

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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Gissing out of Context : *Denzil Quarrier*

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[This is the first of a series of articles reproduced from an unpublished M.A. thesis which Brian Walker summed up as follows on p. IV of his bound typescript:

In this thesis I question the traditional focus of attention on Gissing’s work which seems to be primarily concerned with the social and historical aspects of his novels and with the personality of the author himself.

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I attempt to consider the novels as works of art, as products of the imagination, as transfigurations and transmutations of reality, and to assess their value as expressing wider truths about the human condition. I examine Gissing’s treatment of character and his analysis of motivation and the springs of action and focus attention, particularly on his employment of irony as a reducing

though positive technique.

I conclude that each novel, whilst it is centred on a particular contemporary development or phenomenon, such as the cult of Aestheticism or the question of female emancipation, is concerned to stress that a complete allegiance to an ideology or social theory is damaging to full personal development. The novels emphasise the value of the timeless loyalties to home and family and the essentiality of love, compassion and self-sacrifice.

This conclusion considerably refutes that image of the gloomy, self-pitying Gissing, and suggests that Gissing, in his novels, insists, in an age of division and doubt, on the necessity for connection and for a positive compromise. As such, his novels are not pessimistic reflectors of social conditions but are subdued celebrations of human possibility.

This first article consists of Section II of Chapter I, which is entitled “A Critical Refocusing”.

Gissing never wished to be classified as a Realist nor did he have much sympathy with Realism. Although his work is often valued as a rich source of historical and sociological material relating to the social realities of the 1880's, Gissing, in his rare critical essays, consistently stressed the essential dichotomy, as he perceived it, between the artist, who is subjectively impelled and has

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an ethical responsibility, and the realist, who must work objectively and who has a responsibility to reproductive exactitude.

Writing about Charles Dickens, a novelist with whom he felt a great affinity, Gissing emphasised just this division of purpose:

Our “realist” will hear of no such paltering with “truth.” Heedless of Pilate’s question, he takes for granted that the truth can be got at, and that it is his plain duty to set it down without compromise; or, if less crude in his perceptions, he holds that truth, for the artist, is the impression produced on *him*, and that to convey this impression with entire sincerity is his sole reason for existing. To Dickens such a view of the artist’s duty never presented itself. Art, for him, was art precisely because it was not nature. Even our realists may recognize this, and may grant that it is the business of art to select, to dispose – under penalties if the result be falsification. But Dickens went further; he had a moral purpose; the thing above all others scornfully forbidden in our schools of rigid “naturalism.”<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in his writings on critical theory, he noted the essentiality of subjective selection in the attaining of the artist’s rather than the realist’s idea of the truth. Thus, in his article “The Place of Realism in Fiction” he wrote:

What do we mean by “reality”? Science concerns itself with facts demonstrable to every formal understanding; the world of science we call “real,” having no choice but to accept it as such. In terms of art, reality has another signification. What the artist sees is to him only a part of the actual; its complement is an emotional effect. Thus it comes about that every novelist beholds a world of his

own, and the supreme endeavour of his art must be to body forth that world as it exists for him. The novelist works, and must work, subjectively. A demand for objectivity in fiction is worse than meaningless, for apart from the personality of the workman no literary art can exist.<sup>2</sup>

In a similar vein, in an article entitled “Why I Don’t Write Plays,” Gissing had explained this subjective dimension:

In dealing with the complex life of to-day I am not content to offer only dialogue. The artist, I agree, must not come forward among his characters; but, on the other hand, it appears to me that his novel will be artistically valuable in proportion to his success in making it an expression of his own individuality. To talk about being “objective,” is all very well for those who swear by words. No novelist was ever objective, or ever will be. His work is a bit of life as seen by *him*. It is his business to make us feel a distinct pleasure in seeing the world with his eyes. Now, to be sure, a skilful dramatist does this, up to a certain point. For my own part, I wish to go beyond that point, to have scope for painting, to take in the external world and (by convention, which no novelist has set aside) the unuttered life of soul.<sup>3</sup>

This, then is Gissing’s literary scope – to “take in the external world ... and the unuttered life of soul.” He was not unconcerned about or unaffected by the social, political and ideological developments of his age. Indeed, he was, throughout his career, genuinely interested in social questions. He also possessed, if only by reason of the meticulous research that would have been necessary to complete the eight quarterly articles he wrote for *Vyestnik Evropy* during 1881-1882,

extensive knowledge of the significant social upheavals which the country was experiencing. He commented knowledgeably, in these articles and in his letters, on such contemporary phenomena as the scientific assault on religion, the question of church disestablishment, the Irish problem, the plight of the poor, the rise of democracy, the popular press and on the problems arising from mass education and from the education of women.

Nearly all Gissing’s novels take, for the framework in which to dramatise their essential idea, a significant, usually quite discrete, question of social concern. In novel after novel, however, his artistic purpose lies, not in the consideration of the social dilemma, but rather in the examination of the complex problems in human relationships which are initiated or emphasised by that social dilemma. Gissing’s novels certainly “take in the external world,” the world of late nineteenth-century England but are much less fundamentally concerned with the manifest facts of social and political life than with the underlying spiritual elements, “the unuttered life of soul” which those external elements symbolize or conceal. Thus Gissing’s real excellence lies, primarily, in his intense investigation of human motivation, of the animating emotions of need and desire and in the examination of character and its capacities for freedom and development.

As sources of insight into contemporary conditions, Gissing’s letters, diary and commonplace book are infinitely more objective, factual and historically valuable than are his novels. Whilst, for example, the thematic development of *Born in Exile* takes shape around questions of Christian

belief and the scientific challenge, of religious hypocrisy and compromise, matters of great contemporary relevance, Gissing does not treat these problems in anything approaching a moral or intellectual way. There is little analysis of environment, little attempt to exploit the drama that might come from a crisis of conscience. Whilst Peak, like Turgenev's Bazarov in *Fathers and Sons*,

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epitomizes various social forces that were in a definite state of development, whilst he is typical of the superfluous man of the period, he is also, and this is what the novel (as does Turgenev's) insists upon, atypical, irrational, illogical, perverse, unique and inexplicable in social terms. Although he is convinced that he is exceptional, intellectually aristocratic and, ultimately, a modern tragic hero, Peak's story is the perennial one of "the longest journey,"<sup>4</sup> the growth to self-knowledge, the ironic reduction of self-esteem. It is a study of character that is independent of social times and places. As *Fathers and Sons* (which, incidentally, Gissing probably revered more than any other novel<sup>5</sup>) is a story of a nihilist but *about* a son, a nephew, a lover, so *Born in Exile* is a story of a social exile but is about a son, a friend, a lover, a fool, our neighbour, ourselves. In each novel a contemporary ideological allegiance is set against, and is reduced to a less significant concern against, a more immediate "revelation of intense individual need."

A novel of Gissing's middle period, *Denzil Quarrier* (1892), would, ostensibly, seem to possess all the characteristics claimed for Gissing's novels by the "earnest school" of critics who seek to relate them, in some way, to historical actuality. The plot is fashioned around the political election, and Gladstone's victory, of 1880. The main questions of contention are alluded to repeatedly but they are hardly discussed and by the end of the novel interest in them has been totally replaced by the psychological and ethical dilemmas which have developed as a consequence of the circumstances surrounding the election. The novel would appear to be a classic instance in conforming to Jacob Korg's fundamental criticism of Gissing's work, that of "a dénouement that fails to correspond with the social theme, or even contradicts it."<sup>6</sup>

Adrian Poole, on the other hand, whilst also perceiving this change in emphasis from social to individual concern, is prepared to see the artistic value of such an "unpremeditated" development:

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The most valuable aspect of these secondary novels<sup>7</sup> lies in fact in the unexpected disruption of the apparently primary narrative action (the political elections of *Denzil Quarrier*, the complicated religious wars of fifth-century Italy in *Veranilda*), by the revelation of intense individual need. Characters such as Dagworthy in *A Life's Morning* and Marcian in *Veranilda* obtrude a tortured emotional ferocity that the main current of the narrative is simply incapable of sustaining.<sup>8</sup>

Now if, as will be proposed, Gissing deliberately intended that "*the revelation of intense individual need*" should be the dominant interest of his novels, then the "*tortured emotional ferocity*" which his characters undoubtedly express would become, in fact, "*the main current of the narrative*".

If *Denzil Quarrier* were to be regarded in this light, then the final judgement of its merits must surely be determined not by its social accuracy or relevance but rather according to the verisimilitude and sincerity with which it portrays those wider timeless dilemmas of the world which each of us inhabits and by its capacity to lead the reader to a wiser appreciation of the way in

which he, and his fellow men, think, act and feel.

Certainly, *Denzil Quarrier* contains little which clarifies the issues in dispute between the Tories and Radicals in 1880. Instead Gissing focuses his interest on an impulse which, he believed, lay behind all forms of ideology, political or otherwise, an impulse which is fundamentally egotistic. He concentrates attention on the nature of that egotistical desire as it manifests itself in the various personal relationships in the novel and attempts to determine the psychological factors which determine that desire.

In a letter to his friend, Eduard Bertz, concerning *Denzil Quarrier*, Gissing stressed this interest when he commented that "people seem to think it psychologically interesting. I wish you

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could have liked Eustace Glazzard. I thought the man painfully human."<sup>9</sup> In the same letter, he continued:

They tell me that not a single paper has objected to the theme. Indeed, after Hardy's "Tess," one can hardly see the limits of artistic freedom.<sup>10</sup>

What is Gissing meaning here by "the theme"? Poole and Korg see the novel's theme, "the apparently primary narrative action" as "the political elections."<sup>11</sup> Is it possible that Gissing expected an outcry of moral indignation like that which accompanied the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, a novel imbued with questions of sexual feeling and motivation, if the "theme" of his own novel was merely that of political intrigue? Is it not more likely that Gissing's amazement at the absence of any moral condemnation of him arose from his awareness that the main theme of his novel is the reducing of the essential springs of human action to an intense egoism, an egoism which includes within its scope a primitive, insistent, amoral sexual impulse?

*Denzil Quarrier* is a study of the separate reactions to events of three main characters, Mrs. Wade, Quarrier and Eustace Glazzard. It is a study which stresses the omnipotence of the ego in the delicate balance of sympathies which exists between egoism and altruism, love and hate, friendship and enmity, reason and passion, compassion and jealousy. It is a story of the betrayal of mutual trust by the insistent promptings of self-interest. It is an examination of the primary human urge for self-determination and of the all-pervading dominance of personal desires and needs over any transient ideological allegiance.

Denzil Quarrier adopts a political career from motives of ennui and egoism. Whilst, however, wishing to become a cornerstone of society, he attempts, simultaneously, to defy that society by living with the wife of another man. Quarrier tries to blend personal feeling and a self-determined morality (he genuinely loves Lilian and considers that "she *is* my wife, in every sense of the word

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that merits the consideration of a rational creature")<sup>12</sup> with public morality and social law. He attempts to correlate reason with love, instinctive feeling and mutual faith with public justice and approbation. Explaining his "marriage" to his friend, Glazzard, Quarrier exclaims:

"Yes, we must tell lies!" Quarrier emphasized the words savagely. "Social law is stupid and unjust, imposing its obligation without regard to person or circumstance. It presumes that no one can be *trusted*. I decline to be levelled with the unthinking multitude. You and I can be a law to ourselves."<sup>13</sup>

It is a statement typical of many of Gissing's characters who insist on their right to self-determination. In this instance, as in all the others, experience forces upon Quarrier the realization that complete self-determination in defiance of social conditions is impossible. Ironically, it is because Glazzard *does* act as a law unto himself and not as an ethically conformist member of society that Quarrier's secret is disclosed and his private life is destroyed.

Mrs. Wade is an equally typical figure. Her apparent concern for female emancipation is merely a necessary adoption of a social cause to alleviate the introspective despair which would otherwise arise from her awareness of her personal misfortunes. Whilst, on the surface, concerned only for the welfare of others, Mrs. Wade is inherently racked by an ambitious and insidious jealousy, by deep sexual impulses and drives and by an irresistible will-to-power, to dominate, instincts which are the antithesis of her declared ideology.

Abused and miserable throughout her own marriage, Mrs. Wade, now a widow, can only derive true satisfaction and life purpose, not from a selfless altruism but rather from recognising and encouraging the inner demands of her being, the raw, primal and antithetical impulses for both love and hate. Gissing believed that every human emotion contained within itself the germ of its

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antithesis. Thus Mrs. Wade's original, and genuine love for Lilian, her desire to help and the satisfaction she gains from helping, is finally overridden by her sexual desire for Quarrier and by the deeper, instinctive satisfactions she gains from an urge to destroy Lilian and to exert her power over her. Gissing subtly delineates her alternating impulses towards Lilian, from love to hate, from a desire to serve to a craving to dominate, from a selfless concern to a rabid jealousy:

In a minute or two Mrs. Wade turned to look; the expression which grew upon her face as she watched furtively was one of the subtlest malice. Of scorn, too. Had she been in the position of that feeble creature, how differently would she have encountered its perils! (p. 301)

It is with the ramifications of this delicate balance of feelings that Gissing's real interest lies. As an anonymous contemporary reviewer commented, Mrs. Wade "contrives to precipitate the tragedy by a tenderly malicious word,"<sup>14</sup> the seeming antithesis of the adjectives serving only to emphasise the accuracy of Gissing's perception of fundamental human interest.

Similarly, Eustace Glazzard is a study of the juxtaposition of antithetical motivations. Like *Othello's* Iago, he betrays his friend from an apparent motiveless malignity, by an action which, on deeper consideration, exposes the complexity of psychological drives and responses which determine the true nature of friendship.

The relationship between Glazzard and Quarrier is perched precariously on a balance of mutual feelings of superiority. Quarrier "had the air of a man who, without any vulgar patronage, and in a spirit of abundant good-nature, classifies his acquaintance in various degrees of subordination to himself" (p. 8). Whilst Glazzard is able to tolerate Quarrier's tone of bantering

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condescension when he is secure in his conviction that Quarrier, at bottom, accepts his, Glazzard's essential superiority, this delicate balance of mutual awareness becomes upset by various circumstances. Glazzard's status is altered by his being beaten to the Liberal nomination by Quarrier and by his marriage to the unlovely Serena Mumbray. Glazzard is all too aware that Quarrier,

although outwardly patronising, regards the marriage as “the *pis-aller* of a disappointed and embarrassed man” (p. 201). It is a shift of understanding of sufficient effect to push the balance of feeling across the thin divide between friendship and enmity:

He had come to hate Quarrier. Yet with no vulgar hatred; not with the vengeful rancour which would find delight in annihilating its object. His feeling was consistent with a measure of justice to Denzil’s qualities, and even with a good deal of admiration; as it originated in mortified vanity, so it might have been replaced by the original kindness, if only some stroke of fortune or of power had set Glazzard in his original position of superiority. Quarrier as an ingenuous young fellow looking up to the older comrade, reverencing his dicta, holding him an authority on most subjects, was acceptable, lovable; as a self-assertive man, given to patronage (though perhaps unconsciously), and succeeding in life as his friend stood still or retrograded, he aroused dangerous emotions. Glazzard could no longer endure his presence, hated the sound of his voice, cursed his genial impudence; yet he did not wish for his final unhappiness – only for a temporary pulling-down, a wholesome castigation of overblown pride. (p. 198)

This is the quintessential Gissing as, politics and social questions forgotten, he focuses attention on the determinants of behaviour and illuminates motivational truths relating to human

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actions, truths which clarify and give concrete expression to vague, unformed perceptions which the reader may have experienced in his own relationships. Here, feeling his position undermined, his self-esteem destroyed, Glazzard responds to a basic impulse, to a lust for power, to assert himself, to bring about a disaster solely for the satisfaction to be gained from that act of assertion. He becomes the figure of his own imagining – “A certain kind of man – not necessarily cruel – [who] would be fascinated with the thought of bringing about such a terrific end by such slight means” (p. 156), the exercise of his will:

“To be weak is miserable, doing or suffering.” The quotation was often in his mind, and he had never felt its force so profoundly as this afternoon. The worst of it was, he did not believe himself a victim of inherent weakness; rather of circumstances which persistently baffled him. But it came to the same thing. Was he never to know the joy of vigorous action? – of asserting himself to some notable result? (p. 203)

Thus Glazzard casually, undramatically, almost in spite of himself, takes the step (that of informing Lilian’s husband as to her whereabouts) that precipitates the tragedy. It is an action which, like Mrs. Wade’s, and despite its consequences, seems hardly a calculatingly malicious act. Nor, afterwards, is it an occasion for remorse but, rather, it is presented as the inevitable outcome of one irrepressible aspect of human nature. As Oswald H. Davis suggests:

The fall of a man like Eustace Glazzard, under sudden stress, to the pull of an inbred though suppressed maliciousness, or to the pressure of a warped instinct, is an authentic phenomenon, and lives adequately in objective display as a rendering of the tragedy and inscrutability of life.<sup>15</sup>

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Glazzard, like Mrs. Wade and Quarrier, belongs not to the nineteenth century, but to all time. Whilst his motivations are hinted at or are allusively treated, he is not subjected to a minute psychological examination nor is he justified or excused. Rather, Gissing leaves the reader to search for a truth about Glazzard within his own experience of life. The “weak motivation and thin characterisation”<sup>16</sup> which Korg finds in the novel is, rather, the manifestation of a more suggestive, dramatic style of writing which Gissing had consciously adopted as he explained in a letter to Algernon, his brother:

Thackeray and Dickens wrote at enormous length, and with profusion of detail; their plan is to tell everything, and to leave nothing to be divined. Far more artistic, I think, is the later method, of merely suggesting; of dealing with episodes, instead of writing biographies. The old novelist is omniscient; I think it is better to tell a story precisely as one does in real life, hinting, surmising, telling in detail what can so be told and no more. In fact, it approximates to the dramatic mode of presentment.<sup>17</sup>

Later, again to Algernon, Gissing writes:

I am convinced that the less you think about analysis the better and more acceptable work you will do. Let the reader analyse character and motive ... do you simply present facts, events, dialogue, scenery.<sup>18</sup>

Gissing’s characters impress, not through the accuracy or depth of the delineation of their psychologies but through the vigour of their struggles in a world which leaves them starkly isolated. In an age of “isms” and “ologies” Gissing insists on the necessity for personal responsibility, stresses that life cannot be reduced to a system. In a rare summary of the fundamental idea behind

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one of his novels, in this case the unpublished “Among the Prophets,” Gissing gave expression to this basic intention:

Instead, I took up another attractive subject – the restless seeking for a *new religion*, which leads people into Theosophy, Spiritualism, and things still more foolish.<sup>19</sup>

Whilst an increasing number of his distinguished contemporaries were committing themselves to ideas or ideals of one form or another, Gissing was able to stand apart and view such commitments in terms of the emotional needs of the pledge taken rather than in terms of absolute truth. Whilst his heroes might often be sensitive social barometers, the novels never become treatises, persons are never subordinated to events, art is never reduced to thesis. Gissing deliberately declined to use typical social figures insisting, instead, on the primacy and uniqueness of individual personal relationships determined by motives which defeat theory, defy ideology; motives which are often trivial, eccentric or irrational. It is an emphasis of concern which far removes him from the main tradition of social conscience writing.



1. George Gissing, "Art, Veracity and Moral Purpose," *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (Glasgow, 1926), pp. 67-68.
2. *Humanitarian* (July 1895), pp. 14-16 (p. 15).
3. *Pall Mall Gazette* (10 September 1892), p. 3.
4. A theme centrally embodied in E. M. Forster's *The Longest Journey* (London, 1907).
5. Writing to Ellen, 17 June 1888, for example, Gissing declared that "Bazaroff [is] a wonderfully drawn character: I have some doubt whether you will understand this typical nihilist. It is the purely *negative* mind, common enough now-a-days in men of thought" (*Letters*, p. 217). Also,

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to Ellen, on 4 October 1883 he wrote, "Did you read of the death of Tourguéneff, the Russian novelist? He was, without doubt, the greatest living writer of fiction, and you must read him some day" (*Letters*, p. 135). On 29 May 1884 Gissing declared to Ellen that "the man is glorious" and, again to Ellen, on 6 December 1887, "Tourguéneff is a man I glory in" (*Letters*, pp. 138 and 204).

6. "Division of Purpose in George Gissing", *PMLA*, Vol. LXX (1955), pp. 323-36. Reprinted in *Collected Articles on George Gissing*, edited by Pierre Coustillas (1968), pp. 64-83 (p. 64).
7. Referring to *A Life's Morning*, *The Emancipated*, *Denzil Quarrier*, *The Crown of Life*, *Our Friend the Charlatan*, *Veranilda*, and *Will Warburton*.
8. *Gissing in Context* (London, 1975), p. 159.
9. *Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz 1887-1903*, edited by A. C. Young (1961), letter of 17 March 1892 (p. 149).
10. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
11. *Gissing in Context*, p. 159.
12. *Denzil Quarrier* (London, 1892), p. 112.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 111. Further references to *Denzil Quarrier* will be in brackets after the quotations.
14. *Daily Chronicle* (20 February 1892), p. 3: reprinted in *Gissing: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Pierre Coustillas and Colin Partridge (1972), pp. 190-191 (p. 191).
15. *George Gissing: A Study in Literary Leanings* (Dorking, 1975), p. 17.
16. *George Gissing: A Critical Biography* (Seattle 1963), p. 181.

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17. *Letters* (August 1885), p. 166.

18. Unpublished letter of 25 July 1891 (Berg Collection) quoted in Jacob Korg's *George Gissing: A Critical Biography*, p. 179.

19. *Letters to Eduard Bertz* (11 December 1899), pp. 267-269 (p. 268).

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The Paradox of Success and Failure in the  
Novels of George Gissing

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[A paper delivered at the meeting of the Northeast Victorian Studies Association at Boston College on April 24, 1983].

Among their other radical insights, Gissing's novels offer a critique of the Victorian idea of success. They suggest that failures in life may well be people of superior worth who are the victims of a society that grants success only to the meretricious and insensitive. *New Grub Street* shows one agency of modern society, the publishing industry, destroying the high ideals of authors and driving them to poverty, suffering and death, while industrious hacks rise to wealth and fame. Whelpdale, who has achieved prosperity in spite of his total lack of talent, has the decency to ask why he should have been chosen for happiness while others have perished. "Why should I have come to this," he asks, "and Biffen have poisoned himself in despair? He was a thousand times a better and cleverer fellow than I. And poor old Reardon, dead in misery! Could I for a moment compare with him?" To

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this, his friend answers: "My dear fellow ... success has nothing whatever to do with moral desert..."

A familiar insight. But it struck the naive and idealistic Gissing so forcibly in early life that he came to regard injustice as a cosmic principle. In the social context depicted in his novels, success, even spiritual success, is a sure sign of moral degeneracy, while failure and helplessness are nearly as certain to be signs of genuine virtue.

The point is made directly in *Thyrza*, where a well-intentioned young aristocrat tries to educate workingmen by offering lectures on literature and setting up a library in the slums. These efforts are of course totally ineffective, and Egremont goes off to America, where he learns about Cornelius Vanderbilt, the ignorant, ill-mannered, unprincipled millionaire who was nevertheless a success in an ethical sense, not because he made an enormous fortune, but because he provided employment for large numbers of people who might otherwise have starved. Thus, his entirely mercenary motives produced a great deal of good, while our hero's noble project came to nothing. "What is the state of a world," he asks, "in which such a man can do such good by such means?"

We might reply that it is the world described by Gyorgy Lukacs in his *Theory of the Novel* as the post-epic world that offers no coherence in itself, which the novelist must treat selectively if he is to form the systematic view he needs as the basis of his art. "Every art form," says Lukacs, "is defined by the metaphysical dissonance of life which it accepts and organises as the basis of a

totality complete in itself..." (p. 71). Gissing clearly perceived the dissonance between economic and intellectual life presented by modern society, and based his systematic view of reverse justice upon it. According to Lukacs, the task of locating the basis of the necessary totality is usually assigned to a protagonist who must find a way of living a significant life in a context of reality barren of authentic values. He usually solves the problem by resigning himself to the fact that

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reality itself must remain heterogenous and disorganized, and by reducing his aspirations to personal ideals maintained in private life. In a number of Gissing's novels, the resources of the multi-plotted Victorian novel are used to present these developments through separate figures ; the protagonist is split into two characters, one who willingly accepts reality with its disorder, corruption and inconsistency, and one who withdraws into a world of his own. This withdrawal, however, is not the spiritual triumph it may become in other novels, but a defeat, sometimes actually leading to death, for Gissing's world is so strongly dominated by economic or materialistic forces that it offers no third alternative to meretricious success or fugitive virtue. The contrasting careers of the paired characters amount to a condemnation of the Victorian social system and present an effective analysis of social injustice rather than a mere story of psychological struggle.

In *Born in Exile*, a novel of Gissing's middle period, the contrasting figures are an intellectual of humble origin who is motivated by a desperate desire to share the grace and distinction of middle-class life, and a hypocritical clergyman who advances his career by supporting the fashionable Broad Church doctrine that religion ought to be adapted to the scientific temper of the times. In order to make himself acceptable to the father of the girl he loves, Godwin Peak conceals his agnosticism and pretends to be a theological student. It is an experiment in morality. In Peak's view, his action is an attack on the hypocritical social code of honor and decency and its basis is the relativistic morality dictated by his agnosticism. The result of this venture into dangerous moral terrain is disastrous. Peak is found out, rejected by the woman he loves and the people he wants to befriend, and dies in the loneliness he dreads. In the meantime, his counterpart character, who successfully conceals his own self-interest, moves into a clerical career, frequents the society that has rejected Peak, and marries into the aristocracy. After all this, it is expected that he will leave the

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church. The irony speaks for itself, but is made explicit by one of the characters, who says of the clergyman, "He is one type of the successful man of our day. Where thousands of better and stronger men struggle vainly for fair recognition, he and his kind are glorified." In the meantime, the hero, Peak, is forced to go abroad, declaring: "Though my desires are as pure as those of any man living, I am compelled to express myself as if I were about to do something base and underhand. Simply because I have never had a social place."

The responsibility, we note, is borne by society, whose rigid moral standards cannot discriminate between the sincere, if misguided seeker after truth and the frivolous advocate of trendy ideas. It shows no interest in Peak's investigation into the bases of morality, but demands only that its class divisions be respected, and that its complacency go undisturbed.

In the minor novel, *Will Warburton*, which was published posthumously, each of the paired characters is allowed to see the paradox of his fate. The hero is a young businessman who loses his money through a bad investment, and is forced into the disgraceful occupation of selling groceries behind the counter in a shop. He at first conceals this fact, leads a secret life, and loses the girl he wants to marry; but ultimately he comes to like his humble situation, recognizes its advantages, and

happily marries a girl who does not mind being a grocer's wife. The other half of the balance is a painter who wins prosperity by shamelessly courting conventional taste and marrying the woman who rejected Warburton. The artist is too superficial a fellow to experience genuine remorse, but he does say, in a moody moment, that the money he has earned means nothing to him. The woman he is talking to mischievously asks: "Isn't it easy *not* to pursue success?" but he has no good answer, probably because he only wishes he were able to regret his success as a moral failure, but cannot really rise to this level.

But Gissing's most far-reaching use of paired characters appears in *New Grub Street*, which

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deals with what had become, much to Gissing's disgust, the profession of letters. The writers in this novel often use the words "success" and "failure" as they discuss their careers. I have counted fourteen "successes" and nine "failures" (or their derivatives) in significant contexts up to a point just past the middle of the novel, where the issues begin to be resolved, and where I stopped counting; and if the count were extended to synonyms, it could easily be tripled or quadrupled. This lexical feature shows that Gissing's writers think of their opportunities as clear-cut materialistic alternatives, without a middle ground. It is the bourgeois vision of life as a rags to riches, boom or bust, neck or nothing proposition. The standards are not those of artistic achievement or personal spiritual fulfillment. By success and failure, the people in the novel mean money and the lack of it.

Gissing felt profound contempt for the money standard, but he also realized that it could not be ignored, and we see his characters devoting their energies to material gains they despise and forgetting about the artistic or spiritual achievement that money is supposed to make possible. In his chapter on Gissing in *The Political Unconscious*, Fredric Jameson has observed: "The dialectic of desire is ... in Gissing something like the negation of a negation. Since his characters never reach the point of being in a position to desire, it is as though the whole system of success and failure has been undermined ..." (p. 205).

Even Edwin Reardon, the writer who is the book's protagonist and who is considered something of a serious artist, identifies success in his profession with luxury. What he means when he says, "I am a failure and I can't look with charity on the success of men who deserve it far less than I," is that he cannot support his family as he feels he should, and is being forced into poverty. He loves literature, but accepts the fact that it has been completely devalued in his society. He even

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blames his "bookish habits" for interfering with his "success" as a writer. When the publisher's offer for his latest novel is very low, he thinks, "Here was failure put into unmistakable figures."

The attitude Reardon has unwillingly accepted resembles that of Arnold Bennett, who took the "sturdy mid-Victorian" view that hard work, independence and persistence would achieve "the middle-class economic success which comes only to the writer who can sell his wares." John Batchelor, who makes these observations about Bennett in *The Edwardian Novelists* (1982) describes this position as the reverse of that of Gissing who "bemoans the fact that writing is an industry governed by economic laws".

Bennett's position is represented in *New Grub Street* by Jasper Milvain, a disarmingly modest fellow who admires Reardon's talent, and freely admits he has none himself, but declares that he will make his way as an author by turning out acceptable trash, and says with satisfaction: "Never in my life shall I do anything of solid literary value ... But my path will be that of success." Poor Reardon never writes trash, not because he is too fastidious, but because he lacks the ability to

compete in the literary market place. At the end of the novel he sinks into poverty, grows ill and dies, but Milvain prospers, marries Reardon's beautiful widow, and becomes the editor of a review. The irony underlines the destructiveness of the competitive system that has invaded the literary field.

There are two minor figures in *New Grub Street* who ignore the commercialization and incoherence of their society, and write for traditional motives. Alfred Yule insists on producing literary criticism instead of fiction for the popular press, and has nearly killed himself in the struggle for success – and this is a genuine conception of success, recognition and literary distinction. But he never achieves these goals, and when he reaches fifty, we are told, “his life had been a failure.” Then there is Harold Biffen, a penniless stylist who works painstakingly at a masterpiece of absolute realism. His book is a failure and he ends as a suicide. By juxtaposing these

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figures with the contrast between Reardon and Milvain in the central plot, *New Grub Street* effectively conveys the point that a commercialized society has made it impossible to pursue anything of genuine value for its own sake.

Gissing never read Marx, but he accepted, with sorrow, the principle that in modern society at least, economic life tends to monopolize consciousness, and as some of my references have already suggested, there is some mutual illumination to be found between Gissing's view of society and criticism of a Marxist persuasion. For example, the specifically economic analysis of the novel form developed by Lukacs' follower, Lucien Goldmann in *Towards a Sociology of the Novel*, helps to illuminate the Victorian conceptions of success and failure as Gissing saw them. According to Goldmann, market-centered societies are dominated by exchange value, which is purely quantitative and abstract, and has little reference to the quality, usefulness or beauty of the products of labor. In a society of this kind, the alternative standard of worth, use value, is of concern mainly to the minority who are capable of valuing things for their own sake, without regard to the price they may bring on the market. These marginal figures, whom Lukacs calls “problematic individuals,” are the idealistic citizens of disordered society who are the usual protagonists of serious novels, and Gissing's major figures fit Goldmann's description exactly. According to Fredric Jameson, their desire for fulfillment has undergone the reification industrial society imposes on all aspects of life, making positive achievements “inauthentic,” while failure acquires “an authenticity at best pathetic.” But Gissing is not, says Jameson, recommending renunciation or the acceptance of narrowed possibilities; rather, he expresses a *resentment* or sense of grievance directed at the motivations imposed by a society dominated by exchange value. He does this by showing that those who succeed do so by committing themselves indiscriminately to whatever

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happens to be negotiable in the market place of social life, while those unfortunate enough to be in touch with some genuine source of authenticity whose claim cannot be denied are deprived of social status and sometimes of life itself. They pass judgment on a disordered and incoherent world by becoming its failures.

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## Reviews

*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, Introduction by John Stewart Collis. With bibliographical notes by Pierre Coustillas. Harvester Press, 1982. Cloth, £10.95; paperbound, £4.95.

There was a time when *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* was considered the only one of Gissing's books that could be read without a good measure of tolerance, but as the merits of his fictional writings became clear, the situation has been nearly reversed, and one is forced to admit that its great days are likely to be over. Even though it has passages that connect themselves with current interests in ecology, pacifism, and the threat of technology, its manner of the "familiar essay," and its placid, unassuming style make it a period piece. In its time of popularity, it was read and loved for its atmosphere of serenity, its praise of nature, its purity of style, and the unmistakable sincerity of its opinions, however perverse they might seem. Most of Ryecroft's virtues have been superseded, and there are not many readers who can welcome its peculiar brand of Stoical hedonism or identify with the eccentric personality of the supposed author. Some recent commentators, in fact, have been impatient with the timid, passive, self-pitying complacency they hear in Ryecroft's voice. But the book is, of course, permanently valuable to readers of Gissing as an exposure, however

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oblique, of the novelist's feelings, and is an essential title in the Harvester Press Gissing series. This edition is an offset printing of the "Third Impression" which appeared in April, 1903. It includes the index, an eccentric feature in a book of this kind, and the pages of advertising that appeared in the original edition, which are certainly superfluous in the reprint. It does not, unfortunately, maintain the scholarly quality of earlier Harvester reprints. The bibliographical appendices are thorough, precise and to the point, following the pattern of Coustillas' contributions to the series. But there are no explanatory notes to deal with Ryecroft's Greek and Latin, identify quotations, or provide help with allusions and autobiographical references. Coustillas' bilingual edition provides a great deal of material that ought to have been included here, either through annotation, or in the introduction, but the Harvester reprint makes no move to exploit his many insights and discoveries.

Collis' introduction undertakes to identify the real Gissing behind the figure of Ryecroft, drawing rather more upon intuition and affection than on facts. It is vigorous and colorful, and is best approached as a disarming exhibition of character than as a serious analysis. For one thing, it begins with some startling statements calculated to lift the reader right out of his chair. Collis announces that Gissing really did inherit money that enabled him to retire from writing and move to the country, much as Wordsworth did in the *Prelude*. Before the reader has completely collapsed at this revelation – or perhaps too late – Collis admits that this information is not true, but was only Gissing's dream. This heavy-handed tactic does little to gain the reader's confidence.

After a sketch of Gissing's life, Collis pursues the argument that in writing *Ryecroft*, Gissing freed himself, in imagination, from his three demons, poverty, women and work. One might wonder whether Gissing really wanted release from the last two of these, but Collis does succeed in engaging our attention as he skates over the thin ice of his opinions, recklessly disregarding the

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dangers. This impressionistic performance is very different from the introductions to which readers of the Harvester series have been accustomed. It does not give an account of the book's development from the notebooks, point out its numerous relationships to Gissing's other works,

clarify its historical context, explore its value as autobiography, or do any of a number of things that might have brought the reader closer to the text.

As Coustillas' bibliographical notes suggest, *Ryecroft* has had much attention from critics over the years, yet it remains subject to some difference of opinion. Adrian Poole, in *Gissing in Context*, attributes an odd, negative usefulness to it. He locates the book's ultimate value in its relationship to Gissing's other work. Its colorless placidity, generated by a setting in which all of the problems that troubled the real Gissing have been set aside, underlines the courage and energy of the books in which Gissing confronted them in earnest. Poole interestingly, if too briefly, observes that the state of mind embodied in *Ryecroft* encompasses a subtle irony directed against a world so disordered that it justifies withdrawal to the featureless serenity of the Devon cottage.

In the recent Twayne book, *George Gissing*, Robert L. Selig approaches *Ryecroft* as a fictional creation, considerably modified between the two drafts the book underwent, who can be legitimately compared with characters in the novels. Selig points out the measures Gissing has taken to evoke sympathy for a figure who must be regarded, in worldly terms, as a failure.

John Halperin, on the other hand, in *Gissing: A Life in Books* takes the view that *Ryecroft* is to be identified with Gissing himself, that the volume "speaks with Gissing's voice," and is the most direct expression of Gissing's thoughts about the relation of his life and work. Accordingly, he regards as strictly autobiographical *Ryecroft*'s opinions about modern civilization, democracy,

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marriage, literature, and other topics, and also regards his reminiscences about his youthful poverty and other experiences as factual. It is, Halperin observes, the most "English" of Gissing's books, a point which reminds us that it was written while Gissing was living in France, and that its autobiographical bearings may often be quite indirect. *Ryecroft*'s statement about his country house, "in England this is the dwelling of my choice; this is my home," is not at all factual, but rather the pathetic wish of a man who longed for England, but never expected to have a home there again.

Jacob Korg.

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Robert L. Selig, *George Gissing*. Boston : Twayne, 1982. \$15.95.

Professor Selig is not unknown to readers of the *Newsletter*, who will recall his articles on Gissing in Manchester and on the short stories. He is also the author of two major articles on *In the Year of Jubilee* and *New Grub Street*, the second of which was recently reprinted in Michaux's anthology of criticism, but never before had he offered us any contribution of book length on Gissing.

The present book – a common practice in a series which now numbers hundreds of volumes – attempts to give a reasonably complete survey of the novelist's work, and when completeness is altogether impossible as in the case of the short stories, a brief study of representative texts is presented.

The arrangement of the book is excellent and the titles of the chapters are aptly chosen. After "A Life of Errors and Revisions," Robert Selig discusses the novels of the 1880's in two chapters dealing on the one hand with the working-class novels and with *Isabel Clarendon*, *A Life's Morning* and *The Emancipated* on the other.

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Throughout this section of the book the discussion hinges on the realism-aestheticism dichotomy. Signs of irritation with Gissing's youthful idealism are not lacking and one notices Selig's relief when he has left behind *The Nether World*. The turning-point is clearly signposted in the preface when the diary for 13 June 1888 is quoted apropos of *The Nether World*: "It is poor stuff, all this idealism; I'll never go in for it again." It is true that until then Gissing had often followed the sentimental-idealist tradition. It crops up in all his fiction of the 1880s, but Professor Selig feels capable of praising only the realistic elements. Throughout the volume much space is devoted to plot analysis as is certainly expected in a series which is intended to offer introductions to the writers concerned, but the plot abstracts contain a good deal of indirect literary appreciation. The starting point is clear enough: "This 'idealizing' strain within a 'realistic' genre has important connections with the moralistic assumption that novels should improve their readers – in short, with a pervasive Victorian didacticism that one might call neo-Neoclassic." Doubtless after *The Nether World* Gissing was by and large true to his word and we no longer come across that desire to uplift the soul, which is so conspicuous in *A Life's Morning*. Indeed, there is no difficulty in accounting for the change. Nell's death, Gissing's journeys to Italy and Greece in 1888-1890, his marriage to Edith Underwood were a succession of events, personal and intellectual, which deeply affected his view of life and consequently his approach to fiction. It is surely no accident if the first novel he wrote after his second marriage was *Born in Exile*, a story which is a settling of accounts with his own past ego. Greater objectivity and a more constant and consistent satirical approach to story-telling can be observed from *The Emancipated* (surely an ironical title if any) onwards. Still the view of the late 1880s and early 1890s as a watershed is not fully satisfactory: one has but to think of Gissing's open letter on *Workers in the Dawn* (which is aggressively militant and fails to

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comment on the idealistic aspects of the story) and of such late novels as *The Crown of Life* and *Will Warburton*, both so weighted with sentiment, to realize that there is more continuity than discontinuity in the sequence of works composed between 1880 and 1903.

Professor Selig, as his sharp distinction between realism and idealism testifies, has well-defined notions about what the true Gissing is. No one will carp with him for declaring *New Grub Street* and *Born in Exile* Gissing's two major achievements, but he tends to underestimate some minor works like *Denzil Quarrier* and *The Town Traveller*. I cannot agree with him when he writes early in Chapter VII, entitled "An Erratic Diversity," that "much of this miscellaneous fiction" (*The Town Traveller*, *The Crown of Life*, *Our Friend the Charlatan*, *Will Warburton* and *Veranilda*) "lacks the true Gissing flavor, the shabby-genteel realism that marks his finest books." I can easily understand anyone who prefers those novels which deal with the shabby-genteel world, but I think that any of the five just mentioned is as characteristic as, say, *Demos* or *New Grub Street*. Dismissing *Veranilda* as untypical Gissing would amount to obliterating the classical side of his culture. Samuel Vogt Gapp chose as an epigraph to his worthy study of Gissing the classicist a sentence which is a key to a well-balanced understanding of the whole *oeuvre*: "With me it is a constant aim to bring the present and the past near to each other, to remove the distance which seems to separate Hellas from Lambeth." The "erratic diversity" of the five stories analysed in Chapter VII is the best possible answer to those critics who would like to reduce Gissing's fictional terrain to the anatomy of the very limited social space of the unclassed. His world contains other characters than Waymark, Biffen and Christopherson. Besides there is such a thing as comedy in the novels. Admittedly Robert Selig acknowledges this in his sympathetic study of *The Paying Guest*. "This little book," he observes, "stands as Gissing's only novel that successfully makes light



comedy out of English class distinctions.” Gissing’s tolerant view of class distinctions in this book is tentatively brought close to Henry Hick’s observation that working-class Edith, the novelist’s second wife, “would doubtless have made a good wife to a man of her own station.” Interestingly, Robert Selig derives from this *rapprochement* a double question. Did this opinion originate in a remark of Gissing himself? Couldn’t the essentially genial humour of *The Paying Guest* be an offshoot of the writer’s fantasy wish that his second wife had married someone other than himself? Perhaps the mental process by which Gissing’s detestation of Edith could have been transmuted into comedy is a little difficult to imagine, but at least the first question can be answered with some degree of accuracy. True, I do not know whether Gissing expressed himself in such terms in his very few conversations with Hick, but it is worth recalling that he wrote in this strain to Clara Collet shortly after he ran away from home on 18 February 1897 : “Against Edith’s character not a word can be said. The marriage was regular as that of any grocer. She is perfectly sober – in everything but language. She has good qualities and would have made an ordinary mate for the lower kind of London artisan”.

Besides *New Grub Street*, it is mainly the short stories and the belletristic side of Gissing’s work that are praised, and *Born in Exile* comes as a close runner-up to *New Grub Street*. Four short stories are analysed at some length, “A Victim of Circumstances,” “Comrades in Arms,” “The Schoolmaster’s Vision” and “The House of Cobwebs.” They “can help to convey,” Selig thinks, “the high achievement of Gissing’s extensive work in this genre ... [His] mature short stories have an impressive consistency. His own characteristic version of the short narrative form suited his fundamental attitudes. Its inconclusive brevity seems particularly appropriate to his vision of human beings as fallible little creatures entangled in their petty social webs.” The Dickens criticism, *By the Ionian Sea* and *Henry Ryecroft* are also assessed in a very positive manner.

There is little enough in this critical study of Gissing’s works to find fault with except the tepid judgments on a number of major and minor works (a tepidity in the case of *The Odd Women* which is largely due to the presence of human types Robert Selig dislikes, Everard Barfoot prominent among these). The biographical chapter is very good and quite up to date, the notes invariably accurate and informative, the selected bibliography fully to be trusted. The only inaccuracies I have found in it concern the Nelson edition of *Born in Exile* (first published in 1910, not 1913) and the Dutton edition of *A Life’s Morning* (published, with an introduction by Morley Roberts, in 1927-1928, not 1914). Not the least pleasant characteristic of the book is its author’s generosity to his fellow scholars.

Pierre Coustillas

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#### Notes and News

Among forthcoming books of Gissing interest are two volumes co-edited by Pierre Coustillas. *Extracts from my Reading* has been prepared for publication with Patrick Bridgwater, author of *Gissing and Germany* (Enitharmon Press) and, more recently, of an article on Gissing and Goethe

(see Recent Publications). This Gissing notebook contains over 160 quotations in English, French, German, Italian, Latin and Greek and most of them were entered in the 1880s. It is an important document, reflecting Gissing's cultural preoccupations early in his career, and has interesting connections with his published works. It is hoped that the book will be published by the Enitharmon Press in 1984. – The other volume, co-edited with Dennis Shrubbsall, author of two books on W. H.

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Hudson, consists in an edition of 100 letters from Hudson to various correspondents, including George and Algernon Gissing and Gabrielle Fleury. Over half the volume will be devoted to the relationship between Hudson and the Gissing circle. Nine letters from George Gissing to Hudson will also be included. They range from 1889 to 1903. The correspondence with Algernon covers the period 1894-1922.

The next volume of Gissing interest to be published by the Harvester Press will probably be *A Life's Morning*, edited by Pierre Coustillas, with historical and topographical notes by Clifford Brook. A small portion of the manuscript of the novel (Ch. III) has been discovered recently. The editor would welcome any information about the sale and the present whereabouts of the rest of the MS.

In his article on the influence of Virgil on Gissing, Francesco Badolato records the main allusions to Virgil in Gissing's letters, novels and other books. Similar essays would be worth writing on Gissing and a number of major and minor figures who played an important part in his cultural development. Of course the editing of *Extracts from my Reading* offered a splendid opportunity for this, but many writers who figure significantly in Gissing's letters and works do not appear in *Extracts from my Reading*, Shakespeare, Milton and Schopenhauer in particular.

Shigeru Koike's review of *Gissing: A Life in Books* is full of praise for the book though the reviewer rightly observes that Halperin's stance is likely to raise objections, "namely, that an author's books and his private life are two entirely different things which should be carefully distinguished; and that to casually attempt to associate the two or bind them together is a serious

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mistake. Knowing beforehand the possible dangers of his position, Halperin determined to maintain it. His primary reason for doing so, he says, is that Gissing's humanity and distinguishing characteristics, the good as well as the bad, are most strikingly manifest through his fiction, even more strikingly so than through his letters and diaries. The central topics of all Gissing's works are 'sex, money, and class' (p. 3), the reason perhaps being that, as a nineteenth-century writer whom the twentieth-century had left behind, a man writing about contemporary life from a nineteenth-century perspective, Gissing was continually trying to resolve the inherent tensions of these issues in his own life. Halperin's manner of delivery is perhaps best called 'debate,' but it seems to me entirely appropriate; were I to have written his biography, I should likely have adopted the same method."

Mrs. Ernesta Spencer Mills reported Gissing's brief appearance in "Transatlantic Quiz 1982" on Radio 4 UK: "The Transatlantic Quiz is a somewhat highbrow battle of wits between London and New York. The clues are presented in a cryptic way and usually lead to a single word. In the quiz of

7<sup>th</sup> November 1982 the answer was 'rye' and the clues led to (a) one of the Cinque Ports, (b) a drink, (c) a cereal and (d) George Gissing connected it with a small farm holding. One of the American contestants, Brendan Gill, author and theatre critic of the *New Yorker* found the answer to (d) with Gissing's *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, i.e. 'rye' and 'croft.' One of the two London contestants is Lord Norwich, who prefers to be known as John Julius Norwich. He is the author of several books on Venice, Southern Italy and Sicily, and is a television personality."

Copies of the Rothenstein lithograph of Gissing can be obtained from the National Portrait Gallery, London WC2H OHE, at a cost of £1.20. The negative reference number is 8164.

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The *Victorian Studies Bulletin* for March 1983 announced an interdisciplinary seminar on "Social Class in Victorian Literature and Society" organized jointly by the departments of English and History at the University of Toronto and York University, Toronto, and focusing on the early industrial town, the countryside, and late Victorian London. *The Nether World* is to be one of the central literary texts.

A recent review in the *New York Times Book Review* (19 May 1983, p. 19) of a paperback edition of Christopher Morley's *The Haunted Bookshop* (1919) reminded American readers of Morley's special affection for Gissing. An article in the same paper for 23 January 1983, by Edwin McDowell, was devoted to magazines and journals which concentrate on one author. McDowell wrote:

It is a publishing paradox that, when book sales are lagging badly, the number of newsletters, magazines, journals and periodicals committed to a single author may be higher than ever. Their subscribers are usually few, their contents occasionally thin and their quality enormously varied. But these publications are determined to cover the life, times, great works and minutiae of Faulkner or Fitzgerald, Dante or Dickens, Dostoyevsky or Dailey – Janet Dailey, that is, whose 67 romance novels have reportedly sold more than 90 million copies in just the last few years.

"A lot of them publish tidbits and gossip and some really seem to be scraping the bottom of the barrel," said Leon Edel, the Pulitzer Prize-winning

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biographer of Henry James. One or two publications specialize in fan mail and gushing articles better suited to true confessions about Hollywood starlets than authors. Some publications offer puzzles and quizzes based on a writer's fictional creations and book plots. And there are always scholarly examples of the single-author genre. Mr. Edel has nothing but praise for the *Henry James Review*, which is published at Louisiana State University.

Many single-author periodicals survive under a university's aegis, often through the devotion of a faculty member. A few are the product of a single-author society, such as the 48-year-old Baker Street Irregulars, whose quarterly *Baker Street Journal* delights students of Sherlock Holmes and his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The Janet Dailey newsletter is issued by Pocket

Books, the author's publisher...

Single-author publications often represent the single-minded devotion of one editor aided by unpaid contributors...

Professor McAleer, a longtime consulting editor of the Dreiser newsletter, has found that however high or lowly their subjects, single-author periodicals are "a valuable resource to scholars who are too busy to go through everything about a particular writer."

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### Recent Publications

#### Volume

George Gissing, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, with an introduction by John Stewart Collis and bibliographical notes by Pierre Coustillas, Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982, pp. xxxi + xiv + 298 + 6 (unpaginated). Green cloth. £10.95.

#### Articles, reviews, etc.

*Guide to Literary Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, Huntington Library, 1979. The manuscripts of eight novels by Gissing, his memorandum book and eight letters from him are listed on pp. 195-96.

Lawrence Poston, "Three Versions of Victorian Pastoral," *Genre*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, Fall 1980, pp. 305-35. On *Dreamthorp*, *News from Nowhere* and *Henry Ryecroft*.

Barbara Kanner (ed.), *The Women of England from Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present: Interpretative Bibliographical Essays*, London: Mansell, 1980. *The Odd Women* is discussed on pp. 308 and 312-14 in a chapter by Patricia Otto Klaus entitled "Women in the Mirror: Using Novels to Study Victorian Women."

Francesco Badolato, "The Influence of Virgil on George Gissing," *Helikon* (a journal published by

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the University of Messina), Anno XX-XXI, 1980-81, pp. 411-16.

Michael Collie, "George Gissing, Cosmopolitan," *English Studies in Canada*, Vol. VII, no. 2, Summer 1981, pp. 156-70.

Patrick Bridgwater, "Homage to Goethe: George Gissing and the Goethe-Cult," *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. V, no. 2, Autumn 1982, pp. 169-78.

Barbara Rosenbaum and Pamela White (eds.), *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, Vol. IV, 1800-1900, Part I Arnold-Gissing, London and New York: Mansell, 1982, pp. xii, xxxii and 809-24. An important publication on Gissing's manuscripts. This book will be reviewed in our

next number.

Frank Kermode, "Squalor," *London Review of Books*, 3 to 16 February 1983, pp. 9-11. A review article on recent new editions of Gissing's novels as well as on the books by Michaux and Halperin.

Shigeru Koike, *Eigo Seinen* (The Rising Generation), 1 March 1983, p. 758. Review of *Gissing: A Life in Books*. See "Notes and News" in the present number.

Maurice Dunlevy, "Once more round a life of misery and alienation," *Canberra Times*, 19 March 1983, p. 12. Review of *Gissing: A Life in Books*.

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Anon., "Paperbacks," *Books and Bookmen*, Issue 330, March 1983, p. 37. Notice of *Demos*, *The Nether World* and *Henry Ryecroft* (Harvester paperbacks).

Anon., *Choice*, Vol. XX, no. 7, March 1983, p. 984. Review of *Gissing: A Life in Books*.

Alan Bold, "Dialect and Dialectic: Paperbacks," *Tribune*, 1 April 1983. Review of *Demos* and *The Nether World*.

Barry Newport, "Book Reviews," *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*, Vol. X, no. 4, April 1983, pp. 138-39. Review of *Six Sonnets on Shakespearean Heroines*.

Neil Philip, "Nature and Nurture: A Choice of Paperbacks," *Book and Bookmen*, May 1983, pp. 276-77. Review of *Demos*, *The Nether World* and *Henry Ryecroft* (Harvester paperbacks).

Harry R. Sullivan, *Frederic Harrison*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983. Contains a very few allusions to Gissing.