

THE GISSING JOURNAL

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

Volume XXVIII, Number 4

October, 1992

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Gissing and Shan F. Bullock
The First Reference in the Chicago Press
to Gissing’s Chicago Fiction and Adventures

Robert L. Selig
Purdue University Calumet

Ever since Pierre Coustillas and I discovered two unknown Gissing stories from Chicago in 1980,¹ I have wondered who first, and when, revealed to Chicago newspaper readers that Gissing had lived in that city and published his earliest fiction there as a struggling journeyman writer. In the final segment of *Brownie*’s three part introduction (1931), Thomas Olive Mabbott speaks of “rumor or tradition among newspaper men in Chicago that Gissing had [...] written for the *Journal*” as well as for the *Tribune*, and Mabbott speculates that such a “tradition” might have sprung from “an actual memory of fact, filtered down through forty odd years.”²

The once Chicago journalist who clearly would have remembered his own all-important role in helping Gissing to break into print – the *Tribune*’s managing editor, Samuel Medill

(1841-1883) – died prematurely when Gissing’s only novel already out, the vanity publication, *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), remained totally ignored by American reviewers and when Gissing himself remained unknown in America. In short, Medill could not have realized that he had aided the career of a major English novelist and so could not have proclaimed this secret to the public even if his modesty had let him.³ The second most likely source for a Chicago “tradition” about Gissing – the *Daily News*’s editor in chief, Melville E. Stone (1848-1929) – never mentioned Gissing in print or private letters.⁴ Next, Stone’s son, Herbert S., offers a third hypothetical source for a Chicago Gissing tradition. Herbert Stone received a literary education at Harvard College and, for three months of 1894, published in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a

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biweekly literary review, the *Chap-Book*. In August 1894 young Stone transplanted it to Chicago, where he edited it and published it for one hundred consecutive issues until low circulation forced him to shut it down.⁵ In his personal literary column, Stone does mention Gissing three separate times – most notably in calling H. G. Wells “a George Gissing with humour” – but Stone says nothing about Gissing’s Chicago days, presumably because Stone’s father had never told his son about them.⁶ In sum, no Chicago journalist who knew Gissing there appears to have passed on this knowledge in either print or private letters.

The first revelation in the Chicago press about Gissing’s struggle and achievement in that city repeats and reflects the earliest English revelation. In our 1980 *TLS* article, Professor Coustillas and I mentioned two relatively early published references from England to Gissing’s American months – Edith Lister, “Some Recollections of George Gissing,” *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, 300 (February 1906), pp. 11-18; Morley Roberts, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland: A Record Dictated by J. H.* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1912), pp. 33-37 – but we passed over an earlier English account: H. G. Wells, “George Gissing: An Impression,” *Monthly Review*, 16 (August 1904), pp. 160-72; reprinted as Appendix D in *George Gissing and H. G. Wells: Their Friendship and Correspondence*, edited with introduction by Royal A. Gettmann (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1961), pp. 260-77.⁷ Although Wells’s account remains vague and imprecise, he derived it, like Lister and Roberts, from conversations with Gissing himself:

He crossed to America, and was for a short time a classical tutor in Boston. He threw up his position on some forgotten ground, and went in the vaguest spirit to Chicago ... In Chicago he came near to absolute starvation. And there it was that, with some journalistic fiction, quite lost to the world, his career of print began; though, of course, he had written much both of verse and prose before that time. He was nearly twenty.⁸

This London piece by Wells rather than any Midwestern reminiscences led to the first published mention in a Chicago newspaper of Gissing’s adventures there.

Wells’s account ricocheted across the Atlantic within a month and into the pages of the *Chicago Evening Post* through the intervention of its special London literary correspondent, Shan F. Bullock – in his own right, an important Anglo-Irish author of short stories and novels. Under the headline “George Gissing in Chicago,” Bullock summarized Gissing’s adventures there:

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True he [Wells in his article] gives us some interesting and fresh revelations; such as that Gissing was once a classical tutor in Boston; that he came near

to absolute starvation in Chicago; that it was in Chicago he began his career as a novelist and there published his first attempt at fiction...⁹

A Gissing Event

Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester

World Première
19 November-12 December 1992

THE ODD WOMEN

Adapted by Michael Meyer
Directed by Braham Murray
Designed by Johanna Bryant

This dramatization by the biographer of Ibsen and Strindberg will be one of the five plays performed by the Royal Exchange Theatre Company during the autumn and winter season 92-93. Preceded by *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Blues for Mister Charlie* (James Baldwin), it will be followed by a dramatization of Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and Vanbrugh's *The Relapse or Virtue in Danger*.

As a result of Wells's own vagueness, Bullock could not know of or name the *Chicago Tribune* as the place where Gissing's first story appeared – a silence that would delay its recovery for two whole decades. Then, too, Bullock added his own imprecision in speaking of Gissing's "first attempt at fiction" rather than his first published short story, and Bullock also ignored the implications of Wells's "some journalistic fiction" – more than one Gissing story buried in forgotten issues of old Chicago newspapers. Nevertheless, Bullock succeeded in "scooping" the first American reprint of Wells's revelation by more than a month. Furthermore, this alert special correspondent to the *Chicago Evening Post* got his information into print

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twenty years before its announcement in the Chicago-published *Sins of the Fathers*, and he published his piece in the city most directly concerned.

In addition to his "scoop" from Wells, Bullock has the distinction of writing as sympathetically about Gissing's career as any other critic of the time appearing in America. Ten days after Gissing's untimely death, Bullock wrote the following in the *Post*:

Poor Gissing! He is a great loss. He leaves a wide gap in the broken ranks of our novelists. He has gone too soon – gone just as he had begun ... to hear his name go resounding about the world. [Even] behind [*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*]..., one can always see the Gissing who wrote *The Unclassed* and lived the tragedy of *New Grub Street*...

...His real tragedies were not the everyday tragedies of poverty and neglect, of striving and despairing; they were tragedies of the soul and mind

and conscience. His life was storm-tossed, full of care and care. He sipped sorrow to the dregs, and his books are his witnesses.

But they are fine witnesses... A good dozen of them are in the first rank of fiction. Always the scholar, a close student of French literature and a disciple of Balzac, Gissing perhaps more than any other modern English writer attained to the standard of perfection in form and style that marks the French novelists. Even at his grayest it is always a delight to read him.¹⁰

Bullock's heartfelt empathy with Gissing arouses one's curiosity about this almost-but-not-quite-forgotten special London correspondent for the *Chicago Evening Post*.

Shan F. Bullock (1865-1935, christened John William Bullock) was an Anglo-Irish Protestant, the grandson of one Thomas Bullock, who had settled on the shores of Upper Lough Erne, in County Fermanagh, at the southwest corner of what would later become Northern Ireland. Shan Bullock's father, also named Thomas Bullock, served first as house steward at Crom Castle of the Earls of Erne but then became a large-scale yet struggling farmer and a justice of the peace. Shan Bullock himself received his education at Farra School, County Westmeath – later part of the Republic of Ireland. After failing the Entrance Examination to Trinity College, Dublin, he attempted farming for a year but then scored well enough on a British Civil Service examination to win an appointment as clerk at Somerset House, London, and later at the London Office of the Public Trustee. He served as a member of the secretariat at the Irish Convention in Dublin, 1917-1918, and later received the Order of the British Empire. Most importantly, his English Civil Service career made him an exile from Ireland from 1884

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until his death fifty-one years later, and his nostalgia for Fermanagh and Lough Erne impelled him into fiction. His nom de plume first name, the Gaelic *Shan*, expressed solidarity with Ireland in spite of his Protestant-English parentage and ancestry. Beginning with *The Awkward Squads and Other Stories* (1893) and running through *The Red Leaguers* (1903), Bullock's first eight books of fiction came out during Gissing's own lifetime, so that they were, indeed, literary contemporaries.¹¹

Bullock's short stories and novels resemble Gissing's in the tendency to emphasize defeat and frustration. Except for the Irish-dialect speeches and the Irish background, one of Bullock's finest short stories, "The Emigrant," could well have come out of Gissing's own *Human Odds and Ends* (1898): a young Irishwoman prepares to board a train in order to catch a boat for the United States, but a passing funeral procession makes her foresee her own parents' eventual death without her. Then her ne'er-do-well suitor arrives and persuades her to stay in order to marry him. Yet although she lets her port-bound train leave without her, her suitor becomes hopelessly drunk, and she mournfully decides after all to go on to the United States.¹² Of course, differences from Gissing exist in Bullock's three short story collections and his twelve novels: unlike Gissing, Bullock excels in the shorter form rather than the novel, and he fills much of his fiction with a pantheistic faith in contrast to Gissing's disbelief in any religion. Still, perhaps the major link between Gissing and Shan F. Bullock lies in Bullock's sad conviction as a lesser Gissing that both of them deserved wider literary fame than the world had granted them during most of their lifetimes of hard creative labor.¹³ Gissing's reward came at the end and after his death, but Bullock's came posthumously in only a small degree – recognition of his importance in Vivian Mercer's and David H. Greene's *1000 Years of Irish Prose*, a modest wreath from posterity for a writer who deserved more.

¹Pierre Coustillas and Robert L. Selig, "Unknown Gissing Stories from Chicago," *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 December 1980, pp. 1417-18. See also George Gissing, *Lost Stories*

from America: Five Signed Stories Never Before Reprinted, a Sixth Signed Story, and Seven Recent Attributions, edited with introduction and commentary by Robert L. Selig (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

²Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Introductions: Part Three, *Brownie*, by George Gissing, Now First Reprinted from the *Chicago Tribune* Together with Six Other Stories Attributed to Him, with introductions by George Everett Hastings, Vincent Starrett, Thomas Ollive Mabbott (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), pp. 16-17.

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³Robert L. Selig, "Gissing's Benefactor at the *Chicago Tribune*: An Identification from a Passage in *New Grub Street*," *Etudes Anglaises*, XXXVIII, 4 (1985), pp. 434-41.

⁴On six likely attributions to Gissing in Stone's *Chicago Daily News*, see *Lost Stories from America*, pp. 11-13, 97-144. Melville E. Stone's correspondence is in Special Collections at the Newberry Library of Chicago.

⁵Herbert E. Fleming, *Magazines of a Market-Metropolis: Being a History of the Literary Periodicals and Literary Interests of Chicago*, PhD Dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1906, pp. 797-805 (a reprint of papers entitled "The Literary Interests of Chicago," *American Journal of Sociology*, 11 and 12 [1906]).

⁶"Mr. H. G. Wells," the *Chap-Book*, V, 8 (1 April 1896), p. 374. The other Gissing references are "Notes," the *Chap-Book*, III, 6 (1 August 1895), p. 227, and "Notes," the *Chap-Book*, VIII, 2 (1 December 1897), p. 66.

⁷"Unknown Gissing Stories from Chicago," p. 1417.

⁸Appendix D, *George Gissing and H. G. Wells*, p. 264.

⁹Shan F. Bullock, "George Gissing in Chicago. H. G. Wells Relates How British Novelist Narrowly Escaped Starvation in Chicago," *Chicago Evening Post*, 27 August 1904, p. 4.

¹⁰Shan F. Bullock, "Shan F. Bullock Estimates Art of Late George Gissing...," *Chicago Evening Post*, 16 January 1904, p. 5.

¹¹Robert Greacen, "Shan F. Bullock: Laureate of Lough Erne," *Eire-Ireland: A Journal of Irish Studies*, XIV, 4 (Winter 1979), pp. 109-24; Vivian Mercer and David H. Greene, eds., *1000 Years of Irish Prose: The Literary Revival* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1962), p. 596; "Bullock, Shan F.," *Who Was Who 1929-1940* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1941), p. 188. None of the printed biographies of Bullock mention his many years as special correspondent for the *Chicago Evening Post*.

¹²Shan F. Bullock, "The Emigrant," in *1000 Years of Irish Prose: The Literary Revival*, pp. 157-62 (reprinted from Shan F. Bullock, *Ring o' Rushes* [London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1896]).

¹³See Greacen, pp. 109, 111-12.

The Novelist's Dilemma in Gissing and James

Jacob Korg
University of Washington

In *Gissing in Context*, Adrian Poole compares the ways in which Gissing and Henry James portrayed the situation of the artist who is torn between the demands of his art and the pressures of social and commercial success. As Poole accurately says, the James stories usually

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show artists and writers enjoying a meretricious prosperity, while Gissing emphasizes the exile and poverty suffered by the devoted writer.¹ However, Poole fails to mention “The Next Time,” a James story minor in importance that is perhaps more closely related to *New Grub Street* and its theme of the commercialization of literature than any of James’ other works. It makes a comedy (with, however, a sad ending) of the case of a writer whose work does not sell because it is on too high a level for the reading public.

James developed this story from an early episode in his own career. When he was working as Paris correspondent for the *New York Tribune*, he was asked by the editor to make his material more “personal,” which James took to mean “baser and paltrier.” After he had replied that he had done his best to do his worst, he was fired. Twenty years later he thought of the situation as a possible nucleus for a story about a novelist who “squanders his life in trying for a vulgar success which his talent is too fine to achieve,” and in a few pages of his *Notebooks* we can follow his thoughts as he works the idea into the story that would become “The Next Time.”² Its setting is the same as that of *New Grub Street*: the world of publishers, novelists, reviewers, and the periodicals associated with them. And while James began with his own experience, his character, as he develops it, seems at times to be modelled on Edwin Reardon, and at other times on Gissing himself.

The two novelists were, of course, acquainted with each other. Gissing had read some of James’ work, and James had read at least three of Gissing’s novels before writing the appreciative comment which appeared in *Harper’s Weekly* in July 1897. In the summer of 1901 H. G. Wells brought Gissing to visit James and to spend the night at Lamb House, which Gissing described, in a letter to Gabrielle, as “most beautiful – a unique place!” Some correspondence apparently followed. At least, Gissing wrote to Gabrielle in December of that year that James had sent him “a long letter,” and in a letter fragment presumably written to Gissing in 1903, James laments his absence (Gissing was then living in France), comments on the work of Wells and Conrad, and encourages Gissing by saying that, in spite of his poor health, he has the potential to “renew” his material, and is “secreting inspiration.”³ Adeline Tintner makes a strong case for the argument that the reading of Gissing’s novels led James to tackle new kinds of material, and to try his hand at some of the plot situations he found in them.

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“The Next Time” appeared in *The Yellow Book* of July, 1895, only a month after James had sketched his plan for it in his notebook. The literary critic who is James’ narrator tells us that the fiancée of Ralph Limbert, a novelist of great talent whose books do not sell, has as her sister Mrs. Highmore, a prolific and highly successful producer of popular fictional trash. In the initial situation, Mrs. Highmore summons the narrator to tell him that she wants, for once, to write something good whose merits, like those of Limbert’s novels, will be underlined by its poor sale. “She yearned to be, like Limbert, but of course, only once, an exquisite failure,” and she asks the narrator to tell her how her new manuscript can be made to rise to this level.

Concurrently, the novelist, Limbert, who wants to marry Mrs. Highmore’s sister, and is resolutely opposed by the girl’s mother, is faced by the need to find a source of income. Mrs. Highmore thinks the narrator can help him, and lends him some of Limbert’s books. He is stunned by their quality. James, with characteristic indirectness, has his narrator praise Limbert’s novels by saying that they manifested “an intention of a sort that I had then pretty well given up the hope of meeting.” They gave him, he says, “one of the rarest emotions of my literary life, the sense of an activity in which I could critically rest.” He becomes one of Limbert’s admirers, “a numerous band, partakers of the same repose ... the brotherhood of the faith have become, like the Trappists, a silent order...”

The narrator succeeds in finding a job on a provincial newspaper for Limbert, with the

expectation that his writing is to be “lively.” In this way, a delightful series of ironies emerges: Mrs. Highmore (in accordance with her name) is to try to write “up,” while Limbert will try to write “down.” Each, as the narrator observes, would have liked to be the other. Limbert’s effort fails. In a development that echoes the *donnée* drawn from James’ own experience, the paper fires him because his writing is unsuitable. He claims that he has done “the worst he can do for the money,” a conceit that James drew from his notes about his own journalistic failure – “I had to write to Whitelaw Reid that the sort of thing I had already tried hard to do for the *Tribune* was the very worst I *could* do.”⁴

Hopes for an income that will enable Limbert to marry are then transferred to his fiction. After his friends arrange for his new novel to be published on unusually favorable terms, the objections of the girl’s mother are overcome, and the marriage takes place. The novel is published as a serial, and makes “an impression,” but the book is a flat failure: “when, in its lemon-coloured volumes, like a little dish of three custards, the book was at last served cold ...

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It was in short an exquisite thing, but it was scarcely a thing to have published and certainly not a thing to have married on.”

Beset by the need to support a growing Victorian family (as well as a resident mother-in-law), Limbert now decides to work for money rather than distinction. In a burst of cynicism, he redefines the notion of success, and embraces the other art of courting popularity. “What *is* ‘success’ anyhow? When a book’s right, it’s right – shame to it surely if it isn’t. When it sells it sells – it brings money like potatoes or beer... Success be hanged! – I want to sell. It’s a question of life or death. I must study the way... I must cultivate the market – it’s a science like another. ...I haven’t been obvious – I must *be* obvious. I haven’t been popular. I must *be* popular. It’s another art – or perhaps it isn’t an art at all... They all do it; it’s only a question of how.”

Limbert and the narrator together bring these mercenary motives to another periodical Limbert edits, and write as badly as they can, but in vain. An exquisite irony emerges as the more Limbert tries to meet the vulgarity of public taste, the finer his work becomes. Reading an excerpt quoted from Limbert’s supposedly popular fiction, the narrator feels “a distinct alarm ... The passage ... was simply superb. Ah, he *would* have to move to the country if that was the worst he could do!” When at last he reads the novel as a whole, the narrator is comically devastated by its excellence. “*Was* it a monstrous joke, his second manner ... Obvious? – where the deuce was it obvious? Popular? – how on earth could it be popular? The thing was charming with all his charm and powerful with all his power: it was an unscrupulous, a shameless, merciless masterpiece.” Only oxymoron can do justice to the irony of the situation. “It was too hideous a triumph,” a “magnificent mistake.”

Because his contributions have again failed to meet the lower standards of the journal he edits, Limbert, as before, loses his position. His friends lament the disaster precipitated by his genius. Hearing that her brother-in-law’s new book has “extraordinary beauty,” Mrs. Highmore laments, “Poor duck – after trying so hard!” Forced to move to the country, Limbert continues trying to write his way out of poverty, but instead turns out unsalable masterpieces – “false remedies.” “We got again and again the irrepressible work of art,” says the narrator, “but what did *he* get, poor man, who wanted something so different?” His friends try to relieve his unhappiness by telling him that his work is now suitably inferior, but they cannot understand

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“the marvellous riddle ... why the note he strained every chord to pitch for common ears should invariably address itself to the angels.”

Limbert’s health fails, and when the doctor tells him that he must go to Egypt or die, he

says he thinks a new book, an “adventure story,” will finally make enough money for the trip, but it is, again, “a deep and delicate thing ... another female child” too good for the market. At the end of the story, he is working on a book that he is writing for its own sake, feeling that “the voice of the market had suddenly grown faint and far.” He dies before he completes it, leaving it “a splendid fragment,” that would not, says the narrator, “have waked up the libraries.”

“The Next Time” obviously diverges from the plot of *New Grub Street*, though there are some plot similarities – the pressure of domestic expenses, the hostile mother-in-law, the publishing failures, the sick author who dies in poverty. What the two stories do have in common is a number of themes; the gifted, but unappreciated novelist, the relation between literary failure and family life, the vulgarization of literature, the cynicism of literary exploitation, the public preference for trash and indifference to good writing, the ironic reversal of “success” and “failure” in the commercial environment. While Limbert resembles both Reardon and Gissing himself at times, at one juncture he turns into Milvain, and if one happened to overlook chronological considerations, it would be easy to believe that James had his friend, Conrad, in mind, as he wrote of a novelist who tried to apply his fine sensibilities to an inferior task – and failed. While the material of “The Next Time” may have been suggested by *New Grub Street*, it is clear that James made a very different thing of Gissing’s theme, treating it with comic rather than tragic irony. Gissing’s influence is perhaps also perceptible in the fact that most of James’ other artists and writers survive the vulgarity of their society in guilty prosperity, while Limbert, like Reardon, struggles and dies. But the comparison clearly supports Adrian Poole’s observation that James resembles Gissing in projecting “a vision of pure incompatibility between the inner world of Art and the outer world of material and physical fulfilment.”⁵

¹*Gissing in Context* (Totowa, N. J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), pp. 123-125. “The Next Time” is briefly mentioned as one of the James works influenced by Gissing which Adeline Tintner reviews in “Some Notes on a Study of the Gissing Phase in Henry James’ Fiction,” *Gissing Newsletter*, XVI, 3, July, 1980, pp. 1-15.

²*The Notebooks of Henry James*, ed. F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 180, 200-205.

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³The allusions to James in the letters to Gabrielle appear in *The Letters of George Gissing to Gabrielle Fleury*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (New York: The New York Public Library, 1964), pp. 140 and 144. The letter fragment consists of the last two pages of a four-page letter which is reprinted and discussed in “Half a Henry James Letter” by John R. Byers, Jr., *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910*, XVI, 1, Spring, 1983, pp. 129-31. A pencilled notation, “Henry James à George Gissing (1903)” is in the hand of Gabrielle Fleury. [The December 1901 letter from James to Gissing will be published in Vol. VIII of the Collected Letters. – Ed.]

⁴James, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁵Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

The Biological Drama: Darwinian Ethics
in George Gissing’s Fiction
(Concluded)

Fabio Cleto
University of Bergamo

3. At the very beginning of *The Whirlpool*, the protagonist Harvey Rolfe is depicted as different from Reardon and Peak. He seems to have chosen the role of observer rather than the role of fighter in the struggle for leaving progeny: “he was merely a looker-on” (p. 45). Marriage is abhorred as a danger for his individual tranquillity (p. 26); besides, financial security enables him to stand clear of the “whirlpool” of social ambition and struggle for life.

Such an attitude to life is connected in Rolfe with a “too exclusive regard of self” (p. 45): it is therefore not in open contrast with the Darwinian ethics of his time. He records the social consequences of Darwinism with cold indifference: “If a child dies, why, the probabilities are it ought to die; if it lives, it lives, and you get survival of the fittest” (p. 13).

Rolfe’s egotism prompts him to accept the law of natural selection, but his intellectual temper makes him aware of the fallacy of any finalistic optimism. For instance, when he reflects on the failure of the Britannia Loan Company, he ironically describes the progressive teleology of both religious and scientific creeds: “This is how mankind progresses. Harvey Rolfe felt glad that no theological or scientific dogma constrained him to a justification of the laws of life” (p. 45).

Yet his plan for avoiding the struggle is undermined by sexual desire, which brings him to marry Alma Frothingham. She is cynically egotistic, seeing “the ideal life in a release from all

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duty and obligation – save to herself” (p. 66). What is more, she keeps alive the ambition and desire for struggle which characterized her father, a man who “had played for the world’s reward, and, losing, flung away his life” (p. 419).

Rolfe thus foregoes his isolation to get involved in the social whirlpool. His connection with other people’s reality implies two consequences. On one side, Harvey brings to life his own cooperative sensibility, a sensibility which was not excluded by the biological model, but which had not been taken into account by the community exploiting Darwin’s theories. He decides to help Wager’s abandoned children, although he does not blame their father, who has acted without “foolish prejudices” (p. 111). On the other side, he is brought back to the Darwinian teaching that the transmission of one’s characteristics to one’s offspring is one’s real success. The frailty of his first child Hughie prompts him to reconsider his own fatalism; his doubts about the fruitlessness of his existence are swept away by the thought that “fruitless his life could not be, if his child grew up.” Therefore, his temptation to live, “to perpetuate the race,” goes together with a new purpose in life: “to shape a path for this new life, which he, nature’s slave, had called out of nothingness” (139).

Rolfe’s acceptance of the struggle for life reorders his affections in Darwinian terms; that is to say, he realizes how much shallower his affection for Alma is than the one “sacred to the memory of his parents, to the desires and hopes centring in his child” (p. 335). As Walter Cannon has argued, in the Darwinian theory “there is no known, and probably no conceivable, real relationship among individuals except the one created by reproduction.”²¹

In order to help his child, Rolfe goes deep into educational studies. Even if his natural tendency is to teach his child a distaste for the struggle, he accepts as such the necessity to adapt oneself to one’s environment and to disregard sympathetic feelings: “the best kind of education would be that which hardened his skin and blunted his sympathies [...] What monstrous folly to teach him to wince and cry out at the sufferings of other people!” (p. 342). His friend Basil Morton approves of this, since “life is a compromise” and – as the world goes – “our little crabs must grow their hard shell, or they’ve no chance” (p. 342). It is easy to see how their argument paves the way for the very same ethics they claim to detest; moreover, Rolfe is well aware of such a contradiction, for he recognizes that “in educating children, we are making the new world” (p. 342).

This emphasis on children and education, according to John Goode, categorises *The Whirlpool* as an historical novel, "in the sense that it reproduces a phase in English life, but its history is inscribed as the history of the coming race."²² Yet I would like to underline the fact that such a future is simply a re-ordering of those characteristics transmitted from the past. According to the Darwinian vision, the future forecast in the novel is indeed a future in which the sons will pay for the fathers' "faults": their defects in relation to the environment. Rolfe, for instance, musing over "questions of heredity," links Alma's "characteristic weakness" (p. 136) to her mother's frailty.

The perception of time is equally conditioned by the Darwinian vision; generations rather than years are the measure of it. Harvey hears in Hughie's babble "the same music of earliest human speech, the same ripple of innocent laughter, renewed from generation to generation" as "fell from a child's lips thousands of years ago" (p. 143).

The Darwinian vision also marks a difference in fatherhood: what makes Harvey different from the fathers who have preceded him is his knowledge of the concept of natural selection and of the role heredity plays in it:

he, listening, had not the merry, fearless pride of fathers in an earlier day. Upon him lay the burden of all time; he must needs ponder anxiously on his child's heritage, use his weary knowledge to cast the horoscope of this dawning life. (p. 143)

In his "forecasting" of Hughie's future, Rolfe combines both his own and Alma's characteristics. From what we know about them, it is not surprising that he sees "something dreadful" (p. 144) in Hughie's future: the strong likelihood of his being unfit.

The Darwinian vision saw the destiny of the individual as inscribed in his genetic patrimony. Consistently with such a perspective, Gissing's characters are born with the signs of their destiny already impressed on them. Therefore Harvey is shown to be using a sort of "chiromancy," or "palmistry": he is both divining Alma's and Hughie's future, and searching for its causes in the past. It is appropriate to observe how Rolfe here employs the same strategy as that through which Darwinian society "criminalized" those who were unfit, by equating unfitness with social guilt. In Rolfe's decodification of signs we can see an application of the semiotic model that Carlo Ginzburg has called the "paradigma indiziario" (paradigm of the clue).²³ This paradigm represents a form of investigation that medical and police officers were increasingly employing in Darwin's time. Rolfe is looking for the symptoms of a mortal

"illness" (i.e., lack of adaptability), or the signs denoting the "guilt" of social marginality. The unfit is therefore made equal to an "outlaw": someone outside the law both as a criminal and as one excluded by the law of natural selection.

So the Darwinian revolution has shifted the responsibility for creation from God to Man. Having realized "the obligation under which he lies towards his offspring" (p. 330), Rolfe sees fatherhood deified: "He was the giver of life, and for that dread gift he must hold himself responsible" (p. 384). His speculations clearly establish that he endorses the Darwinian vision. So does Alma, who, however, emphasises the competitive aspect of it. Indeed, she is far less concerned than her husband about Hughie's future, placing social success above the desirability of "leaving progeny." Her sensibility is akin to that of people living in society. So it is in order that she should idealise city life, whereas her husband longs for a "clean and sweet" (p. 184) country niche. Once again we see that an individual's attitude to his environment helps us to

define his identity: Alma is better fitted to “the whirlpool,” Harvey to a niche, where competition is less harsh.

The niche offered to Rolfe is represented by Greystone, where his friends the Mortons live according to a preindustrial model. They are suggestive of a seemingly extinct species which has survived by finding a space where it had no real competitors and can therefore be described in Darwinian terms as “persistent types,” that is to say, a species which has not changed through the ages owing to its living in harmony with its environment.

Still, the existence of such a place cannot represent a real alternative to the Darwinian world. Greystone is not a utopia with laws different from Darwin’s, but a space in which commerce has not become the hegemonic activity. Basil Morton is both “scholar” and “gentleman.” “He lived by trade, but trade did not affect his life”; and Mrs. Morton “conceived her duty as wife and mother after the old fashion, and was so fortunate as to find no obstacle in circumstance” (pp. 323-24).

Here nature loses the Darwinian connotations of cruelty to assume a former maternal dimension (p. 323). Yet I can hardly agree with David Grylls when he says that Gissing idealized nature as innocence opposed to the life struggle, for “accepting Darwin, he still admired Wordsworth” (p. 66). In fact, Gissing’s regard for the struggle privileges the human side of it; his description of nature does not take into account animal and vegetable sufferings. His “nature” is depicted as a humanizing factor which makes the struggle less poignant. In such

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a milieu, humankind can establish a better balance with its environment, since there are only weaker competitors; the law of natural selection is mitigated, though never contested in its theoretical validity.

Still, such a mode of existence does not represent an attraction for either of the Rolfes, as Alma is genetically not suited to it. When she gives up her career as a violinist and loses her baby daughter, she is still charmed by “the whirlpool”: she therefore puts up with the provincial dimension of Gunnersbury only with the help of narcotics, that is, by repressing her nature. The Redgrave affair, which destroys her social image, functions as a definitive verdict of unfitness passed on her by society; accepting such a verdict, she turns self-pity into self-scorn and kills herself when, seeking for oblivion, she drinks an overdose of a sleeping-draught. Harvey, for his part, takes the only decision that enables him to survive: he isolates in the Greystone niche with his son, who does not seem suited to the whirlpool of competition either.

The narrative structure of *The Whirlpool* is therefore consistent with those of *New Grub Street* and *Born in Exile*. The Rolfes’ defeat is set against the Carnabys’ triumph and the marriages of both Felix Dymes and the good-natured Mrs. Abbott. The recurrence of such a pattern shows that Gissing’s argument has an artistic rather than a moral aim. Indeed, Gissing uses as a literary “device” the “defamiliarization” theorized by Victor Shklovsky.²⁴ Through the emphasis given to defeated characters, Gissing’s narratives defamiliarize the suffering concealed behind the “comic” façade of Darwinian evolution. The interest of this defamiliarization is made explicit in Harvey’s reflections after Redgrave’s death:

He seemed never before to have realised the infinitude of human suffering. Hour after hour, [...] he travelled from land to land, from age to age; at one moment picturing some dread incident of a thousand years ago; the next, beholding with intolerable vividness some scene of agony reported in the day’s newspaper. [...] For the first time, tragedy had been brought near to him, and he marvelled at the indifference with which men habitually live in a world where tragedy is every hour’s occurrence.

He told himself that this was merely a morbid condition of the brain, but

could not bring himself to believe it. On the contrary, *what he now saw and felt was the simple truth of things, obscured by every-day conditions of active life.* [...]

To-night he spoke of it, as he sat with Morton after every one else had gone to bed. [...]

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“Every one knows that state of mind, more or less,” said Morton, in his dreamy voice – a voice good for the nerves. “It comes generally when one’s stomach is out of order. [...] It’s morbid – yes; but for all that it may be a glimpse of the truth. Health and good spirits, just as likely as not, are the deceptive condition.”

“Exactly. *But for the power of deceiving ourselves, we couldn’t live at all.*” (pp. 325-26; my emphases)

It is interesting to find in Rolfe and Morton this sudden awareness, since it shows once again that even Gissing’s “positive” characters participate in Darwinian ethics. An awareness of suffering is not deemed valuable by them, but rather a sign of intellectual immaturity:

“I fought it out with myself,” said Basil [...]. “There’s a point in the life of every man who has brains, when it becomes a possibility that he may kill himself. Most of us have it early, but it depends on circumstances. I was like Johnson’s friend: be as philosophical as I might, cheerfulness kept breaking in. And at last, I let cheerfulness have its way. As far as I know” – he gurgled a laugh – “Schopenhauer did the same.”

Harvey puffed at his pipe before answering.

“Yes; and I suppose we may call that *intellectual maturity*. It’s bad for a man when he *can’t* mature – which is my case. I seem to be as far from it as ever.” (pp. 326-27; first emphasis mine)

Although it is quite clear that Gissing’s aim is to rouse the reader’s sympathy for the defeated, it is difficult to agree with Gisela Argyle when she sees in this passage evidence that it is through pessimism that the protagonist reaches a sympathetic attitude – that is, “intellectual maturity” – towards other fellow beings.²⁵ In fact, Rolfe’s cooperative tendency appears long before his hypothetical final maturity (one need only remember the little Wagers); and Morton, who *is* “mature,” does not trouble to cultivate sympathetic feelings in his son (p. 342) because “life is a compromise” with the world. The passage just quoted shows that the intellectual maturity Rolfe longs for is alien to an understanding of suffering: it rather consists in a capacity to exercise “the power of deceiving ourselves,” and therefore to enjoy the cheerfulness that stems from it.

The conclusion of the novel gives some space to Kipling, the poet of British imperialism, and offers, once again, a view of the public comedy, of the unconsciousness of tragedy that is attained through society’s oblivion of pain. On the other hand, Rolfe cannot side with the Imperialists because he is unable to “mature”; yet he does not fight social optimism either – he

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can only oppose to it the sad sarcasm of a man who knows himself to be defeated: “we may reasonably hope, old man, to see our boys blown into small bits by the explosive that hasn’t got its name yet” (p. 450).

III

We have seen that Gissing's fiction is diffusely impregnated with Darwinian ethics. Still, it might also be observed that his novels point to some defective logical links in the Social Darwinists' equation of animal and human societies. Indeed, Gissing's narratives reveal a surprising awareness of Man's evolutive anomaly, if compared with animal evolution. This anomaly may be partly summed up in the words of Engels, who claimed that "the essential difference between human and animal society consists in the fact that animals at most *collect*, while men *produce*."²⁶ In other words, human societies produce a "cultural" element (i.e., wealth, codes, classes), which is handed over to the new generations. Therefore, the human struggle for existence is determined not only by genetic fitness but also by the "cultural" aid which a given variety may be granted or not.

For instance, Peak's schoolmates are "culturally" put in the way of success, as "a track was marked out for them by the zealous care of relatives and friends, and their efforts would always be aided, applauded, by a kindly circle" (p. 51). The literary arena is not immune to such an influence. Money and social prestige are highly relevant in the struggle; Reardon might have had a different career had he been born rich, since he was "the kind of man who cannot struggle against adverse conditions, but whom prosperity warms to the exercise of his powers" (p. 93); and Fadge's marriage to "a woman of good social position," who has brought him "friends and influence," is the main reason for his success: "But for that, he would never have been editor of *The Study*, a place for which he wasn't in the least fit" (p. 136).

Another element which makes human struggle different from animal struggle is the fact that in human evolution the environment is represented by society. Human beings are selected and rejected according to their degree of adaptation to the customs and values of society. Therefore natural and sexual selection becomes, when applied to the human sphere, highly artificial. In this perspective, Robert Young has shown how the "naturalisation of value systems" (p. 611) hides a social selection in which the selector (i.e. bourgeois society) works within the cultural area rather than the natural area.²⁷ In short, the Social Darwinists posited as

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"natural" what was in reality a social selection through which society reinforced itself.

Gissing's narrator is clearly conscious of society's responsibilities. When he describes the irritation that Biffen's and Reardon's inability to adapt to the new productive model may produce in the reader, he comments:

But try to imagine a personality wholly unfitted for the rough and tumble of the world's labour-market. From the familiar point of view these men were worthless; view them in possible relation to a humane order of society, and they are admirable citizens. [...] These two were richly endowed with the kindly and the imaginative virtues; if fate threw them amid incongruous circumstances, is their endowment of less value? (p. 462)

New Grub Street might tempt one to trace Gissing's idealization of the past to the notion expressed in this passage. Yet the case of Peak, who is probably more suited to the really positivist age that is still to come, shows that the past is not idealized by all Gissing's defeated characters:

"You have been trying to adapt yourself," she [Sidwell] said, "to a world for which you are by nature unfitted. Your place is in the new order; by turning back to the old, you condemned yourself to a wasted life." (p. 402)

After reading such words, it is hard to believe that Gissing's novels embody a fear of evolution-in-reverse. Rather, he exploits the fact that his protagonists are suited to a *different* order of society the better to denounce the neglect by contemporary society of its responsibilities. In Reardon's words, society is revealed to be "blind and brutal as fate" (p. 230), i.e. the very same fate that Darwinism deemed responsible for the elimination of those who are born with a "genetical deficiency."

One further element which undercuts the "scientific" lawfulness of the conflict is the human ability to soften the ruthlessness of the struggle. This point was openly argued by Thomas Huxley. He exposed the "naturalistic fallacy" of Social Darwinism, which claimed the fruitfulness of the passage from *is* to *ought*,²⁸ that is to say the human reinforcement of what was thought to be a natural law. In doing so, he opposed to the "cosmic process" an "ethical process": the human possibility to intervene for the survival of those less fit, yet humanly deserving.²⁹

Although Gissing's narratives offer a few cases of cooperation in favour of the weak, his protagonists are never as lucidly consistent as Huxley. Even if they occasionally understand the

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possibility of modifying interpersonal relationships, they remain dominated by the very same Social Darwinism by the standards of which they are superfluous. As John Goode says of *The Whirlpool*,

the modernity of the novel is reflected in the pervasive representation of an ideological formation responsive to this newness. At the root of it is a way of seeing which is best identified as social Darwinism. [...] However sharply opposed the characters in the novel are, they are all contained within this formation. Nobody poses values which can countervail it. The "real" Whirlpool is that created by the boundaries of vision in which the novel is contained. (p. 185)

Actually, the novel shows how Rolfe realizes the value of cooperation and protection as factors that humanize Darwinist selection. Yet such an awareness never prompts him to reject and fight the Darwinian ethics. Therefore it may be said that his and the other characters' responsibility lies in their acquiescence to a social law which they view as arbitrary and ideologically determined. For instance, Peak paradoxically construes his own charitable leanings as a manifestation of "moral weakness" (pp. 134-35); and Reardon himself, who accuses Milvain (i.e., society) of having destroyed him, accepts the general refusal to cooperate as pragmatically motivated (p. 290).

Gissing's losers lack the intellectual capacity to coordinate the insights which undermine the dominant ethical attitude into a different morality. Biffen, who is keenly aware of his own personality and motivations, openly tells Reardon that their passivity deprives them of all heroic qualities:

"I sometimes wonder at our inoffensiveness. Why don't we run amuck against law and order? Why, at the least, don't we become savage revolutionists, and harangue in Regent's Park of a Sunday?"

"Because we are passive beings, and were meant to enjoy life very quietly. As we can't enjoy, we just suffer quietly, that's all." (p. 403)

Godwin Peak, though stronger than Reardon, lacks the impetuous idealism that characterized

the author of *Political Justice* after whom he has been named: "Heroism might point him to an unending struggle with adverse conditions, but how was heroism possible without faith?" (p. 170). As regards Rolfe, his passivity prompts him to avoid conveying his negative perception of the Darwinian world to his child, and consequently he lets society teach Hughie its moral values.

Gissing's "positive" protagonists are therefore doubly responsible. Firstly, as we have seen, they are not averse to using the strategies authorized by the Darwinian ethics; secondly,

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once their experience has resulted in failure and consciousness of the arbitrariness of the very same ethics, they never fully *react* to such a vision. Their submissiveness accuses them of connivance in building up the Darwinian monster.

The key to Reardon's attitude to life may be found in a reading of *New Grub Street* as an industrial novel, that is a reading which stresses its analysis of the dynamics of literary production.³⁰ Romolo Runcini offers some enlightening comments on this aspect of things:

Towards the end of the century a profound division occurred within the bourgeoisie, between those who managed to modernize their capitalistic management, and those who remained on the borders of it, excluded by its complex mechanisms, left as silent witnesses of a banquet which they had contributed to make more and more various and sumptuous.³¹

Reardon has been working like a *petit bourgeois* of literary production; he has consequently adopted the same strategies as those who crush him. He complains merely because he is excluded from the banquet, doomed to extinction, devoured by the machine he has contributed to create, thus justifying Bergonzi's shrewd remark that *New Grub Street* is "a novel of resentment rather than of protest" (p. 20).

In conclusion, Gissing's novels do not paint failure as moral superiority: they portray the poetic value of defeat and its pathetic appeal for sympathy. None of Gissing's characters can reasonably claim the role of martyr. Indeed this role, which the defeated protagonist sometimes seems to claim, is more the narcissistic aspiration of an ambitious soul than the result of a heroic rejection of society. We can see this implicitly asserted in the passage of *Born in Exile* which demystifies "martyrdom" by equating it with a defeat caused by inability to assert one's own narcissism:

Self-assertion is the practical complement of *self-esteem*. To be largely endowed with the latter quality, yet constrained by a coward delicacy to repress it, is to suffer *martyrdom* at the pleasure of every robust assailant, and in the end be driven to the refuge of a *moody solitude* (p. 54; my emphases).

²¹Walter Cannon, "Darwin's Vision in *On the Origin of Species*," in George Levine and William Madden (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 155.

²²John Goode, *George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction*, London: Vision Press, p. 185.

²³Carlo Ginzburg, "Spie. Radici di un paradigma indiziario," in Aldo Gargani, *Crisi della ragione*, Turin: Einaudi, 1979, pp. 57-106.

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²⁴Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (eds.),

Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965, pp. 5-22. Shklovsky here argues that art defamiliarizes reality, that is, it renews human perception through certain techniques which remove the veil of habit and automatism.

²⁵Gisela Argyle, "Gissing's *The Whirlpool* and Schopenhauer," *Gissing Newsletter*, XVII, 4 (October 1981), pp. 9-10.

²⁶Cit. in Robert M. Young, "Darwinism Is Social," in David Kohn, *op. cit.*, p. 631.

²⁷For a pointed analysis of this topic, see W. Stark, "Natural and Social Selection," in Michael Banton (ed.), *Darwinism and the Study of Society*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1961, p. 56.

²⁸Antony Flew, *Darwinian Evolution*, London: Paladin Books, 1984, p. 125, offers a good introduction to this aspect of Social Darwinism. A general view of Darwin's role in the history of thought is D. R. Oldroyd, *Darwinian Impacts: an Introduction to the Darwinian Revolution*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1980.

²⁹Thomas H. Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics," in Harold Y. Vanderpool, *Darwin and Darwinism*, London: D. C. Heath & Co., 1973, p. 212.

³⁰Gissing himself wrote that "novel writing in England is now so largely a branch of industry" ("Gissing on Matters of War and Ethics," p. 5).

³¹Romolo Runcini, *Illusione e paura nel mondo borghese da Dickens a Orwell*, Bari: Laterza, 1968, p. 234 (my translation).

Obituary Clifford Brook (1922-1992)

It is with the deepest regret that I announce the death of Clifford Brook on 9 August. He had been unwell for many months, but his death was unexpected and came as a profound shock to his family and friends.

Clifford was regarded in Wakefield as a leading expert on George Gissing and the Gissing family and through his articles in the *Gissing Newsletter* he was known to a wide audience of Gissing scholars.

He was born at Wakefield on 12 July 1922 and was educated at Thornes House School, Wakefield and Leeds University, where he obtained a BSc. degree and a Diploma in Education. A mathematician, he taught at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield for eighteen years from 1948, and was also the Careers Master. For ten years before retiring in 1976, he was a

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Senior Lecturer at Sheffield City College of Education. In 1947 he married Margaret (Peggy) Brook; they had a son and daughter.

Clifford's first article in the *Gissing Newsletter* appeared in April 1975. This was "A View of *A Life's Morning* from Wakefield," notes which he later expanded and which were printed in the Harvester Press edition of the novel. A steady stream of well researched papers followed and he quickly gained the respect of Gissing scholars throughout the world.



It was due to extensive research by Clifford that it was established that the Gissing family occupied the Georgian house, 2/4 Thompson's Yard, behind the chemist's shop in Westgate. Almost immediately steps were taken to try to preserve this historic building. In 1978 the Gissing Trust was set up with Clifford as the first Secretary and Treasurer, a post he was to hold

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until 1987. He was one of the main organisers of the fight against the Wakefield Council when they demolished part of the Gissing house. He organised meetings and wrote countless letters, the result of which was the total re-instatement of the building. There can be no doubt that without Clifford's efforts the house would not have been saved in its present form and Gissingites everywhere owe him a great debt of gratitude. One of his proudest moments must surely have been in May 1990 when the Gissing Centre was finally opened. A few weeks before his death the Gissing Trust published a second and revised edition of his book *George Gissing and Wakefield*. This event was a source of great satisfaction to him.

Apart from his work for the Gissing Trust, Clifford Brook was a well-known figure in the public life of Wakefield. He was a Magistrate for over thirty years and Chairman of the Magistrates Bench from 1984-1989. He was also a prison visitor for many years. Always a compassionate man, he was held in the highest esteem and earned the respect of all who came into contact with him. Clifford was a member of the Wakefield Historical Society and served on the Council of the Society for several years.

I knew Clifford Brook for almost forty years. Firstly as a schoolboy at Wakefield Grammar School in the 1950s and later in a professional capacity, when I sometimes appeared before him at Wakefield Magistrates Court. I hasten to add that on those occasions I was appearing on behalf of Wakefield Education Department. I, too, was a member of the Council of Wakefield Historical Society and for several years held the post of Lecture Secretary. Clifford was always prepared to give papers on George Gissing, or on one of his many other interests. It was after a meeting of Wakefield Historical Society that he suggested I should read *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. He followed that with a copy of *A Life's Morning*. Clifford certainly knew how to bait a hook. He was always a good and kind friend and I am sure that my great

feeling of loss is shared by everybody who knew him.

Anthony Petyt, Hon. Secretary of The Gissing Trust

Douglas Hallam, Chairman of The Gissing Trust, who first met Clifford Brook in 1978, when he agreed to represent the Historical Society on the Gissing Appeal Committee, writes: "Clifford was a very meticulous person, he was self-disciplined to an extraordinary degree, planning everything in considerable detail and setting himself targets. He told me he read 100 books each year and if his reading rate was too low to achieve this, towards the end of the year

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he selected shorter books to read. He would be annoyed with himself if he could not account for every penny spent during each week. This approach to life was evident in his voluntary work, which in my view made it a pleasure to work with him. His candid manner left one in no doubt as to what he expected to be done. No ambiguities, no loose ends.

I always admired his ability to assimilate a mass of information, pick out the core issues, suggest action and give advice. Clifford had all the attributes which made him a good judge of people, a first-rate organiser and, of course, an excellent magistrate.

During our years of friendship Cliff and I had many informal discussions. We found it easy to talk about almost anything, but the usual subjects were politics, the economy and the stock market. Basically he was an expert in mathematics, and there were occasions when he attempted to improve my education in the subject but left little mark. He was away and away ahead of me, and I suspect most other people. Furthermore he was a recognised authority on Mystery Plays. Not just the Wakefield cycle and the other well-known ones, but also the many others which were performed up and down the country. He lectured extensively on this, one of his favourite subjects."

Pierre Coustillas, whose first contact with Clifford Brook dates back to the summer of 1974, when he revisited Wakefield after occasional epistolary contacts with Norman Willox and John Kilburn, contributes some further recollections and assesses Clifford Brook's achievement in Gissing studies: "With the death of Clifford Brook, Gissing studies have lost the leading specialist in the novelist's home town and many of us have lost an earnest, faithful and hospitable friend. Until he began to study Gissing and his circle locally research in this field had scarcely started. For some seventy years it had remained in its infancy; with Clifford it promptly reached adulthood. Encouraged by correspondents – in England as well as abroad, and notably by Alfred Slotnick, whose curiosity about Gissing's life and works was boundless – he embarked on a vast enquiry, only a very small part of which developed into articles. He was a born researcher and knew how and where to find what he was looking for. His work is summed up in his bulky notes on the Gissings, their friends and acquaintances from the time George's father settled in Wakefield till his sisters left the city for Leeds shortly before the First World War. Clifford felt at ease in all kinds of local and regional research, and he would travel to distant counties when he knew that the answer to some crucial question could not be found in

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Yorkshire. In one of the big boxes containing the many letters and documents I have received from him is a letter written after a short stay in Suffolk, which concludes on a characteristically modest note: "A good week for my Gissing studies." To this was limited the expression of his enthusiasm after some research which had resulted in substantial progress in his knowledge of a whole generation of Gissing's ancestors.

Very recently the *Wakefield Express* had devoted an article (*Wakefield Plus*, 10 July,

p. 40) to his retirement from the Wakefield City Bench after thirty years' activity. "Due to ill health," the anonymous journalist wrote, "Mr. Brook was not present in court last Friday to hear the warm wishes from fellow magistrates, clerks, solicitors and the police." As his friends reported at the time that he felt so much better and that he was planning a holiday, I suspect Clifford chose not to attend the ceremony given in his honour for another reason. His modesty made it impossible for him to listen to the praise that would be offered him. His disinterestedness was never at fault; he gladly shared his knowledge with scholars who consulted him on obscure phases of the lives of Thomas Waller Gissing, his relatives and friends. His sense of time and topography was remarkable, as were his capacities as a photographer. His demonstrations were often accompanied by photographs which established the truth in an authoritative manner. He was an enlightened conservationist (I am thinking of the houses in Westgate and Thompson's Yard as well as TWG's grave), a man of principle, anxious to contribute to all the efforts that were made to promote public knowledge of Gissing's life and work. Doubtless, as is implied in the obituary that appeared in the *Express* ("Former chief of Bench dies aged 70," 14 August, p. 1), he was strongly influenced by his former training as a mathematician and only claimed to offer facts and documents. Literary criticism he gladly left to others.

Two promises that he had made at my suggestion he was unable to keep – to write an article on Morley Roberts's marginalia in his own copy of *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, and a series of short biographies of Thomas Waller Gissing's Wakefield friends and acquaintances. These plans were cast aside two years ago when quite abruptly he was taken ill. I had hoped that, once Clifford's health was restored, they might be revived. Fate willed it otherwise. But as it is, his dedicated work on the Gissing family and their circle will live. His achievement deserves our unstinted regard."

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Book Reviews

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, edited by John Halperin. Halifax: Ryburn Publishing, 1992. Leatherbound: ISBN 1-85331-041-7; £30. Clothbound: ISBN 1-85331-024-7; £25. xv + 440 pp.

The reputation of *New Grub Street* has been steadily increasing in the last third of the present century, and the centenary of the book was duly celebrated in several newspapers last year. Clearly it has achieved the status of a classic. Five new editions have been published since 1958 and it is significant that most of them, now that the story can no longer be regarded as mere "modern fiction," include a substantial introduction. The time is coming when some enterprising scholar who has managed to trace them all will be in a position to review them from a historical standpoint and in the light of the progress made by Gissing studies in general. Such a study, which will mean a discussion of the assessments by Harry Hansen, Morley Roberts, G. W. Stonier, Irving Howe, John Gross and Bernard Bergonzi, will reveal no ups and downs in the reputation of the book, only an increasingly professional and documented approach to its many-sided cultural message. The number of translations of *New Grub Street* also places it very high on the scale of comparative popularity. No other Gissing story has been translated twice into French and Chinese, gone through revised German and Japanese translations, and been done into Swedish, Romanian and Russian as well.

A new stage is reached with this edition by Ryburn Publishing, introduced and annotated by John Halperin, whose work on the author ranges from *Gissing: A Life in Books* to reviews of Gissing scholarship in a variety of periodicals. It is a superbly produced limited library edition

available in two formats – cloth and leather with decorated spine and green edges – and it is physically more impressive than any other English or American edition. Only the recent translations issued by Shubun International and other Japanese publishers have been produced with equal care. The text has been printed from the first edition and, whenever there was any doubt about its conformity with the manuscript, the latter was consulted. Obviously Ryburn Publishing are aiming at a more sophisticated market than the two firms from which low-priced editions are currently available.

“*New Grub Street* is perhaps the greatest novel ever written about the collision of the creative impulse with material circumstances,” John Halperin writes, and his nine-page

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comment on the story is an able, well-documented illustration of this initial statement, with which no twentieth-century critic would seem to disagree. Some commentators have placed *Born in Exile* above *New Grub Street*, but it would be easy enough to compile a list of eulogies of the latter book that any publisher would be glad to slip into his files for future use. As long ago as 1912 J. M. Kennedy pronounced *New Grub Street* “the most powerful novel he ever wrote,” and Desmond MacCarthy twenty-six years later “probably the best novel about the drudgery of writing on starvation wages.” Contrary to what some critics have thought, Halperin believes and convincingly demonstrates that “there is something of the novelist or of situations in which he found himself in almost every major personage and happening in the novel.” Hence his detailed study of the five major male characters – Reardon, the unpractical artist with his cult of beauty and his weakness with the other sex; Biffen with his classicism and humanism; Milvain the genial self-seeker; Whelpdale and Yule, whose relations with women are examples of comic and tragic treatment of a theme which informs the novel as much as the sustained discussion of the material condition of the writer in the 1880s. Inevitably Halperin also discusses the commercialization of literature and the various characters’ attitudes to it. Becoming practical, for men like Milvain and Whelpdale, means cultural death; being unpractical, for the misfits who are born losers, means physical death – Reardon dies of pneumonia, Alfred Yule of some unspecified disease (“blind and fallen on evil days”), while Biffen commits suicide. The three of them are victims of poverty, and Halperin easily convinces his reader that *New Grub Street* offers a splendid illustration of the thematic trinity first analyzed by John Middleton Murry – money, class and women. The book makes full sense as an autobiographical debate on the pros and cons of marriage to a social inferior (the figure of Edith Underwood stands in the background); it also shows that, by disregarding Biffen’s perceptive objections to Reardon’s idealism, Gissing’s more lucid self refused to take heed of the warnings which he so forcefully had Biffen give his friend. In other words Biffen, in chapter 27, “charts with astonishing accuracy the course Gissing’s second marriage would take – even down to the sharp temper and querulousness of the wife and the torment and ultimate escape of the husband.” If the story can be viewed as a brilliant sociological *tableau* of the literary world, it is also a cleverly disguised testing-bench for the emotional difficulties that Gissing was experiencing and which he overcame masochistically before he had a bound copy of his book in

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hand. Halperin concludes his introduction with this vision of Gissing disregarding his own advice at proof-stage when he married Edith Underwood on 25 February 1891, the day on which his letter to the editor of the *Times* on Greek pronunciation was published.

Only one edition of the novel hitherto carried notes, Bernard Bergonzi’s, with 48 thorny points elucidated. The superiority of the Ryburn edition in this respect is undoubted. The 112 notes cover a wide range of historical and literary allusions, foreign words, situations or

anecdotes of unquestionable autobiographical significance. No reader who discovers Gissing and this book at the same time should stumble against any linguistic or cultural difficulty. In a few cases the starting-point of some worthwhile literary investigation is supplied. For instance when, apropos of the words "sousing into the black depths," the editor remarks that "from his first story to his last, Gissing's fiction is packed with the imagery of drowning," or when, Reardon having alluded to the possibility for a man to outgrow passion, we are invited to see here a vintage Gissing theme based on his familiarity with Schopenhauer's doctrine.

This beautifully printed and well-edited reissue of *New Grub Street* should be purchased by librarians and collectors alike. It is to be hoped that the publishers will be adequately rewarded for their engaging initiative and that another Gissing title, such as *Demos* or *Thyrza*, will be published in the same formats. Meanwhile these twin volumes, the leatherbound and the clothbound editions, will remain a major bibliographical landmark in the publishing history of the author's best-known novel. – Pierre Coustillas

George Gissing 1857-1903 Books, Manuscripts and Letters: A Chronological Catalogue of the Pforzheimer Collection, [London]: Bernard Quaritch, 1992. viii + 70 pp.

All scholars who have used the Gissing Collection so long housed in the Pforzheimer Library at 41 East 42nd Street, New York, will be interested in its sale *en bloc* to the Lilly Library of Indiana University in Bloomington. (See the article in this *Journal*, July 1991, by Heather R. Munro, the Manuscripts Reference Assistant at the Lilly Library, on its purchase two years ago of photographs of London buildings associated with Gissing.) Bernard Quaritch, the venerable London antiquarian book and manuscript firm, acquired the Gissing Collection in

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October 1991 and negotiated the sale to the Lilly Library, which expects to have the material ready for use later this year. Since Quaritch's sumptuous sale catalogue is obviously of great interest to scholars, the firm has generously decided to circulate it "selectively," along with a flyer announcing other Gissing material still on offer.

In preparing the catalogue, Quaritch wisely consulted Professor Coustillas and Vincent Giroud, of the Beinecke Library at Yale, which is another major holder of Gissing material. A brief preface signed with the initials "A. F." introduces Gissing to potential buyers as "one of the proven but forever unfashionable masters of the English novel," an author whose works enjoy "a small but intensely loyal readership in England, America, Europe, and latterly the Far East." There follows an explanation of his attraction for modern readers: the tension between his own aesthetic sensibility and the degrading world of poverty, class conflict, and humiliation about which he wrote. Though A. F. finds Gissing's artistry often "flawed," he classes his last writings with *The Tempest*, *Billy Budd*, and "Among Schoolchildren" – "the autumnal works of other great literary artisans" – and judges Gissing's canon to be in the main "still formidably readable." Will readers of this *Journal* quarrel with such a judgment?

Carl H. Pforzheimer (1879-1957) began collecting Gissing manuscripts in 1922 with the purchase of the private collection of Walter T. Spencer, a London rare book dealer. Spencer had bought some of them from Frank Redway, a Wimbledon dealer, and some from Algernon Gissing, who was also Redway's source. Over the years the Pforzheimer Foundation has added to the Collection. The Foundation has had other literary interests. In 1986 its splendid library of 1,105 English books and 250 manuscripts all dating from 1475-1700 was acquired for 15 million dollars by the Texas billionaire G. Ross Perot, who presented it to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin. With the sale of that material and the Gissing Collection, the Foundation is left to concentrate on its extensive holdings pertaining to Shelley and his circle, which have been moved into the New York Public Library

at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue. There the ongoing project of bringing its manuscripts into print continues.

Quaritch's catalogue assures us that the firm extracted nothing from the Pforzheimer Gissing Collection after acquiring it, and the catalogue lists the Collection intact except for a few duplicates and later editions "of no apparent textual authority." What the Lilly Library now possesses falls into three categories: printed books, manuscripts, and letters. The catalogue's

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unsigned introductory essay summarizes the contents of these categories, making it clear that only a very well-informed scholar indeed could fail to learn something new from the entries on the individual items that follow.

The prize books in the Collection are naturally the first editions, both from Gissing's lifetime and the posthumous volumes. Chronologically arranged, the entries on these volumes give details about their appearance (color, type, and condition of binding), provenance, publishing arrangements when known, and occasionally contemporary opinions of the work. The "shortcomings" of Michael Collie's 1985 *George Gissing: A Bibliographical Study* are acknowledged, but there are references to it, with corrections, in the individual entries. His 1975 bibliography, those of Michael Sadleir and Robert Lee Wolff, *The Rediscovery of George Gissing* by John Spiers and Pierre Coustillas, and works by other scholars have also been consulted. This is a well-researched catalogue.

The manuscripts in the Collection will probably yield more important Gissing scholarship in years to come than will the riches of the other two categories. The anonymous author of the catalogue's introductory essay surmises that "no modern critical text of Gissing's works has been systematically checked even for literal error against the original manuscript." It is therefore gratifying to know that the Collection includes five of the twenty known holograph texts of entire books by Gissing: *Isabel Clarendon*, *Veranilda*, *Charles Dickens*, *By the Ionian Sea* and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (the manuscript bears the original title, "An Author at Grass"). There are also manuscripts of the early novella "All for Love" and the important essay "The Hope of Pessimism," and of two other essays and nine short stories (including the last one Gissing completed for the *Daily Mail*). Juvenilia (listed in a separate category) establish Gissing's precocity, and a college essay (that has been published but without his teacher's annotations) represent his Manchester years. His main working years are represented by some notes for a novel never completed and a "Scrapbook" of some 30,000 words in Gissing's hand plus "a large quantity of mounted and loose clippings, ephemera, etc." intended by him as a sourcebook for literary projects (see David Grylls in this *Journal* in January 1991). Finally, there is material relating to Gissing's contracts and earnings.

The holograph letters in the Collection, over 280 in all, have been mined for editions of Gissing's correspondence preceding the now definitive *Collected Letters*, of which three

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volumes have already appeared. Family ties are recorded in the Collection by two letters from young Gissing to his father; twenty letters to his brother Algernon; thirty-nine letters and postcards to his sisters; and three letters and a postcard to his elder son Walter. Grouped separately are the Collection's ten letters from Gissing to his early patron Frederic Harrison and his wife Ethel Bertha, and one to their son Austin, his former pupil; six letters to his friend Edward Clodd; two letters to his physician Dr. Henry Hick; one to his biographer Morley Roberts; twelve to his editor and collaborator at Methuen's, F. G. Kitton; and several to miscellaneous correspondents. Helping to document Gissing's literary career are 160 pages of his letters and cards to William Morris Colles of the Authors' Syndicate, who became his agent

in 1893; and ninety-three letters and cards to J. B. Pinker, his agent after 1898. A small group of letters to editors, publishers, and others provides further details about Gissing's professional life. If it has inspired admiration surpassing that commanded by many other writers, is it not partly because documents like these tell us a great deal about the trials of an author in his day?

Greatly enhancing the Quaritch catalogue are its seven full-page photographs. It opens with one of Elliott & Fry's best photographic portraits of the mature Gissing (in rich sepia tones and seen in the same pose sketched on the cover of our *Journal*). Another photograph has the three volumes of *Workers in the Dawn* standing so that the spines are visible, with the front cover of the second volume extended to feature its sunrise design. Still another displays forty-three volumes of his first editions, filling three shelves, all brilliantly illuminated and set against a dark background to bring out the rich colors and gold lettering of their bindings. Seen thus arranged, these volumes suggest (except for their different colors) a kind of collected edition, that crowning achievement of a writer that Gissing died too early to attain. The remaining photographs display manuscripts set against brilliant blue backgrounds: leaves bearing Gissing's microscopic handwriting with corrections for *By the Ionian Sea* (acquired by Pforzheimer in two different purchases); a sheet from the "Scrapbook" on which Gissing listed surnames in six long columns for use in his fiction, some names crossed out, indicating that they had served their purpose; the first page of the manuscript, with corrections, for *Veranilda*, behind which are spread pages of notes for the novel; and a striking shot of Gissing's first extant letter (written before he was six, to his father), with envelope, both backed by fanned out manuscript pages of perhaps his earliest literary effort, "Rabba the Wizard of the Alps," dated

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1868. Is it significant that neither his first nor his last work of fiction is set in England?

The flyer tucked into the catalogue after the sale by Quaritch lists 126 items: works by Gissing, older editions of his letters, and a copy of *Henry Hick's Recollections*. Some of these publications are duplicates from the Lilly Library, some are Pforzheimer copies not needed by the Lilly Library because it preferred its own copy of the work, and some are from Quaritch's stock. There is also an autograph letter from Gissing to his sister Ellen commenting on Hardy's novels in 1889. From these items one gains some notion of the prices commanded today by Gissing's first editions and manuscripts. The 1889 letter is listed for £2,800; Pforzheimer's copy of *Workers in the Dawn* for £8,000; and T. J. Wise's three-volume set of *New Grub Street*, with letters from Gissing to Clement Shorter tipped in, for £2,200. But a copy of *Veranilda* can be yours for only £80, and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* for £120 (both Pforzheimer first editions). The Lilly Library has had a wonderful new feast spread for it, and what is left over, or supplemented by Quaritch, is also healthy fare. — Martha S. Vogeler, California State University, Fullerton

George Gissing, Catalogue LXXXV, Jarndyce Antiquarian Booksellers. London: Jarndyce, 1992. 48 pp.

The Gissing catalogue of Jarndyce Antiquarian Booksellers located opposite the British Museum compels attention if only for its cogent Introduction by this *Journal's* editor. In under five pages he traces Gissing's critical reputation from the decade before his death, when he was placed among his nation's leading writers, through the following half century, when he was "badly served," to our own period's high regard for his achievement. This brief survey explains the interest of the Jarndyce catalogue. With only "modest runs in his life-time and during the next fifty years," Gissing's first editions have become scarce — hence the importance of Jarndyce's offerings. They include all the first editions, and a good sampling of later editions that appeared in Gissing's lifetime. Professor Coustillas notes that often the early publishing

history of a title in the canon can be reconstructed from the entries in this catalogue. *Demos*, we learn, for example, started out as a three-decker, then came out in one volume in 1886, and in a half-crown impression in 1890. Gissing's posthumous editions are also well represented in the catalogue, as is the Dickens criticism.

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Bibliographers are said here to have overlooked some early editions listed in this catalogue. Obviously, it has bibliographical significance. And it is attractive. It has a glossy white cover with portrait sketch of Gissing in rough black strokes on both front and back, and on the inside covers there is a continuous photograph of five shelves packed with books by and about Gissing. The title pages of twelve Gissing works listed in the catalogue are reproduced, one of a work by his father, and another of Morley Roberts's *Henry Maitland*. Jarndyce sent my copy free and promised to put me on its mailing list for the next four catalogues if I ordered from this one, or sent £10 (overseas \$25).

The 205 titles offered for sale are accompanied by brief bibliographic descriptions and notes on the work's condition. Several copies of many works are available, with first editions obviously commanding the highest prices. The most expensive item – you guessed it – is *Workers in the Dawn*, at £3,000. But the prices of the three first editions of *By the Ionian Sea* vary from £140 to £80, and the prices of the remaining six copies of later editions range from £45 for a 1905 edition (with map and illustrations) to £15 for a 1933 edition (with Virginia Woolf's introduction). As might be expected, there are many editions of Ryecroft – sixteen – priced from £110 for a first to £15 for reprints from the 1920s.

One catalogue entry strikes a pathetic note. For his introduction to *David Copperfield*, offered here with his autograph signature, we learn that Gissing said he asked only £20 (plus £6.00 for signing 300 copies of the introduction) “and I suspect I might have got very much more.” Jarndyce's copy costs £550. The contrast is one every catalogue of rare books suggests, but the meaning never grows less painful. – Martha S. Vogeler, California State University, Fullerton

Wim Neetens, *Writing and Democracy. Literature, Politics and Culture in Transition*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991. ISBN 0-7108-1326-0. 176 pp.

Wim Neetens's recent publication, *Writing and Democracy*, contains some new and daring analyses of a selection of the Victorian Classics, suggesting as well a few additions to the traditional canon. Indeed, Neetens's ultimate aim is to correct that canon, because, – he maintains – not only does that offer a partial view of literary history since it leaves out the novels that went into a dialogue with those “classics,” but it also seems to reflect the philosophy

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of the bourgeois hegemony only.

Chapter three, “Naturalism and its Others,” deals with Gissing's *Demos*. Neetens does not make it clear whether he considers Gissing's book to be a classic or not, but he does point out that the book is meant to confront working-class readers with their unalterable “otherness.” In fact, *Demos*, the author argues, is one of the many novels published in the last two decades of the nineteenth century which contributed to a large-scale colonial project. These novels did not merely reflect an increased interest in the lower classes as a result of the contemporary social unrest, they also gave expression to such class feelings as “fear, repulsion, anger and contempt for the proletariat.” In other words the growing number of both fictional and scientific

discourses published at the end of last century was “a desperate gesture through which the British bourgeoisie attempted to regain intellectual dominance and re-establish hegemony.” (p. 68)

In Gissing’s story of the self-taught socialist Richard Mutimer plenty of space is allotted to socialist and other political excursions, yet, Neetens maintains, those expatiations can never outgrow the novel’s master discourse. In point of fact, this pseudo-utopian tale really means to show that Mutimer can never become a member of a class in which he was not born. He “naturally” belongs to the working class and betrays his “nature” in his passionate masculinity.

The thin crust of refinement was shattered; the very man came to light, coarse, violent, whipped into fury by his passions...Her beauty in revolt made a savage of him. (p. 75)

Mutimer’s marriage into the upper-class through his union with Adela Waltham is doomed to fail as is the co-operative industrial estate New Wanley into which he has tried to convert the pristine Wanley valley. Not surprisingly, therefore, Dick Mutimer is eventually killed by the class which he has attempted to raise onto a higher rung of the social ladder and he dies in the arms of his former working-class sweetheart Emma. The purity of Adela and of the Wanley estate, on the other hand, is restored by Hubert Eldon, who like Adela belongs to the *haute bourgeoisie*.

The message in *Demos* is, according to Neetens, extremely obvious. If Gissing can be said to represent the late Victorian intellectual, then it seems that this particular group of society had lost its belief in democracy. Gissing did not expect the “rags to riches” individual to contribute to the improvement of society: once a worker, always a worker. Democracy would therefore be

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a serious mistake and signal the end of our civilization. Society’s only hope lies with the small minority which constitutes its financial and cultural aristocracy.

The other authors examined here are treated in a chronological sequence. The works selected were always written against a background of social change. George Eliot is presented as the reactionary defender of a hegemonic realism. Neetens holds that works such as *Adam Bede* and *Felix Holt* served her own class and her own class only. Her attitude towards the working-class was one of benevolent paternalism. Walter Besant’s well-meant attempts at creating a literature of the working-class, “a moralised version of the commodity aesthetic” remained just as illusory. In *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* Besant starts from the assumption that the working-class has nothing to offer, is a kind of tabula rasa which has to be taught everything. Without any hesitation Besant, therefore, assumes that this class will jump at the opportunity of acquiring middle-class values and culture. In this case, too, the term “colonialism” can be rightfully applied.

Gissing, Henry James, and Arthur Morrison are dealt with as representatives of separate directions within the naturalist movement in chapters three and four. But all three offer bleak prospects of a democratic future.

The last two chapters then are devoted to the most truly democratic-minded authors of this selection. First, the representatives of the women’s movement in the persons and the work of Sarah Grand and Elizabeth Robins. Robins’s novel *The Convert* is the more far reaching of the two and could be used as the manifesto of the suffragettes. One of her most memorable sentences – “Every woman who has borne a child is a labour woman” – is aptly used by Neetens as a subtitle. Both Grand and Robins used fiction as an instrument for propaganda. By the same token, George Bernard Shaw and William Morris explored the genre’s possibilities for propaganda purposes. They rightly believed the novel to be the easiest means of influencing a

large part of the population.

But Neetens believes only Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* to have been written by and for the working-class. Tressell "usurped" this pre-eminently middle-class genre of the novel in the hope of being listened to, indeed he adapted the language (a faithful reproduction of the dialect), the content (e.g., by means of long-winded expatiations on manual labour), and the form (or its formlessness), for it to reflect working-class values.

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The one unfortunate feature which unambiguously undermines the democratic character of the text is its uncritical confirmation of the typical role models in which the woman remains the man's inferior. In the last instance, therefore, Tressell, too, betrays a biased view of democracy since his "democratic world" still portrays an "other" who has to be colonized.

Neetens concludes his exposé pointing to literature's role as a medium for marginal and marginalized groups, warning us at the same time against an over-optimistic view of a future "universally unambiguous, aesthetically pleasing and ideologically correct mode of fiction."

Writing and Democracy is a controversial book both in its approach and in its conclusions, but it certainly presents the student of the period with new and, at times, fascinating readings of the well-known texts, which makes it very much worth its while. – Marysa Demoor, University of Ghent

Notes and News

A new edition of *By the Ionian Sea*, privately printed, was published in mid-September by Alan Anderson, 43 Mayburn Avenue, Loanhead, Midlothian EH20 9EY, Scotland. This edition is limited to 45 copies, designed and hand-set by Alan Anderson himself in 14 point Perpetua type and produced at the Tragara Press. The book has 169 pages and includes a line map. Numbers 1 to 10 are printed on paper made by Amatruda of Amalfi, bound in marbled boards with cloth spine, and priced at £90.00. Numbers 11 to 45 are printed on Abbey Mills laid paper, bound in cloth, and sell at £50.00. This edition – Mr. Anderson's farewell to publishing after a distinguished career – is a fine tribute to Gissing, who wrote his travel narrative so lovingly in 1899. Strangely the book has so far been translated only into Italian and Japanese. Other translations, however, may appear in the next few years.

An exhibition on Literary Manchester is to be held in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester in the first quarter of 1993. Thanks to Mr. David W. Riley, Keeper of Printed Books, and to Ms Sarah Lawrance, Exhibition Officer, it has been possible to obtain some details, although the precise dates of the exhibition have not yet been fixed. "The working title," Sarah Lawrance writes, "is 'A strange northern accent' (a quotation from *Tess of the*

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D'Urbervilles). The exhibition will explore aspects of Manchester literary production, from pre-industrial times to the present day. The focus will be mainly on writers' varying treatments of Manchester and their response to its dramatic transformation from a market town into an urban metropolis. Among the authors to be included in the exhibition are Thomas de Quincey, Mrs. Gaskell, Francis Thompson, George Gissing, Mrs. Linnaeus Banks, Howard Spring, Walter Greenwood, and the Lancashire dialect poets Edwin Waugh and Ben Brierley. There will also be some treatment of Manchester publishing, including the Heywood brothers in the nineteenth century and the present day Carcanet Press, with which the Library has close links."

The *Wakefield Express* for 19 June ("Hymn writer's work on show," p. 10) gave a brief account of a small exhibition on Sabine Baring-Gould at the Gissing Centre, to be open on Saturday afternoons until the end of October. The books on show are from the collection of John Goodchild. It will be remembered that Baring-Gould, a man with many interests, whom Gissing had in mind when he described Sir Quentin Ogram's matrimonial venture, was personally acquainted with Thomas Waller Gissing. Evidence of this relationship is given in Vol. III of the *Collected Letters* (p. 212).

Two correspondents, C. M. Wyatt and M. D. Allen, have recently drawn our attention to one of those scarce privately printed selections from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* which were occasionally produced in America between the wars, *George Gissing contemplates his ancient penholder; meditating upon the vicissitudes of a literary career, and the elusive and unsubstantial character of literary fame, as recorded in The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, [Muscatine, Iowa], 1938. The booklet is described on library cards as 7 pages long and 17 cm tall. A note tells us why it has become so scarce: "One hundred and ten copies...have been printed by Carroll D. Coleman at The Prairie Press, Muscatine, Iowa."

Dr. Janice Deledalle-Rhodes informs us that the article by David Livingstone mentioned in note 8 to her own article, "McNaughten's Book': A Hypothesis," *Gissing Journal*, April 1992, p. 17, has appeared in the September issue of *Axis* under the title "Darwinism and Calvinism: The Belfast-Princeton Connection."

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Recent Publications

Volumes

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, edited by John Halperin, Halifax: Ryburn Publishing, 1992. xv + 440 pages. This book is available in green Imperial Bonded Leather (ISBN 1-85331-041-7; £30) and in green cloth with gilt titling (ISBN 1-85331-024-7; £25). 250 copies of each format have been printed. Beige dust-jacket with green titling. For ordering through the Gissing Trust, refer to our July number, p. 37.

George Gissing, *George Gissing's Essay on Robert Burns: A Previously Unpublished Manuscript*. Edited by Jacob Korg, with a selection of poems by Burns, Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992. 83 pages. ISBN 0-7734-9533-9. £19.95. Black cloth with gilt titling.

A. F., *George Gissing 1857-1903: Books, Manuscripts and Letters. A Chronological Catalogue of the Pforzheimer Collection*, [London]: Bernard Quaritch, 1992, viii + 70 pages. Mustard-coloured card covers. Seven illustrations. Bernard Quaritch Ltd define their policy as follows: "We publish catalogues for the use of our customers, and there is no charge for them. In this instance we will try to supply copies to Gissing students who apply in *writing* (not by telephone, and postcards are rather perfunctory, we feel). Form-orders, whether from institutions or library agents, will neither be filled nor acknowledged. The catalogues are free, but postage stamps would be appreciated (£1 U.K. and Europe, equivalent of £2.20 Australasia and Far East, \$3 U.S.A.)."

Clifford Brook, *George Gissing and Wakefield: A Novelist's Associations with His Home Town*. With an introductory essay by Pierre Coustillas, Wakefield: The Wakefield Trust, 1992. 32 pages. Second (revised) edition of a booklet originally published by Wakefield Historical Publications in 1980. Pictorial covers. Thirteen illustrations. ISBN 0-9519658-0-8. Orders should be sent to the Hon. Sec. of The Gissing Trust, Anthony Petyt, 10 Station Street, Sandal, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 5AF. £2.50 + 50p for packing and postage. Payments in sterling only.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Geerten Meijnsing, "De Dagboeken van George Gissing," *Maatstaf* (Amsterdam), September-October 1988, pp. 129-41. A valuable article on Gissing's diary with two illustrations – Gissing in 1888, and Gabrielle after Gissing's death, holding Bijou in her left arm.

Michael Waters, *The Garden in Victorian Literature*, Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988. ISBN 0-85967-736-2. Numerous passages on Gissing; certainly breaks new ground.

Carol L. Bernstein, *The Celebration of Scandal: Toward the Sublime in Victorian Fiction*, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991. ISBN 0-271-00718-4. Contains an extended discussion of eleven of Gissing's novels.

Francesco Badolato, "Thomas Hardy: grande romanziere regionale inglese," *Il Corriere di Roma*, 31 May 1992, p. 4. The last paragraph is on Gissing and Hardy.

Sian Griffiths, "When the Gissing had to stop," *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 5 June 1992, p. 1. On the recent purchase by the John Rylands University Library, Manchester, of a first edition of *Workers in the Dawn*, with photograph of David Riley, reading the book.

D. J. Taylor, "Honest John, the people's don," *Guardian*, 25 June 1992, p. 27. Review, with passage on Gissing, of John Carey's *The Intellectual and the Masses* (Faber).

L. R. Leavis, "George Gissing, Politics, and the Chunnel," *English Studies*, June 1992, pp. 240-47. On John Sloan's book.

George Sims, "Dr. John Gordan of the New York Public Library," *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*, June 1992, pp. 258-62. Gordan was curator of the Berg Collection; Sims reproduces a portrait of him, and refers to Gissing's contribution to *The Ghost at Brede Place* as well as his letters to Edith Sichel.

Russell Kirk, "Current Books in Review," *Sewanee Review*, Summer 1992, pp. lxxii-lxxv. Review of Vols. I and II of the *Collected Letters*.

Pierre Coustillas, "Conrad parmi ses contemporains: *primus inter pares*?" *Europe* (Paris-based literary monthly), nos. 758-59, June-July 1992, pp. 11-20. Part of this article is devoted to Gissing and Conrad.

Jonathan Keates, "What the Grocer Saw," *Independent* (London), 4 July 1992, p. 33. Review, with passage on Gissing, of John Carey's *The Intellectual and the Masses*.

Anthony Curtis, "Books: A Working-class hero who found himself revolted... The latest in the renaissance of George Gissing, champion of the poor," *Financial Times*, 23 August 1992, *Weekend FT*, p. xii. Review of *The Nether World* (World's Classics), *New Grub Street*

(Ryburn Publishing) and Vols. I to III of the *Collected Letters*.

Ruth and Peter Herzog; "Alte Fotografien 1850-1900," *Du: Die Zeitschrift der Kultur* (Zurich), Heft Nr. 7/8, July-August 1992. The latest number of this profusely illustrated periodical is devoted to Rome, Egypt and Paris in old photographs dating from the latter half of the nineteenth century. Many of the splendid photographs taken in Rome and Paris are of sites visited or referred to by Gissing in his diary and correspondence. The periodical proper is accompanied by a Leseheft which contains numerous passages from the writings of contemporary personalities on the three places concerned. A substantial extract from Gissing's diary for 1888 appears on p. 39 of the Leseheft. This is a pictorial document of exceptional interest. Thanks are due to Wulffhard Stahl for sending a copy (Swiss francs 22, DM 24).

James Ferguson, "Catalogues," *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*, September 1992, pp. 429-31. Review of the Quaritch catalogue of the ex-Pforzheimer Library.

Glyn Turton, *Turgenev and the Context of English Literature 1850-1900*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992. ISBN 0-415-07742-7. One of the six chapters is devoted to Turgenev and Gissing.

Maria Socorro Suarez Lafuente, "El infierno social de George Gissing," in *Miscel.lània Homenatge Enrique Garcia Diez*, ed. Angel Lopez Garcia and Evangelina Rodriguez Cuadros, University of Valencia, Spain, 1992, pp. 265-73.

Subscriptions

The Gissing Journal is published four times a year, in January, April, July and October. Subscriptions are normally on a two-year basis and begin with the January number.

Rates per annum are as follows:

Private subscribers: £8.00

Libraries: £12.00

Single copies can be supplied as well as sets for back years. Complete runs from January 1965 are available.

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7 Town Lane, Idle, Bradford BD10 8PR, England.

Information for Contributors

The Gissing Journal publishes essays and notes on Gissing and his circle. Contributions may deal with biographical, critical, bibliographical and topographical subjects. They should be addressed to the editor, Pierre Coustillas, 10 rue Gay-Lussac, 59110 La Madeleine, France.

This journal is indexed in the *MLA Annual Bibliography*, in the Summer number of *Victorian Studies* and *The Year's Work in English Studies*.

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