

THE GISSING NEWSLETTER

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

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-- 1 --

Love and Culture in *Workers in the Dawn*

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In his first novel, *Workers in the Dawn*, George Gissing lays the foundations for a pattern of relationship between love and culture that will evolve throughout his further productions. This work, then, can be considered as a chosen field for the exploration of such basic elements as compose the closely-knit network existing between the two main poles of activity of his heroes.

As is often the case with Gissing’s characters, Arthur Golding’s sentimental life is rich and

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-- 2 --

varied, it mainly develops according to a classical and significant contrast between the educated Helen Norman and the uneducated Carrie Mitchell; and naturally enough, each of these women, in her own particular way, has something to do with culture. But the picture of Golding’s loves would not be complete if we did not include the figure of Lizzie Clinkscales. For contrary to what he does in the majority of his other novels, Gissing takes his hero from early childhood and follows him to manhood, and as a result we are allowed a view of a childhood love that is far from being irrelevant to the point at issue. It is a sort of prologue, like the opening chapters of *The Unclassed*, and as such contains in the bud elements of further developments. From the beginning it is quite clear that the two children belong to two different worlds. It may seem strange to speak of a difference in social status between Lizzie Clinkscales and Arthur Golding when we remember that the former is but the daughter of an East End grocer; and yet, Golding being parentless and a mere shop-boy, there is as wide a gulf between him and Lizzie as between a squire’s daughter and a stable-boy. At least we are made to feel so, through the mother’s arrogance mainly, and through Lizzie’s condescension too. Gissing is very keen on pointing out such class distinctions as exist between the various strata of the

nether world and rejects any attempt to view the latter as a homogeneous suffering group; it appears to him as a sort of primeval jungle, a magma of humanity as it were, in which some of the inhabitants contrive to recreate, or even perhaps to prepare the inequalities to be found in the world at large between lower and higher classes. In that respect the relationship with Lizzie Clinkscales heralds the situation with Helen Norman herself.

In spite of these odds, nature speaks and Lizzie feels attracted to the boy; physically at first, because of course he is good-looking but also on account of there being a certain undefinable gentleness and daintiness about him that sets him apart from the ordinary street-boy. She tries then to come into contact with him, and what could be more natural than to use the medium of her

-- 3 --

current interests: her studies? One day, she asks Arthur to help her with certain difficult sums but unfortunately poor Arthur must confess not only that he knows nothing about mathematics but that he cannot even read.

Now, this is an important scene in several respects: there is first of all the two children's consciousness of the world of culture or at least of education, and then there are their own individual reactions to the situation. Each of the children becomes aware of the fact of culture and realizes that it is not neutral. The rudiments of culture which the girl wanted to use as a bridge between their two selves turn out to be a wall on which is inscribed their social difference in full letters. Education appears as the visible sign of their belonging to two different worlds and renders communication impossible because, already, even at such an early stage, their interests and their languages are no longer the same: Lizzie is already something of a pedant and Arthur is still an illiterate street-boy. But this common awareness of education results in different behaviours.

Owing to his feminine, reserved temperament, and because of his inferior social status, Golding's love for Lizzie assumes the form of a silent but eager worship, transforming the person loved into a sort of divinity. This nearly religious attitude in love is far-reaching in its consequences because in the present scene the divinity has stepped down from her pedestal to find only ignorance and unworthiness in her worshipper. Hence an intense feeling of shame and hurt pride at seeing the image of his ego shattered in Lizzie's mind; and as a matter of fact, through this first love experience, he has discovered his ego by comparison with another and found it wanting in certain qualities contained in the word "education." Compared with the already sophisticated Lizzie Clinkscales, Arthur Golding is but a raw uncivilized being.

Up to that moment, Golding has been fairly indifferent to matters of education and the reason

-- 4 --

for such indifference is informative: he turned down the opportunity offered by Mr. Norman because of his grief at having lost his father and of a desire to go back to the place where he had been living with him. This strong urge to go back and sleep in the old room connected with the image of the father was the sign of Golding's immaturity and lack of personal identity. Up to that scene with Lizzie, Golding has appeared as a child with mainly emotional reactions to the world, living at first on the level of feelings only, unable to adapt himself to a new situation, centred on his grief and then, under the weight of circumstances, brought down to live on the lowest possible level, having for sole preoccupation the finding of food and shelter. Through his love and admiration for Lizzie he gets in touch with another kind of existence, with knowledge and worthiness. This first meeting with love has revealed to him his underdeveloped self and shown the only way to improvement: Learning. In this first stage, then, love appears as an eye-opener and a foil, an incentive to educate oneself in order to be worthy of the other.

This pattern is central to the love and culture relationship in Gissing's novels: most of his characters, at least those who are valuable in his eyes, ascribe much importance to the opinion of others, they like to be held in high esteem and this they generally achieve through learning; there is nevertheless a major difference which makes Golding's originality compared with subsequent

heroes in the fact that as a rule it is the male partner who is cultured and the female who tries to catch him up: Ida Starr endeavours to cultivate her mind for Waymark's sake, Isabel Clarendon would do the same to please Kingscote, Adela Waltham to please Hubert Eldon etc.

No less significant is what takes place after: Lizzie generously offers to teach him at least the rudiments of her own learning, but her mother, who stands for class-consciousness and the continuation of inequalities, refuses; in spite of this Lizzie, like a modern Ariadne, gives Arthur

-- 5 --

her first spelling book, the key to knowledge, and love plays a new part when it breaks the circle of ignorance and interdicts.

There is a material element to which we must pay attention, and that is the book. This, rudimentary as it is, is the first of a long series that appear in further novels as the symbols of culture, and as an invitation to join the brotherhood of the elect. Gissing's best characters are always carrying a book, which is to them like an identity disk. Think of the number of books that are exchanged, given or lent at a first meeting as a test for further relationship: Waymark carries a book when he meets Ida Starr, who borrows it. Isabel Clarendon finds Kingscote's "Thomas Browne," Grail lends Thyrza a book, Egremont advises Annabel to read *Sesame and Lilies*.

But this, in fact, is only one aspect of the love relationship between Lizzie Clinkscales and Arthur Golding, the one in which it is she who plays an active part, helping him to grow conscious of his deficiencies and starting him on a programme of education. In doing so, she illustrates one aspect of culture which is the handing down of a heritage from the past; culture is not limited to mere preserved knowledge, it is also life and renewal inasmuch as it also coincides with artistic creation.

Arthur has always been sensitive to beauty and, with the help of Mr. Tuck, has developed a gift for drawing, and as a matter of fact he knows that if it is difficult for him to vie with Lizzie in the field of pure knowledge, at least he is capable of creating something beautiful. The present he makes her of the drawing of a parrot has a double aspect: it is both an altruistic and an egotistic gesture. It is altruistic in the sense that this time it is Arthur who gives something to Lizzie and moreover something valuable since it is beautiful; this present is a homage, a means of expressing his love. But at the same time it is an expression of himself, an extension so to speak of his being, and in inviting a judgment of value on the object, it is himself that he wants to be valued and

-- 6 --

recognized. In short, in the same way as love is an incentive to learn, it can also be an incentive to create, and art becomes a means of expressing love. In that case the work of art assumes a double function: as a beautiful product it is a homage to the person loved; but once it is acknowledged as a beautiful creation the creator indirectly has his share of the homage, and takes on a greater stature in the eyes of his partner. Love leads to culture and culture makes love possible by making the lover more lovable.

If Golding's love for Lizzie drove him to learn and create, his passion for Carrie Mitchell brings him to teach and be sterile. The hero has now a modest but decent situation, is fairly cultured for a workman, and he rescues Carrie from the street in a way similar to Gissing's personal experience with his first wife. For Gissing love cannot feed on aesthetic or sensual considerations alone, the spirit and the mind must have their share, so that even if, owing to his age, Golding's love was initiated by sensuality, we must not forget that "what he intensely loved he could not but wish intensely to respect" (II, 147). With Gissing, all kinds of valuable human relationships, be they love or friendship, must be made of mutual respect and of a mutual desire for improvement, so that in the same way as Golding wanted to be worthy of Lizzie and learn from her, he expects Carrie to improve and be worthy of him. He wants her "to develop, in short, into the ideal woman that his imagination had for years loved to depict" (II, 143). This, in fact, is the crucial test for the would-be female partners of so many Gissing heroes: here is what I am from a cultural point of view, are you

ready to cover the way that lies between us? and if so, please do it. On the whole, the heroes are not so heavily didactic as Golding, the invitation is often more subtle, but the situation occurs repeatedly : take for instance the case of Kingcote who refuses to read his book to Isabel Clarendon but leaves it to her that she may plough on her own through the difficult author; it is no less significant that it is Ida Starr herself who asks Waymark to lend her his book.

-- 7 --

But Carrie Mitchell is quite unlike Arthur Golding, she is not possessed with that desire to elevate her mind and to progress continually so characteristic of the true Gissingian hero; and her refusal of the rudiments of culture is the medium through which Golding comes to realize their deeper differences in temperament and outlook. Golding's marriage to Carrie is the first of a series of premature marriages, in which young men with brains marry beneath their intellectual positions because of the lack of opportunities, because of the changes happening in society at the time, because of their lack of money and social position, because of nature.

The tragedy for Golding is not only that Carrie is unwilling to acquire some education, but that she has a definitely degrading influence on him. Marriage and its sequels rapidly entail a narrowing of his cultural activities, he finds less and less time, or has no wish to read and draw, and as a result, if he fails to elevate her, she, at least momentarily succeeds in dragging him down. "When he had lived together with Mark Challenger in this room, he had been accustomed to spend several hours in serious study every day; but since his marriage he had scarcely opened a book"(II, 177). We may note, by the way, that with Gissing male friendships always appear as more fruitful or pleasurable from a cultural point of view than the relationships with women. This at least is particularly true of the first novels, in which we have numberless scenes of two friends enjoying in peace and quiet a poem, a play, a novel, an article, in counterpoint with the tumultuous scenes of passion in which love and didacticism are always mingled in a pattern that supposes two conflicting wills and outlooks, the struggle ending with one character giving in or both giving up.

The receding of culture from Golding's horizon is in keeping with the agitation and turmoil of his daily married life, its lack of quiet and peace of mind. His love for Carrie ultimately results in a scattering of his personality, an impossibility to concentrate on any serious work; and most significantly, when she leaves him, the return of calm is expressed in the sensuous reading of

-- 8 --

Vasari's *Life of the Artists* throughout the evening : "Oh, joy! It was like a draught of cool spring-water to one panting in the desert; like a fresh breeze upon the sea-cliffs to one whose energies have wasted in the hateful gloom of a manufacturing town; like the first ray of fertilising sunshine to one who long yearned in the wilderness of winter for the sweet flowery days of spring; like the first kiss of returning health to one who has travelled even within sight of the very valley of the shadow of death" (II, 196). There can be no better illustration of the necessity of culture for Gissing's main characters, as essential to their minds as food to their bodies. All the key words of the passage point to the connection between Life and Culture. And throughout Gissing's work there is an almost religious respect for the life of the spirit, a deep concern for life in general which appears in continual anxiety lest it should be wasted in vain pursuits. Many of Golding's successors will remember the lesson and see to it that married life should not interfere with culture. And yet there will be relapses, the most notable being Reardon's, for motives that go beyond mere human relationship, but in both cases the characters can be perceived at various levels; with Carrie Mitchell and Arthur Golding, we have culture fighting at close quarters with ignorance arising from social conditions; with Amy Yule and Reardon, culture is fighting with the forces of commercialism and money. On the level of human beings, the effect is nearly the same; there is a strange similarity between the atmosphere of quiet and relaxation experienced by Golding after Carrie's departure and the scene taking place after the breaking off between Amy and Reardon when the latter, free at last from the cares of housekeeping, turns to the enjoyment of culture.

The Carrie Mitchell adventure points to the unfortunate consequences that a hasty marriage may have on art and culture. It clearly heralds Gissing's lack of faith in the immediate possibilities of improvement of the working-classes. Through his daily contact with his wife, in his attempt to

-- 10 --

raise her above her level, Golding comes to realize that the poor have been so blighted by wretched conditions of living that they have come to be another race that would require ages for regeneration. In marrying Carrie Mitchell, Golding, as it were, marries the working-class and gives up art as futile. Out of duty he compels himself to live in a sort of hell completely alien to his true nature, the first of a series of "exiles" by birth or by duty.

It is certainly in the relationship with Helen Norman that love and culture are given full scope. To some extent the themes are similar to those sketched out in the Lizzie Clinkscales "affair," but of course at that stage in the hero's life they are treated with the full impact of passion and it is rather the artistic than the scholarly side of culture which is viewed, and this not without reason. Just as Lizzie helps Golding to discover himself in the field of knowledge, Helen helps him to grow aware and proud of his artistic self. From the start culture is present in the form of art to establish the fact that young Arthur is an exceptional being, different from other working-class children. Yet he is not fully conscious of it, because of his age, and his capacity for self-perception is not yet developed. During that first phase of the novel Gissing paints the child mainly from the outside as if to make this fact more tangible to the reader. It is through the child's connection with the Normans that we are made aware of his abilities. He feels a stranger in the Normans' beautiful refined world: because he has been transplanted from his original working-class environment, and because of his grief at having lost his father, he is socially and sentimentally isolated. It is Helen who first succeeds in breaking his isolation by inviting him to look at a book of fine pictures. Further on in the novel, art plays an important part in bringing them together again: ironically it is through the copy made by Arthur of one of Gresham's pictures that he finds Helen again. Gresham sees the picture in Tollady's window, shows his interest in the young man, decides to help him and thus brings him in daily contact with Helen.

-- 10 --

Art, then, is used as a medium to express love. It might be argued that, after all, this is a natural enough device: has it not been used by Golding already with his first love, and is it not taken up by Gresham too? A brief comparison with those two cases will give an idea of the distance covered since the first experience, and at the same time draw the line between Gresham's and Golding's love. Golding's first "work of art" was meant to excite admiration and value him in the eyes of his partner; as a present it was meant to draw attention to himself and to his reverence for her. For Gresham this problem of valuation is immaterial since he is Helen's social equal, the portrait is only an excuse for seeing her at some length every day and finally affording an opportunity for a declaration of love. The case is entirely different with Golding. This time the picture is not meant to be shown but to be kept secret like his love which he dare not declare, so unworthy of Helen does he deem himself. In this he initiates a long series of silent lovers-worshippers among whom we shall find Casti and Biffen. His love is made up of admiration, worship, humility and the way in which he composes Helen's portrait partakes of the same feelings. This comes out even more forcibly when we bear in mind Mr. Gresham's manner of composition, the latter simply asks Helen to sit several times for him, the portrait is the product of a craft. Completely different is Golding's manner: he watches Helen carefully and intently at Maud's wedding, hidden among the crowd and when he comes back to his studio he feels compelled to draw the portrait at one go, in a sort of trance. Golding is literally possessed with the image of Helen, so great is her aesthetic and emotional impact on his person. At the same time there is a general tone of purity and modesty lent to the quality of his love by the comparison Gissing makes with Fra Angelico; Helen's association with the image of the Madonna is no less significant if we

remember how often the vision of the Virgin is connected with Gissing's ideal of the perfect

-- 11 --

woman. The work of art serves as an outlet for a feverish state in which love is transmuted into a spiritual and artistic force. But the picture, as so frequently occurs with works of art, acquires a life of its own, and although meant by Golding as a chaste means of possessing his beloved, it does not remain entirely secret and is brought to Helen's view by Mr. Tollady's innocent hands, an indirect and no less sweet declaration of love contrasting in its subtlety with the direct and brutal declaration made by Gresham after an evening of drinking and eating. The pleasure aroused in Helen by her discovery is enhanced by its secrecy. For her as for many Gissing characters there is a distinct enjoyment in peeping at the object of interest without being seen. Golding watched Helen without her knowing it and the result was a work of art; in turn she gazes on the embodiment of his love when he is unaware of it. Further in the novel, the picture comes out again, in Carrie's hands, as a token of Golding's past, and it makes him vulnerable because she can make him suffer by tearing it into pieces. But at the same time, in the wreck of his married life, the picture is a powerful reminder of Helen, inciting him to compare the two women lucidly. "What a spirit of sweet and noble intelligence breathed from her whole person. Intelligence – intelligence! That, after all, was what Arthur most worshipped in her; that godlike property in virtue of which man becomes 'a being of such larger discourse, looking before and after' ... But poor Carrie – alas! what was her outward beauty when she utterly lacked all trace of that divine fire, that heaven-aspiring flame" (II, 164). There could be no clearer statement of the deep connection existing between love and culture for Gissing characters, they do not simply fall in love with a beautiful form but with a fine intelligence as well.

Helen and Arthur are brought together again a second time, and she has a determining influence in the choice of his line of conduct: when he is confronted with the problem of deciding whether he ought to go on with social work or devote all his time and energies to art alone, she

-- 12 --

strongly advises him to follow his real nature and be an artist. Then, to feed his inspiration, she proceeds to suggest new cultural sources, like Tennyson's "Palace of Art." Her part here is similar to Lizzie's but on another level: Lizzie gave him her spelling book and helped him on the way to education, Helen, again with a book, shows him new cultural prospects. The scene in which she reads him the whole poem is essential to the love and culture relationship. Friends and lovers are fond of reading to one another, prompted by their love of words, of sonorous sentences, good voices, of music in short; reading aloud also establishes the teacher-pupil relationship that nearly always doubles that of love or friendship. The main difference in that field between *Workers in the Dawn* and subsequent novels is a shift of the cultural pole from the heroine to the hero.

And yet, is not the pattern already sketched out in the present novel, in a subtle way? Seeing that Gissing's main characters cannot love somebody whom they do not respect and admire, why should Helen Norman be an exception? Moreover the female characters need to be dominated and lose themselves in their lovers who must appear as their masters. Now, here is what Helen says to Golding on the night of their mutual declaration: "Scarcely had I strength to write you the reply. My whole being seemed at once concentrated in one desire to fall before your feet and call you my master" (II, 320). Uttered as they are, at a climax of emotion, these words can be misleading and the reader might be tempted to take them as the mere outcome of passion. The word "master" implies more as appears from a conversation between Helen and Maud Gresham about Golding: "Well," said Maud, "when I speak of his ambiguous position, I mean to say one is not quite sure whether one ought to talk to him as an equal or not.... You consider him as an equal?" To which Helen answered: "In many respects my superior ... as an artist he has shown that he possesses genius, and that is a property I bow to, wherever I meet it" (II, 286). Their mutual relationship

appears in a completely different light. Social superiority bows to superiority of the mind and artistic creation. It is because Golding is an artist that Helen acknowledges him as her superior and this publicly. Helen thus breaks the old barriers of class and adheres to a new scheme of values.

It is either their creative power, or their intelligence or culture, that makes of Gissing's heroes what he himself calls "un-classed" or "unclassable people". The same endowments serve as a passport from the lower orders of society to the various regions of the middle-class, but wherever they go culture is the touchstone of their loves.

Gissing also starts using in *Workers* cultural echoes as a means to underline his purpose in the two domains of love and culture. For instance, after working on the subject set him by Helen, Golding goes for a walk and passes a theatre where they play *Romeo and Juliet*: "The play was congenial to his mood and he went" (II, 308). At first sight of course the situation is fairly commonplace: what more natural for a lover than to go and see a play whose characters are so symbolic of love? but at the same time there is an undoubted dramatic irony in the fact that Golding, in a moment of passionate exaltation, can only see the bright side of the play, forgetting that the two lovers will be united in death only. The parallel can be completed by replacing the family feud by class struggle.

The novel opens on the vision of Mr. Norman in search of his friend Arthur Golding senior, whose address is Adam and Eve Court, No. 9. Of course the place is as far removed from the Garden of Eden as it can be and vies in squalor with the adjoining streets. Later on when, according to Helen's instructions, Golding in turn wanders through London in search of his wife, he finds her acting the part of Eve in a *tableau vivant* evoking the Garden of Eden. At that stage, when the novel is reaching its close, the biblical allusion cannot fail to conjure up the constant relationship which has been established between Love and Culture in the Quest of the Ideal, the Quest of the Absolute,

and the discovery of the Self: it was the love of Lizzie Clinkscales that brought Golding to a greater awareness of himself and gave him the key to education. Later Carrie Mitchell represented a plunge into sensuality, an experience in vulgarity and stupidity. It enabled him to realise the limits of education and of social action. The loathing aroused by constant contact with things so alien to his true nature facilitated his accepting himself as an artist. It was with Helen that he came closer to the ideal; she offered the required qualities of the mind and the heart, and she was beautiful, but experience can only be acquired through loss of innocence and Golding was no longer the same. With Gissing love feeds on feelings and culture, but it also needs purity and freedom.

This last image of the Garden of Eden and of the myth of Adam and Eve can be considered as the keystone of the structure illustrating the relationship of love and culture in Gissing's works. Both feed on the same curiosity, the same urge to know, they coincide with the loss of a certain innocence and the gain of knowledge. Both are made up of torture and pleasure, connected with self-knowledge and knowledge of others and of the world. They are the emotional and intellectual sides of a complex unity towards which Gissing's heroes tend and the unity cannot be broken or remain imperfect. If culture is absent, love dies, but if love dies or is withdrawn from the hero's reach, his cultural possibilities rapidly dwindle. They are two fires that feed on one another, at the same time consuming and giving life.

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Book Review

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*George Gissing: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him*. Compiled and edited by Joseph J. Wolff. Contributors: Pierre Coustillas, Paul Goetsch, James A. Rogers and Joseph J. Wolff. Series General Editor, Helmut E. Gerber. Northern Illinois University Press. De Kalb, Illinois, 1974.

The appearance of this bibliography is an event of great interest to all students of Gissing and the period in which he wrote. Much of its material is not new, for it brings together and amplifies the bibliographies that have been appearing since 1957 in *English Literature (formerly English Fiction) in Transition*. It is the fourth of the "Annotated Secondary Bibliography Series on English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920" which Professor Gerber, the editor of *ELT* has developed from the listings carried in his journal over a period of many years. The series has an interesting background. The thoroughly worked-up annotated bibliographies produced by Professor Gerber and a large number of industrious contributors which were published in the modest mimeographed pages of *ELT* were extremely useful sources to those interested in the writers of the period it covered. Under Professor Gerber's general editorship, the scattered listings are now being assembled into an impressive series of bibliographies with a simple uniform format. The entries are grouped by years, appear alphabetically by author within each year, and are numbered in sequence. There are only two departures from this scheme; anonymous listings are localized only according to the year of publication, and may be found anywhere within that year; and reviews are appended to the entries covering the books to which they pertain. Indices of authors, titles, periodicals and foreign languages facilitate reference. Bibliographies of Maugham, Conrad and Hardy have already appeared, and the series will ultimately have volumes on Forster, Galsworthy, D. H. Lawrence,

-- 16 --

Ford Madox Ford and Pater, and will constitute a very considerable contribution to the study of modern English literature, sustained over a period of many years and involving the co-operation of a large number of researchers.

Readers of *ELT* will have seen many of the entries in Professor Wolff's bibliography as they were published, but will find this corrected and unified listing no less indispensable. It contains 1196 entries, from the brief comment on *Workers in the Dawn* which appeared in the *Graphic* on June 19, 1880, to Jack Zucker's poem on Gissing in the *Gissing Newsletter* of January, 1970. (However, the first published allusion to Gissing's work was the *Athenaeum* notice of *Workers in the Dawn*, which appeared a week earlier than the *Graphic* review, but is the third entry in the bibliography.) It is the smallest volume of the series so far: the Maugham bibliography, edited by Charles Sanders (1970) contains 2355 entries, the one on Conrad, edited by Bruce E. Teets and Helmut E. Gerber (1971) contains 1977, and the one on Hardy, edited by Professor Gerber and W. Eugene Davies (1973) contains 3153.

I had better admit that the generosity with which the *Gissing Newsletter* and its editors and contributors are treated by Professor Wolff makes us blush and threatens to interfere seriously with the objective functioning of our critical faculties. The contributions to Gissing criticism of both the former editor and the present one (who is himself a contributor to this volume) are thoroughly covered (with some exceptions) and no fewer than forty-six entries are devoted to material from the *Newsletter* itself. This high figure is entirely natural, for the bibliography sets out to be as inclusive as possible, and succeeds in achieving impressive range and depth. In his Preface, Professor Wolff states that his volume is more complete than any previous bibliography, and that he means to be as thorough as practical considerations allow. He lists and annotates brief reviews or parts of review

-- 17 --

articles, material in foreign languages (including Japanese, Italian, Swedish and Czech), unpublished dissertations in English and other languages, discussions and allusions in general



works and works on other subjects, and letters on Gissing that have appeared in the correspondence columns of journals and newspapers. Reprints and revisions have been carefully traced and identified, so that they can be obtained in their most convenient form. Much that no reader could find for himself is unearthed, and the abstracts that follow each entry make it possible to gain a very fair if necessarily sketchy view of the course of Gissing criticism.

However, the bibliography is not without its problems, which may be divided into two classes: those connected with its genre, and those peculiar to this particular project. Bibliographies of this kind are bound to be vulnerable at a number of points. Their annotations, to begin with, cannot please everyone. Since the listings are unselective, and everything must be annotated some of the entries, together with their notes, must be apologized for with such comments as "Slight," "Unimportant" or even "Worthless." The notes generally limit themselves to summarizing the contents of their originals and evaluations, if any, are confined to bracketed comments added at the end (a style carried forward from the *ELT* listings), yet some informed analysis of what is being summarized often seems called for. Then there is the question of proportion. Some readers may feel that Samuel Vogt Gapp's well-known *George Gissing, Classicist* contains facts that need to be abstracted in some detail, or that Madeleine Cazamian's *Le Roman et les idées en Angleterre* deserves more than the eight lines of general characterization devoted to it. Annotators have to face the fact that opinions will invariably differ about matters like these.

It is a peculiarity of secondary bibliographies (as compared with primary ones) that they

-- 18 --

cannot approach completeness, even in theory. Professor Wolff cheerfully acknowledges that he has had to accept practical limits, while trying to be as inclusive as possible, and no one, I think, will feel that the general range of his search has been deficient. Yet there are some fairly serious omissions that seem due to oversight rather than to editorial policy. The trouble seems to have been that the bibliographers' net has missed material of value published in out-of-the-way places. Clara E. Collet admired Gissing's work, shared his interest in the social problems of women, and penetrated his reserve to become a good friend and valuable ally; yet her article, "George Gissing's Novels: A first Impression," which appeared in the *Charity Organization Review* in October 1891, is not listed, though the report of the lecture she gave on his novels the following year is. Another odd omission is a valuable article by one of the major contributors to the bibliography: "George Gissing: Bohème Bourgeois" by Pierre Coustillas, which appeared in the *Annales de l'Université de Madagascar* in 1968. The Italian contributions should have included two strong articles by Maria Chialant, both published in *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale* (Naples), "The Odd Women di George Gissing e Il Movimento Femminista" (1967) and "Dickens, Gissing e Orwell" (1969).

Bibliographies of this kind cannot, by their nature, be complete, but they must maintain high standards of accuracy if they are to inspire confidence. I am sorry to have to report that the present volume is unreliable enough typographically to put the reader on his guard. The editor is given as "Joseph J. Wolff," but in the list of contributors that faces the title page his name has lost its middle initial. One of the titles in the check-list of Gissing's books is incorrectly given as *Critical Studies in the Works of Charles Dickens*. There is considerable uncertainty about the spelling of foreign languages. But even the familiar English names "Radcliffe" and "Holborn" are mis-spelled. The abstract of Irving Howe's introduction to *New Grub Street* has him saying that Gissing's people are

-- 19 --

"physically" rather than "psychically" displaced.

Readers may wonder what relationship the present bibliography bears to the *ELT* listings upon which it is based. Comparisons show that it incorporates much of the work done over many years by Pierre Coustillas, Paul Goetsch, Philip Armato, W. L. George, James Haydock and a number of others, so that it is a genuinely co-operative enterprise. Most of the *ELT* entries have been re-worked for inclusion in this new bibliography; the numerous errata that bedevilled the old

typewritten lists have been corrected, and the entries themselves are absorbed in a variety of ways. Some – especially those dealing with material in foreign languages – have been reprinted without much change; others have undergone verbal alterations, compression, severe cuts or complete re-writing. These procedures have not always produced improvement. For example, the *ELT* entry specifies that the Gissing article in the *Dizionario Universale della Letteratura Contemporanea* makes two biographical errors: it says that Gissing studied at the University of Jena, and places his death at St. Jean-de-Luz instead of St. Jean-Pied-de-Port. But the new listing says only that the information in the article is “usually reliable.”

These deficiencies are, however, only marginal, and are far outweighed by the many additions and rectifications which are brought forward. On the whole, this bibliography succeeds admirably in its purpose of illuminating the whole field of Gissing studies, a task that could not have been accomplished without the long-term collaboration of its editors and their contributing scholars.

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-- 20 --

#### Notes and News

The paragraph about E. M. Forster and Gissing in the April issue prompted reactions from Dr. Keating, of the University of Edinburgh, and from Dr. Ann Pilgrim of York University, Ontario. Dr. Keating thinks that the endings of *The Odd Women* and *Howards End* have enough in common to suggest that Forster might have read and been unconsciously influenced by this novel of Gissing's. He adds that in the catalogue issued by Heffer when they sold Forster's library only one book by Gissing appeared – a first edition of *The Odd Women*. Dr. Pilgrim writes that at some point in the research for her dissertation she discovered a tantalizing reference by Forster to Gissing's fiction. On December 1, 1906, Forster addressed the Old Students' Club of the Working Men's College in London, reading a paper entitled “Pessimism in Literature.” In this paper (later printed in volume 10 of *The Working Men's College Journal*), Forster begins with a survey of pessimism in continental literature, citing the works of Zola, Ibsen and Tolstoy, and then turns to the English scene, saying: “We have in England no one great man whose name rises naturally to our lips, as Tolstoy rises to the lips of a Russian. We have no leader of acknowledged superiority, and it is more difficult to generalize about our literature, and to decide whether it leans towards optimism or pessimism. Yet, if we compare the novelists of to-day with the novelists of fifty years ago, we can surely make a generalization of a kind. The older generation, had a lightness of spirit, a robustness of outlook, that is apparently denied to the younger. Compare Charles Dickens, Charles Reade, Tom Hughes, and Anthony Trollope, with R. L. Stevenson, George Gissing, Thomas Hardy, Henry James. The latter writers have a quality in them that may be called morbid. They are quicker to register discomfort than joy. They are obsessed with the sadness of life – Gissing with the sadness

-- 21 --

of social conditions, Stevenson with the sadness of ill health, Henry James with the sadness of personal relations, Thomas Hardy with the general sadness of everything.” Dr. Pilgrim comments: “Forster does not at all expand on the preceding allusion, so that it is impossible to determine whether he had a specific novel or novels by Gissing in mind. It is interesting, though, both that Gissing came so readily to his mind as a ‘novelist of to-day’ and that Forster could assume his name and works would be readily familiar to his audience.”

Gissing's birthplace in Wakefield, which had been for some time an Oxfam shop, was sold last August for a sum which, compared with what Thomas Gissing must have paid for it in the 1850's, is a staggering one – £37,500. The tablet on the front of the house (unveiled by Ellen Gissing in 1932) is likely to change places once more.

The Secretary of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals communicates that the Society welcomes new members to its quarterly journal *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*. Through its pages scholars can follow the progress of the gigantic computerized *Directory of the Victorian Press*, check the annual bibliography of current work in the field, take advantage of the world-wide survey of manuscript resources and read of the latest research. Membership in the Society is eight dollars, including a subscription to the *Newsletter*. Subscription only is three dollars for individuals and five dollars for institutions. Either to join or to subscribe, contact: N. Merrill Distad, University of Toronto, Department of History, Sydney Smith Hall, 100, St. George Street, TORONTO, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A1.

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-- 22 --

### Recent Publications

#### Volumes

- Joseph J. Wolff (ed.), *George Gissing: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him*, Northern Illinois University Press, 1974, \$17.50.
- George Gissing, *Thyrza*, Harvester Press and Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1974. This reprint of the one-volume edition has an introduction, notes to the text and a bibliography by Jacob Korg. £6.
- George Gissing, *The Nether World*, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1974. With an introduction and a bibliography by John Goode. Price unknown.

#### Articles, reviews, etc.

- Maria Teresa Chialant, "Recensioni," *Annali* (Istituto Orientale di Napoli), 1973, no. 3, pp. 310-15. Review of *Gissing: The Critical Heritage*.
- René Elvin, "Lettre de Londres," *Nouvelle Revue des Deux Mondes*, March 1974, p.755. A notice of *The Nether World*.
- Robert L. Selig, "Comptes Rendus," *Etudes Anglaises*, Jan.-March 1974, pp.111-13. A review of *George Gissing: Essays and Fiction* (1970).
- Norman Mackenzie, "Gissing, the Fallen Man," *Listener*, April 25, 1974, pp. 523-24. A review of *The Born Exile*, broadcast on Radio 3 on March 31 and on May 16. See some comments on this review in the *Listener* for May 16, p. 636 (letter to the editor entitled "Gissing – A Risen Man," by Prof. W. Van Maanen, of the University of Amsterdam).
- Anon., *British Book News*, April 1974. Reviews of *The Born Exile* and *The Nether World*.

-- 23 --

- Helmut Gerber, "Announcements: A Spate of Gissing," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 17 (1974), no. 2, p. 75.
- Anon., *Times Educational Supplement*, July 19, 1974. A notice of *The Born Exile* and *The Nether*

*World.*

- Judy Cooke, "Puritan in the Underworld," *New Humanist*, July 1974, p. 105. A review of *The Born Exile*.
- *Harvester News*, vol. I, no. 3, Spring-Autumn 1974. This issue of the journal of the Harvester Press contains ample comments on recent and forthcoming Gissing publications, as well as a portrait of Gissing in 1888.
- Maria Teresa Chialant, "L'Intellettuale tardo-vittoriano di fronte allo sviluppo dell'industria culturale. – Un caso esemplare: George Gissing," *Annali (Anglistica)*, Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1974, no. 1, pp.9- 75. A long essay on Gissing and late Victorian culture.
- Sylvère Monod, "Confessions of an Unrepentant Chestertonian," *Dickens Studies Annual III* (1974), pp. 214-28. A stimulating comparison between Chesterton and Gissing as Dickens critics occurs on pp. 219-21.