and via her surrogate assaults the other. She soon learns, however, that Pete attacks all, including her, and hears him predictably blame her (and her brother and mother) for his depredations. Herein Crane urges that in this culture a pervading psychological, even ontological, self-importance, however unconscious, functions as a principal force perpetuating a deleterious environment.

I now introduce June Howard's important argument in *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism* concerning the privileged position of the author and readers of naturalist narratives. Howard observes that unlike the characters in such fiction themselves, who suffer in ignorance the effects of environmental determinants, the writer and his or her audience remain exempt from such forces. She holds that works of literary naturalism solicit middle-class readers to use their freedom (their exemption) to effect reform, but at the same time, she concedes, they often tempt readers into a sense of superiority in which via a kind of "aesthetic slumming" the audience uses the down-and-out to elevate and entertain themselves. With Howard's argument in mind, we consider the ways in which Crane's interest in the limited ego necessarily entails his own readers and himself as author. I ask students if they see in *Maggie* instances of onlookers, analogues for readers, converting suffering into entertainment. The class readily points to Maggie's neighbors turning the despairing girl into a spectacle, "as if they formed the front row at a theatre" (48), and makes much of the amused citizens watching Jimmie and the other boys bloody one another:

From a window of an apartment house . . . there leaned a curious woman. Some laborers, unloading a scow at a dock at the river, paused for a moment and regarded the fight. The engineer of a passive tugboat hung lazily to a railing and watched. Over on the Island, a worm of yellow convicts came from the shadow of a grey ominous building and crawled slowly along the river's bank. (3-4)

Crane uses such episodes, we surmise, not only to indict these spectators for obtaining an egotistical pleasure that helps perpetuate misery but also to induce his readers—perhaps “excellent people”—to find themselves in the indictment. Do we, like Jimmie’s lazy onlookers, aesthetically slumming, fail to see that in such a determining environment the boys will almost certainly become the convicts? In class we conclude that Crane’s work seeks at least in part to undo the arrogance of readers.<sup>3</sup>

To make this conclusion all the more personal, I then ask students to think more about their own reaction to a couple of strange moments in *Maggie*. In the first we revisit vicious Jimmie’s having “on a certain star-lit evening, said wonderingly and quite reverently: ‘Deh moon looks like hell, don't it?’” (16). Invariably some students see in his remark only the comical if not hostile crudeness of his thought. But upon further reflection many begin to realize that, like us, Jimmie, however much within the patois of the Bowery, actually esteems beauty. In this moment they discern how Crane, true to his vision of reality, invites readers to express, then comprehend, and, it may be hoped, allay their own self-importance. In the second we review the episode in which naive Maggie initially accompanies Pete to the beer garden and reveals her ignorance of artful representation:

“Say, Pete,” said Maggie, leaning forward, “dis is great.”

“Sure,” said Pete, with proper compla-

cence.

A ventriloquist followed the dancer. He held two fantastic dolls on his knees. He made them sing mournful ditties and say funny things about geography and Ireland.

“Do dose little men talk?” asked Maggie.

“Naw,” said Pete, “it’s some damn fake. See?” (23)

Some students laugh at Maggie’s seeming stupidity; others commiserate her lack of awareness—all of us feel superior. But then together we begin to wonder, what have we been doing all along with Maggie, Pete, and the other characters in Crane’s fiction? Haven’t we readers, like Maggie, been anthropomorphizing, investing these little men and women—these ventriloquized, inked signs on paper—with human life? Haven’t we, too, ignored, remained ignorant of, their being the artist’s “fantastic dolls [who] say funny things”? Tempting us to mock Maggie, Crane has again induced, then punctured, our egotism, holding out the possibility of our coming to consciousness of a deleterious disposition toward self-pride. In discussions of Maggie’s, then our, deficient understanding of the artist and his figures, I have more than once seen students in the classroom suddenly recognize their own propensity for easy elevation over others and laugh out loud at themselves and Crane’s concluding joke: “it’s some damn fake. See?”

I end our work on *Maggie* with questions for the class: if, as Howard contends, the naturalist author exempts himself or herself from the deterministic forces depicted in the narrative and if, as we have proposed, Crane sees egotism as one, perhaps the principal, such force, is it possible that the author of *Maggie* exempts himself from the possibility of egotism? And, if he does, wouldn’t that be unconscionably hypocritical, hyper-egotistical? To help students get started with answers, I have them consider the pertinence of . . .

1. Crane's publishing the novella under the pseudonym Johnston Smith;
2. his naturalist subject matter: for example, the ordinarily tabooed prostitution and his empathy for a "girl of the streets." (I tell students about Crane's real-life defense of the prostitute Dora Clark.);<sup>4</sup>
3. his assault on his own bourgeois world and on conventional Christianity (himself the son and grandson of important religious figures);
4. his bohemianism, his esteem for and evident identification with the old woman who comforts Maggie: "come in an' stay wid me teh-night. I ain' got no moral standin'" (48);
5. his metafictional identification with his characters (Jimmie's aestheticism; Maggie's ventriloquist);
6. his sometimes bathetic juxtapositions of vernacular and literary language;
7. and his kaleidoscopic use of naturalism, expressionism, impressionism, and irony in such a way as to subvert not only the reader's but also the author's coherent authority.

Students generally conclude that Crane, a gifted, perspicacious artist, does in fact recognize his own propensity to self-importance, that *pace* Howard he and his readers do experience a force—egotism—that oppresses his characters, and that in his writing he works to clarify and dissolve it in himself and others. They allow, however, that at times Crane may succumb to the very thing he opposes. As one student put it, "he tries to escape ego by attacking it everywhere for the sake of a better world: is that his secret conceit and justification for his own arrogance?" This line of thinking opens further debate, but in the end most agree that Crane truly envisions and would effect a reality in which none takes himself or herself as more

important than any one else. With that vision before us, we enter Crane's pessimistic "Blue Hotel" and witness how community—here, four men playing cards "for fun" (112), their knees touching under the table—comes apart in a burst of ego: the aggressively subtle and un-subtle self-interest of the Swede, Johnnie, the cowboy, the Easterner, the gambler, and the "important men" (110) of the town. We then embark on the more hopeful "Open Boat," where violence and negation reside in "indifferent" (74) nature, and the four castaways, virtually nameless, more or less limit self-regard in such a way as to betoken for Stephen Crane human transcendence:

It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas. No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it. But it dwelt in the boat, and each man felt it warm him. They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. . . . It was more than a mere recognition of what was best for the common safety. There was surely in it a quality that was personal and heartfelt. . . . [There] was this comradeship that the correspondent, for instance, who had been taught to be cynical of men, knew even at the time was the best experience of his life. (61)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Northrop Frye calls *Maggie* the first naturalist novel in the United States (307), and fifty years ago Thomas Gullason could say, "For over a half-century, Stephen Crane's *Maggie* (1893) has been linked with European naturalism, particularly with Zola's *L'Assommoir*" (103). Of course, since then many have suggested ways of rethinking Crane's aesthetic interests in literary naturalism; for an important example see

Donald Pizer's "Stephen Crane's *Maggie* and American Naturalism."

<sup>2</sup> In one of his poems especially pertinent to literary naturalism, Crane suggests that in the nineteenth century with the perceived "death of God" humans egotistically, graspingly aspire to be gods themselves:

God lay dead in Heaven;  
 Angels sang the hymn of the end;  
 . . . .  
 Then from the far caverns  
 Of dead sins  
 Came monsters, livid with desire.  
 They fought,  
 Wrangled over the world . . . (71)

<sup>3</sup> See Aida Farrag Graff's insightful discussion of the relation between the boys and the convicts and its implication of the reader (424-426). Charles Swann (102) and John Berryman (279) also discuss Crane's interest in raising a reader's consciousness by subverting his or her presumed authority.

<sup>4</sup> See "Stephen Crane, Dora Clark, and the Police" in *The New York City Sketches of Stephen Crane and Related Pieces* (217-263).

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### Critical Editions of Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*:

## Theoretical and Pedagogical Considerations

Gary Totten

An unsigned review in the *Independent* of July 1905 notes that while Wharton garnered praise for “distinction in literary style” early in her career, the style of *The House of Mirth* “is like the fine gowns of her heroines, a fashion of the times for interpreting decadent symptoms in human nature.” Ultimately, the reviewer concludes, “[w]hat she says will not last, because it is simply the fashionable drawing of ephemeral types and still more ephemeral sentiments” (110). Wharton herself drew upon the metaphor of fashion to disparage the passing fads of criticism, observing, in the first sentence of a previously unpublished essay, “Fiction and Criticism,” that “[f]ashions in criticism change almost as rapidly as fashions in dress” (293). Through this juxtaposition of material and intellectual fashion, Wharton perhaps gains the last word. Indeed, as the current abundance of scholarship on *Mirth* demonstrates, Wharton’s novel and style have proved far more enduring than the reviewer predicted and than even Wharton herself might have suspected, and it is the reviewer’s criticism, not the novel, that now seems like a momentary fashion. Critical editions of *The House of Mirth* further attest to the novel’s staying power and provide both a theoretical and pedagogical apparatus for exploring the aesthetic, critical, and cultural significance of Wharton’s first bestseller.<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Ammons’s 1990 Norton Critical Edition of *Mirth* provides instructors with a strong critical apparatus. The text, reprinted from the 1905 Scribner’s edition,<sup>2</sup> also includes the original illustrations by A. B. Wenzell, which appeared in both the *Scribner’s Magazine* serialization (January to November 1905) and Scribner’s first edition of the novel. Ammons situates the novel biographically through

a selection of Wharton’s letters that convey her aesthetic concerns relating to the novel’s form and structure as well as her investment in its economic success; in a letter written to Charles Scribner on 11 November 1905, for example, Wharton expresses her pleasure in the novel’s vigorous sales and, as further evidence of its mass market appeal, mentions her upcoming meeting with Elisabeth Marbury (“one of the first successful author’s agents,” according to Ammons’s footnote [261n2]) to discuss the novel’s dramatization. In addition to Wharton’s own thoughts about the novel’s production and reception, Ammons also includes a number of contemporary reviews indicating the variety of critical opinion on the novel, which range from praise for Wharton’s memorable characterization of Lily to disdain for Lily’s shallow behavior and improbable choices.

Ammons’s edition is most useful, at least in a cultural studies sense, for the selection of essays and excerpts that provide cultural context. Ammons includes well-chosen passages from Thorstein Veblen’s *The Theory of the Leisure Class* explaining how women’s dress serves as a marker of conspicuous consumption. The Veblen excerpts can be assigned with selections from Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Women and Economics* and Olive Schreiner’s *Woman and Labour*, both texts that extend Veblen’s analysis of *fin de siècle* culture by problematizing women’s culturally-produced parasitism. Ammons also includes excerpts from an etiquette guide and an article on millinery as a profession for women, both of which helpfully contextualize Lily’s experiences near the beginning and end of her decline. Essays on the lives of factory girls and the function of working girls’ clubs illuminate characters such as the philanthropic Gerty Farish or working-class Nettie Struther, who provide further points of comparison for Lily’s own slide down the socioeconomic scale. Students find these characters intriguing but are not always sure how to understand them, a concern which the contextual essays address.



The edition also reprints useful examples of the period's visual culture, specifically the illustrations accompanying Charles Dana Gibson's "Marrying for Money" and a late nineteenth-century photograph of a *tableau vivant*, "The Dying Gladiator," by Sandow, the strong man. This choice is a curious one, as Jack McCullough's book, *Living Pictures on the New York Stage*, from which the photograph comes, contains several images of Mary Anderson's *tableau vivant* of "Galatea," which is more closely related to the female *tableaux vivants* in the novel. Sandow's photograph demonstrates, however, that in addition to the spectacular displays of upper class women such as Carry Fisher stages at the Wellington Brys' *tableaux vivants*, men were also exhibiting their bodies on stage during this period. Future Norton editions of *Mirth* might be enhanced with more images from theater, advertising and other popular media that would demonstrate the novel's relationship to trends in visual, mass, and beauty culture, particularly as these trends affect women, a lack in the Norton that the recent Broadview Press edition attempts to remedy, as I discuss below.

The Norton Critical Edition also includes biographical and interpretive essays from well-known Wharton scholars Millicent Bell, Louis Auchincloss, Cynthia Griffin Wolff, R. W. B. Lewis, Elaine Showalter, and Elizabeth Ammons. Although these essays and the sources in the selected bibliography are all pre-1990, and thus not informed by more recent developments in cultural theory, the insights remain prescient and relevant to our current reading and teaching of *The House of Mirth*. Essays such as Showalter's "The Death of the Lady (Novelist)" or Wolff's "Lily Bart and the Beautiful Death," for example, are seminal explorations of the relationship between women, writing, and art, issues that are central to both the novel and Wharton's work in general and with which students might profitably grapple. If desired, instructors could supplement these readings with more recent scholarship on *The*

*House of Mirth* regularly published in scholarly journals or found in collections such as *New Essays on The House of Mirth* (2001), edited by Deborah Esch, or *Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth: A Casebook* (2003), edited by Carol Singley.

The 1994 Bedford Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism edition of *The House of Mirth*, edited by Shari Benstock, responds to the late twentieth-century interest in critical theory by reading the novel within this critical milieu. Like the Norton, the Bedford reprints the 1905 Scribner's edition of the text, and Benstock, who was completing her revisionist biography of Wharton at the time, provides a thorough and readable biographical/historical introduction to Wharton (instructors might also utilize Benstock's expanded essay-length biography in Singley's *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton* [2003]) and a concise critical history of Wharton criticism through 1990 (see Clare Colquitt's "Bibliographic Essay: Visions and Revision of Wharton" in Singley's *A Historical Guide* for an updated critical history). Benstock's critical history provides a solid overview of Wharton's relationship to the changing fashions of criticism, noting, for example, that three decades after the advent of structuralism in American universities, Wharton's work is finally being interpreted according to "'new' theories of reading and writing" (Norris's essay in the volume being, as Benstock notes, the first deconstructive analysis of *Mirth*) (318). Thus, the edition is valuable not only for courses focusing on critical theory, but also for courses in which instructors wish to give students a solid grounding in the best critical practices of both Whartonian and literary criticism, informed by a historical understanding of ideological trends and the ways in which literary criticism responds to such trends. "A set of sexual, social, financial, racial, moral, and psychological economies governs" the "world" of *The House of Mirth*, Benstock concludes, and the critical essays included in the edition provide insights into how

these economies “intersect, overlap, support, and undercut each other” and how “they position us as readers so that we participate in creating Lily Bart and her world” (323), good questions that should inform any critical practice.

Although the edition’s critical essays are not much more recent than those in the Norton, they do present a wider range of critical perspectives, including cultural criticism, Marxist criticism, feminist criticism, deconstruction, and psychoanalytic criticism. Two of the essays, Wai-Chee Dimock’s Marxist critique, “Debasing Exchange,” and Frances Restuccia’s feminist essay, “The Name of the Lily,” are previously published (and revised for a student audience) while three are specifically written for this edition: Lillian Robinson’s cultural critique, “The Traffic in Women,” Margot Norris’s deconstructive essay, “Death by Speculation,” and Ellie Ragland Sullivan’s psychoanalytic analysis, “The Daughter’s Dilemma.” Each critical essay is preceded by an introduction to the critical approach and a bibliography of further reading in that approach (including works on *Mirth* from that perspective, if available), written and compiled by series editor, Ross Murfin. A glossary of critical and theoretical terms also appears at the end of the volume.

The essays are challenging but for the most part manageable for undergraduate students, having been written or revised with a student audience in mind, as Murfin notes, to demonstrate “how current theoretical approaches can generate compelling readings of great literature” (v) and “that good criticism is informed by a set of coherent assumptions” (vi). Robinson’s essay helpfully delineates the subtle classifications among the upper classes and *nouveaux riches* in the novel and explains Lily’s social and economic position in relation to other characters. For instructors desiring to provide students with cultural context for the novel (specifically, women’s relationship to the period’s sexual economy), the essay could provide

a starting point. While Robinson invokes Emma Goldman’s 1911 essay, “The Traffic in Women” in her title and discussion, the argument could be more richly contextualized with sources such as Veblen, Gilman, Schreiner, or others in order to provide students with a better sense of the intertextuality that characterizes the best cultural criticism. The revised version of Dimock’s important article, “Debasing Exchange,” not only provides an engaging analysis of “the injustice of exchange” (378), particularly as it relates to Lily, but also serves as an excellent model of Marxist criticism. Restuccia’s feminist exploration of the novel is nicely complicated by her argument that a tension between two feminisms, sociopolitical and post-structuralist, exists in Wharton’s text. Students will benefit both from Restuccia’s careful reading of the text and her modeling of feminist theoretical practice. For instructors wishing to familiarize students with deconstruction, Norris’s essay adequately models a deconstructive reading and also contains a helpful discussion of the ways in which literary aesthetics associated with the novel of manners and realism are deconstructed by the text, though without a sustained discussion of deconstruction’s theoretical assumptions and strategies (which can be facilitated by Murfin’s introductory essay on the approach), students will most likely be frustrated by the essay’s complexity. Finally, Sullivan explicates the possible connections between Wharton and Lily through a psychoanalytic lens, concentrating on Lacan’s reworking of Freud’s notion of hysteria. The essay is a good model of a psychoanalytic approach, though instructors may wish to emphasize the inherent risk this approach poses for drawing simplified connections between writers and characters (which Sullivan acknowledges at the beginning of the essay), as this is a tendency into which undergraduate writers easily slip if not alerted to the subtleties of such criticism.

Although instructors will not find such a developed critical context in the 2005 Broadview Press edition of *Mirth*, edited by Janet

Beer and Elizabeth Nolan (in fact, the edition does not include any critical essays), the edition presents several important strengths, including a useful selection of appendices containing contextual materials, each section preceded by a brief introduction suggesting the relevance of the materials to an understanding of the novel. Similar to Ammons, Beer and Nolan excerpt Wharton's correspondence about the writing and marketing of the novel as well as contemporary reviews. They also include passages from *A Backward Glance*, in which Wharton discusses the experience of writing *Mirth*, and reprint her introduction to the 1936 edition of the novel, a document that emphasizes the profound social changes occurring in the three decades following the novel's initial publication and reveals Wharton's confidence in the novel's lasting worth: "the book still lives," she observes, despite its "'dated' . . . stage-setting of manners, furniture and costume" (373). Students enjoy comparing Wharton's own reflections about the novel's significance to the contemporary reviews of the text, an exercise that can lead to engaging discussions about reception and canonicity. The editors have also included Wharton's 1905 story, "The Introducers," to illustrate how she utilized similar themes in short fiction, a feature of the edition which allows instructors to further contextualize the novel within the aesthetic and thematic aspects of Wharton's *oeuvre*.

As I noted earlier, the Broadview edition situates the novel within a cultural context that gives more attention than any other critical edition thus far to the popular culture of the period. In addition to a brief chronology of Wharton's life and a select bibliography, instructors will find textual selections similar to those in the Norton, including the same excerpts from Veblen and Gilman, passages from etiquette manuals and articles on hospitality and working girls' clubs (from different sources than those in the Norton), as well as contemporary articles about the Newport and New York social scenes (including an excerpt from Henry James's *The*

*American Scene*), *tableaux vivants* and other leisure class entertainments, card-playing, and fashion images from *Harper's Bazaar*. Beer and Nolan also include excerpts from Wharton's *The Decoration of Houses*, her interior design guide co-authored with Ogden Codman, Jr. in 1897, in order to emphasize, as the editors state in their introduction to this section, how Wharton uses New York's "built environment . . . to connote grades of social standing and inclusion" (447). Their argument for its relevance to *Mirth* is compelling and one wonders why excerpts from *The Decoration of Houses* have not been included in previous critical editions of the novel.

Another important aspect of the Broadview edition is Beer and Nolan's introductory discussion about Wharton's relationship to Henry James and George Eliot. They contend that Eliot's influence on *Mirth* reveals "the limit of James's influence, rather than its dominance" (12), countering a tendency seen in Brookner's introduction to the 1997 Scribner's edition, for example, to read *Mirth* as Wharton's "most Jamesian novel" (11), and allowing students to understand *Mirth* in its larger international context. Their discussion of the novel's relationship to naturalist ideology is also helpful, and instructors who wish to pursue this topic further could supplement Beer and Nolan's introduction with Donald Pizer's "The Naturalism of Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*" (1995) or selections on Wharton from Donna Campbell's *Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1885-1915* (1997).

The novel's rich engagement with various aesthetic, critical, and cultural contexts is well-illustrated by these editions. The current selection of critical editions emphasizes the many ways in which *The House of Mirth* supersedes initial criticism about its literary faddishness and, in addition to the possible ways to utilize the editions that I discuss above, could also provoke lively discussion about the ways in which such editions and the critical and pedagogical approaches they privilege affect the

novel's place in college curricula. Most importantly, however, these editions provide instructors with ample material to develop their students' critical and theoretical capacities and fulfill a variety of pedagogical needs.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For instructors not desiring an extensive cultural and critical context in which to situate their teaching of the text, several suitable editions of the novel exist, all with general introductions by critics such as Cynthia Griffin Wolff (Penguin, 1994), Martha Banta (Oxford UP, 1994), Anita Brookner (Scribner's, 1997), Anna Quindlen (New American Library, 2000), and Jeffrey Meyers (Barnes and Noble, 2003). The Library of America (1985) also publishes *Mirth* in one volume together with *The Reef*, *The Custom of the Country*, and *The Age of Innocence*, with notes by R. W. B. Lewis. This edition contains a detailed chronology of Wharton's life and work.

<sup>2</sup> R. W. B. Lewis argues that "the authority of the first book publication of many of her works" (including *Mirth*) is established due to the fact that she "closely supervised the publication of her works . . . except during World War I when she was overseas and found it impossible to do so." Further, "her extensive correspondence with editors at Charles Scribner's Sons" reveals that "she was fortunate in finding a publisher as eager to carry out her intentions as she was meticulous" (1321).

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**Gary Totten** is Assistant Professor of English at North Dakota State University. He has published articles on Wharton, Dreiser, and their contemporaries, and is the editor of *Memorial Boxes and Guarded Interiors: Edith Wharton and Material Culture*, forthcoming from the University of Alabama Press in 2007.

## Five on Twenty-One

For each issue of ALN the editors ask someone in the field to share his or her favorite books. We aren't sure why we do this. Call it an obsession. For this issue of ALN, we asked **Jeanne Campbell Reesman**, *Ashbel Smith Professor of English at the University of Texas at San Antonio*, and author and editor of more books and articles than a team of Siberian huskies in a fan hitch could pull.

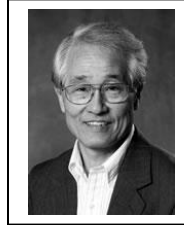
### The Reesman Top Five

Mary Shelley *Frankenstein*  
 Herman Melville *Moby-Dick*  
 Mark Twain *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*  
 Jack London *The Stanford Complete Short Stories of Jack London*  
 William Faulkner *Absalom, Absalom!*

The editors wish to thank Professor Reesman for her list, and we must insist that if you have not read these books, you *Come Gee! Come Haw!* Stop being village dogs: get out of the basket and hook yourself up to the gangline! How else will you ever become lead dog?

## Ten Questions with

## Yoshinobu Hakutani



**Yoshinobu Hakutani** is a professor of English and University Distinguished Scholar at Kent State University. He is the author or editor of many books, including *Cross-*

*Cultural Visions in African American Modernism*, *Richard Wright and Racial Discourse*, *Haiku: This Other World* by Richard Wright, *Young Dreiser*, *Theodore Dreiser and American Culture*, and *Art, Music, and Literature, 1897-1902*, by Dreiser.

**ALN: From your 1964 article on the connection between Dreiser and French Realism to the present, you have worked a great deal with Theodore Dreiser. What drew you to the study of Dreiser?**

That article became the first chapter of my dissertation "Dreiser Before *Sister Carrie*: French Realism and Early Experience," which I completed at Penn State in 1965. In the article, based on Dreiser's references to Zola and Balzac in Robert Elias' collection of letters and *A Book About of Myself*, I try to show that Dreiser was inspired rather than influenced by the French novelists and that his writing was primarily experiential and instinctual.

My interest in Dreiser, though, goes back to my undergraduate years. I was an English major at Hiroshima University to become a high school English teacher in Japan. While English majors there took courses in British romantic poetry, trying to read, among other writings, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats, many of us were far more interested in reading modern British fiction. We read, as I recall, Hardy's *Tess*, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. One day I happened to see William Wyler's "Carrie," based on *Sister Carrie*. Not only was I impressed with actor Sir Laurence Olivier (Hurstwood) and actress Jennifer Jones (Carrie), I wanted to

read the novel. A year later I also saw the movie “A Place in the Sun,” based on *An American Tragedy*, which won an Academy Award.

During my junior year I was enrolled in a course in literary criticism. The professor discussed a chapter—“Reality in America”—from Lionel Trilling’s *The Liberal Imagination*. Because I wasn’t familiar with Henry James, I didn’t understand Trilling’s argument. I then inquired my advisor, not the professor who discussed Trilling, about my B. A. thesis. My advisor, who authored books on Mark Twain and Sinclair Lewis, recommended that I study Dreiser on the ground that F. O. Matthiessen, whom he admired, had published his critical book, *Theodore Dreiser*. Eventually I did write my B. A. thesis in English on Dreiser. I’ve long forgotten its title.

**ALN: Another of your research interests has been African-American literature, especially the work of Richard Wright. What are some of the unexplored or under-explored connections between American literary naturalism and African-American literature?**

The mutual admiration of Dreiser and Wright represents the earliest connection between American literary naturalism and African American literature. In the penultimate chapter of *Black Boy* (1945), one of the great autobiographies in American literature, as well as the centerpiece of the Chicago Renaissance, Wright writes: “I read Dreiser’s *Jennie Gerhardt* and *Sister Carrie* and they revived in me a vivid sense of my mother’s suffering; I was overwhelmed. I grew silent, wondering about the life around me. It would have been impossible for me to have told anyone what I derived from those novels, for it was nothing less than a sense of life itself. All my life had shaped me for the realism, the naturalism of the modern novel, and I could not read enough of them.”

Wright’s affinity with Dreiser has conventionally been understood in terms of naturalism,

but Wright never considered himself a naturalist. That Wright made no distinction between realism and naturalism in reading Dreiser’s fiction suggests a predilection for the fiction that mirrors social reality, the writing that not only expresses the sentiments of the socially oppressed, but also deals with the unalloyed feelings of individuals representative of the feelings of others. This objectivity on the part of the writer, which Wright deemed the most difficult to achieve, constitutes what he called “perspective” and “intellectual space,” the twin elements indispensable to his narrative.

The models that appealed most to Wright’s understanding of American life were *Jennie Gerhardt* and “Nigger Jeff.” Wright considered Dreiser the greatest writer American culture had produced just as he thought Dostoevski was the greatest Russian writer. It is Chicago that provided the young Wright, as it did Jennie Gerhardt, with ample space in which to move about freely, interact openly with others, cherish dreams, and fulfill desires. Having recovered from the first economic depression the nation experienced, Chicago in the 1910s to Dreiser was a throbbing city with space and energy. Wright’s Chicago two decades later was similarly a volatile, fluid city, what Wright called “the fabulous city.” Only recently has it come to light that Dreiser shortly before death regarded *Black Boy* as a model of writing, “an honest forth right book.”

One of the unexplored connections between American naturalism/realism and African American literature can be found in some of the postmodern, postcolonial African American fiction and nonfiction, such as Wright’s *Black Power* (1954) and *The Color Curtain* (1956), Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* (1982), and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987) and *Jazz* (1993). *The Color Purple* and *Beloved*, for example, were written under the influence of *Black Power*. I’d like to think that if Wright were Dreiser’s son, Walker and Morrison would be Dreiser’s granddaughters. The connection between American natural-

ists/realists and modern/postmodern African American writers is reflected not in the naturalist doctrines of heredity and environment but in the writer's faithful description of fact and history. In gauging the narratives of modern and postmodern African American writers, I have found Lacan's concept of human subjectivity extremely helpful. I have found Bakhtin's dialogic imagination and his concept of the subject most useful as well.

**ALN: *The list of works that you have edited in one capacity or another is significant. One of your earliest edited collections was the volume American Literary Naturalism: A Reassessment, which you co-edited with Lewis Fried in 1974. Now, some thirty years later, could you give us your assessment of the "re-assessment" offered in that volume?***

For the collection we invited ten scholars/critics, including Charles Child Walcott, Philip L. Gerber, Warren French, and Michel Fabre, to contribute an essay each on Edgar Watson Howe, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Robert Herrick, Henry Adams, Theodore Dreiser, John Steinbeck, Richard Wright, James T. Farrell, and Nelson Algren. Based on the essays, we observed that since its tumultuous beginnings in the late nineteenth century, American literary naturalism had undergone a drastic transformation. We also noted that twentieth-century critics in the field had continued to use such terms as "dualism," "tensions," and "contradictions" in defining the essential character of American literary naturalism.

While American naturalists used the concept of determinism in describing human character, they could also affirm the significance of human beings as individuals. Dreiser, for example, instinctually intimated this individualism when he referred to Mark Twain as the "double" Twain. We are also reminded of Henry Adams' words that "from earliest childhood the boy was accustomed to feel that, for him, life was double."

**ALN: *Is the reassessment project set forth in that 1974 volume still unfinished? What would you say is the current status report on the study of American literary naturalism? Is it time for another reassessment? What work needs to be done in the field?***

When working on Wright's *The Outsider* (1953), a naturalist as well as existentialist novel, I encountered his idea of "a double vision," explained by Ely Houston, New York District Attorney. "Negroes, as they enter our culture," Houston as Wright's mouthpiece says, "are going to inherit the problems we have but with a difference." Even though Damon, the protagonist, tries to alienate himself from the world, while dying he seizes upon a vision that enables him to see himself as belonging to American culture. The acquisition of independent vision is what Wright considers imperative for African Americans not only to survive but to flourish in American life. This concept of double vision is often attributed to W. E. B. Du Bois but I'd like to think it came from Dreiser. One might theorize that American literary naturalism as a literary discipline consists of determinism and individualism, the binary aspects of the doctrine. Can this approach to American literary naturalism be an example of the transformation mentioned in my response to question 3 above?

**ALN: *You are the General Editor for the series Modern American Literature: New Approaches published by Peter Lang. For the uninitiated, please tell us how one becomes the General Editor of such a series. What is your vision for the series? What are the editorial principles that guide your work as General Editor?***

In 1995 an acquisition editor at Peter Lang in New York asked me if I was interested in evaluating a book manuscript "The Courtroom as Forum: Homicide Trials by Dreiser, Wright, Capote, and Mailer." The first half of the study

focuses on the murder trials in *An American Tragedy* and *Native Son*. Impressed with the subject matter as well as with the methods of intertextuality and interauthoriality, I recommended publication. The acquisition editor, who had received a Ph. D. earlier, told me she liked Dreiser and other American novelists. She then made a proposal to the board of editors in Bern, Switzerland, that she as acquisition editor and I as general editor start a new series, "Modern American Literature: New Approaches." *The Courtroom as Forum: Homicide Trials by Dreiser, Wright, Capote, and Mailer*, by Ann M Algeo, became the first volume of the series. The latest volume (vol. 49) is a collection entitled *James Baldwin's Go Tell It on the Mountain: Historical and Critical Essays* (2006). The first volume was a dissertation whereas the last one was by a professor who had published her first book with a university press.

The books in this series deal with many of the major writers known as American realists, modernists, and postmodernists from 1880 to the present. This category of writers also includes less known ethnic and minority writers, a majority of whom are African American, some are Native American, Latino/a American, Japanese American, Chinese American, and others. In general, the series reflects new critical approaches, such as deconstructionism, new historicism, psychoanalytical criticism, gender and feminist criticism, and cultural studies.

**ALN:** *Aside from your work with American literary naturalism and African-American literature, you have done considerable work on Japanese literature, especially the poetry of Yone Noguchi. In your estimation, what impact did American literary naturalism have on Japanese literature? Or, conversely, to what extent did the American literary naturalists draw on eastern influences? Are there unexplored connections here?*

Actually, my study of Yone Noguchi's poetry and literary criticism led to exploring the relationship between Japanese poetics and the modernism of Yeats and Pound. While Yeats' symbolism was influenced by his cross-cultural visions of noh theatre and Irish folklore, Pound's imagism had its origin in classic haiku. In the article "Ezra Pound, Yone Noguchi, and Imagism," *Modern Philology* (1992), I tried to demonstrate that Noguchi influenced Pound rather than the other way round as previously thought. Even though Pound's modernist theory might partly have derived from other sources, one can hardly overlook the direct link between Japanese poetics and Pound's imagism through Noguchi.

In 1998, with my colleague at Kent State, Robert Tener, I edited Richard Wright's posthumous work, *Haiku: This Other World*, a selection of 817 out of the 4,000 haiku he wrote in the last eighteen months of his life. Sometime during the summer of 1959, Wright was introduced to haiku by Sinclair Beiles, a young poet who loved its form. Only recently has Beiles been identified as a poet from South Africa living in Paris and associating with other poets of the Beat generation, such as Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and Gary Snyder. Later in the 1960s, after Wright's death, Ginsberg and Snyder, for example, became so fascinated with Zen and Zazen, a kneeling meditation, that they studied Zen philosophy and practice in earnest with priests living in celebrated medieval monasteries in Japan. Wright, on the other hand, borrowed from the South African poet R. H. Blyth's four volumes on the art and history of haiku and the relationship of haiku to Zen. By March 1960, he was so captivated by the beauty of haiku that he was already in the midst of composing what turned out to be over four thousand separate haiku.

**ALN:** *1902 and your 2003 University of Delaware Press edition of Theodore Dreiser's *Uncollected Magazine Articles, 1897-1902*. Could you take us through the process of edit-*



***ing these early pieces by Dreiser? What editorial problems arose, if any? How did you collect these pieces?***

In 1964 I spent a week at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. to read some of Dreiser's early magazine articles for a chapter of my dissertation, "Free-lance Writing." There were no such things as Xerox machines or copiers available anywhere. I vaguely remember that I was busy taking notes and transcribing Dreiser's passages. As early as the late 1970s, through interlibrary loan, I began collecting all of the 111 articles published between 1897 and 1902. At that time some of the libraries that held the issues of the magazines in which Dreiser's articles appeared sent me negative photocopies (letters in white and the rest of the page in black) of the articles.

For the publication of *Selected Magazine Articles of Theodore Dreiser: Life and Art in the American 1890s* (1985, 1987), I had to decipher some of the obscurely photocopied words and punctuation marks. In editing the text I emended obvious spelling errors, but retained the prevailing typography regarding spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, and punctuation as it appeared in the original publication. As for the illustrations selected for this edition, I tried to reproduce many of the photographs and line drawings originally included in the articles. Some of the articles were reconstructed from the previously published articles on the same subject. On occasion Dreiser rewrote his published pieces and republished them with new titles, frequently making extensive changes in the process. Under whatever circumstances an article was published, however, he or the editor made changes ranging from minor stylistic alterations to considerable revisions in content.

For the publication of *Art, Music, and Literature, 1897-1902* (2001) and *Theodore Dreiser's Uncollected Magazine Articles, 1897-1902* (2003), I of course used computer (Word Star

instead of Microsoft Word) to set up the text. At that time, unfamiliar with the digital camera, I used a conventional camera to reproduce the illustrations used in these editions.

***ALN: As you were editing those two Dreiser volumes, what surprised you? Any unexpected Dreiser discoveries or intellectual gems? How do these early essays contribute to our understanding of Dreiser?***

When I was working on the earlier, two-volume edition, *Selected Magazine Articles of Theodore Dreiser: Life and Art in the American 1890s* (1985, 1987), I left out 33 out of the 111 articles published in 1897-1902. Those left out, then, are collected in *Theodore Dreiser's Uncollected Magazine Articles, 1897-1902*. I didn't select these pieces since many of them do not directly concern the twin topics: life and art in the American 1890s. I was, however, keenly aware that some of these articles are precious cultural documents that closely reflect social issues and directly relate to literature. One of these articles, "Delaware's Blue Laws," expressing in part Dreiser's view of racial prejudice at the turn of the century, is extremely relevant to Dreiser's "Nigger Jeff," what I'd like to call a classic modern American short story. This article is also important to the study of American literature and culture, for Dreiser makes a reference to another American classic: "It was only in 1893, that the law relating to the Badge of Crime was wiped off the books—a law which had its counterpart in the famous Massachusetts act, on which the romance of 'The Scarlet Letter' was founded." Another article, "A Touch of Human Brotherhood," reconstructed from the story of the Captain in "Curious Shifts of the Poor" reflects what Dreiser was thinking when describing the down-trodden Hurstwood. The collection also includes articles that address socio-economic issues, such as "It Pays to Treat Workers Generously: John H. Patterson," originally published in *Success* in 1899.

Some of the other articles have little to do with Dreiser but shed important light on the new developments in turn-of-the-century America. Articles, such as “Our Government and Our Food,” “Atkingson on National Food Reform,” “An Important Philanthropy: Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,” and “The New Knowledge of Weeds,” all address pressing issues in human and animal life, health, and ecology, the issues with which we are all deeply concerned today. Reading these articles surprised me, for I had not realized that Dreiser was concerned about such issues when writing *Sister Carrie*. But, having considered Dreiser an extraordinarily compassionate human being, I shouldn’t have been surprised.

**ALN:** *What are your favorite works to teach?*

For the undergraduate course “U. S. Literature from 1865 to 1945” I use, besides an anthology, two of my favorite novels: *Jennie Gerhardt* and *Native Son*. Teaching in Ohio, I include in the book list for another undergraduate course *Jennie Gerhardt* and *Beloved*; both stories took place in Ohio. If I were teaching in Illinois, I might assign *Sister Carrie* and *Native Son*. Currently I’m teaching a senior seminar on Dreiser, an intertextual and interauthorial study. The seminar requires five novels and a short story: *The Scarlet Letter*, “Nigger Jeff,” *Sister Carrie*, *Jennie Gerhardt*, *An American Tragedy*, and *Native Son*. I’m also showing the films “Carrie” (1952), “A Place in the Sun” (1951), “Native Son” (1951), and “Native Son” (1986). In the film “Native Son” (1951) Wright (41 years old) played Bigger Thomas; it’s not a good film!

**ALN:** *We hear that you are loyal to Cleveland sports teams. Is this the year LeBron James takes the Cavaliers to the NBA finals? Will Romeo Crennel be able to turn around the ill-fortunes of the Browns? What would it take to convince corporate America to give big en-*

*dorsement deals to literature professors instead of professional athletes?*

It’s not likely that the Cavaliers, despite LeBron James’ heroics on the court, will make it to the NBA finals. This good natured high school graduate from nearby Akron, whom some locals call King James, stands a beacon of hope for climatically and economically depressed Northeast Ohio. Dreiser in *Jennie Gerhardt* described Cleveland as a booming city with “the railroad, the express and post-office, the telegraph, telephone, the newspaper and, in short, the whole art of printing and distributing . . . what may be termed a kaleidoscopic glitter.” Every time the Cavaliers win a game on home court, I feel elated just as Lester Kane was energized by the glittering city a century ago.

## Naturalism News

ALN seeks to note all items of interest to scholars of American literary naturalism and related to the memberships of the Frank Norris Society, the Jack London Society, the Hamlin Garland Society, the Stephen Crane Society, the Theodore Dreiser Society, and beyond. If you have a newsworthy item, please send it to Eric Carl Link at [elink@ngcsu.edu](mailto:elink@ngcsu.edu) and we’ll be sure to take note of it in a forthcoming issue of ALN. Did someone in your society win an honor or reach an important career milestone? We want to know. Do you know of a forthcoming volume that might be of interest to the ALN readership? Tell us about it. Is there an event related to American literary naturalism that you attended (or would like us to attend in the future)? Are there competitions, prizes, or grant opportunities that you have learned about? Let us know.

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ALA Symposium on Naturalism

Welcome news for all of us: this coming October, the ALA will sponsor a symposium on American Literary Naturalism. For full details, see the symposium's call for papers later in this issue of ALN.

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### Dreiser Bibliography Online at Penn

*Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide*, compiled by Donald Pizer, Richard W. Dowell, and Frederick E. Rusch (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1991), which has been available online at the University of Pennsylvania Dreiser Website for several years in a user unfriendly form, is to be completely re-entered using new software which will also permit regular updating of both its primary and secondary sections. A Dreiser Bibliography Committee consisting of Donald Pizer, Stephen Brennan, and Gary Totten, assisted by several foreign scholars, will be responsible for gathering the material for updating. The Committee would appreciate receiving any information about possible omissions or errors involving material in the 1991 printed edition in order that these omissions and corrections can also be included in the new online bibliography. Please communicate with any member of the committee: [dpizer@tulane.edu](mailto:dpizer@tulane.edu); [stephencbrennan@bellsouth.net](mailto:stephencbrennan@bellsouth.net); [gary.totten@ndsu.edu](mailto:gary.totten@ndsu.edu)

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*The Call: The Newsletter of the Jack London Society* publishes short articles on all aspects of Jack London's life and works. For more information, or to contribute, contact Ken Brandt ([kbrandt@scad.edu](mailto:kbrandt@scad.edu)).

•ALN•

### Have Dinner with Howells

Howells Society Dinner at the Tavern Club  
4 Boylston Place, Boston  
Friday, May 25, 2007 at 7 p.m.

Many of you at the ALA conference six years ago may recall the superb dinner our Society enjoyed at the Tavern Club; the evening was enhanced by splendid dining and camaraderie in the inspiring atmosphere of Old Boston during the late 19th century. Now we are planning to do it again! The W. D. Howells Society will sponsor a dinner during this year's American Literature Association Conference in Boston at the historic Tavern Club, of which W. D. Howells was the first president.

Menu: Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres before dinner; Salad; Beef Tenderloin with vegetable and starch; Dessert; Coffee/Tea; Wine with dinner.

Sufficient non-meat dishes will be available for vegetarians.

The all-inclusive price, with tip, for members and their guests is \$70 each; for non-members the price is \$80, but for those who wish to join the Society and send \$10 dues to the treasurer before or with their dinner reservations, the dinner price for themselves and their guests will be reduced by \$10 per person.

Reservations should be made by May 5 so that a final count can be submitted to the Tavern Club. If you would like to attend, please mail your check in U. S. funds (payable to the "W. D. Howells Society") to

Dr. Elsa Nettels  
211 Indian Spring Rd.  
Williamsburg, VA 23185.

Please indicate how your check should be divided (\$80 for nonmember or \$70 for a member/\$10 for WDHS membership).

Please note that this will be a very special evening in the magnificent historic Tavern Club, an

event to anticipate with joy-and you'll be in great company!

--Sanford Marovitz, Editor of *The Howellsian*

•ALN•

### Howells Society Excursion

As on the day following our Tavern Club dinner in 2001, the Society has scheduled again a bus excursion to the Howells family home at Kittery Point. It will begin when we board the bus at our hotel on Saturday morning at 9 and end in mid-afternoon the same day; the bus will leave Kittery Point at 2 and arrive back at the hotel in time for participants to have the late afternoon in Boston. Box lunches will be provided. Although the Society has done this before, we may not have a chance to do it again, so if you'd like to visit the Howells Memorial Home, on a truly gorgeous site, this spring is the time to do it.

A short program there will include an informal discussion by Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson on writing their distinguished biography, *William Dean Howells: A Writer's Life* (2005), with remarks by Sarah Daugherty and others; comments and questions from the floor will be welcome. Through the generosity of the William Dean Howells Memorial Committee, to whom the Society is grateful indeed, the full cost of the excursion for all participants will be covered. If you wish to participate in this special "happening" at the Howells Memorial, please notify Susan Goodman by e-mail: <[sgoodman@english.udel.edu](mailto:sgoodman@english.udel.edu)>. Because we expect a large turnout and bus seats are limited, it would be advisable to let her know as soon as possible. Membership in the Society is not required.

--Sanford Marovitz, Editor of *The Howellsian*

•ALN•

### *Slumming in New York*

Forthcoming in July, 2007, Robert M. Dowling's *Slumming in New York: From the Waterfront to Mythic Harlem* (University of Illinois Press). This work looks at how marginalized urban voices changed through literature from moral threats into cultural treasures, revealing the way in which "outsider" authors helped alleviate New York's mounting social anxieties by popularizing "insider" voices from neighborhoods as distinctive as the East Side waterfront, the Bowery, the Tenderloin's "black bohemia," the Jewish Lower East Side, and Harlem. It samples a number of New York "slumming" narratives—including Stephen Crane's Bowery tales, Paul Laurence Dunbar's *The Sport of the Gods*, Hutchins Hapgood's *The Spirit of the Ghetto*, and Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven*—in order to characterize and examine the relationship between New York writing and the city's cultural environment from 1880 to 1930.

•ALN•

### Jack London Symposium:

The Ninth Biennial Symposium of the Jack London Society will take place October 9-11, 2008, at The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Home to Jack London's papers, The Huntington boasts a world-class collection of rare books and manuscripts in the fields of British and American history and literature, as well as such art masterpieces as the famous portraits of Pinkie and Blue Boy, plus 100 acres of themed botanical gardens, including a spectacular new Chinese Garden, set to open in the autumn of 2008.

The exhibitions and gardens will beckon conference-goers, but the Symposium will afford strong competition with its sessions, which will be held at The Huntington. A call for papers will be forthcoming, with a deadline of May 1, 2008, for sending proposals and CVs to Executive Coordinator Jeanne Campbell Reesman.

The conference hotel is the Westin Pasadena, a four-star facility in a Spanish-Mediterranean setting on the edge of historic Old Town. In Old Pasadena, you will be able to choose from scores of fine restaurants, sample the offerings of clubs and wine bars, indulge your shopping whims, catch a new film, or take in a play at the Pasadena Playhouse – all just a short walk from the hotel. At the opening reception, you will be able to relax and share news with friends on the fountain terrace of the Westin, and preceding the closing banquet you will be treated to stunning, sunset views of City Hall dome and the rooftops of Pasadena.

For those who want to do some research at The Huntington, you will need to apply for reading privileges well in advance. Space is very limited, so we ask that you seek a reader's card only if you are doing research leading to original, scholarly publication. To apply for a reader's card, download the application from the library's web site, [www.huntington.org](http://www.huntington.org), and follow the instructions provided.

We look forward to welcoming you to The Huntington and to Pasadena, so start making your plans to join us in celebration and exploration of the worlds and writings of Jack London. --Sue Hodson, Curator of Literary Manuscripts

•ALN•

### **A New *Genius* on the Horizon**

Clare Eby's edition of Dreiser's *The "Genius"* is in press and should be out in the summer from the University of Illinois Press. This edition, part of the ongoing Pennsylvania Edition of Dreiser's works, uses the original 1911 manuscript as copytext.

•ALN•

### **Hamilton College Library Receives Chester Gillette Diary**

Nancy Shawcross, Curator of Rare Books at the University of Pennsylvania, home of the Dreiser Collection, received the following announcement from her son, a student at Hamilton College:

On Tuesday, March 6, Marylynn Murray, grand-niece of Chester Gillette, presented Gillette's diary to the Hamilton College Library. This diary was kept by Gillette while he was held at Auburn prison awaiting execution for the murder of Grace Brown. The whereabouts of this diary has been unknown outside his family for ninety-nine years. The diary presents a different picture of Chester Gillette than did the trial. The trial was made famous by Theodore Dreiser's novel, *An American Tragedy*, and by the 1951 film, *A Place in the Sun*, starring Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift, and Shelly Winters.

Aside from the diary, the Hamilton College Library collection includes Grace Brown's letters to Chester, court documents, and many newspaper clippings related to the case in 1906.

•ALN•

### **Jack London at the 2007 Popular Culture Association**

The program of the 2007 Popular Culture Association Conference, held April 4-7 in Boston, included two excellent panels on Jack London. In the first panel, Jeanetta Calhoun Mish (University of Oklahoma) combined class analysis with queer theory in "Queering *Martin Eden*: Class and the Closet." Analyzing Martin with respect to middle-class society, the intellectual community and the working-class world, she concluded that he does not belong to any of them. In "*Michael, Brother of Jerry*: A Social Action Piece," Carrie Kendall (Purdue University Calumet) urged recognition of the novel as a meaningful part of the London can-

on. She pointed out that it not only lobbies for the humane treatment of animals, but also represents London's most significant attempt to understand animal consciousness. Independent scholar Jay Williams presented "Specters of Marx and London," in which he dealt with the threat both men perceived in the proletariat. He focused on "What Socialism Is" and "Pessimism, Optimism, and Patriotism" and paid particular attention to the figure of the hobo in London's writings. Louise E. Wright, area chair for Jack London's Life and Works, moderated the panel.

The second panel, chaired by Jay Williams, featured Meredith B. Kenyon (St. Bonaventure University) whose paper, "Jack London's *The Sea-Wolf*: Naturalism at Sea and at Home," examined naturalistic elements, not only with respect to the novel and its characters but also to the publication history of the book. In contrast, Liam C. Nesson (University of Arkansas Fayetteville) argued against tendencies to pigeonhole London, whether as a writer or an individual, in "Jack London as Absconder of the Confines of Categorization." He suggested that readers take a cue from London's own characters, who often escape the confines in which they find themselves. In "Upton Sinclair's *Journal of Arthur Stirling*: Another Way of Looking at *Martin Eden*," George R. Adams (University of Wisconsin Whitewater) focused on the similarities between the two novelists and their works. He theorized that London must have known Sinclair's novel and, consciously or unconsciously, intended *Martin Eden* as a critique of or an improvement on it. Discussion following both panels concentrated on London's use of the imagination, his work ethic and his professional approach to his craft.

Planning for the London panels at the 2008 PCA Conference is already underway. See the call for papers included in this issue of ALN.

--Louise E. Wright

•ALN•

## Coming Attractions: A Preview of some Panels at the Up- coming 2007 ALA in Boston

### Jack London Society Panels

Jack London I: Performing Masculinity

Chair: Andrew J. Furer

1. "Masculine Collapse in London's Far North" Kenneth K. Brandt
2. "Teaching *Martin Eden*'s Narrative Acts of Transvaluation" Debbie López and Maria De Guzmán
3. "'Things Men Must Do': Performing American Manhood in Jack London's *The Valley of the Moon*" Katie O'Donnell Arosteguy

Jack London II: Performing Authorship

Chair: Jeanne Campbell Reesman

1. "London and Orwell: The Quest for Dystopia" Martin Haber
2. "Jack London, Plagiarist—or Author?" Keith Newlin
3. "Jack's Neglected Daughter: Frona's Scholarly and Pedagogical Uses" Andrew J. Furer

### Theodore Dreiser Society Panels

Session #1: Theodore Dreiser's Bodies, Both Natural and Supernatural

Chair: Stephen C. Brennan

1. "Fellow Feeling: Reading the Male Body in *An American Tragedy*" Stephanie Foote
2. "Theodore Dreiser: The Supernaturalism of a Naturalist" Eric W. Palfreyman
3. "Body, Text, and Travel in Dreiser's American Diaries and *A Hoosier Holiday*" Gary Totten

Session #2: Theodore Dreiser: Public Roles, Public Signs, and Public Space

Chair: Roark Mulligan

1. "There's No Place like the Workplace: Relocating Home in *Sister Carrie*" Grace Wetzel

2. "Social Signs in Theodore Dreiser's Novels"  
Ekaterina N. Kozhevnikova
3. "Sister Carrie in Elf Land: The Theater of  
the Chapter Titles" Timothy O'Grady
4. "Women's Agency and Social Change in  
Dreiser's Magazine Work 1895-1910"  
Jude Davies

### Hamlin Garland Society Panel

Hamlin Garland: The Evolving Writer

Chair: Kurtis L. Meyer

1. "Hamlin Garland's 1887 Travel Notebook:  
Becoming a Writer" Bridget Wells
2. "'The End of Love Is Love of Love': The  
Problematic Ending of *Rose of Dutcher's Cool-  
ly*" Stephen C. Brennan
3. "The Melody of Rebellion: Decentralization  
and Dissent in *A Son of the Middle Border*"  
Melissa Leavitt

### Frank Norris Society Panels

Ethics, Literary Naturalism, and Frank Norris

Chair: Steven Frye

1. "'Prying, peeping, peering': The Ethics of  
Naturalism" Shari Goldberg
2. "A Happy Naturalist? Jeremy Bentham and  
the Cosmic Morality of *The Octopus*" Thomas  
Austenfeld
3. "The Commodification of Desire: Examining  
*McTeague* Through the Lens of *Capital*" Stella  
Setka

New Perspectives on Frank Norris

Chair: Eric Carl Link

1. "*A Man's Woman* Revisited" Benjamin F.  
Fisher
2. "Studies of Frank Norris in China"  
Xiaoyun Luo
3. "Frank Norris's *Octopus* and an Ecology of  
Wheat" Cara Elana Erdheim

### William Dean Howells Society Panels

Howells and Marriage I

Chair: Elsa Nettels

1. "A Grammar of Marriage: Love in Spite of  
Syntax in *Silas Lapham*" William Rodney Her-  
ring
2. "The Art of Marriage: Taking the Woman  
Artist as Wife in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*"  
Sherry Li
3. "Marriage and the American Medical Wom-  
an in Dr. Breen's Practice"  
Frederick Wegener

Howells and Marriage II

Chair: Susan Goodman

1. "Movement, Modernity, and the Marriage of  
Elinor Mead and William Dean Howells"  
Elif Armbruster
2. "Love in Leisure Spaces: Tourism, Court-  
ship, and Marriage in *The Coast  
of Bohemia* and *An Open-Eyed Conspiracy*"  
Donna Campbell
3. "If You Liked That, You'll Like This: How-  
ells and Theodor Fontane on Marriage" Richard  
Ellington
4. "A 'Record of Young Married Love': Mar-  
riage in William Dean Howells' Criticism and  
Reviews" Rachel Ihara

### Stephen Crane Society Panels

Stephen Crane, Journalist and War Novelist

Chair: Paul Sorrentino

1. "Honest Reporters and Crooked Newspa-  
pers: Crane's Mission of Personal Honesty"  
Erica Geller
2. "Crane's War-Machine and the 'Temporary  
but Sublime Absence of Selfishness'"  
Nicholas Gaskill
3. "Histories of 'War Writing': The Origins of  
Crane's 'Modern War Novel' in the Victorian  
Battle Piece" Corinne Blackmer

Stephen Crane: Crane and Creating (and Dis-  
turbing) Communities

Chair: Patrick K. Dooley

1. “ ‘We are all in it,’ Crane’s American Community” Bruce Plourde
2. “The Theme of Misreading in ‘The Monster’” Paul Sorrentino
3. “The Horizons of the Rich in the Writings of Crane” Donald Vanouse

**AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION SYMPOSIUM ON AMERICAN LITERARY NATURALISM**

October 5-6, 2007

Hyatt Regency Newport Beach

1107 Jamboree Road

Newport Beach, California, USA 92660

Conference Director: Jeanne C. Reesman, University of Texas-San Antonio

## The Call of the Papers

### Special Journal Issue on Stephen Crane

The fall 2007 issue of *Eureka Studies in Teaching Short Fiction* will focus on the short stories of Stephen Crane. We are especially seeking articles that are pedagogical, but we also welcome articles on theory or analysis that would be helpful in teaching Crane’s stories. **The deadline for submission is October 31, 2007.** Please send articles via e-mail attachment to [llogsdon@eureka.edu](mailto:llogsdon@eureka.edu) or mail hard copy to the following address:

Loren Logsdon, Editor  
Eureka Studies in Teaching Short Fiction  
Humanities Division  
Eureka College  
Eureka, IL 6153-1500

•ALN•

### Jack London at the 2008 Popular Culture Association Conference

Next year’s PCA conference takes place 19-22 March. Papers on any aspect of Jack London’s life and works are invited. Because the conference will be held in San Francisco, papers focusing on London’s California connections are particularly welcome. Please send a 150-200 abstract to Louise E. Wright, at [lewright2@verizon.net](mailto:lewright2@verizon.net), by 1 Nov. 2007.

•ALN•

The American Literature Association solicits paper and panel proposals for its Symposium on American Literary Naturalism October 5-6, 2007, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Newport Beach, California. Proposals can address any aspect of the topic. Proposers are encouraged to submit traditional formats of 15-minute papers suitable for a 3-paper + chair session of 1 hour and 20 minutes, as well as other formats including panel discussions, round-table discussions, 2-paper panels, and others. Please submit via e-mail to [jeanne.reesman@utsa.edu](mailto:jeanne.reesman@utsa.edu) by the submission deadline of June 15, 2007, including a one-page description of the paper or panel plus exact paper title(s), names, affiliations, and, on a separate page, full address information and e-mail address for each participant. Participants may read one paper at the symposium and chair one panel other than the one they read a paper on. Please note that a/v equipment is not available for the Symposium.

Naturalism Slam! There will be a special panel made up of scholars who want to propose an author for consideration as a Naturalist who is not ordinarily thought of as such—or perhaps not enough. Presentations (or exhortations?) should be no more than 5 minutes long and should attempt to persuade the audience to accept this “new” Naturalist. Places are limited; please submit the name of your author and a brief rationale outlined for all proposals above. “Slammers” may still appear on another panel to read a paper.

Program Arrangements include two concurrent sessions running Friday and Saturday and two luncheons covered by the conference



fee of \$120. An afternoon keynote address by Donald Pizer, "Naturalism and the Jews," will conclude Friday's sessions, to be followed by a cocktail reception. On Saturday, Earle Labor will be featured as keynote speaker at a conference luncheon on the topic of "Naturalism and the Biographer." A closing celebration will be held Saturday evening.

**Hotel Reservations:** The Hyatt Newport Beach offers all the usual luxury hotel conveniences, including fine restaurants with room service, full-service spa and fitness center, room amenities, dramatic Newport Bay views, refrigerators in all rooms, wireless High Speed Internet, full-service Business Center, 3 outdoor pools, outdoor whirlpools, shuffleboard, table tennis & volleyball. Nearby are the beautiful beaches of Southern California, the Henry E. Huntington Library, the University of California-Irvine, golf courses and tennis courts, world-class shopping at Fashion Valley, international cuisine at Orange Country restaurants, and Newport Dunes Aquatic Park. The sunshine and fresh orange juice are guaranteed. Participants are responsible for making their own hotel room reservations by the hotel's cut-off date of September 4, 2007 (reservation requests received after the cut-off date will be based on availability at the Hotel's prevailing rates). Make your hotel reservation by mentioning the special ALA conference rate of \$139 single or double room. Phone: 949-729-1234 or 800-233-1234; website: www.Hyatt.com.

**Maps & Directions:** From Orange County/John Wayne Airport (5 miles): Exit airport to MacArthur Blvd., turn right. Continue 1 mile. Turn right on Jamboree Rd. Travel 3 miles south. Hotel is on right. From Los Angeles Int'l Airport (50 miles): Take 405 South (or 5 South to 55 South) to 73 South. Exit Jamboree Rd. and turn right. Travel 3 miles south. Hotel is on right. From San Diego area: Take 5 North to 405 North. Exit Jamboree Rd. Turn left. Travel 5 miles south. Hotel is on the right.

## Bibliographic Update

*Listed below are studies on American literary naturalism published since the last bibliographic update (in the October 2006 issue of ALN), plus a few that cunningly evaded our eagle eyes last October. The lists below are comprehensive, but not exhaustive, and we undoubtedly missed a work here and there. If you published an article or book related to American literary naturalism in the past six months and it is not listed below, please let us know and we will make sure to note it in the next issue of ALN.*

### General Studies

- Brennan, Stephen C. "Donald Pizer and the Study of American Literary Naturalism." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (Summer/Winter 2006): 3-14.
- Campbell, Donna. "'Where are the Ladies?' Wharton, Glasgow, and American Women Naturalists." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (Summer/Winter 2006): 152-169.
- Lehan, Richard. "Naturalism and the Realms of the Text: the Problem Restated." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (Summer/Winter 2006): 15-29.
- Lye, Colleen. *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945*. Princeton, NJ : Princeton UP, 2005. [Includes chapters on Frank Norris and Jack London]
- Rossetti, Gina M. *Imagining the Primitive in Naturalist and Modernist Literature*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006.
- Shillingsburg, Peter. "On Being Textually Aware." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (Summer/Winter 2006): 170-195.
- Spencer, Nicholas. *After Utopia: The Rise of*

*Critical Space in Twentieth-Century American Fiction*. Lincoln, NE : U of Nebraska P, 2006. [Includes a chapter on Jack London and Upton Sinclair]

## Stephen Crane

Bellman, Samuel I. "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky." *Reference Guide to Short Fiction*, Noelle Watson, ed. Detroit: St. James Press, 1999. 655-656.

Bickerstaff, Linda. *The Red Badge of Courage and the Civil War*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2004.

Campbell, Donna. "Reflections on Stephen Crane." *Stephen Crane Studies* 15.1 (Spring 2007): 13-16.

Church, Joseph. "Uncanny Moments in the Work of Stephen Crane." *Stephen Crane Studies* 15.1 (Spring 2007): 20-27.

Clendenning, John. "The Thematic Unity of *The Little Regiment*." *Stephen Crane Studies* 14.2 (2005): 2-9.

Colvert, James B. "Stephen Crane: Notions of an Aged Reader." *Stephen Crane Studies* 15.1 (Spring 2007): 6-8.

Dooley, Patrick K. "Stephen Crane's Distilled Style (and the Art of Fine Swearing)." *Stephen Crane Studies* 15.1 (Spring 2007): 28-31

---. "Stephen Crane: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Scholarship: Book Chapters and Articles through 2004." *Stephen Crane Studies* 14.2 (2005): 10-23.

Edwards, Bradley, C. "Stephen Crane's 'The Five White Mice' and Public Entertainments in Mexico City in 1895." *Stephen*

*Crane Studies* 14.1 (2005): 16-27

Everson, Matthew. "Stephen Crane and 'Some Others': Economics, Race, and the Vision of a Failed Frontier." *Moving Stories: Migration and the American West, 1850-2000*. Scott Casper, ed. Reno: Nevada Humanities Council, 2001. 71-98.

---. "Strenuous Stories: The Wilderness Tales of Stephen Crane and Theodore Roosevelt." *Stephen Crane Studies* 14.1 (2005): 2-14.

Hayes, Kevin. J. *Stephen Crane*. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers. 2004.

Kepnes, Caroline. *Classic Story Tellers: Stephen Crane*. Hockessin, DE: Mitchell Lane Pub. 2005.

Kuga, Shunji. "Momentous Sounds and Silences in Stephen Crane." *Stephen Crane Studies* 15.1 (Spring 2007): 17-19.

Link, Eric Carl. "Bitter Questions: Six Crane Moments." *Stephen Crane Studies* 15.1 (Spring 2007): 3-6.

Nagel, James. "The Open Boat." *Reference Guide to Short Fiction*, ed. Noelle Watson. Detroit: St. James Press, 1999. 833-834.

---. "Limitations of Perspective in the Fiction of Stephen Crane." *Stephen Crane Studies* 15.1 (Spring 2007): 9-12.

---. "Donald Pizer, American Naturalism and Stephen Crane." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1 (2006): 30-35.

Schafer, Michael. "'Heroes Had No Shame in Their Lives': Manhood, Heroics, and Compassion in *The Red Badge of Courage* and 'A Mystery of Heroism.'" *War, Literature & the Arts* 18.1-2 (2006): 104-

113.

Paschke-Johannes, J. Edwin. "Existential Moments in Stephen Crane's Poems." *Stephen Crane Studies* 15.1 (Spring 2007): 32-36.

### Theodore Dreiser

Brennan, Stephen C. *Sister Carrie Becomes Carrie. Nineteenth-Century American Fiction on Screen*. Ed. R. Barton Palmer. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 186-205.

Gair, Christopher. "Sister Carrie, Race, and the World's Columbian Exposition." *The Cambridge Companion to Theodore Dreiser*. Eds. Clare Eby and Leonard Cassuto. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Pages 160-176.

Hakutani, Yoshinobu, ed. *Art, Music, and Literature, 1897-1902*. By Theodore Dreiser. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2007. (Paperback version of the 2001 collection.)

---. "The Chicago Renaissance, Theodore Dreiser, and Richard Wright's Spatial Narrative." *Cross-Cultural Visions in African American Modernism: From Spatial Narrative to Jazz Haiku*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2006. 19-43.

Riggio, Thomas P. "Dreiser and Kirah Markahm: The Play's the Thing." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (Summer/Winter 2006): 109-127.

Totten, Gary. "'American Seen': The Road and the Look of American Culture in Dreiser's *A Hoosier Holiday*." *American Literary Realism* 39.1 (2006): 24-47.

---. "Dreiser and the Writing Market: New

Letters on the Publication History of *Jennie Gerhardt*." *Dreiser Studies* 36.1 (2005): 28-48.

### Hamlin Garland

Knowles, Owen. "Conrad and Garland: A Correspondence Recovered." *Conradian* 31.2 (2006): 62-78.

Newlin, Keith. "Why Hamlin Garland Left the Main-Travelled Road." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1 (2006): 70-89.

### Jack London

DePastino, Todd. Introduction. *The Road*. By Jack London. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

Farrier, David. *Unsettled Narratives: the Pacific writings of Stevenson, Ellis, Melville and London*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Kersten, Holger. "The Erosion of the Ideal of the Heroic Explorer: Jack London's the *Cruise of the Snark*." *Narratives of Exploration and Discovery: Essays in Honour of Konrad Gross*. Ed. Wolfgang Kloss. Trier, Germany: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2005. Pages 85-97.

Marovitz, Sandford E. "Jack London's 'The Sun Dog Trail': A Stereoscopic View." *Eureka Studies in Teaching Short Fiction* 7.1 (Fall 2006): 78-84

Reesman, Jeanne Campbell. "Rough Justice in Jack London's 'Mauki'." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (2006): 42-69.

Theisen, Kay M. "Realism as Represented in

'South of the Slot,' Naturalism as Represented in 'To Build a Fire': Critical Thinking and Pedagogy." *Eureka Studies in Teaching Short Fiction* 5.2 (2005): 99-107.

Wright, Louise E. "Jack London's Knowledge of Thoreau." *Concord Saunterer* ns 14 (2006): 61-72.

---. "Talk about Real Men: Jack London's Correspondence with Maurice Magnus." *Journal of Popular Culture* 40.2 (2007): 361-77.

### Frank Norris

Cruz, Denise. "Reconsidering McTeague's 'Mark' and 'Mac': Intersections of U. S. Naturalism, Imperial Masculinities, and Desire between Men." *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 78.3 (2006): 487-517.

Link, Eric Carl. "The Theodicy Problem in the Works of Frank Norris." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (2006): 90-108.

### Other Authors

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Ludington, Townsend. "Explaining Dos

Passos's Naturalism." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (Summer/Winter 2006): 36-41.

Scharnhorst, Gary. "Bret Harte's Naturalism." *Studies in American Naturalism* 1.1-2 (Summer/Winter 2006): 144-151.

## From the Archives

### An 1892 Interview with Hamlin Garland

The following interview with Hamlin Garland appeared in the *Washington Post* on May 8, 1892. Garland had recently published *Main-Travelled Roads* and had traveled to Washington to lecture. While there, he agreed to the following interview in which he surveyed his career and outlined his future plans. Of interest is this early expression of his literary creed, which Garland clearly connects to the evolutionary theories of Taine and Posnett. At the time, he conceived of compiling his lectures as a book to be entitled "The Evolution of American Thought," but he would not follow through on the plan. Instead, the lectures would evolve into the essays collected in *Crumbling Idols* (1894). The interview concludes with Garland's account of his daily working methods, which does much to explain why his early work was so varied in both topic and quality. This interview has never been listed in any of the Garland bibliographies, nor, till now, has it been reprinted.

--Keith Newlin, UNC Wilmington

[*The Washington Post*, May 8, 1892, 12.]

## AN AMERICAN AUTHOR

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### How Mr. Hamlin Garland Got His Start in Literature.

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#### THREE YEARS STUDY IN BOSTON

---

#### He does not believe that his Style of Writing Will Be a Finality, but Thinks It Will Be Old-fashioned in Time, Like Everything Else.

---

Mr. Hamlin Garland, whose books have been winning him so much fame of late, belongs to the modern school of American literature, and has some clearly defined views of what our literature ought to be. He defined his theory in a very interesting manner in a recent talk with the writer and gave at the same time some reminiscences of the manner in which he obtained his first footing in the literary world and how he has kept it since. He said in reply to a question regarding the manner in which he began his literary career:

“It is astounding even to me how I had the audacity as a Western boy to face the culture and the keen criticism of Boston literary circles. It was the audacity of ignorance. It was about ten years ago that I came East, but I got fairly going about seven years ago, when some of my sketches were published in *Harper's Weekly* and other papers. The first encouragement I got, however, was from a man of the name of Wykoff, the editor of the *New American Magazine*. The first friendly letter that I had from an editor came from him. Then Don Piatt took an interest in my work and then Mr. Richard Watson Gilder took at one time two stories for the *Century*, the payment for which came to about \$400. It was a great windfall to me, of course, at that time, and I can well re-

member with what delight I read Mr. Gilder's letter. He has at the present time two novelettes of mine—stories of Western life, besides the one now running in the *Century*. He really put me on my feet. He is a man who perceives the artistic quality in a man's work from the very first. He has taken some of the very best things I have done.

“Then came my work for the *Arena*. I began to send things to the *Arena* soon after it started and finally met Mr. Flower personally, and we have become very intimate friends. So far as publication goes, my work in the *Arena* was earlier than that which has been published in the *Century*. My friendship with Mr. Howells, which began four or five years ago, and has grown more intimate and valuable, to me, at least, as time has passed, has helped me greatly in my work. Five of my books will have been published by the middle of June, and three are already on the market. The latter are ‘Main Traveled Roads,’ ‘Jason Edwards,’ and a ‘Member of the Third House.’ The books about to be published are ‘A Little Norsk,’ which is a study of Western life, and ‘The Spoil of Office.’ ‘The Norsk’ is the same story which has been running in the *Century* as ‘Old Pap's Flaxen,’ and will appear this summer. I have stories running also at present in the *Arena*, the *Cosmopolitan*, and *Belford's Magazine*.”

“What was your occupation before you found a ready market for your work?”

“I was released from what might be called hack work,” was the reply, “by teaching literature. I came East to study literature and believed that by study in the Public Library in Boston I could learn to teach it. I determined to get at the original documents in the library, and I studied there for three years, forming a pleasant friendship with Judge Chamberlain, the librarian. I pushed on to write a sort of monograph on the literature of democracy, going through the documents, from the colonial times down to the present, with the results that I have twenty lectures on American literature, which I

have delivered again and again, and found very profitable.”

“Are you going to publish this book on democracy?”

“I think I may,” replied Mr. Garland, “some time within the coming two years. The book is extremely aggressive. It teaches two fundamental ideas—liberty and truth—absolute liberty in life, and truth in art. Those things I endeavor to stand for in literature and everybody who knows me, knows that I have now cut myself loose from my regular teaching in Boston and make tours of the country, speaking in various cities. That is the work I shall probably continue to do, and I shall use these lectures to present my view. What I shall finally do will be to put them in a book, calling it ‘Evolution of American Thought.’ The literature of democracy is what it really leads up to.”

“You have given your chief attention to American literature, have you?”

“I have,” was the reply. “I am just as radical in my Americanism on those lines as I am in political economy. The book I have been speaking of, if published, will arouse a deal of controversy. I discuss the question whether the American author shall be held responsible for his work measured by the work of those in the past or measured by the standard of to-day—whether the young American writer should take the past for his model or whether he should take life. My literary creed is this—to write as if no other person ever wrote in the history of the world. I simply ask myself the question: Am I true to things as I see them and to facts as they appeal to me? That doctrine has been expressed by Veron, the great French critic, in his book on ‘Esthetics.’ A great many young people come to me after my lecture and ask me if I can give them any rule or principle that will help them. When they do this I give them this principle: Write about things of which you know the most and for which you care the most; write without regard to what the effect upon the reader may be. First, be true, and the effect will take care of itself. That fundamental

principle runs through everything I attempt—not only everything I write, but everything I teach in the way of literary principle.

“Mr. Howells stands for this idea perhaps more fully than any other American. He is, in my estimation, the most vital figure, considered both as a critic and novelist, that we have living to-day in America, because he stands for this principle of progress, for this movement of art and change of ideas. We veritists are often misunderstood, for while we respect the past for what it has done and try to be just to a past school of writers, so far as its relation to a farther past is concerned, we claim that to hold up any school as a model, holding it before the young writer as a thing to be patterned after, is the most desolating doctrine that can be taught. If rigidly carried out it would simply mean treading the same eternal circle. The only model is life, the only criterion truth.”

“But do you not believe that American writers should study the authors of foreign countries?”

“Certainly. We believe in what is known as the comparative method of criticism. It is a legitimate comparison to take the writers of one people and compare them with their contemporaries in a society of substantially the same sort. There is value in the comparison of Mr. Howells, for instance, with Herman Sudermann, or Tolstoi, but there is no value in comparing Howells with Dickens or Thackeray or Scott, because they lived in such different times and worked in such a different style of art. A very common expression is, ‘We will put Mr. Howells over against Scott and Dickens and then see how they compare.’ Such a comparison is not only futile, it is unjust, because Dickens may suffer in it as much as Mr. Howells. Such a comparison has no value because you are comparing writers of epochs so far apart that you simply get at the differences.”

“You believe with M. Taine, that a writer’s work is determined by his environment?”

“Very largely,” replied Mr. Garland. “Taine came very near the truth, but a man who

came much nearer the truth, in my judgment, is Posnett in his 'Comparative Literature.' He was a professor of literature in the Dublin University, and has now gone to New Zealand to become the head of some college there. His book is one of the most suggestive things I have ever seen. The idea there expressed, and the idea which Mr. Howells stands for, is, as a matter of fact, the theory of development, the application of the evolutionary theory to literature. The war, therefore, is really between those who might be called the statical fellows and those who believe in movement, in progress, the same division that exists in society on all questions whatsoever. You have conservatives and you have radicals. I certainly belong to the radical camp."

"Who are the most typical of the European writers who belong to your camp?"

"Maupassant is perhaps as good a representative as we have among the French writers. Sudermann is a wonderfully fine example among the young Germans, and then there are Kjiellaud and Garaborg in Norway. They are really better than Ibsen. He is of course an old man. He extends into the present, but he does not represent the present like these young men writing stories, 'down cellar,' as they call the *feuilleton* at the bottom of the sheets of the newspapers, who are infinitely finer and truer and more human than Ibsen. Much as I admire him I realize that he is after all the old warrior, and that he comes to us out of another age. In Russia I, of course, hold that Turgeneff is one of the very finest—truer, in my estimation, as an artist than Tolstoi."

"What are your methods of work, Mr. Garland? Do you find your application, or at least your originality, flagging, in keeping at work every day?"

"I shall fail at last like every demijohn, large or small," was the reply. "My method is this: From 8 to 12 are my working hours, and I allow nothing to interfere with them. I do all my work easily. When I find my brain grinding I stop. I have always before my eyes the reality,

and I am constantly asking myself the questions, 'Is that true?' 'Have I got this man's voice?' 'Is his manner of speech right?' I put these questions rather than ask myself: 'Will this please the public?' Or, 'Will this produce a certain effect?' It is a hackneyed expression, but I see my people before my mind exactly as in life. In some cases my characters spring from a germ, from a mustard seed of actual experience, and in some other cases they are entirely fictitious, yet I believe that in many cases the public take the wholly fictitious persons for the ones which spring from a germ of actual experience. I work exactly like a painter. I have, I may say, a number of canvases on the easel. I have at my elbow from five to twenty different things. I sit at my desk every morning. I take up sketch after sketch or a section of a novel. I read over what I have written, and when I come to the point where the day's work is to begin if I find myself unable to go on in the same mood in which I was writing when I stopped, I lay that aside and take up another; so that I have all the way from ten to twenty-five unfinished things on hand to work on when the mood is on me. By doing this I can work regularly without the work becoming a grind, as it probably would if I worked every day upon the same thing."

"Do you expect your style of writing to be a finality?"

"Certainly not," was the instant reply. "We believe that we shall be old-fashioned in the course of time, just like every other phase of literature. There never can be a farther wall which stops advance. Our fundamental conviction is that a literature springs from a society, and as society changes literature and art change, so that just as long as there is change in human society there will be change in literature and in art. Nothing endures. All is change."

## A Fistful of Websites

**Garland Society:**

<http://www.uncw.edu/garland/>

**Dreiser Society:**

<http://www.uncw.edu/dreiser/>

***Studies in American Naturalism:***

<http://www.uncw.edu/san/>

**Dreiser Web Source at Penn**

<http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/>

**The William Dean Howells Society**

<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/howells/index.html>

**The Edith Wharton Society**

<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/wharton/index.html>

**The Stephen Crane Society**

<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/crane/index.html>

**The Jack London Online Collection**

<http://london.sonoma.edu/>

**The Jack London Society**

[http://london.sonoma.edu/Organizations/jl\\_society.html](http://london.sonoma.edu/Organizations/jl_society.html)

**Jack London International**

[http://www.jack-london.org/main\\_e.htm](http://www.jack-london.org/main_e.htm)

**The World of Jack London**

<http://www.jacklondon.net/>

**The Frank Norris Society**

<http://www.csub.edu/franknorriscenter/>

**Frank Norris**

<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/howells/norris.htm>

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Coming up in our Fall 2007 Issue:

Naturalism news. Another bibliographic update. More stuff from the archives. An interview with a scholar working in the field. And an ever-increasing number of things you'll want to discuss over a latte with your friends.

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We are particularly interested in articles of 2000-3000 words that look at literary naturalism in the classroom, both in the United States and abroad. If you would like to contribute such a piece, we'd like to hear from you. In addition, if you have items that would be suitable for presentation in *From the Archives*, please let us know.

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