

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Benjamin Franklin Norris or Frank Norris is one of the famous American novelists in the Progressive Era, at the turn of the century, which lasted from the 1890s to the 1920s. He is well-known as a realist and naturalist figure in American fiction. He describes a believable everyday reality in lower and middle classes in his stories and the stories generally end in tragedy.

Frank Norris's notable works are McTeague (1890), The Octopus: A California Story (1901), and The Pit (1903). For my thesis, I decide to analyze McTeague as I find the book is interesting and fascinating to me, easy to read and to understand. McTeague was written in the Progressive Era and it has been filmed repeatedly under the title *Greedy* in 1924. This book is the first book of Frank Norris but it is the most famous. The book is surprising and shocking because in the beginning of the story, the novel presents a promising and hopeful atmosphere but it ends tragically. In this novel, the author exposes the dark harshness of life through his characters in McTeague. This novel tells about a man

who is stupid, obedient and immensely strong and later he kills his wife and his best friend.

The name of protagonist is McTeague (he has no first name). His very simple life changes into a hard-life and it makes him become a nasty and cruel man. The author uses his protagonist to convey his ideas and that is why I would like to analyze the portrayal of protagonist, using formalism. As stated in Story and Structure,

“All fictional characters may be classified as a static or dynamic.

The static character is the same sort of person at the end of the story as he was at the beginning. The dynamic or developing character undergoes a permanent change in some aspect of his character, personality, or outlook” (Perrine 71).

So, I think it is most suitable for me to analyze portrayal of protagonist from McTeague based on the above definition.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I will discuss the following problems in this study:

1. How does the author portray the protagonist?
2. What is the author’s purpose in creating such protagonist?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the statement of the problem, the purposes of the study are:

1. To show how the author portrays the protagonist.
2. To reveal the author’s purpose of creating such protagonist.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

I used library research in my analysis and I start by reading McTeague as the primary text. I also read and use some resources and references from the book and internet to help and support me in writing the thesis. Finally, I draw some conclusions of what has been discussed.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis consists of three chapters, preceded by Abstract, Acknowledgment, and Table of Contents. Chapter One is the Introduction comprising of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Portrayal of the Protagonist in Frank Norris's McTeague. The last chapter, Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of Synopsis of the Novel and the Biography of the Author.