

“More than most men am I dependent on sympathy to bring out the best that is in me.”
 – George Gissing’s *Commonplace Book*

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Adulation and Paranoia: Eduard Bertz's Whitman Correspondence
 (1889-1914)

Walter Grünzweig
 Universität Graz

For many decades, Eduard Bertz’s only presence in literary history was as George Gissing’s German friend and, especially, his correspondent. More recently, however, aspects of Bertz’s biography and oeuvre already emerging from Gissing’s letters to Bertz edited by Arthur C. Young in 1961¹ have been taken up by scholars working in German-American cultural relations, the early German gay movement, and the German reception of Walt Whitman. Two important articles by Hans-Joachim Lang have rescued from oblivion a mediator between German and American culture

who was “as nearly a man without a biography as it is possible for a modern author to be.”²

The letters collected here throw further light on Bertz’s enigmatic personality. They reveal a highly contradictory character: unorthodox, liberal, free-thinking, open-minded and invested with great literary sensibility, but also fearful, paranoid, depressed, vengeful, and conceited. From his promising beginnings as a socialist and Whitmanite, Bertz developed into what has become a clichéd image of the (German) researcher and academic (especially among philologists) with his ascetic lifestyle, his devotion to books, and his failing eyesight. His development of an ideologized world view of controlled pessimism and tragedy as it emerges in letters to the Austrian-Swiss critic and writer Josef Viktor Widmann is entirely consistent with this image. Yet, the universality of his mind, his great knowledge, and his enthusiasm for certain subjects show that Bertz was no ordinary German intellectual. His (futile) search for original creative expression in the novels and other prose texts reflects an almost Faustian quest for truth. The most remarkable feature of his work, however,

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is his sense of honesty. In spite of his frequently shifting positions, he always remained true to himself and—as far as possible—to the individuals and groups he was interacting with.

Bertz’s letters to Walt Whitman [I and II] are classic documents of German Whitman reception. Whereas Bertz later complained about the German cult surrounding Whitman, these letters prove that he himself wanted to be Whitman’s German apostle, the “advocate” who would interpret Whitman to the Germans. His correspondence with Horace Traubel [III, V-IX], Whitman’s Boswell (or Eckermann) and literary executor as well as the mastermind and chief organizer of the Whitman community united in the Walt Whitman Fellowship International, shows Bertz’s desire to be recognized as the German representative of the Whitman movement. He emphasizes his attempts to make Whitman known in Germany, reassures Traubel as to his solidarity against Whitman critics, and reports on Whitman’s reception in Germany. At the same time, he is careful to state that Whitman is hardly widely known, thus emphasizing the importance of his own work.

The difference between his evaluation of Whitman’s popularity in letter [VII], written in January 1900 (“It will interest you to know that Walt Whitman is steadily gaining ground in this country. He is now frequently mentioned in German periodicals”), and in letter [IX] hardly eight months later (“I find that not even Whitman’s name is known among literary people”) is indicative of a growing sense of rivalry and jealousy. This becomes more explicit in the one and only letter to Schlaf of which we know [IV], where his complaint about not being able to share his Whitman enthusiasm with like-minded human beings only thinly veils his jealousy of Schlaf’s manifold activities.

Johannes Schlaf (1862-1941), a German naturalist writer turned Whitmanite, was the German writer/critic who actually did hold the Whitman position Bertz would have liked to obtain for himself. Recognized by Traubel and frequently published in Traubel’s Whitman journal *The Conservator*, he was in touch with leading Whitmanites throughout Europe and America. His contacts with a number of French Whitmanites, foremost among them Léon Bazalgette and Henri Guilbeaux, are of particular interest for comparative literary history because they illustrate the creativity of the European Whitman network that existed prior to World War I. Schlaf published a series of Whitman monographs and articles and translated a selection of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* for the popular mass-market Reclam series in 1907. In view of those achievements (which, from a

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philological point of view, were not always entirely successful, but Schlaf, unlike Bertz, did not

imagine himself as a philologist), Bertz had to concede defeat grudgingly.

However, in order to preserve at least some of his intellectual and academic investment in Whitman, Bertz must have decided to make his knowledge of the American poet available to the German gay movement with which Bertz had been in contact since 1898 or even earlier. The motivation for his initial connection with the movement remains unclear. Throughout his life, Bertz was in search of “causes” and it is entirely possible that he considered the gay cause a worthy humanitarian project. However, Bertz, a life-long bachelor, might also have been an (unacknowledged?) homosexual himself, which would explain his advanced sensibility for the issue. He was one of the “Obmänner” (members of the board) of the Berlin-based “Wissenschaftlich-Humanitäres Komitee” (Scientific-Humanitarian Committee) established to coordinate scientific research into homosexuality designed to further gay emancipation.

In 1905, Bertz submitted an oversized article to the *Jahrbuch für Sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, a yearbook edited by Magnus Hirschfeld, the Berlin physician, sexual researcher and activist for homosexual emancipation who headed the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee. In the article, Bertz attempted to “prove” Whitman’s homosexuality by analyzing his writings and biography, and, as a result, granted him the status of an *Edelurning* (literally: noble homosexual), i.e., that of a homoerotically inclined individual who abstained from actual homo-sexual activity. The yearbook printed such pieces in order to exemplify the social and cultural merits of homosexuals and to enhance the public acceptance of homosexuality. The larger political context of Bertz’s article was a petition (eventually defeated), signed and supported by practically the whole cultural élite of Germany, demanding legal emancipation of homosexuals.

With his contribution, one offspring of which he dedicated to Schlaf [X], Bertz unwittingly opened the discussion of Whitman’s homosexuality, with himself and Schlaf as the battle’s main protagonists. This fight brought forth a number of articles and three books, one by Schlaf and two by Bertz.

The conflict, which lies at the foundation of the correspondence between Bertz and the British physician W. C. Rivers [XI-XV], is difficult to understand because neither side openly admitted to their agenda. Schlaf, who felt he had to “defend” Whitman against Bertz’s allegation of homo-

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sexuality, was not against gay emancipation; indeed, he, too, had signed the petition. He simply did not want Whitman to be used as a vehicle for the issue because that would have destroyed the very foundation of the German Whitman cult initiated by himself. A homosexual could never have assumed the status of a prophet of mankind and universal healer Schlaf had ascribed to Whitman. For Bertz, on the other hand, “proof” of Whitman’s homosexuality was essential because he did not want to permit a homophobic public to hush up the homosexuality of a prominent individual.

When Schlaf was well on his way toward winning this battle as well, Bertz turned paranoid, believing himself to be a victim of a homosexual conspiracy against his own person. Thus, the very objects of his humanitarian concerns became, in his view, his persecutors. In the course of his long and arduous battles with German, French, American, and British Whitmanites, Bertz forgot his original championship and appreciation of Whitman whom he now characterized as a degenerate, a pederast and—a homosexual. Although he would have denied it, claiming to further the gay cause, a certain homophobic quality in these letters is obvious.

As the correspondence with Rivers shows, the conflict was to preoccupy Bertz for many years and on many different levels. Although he claimed to have turned to other matters after 1907, he obviously never managed to cope with the issue. While the correspondence with Rivers is fascinating, especially because the discussion flared up again in France at that time, it also reflects

the unfortunate “intellectual” climate just before World War I: Europe was obviously headed for collective disaster.

Acknowledgment:

I would like to thank Pierre Coustillas, Paul Mattheissen and Hans-Joachim Lang for their significant assistance in putting together this annotated manuscript. In the annotations, English-language quotations from German sources are always my own translations unless otherwise indicated.

¹*The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz. 1887-1903*, London: Constable, 1961.

²Hans-Joachim Lang, “Eduard Bertz vs. Johannes Schlaf: The Debate on Whitman’s Homosexuality in Germany,” in: *A Conversation in the Life of Leland R. Phelps. America and Germany: Literature, Art and Music*, eds. Frank L. Borchardt and Marion C. Salinger, Durham: Duke, 1987, p. 50. Lang’s second article on Bertz is “*Das Sabinergut* von Eduard Bertz: Ein

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vergessener Amerikaroman,“ in *Wege amerikanischer Kultur. Ways and Byways of American Culture*, ed. Renate von Bardeleben, Frankfurt/M. *et al.*: Lang, 1989, pp. 143-158.

The Letters

I

[Letter from Eduard Bertz to Walt Whitman, text recorded by Horace Traubel in the entry of June 28, 1889, in *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, vol. 5: April 8-September 14, 1889, ed. Gertrude Traubel, pp. 330f. The date is not given on Traubel’s transcript, but the letter was received in Camden that day. In the *Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*, vol. 4: 1886-1889, ed. Edwin Haviland Miller, New York: New York University Press, 1969, p. 352, an annotation gives the letter’s date as June 16.]

Dear Sir,

Dear Poet, Friend, and Master,

To celebrate your seventieth birthday, I your grateful and devoted admirer, have written some words of sympathy and congratulation, and published them in the issue of June 2nd of the paper I am editing just now, viz. the “*Deutsche Presse*,” the official organ of the league of German authors (*Deutscher Schriftsteller-Verband*). I trust I may be able some day to devote to you and your work a serious essay better suited to do justice to your genius than was possible in that aphoristic article. However, those few lines will at least serve as an unambiguous testimony of my deep and true devotion to you, and as it may give you pleasure to hear of an unknown German friend of yours, I take the liberty to send you that birthday paper, hoping you will look upon it with kind and indulgent eyes.

Ever yours sincerely and affectionately
Edward Bertz

II

[Bertz to Walt Whitman, 20 July 1889, Library of Congress, Feinberg Collection.]

DEUTSCHER SCHRIFTSTELLERVERBAND

Bezirksverein I, Berlin. Vorstand.

Lagow,¹ July 20th, 1889.

My dear Sir,

Your card and, some days later, the gift of your Complete Works, as well as the parcel of pamphlets and papers² you sent me, safely reached me here in the country where I am spending my summer holidays, and whence I shall return to Potsdam in the beginning of August. Your card

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Facsimile of first page of Bertz's letter to Whitman of 20 July 1889

alone would have been a great treasure; but to receive, out of your own kind hands, that glorious book with your personal dedication, your portraits, and those various materials which confirm what had always been my impression of your character, is more to me than words of gratitude could express. So I will only say: Thank you heartily. To think that some words of mine brought a pleased smile upon the lips of a great and good man, adds something priceless to the value of my life.

My article was hastily written and, though you do acknowledge my good intentions, must seem very inadequate to you. But for years it has been my aim some day to write an exhaustive essay worthy, as far as it may be in my power, of your work and genius. Now your personal touch, if I may say so, has given me a new impulse, and I am resolved to set to work at once. If life and strength lasts, this pen of mine shall help to reveal you to the German people.

When I wrote that paper for the "Deutsche Presse,"³ I did not know of the translation published at Zürich,⁴ of which you speak. But I got it since then and brought it here with me. I came here, together with a medical man, Dr. Rehfeldt,⁵ my faithful friend since our common school days, and we are staying in a retired spot which belongs to the most picturesque in Northern Germany. The house is situated high in a garden from which we overlook two deep, quiet lakes, surrounded by hills clad with beech and pine forests. On an island between them clusters the hamlet of Lagow, at the foot of an ancient castle. My friend has his wife and children with him. Every evening when my little favourites have gone to sleep, we light the lamp under an old lime tree in the garden, and then we call you to keep us company. The other night I translated to my friends pp. 5 to 11 from Mr. O'Connor's "Vindication,"⁶ and they were deeply moved. The wife whose spiritual beauty would gladden your heart, instructed me to send you her love. Generally my friend reads the translation while I compare the English text. So Messrs. Knortz and Rolleston have found in us a rather critical public. In many places the rendering is excellent, and faithfully mirrors the beauty and power of your thought, eliciting warm praise from Rehfeldt and his lady. In not a few instances, however, we also noticed mistakes which sometimes will make it hard to grasp your meaning, for those who cannot read the original. No doubt you are aware that it is very difficult to translate you; frequently the entire originality of your language seems to defy its being moulded into different forms. I have often experienced it in my own attempts at translating you; for I was never quite satisfied with the results. In any case there is not, in the German translation, that grand harmony by which the original is distinguished, and it certainly does not reach the perfection of those examples Freiligrath⁷ has given us of your work. But to translate a poet, another poet is required, and I think that some day he will appear who will do justice to you even in German. However, everything considered, it is a careful and diligent book Messrs. Knortz and Rolleston have given us, and as pioneering work it is most welcome.

To avoid mistakes, I think I ought to tell you that I am living as an independent literary man, and am not constantly the editor of the "Deutsche Presse," but was so only temporarily, because of

a severe illness of the regular editor. However, since last autumn I am entrusted with the honorary office of first secretary in the Society of German authors, a position the duties of which keep me very busy indeed. I am also a member of the "Verein Berliner Presse,"⁸ and though quietly living at Potsdam, I have to go to Berlin about twice or three times every week.

Perhaps you did not know of the passages characterizing your mind and work which, in my article, I have translated from "Thyrza." The author of this book, the English novelist George Gissing, is one of my very best friends. I knew him from my first coming to England, in 1878, and

passed with him, in common studies and aspirations, some rich and fruitful years of companionship and curious Bohemianism, and our correspondence, since my coming back to Germany, was never interrupted. I made him acquainted with your works, after my return from America, and it is my own experience he has related in "Thyrza": his hero's getting to know "Leaves of Grass" during his American life, and coming home a new man.

I spent two years in America, from 1881 to 1883, at Rugby, Tennessee,⁹ the English colony of Thomas Hughes. My health had broken down from overwork, and making the personal acquaintance of the author of "Tom Brown's School Days," I was induced to join his settlement, since I urgently needed a change of air. The sea voyage did me much good, and when I arrived at Rugby, I was well enough to help for a month or two in nursing those English young fellows who, after coming out to Tennessee, were most of them attacked by typhoid fever. A number died, and when the others recovered I went into the wilderness. But though I acquired a hundred acres of forest land, and got a good house erected there in a solitary and romantic spot, all of which is still my property, my farming came to nothing, as I longed to get back to my studies, as soon as I had got well again in the rough and healthy forest life. Seven squatter's children came to me every morning with their spelling-books, and I amused myself with teaching them the three R's, till snow blocked the roads. Then I passed the winter in complete solitude, reading Shakespeare and the ancient classics, with no companion save a fine collie dog I had brought over with me from England. In the spring of 1882, the trustees of the "Hughes Public Library" which, in honour of Tom Hughes, had been founded at Rugby by the publishers of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, offered me the post of librarian, and I accepted it for a year, during which time I had to arrange and to catalogue the whole library.

Your works were not among the donations; but reading about you in the "Critic" paper, I believe, which was regularly sent to the library,¹⁰ I ordered "Leaves of Grass" from Cincinnati, and from the very first I recognized your genuine greatness, and loved you with all my heart. However, with a whole library at my disposal, in which hundreds and hundreds of books were new to me and attracted my curiosity, I was not then in a position to enter very deeply into anything, but rather tasted of everything, and I may say the seeds that fell into my heart when first reading you, have

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grown to maturity only after my return to Europe when I found time quietly to digest what I had hastily swallowed.

I did not want to stay in America, as I felt that my real work lay in Europe with which I was most strongly connected by personal and intellectual ties. So in June, 1883, I went back first to England, and, about a year after that, to Germany. But before leaving, I spent a fortnight in New York, and there I purchased "Specimen Days and Collect,"¹¹ so that your complete works, as far as they were then published, accompanied me to Europe.

Since then I have been leading the life of a literary man. In 1884 I wrote an English book, entitled "The French Prisoners,"¹² – the story of a friendship between a German boy and a young French soldier. It was published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co., of London, and rather well received by criticism. One of its chapters is headed by a motto from "Leaves of Grass," viz.: "Beautiful thought, beautiful as the sky, that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time for ever be lost." In the following year I published, at Leipzig, a German translation of Montesquieu's "Lettres persanes," with commentary and critical introduction.¹³ In the latter I have also mentioned you.

But I may say that I am still in the beginning of my literary career. After finishing that translation, I devoted about three years to extensive studies, writing very little, and it seems to me that only then I acquired what I may perhaps regard as my maturity. Now during the last year I have

written a number of long articles on literary matters, for various papers, and I had the satisfaction that almost every one of them brought me letters of approval and gifts of books from authors.¹⁴ All that is very encouraging and assures me in the hope that I may in time do some really good work. Having devoted much industry and thought to the study of philosophy, social science, and literature, I was able to form an independent opinion on many things; and as my highest aim in writing is truth, I have come to believe that there is some important work to do for my pen. And I trust you will find it is no unworthy advocate that is going to interpret you to the Germans. You will not wonder, of course, if I tell you that in many respects I am opposed to the spirit now current in the German empire. I am not a fighting man by nature, but as an author I feel in duty bound to defend with unflagging energy what is highest in life and literature, and I would rather be silent forever than to foster anything mean and unjust.

July 22nd, 1889.

Yesterday your gift of Dr. Bucke's book¹⁵ arrived, as well as, from Mr. Knortz of New York, his German lecture about you.¹⁶ Thank you from all my heart for the kind and welcome help you are giving me in the work that is now before me: for indeed all those materials will make my task much more easy. But, besides being a help, Mr. Bucke's book contains much, very much that is new to me and a key to your work and character. And, beyond all that, everything that comes from you is sanctified, and words cannot express what it means to me.

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I have written this very long letter because I felt it due to you to tell you something of the disciple who was so kindly received by you. Perhaps, as my work progresses, it will please you to hear now and then how I am getting on. But of course no answer will be needed, since it is quite sufficient to me to imagine that my lines come to you like a pleasant visitor.

By-the-by, there was a delay in sending you my article, because I did not know in what city you are living. After some weeks only, seeing from a paragraph in the London "Athenæum" that you had been present at the celebration of your birthday in Camden, New Jersey, I concluded that you were dwelling there.¹⁷

Now good-bye for this once, my dear Friend and Master. I send you my sincere good wishes for the improvement of your health and strength. Some weeks ago my old grandparents, after sixty years marriage, celebrated their diamond wedding. My grandfather, who last year had been so ill that hardly any hope remained for his life, walks now about again and reads all day long, and is as ardent and radical a politician as ever, though now past eighty-six: I trust you too, like him, will grow quite strong again.

Ever Yours reverently, gratefully,
and affectionately,
Edward Bertz.

III

[Bertz to Horace Traubel, 19 November 1896. Library of Congress, Feinberg Collection.]

Neue Königstrasse 71,
Potsdam.
November 19th, 1896.

Dear Sir,

The three parts of "The Conservator,"¹⁸ for July, August and September, which you had the kindness to forward to me, were very welcome. I am much obliged to you and shall presently send a year's subscription for the paper, to the publishers.

Let me take this opportunity of thanking you for the book with the presentation of which you have honoured me, viz. "Camden's Compliment to Walt Whitman."¹⁹ It must have seemed to you very rude, I fear, that I never acknowledged your kind gift. But at the time of its arrival I was very ill, unable, for a long period, to reply to any communication, and afterwards my work became all the more absorbing. So I trust you will forgive the omission. I have since published two novels,²⁰ besides writing many essays and critical articles, and the days always seem far too short for what one ought to perform.

Your book "In re Walt Whitman"²¹ I have not yet seen, but I think it must be most interesting, and I will certainly get it some day.

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I am very glad to see that you have made it your life's object to keep the memory of Walt Whitman fresh, and to spread his influence. To me the acquaintance with his works remains one of the most important events in my development. For a number of years now his portrait is hanging in my study, a mark of distinction which, in addition, I have only accorded to Shakespeare, Goethe, and two German philosophers, as to those to whom I am looking up as to my guides, and with whom my mind is connected by the strongest links of sympathy. I hope, in a year or two, to bring out a volume of essays in which will be stated everything I am owing to Walt Whitman.

Some years ago I tried to induce Baron Tauchnitz²² to obtain the permission of publishing a selection of Walt Whitman's writings, in his Collection of British and American authors, and offered to write an introduction to the book. But Tauchnitz had not the courage to undertake it. I am afraid, with the exception of a selected minority, Walt Whitman's time has not yet come, in this country. At present, Nietzsche is in vogue here, whose spirit is the very opposite of Walt Whitman's.

I am aware of the foolish things that were said against Walt, in England, shortly after his death, notably by Theodore Watts, in "The Athenæum," which formerly had been in sympathy with him. The good man only committed himself by his sorry protestations, it seemed to me.²³

For my own part, I am convinced that Walt Whitman represents a power which will continue to act long after we shall be gone, a living spring out of which many generations to come, will drink health, and vigour, and courage. In reading him, I often feel as if the very heart of humanity were beating in his words.

I remain, dear Sir,
Very sincerely yours,
Edward Bertz.

IV

[Bertz to Johannes Schlaf, 12 November 1897, Johannes Schlaf Archiv, Querfurt, Germany]

Potsdam, 12. November 1897
Neue Königstrasse 21.

Sehr geehrter Herr,

Im Oktober des vergangenen Jahres sah ich im Schaufenster einer Berliner Buchhandlung das Buch "Neuland" (zu dessen Abonnenten ich seitdem gehöre) und Ihr darin enthaltener Aufsatz über Walt Whitman veranlaßte mich, es zu kaufen. Was Sie von dem Dichter sagen, las ich mit Teilnahme, nur über Ihr Wort, seit Freiligrath habe sich bei uns in Deutschland kaum wieder jemand um Whitman bekümmert, empfand ich leises Bedauern.

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Kürzlich sandte mir nun Paul [...] mit [...] seine "Aphorismen des Empfindens" [?] und ich fand auf dem letzten Blatt des Buches die Anzeige, daß Sie eine Schrift über Walt Whitman vorbereiten. Dieser Ihr Plan deutet darauf hin, daß Sie sich länger und tiefer mit dem Dichter der "Grashalme" beschäftigen, als Ihr Aufsatz vermuten ließ und da ich seit einiger Zeit selbst wieder viel über ihn nachgesonnen habe, so wurde aus dem leisen Bedauern des vorigen Jahres der lebhaftere Wunsch, mit Ihnen in Verbindung zu treten.

Denn einer hat sich seit Freiligrath doch mit unzweideutigen Worten zu Whitman bekannt, und zwar ich selbst. Noch vor dem Erscheinen der Knortz-Rollestonschen Übersetzung habe ich in No. 23 des II. Jahrgangs der "Deutschen Presse," des damaligen Organs des Deutschen Schriftsteller-Verbandes, am 2. Juni 1889, Seite 177-179, unter dem Titel: "*Walt Whitman. Zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstag*" einen Artikel über Whitman veröffentlicht. Diese Arbeit ist nun verschollen, wie es die Freiligrathsche sein würde, wenn sie nicht in dessen gesammelten Werken erhalten wäre, und es muß wohl richtig sein, daß auch sie hier in Deutschland ohne Wirkung geblieben ist. Aber Walt Whitman selbst wenigstens hat ihn gelesen und mir seine Freude darüber in mancherlei Weise zum Ausdruck gebracht. Indessen rührt mein Bedauern nicht eigentlich daher, daß Sie mir aus Unkenntnis eine *Anerkennung* vorenthalten haben, die mir vielleicht gebührte, sondern weit mehr daher, daß meine Arbeit für die, denen sie in Wahrheit bestimmt war, verborgen und mir so die *Sympathie gleichgestimmter Menschen* versagt geblieben ist. Denn gerade auf diese Sympathie wird jeder, der einen Hauch von Whitman's Geist verspürt hat, den größten Wert legen.

Da ich nur noch *einen* Abdruck meines Artikels besitze, der mit mehreren Jahrgängen der "Deutschen Presse" in einem dicken Band vereinigt ist, so habe ich eine wörtliche Abschrift für Sie angefertigt, die ich Sie bitte, freundschaftlich von mir anzunehmen. Der Geburtstagsaufsatz konnte und sollte nicht umstürzend sein; er sollte nur hinweisen auf den Dichter und auf eingehenderes Studium über ihn vorbereiten. Mein Verständnis Whitmans hat sich ständig vertieft, meine Bekanntschaft mit seinem Leben und seinem Wirken sich bedeutend erweitert. Freilich haben schlechte Gesundheitsverhältnisse mich noch immer nicht dazu gelangen lassen, die geplante größere Arbeit zu veröffentlichen, aber ich habe schon [...] und ich hoffe, es in nicht ferner Zeit und [...] zu können.

Wahrscheinlich wird das Buch, daß Sie vorbereiten, früher fertig werden, doch darin liegt für mich keinerlei Veranlassung zur Unzufriedenheit. Ganz im Gegenteil. Whitman ist ein so unerschöpfliches Thema, daß zwei verschiedene Individualitäten, die über ihn sprechen, einander nur ergänzen können. Und für seine Sache ist es um so besser, je mehr Zustimmende auf dem Plan erscheinen.

Mit herzlichem Gruß
Ihr ergebenster
Eduard Bertz

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[Translation of 4]

Potsdam, 12 November 1897
Neue Königstrasse 21.

Dear Sir:

In October of last year, I saw the book *Neuland* in the window of a Berlin bookstore (I have since started to subscribe to it) and your article on Walt Whitman induced me to buy it. What you say about the poet I read with sympathy, I had only silent regrets about your word that since Freiligrath nobody ever again was concerned with Whitman here in Germany.

Recently, Paul [...] sent me his "Aphorismen des Empfindens" [...] with [...] and on the last page I found an advertisement that you are preparing a study of Walt Whitman. This plan of yours suggests to me that you have been dealing with the author of "Leaves of Grass" for a longer period of time and more intensely than your article suggested and, since I have myself again reflected extensively about him in the more recent past, the silent regret of last year turned into the strong desire to get in touch with you. Because one person has indeed professed himself with unequivocal words, namely myself. Already prior to the publication of Knortz-Rolleston's translation, I have published an article on Whitman in No. 23, vol. II of the "Deutsche Presse" of 2 June 1889, pp. 177-179, entitled "*Walt Whitman. On his seventieth birthday.*" This contribution is now lost as Freiligrath's would be if it had not become part of his Collected Works. Indeed, it is probably correct that it [Bertz's contribution] has remained without consequences here in Germany. But at least Walt Whitman himself read it and expressed his delight over it in a variety of ways.²⁴ To be sure, my regrets do not originate in a lack of *recognition* (out of a lack of knowledge on your part) which might have been due to me, but in the fact that my contribution has remained unknown to those for whom it was actually designed and that I have thus had to do without the *sympathy of like-minded human beings*. Because it is precisely this sympathy which everybody who has only felt a touch of Whitman's spirit will set the greatest store by.

Since I only own *one* copy of the article which is bound together with several years of the "Deutsche Presse" in one thick volume, I have produced a verbatim copy for you which I hope you will be so kind as to accept from me.

This birthday contribution could not and was not supposed to have been revolutionary; it was merely supposed to make the poet known and prepare a more in-depth investigation. My comprehension of Whitman has continuously improved, my acquaintance with his life and his work has expanded significantly. Although a bad health condition has not yet allowed me to publish the projected more extensive study, I have already [...] and hope to be able to do it [...] in the near future.

In all likelihood, the book you are preparing will be completed sooner but this is no cause for dissatisfaction to me. Quite the contrary. Whitman is such an inexhaustible topic that two

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individuals who speak about him will automatically complement each other. And the more followers will make their opinions known, the better it is for his cause.

With warm greetings
Your
Eduard Bertz

V

[Bertz to Horace Traubel's *Conservator* (Philadelphia), 20 April 1898. Library of Congress, Feinberg Collection.]

Neue Königstrasse 21.
Potsdam.
April 20th, 1898.

Dear Sir,

I beg to inform you that I am forwarding to-day to your address by P.O.O., the sum of one Dollar, being my subscription to the "Conservator" for the ninth annual volume.

Number 1st, of March, is already in my hands.

I am very glad I became a subscriber, as I find your review very valuable and sympathetic.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Edward Bertz.

Mr. Edward K. Innes,
Philadelphia.

VI

[Bertz to Horace Traubel, 7 February 1899. Library of Congress, Feinberg Collection.]

Neue Königstraße 21.
Potsdam
February 7th, 1899.
(From April 1st: Alexandrinen Str. 11, Potsdam).

Dear Mr. Traubel,

You have honoured me, by addressing me on behalf of the *Conservator* (for I do consider that I am among those addressed), but I am grieved to be quite unable to give proof of my interest, by

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action. Being the friend of Walt Whitman, you will, I trust, receive this assurance with generous confidence. Through a long period my whole time has now been devoted to philosophical speculation, and its faithful companion, especially as my progress was protracted by constant illness, and misfortunes from without, is poverty.

For several years I have now earned no income by my work, and did not even find it possible to use a cure of which my health is in great need. Thus my existence and my persevering in the path of quiet thought and patient research, has been and is still a difficult struggle. I therefore earnestly request you not to conclude, from my remaining mute to your appeal, that I am deficient in the feeling of solidarity with your aims, as expressed in the *Conservator*, for you would do me wrong.

I should be extremely sorry if you were unable to weather the storm that seems to threaten The *Conservator*, but I hope the present danger will rouse those among our friends who have it in their

power to help you. To me your paper is always most valuable, suggestive, and invigorating, and your perfect impartiality, possible to conscious strength only, often gives me genuine pleasure.

Let me use this opportunity to mention that Walt Whitman's influence is visibly spreading in Germany. There have been several essays treating of him, of late, in German periodicals,²⁵ and among our younger generation his name is recognized as that of a guide to a fuller conception of life.

Believe me
Very sincerely Yours,
Edward Bertz.

VII

[Bertz to Horace Traubel, 22 January 1900. Library of Congress, Feinberg Collection.]

15, Alexandrinen Str.
Potsdam.
January 22nd, 1900.

Dear Mr. Traubel,

I am sorry you did not state last year, as you are doing now, in your appeal to the friends of The Conservator, the exact amount you expected them to subscribe to the Publication Fund. I could have managed to subscribe as much as \$2 but I did not venture to offer such a small sum, as I imagined you counted upon a great deal more. I am not, as I already told you, in very flourishing circumstances, but it would be lamentable indeed if I could not even spare as much as that for our common cause. I only ask your permission to defer payment till the beginning of April, when I will

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send in those \$2, together with the amount of my annual subscription for the new year. I shall be glad to contribute the same sum to the Publication Fund next year if it should be required. Let me hope that you will be able to overcome all difficulties.

It will interest you to know that Walt Whitman is steadily gaining ground in this country. He is now frequently mentioned in German periodicals, a most sympathetic essay about him, by Johannes Schlaf,²⁶ the poet, has come out as a book, and another good essay is contained in Dr. Karl Federn's book: "Essays zur Amerikanischen Litteratur."²⁷ Then there is the new edition of Knortz's treatise.²⁸ An article, by Julius Rodenberg, in the "Deutsche Rundschau,"²⁹ is likewise dealing with Whitman, an important fact. Perhaps I may give you some details about all that, some day, for "The Conservator"; I often wish I may find the time for it. Just now, however, and for some time to come, I am terribly busy, as I am reading the proofs of a new novel³⁰ to be published in February, finishing another book which is to appear at Easter, and already preparing a third one, a treatise about a question of Ethics, for publication in October.

With best wishes for the Conservator, as well as for your personal well-being, I remain,
Very sincerely Yours,
Edward Bertz.

VIII

[Bertz to Horace Traubel, 13 August 1900. Library of Congress, Feinberg Collection.]

Alexandrinenstrasse 15.
Potsdam.
August 13th, 1900.

Dear Friend Traubel,

Most unfortunately I was absent in the country, for a holiday, when your letter of May 4th arrived here. By some mistake it was not forwarded to me, and, on coming home, a few days ago only, I found it in my letter box. So you will have waited in vain for some lines from my hand, to be read at the Whitman birthday celebration. I greatly regret to have, though unknowingly, disappointed you. But I am now going to prepare a report for next year's celebration, when I trust it will be no less welcome than it would have been, if it had reached you on May 31st, 1900.

But you mention "the current discussion of Whitman, of which you hear murmurs." I really doubt whether you may not have heard more than I know of.³¹ As I am living here in some isolation, and always very busy, I do not see very many papers and periodicals, that is to say: not more than twenty altogether; and there are hundreds that may have contained something about Whitman. At any rate I do not remember anything that you may call a "discussion." There were essays by Schlaf

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in the "Neue Deutsche Rundschau,"³² of Berlin, and by Federn in the "Zeit,"³³ of Vienna. Both are now reprinted in books which I am sending you to-day.³⁴ (Both these books I am taking from my own library. Of that of Schlaf's, I have got two copies, as the author presented one to me; and of Federn's essay I still possess the issue of the "Zeit" in which it first appeared. So there is no expense, and I hope you will not mind accepting these little volumes from me, as a friend's gift).

Then there was an article which was in fact a review of Schlaf's book, in "Das Magazin für Litteratur,"³⁵ two years ago. And another, by Schlaf, about Knortz's essay, in "Das litterarische Echo," of Berlin.³⁶ A third review by Julius Rodenberg,³⁷ of the complete Whitman edition, of Schlaf's booklet, and of Knortz's essay, came out last year in the "Deutsche Rundschau" (the old, not the new one). But I got no copy of either of the three, nor do I remember the exact dates.

Schlaf, by-the-by, as you will notice, does not know the original Whitman, but the very incomplete and not very good translation by Knortz and Rolleston only. Perhaps he does not read English. So his impression too of Whitman's personality, as it is derived from those rendered extracts merely, is incomplete.

As to Knortz's essay, it is the second edition of a pamphlet which I feel sure you know, but augmented by some new translations from "Leaves of Grass," and thirteen letters from Whitman to the author. The title of the book is: "Walt Whitman. Der Dichter der Demokratie. Von Karl Knortz (*Evansville, Indiana*). II. Auflage. Leipzig, 1899." Of this I should think Mr. Knortz would be glad to send you a copy. If not, I might order it for you.

Towards Christmas there will also come out, at Stuttgart, a History of the Literature of the World, written by various authors.³⁸ I myself have contributed to it the history of English and American literature, and in my sketch of the latter I gave to Whitman the most prominent place. I will let you hear of the book, as soon as it may be published.

Believe me,
Ever Yours sincerely,
Edward Bertz.

IX

[Bertz to Horace Traubel, 13 August 1903. Library of Congress, Feinberg Collection.]

Waisenstrasse 27.
Potsdam.
August 13th, 1903.

Dear Mr. Traubel,

The enclosed is all I could make out, from my own books, about Dr. Platt's³⁹ questions. The only point I am unable to answer, is Duke Augustus's authorship of the book on Ciphers. But if, as

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Dr. Platt says, such a book was indeed written by a Duke Augustus, about that period, it can only be the *senex divinus*.⁴⁰ So I hope that my notes may be sufficient to Dr. Platt's purpose.

As to an article on "Walt Whitman in Germany," I hardly could say much more, just now, than Mrs. von Ende,⁴¹ in her article in "The Conservator."⁴² So it will be better, I suppose, to defer the matter for a year or so. But as you asked what I thought of Mrs. von Ende's article, I regret to have to confess that I believe her statements about Whitman's influence upon the younger generation in Germany to be vastly exaggerated. Federn and Schlaf, especially the latter, made a specialty of the study of Whitman. (I sent you their booklets, as you may remember). But Mrs. von Ende gives no other names, and I don't think she could have given many more. For my own part, I often find that not even Whitman's name is known among literary people, and I doubt whether more than a couple of those who talk about him, have ever read him in the original. Even Schlaf, it seems to me, knows only the fragments translated by Knortz-Rolleston.

About a year ago, there appeared a German translation of Whitman's early prose tales, under the title of "Novellen," by Thea Ettliger.⁴³ I reviewed the book, which was preceded by an introduction from Schlaf's pen, in the "Litterarische Echo" of which Mrs. von Ende is a regular contributor. I am afraid Whitman himself would not have liked it; at any rate, he would have preferred first to see his later prose writings appearing in a German translation; but that is still absent.

I did not yet thank you for the prospectus you kindly sent me, of the Autograph Edition of "Leaves of Grass." Unfortunately, though I fully appreciate the importance of the publication, for the study of Whitman, I cannot at present afford such an expense. All my work has been protracted by illness, for several years, and my income has been so small, in consequence, that I must renounce to many things, and I still have to remain your debtor.

Believe me,
Sincerely yours,
Edward Bertz.

[To be concluded]

Notes

¹Today Lagów, Western Poland; East of Frankfurt/Oder.

²Whitman sent him the *Complete Poetry and Prose* (1888), Richard M. Bucke's biography *Walt Whitman* (1883) and probably a number of magazine articles and reviews. Bertz later claimed to have been overwhelmed and bothered by the amount of material sent to him.

³“Walt Whitman,” *Deutsche Presse*, 2 June 1889, pp. 177-79. At that time, Bertz wrote regularly for the *Deutsche Presse*, published by the German Union of Authors (“Deutscher Schriftsteller-Verband”), including a three-part contribution on Gissing (3, 10 and 17 November 1889). For a while, he also served as editor or assistant editor for the weekly.

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⁴Walt Whitman, *Grashalme. Gedichte*, transl. Karl Knortz and T. W. Rolleston, Zürich: Verlagsmagazin, 1889. This edition, translated by a democratically-minded German-American and an Irish nationalist, and published with a radical Swiss publisher, was the first book-length edition of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*.

⁵Heinrich Rehfeldt (1851-1910), a German physician living in Frankfurt/Oder, founder of the German Medical Society, is often mentioned in Bertz’s letters to Gissing. While Bertz obviously depended on him for medical advice and companionship, the relationship was far from all-harmonious. His wife, below described as displaying a “spiritual beauty,” unnerved Bertz that very summer (see letter to Gissing, 11 September 1889).

⁶William D. O’Connor, in *The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication* (1866), defended Whitman against charges of immorality.

⁷Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-1876), a revolutionary German poet, was the first German translator of Whitman’s poetry. His small selection of ten poems, together with an essay on Whitman, appeared in the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, Germany’s leading daily, in 1868.

⁸Society of Berlin Journalists.

⁹Thomas Hughes (1822-96), British politician, educator and writer (his most famous novel is *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, 1857). In 1880, he founded a utopian colony at Rugby, Tennessee, based on the spirit of English public schools, avoiding the evils of modern industrialism. However, severe difficulties, chiefly economic, soon suggested the failure of the experiment which eventually occurred in 1891.

¹⁰The contributions in *The Critic* that Bertz might have read at Rugby are “Walt Whitman’s ‘Leaves of Grass,’” No. 22, 5 November 1881, a mixed but basically positive review, and an excellent contribution on “Walt Whitman’s New Book” (on *Specimen Days and Collect*) which appeared on 13 January 1883, No. 53-54.

¹¹Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days and Collect*, Philadelphia: Rees, Welsh & Co., 1882.

¹²*The French Prisoners; A Story for Boys*, London: Macmillan, 1884.

¹³*Montesquieu’s persische Briefe*. Mit Einleitung und Kommentar deutsch von Eduard Bertz, Leipzig: Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 1884.

¹⁴The articles identified so far include contributions on Carlyle, Heine, Herzog Ernst II., Schopenhauer, drama criticism and George Gissing, published in *Deutsche Presse* and *Das Litterarische Echo*.

¹⁵Probably *Walt Whitman*, Philadelphia: D. McKay, 1883, by Richard Maurice Bucke (1837-1902). Bucke, a physician born in England, had been superintendent for the Asylum for the Insane in London, Ontario, Canada, since 1876. He was one of the executors of Whitman’s literary estate and a co-editor of his work.

¹⁶Knortz, *Walt Whitman. Vortrag gehalten im Deutschen Gesellig-Wissenschaftlichen Verein von New York*, New York: Bartsch, 1886. This was a lecture given for a German audience in New York City.

¹⁷The short note appeared in *The Athenæum*, 15 June 1889, p. 760.

¹⁸Radical leftist-mystical magazine edited by Traubel, unofficially served as mouthpiece of the Walt Whitman Fellowship International and the organized Whitman movement.

¹⁹Horace L. Traubel, ed., *Camden's Compliment to Whitman. May 21, 1889. Notes, Addresses, Letters, Telegrams*, Philadelphia: David McKay, 1889.

²⁰*Glück und Glas*, Leipzig: V. Ottmann, 1891, and *Das Sabinergut*, Berlin: Verein der Bücherfreunde, 1896. The latter novel employs his experiences while in Tennessee.

²¹*In Re Walt Whitman: Edited by His Literary Executors, Horace L. Traubel, Richard Maurice Bucke, Thomas B. Harned*, Philadelphia: David McKay, 1893.

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²²Christian Bernhard Freiherr von Tauchnitz (1816-1895) founded Tauchnitz Publishers in Leipzig in 1837. The firm specialized in the publication of English-language titles for Continental distribution.

²³In his article of April 2, 1892, pp. 436, Theodore Watts(-Dunton) complained that Whitman had never visited London and that he had no "message for humanity."

²⁴See note 2.

²⁵See the contributions mentioned in Bertz's letter of 22 January 1900 and 13 August 1900.

²⁶Johannes Schlaf, *Walt Whitman. Lyrik des Chat Noir. Paul Verlaine*, Leipzig: Kreisende Ringe/Spohr, 1898. The essay on Whitman contained in this volume already appeared in 1892.

²⁷Halle/Saale: Hendel, 1899, pp. 90-123.

²⁸*Walt Whitman, der Dichter der Demokratie*, 2nd edition, Leipzig, Fleischer, 1899.

²⁹"Walt Whitman," *Deutsche Rundschau*, 26/3 (December 1899), pp. 501-06.

³⁰In 1900, Bertz published *Die Philosophie des Fahrrads* (Dresden, Leipzig: Reißner). Possibly he was referring to *Der blinde Eros*, also published by Reißner in 1900 and eventually published serially in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* from 26 February to 11 April 1901.

³¹Indeed Traubel was better informed than Bertz who, in his listing below, failed to include quite a few publications relating to Whitman.

³²Bertz is referring to Schlaf's "Walt Whitman" in *Freie Büne für den Entwicklungskampf der Zeit* (later: *Die Neue Rundschau*) 3 (1892), pp. 977-88.

³³"Walt Whitman. Ein Betrag zur Litteratur- und Sittengeschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts," *Die Zeit*, Nr. 159, 16 August 1897, pp. 37-40, and Nr. 160, 23 October 1897, pp. 53-55.

³⁴See notes 26 and 27.

³⁵Arthur Moeller-Bruck, "Drei Essays," *Das Magazin für Litteratur*, 67, Nr. 18, 7 May 1898, cols. 416-20.

³⁶*Das litterarische Echo*, 2 (1899/1900), cols. 65f.

³⁷See note 29.

³⁸*Spemanns goldenes Buch der Weltlitteratur*, Berlin & Stuttgart: Spemann, 1901, pp. 258-382. In addition to Bertz, the "various authors" included Ernst Brausewetter, Gustav Diercks, Gustav Heinrich, Wilhelm Henckel, Robert Hessen, Gustav Körting, Victor Ottmann, Ludwig Salomon, Herman Schiller, Linda Schneider, Georg Witkowski, Eugen Wolff and others.

³⁹Isaac Hull Platt (1853-1912), lawyer, physician, and student of Shakespeare; involved in the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy and author of a biography of Walt Whitman.

⁴⁰It was not. The author is Charles W. Augustus, *The Cipher Found: Lord Bacon's Work Located in One of the Plays*, Chicago: E. Simon, 1888.

⁴¹Amalie (Amelia) von Ende was born in Warsaw in 1856 and moved to the U.S. still as a child. She is a very significant literary go-between between the U. S. and the German-speaking countries around the turn of the century. As American correspondent for the *Litterarische Echo*, she had a strong impact on the reception of American literature in Germany, making a significant contribution

to the emerging Whitman-enthusiasm there. She died in 1932.

⁴²*Conservator*, 14/2 (1903), pp. 23-25.

⁴³Walt Whitman, *Novellen. Ins Deutsche übertragen von Thea Ettliger. Mit einem Geleitwort von Johannes Schlaf*, Minden i.W.: Bruns, 1900. Bertz's review appeared in *Das litterarische Echo*, 3/15 (1901), cols. 1079f.

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Homage to *New Grub Street*

1891 was an important year in Gissing's life. On 25 February he married Edith Underwood, on 7 April *New Grub Street* was published, on 10 December Walter was born. It would occur to no one to celebrate the first event with its train of disastrous consequences, nor the third which, although Gissing was very much attached to his elder son, proved a doubtful blessing. The second event, being of a purely artistic nature, easily transcends the pains of material life, and its significance has been confirmed by the passing of time. A hundred years after its publication, *New Grub Street* seems to have eclipsed *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* which, until the second world war, was as a rule regarded as his best work. This impression is strengthened by the recent publication of four articles which celebrate its centenary.

In his very positive estimation of Gissing's picture of literary life, C. A. R. Hills ("Poverty and the literary toiler," *Daily Telegraph*, 6 April, Section W, p. 16) compares the predicament of the struggling writer in the 1890s and in the 1990s and he is not optimistic: "It must be questionable whether a writer as good as Gissing, and one dealing with the unfashionable subject-matter of today, would ever establish himself. A person such as Gissing would probably have become a professor of Greek and Latin, and the world would have lost a great realistic novelist. Gissing was in no doubt that poverty always degrades. He would never have been so foolish as to equate the Grub Street of 1891 with hunger and the workhouse. Nevertheless, he might not have found its conditions easy to bear." Hills has turned to good account his reading of *Gissing: The Critical Heritage*, selecting for quotation one of the most perceptive reviews of *New Grub Street* in 1891—that which appeared in the *Whitehall Review*. He himself regards the story as Gissing's finest novel. "Perhaps the most touching and complete portrait in the book is of Marian Yule, one of the most subtly-drawn heroines in Victorian fiction."

In the *Guardian* of 24 April ("Grub Street Revisited," p. 36) Jonathan Sale also reveals that he has read *Gissing: The Critical Heritage* with profit and is aware of the French and Russian translations, whose titles he translates back into English, "Starvation Street" and "The Martyrs of the Pen." He places Gissing's achievement correctly on the scale of Victorian fictional artistry: "His brand of social realism caught on. *Born in Exile*, *The Odd Women*, *The Whirlpool*, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, all have claims to be major landmarks in the scenery of Victorian fiction.

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He became a respected literary figure." Sale recalls the warm critical reception of the book which he himself calls "a loser's manual produced by a man who raised pessimism to an art form," and, in a quick survey of Gissing's life, broaches the familiar theme of "life imitating art" when he reminds us, somewhat tendentiously, of Gabrielle Fleury's arriving to discuss the translation of *New Grub*

Street and staying on to live with the author. Sale rejoices that *New Grub Street* is available in paperback, a refreshingly “bleak novel about novel-writing [which] contains a wonderful collection of not-so-literate literati, doomed scribblers and others engaged in the ‘trade of the damned.’”

D.J. Taylor acknowledges the status of *New Grub Street* as Gissing’s most famous book (“Men of letters and let-downs,” *The Independent*, 15 June, p. 28), but he thinks his masterpiece is *Born in Exile*, whose centenary, next year, is not likely to pass unnoticed. His piece begins with a remark which should perhaps be qualified. Considering the number of new editions that have appeared in the last twenty years and the continuing commercial success of the major titles, one can hardly agree that “perhaps the most depressing thing about Gissing’s reputation, 90 years after his death, is the extent to which he is written about rather than read.” Viewing *New Grub Street* as a terrifying parable of the circumstances of literary production a hundred years ago, “full of squalid tragedies and swingeing strokes of fate,” Taylor notes the grim inevitability of the central plot and contrasts Reardon’s predicament with Milvain’s facile success. “*New Grub Street*,” he observes, “is a prophetic work, written by a man who foresaw fairly accurately some of the consequences of mass culture, but it is something more than a document of the contemporary literary life. At his best Gissing is a very subtle psychologist, and his best scenes emerge out of a painstaking unravelling of human motivation.” He gives the examples of Alfred Yule fancying that Marian’s legacy will finally set him up as a literary panjandrum and Biffen foolishly imagining that Amy smiles upon him, frustration leading him to commit suicide. Bearing in mind some passages in the diary, Taylor also observes that the book makes full sense as autobiography, hence its “ghastly authenticity.” He concludes that “in the age of the six-figure advance and easy fame, it is not hard to feel a pang of sympathy” for Gissing, an “aloof, solitary figure...one of those writers who really did almost starve to death” and whose “work has a kind of integrity, a sort of emotional jaggedness, sufficient to set it apart from most of the comfortable productions of the late-Victorian reading-room.”

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The longest celebration of the centenary of *New Grub Street* appeared in the *Los Angeles Sunday Times Book Review* (31 March, pp. 3 and 9) under the title “Oh Lord, Save Me From New Grub Street.” It comes from the pen of Robert Ward who won the PEN West Award with *Red Baker* as the best work of fiction for 1985. Ward offers an entertaining account of his own literary struggles and relates how he “discovered the book that saved [his] life, more or less...I don’t know why the book was in my library. I didn’t remember buying it and I don’t think it was my girlfriend’s either. All I knew was that I started reading and I couldn’t stop. It was as if God had pointed me to it...I would lie...in my unmade bed on those rainy Washington mornings and I would feel the creeping horrors come over me. It was as though Reardon was my fictional doppelgänger. I read with a kind of ghoulish delight.” Ward concludes enthusiastically: “All I know is that it’s a great novel...They say that in his own life Gissing was unable to accept success, that his marriages were all disasters and that he sabotaged himself whenever he was on the threshold of respectability. Maybe so, but in *New Grub Street*, he got it dead right. There’s no special pleading, no whining, and no quarter given. Which is how it has to be with real art. *New Grub Street* is a great and true book. I owe you one, George, and we’ll have a drink one day together, when we’re all farthingless in heaven.” Ward’s piece is subtitled “Trust Me On This” and he shows us the book—its front cover in the Penguin Classics—, now in its ninth impression under that imprint.

Thanks to Andrew Whitehead of the B.B.C. another kind of celebration has been echoed to us. On the Radio 4 programme “Bookshelf” on 5 May, the northern novelist Stan Barstow was asked what he was reading at the moment and he spoke warmly about Gissing. One of the titles, it appeared, was *In the Year of Jubilee*. He explained that, although Gissing was like him a northerner,

he had only come to him recently, and reflected that he had been dissuaded from reading him by the received opinion that he was a little second-rate, and his only good novel was *New Grub Street*. This, he insisted, was not the case, and when a note was sent to him expressing interest in his defence of Gissing he confirmed that as a novelist born within three miles of Wakefield, he had come very late to his work except *New Grub Street*, which he read years ago. Perhaps, he confessed, this was partly due to the unavailability of his work. He is now trying to make up for this belatedness and will continue reading Gissing. *The Unclassed* he thinks very powerful.— P. C.

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Photographs of Gissing's London:
The Paterson Collection at the Lilly Library

Heather R. Munro
Bloomington, Indiana

Sometime before the end of November in 1941 James Paterson commissioned the architectural photography firm of Bedford Lemere & Co. to photograph particular buildings in London—buildings that all had associations with the Victorian author George Gissing. In 1990 the Lilly Library of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana purchased Paterson's photographs. These images of buildings are of interest not only to the scholars of Gissing but also of interest as historical documents—illustrating a city at war and illustrating representative British architecture.

There are thirty-one items in the Paterson collection. Twenty-eight are photographs of London structures. Twenty-four of the photographs are 6 in. x 8 in. and four are 9 ¼ in. x 12 in.; all are matted. In addition to this group of structural photographs is a portrait photograph of George Gissing by J. R. Russell & Sons, 1895, 5 in. x 7 in., the same image that is reproduced by Jacob Korg in his *George Gissing: A Critical Biography* (1963), facing page 24. Two letters are included in the collection—one from James Paterson to Dr. K. C. Hayens, four pages in length, dated the 22nd of November, 1941 from the Crown Hotel, Wishaw, Lanarkshire, and one from Hayens to Paterson, two pages long and undated.

In his four-page letter Paterson discusses nineteen of the photographs in the collection, describing in detail his motivation for each picture and the desired impression he wished to convey with each image. All of the photographs were of buildings Gissing had written about or that Gissing experienced himself. Paterson had publicly announced on at least two occasions, just before and just after World War II, that he was writing a biography of Gissing. This group of photographs apparently played some part in the plans for the book. No evidence exists that Paterson ever produced any book about Gissing. At this time James Paterson's background is unknown, it cannot be determined whether he was an author, an historian or simply someone with an interest in Gissing.

The recipient of Paterson's letter, Dr. K. C. Hayens, is possibly Kenneth Cochrane Hayens

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(1891- ?), the author of *Grimmelshausen* and *Theodor Fontane: A Critical Study*. [Grimmelshausen (1625-76) was author of what is often called the first German biographical novel, *Simplicissimus*,

and Fontane (1819-1898) was known as the first master of the realistic novel in Germany.] From the slant of the letter it appears that Paterson sought Hayens's advice on literary matters.

Paterson's letter to Hayens lists each photograph by its negative number and then discusses its merits as to its ability to illustrate a scene or description by Gissing. Reading Paterson's methodical letter in conjunction with looking at the photographs enables one to see each image as Paterson saw it. Taking information from Paterson's letter, the following lists each of the photographs, their title/location and a few words to give the reader a visual description.

A description of a photograph labeled "General view. Farringdon Rd. Buildings E.C." begins the listing of images in Paterson's letter. This image shows three all-brick buildings, six floors tall, the ground floors of all the buildings are shops and the other floors apartments. Each building has a gateway entrance into a courtyard, with an arch overhead surmounted with a sign—Farringdon Road Buildings and a lamp caps the arch.

"Entrance to courtyard. Farringdon Rd. Buildings. E.C." is a close-up of one of the Farringdon Road Buildings. The entrance to the building is the focus of the picture. An iron gateway arches over a low brick wall and encloses the paved courtyard of the housing complex. Numbers can be seen on a sign on the building to the left, 25 to 52 and on the building to the right, 70 to 97. No trees, no grass, no flowers are anywhere visible—a grim, urban environment. Some of the windows in the buildings have X's taped on them for protection against shattering from bombing.

Of these two scenes Paterson writes to Dr. Hayens, the "...barrack like appearance of the blocks comes out very well..." and "...the presence of the flat numbers on the back buildings will give indication of the numbers of dwellings in the blocks." He off-handedly mentions to Hayens how he was lucky to be able to get these photographs as bombing nearby had recently occurred. These two views evidently served Paterson's purpose because he writes, "These are undoubtedly the buildings described by Gissing, as the date 1873 is on the outside." Dr. Hayens shares Paterson's satisfaction with these two pictures and responds, "Courtyard view well emphasises gloom."

"5. Hanover St. Islington. N." shows a typical block of London apartment dwellings. Three floors tall, close to the street, with iron spiked fences, the block is in the Regency style with ground

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floor windows and doorways distinguished by segmental arches with keyed voussoirs. The ground floor is smooth stucco, the other floors are brick. Iron balconies adorn all the ground floor windows. The doorways are round-headed with fanlights, i.e. decorative windows above the door.

A row of houses joined together in a unified design such as the apartment buildings of 5 Hanover Street are known as terraces. Most of the buildings photographed in the Paterson collection are terraces in the Regency style. Domestic architecture during the early nineteenth century was predominantly Regency and was usually built of brick faced with painted stucco. Stucco was an inexpensive material for achieving the effect of a smooth stone surface. Facades were simple. A fashionable feature of the time was elegant wrought-iron balconies. Terraces were built as cheaply and quickly as possible, mass-produced by the speculative builder for the working class. Sometimes the results could be rows of crowded, drab, structures leading to a standardized environment. Yet, the results also could be dwellings unified by shared cornices and pediments creating a neighbourhood with character and charm. The Paterson photographs of Gissing's London illustrate both types of Regency terrace architecture.

"General view. Wilmington Square. Clerkenwell E.C. 1" presents a street scene with a park in the middle distance. The park is enclosed by an iron fence, in the center is a gazebo with a sloping tiled roof. On the other side of the park can be seen three-floor apartment buildings very similar to

those seen in Hanover Street, Islington. Another closer view of the same scene is labeled: "Entrance to Gardens. Wilmington Square. Clerkenwell. E.C. 1." Barbed-wire appears to be strung atop the iron fence enclosing the park, perhaps some type of citizen defense measure? Noticeable on one of the apartment buildings in the distance is an additional floor—Paterson comments to Hayens,

"...notice the little penthouse storey built on top of the first house? I suppose this would be added after the houses were built and occupied; some money-grubbing individual probably added them in order that he might make a little more out of the letting."

"Wilton Square. N. 1": the scene is a two-level apartment building, all-brick with the glass in its windows smashed. It is a scene of destruction. A door has been blown off into the middle of the block. In his letter to Hayens, Paterson notes that this area was recently "blitzed." Each separate

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entranceway has a small stair with an iron fence, all of the windows are rounded and all the doorways are pedimented, a stringcourse divides the floors, the roof is flat. The apartments face a small park "island" enclosed with an iron fence. In the park is an all-brick building resembling a small church.

"Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. S.W." shows a very lush park on the right with the park entrance at the corner bordered by an iron spiked fence. A block of all-brick apartment buildings, four floors tall, are across the street from the park. Each building has a low brick wall fronting the sidewalk topped by a spiked fence, the buildings also have small front yards with some shrubbery and trees. The entryways are down a few steps behind a gate.

"Walnut Tree Walk. Lambeth. S.E." shows a four-level, all-brick apartment building. Paterson remarks on this view,

"It shows the perpendicular type of London house—narrow frontages and all rooms above one another. This is the sort of street you can see in London and nowhere else."

"Lambeth Walk. S.E.": a busy street scene of a market area—wagons are lined up at the curb selling flowers and fruit. Shop buildings line both sides of the street. People are shopping and walking along the littered and dirty sidewalk.

"Exterior. 22 Colvill [sic] Place. Tottenham Court Rd. W. 1" is a view down a long narrow courtyard between two rows of apartment buildings three floors tall. The buildings have varied styles of exterior facing. Gissing lodged here. Paterson comments on its narrowness, its monotony and its gloomy appearance. Colville Place is a rare survival, this small alley of houses suffered damage in the blitz but still survives in its basic form to the present day.

"Interior. Basement Room. 22 Colvill [sic] Place. Tottenham Court Rd. W. 1" depicts the inside of a very low-ceilinged room crammed full of furniture. A small window opens onto a shaft covered with grating, some sunlight filters down. The ceiling is stained. Gissing lived in this room. In his letter Paterson states, "It is cleaner and better furnished than it was when Gissing lived in it..." and Hayens thinks it "...certainly looks a hole..."

In the Paterson collection are three photographs of Whitecross Street. "Whitecross Street & Shrewsbury Court. E.C. 1"—in the foreground the street with a row of shops behind. A little alleyway is visible that leads to an inner courtyard. "Whitecross St. E.C. 1.—The Offal Shop"—a

row of shops on the ground floor of three-floored buildings. The sign above the offal shop reads: "Noted for HomeMade Brawn [headcheese]...Henson's—Fresh Supplies Always." In Paterson's words this scene shows "...the congestion of shops which is typical of this area." "Whitecross St. E.C. 1.—Stalls & entrance to Banner St."—another view of the same busy market street with brick buildings and shops. Wagons are set up on the sidewalk selling fruits and vegetables. In his letter Paterson writes, "...it is a scene which Gissing saw and this is the actual spot where he saw it."

Paterson's letter explains why he has three photographs of White-cross street:

"The caption 'Walk with me reader into Whitecross Street' is the opening sentence of Gissing's first novel, 'Workers in the Dawn'...there is such a lengthy description of this famous street in the novel that I made rather a point of elaborating on it."

"De Crespigny Park. Camberwell S.E." shows a tree-lined street. Barely visible behind the trees are apartment buildings faced with a low brick wall and a low iron fence. Another image labeled "De Crespigny Park. Camberwell S.E." shows the same scene except that the trees are bare and the buildings are now visible. The apartment buildings of De Crespigny Park are of finer quality than most of the other buildings photographed, with Doric columns at the entranceways all along the block. The second De Crespigny photograph is not actually described in Paterson's letter; he remarks about the first view, "I do feel that I should like to have this taken again when the leaves are off the trees."—and as a bare tree version exists, he evidently got a second version.

"Grove Lane. Camberwell S.E.," a view down a tree-lined street. On the right corner of the street is a sign, Love Walk S.E. 5. On one side of the street is a park and on the other apartment buildings. The other street corner is shown in a photograph entitled "Grove Lane. Camberwell. S.E." In both photographs all the ground floor windows of the brick apartment buildings are rounded, and some have second-floor iron balconies. The buildings exhibit typical Regency style elements such as round-headed doorways and iron fences fronting the sidewalk.

"Little St. Andrew St. Holborn. W.C. 2" shows a corner looking down a city street. Shops and cafés are on the ground level of three- and four-floor brick buildings. A sign on the corner reads: Monmouth Street Formerly Lt. St. Andrew St. and a large sign above it, St. Martins Kennels—

Aviaries & Pet Stores. Paterson explains that this depicts

"...the one remaining dog shop and just a glimpse of the Seven Dials at the top of the street...at the time Gissing wrote this description, the street was lined with animal shops, so no wonder he describes the Dials as a reeking centre."

Nine photographs are in the collection that Paterson does not mention in his letter to Hayens. It must be assumed that these pictures were in Paterson's possession but that for some reason he did not wish to include them in his letter to Hayens. They are an assortment of well-known buildings and scenes in and around London. The nine unmentioned images consist of a photograph of the exterior of the Crystal Palace, the British Museum, the interior of the British Museum Library's vast domed reading room, a workroom in the British Museum Library, a view of a bridge over the Thames and the Royal Victoria Hall. Similar to photographs described in Paterson's letter are "5.

now 7. Oakley Terrace, Chelsea” and “17 Oakley Terrace, Chelsea” showing street scenes of blocks of apartment buildings three floors tall. Also similar is “Interior. Colville Place W. 1,” which pictures a corner of a small plastered room with stained walls, a sloping ceiling and a tiny fireplace. Paterson attempted to have photographed scenes of London as written about or experienced by Gissing. Paterson’s idea was noteworthy to document literature with photographic images. In his response Dr. Hayens writes,

“Speaking generally, I think you should try to decide what is truly illustrative, not necessarily keeping all the plates, even though the themes were chosen with the best intentions. May I venture to assume you did not get just what you hoped to get?...in part you were attempting to grasp the unattainable...”

Of course it was impossible for Paterson to photograph exactly the London of Gissing, as many years had passed and cities change, especially London after the blitz. However, scholars of Gissing are fortunate that Paterson made the attempt to photographically document literature, for these images show scenes of surviving buildings of Gissing’s London, London during World War II and the architecture of a city from a particular time period. Scholars are fortunate too that these photographs are now forever preserved for study at the Lilly Library.

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News from the Gissing Centre

Last summer, following the opening of the Gissing Centre in Wakefield in May 1990, well over a hundred people visited the Centre, which was open on Saturday afternoons throughout the summer. This year the Gissing Trust has changed the opening time to Sunday afternoons, and visitors have a treat in store because there is now some very interesting material on display.

This is the result of a visit to Wakefield in March by Jane and Xavier Pétremand, Gissing’s grand-daughter and great-grandson, who brought some exciting items, which they have donated to the Trust. During their stay in Wakefield they were shown various sites connected with the Gissing family and with Gissing’s works by members of the Trust, and everyone had a very enjoyable time. The material that has been given to the Centre is associated with members of the novelist’s family. We have photocopies of several programmes of dramatic performances from Gissing’s schooldays, featuring not only George but also Algernon and William, and photocopies of material relating to Thomas Waller Gissing, as well as of material about books by other members of the family: Ellen Gissing’s *Angels and Men* and Alfred Gissing’s *William Holman Hunt*—both fairly rare books, which the Trust is keen to acquire.

Perhaps most exciting is the original material which we now have on display. Together with T. W. Gissing’s visiting card, there is one of his funeral cards, a reminder of his premature death in 1870. Part of the display commemorates the involvement of Gissing’s two sons in the First World War. In addition to photographs of both Walter and Alfred in uniform, there is Walter’s cap badge and the plaque sent to the Gissings after his death in France in 1916. Visitors can also see the three medals won by Alfred, including a 1914-15 Star and an Allied Victory medal. None of this material has been on display before.

Besides the items donated to the Trust by Jane and Xavier Pétremand, we have been fortunate enough to borrow some original material from Chris Kohler, which forms part of the display. This is also connected with Gissing’s relatives. There is a copy of *Wayside and Woodland Blossoms* by

Edward Step, which Gissing inscribed “To my boy Walter” in 1895, together with two letters from Gissing to his son dated September 1897. A letter from Gissing to his sister Ellen, dating from October 1885, is accompanied by two books, one that he gave her: *Selections from Landor*, and a first edition of Gissing’s own *Isabel Clarendon* which he presented to his mother and sisters in 1886.

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The Trust hopes to have a different display of original material each year, to make the Centre more interesting to visitors. Any items which readers can donate will be gratefully received. Finally, a reminder—that the normal opening times are 2-4.30 p.m. on Sundays until the end of September, but that the Centre can be opened at other times by arrangement with the Secretary of the Trust. We look forward to welcoming you to the Gissing Centre.— Ros Stinton.

Book Review

Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young and Pierre Coustillas (eds.), *The Collected Letters of George Gissing. Volume One 1863-1880*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1990. lxiv + 334 pp.

This splendid first instalment of Gissing’s *Collected Letters* is part of a project to publish his correspondence in eight or nine volumes over as many years. The completed project should greatly simplify life for students of Gissing’s biography by bringing together what is currently scattered over dozens of published and unpublished sources. It will subsume not only major editions, such as the letters to members of Gissing’s family, to Bertz, Wells and Gabrielle Fleury, but also several smaller collections, to Hick, Clodd, Hudson, Hardy and others. In addition it will incorporate unpublished correspondence, including extensive runs of letters to Morley Roberts, Clara Collet and the agents Colles and Pinker. One can estimate the scale of the enterprise from the fact that the *Family Letters* of 1927 included just over 350 items while the Collected edition plans to include 1050 family letters alone. As the editors recognise, it is a massive undertaking, but eventually it should give us an unrivalled close-up of most of Gissing’s life.

A sad life, of course, with tragic beginnings—and yet, as these early letters indicate, Gissing was not always depressed or dejected. We first encounter him as a cheerful, precocious schoolboy penning letters from holiday spots to his father. Then after his father’s death, we find him at Lindow Grove school, “sweating violently” for examinations, and trying out his armoury of cultural allusions in excited letters to a friend. A scholarship to Owens College, Manchester follows and, not long afterwards, the notorious catastrophe: involvement with Nell Harrison, theft, expulsion,

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imprisonment, and emigration to America. Overnight, Gissing’s hopes have disappeared: so too has most of the correspondence. And yet his few surviving letters from America show a certain buoyancy, a youthful energy, an openness to new experience. When Gissing returns to live in London with Nell, beginning his long struggle to succeed as a writer, the ambition and resilience revealed in the letters can almost at times conceal the fact that his life has been permanently damaged.

What damaged it were guilt and secrecy, and the anxiety these engendered. Reticence is a constant theme in this volume, a cautiousness extending to family and friends. In the extant letters no one mentions Gissing's imprisonment, though its shadow often flickers between the lines. For quite a time no one mentions Nell. It is not until nearly a year after his return that Gissing first uses the pronoun "our," in a letter to his brother Algernon. Another year, and his sisters have still not heard of Nell, for his mother refuses to acknowledge her existence. Even when both his brothers have met her, and Will has extended hospitality to her, Gissing remains tight-lipped about his home-life, rarely risking more than a medical report ("Nell thanks you very much for kind letter. Her rheumatism renders her unable to hold a pen"). Similarly guarded, his relatives close ranks when locals occasionally ask after Gissing. "I take it that many more people," writes Will, "have suffered by saying too much than too little."

This attitude of secrecy and shame is deducible not only from the letters we have but also, of course, from those we do not have—from eloquent gaps in the record. When Algernon and Ellen Gissing produced their edition of the family letters, they distorted some facts, curtailed many letters, and expunged certain features of their brother's life. For this they have often been condemned, but as these early letters reveal they were acting consistently on beliefs and evasions reaching back into family mythology. For example, without ever mentioning Nell, they stated that Gissing "was now married" on returning to England in 1877. In fact Gissing married in 1879. However, as letters in this volume show, Gissing misled his family on this point. They accepted his tidied-up version of the truth—and later took no care to correct it.

Professors Mattheisen and Young declare that one aim of the Collected edition is to render the *Family Letters* "obsolete." But this is easier said than done, for the family did their work of censorship well, and so did Gissing's friends. Reviewing the 1927 volume, Edmund Gosse complained that "the few letters dated from Manchester and the United States do not hint at the

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incidents of those doleful years." This is also true, unfortunately, of the present volume. From mid-1874 to the beginning of 1878—the period encompassing the catastrophe—only five of Gissing's letters survive. The family removed what might lead to scandal, thus creating a pattern of defensive destruction that continued throughout Gissing's life. Subsequent volumes of the *Collected Letters* will be similarly weakened by the cullings carried out not only by Gissing himself and his family but by Eduard Bertz, Clara Collet and Gabrielle Fleury.

The editors, it must be said, have done what they can to repair the gaps in the record. They reprint four letters from Gissing's fellow student Black which reveal Nell's impact on Gissing's emotions as well as on Black's own state of health ("on examination I found the prepuce swollen, & on turning it down, I found the whole of the inside salmon-coloured..."). Black's letters are already quite well known, but less familiar will be the 84 letters to Gissing from his younger brother William, who died of consumption aged twenty. Will's story, a muted tragedy of social frustration, unfolds like one of Gissing's fictions. Gentle, affectionate, idealistic, with a slightly outmoded sense of honour, he struggled first as a bank clerk and then as a private music teacher with the jobberies and snobberies of Victorian England. Like all the Gissing children he found that his talents, unassisted by any vocational training, made limited headway in a commercial society. His acute diagnoses of his own predicament—intellectually aspiring but socially inferior—might come straight from *Born in Exile*.

Apart from Will's letters, what else in this volume will seem fresh to readers who have relied until now on the published correspondence? Though certain key items have sunk without trace, there are many letters, and parts of letters, suppressed but not destroyed by Gissing's family, that

alter our perspective on his early life. For example, his increasingly troubled dealings with his working class relatives in London: on this saga the excellent annotation helps, as does the enlightening “Genealogical Survey” supplied in the prefatory material. Gissing’s relatives introduced him to left-wing meetings, and another feature of his early life highlighted by the present collection is the depth and fervour of his youthful commitment to radical thought and rationalist polemics. On his first published novel, *Workers in the Dawn*, most of the commentary contained in his letters is already familiar to Gissing scholars, but a long, detailed letter to Frederic Harrison, describing the genesis of the novel, has not formerly been published in full.

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This opening volume of the *Collected Letters* has been edited with a scrupulous concern for detail and a very high degree of scholarly precision. It contains a General Introduction and an Introduction to Volume One written by Professors Mattheisen and Young, who also supply sections on the Gissing Collections (their main sources in this volume are Berg, Pforzheimer and Yale), the principles of editorial procedure, and the history of the project. Professor Coustillas, as well as contributing to the footnotes, has supplied a genealogical essay on the Gissings and the Bedfords. There is also a six-page chronology of Gissing’s life which, though occasionally too detailed (“Leaves Berlin, arrives at Henry Hick’s at 11.00 p.m.”), is extremely convenient. Altogether, it is hard to find fault with this edition, though given the general fullness of annotation it does seem odd to adopt a policy of never translating foreign phrases. Isn’t it time that we dropped the pretence that modern students of English literature are all familiar with Latin and Greek? This however is merely a quibble. All readers of Gissing have reason to be grateful to Professors Mattheisen, Young and Coustillas, as well as to the Ohio University Press. Future volumes will be awaited eagerly.—
David Grylls, Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford.

Notes and News

The preparation and publication of the *Collected Letters* of George Gissing goes on at a steady pace. Volume II (1881-1885) begins at the time when Gissing had become convinced that *Workers in the Dawn* was a commercial failure and ends with the prospect of *Demos* being published within a few months. The illustrations will be of even greater interest than those of Volume I. New to all readers will be a portrait of Algernon Gissing in June 1884 kindly supplied by Xavier Pétremand, George’s great-grandson. It harmonizes fairly well with the notion one derives of him from George’s letters in the days of *The Unclassed*. Volume III (1886-1888) will, like its predecessors, contain a number of unpublished letters, mainly to members of the Gissing family. Most of the illustrations will be startlingly new. A portrait of Nell will be the main pictorial attraction; for the first time also a photograph of Algernon’s wife, Catherine Baseley, “Katie,” a niece of Samuel and Lucy Bruce, will be published. No decision has been made yet about all the illustrations, some of

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which will be of a topographical nature, but the editors will be in a position to reproduce, thanks to Gissing’s great-grandson, portraits of Ellen Gissing, Miss Milner, Dora Carter, Tom and Mary Bedford and Mrs. Shailer either in Volume III, proofs of which have already been read, or in

Volume IV, an introduction to which is being written. This Volume IV will cover another three years, ending in December 1891, some ten months after Gissing's second marriage and a few weeks after Walter's birth.

Evidence of continuing interest in the works is being offered every month. Professor Fumio Hôjoh has sent two recent impressions of collections of English short stories for Japanese students of English which contain a Gissing text each. In *Classic British Short Stories* (Seibido, 1990), "The Salt of the Earth" is preceded by "The Half-Brothers" (Elizabeth Gaskell), "The Poor Relation's Story" (Dickens), "The Son's Veto" (Hardy) and followed by "Thrown Away," an early Kipling tale. In *Easy Short Stories English and American* (Shinozaki Shorin, 1988) "The Scrupulous Father" is accompanied by short tales by Lafcadio Hearn, that favourite writer of the Japanese, O. Henry and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Dr. Bouwe Postmus, of the University of Amsterdam, who is editing Gissing's American notebook and his Collected Poems, gave lectures in Spain recently and discovered on that occasion the existence of an article in Spanish on *The Odd Women* (see "Recent Publications"). Its author, Maria Socorro Suarez Lafuente, will soon be publishing another article on Gissing, "El inferno social de George Gissing" in *Homenaje a Enrique Garcia Diez*, University of Valencia.

News from Italy are reported in part among "Recent Publications." Dr. Francesco Badolato gave three lectures at the University of Pescara on 8 and 9 April, where he took part in a seminar organized by Professor Francesco Marroni, who recently translated *Henry Ryecroft*. The three lectures were devoted to "Il senso del passato in Gissing," "George Gissing e la democrazia" and "Umanesimo di Manzoni, Gissing e Pater." The seminar was concluded with a discussion of Gissing's short stories by Dr. Emanuela Ettore.

A number of allusions to Gissing have appeared in the English and American press in recent months. John Fletcher has sent press cuttings from the *Sunday Times* of 20 January ("On the rank

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and vile," by D. J. Taylor) and 31 March ("Sex changes," by Lisa Appignanesi) which comment on passages about Gissing in Paul Fussell's *Kipling in Verse and Prose and other essays* (Bellew, £9.95) and Elaine Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy* (Bloomsbury, £5.99). Saul Cohen has sent from Santa Fe two reviews of Wendy Lesser's recent book, *His Other Half: Men Looking at Women Through Art* (Harvard, \$24.95). Raymond Sokolov commented on the book in the *Wall Street Journal* ("Beyond Prudery: The New Postfeminists," 27 March) and Anne Hollander in the *New York Times Book Review* ("Where's the Rest of Them?" 7 April). Mrs. Lesser's book has not yet been received.

Henry Sotheran Ltd held an exhibition of 500 books by women writers of the 1890s from 23 May to 7 June. A catalogue is available in two editions, paperback (£14.95) and hardback (£50). Postage is £2 for the U.K., £3 for overseas surface mail. The catalogue has been compiled by Dr. G. Krishnamurti, and Margaret Drabble has contributed an introduction; the editors have signed the hardback copies, a limited edition of 100. Cheques must be made payable to Henry Sotheran Ltd, 2/5 Sackville Street, Piccadilly, London W1X 2DP.

Dr. Marysa Demoor, of the University of Ghent, has published another volume which lies on

the border line of Gissing studies, *Dear Stevenson: Letters from Andrew Lang to Robert Louis Stevenson with five letters from Stevenson to Lang* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1990). It is rather scrappy correspondence, on Lang's side at all events, and Lang's position in the literary arena is once more clearly defined when he praises *Catriona*, the sequel to *Kidnapped*, at the expense of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. A number of literary people whom Gissing wisely regarded with a good deal of intellectual suspicion, appear in these pages—Grant Allen, Barrie, Besant, William Black, Rider Haggard, Henley, Kipling and James Payn. On coming across each of these names, with the possible exception of Kipling, one might well utter the word which Edward Ponderevo, in *Tono-Bungay*, cries out on seeing the tomb of a knight on his newly bought property of Crest Hill: "Ichabod!" The romancers of the turn of the century have fared rather badly, but their correspondence makes interesting reading, especially when it is well-edited, as is the case here, because it shows why they have been relegated to the nursery.

To the names of friends and correspondents who are thanked above and under "Recent Publications" should be added those of Chris Kohler, Jacob Korg, John Spiers, Ros Stinton, Gillian

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Tindall, Al and Martha Vogeler and Andrew Whitehead.

Recent Publications

Volume

Paul Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young and Pierre Coustillas, eds., *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Two: 1881-1885*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1991. Off-white paper-covered boards with a grey tape binding and, on the spine, gilt titling on dark green panel. Dark green dust-jacket with pattern in light green. xxxii + 397 pages. \$55.00.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Maria Socorro Suarez Lafuente, "The Odd Women: La rebelion de la mujer ante la moral victoriana, segun Gissing," *Estudios humanisticos Filologia* (Universidad de Léon), no. 10, 1988, pp. 195-204. A substantial article on a subject which has been widely discussed in the last twenty years, apparently the first that has appeared in a Spanish journal.

Francesco Marroni, "Recensioni," *Merope*, First year, no. 2, June 1990, pp. 165-68. A long, appreciative review of *George Gissing. Da Venezia allo Stretto di Messina*, translated by Francesco Badolato and published by Herder in 1989. The publisher of *Merope*, who has generously sent us copies of the first three numbers, is Marino Solfanelli, Via G. Armellini n. 3, 66100 Chieti, Italy.

Nelson Cenci, "Lecture," *Interferenze* (Brescia), Second year, no. 7-8, May-August 1990, p. 38. Another review of *Da Venezia allo Stretto di Messina*.

Mauro Francesco Minervino (translator), "Virginia Woolf, L'anima et le forme: I romanzi di George Gissing," *Plural* (semestrale di letteratura internazionale). Fourth year, no. 8, July-December 1990, pp. 129-39. Dr. Minervino has translated Virginia Woolf's long review

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article originally published in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 11 January 1912. *Plural* is a finely produced journal published by Plural Edizioni, of Naples. The editor is Alfredo Gigliotti, Via Pescara 2, 81030 Castel Volturno (Ce).

Frank Kermode, *The Uses of Error*, London: Collins, 1990. Contains a review article, entitled "Squalor: On George Gissing," pp. 224-35, which first appeared in the *London Review of Books*, 3 February 1983, pp. 9-11. The bibliography printed on p. 235 is as thoroughly unreliable as a bad bibliography can be.

Jane Miller, *Seductions: Studies in Reading and Culture*, London: Virago Press, 1990. This book contains a long chapter on Clara Collet and her family (pp. 70-107), part of which is devoted to her relationship with the Gissings, that is George, Edith and their children, Walter and Alfred.

Margaret D. Stetz and Mark Samuels Lasner, *England in the 1890s: Literary Publishing at the Bodley Head*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990. Like the same authors' volume, *England in the 1880s*, this is an attractively produced exhibition catalogue written by specialists. Margaret Stetz is the founding editor of *Turn-of-the-Century Women* and Mark Samuels Lasner is a well-known book collector and bibliographer. The exhibition included 111 items, sixteen of which can be seen in the illustrations. Item 103 was William Rothenstein's lithograph portrait of Gissing in 1897, which first appeared in his *English Portraits* (1898). Many authors whom Gissing met or read are discussed between the regulation yellow covers—they range from Grant Allen to Israel Zangwill—so that this 94-page volume, of which 600 copies have been printed, will soon earn the status of a reference book, like its predecessor.

Takeichi Kiwara, "Survey of World Literature," *Shûkan Shincho*, 7 February 1991, pp. 94-98. Under this heading Mr. Kiwara has reprinted extracts from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* in the translation by Masao Hirai. This article belongs to a series which has been running for some time in the popular illustrated weekly. Thanks are due to Professor Yukio Otsuka, the author of a book on *Henry Ryecroft*, for sending us a copy.

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Anon., "Commentary," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 45, no. 4, March 1991, p. 538. An account of the opening of the Gissing Centre in Wakefield on 5 May 1990. The details were supplied by Jacob Korg.

Pierre Coustillas, "Homage to Gissing," *London Review of Books*, 4 April 1991, p. 4. A letter to the editor, Karl Miller, about Jane Miller's review in the number for 7 March 1991, p. 16.

C. A. R. Hills, "Poverty and the Literary Toiler," *Daily Telegraph*, 6 April 1991, Section W, p. 16.

An article on the centenary of the publication of *New Grub Street*.

Edmund White, "When the Genders got confused," *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 April 1991, p. 5. Review of Elaine Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy* with a short passage on *The Odd Women*.

Jonathan Sale, "Grub Street Revisited," *Guardian* (London), 24 April 1991, p. 36. Another article on the centenary of *New Grub Street*.

G[uy]-P[ierre] E[loire], "Van der Meersch au soleil levant," *Nord-Eclair* (Roubaix), 26 April 1991, p. FRJ. An article on Professor Otsuka's translation of *La Maison dans la dune*, the novel by the French novelist Maxence van der Meersch, with a short passage on Mr. Otsuka's interest in Gissing. A photograph of the translator accompanies the article, which also appeared in at least two other dailies in the north of France and in Belgium.

Anon., "Gissing Centre Opens," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 34, no. 1, 1991, p. 5. A brief account of the ceremony in Wakefield on 5 May 1990.

D. J. Taylor, "Men of letters and let-downs," *Independent* (London), 15 June 1991, p. 28.

Gillian Tindall, *Countries of the Mind: The Meaning of Place to Writers*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1991. Gissing is discussed in various places.

Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the fin de siècle*, London: Bloomsbury, 1991. Contains passages on Gissing.

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Gissing Observed

"George Gissing and H.G. Wells are coupled in my mind, although I met the first but rarely, and with the second took week-ends—at Woking, at Worcester Park, at Sandgate—very often. They were friends; each had the trick of putting himself into a novel. Gissing's books could not, I imagine, have had a wide circulation, but the circulation was fit, and no man who wrote so gloomily about gloomy people could expect to have a very large number of readers. It is in *The Whirlpool* that a young couple having, after a sufficient number of tribulations, contrived to get married, go to live for two agreeable years in Wales; these years Gissing deals with in hurried pages, and then brings the pair back to London, and to all the discomforts of home. He told me that he wrote his one amusing novel, *The Town Traveller*, during a time of great mental worry. 'It was the only thing I could do,' he urged excusingly. There was fine work and enormous patience in *Demos* and *The Unclassed* and the rest; published now they would receive an attention they did not encounter in their day. George Gissing was a tall, good-looking man, moustached, with a bushy head of hair; he had a deep voice that seemed ill-suited for ordinary remarks.

'Do you know,' he would say at table (and you might think from his tones he was about to submit a profound and well-thought-out argument), 'do you know I am half inclined to ask for a second helping of that admirable roast mutton!'

He had not—there was no secret about it—the happiness in domestic life which fortunately comes to most of us, and when he did seem to be nearing peacefulness, the end arrived. There was

something tragic and wholly interesting about his marital experiments. To every one else they looked hopeless, and they were hopeless. He should have imposed on some trusty and reliable friend the task of choosing a partner for him; even then the results might not have been perfect. You have heard of the man who obtained a wife through the agency of Whiteley. A year later he was heard to express regret that he had not gone to Harrod's."

W. Pett Ridge

A Story Teller: Forty Years in London

London: Hodder and Stoughton, [1923], pp. 23-24.

