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The Gissing Journal

Volume LII, Number 4, October 2018
"More than most men am I dependent on sympathy to bring out the best that is in me."
Commonplace Book

Pierre Coustillas: 1930-2018

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For the initiated readership of *The Gissing Journal* it would seem unnecessary and superfluous to record and specify in this tribute once again the stream of scholarly books and articles that has flowed from the tireless pen of Pierre Coustillas over the last fifty years. Therefore I have opted for a more personal focus and tone in my memories of my dear teacher, mentor, and friend.

When in the summer of 1961 a callow, 17-year-old Dutch youth on a cycling tour to the Lake District chanced to pick up a novel entitled *Born in Exile*, he could not have foreseen that the book and its author were to become among the major influences that shaped his life. The early sixties saw the start of a significant revaluation of Gissing's novels and the two prime movers of the Gissing revival were Jacob Korg and Pierre Coustillas, whose names and activities remained unknown to the Dutch student until the mid-eighties of the last century.

In December 1990, after a good deal of hesitation I summoned up enough courage and wrote my first letter to Professor Pierre Coustillas, the leading scholar in the field of Gissing studies. Within a week his full, helpful, and encouraging reply arrived. The opening paragraph of my next letter reads:

> Rarely have I received such a welcome, generous and encouraging letter as yours: for its promptness, its wealth of useful suggestions, but especially its tone of kindness, I am most grateful. As the kingpin in the serious game of Gissing scholarship (forgive the trite metaphor), you must be looking forward to the day when other obligations no longer distract you from concentrating solely on Gissing.

Thus started my epistolary acquaintance with Pierre ("Dear Bouwe, don't you think we must drop surnames?" he wrote, a month after we started our correspondence), which also marked the beginning of my proper Gissing education. To have been taught by him was perhaps the greatest privilege I ever enjoyed. He literally had an answer to all the questions I dared put to him once I discovered that I could do this without fear of exposing my ignorance. To all my university teachers he was superior, because from the first he was keen to recognise and respond to my enthusiasm and interests,

while I as a budding disciple was bewitched by his generous willingness to share what he knew with a raw novice.

On the day America entered the Gulf War (17 January 1991) I drove for the first time to the hospitable and welcoming home of Pierre and Hélène at La Madeleine for an unforgettable meeting whose intensity, pleasure, and excitement laid the foundation of a most fruitful and lasting combination of scholarship and friendship. The moment I set foot in the Coustillas residence we began to talk Gissing and our conversation was uninterrupted for the next ten hours (except for Hélène's delicious meal) until I started on my journey home in the evening, where I arrived hoarse and with a sore throat, my head full of new facts, stories, and plans, inspired and determined to finish my first Gissing project.

In the first nine years of our correspondence we relied on snail mail, then briefly we faxed, and finally from about the year 2000 availed ourselves of e-mail for regular contacts. Pierre's French postman regularly delivered a separate postbag chock-full with letters, postcards, parcels of books, packets and packages from correspondents, booksellers, and colleagues all over the world. All of them expecting acknowledgements and replies and it has long been a mystery to me how he managed to keep all his correspondents happy. At a conservative estimate he must have written at least 100,000 letters, notes, and cards, in the course of his professional life. That he combined this with his own research and steady production of Gissing books and articles is proof of his unique zest for work and energy.

After agreeing to act as my co-promotor, Pierre, accompanied by his wife, travelled to Amsterdam in 1999 for the public defense of my thesis, a ceremony which he graced with his presence, though mildly surprised by its strict and traditional regulations. Later that year he returned to Amsterdam for "The International George Gissing Conference," attended by some 80 participants from 13 countries. No one could have been more pleased than Pierre about its success. He greatly enjoyed meeting old and new Gissingites and felt the occasion reflected and celebrated the results of his own (and others') efforts "put Gissing on the map." Other such conferences in London, in July 2003, Lille, in March 2008, and York, in March 2011, delighted him on account of the obviously rude state of health of the studies to which he continued to devote his life.

Now that he has "joined the silent majority" (a phrase dear to him), we salute in him a man whose remarkable voice spoke so long of the love and appreciation of Gissing and his achievement for our time and for many years to come. He will not be forgotten.

Christine's turn to write, with especial emphasis on Pierre's exceptional achievements seen from the French angle.

As a number of Gissingites know, I was Pierre's student in the early 1980s before I became his colleague at the university of Lille, until his retirement in 1995. That one sentence about myself is enough to reveal what an incalculable debt to Pierre mine is. English-speaking scholars cannot begin to guess, I imagine, what an amazing international sesame the name of Pierre Coustillas has always been for me, a French Victorian Literature person. As a young scholar giving her very first talks abroad, I soon learnt to experience the magic of his name. Indeed, having been Pierre's student was enough to secure instant consideration, I realised with mixed feelings of pride and retrospective, guilt-ridden dismay – for I had taken up so much of Pierre's valuable time for eight long years with my post-graduate hesitations and procrastinations, and the kind, dear man had encouraged me unfailingly and led me on without once complaining (even when I brought him an expiatory basket of nuts instead of the long-expected new chapter of my thesis).

Significantly, it was not just as a newcomer to Gissing studies that I benefited from Pierre's aura. So many Dickens scholars of all ages sound respectfully aware of his global stature, for instance. And, generally speaking, what a relief it has always been to find out that there is no need for me, anywhere in Victorianist circles abroad, to spell the name of my university only because Pierre used to teach there. It was under him that Lille became of worldwide importance in the field of Victorian studies and is still being recognised as a leading Victorianist centre at a national level, almost a quarter of a century after his retirement – in clear terms, even today my university owes Prof. Pierre Coustillas very special thanks, his name being as amazingly helpful as ever when it comes to unlocking additional library support from the government, for instance. I just cannot think of any other French scholar capable of maintaining that sway decades after his retirement or, more importantly, of establishing him- or herself as the leading global authority in the study of a significant British author.

Readers of *The Gissing Journal* perhaps now begin to measure the extent of my debt as a French scholar to Pierre, and the depth of my gratitude to him and to his wife Hélène, his constant collaborator from 1958 onwards, without whose assistance, as Pierre himself graciously used to say, his list of publications would have been palpably shorter. In the last analysis, though, sticking to Pierre's unique scholarly achievements to account for the sadness I

feel does not work. If I am still in the process of picking up the pieces one month after Pierre is gone, it is above all because on 11 August 2018 I lost a vibrant friend, one who had been with me not only through my PhD and early years as a lecturer at Lille but more importantly through every stage of my life and my family's. Pierre was a wonderful person, at once a quiet left-winger and a passionate free-thinker, warm-hearted, unfailingly responsive and generous. He was my dear, dear friend, mentor, and inspiration. I cannot express my grief and sense of loss.

MARKUS NEACEY
Berlin

My turn to show how admiringly receptive and encouraging Pierre Coustillas could be even to a commoner like myself.

Pierre Coustillas may have written his last words, but those words will have an enduring echo. For he has left us with a great legacy: his lifework, the results of an incomparable devotion to the study of the biography and works of George Gissing. Like Jacob Korg, Shigeru Koike, and Herbert Rosengarten, he was a co-founder of modern Gissing studies. More than anything, for more than half a century, he was the driving force in restoring Gissing's reputation as a major late Victorian novelist. He leaves Gissing studies in a good place, far better than anyone could ever have imagined possible sixty years ago.

Personally, my first contact with Pierre came via letter in 1992. I had only just obtained a place at the University of Stirling, gained on condition of an interview, which I managed to pass by boring the academic committee into submission with the story of my passion for Gissing, after three other universities had rejected my application without writing to me (I was a mature student lacking the required A levels, having left school at sixteen with no qualifications). By then I had eight years' knowledge of Gissing's novels, all library editions mostly ordered from the stacks.

How I discovered Gissing in the spring of 1984 and eventually met Pierre Coustillas years later is such an unlikely story that it is perhaps worth a brief digression in the telling, at the risk of *also* boring the readers of this *Journal*.

After years living in various children's homes in Dundee, Peterborough, Camberwell, Tunbridge Wells, Heathfield (East Sussex), and Eastbourne, where the Bible was the only book I ever knew, I had, at thirteen, gone back to live with my Irish father, whose womanising and gambling addiction had led to a domestic catastrophe when I was six months old resulting in my mother being institutionalised, my older brother being adopted, and my being put into care. From that time in 1982 up to 1984, I was in the habit of playing truant from my secondary comprehensive school in Penfold Road every day after

assembly (when the register was taken) to avoid being bullied (in those days teachers turned a blind eye to such things). As I had to wait long hours until my father finished work on the building site in Westbourne Grove where he was employed as an unskilled labourer before I could venture home, I often walked down Marylebone Road to Marylebone Library to get through the hours without being accosted by a stranger or a policeman asking me: "Why aren't you at school?" It was at this library (400 meters from Gissing's former flat in Cornwall Mansions) that I took an interest in books for the first time as we didn't have any in our run-down council flat except for a large hardback pictorial history of the Wild West which I had found one Saturday morning in a cardboard box outside the bookies just across from Church Street market in Edgeware Road, where I was waiting for my father to come out. After many such daytime visits to Marylebone library, one afternoon in early 1984, I came upon a dog-eared copy of the 1968 Penguin *New Grub Street* which at once struck a chord with me. Weeks later, after devouring *Demos* and *The Nether World* in quick succession and raising Harold Biffen and Sidney Kirkwood to heroic status in my imagination, I realised that Gissing was describing the battle of life in an impoverished world – one I knew only too well. There and then I decided that he was the author for me.

Thus, whilst just across the Channel Pierre Coustillas was busy editing Harvester Press editions of Gissing's novels, thanks to those novels, I was emerging out of the cultural desert in which I had been brought up. I next read Jacob Korg's biography, and was so fascinated and moved by Gissing's life story that I wrote Korg a fan letter. Months later, having long given up on ever hearing from him, I had an answer in which he explained that I had mistakenly paid for surface mail and so the letter I had sent him had taken two months to reach him in Seattle. Korg suggested that I get in touch with David Grylls and Pierre Coustillas, and subscribe to *The Gissing Newsletter*. I both subscribed and wrote to Mr Grylls by the next post, but did not dare write to the number one expert on Gissing, perhaps because for a diffident schoolboy, there was something intimidating about a "Professor" and especially a French one. All the same I took tremendous consolation in the thought that there were other people who were also obsessed with Gissing as I was becoming at that time – even if I found writing to them daunting.

Eight years later, in the spring semester at Stirling University, I had an article on Gissing published in the student paper, a copy of which I proudly sent to Pierre Coustillas, but not without some misgiving at the thought of disturbing the sacred peace of the great French scholar with my paltry offering. Certainly, for someone who, coming as I did from the lowest class of society, did not know how to pronounce many English words correctly because I had

never heard them spoken before (which I discovered to my embarrassment on many occasions in that elevated university atmosphere), and being still somewhat in awe of academics, I was little expecting a reply.

Yet, not only did Pierre Coustillas reply to me, he also praised my work, and encouraged me to pursue my interest in Gissing. In that letter, he wrote:

> It is very kind of you to have sent me a copy of *Brig* containing your article. A pleasant surprise. You know Gissing well and your enthusiasm will, I hope, prove contagious. The portrait you've used is my favourite […] Your piece has reached me just in time for a mention and some comment in the April Journal. May you write other articles and convince people around you that Gissing is a novelist well worth reading and studying.

That letter was a great incentive to me, and, of course, I was thrilled to be mentioned in *The Gissing Journal*. Straight away I was haunting the university library in search of articles about Gissing. That was Pierre Coustillas through and through: the most approachable, encouraging, and inspirational of scholars. And a friendly man to meet and talk to, as I did at the 1999 Amsterdam Conference and at his house prior to the 2008 Lille Conference, when he took me on a tour of his Gissing Collection. Wow!

Then, returning to that spring of 1992, in one fortunate hour in the university library I came upon Pierre's 1968 article, "Collecting George Gissing." There he writes of how he started collecting Gissing. The story of his progress spellbound me, as his shelves filled with first editions of Gissing's three deckers and many other rare editions of his works through the 1960s (see Chris Kohler's tribute to Pierre for an account of their early book dealings on pp. 22-25 of the accompanying *Supplement*). From that point, as far as my limited means allowed me, I decided to collect Gissing myself. My first find was a dusty 1914 edition of *The House of Cobwebs and Other Stories* at a secondhand bookshop in Bridge of Allan. Absorbed in all things Gissing, I went on to write my final-year dissertation about his early working-class novels in 1995, and achieved first class honours. Two years later, by which time I was doing my MA at Warwick University and had a good stock of Gissing's works, Pierre offered me the nine volumes of *The Collected Letters* at a considerable reduction. That was the most valuable of all my acquisitions in my career of collecting Gissing up to the present time. As Pierre told me then, *The Collected Letters* are a treasure for what they give to the Gissing scholar, and so I was to find out when I started to read them one after the other. The scholarship that went into the making of those nine volumes is superb, and the rewards are immeasurable.

Of course not every collector can afford to acquire all the three-volume first editions, let alone set himself the gargantuan task, as Coustillas did, of obtaining all the magazines in which Gissing's stories and essays were

published, all the hybrid, variant, remaindered, or presentation copies, all the translations in Dutch, French, Italian, Japanese, Swedish, etc., all the Modern Library editions, and, as if that were not enough, also every one of Algernon Gissing's thirty books. Unlike Coustillas, at some point the collector has to acknowledge the limitations of his purse, as I did, and be a little more selective. I therefore reasoned that I should be happy with all the Harvester Press editions and every edition of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* I could find, and otherwise limit myself to collecting Gissing ephemera (antiquarian and exhibition catalogues, pocket Christmas editions, etc.).

However, it recently occurred to me that, if "Collecting George Gissing" is beyond the means of most enthusiasts today, there still remains the most rewarding alternative of collecting everything the great Gissing scholar himself wrote after he first seriously devoted his life to the study of his favourite writer in the late 1950s. From that time, as all Gissing admirers know, his contribution to Gissing studies has been so immense that any potential collector of his complete works on Gissing might find himself overwhelmed by the enormity of his task. For example, a quick perusal of the recent Grayswood Press index of our *Journal* (2016) reveals that he made more than three hundred contributions there alone. And he was scarcely less industrious in supplying articles on his favourite author to many other journals devoted to the study of Victorian literature. Besides these we must not forget the numerous scholarly works he has written, edited or co-edited, especially the various Harvester Press, Enitharmon Press, Tragara Press, and Grayswood Press editions, the countless introductions he contributed to English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Swedish editions of Gissing's works, the articles written for critical anthologies, the translations of Gissing's novels and stories into French, the nine volumes of *The Collected Letters* he co-edited, the remarkable 600-page bibliography, and the magnificent three-volume biography. Then there are the lesser-known early articles in French such as "George Gissing à Manchester" and "George Gissing et Eduard Bertz: Une Amitié Littéraire," the 25-page *Checklist of Books by George Gissing in the Collection of Pierre Coustillas* from 1972, the limited print edition of Gissing's *Six Sonnets on Shakespearean Heroines*, the exhibition catalogue he co-wrote for the National Book League in 1971, and the leaflet for the Basque Centenary gathering on 28 December 2003 with his "Memorial Address" before Gissing's grave. And to think that the majority of his writings on Gissing were written in a foreign language! And what English! Surely there have been few better foreign writers of English since Conrad himself. And beyond these works, I must mention the articles and editions he produced on other writers such as the 6700 pages of the *La Pleiade* four-volume Kipling he edited and

co-translated, the several translations of Joseph Conrad and George Moore, the commentary and notes contributed to French editions of Jack London's works, the book of short stories by Thomas Hardy, and the volume of late Victorian English short stories. Of course, few of these works would have been possible without the constant support of Hélène, his wife, throughout these sixty years of uninterrupted scholarly industry. For few know better than I do, that, as Pierre never used a computer, she was the one who prepared the *Journal* over decades for publication, typed up his manuscripts, letters, emails, and did and is still doing much more besides. In fact, she is just as much a Gissing scholar as any of us, if not more so. And they were a wonderful team.

For me, at any rate, collecting Pierre Coustillas is a worthy pursuit, as I already have a good many of his works, and this very day have purchased the 1978 volume *Le roman anglais au xix^e^ siècle*, which he co-edited and for which he penned a 64-page introduction as well as chapters on *North and South*, *Barchester Towers*, *Born in Exile*, and *Jude the Obscure*. To read everything Coustillas wrote is to steep oneself both in a truly rewarding course in Gissing studies and late Victorian literature and to be constantly awestruck by the exact and exemplary scholarship that he brought to his work. And as I read my way through these works, I can take great consolation in the thought that Pierre Coustillas will live on in everyone who loves Gissing.

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Q. D. Leavis's Interest in George Gissing

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In 2003 John Ferns complained about the insufficient study of Q. D. Leavis's works, saying that there were only half a dozen articles discussing her independently, which was much fewer than those on her husband.[1] Now there still seems to be little improvement. Yet, as G. Singh finds, Q. D. Leavis undertook a considerably wider and more varied range of reading than her husband and wrote about more novelists than he did, which substantially complements and enriches the study of his criticism.[2] George Gissing is one of these novelists, who is mentioned in the books of both, i.e. *Fiction and the Reading Public* and *The Great Tradition*. If one suspects that the words about Gissing in the latter book were written by F. R. Leavis's wife, it is also certain she had a strong interest in Gissing.[3] P. J. M. Robertson asserts that her interest derived from Gissing's exemplification in his novel *New Grub Street* of the difficulties the gifted writer faced while trying to do serious work when critical

standards were a jungle and the formula bestseller was in the ascendant.[4] Robertson is right to discern the origin of Mrs. Leavis's interest in one of her reviews on Gissing, entitled "Gissing and the English Novel," which was printed in *Scrutiny* in 1938. However, Robertson also notices "an economy and precision of statement and reference, instead of quotations and analysis" in her *Scrutiny* pieces, so that this invites more perspectives to explore her preoccupation with Gissing.[5] A re-reading of the review, together with her other works and Gissing's *New Grub Street*, is worthwhile for it helps reveal that Q. D. Leavis had a more essential reason to take an interest in Gissing, one that provides a further dimension to her contribution to English literature.

Robertson acutely perceives that Mrs. Leavis's interest in Gissing refers one back to her book *Fiction and the Reading Public* which was published six years before the review when claiming that Gissing "makes an impressive ally" for the book.[6] Actually, Q. D. Leavis mentions Gissing twice in the book where he and Henry James are ranked alongside the novelists who "cannot find publishers easily today," and "cannot in any case hope to make a living from their novels."[7] This conclusion is reached after an examination of what she calls the "sudden opening of the fiction market to the general public" when books could reach general readers directly in the late 19th century in the form of cheap one-volume editions as a replacement for the traditional three-decker without being subjected to the censorship of circulating libraries.[8] In this sense Gissing attracts Leavis's attention because his failure to win a big audience helps serve her sociological research and prove her argument that the change in the type of common reader had a decisive impact on fiction writing.

Six years later, she shows more intense interest in Gissing. At the beginning of her review she declares that it is odd that the Gissing vogue has faded out of literary history and reviewers need to "re-estimate his achievement" and his novel *New Grub Street* should be regarded as a classic.[9] The change in her attitude towards Gissing is distinct. While in *Fiction and the Reading Public* he is thought to be inevitably marginalised due to a historical and sociological context, here Leavis strongly holds that he should not lose readers. In spite of her obvious discontent with Gissing's gloomy temperament which she views this time as the main cause of his failure, she alleges that he produced his one permanent contribution to the English novel when he made the subject of a novel his most vital interest – the problem of how to live as a man of letters, the literary world being what it is, without sacrificing integrity of purpose.[10] Apparently, Leavis's interest takes a shift in critical focus, from one on readers to one on writers. Of course, the change is not unexpected in light of her "own concept of literature as a product of the interplay between writer and reader."[11] It is implied in *Fiction and the Reading Public* that the change in readership

had a profound impact on writers for the "sudden opening of the fiction market to the general public" is deemed to be "a blow to serious writing."[12] Yet, the reason for the shift remains to be specified. Robertson's argument offers one reason – Gissing describes in *New Grub Street* the difficulties confronting late 19th-century writers. However, more reasons could be discerned if her other works are taken into consideration, especially her last article "The Englishness of the English Novel." As an author of "the first major novel to place authorship at the centre of the plot rather than as an incidental achievement of the hero or heroine,"[13] Gissing meets her criteria for a major novelist by being particularly sensitive to one part of the contemporary "national tensions and conflicts,"[14] i.e. by portraying the writer's life in an age that witnessed an unprecedented change in the British literary world – an influence which continued in Leavis's day and continues today. A close examination of the novel will show that Gissing's sensitivity consists of at least three aspects.

First, Gissing is sensitive to the changing climate of the literary world as it begins to fundamentally affect the lives of writers. In addition to one major feature of this world which Robertson has pointed out, i.e. the disordered critical standard, the novel also reveals something more important – the origin of the disorder – through its panoramic representation of the literary world as it undergoes a radical transformation, that is, the decline of the three-decker novel, the expansion of popular presses, the introduction of literary agents, and the rise of new journalism. All these changes seem to show the thriving state of literature. However, there is Gissing's deep anxiety over the prosperous development, which rests on two main areas: the advent of one-volume fiction and the rise of new journalism in late 19th-century Britain. As to the former, there is the precise prediction which Jasper Milvain makes in *New Grub Street* that "the long novel has had its day, and that in future people will write shilling books."[15] To Gissing, as he was writing the novel in 1890 which he sets in the 1880s, it was already obvious that the three-decker was being replaced by cheaper one-volume novels. The benefits of the latter are further unveiled as the same character goes on to say that even a novel with silly plots can succeed as long as it "holds the attention of vulgar readers."[16] This clearly shows Gissing's uneasiness about the taste of public readers. As Q. D. Leavis asserts in *Fiction and the Reading Public*, though the reading taste starts to change before the appearance of cheap fiction, it takes effect on the fiction market mainly after 1870 when the Education Act swells the ranks of the half-educated.[17] Hence, Gissing had the insight to depict the considerable change brought about by the increase of the number of readers with a supposedly vulgar taste in literature. At the same time, Gissing's worry about the rise of new journalism is of no less a sharp concern. The novel provides an

exceptionally illuminating exploration of this new type of reporting by satirising the popular journals of his age. As Jerome Buckley observes, *Chit-Chat* parodies *Tit-Bits*, the penny paper on which George Newnes built his fortune; *The Study* and *The Wayside* evidently correspond to familiar monthlies of the time; and *The West End* and *All Sorts*, representing popular weeklies, actually furnish the titles for new periodicals in the later 1890s.[18] All the satire gives a meaning to the nature of the new journalism – showing it to be a mere product with a mercenary intent. This exploration is astute enough to resound in Leavis's investigation in her book when she remarks "the discovery by several men towards the end of the nineteenth century that the periodical, like the novel, could be made profitable by treating it as a business concern."[19] Obviously, such a commercial intent would inevitably lead to a decline in the quality of writing. It is plain that the novel has an immediate historical importance in that it discloses the latent deterioration of literature at a critical moment when two major changes at an early stage in their development are occurring in the late 19th-century British literary world. In this regard, Gissing has keenly voiced the tension and conflict of a nationwide change, showing what Leavis calls in her review a "passionate concern for the state of literature"[20] – thus a major theme in *New Grub Street* which meets the first requirement of a major novelist as defined in her final essay.

Second, the novel is a perceptive response to the lives of writers in its author's time. Besides presenting an in-depth view of the literary world, the novel displays a variety of literary types, such as Edwin Reardon and Harold Biffen (struggling novelists), Alfred Yule (critic), Jasper Milvain (journalist), Whelpdale (literary agent), Ralph Warbury (all-round man of letters), Markland (best-selling novelist), Boston Wright (editor of a popular magazine), Miss Wilkes (female writer who marries her publisher), and Dora Milvain (female writer for children). The strength of the studied depiction of these writers' lives is achieved in two ways. On the one hand, the quality of the individual characterisations are intimately related to the author's personal observation of his peers. For, according to Nigel Cross's study, most of the main characters have their prototypes in Gissing's time. Biffen's experience of rejection by editors is based on that of Edwin Pugh whose work was rejected for its lack of amusement;[21] Yule is possibly a mixture of a few literary figures like James Ashcroft Noble, a decent man of letters who refused to contribute to *Tit-Bits*, Wilfrid Meynell, an editor of a short-lived literary periodical, and Henry Barton Baker who endeavoured to write papers on neglected poets and dramatists;[22] Milvain's ceaseless writing in one day is a parody of Andrew Lang's facile working habit which was well known throughout literary London;[23] the pamphlet Whelpdale tries to write, entitled *Author's Manual*, is

based on Percy Russell's with the same title;[24] and most impressively, Reardon's life resembles that of Gissing's and Algernon's, his brother, also a novelist incessantly struggling in the literary marketplace whilst making painful efforts to keep his artistic integrity.[25] Thus Gissing presents a severe perception of the writer's life when he "restricts all his major characters in a novel to an occupation that he knew firsthand – that of writer."[26]

Yet, on the other hand, Gissing's response to these writers' lives would not have been valued without his impersonal contemplation and sympathy. Though suffering a crushing blow from reviewers who reject his book just for its lack of humour, Biffen captures our particular attention with his integrity when he devotes himself to a conscientious style of writing with no regard to his impoverished situation. Alongside the depiction of his thorough defeat, Yule's intelligence and seriousness are admirably displayed. Most typically, there is a strong human concern in the analysis of Reardon's emotional agony. Under the high pressure of supporting his family, he needs to earn quick money from his writing, yet refuses to disobey his conscience to write potboilers. Even in the writers who succeed by adapting to the market, hardship can be noted in their writing lives. Milvain, though successful as "a man of his day,"[27] has to submit himself to the stressful routine of writing four articles in one day. In spite of his ironic role as an author of a writing manual, Whelpdale's failure in his early days of novel writing evokes poignancy. Gissing's concern with the hardship of the writing life is not a mere autobiographical reminiscence though it is often criticised as a fault. All his earnest sympathy is an evocative account of the life of most writers in the late 19th century whose talent was "not of the first order" and whose misfortune was "to be born into a bad tradition."[28] More importantly, beyond Gissing's own personal experience, the sympathy shown in *New Grub Street* exposes with convincing realism the difficulty of the average writer in maintaining "the organic model of self-formation"[29] the intensity of which might not have been recognised by his contemporaries.

Given the distinctive perception of the writing life in the novel, we may confidently say that Gissing was "specially qualified to feel and register the characteristic and deeper movements of the life of his time […] by the accidents of his personal history,"[30] – the second requirement Leavis imposes on a major novelist. Still, perception is achieved through a marked inquiry into moral values. As she asserts, the problem of how to live as a man of letters without sacrificing integrity of purpose can be taken as the main subject of the novel. Raising such a problem itself entails tackling a weighty moral issue. It is explored with strenuousness in the struggling life of the writers. Reardon resolves to abide by his artistic principle even when he urgently needs to support his family; Biffen retains his artistic integrity even under the threat of

starvation; Milvain, in a different way, is determined to be a successful journalist. Gissing is serious enough to be fully conscious of the moral tensions involved in the struggle. There are other moral concerns as well. For example, Leavis identifies "delicacy and fineness, the strongly noble and the devotedly disinterested elements in human nature"[31] in characters like Marian Yule and Biffen. Yet, John Sloan disagrees with her identification of these moral traits, thinking that she is in fact driven by her own cultural attachments to identify such "moral meaning" and ultimately to refuse the absoluteness of the writer's defeat.[32] To say so is perhaps misleading for Leavis also points out that there are many studies of the emotions and conduct peculiar to those who live by literature and journalism.[33] Preoccupation with morality is especially marked in these writers. Apart from the proposed merits of the above two characters, human feelings can be traced in the behaviour of other characters too. For instance, Reardon shows deep affection for his son when he hurries to see him at the risk of his own life. Milvain helps Reardon's widow by sparing no efforts to write a review of Reardon's last book to enhance his reputation, against his usual practice, simply for the sake of friendship. Whelpdale, while enjoying his success, tries to cheer up the desperate Biffen. What is charming about their behaviour is that an idealising element of responsibility is provoked amidst the surrounding reality of mass destruction and disintegration. Their lives are felt with admirable depth, which shows a strong attitude towards life, not only the writing life, but also everyday life. The unselfish emotion helps keep a life of sadness still one of warmth. In this sense, Gissing gives to *New Grub Street* a valuation that adds a timeless stamp to its sociological significance. This is also one of the expectations Leavis requires from a major novelist.

Third, the novel gives a penetrating picture of the literary world and the writer's life. The novel's passionate concern is closely related to Gissing's intelligent employment of literary devices. The most notable one is the title of the novel. Through allusion to the 18th century Grub Street inhabited by impoverished hack writers, aspiring poets, low-end publishers and booksellers, a heightened association with the reality of the late 19th-century literary world is implied. The force of the association is brought out further by reference to the "Grub Street" entry in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* and the "Grubstreet-state" in Alexander Pope's *Dunciad*, both of which add an undertone of disparagement. Of course, there are distinctions to be made between the two literary worlds. An image of fog helps to reflect these. Rather than a metaphor for the consequences of the industrial revolution, fog has a specified reference in the novel. With its tormenting effects on the main characters when it keeps haunting them, it becomes a symbol of a literary field with low autonomy and strikes us with an irresistible insight into the truth. Moreover, the illustration

of anxiety over the writer's life owes much to the subtle use of metaphors, such as the striking of the parish church clock whose recurrence contains an emblematic structure that embodies much psychological analysis of Reardon's strain and suggests a call of deathly peril surrounding him, while the image of "dwellers in the valley of the shadow of books" sheds light on Yule's strain and desperation by predicting his ineluctable death with intertextual meanings drawn from Psalm 23 in the Bible and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. These metaphors profoundly reflect the difficult lives of the various characters and, as a result, the urgency of their situation and their tormenting frustration and helplessness in an age when an extraordinarily unheard-of crisis occurs in the literary world. Most of the literary devices are of such an intellectual weight as to inform it with a "human core" that makes the novel become what Q. D. Leavis calls "a real novel" rather than a sociological one.[34] In a word, its author has the wisdom and insight that "make him a warning voice of his generation," which is Leavis's last requirement for a major novelist.[35]

Although Leavis sets qualifications for a major novelist in her last essay "The Englishness of the English novel," published many years after her review on Gissing, they help justify her interest in Gissing retrospectively. In addition to being an ally of her early book *Fiction and the Reading Public*, Gissing can be adjudged to have tackled a perennial subject in English literature with sensitivity and to have evoked an original representation of the writerly life with great wisdom. Both merits may prove to be the essential contribution to the origin of Leavis's appreciation of Gissing as a successful artist. Furthermore, what she calls his "permanent contribution to the English novel" could also be clarified in terms of the Englishness of the English novel itself. In his description of writers' lives, Gissing shares "a sensitive open-minded exploration of the fully human world"[36] with the gifted writers who see fiction as "a suitable medium for expressing their human concerns" – that is, concerns that were "directed by our changing social, political and economic history."[37] Thus, his choice of the subject of how to live as a man of letters, reinforced by his technical innovation, meant that he would naturally appeal to Leavis who consequently gives him a place in the tradition of the English novel from the 18th century to the early 20th century.

If Leavis's interest in Gissing can be proved in the context of her constructive criticism of English novels, her interest retrospectively augments her contribution to English literature. Her review on Gissing, as well as those on Richard Jefferies, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, and Edith Wharton, comprise both "a welcome supplement to her detailed discussion of 18th-century fiction" and to the progress in her thinking about the novel beyond the stage she had

reached in the book.[38] To extend this point, the significance of her interest can also be charted in the field of Gissing studies.

Her stress on the subject and inherent concerns of *New Grub Street*, i.e. how to live as a man of letters has promoted a valuable discussion, especially since the revival of Gissing studies in the 1960s. Jacob Korg, a Gissing biographer, remarks Leavis's interest in *New Grub Street* and then goes on to claim that the novel is "a unique exploration of the writer's problem of survival in a commercial age, of the social and professional background that bears upon his work, and of the relations between his activity as an artist and his personal and family life."[39] It is evident enough that Leavis's comments are accepted to a large extent whilst, more crucially, one of the key ideas in Gissing studies evolves out of her remarks, i.e. the writer's survival in the literary marketplace. Then the idea is taken up in the work of other Gissing scholars becoming a central term in identifying the theme of the novel as "the struggle for survival of the late Victorian man of letters."[40] Also, her emphasis on the historical importance of the idea of survival attracts further attention among Gissing scholars. Hence the survival of the writer is placed in close relation to a literary market that is "much bigger, more competitive, and publicity-conscious."[41] And the distinct nature of his/her survival is further recognised as one of subjection to a "systematic and inescapable" oppression in contrast with "the struggle for success and recognition" in Dickens's time,[42] and, as a result, as a crisis that is part of the cultural crisis in late 19th-century Britain.[43]

Besides her concept of the writer's survival, Gissing scholars are also influenced by Leavis's focus on integrity which she links to the theme of survival. Compared with Thomas Carlyle's image of achieved integrity, Gissing's compelling integrity is considered to have "degenerated into a more desperate struggle for survival."[44] In recent years, as Mary Hammond alleges, the conflict between survival and integrity as specially enacted in the spaces of late 19th-century literary London has attracted more critical attention to the extent that Gissing "has occupied many of recent explorations that have tended to seize almost exclusively upon his gloomy representations of the individual alienated by the modern world and his portrayals of the doomed writer of integrity drowning in a world of mass-produced pulp."[45]

At any rate, Q. D. Leavis's insight into the novel's subject can be regarded as a stimulating breakthrough in Gissing studies. Furthermore, owing to the increased attention on Gissing in the recent flourishing academic research into late 19th-century and early 20th-century literary life, her pioneering criticism of Gissing now has a greater significance insofar as it can be viewed as more than a supplement to *Fiction and the Reading Public*. For it not only foreshadows F. R. Leavis's *The Great Tradition*,[46] but more importantly has

seminal value at least in the study of *fin-de-siècle* English literature, even if her disparagement of Gissing's other novels remains to be discussed.

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Gissing the Radical

TOM UE
Dalhousie University

In keeping with "Conflict and Resolution," the theme of this year's Literary London Society conference, the second annual Gissing panel explored the ways in which he addressed a range of literary and social issues. The meeting, held on 28 June 2018 at Senate House in the University of London, featured emerging work by myself, Gareth Reeves (Durham), and Owen Holland (UCL). My paper, "Moral Perfectionism, Optatives, and the Inky Line in Besant's *All in a Garden Fair* and Gissing's *New Grub Street*" draws on Andrew H. Miller's work on counterfactual narratives to argue for a marriage of form and content in Walter Besant's and Gissing's novels. At the start of *New Grub Street*, Milvain cheerfully reports to his family: "There's a man being hanged in London at this moment" (35). The event confers to him "a certain satisfaction in reflecting that it is not oneself" (35), and thus instantiates both his insensitivity and his selfishly-inclined worldview. But what is equally striking is how his self-conceptualisation is predicated upon understanding who he is not, or at least not yet: "Things are bad with me, but not so bad as *that*. I might be going out between Jack Ketch and the Chaplain to be hanged; instead of that, I am eating a really fresh egg, and very excellent buttered toast, with coffee as good as can be reasonably expected in this part of the world" (35). My paper reveals how Besant's and Gissing's novels speak to a broader, Victorian conversation regarding moral perfectionism and revisits Besant's and Andrew Lang's responses to *New Grub Street* in the *Author* to show how they re-enact some of the novels' debates. A fuller version of this essay is forthcoming in *Walter Besant: The Business of Literature and the Pleasures of Reform,* edited by Kevin A. Morrison (Liverpool UP, 2019). I am grateful to Hélène Coustillas, Morrison, and Markus Neacey for their invigorating reading, and to Christine Bolus-Reichert, Rachel Bowlby, Philip Horne, and Neil ten Kortenaar for their insights into counterfactual narratives.

In "Performing Gender in *The Whirlpool*," Reeves draws and builds on the scholarship of William Greenslade, Christina Sjöholm, and Simon J. James to analyse some gender reversals (in Judith Butler's terms) in the novel. Reeves illustrates how its main protagonist Harvey Rolfe becomes hermaphroditic: Rolfe compensates for Alma's "masculine" careerism and neurasthenia by providing for their child Hughie's education himself. Reeves demonstrates how, following Hugh Carnaby's manslaughter, Hugh's and Sybil's gender roles are similarly reversed. Hugh laments the life that he did

not live – another instance of counterfactual narrative in Gissing's fiction – by not following his brother Miles to a colonial outpost, and his cigar-smoking and his bicycle business venture, signatures of the New Woman, suggest how unconsciously he appropriates the badges of female emancipation. By contrast, Sylvia – quite consciously – wears the trousers. Reeves concludes by considering the extent to which Gissing was radical as a social reformer, revealing some of the ways his insight into the world on which he was reporting, combined with his astuteness as a social reader, has rendered his writing particularly tantalising – and puzzling – for future critics. Reeves is currently completing his PhD dissertation on Education or Exile 1870-1914 under Simon J. James's supervision. He has written articles on Dante, Raymond Williams, and Marc Augé; presented papers on publishing history, H. G. Wells's Edwardian novels, and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*; edits Durham's Postgraduate English Journal; and teaches in the university's English department.

Owen Holland's "Communard Horizons in Gissing's *Workers in the Dawn*" provides fresh context by examining Gissing's treatment of a real social crisis – namely, the Paris Commune of 1871 – and by attending to his repeated acts of narrative displacement and occlusion. Focusing on the minor character John Pether, Holland argues that the novel is haunted by the spectre of continental political upheaval, particularly the memory of the Paris Commune that ruled from 18 March to 28 May 1871. As he observes, Pether's death "marks the moment in the novel after which all direct, explicit reference to the Commune ceases, at the same time as it inaugurates a chain of displacements, through which the Commune's continued presence is registered only negatively, detectable only at the edges of Gissing's novelistic canvas." Readers of Gissing's first published novel can scarce forget the umbrella mender's bitter outburst, whence he seeks resolution through violence:

> Another gone [. . .] Another trodden down into the grave in the struggle against the tyranny of kings and princes, of idle lords, and all the pestilent army of the rich, whose rank breath poisons the bitter crust they throw to us! How many more, how many more of us shall perish before we learn the courage of the dog which leaps at its tormentor's throat? Year after year I have watched you, Samuel Tollady, starving yourself that half a dozen of us feeble wretches should creep on a few paces longer before we dropped into the gutter and died; year after year I have known you a friend to those of us whom hunger and despair had made worse than savage beasts, always bidding us remember we were men and hope that we should some day have our rights; year after year you have toiled without ceasing for others, and at last despair of helping all you could has killed you. How many more, how many more? You fought it out well to the end, Samuel Tollady, but you have lost. You were too kind, too good, too tender for a fight like this. Your voice was as little able to call back freedom or justice to the earth as this candle that lights up your dead face would be to take the place of

> the sun and light up the whole world! Your struggle against our tyrants was like a pebble thrown into the sea, it could make no more impression! Year after year I have told you the truth, but you refused to believe me. It is not gentleness and kindness and forgiving words that will end our miseries, but swords and cannon-balls and every river of the earth red with blood. It is good you are gone; the fight that is coming would have been too stern for you; your heart would have been moved to pity by the shrieks of dying wretches when the hour came for killing, and killing without mercy, man, woman and child. We will make the earth fat with their thick blood, and it will grow us better bread! We will pull down their palaces which shut out the air of heaven, and build houses out of the ruins, for we are tired of creeping into dens for our rest! (II: 354-355)

Drawing on Fredric Jameson's discussion of the ideologeme of ressentiment in Gissing's early novels, Holland argues that "Gissing's attribution of the desire for violence to the novel's only Communard sympathiser [...] displaces any attempt to confront the historical actuality of the violence with which the Parisian Communards were themselves suppressed." This paper forms part of a longer essay wherein Holland positions Gissing beside Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), another novel written in the climate of the socialist revival. Holland's larger project concerns cultural responses to the Paris Commune in Britain between 1871 and 1914.

A stimulating discussion ensued, exploring the authenticity and the multiplicity of selfhood in Gissing's *oeuvre*, his use of humour, the Gissing-James connection, the Woman Question, the colonial project on which *The Whirlpool* offers commentary, and the geographical underpinnings in Gissing's fiction. We are grateful to our panel chair Eliza Cubitt (UCL); to the conference organising committee (Martin Dines (Kingston), Hadas Elber-Aviram (Notre Dame), Lucie Glasheen (QMUL), and Nicolas Tredell); and to the Institute of English Studies at the School of Advanced Study in the University of London. The 2019 conference, themed "Neighbours of Ours," will be held at Senate House on 11-12 July 2019, and it resonates closely with Gissing studies: in the small scale, it provides an invaluable opportunity to (re)think issues of housing in Gissing's fiction, and in the large, his relationship to professional bodies such as the Society of Authors, and the depiction of Italy in his *oeuvre*. Our reading list is greatly expanded following this year's panel, we eagerly await next year's.

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Announcement: *The Gissing Journal* Subscription 2019-2020

The two-year subscription fee to *The Gissing Journal* for 2019 and 2020 is now due. Because of the rise in postal costs, I have been compelled to raise the price of subscriptions.

Rates for two years (8 issues) are as follows:

Individuals (Europe):	£34
Libraries (Europe):	£38
Individuals (ROW):	£42
Libraries (ROW):	£46

Payment can be made in sterling to thegissingjournal@outlook.com via Paypal, by cheque made out to Markus Neacey, or by bank transfer (regarding which please contact me at forfarmarkus@fastmail.co.uk).

Gissing in Hungary

BOUWE POSTMUS
University of Amsterdam

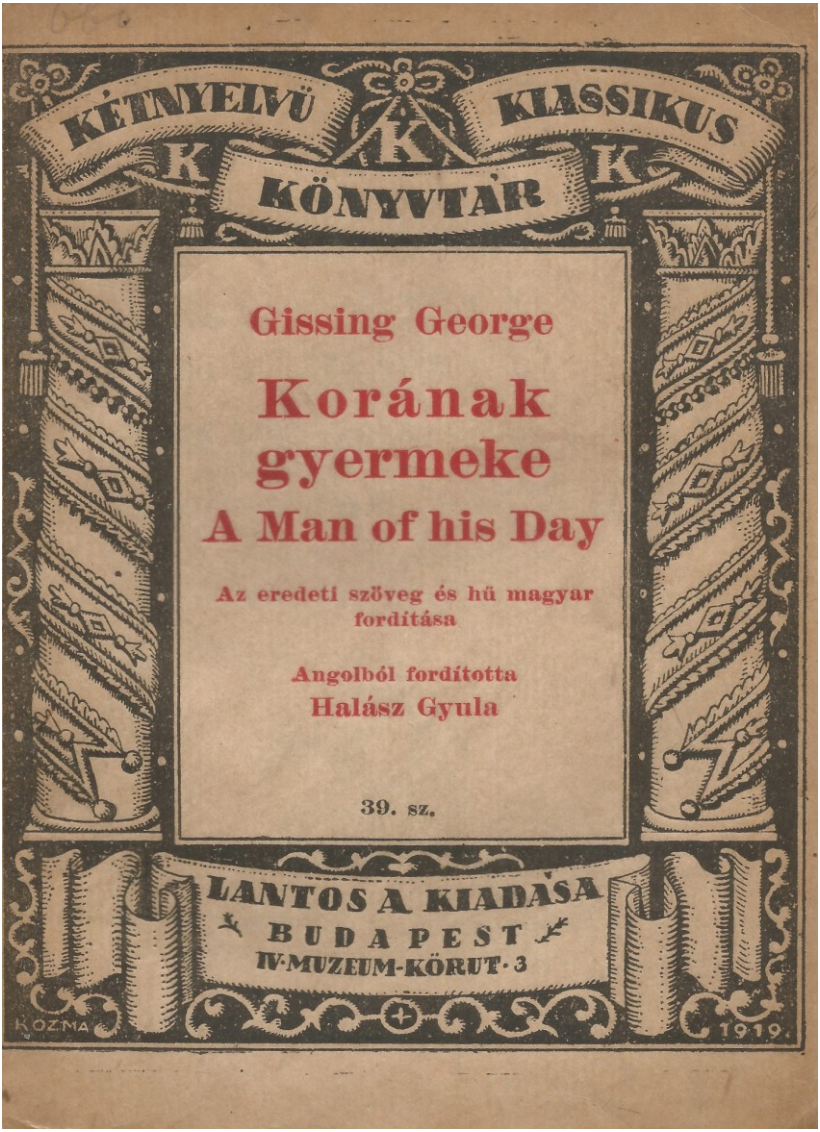
When Pierre Coustillas in 2005 published *George Gissing: The Definitive Bibliography*, one of the remarkable results of his peerless inquiries into the spread of Gissing translations across the world revealed that translators in fourteen countries had undertaken the often thankless and underpaid work of making Gissing's novels available in their own tongues to those readers whose command of English was insufficient to appreciate the subtleties of his art. These are the fourteen languages into which Gissing has been translated:

> French (1890), Russian (1891), Polish (1891-92), German (1892), Danish (1900), Dutch (1904), Italian (1939), Japanese (1947), Romanian (1978), Korean (1979), Swedish (1982), Chinese (1986), Greek (1994), and Spanish (2001).

With the publication in 2006 of Josep M. Llauradó's translation *Per la mar Jònica: Notes d'un viatge pel sud d'Itàlia* another language was added to the previous fourteen, viz. Catalan.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to report the discovery of a sixteenth language used for a Hungarian translation of *New Grub Street*. Thanks to the attentiveness of Miss Kata Bodnar from Budapest the item in question was

found in an antiquarian bookshop in her home town and it has since come into my hands. It is a bilingual Hungarian translation by Gyula Halász of the opening chapter of *New Grub Street* entitled *Korának gyermeke* (*A Man of His Day*), published in Budapest in 1920.



(Bouwe Postmus 2018)

Originally born Gyula Halász on 9 September 1899 in Brassó, Hungary, Brassaï adopted his pseudonym from his home town in Transylvania, then part of Hungary, later of Roumania, and famous as the home of Count Dracula. During World War I he served in the Austro-Hungarian army, and was moved to Berlin, where he also met and knew other artists such as Moholy-Nagy, Kandinsky, and Kokoschka. He studied sculpture and painting at the academies of Budapest and Berlin before coming to Paris in the mid-twenties, where he worked as a journalist and photographer and joined a circle of Hungarian artists and writers. After dark, he wandered his neighbourhood of Montparnasse and documented prostitutes, street cleaners, and other characters of the city nightlife, publishing his work in the seminal 1933 book *Paris de Nuit,* when he used his pseudonym for the first time. Though Brassaï is famous for capturing the grittier aspects of the city, he also documented high society, including the ballet, opera, and intellectual worlds – among them his friends and contemporaries, Pablo Picasso, Alberto Giacometti, and Henri Matisse. His American friend Henry Miller gave him the nickname "the Eye of Paris." By 1924, the artist's photographs brought him international fame, and his first show at The Museum of Modern Art in New York was held in 1948, though he continued to support himself with commercial photography throughout his life. He died on 8 July 1984 in Beaulieu-sur-Mer, France.

Introduction to the opening chapter of *Korának gyermeke* (*A Man of His Day*) by Halász Gyula, Budapest 1920. [31 pages].

George Gissing (1857-1903)

"Angol kortársai közül senkinek, az idegenek közül is csak Zolának és Tolsztojnak volt bátorsága ilyen hatalmas festmények alkotására. Herkuleszi koncepciók" — irja Zangwill[1] *Gissing* regényeiröl. Keserü, következetes igazságkeresése Zola mellé állitja — akinek csakugyan nagy tisztelöje — de müvészi érzékenysége visszariad Zola hőskultuszától; alakjai élőbbek, küzdelmeik emberibbek. "Ember voltam és ez azt jelenti: harcos voltam" — irja önmagáról utolsó munkájában: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, amely fölött már ott dereng a dickensi megbékülés édes mélabúja. Henry Ryecroft maga George Gissing, aki ebben az irásában a maga életének mérlegét állitja föl és megenyhűlve, meghatottan bucsuzik az élettől.

Gissinget a komorság költöjének kiáltották ki honfitársai. Kevés napfény hatol le mélységeibe. Pedig Dickens érzékeny szemével néz bele az élet

teljességébe. Szavai mögött ott remeg fájdalmas meghatottsága. Kőnyőrtelen realistának mondják, holott — romantikus. Romantikus, mint maga a tragikus élet, amelyből merit.

1880-tól 1903-ig — haláláig — mintegy husz regényt irt, egy klasszikus utirajzot: *By the Ionian Sea*. Szeretettel, megértéssel irta meg Dickens életét. Legjellemzőbb munkái: *Demos. — The Nether World. — Born in Exile. — The Odd Women. — The Whirlpool. — The Unclassed. — Eve's Ransom.* És mindenekfőlőtt a *New Grub Street*, a 80-as évek angol irodalmi életéből. Az itt kőzőlt részlet ennek a regényének első fejezete.

(H. Gy.)

[Translation]

"None of his contemporaries in England – only Zola and Tolstoy anywhere else – even attempted to wrestle with such big canvases, […] the conception was at least Herculean" – wrote Zangwill about Gissing's novels. His bitter, consistent search for truth is comparable to Zola's, who he greatly admired – but his artistic sensibility makes him turn away from Zola's prostitute; Gissing's characters are more alive, their struggles are more human. "I have been a man, that means I was a fighter." In his last [*sic*] work, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, we hear the sweet echoes of Dickens's world. Henry Ryecroft himself is George Gissing, who in this book summarises his life and is gratified to bid an emotional farewell to life.

Gissing was regarded as a late instance of a writer with a grudge against his compatriots. Little sunlight penetrates the dark corners of his novels. But Dickens looks at the fullness of life with a sensitive eye. Behind his words there was a tremendously painful apprehension of his life and times. They are said to be unrealistic realists, though – romantic. Romantic, as tragic life itself deserves to be.

Between 1880 and 1903 – until his death – he wrote about a dozen novels, and a classic Utopian travelogue: *By the Ionian Sea*. With love and understanding he produced a study of Dickens. His greatest works are *Demos – The Nether World – Born in Exile – The Odd Women – The Whirlpool – The Unclassed – Eve's Ransom*. And, above all, *New Grub Street*, from the English literature of the '80s. This is the first chapter of this novel.

(Gyula Halász)

[1] Israel Zangwill, "'Without Prejudice': George Gissing," *To-Day*, 3 February 1904.

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Gissing and the Topographies of Lambeth, Part Two: From Lambeth Walk to Brixton and Beyond

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According to a 1912 account of "Lambeth: The Parish," "[t]he districts of Stockwell, Brixton, Herne Hill and Tulse Hill practically owe their existence to their position neither in nor out of London, and have been laid out in wide roads bordered by villas and gardens."[1] The acts of naming and definitions of spatial boundaries recorded in literature, especially in realist fiction such as George Gissing's with its precision about toponyms, structure people's urban life experiences. Around the edges of Victorian and Edwardian London, new districts like those named in the above *Victoria County History* appeared when railway lines were built into areas formerly beyond the city's boundaries, leaving different classes of people "distributed into social areas" that were physically separate from one another.[2] The naming of stations and the simultaneous construction of houses around them could suddenly bring an area into being, as at Golders Green in North London where the northern terminus of the Charing Cross, Euston & Hampstead Railway opened in June 1907. Such new districts of very large cities have a nebulous existence until sufficient signs and labels become attached to them for their existence to seem reliable and secure.

Instead of standing distinct from one another like country villages surrounded by fields, the numerous new districts blurred into one another. Their relationship was one of grading, of the threat of rise and fall. Such gradations and shifts could be detected throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, at levels ranging from the individual house to entire sectors of the city. People in 1920s outer South London were remembered later, by a writer who had grown up there, as having been conscious of "the slightest distinctions between the streets."[3] A name attached to a district could become a millstone, if the name became linked to slums, vice, and crime. As well as appearing, whole districts could shift, expand and contract, or even disappear altogether. Today, Lambeth shades into Waterloo, Kennington and Vauxhall. "Horsley Down" was written in large letters over a portion of London immediately south of Tower Bridge on an 1891 map, but no Londoners alive a hundred years later would ever use the name for a London district.[4] What is transmitted about cities across generations is a tiny proportion of what was once known and felt.

Gissing is well known as a writer of place, but the definition of localities through the establishment of boundaries and the application of names which might or might not stick in the longer term are still more important to his

writing than so far appreciated.[5] Whereas much of Gissing's 1880s fiction memorialises threatened and disappearing slums in Victorian inner London, the work of his 1890s fiction includes that of creating the South London suburbs. This act of creation exists in productive abrasive dialogue with another such act, namely the official creation of new metropolitan boroughs, municipal boroughs and urban districts in the reformed local government environment of late Victorian England.

Inner and Outer Lambeth

This article is the second of two building up an "embodied, phenomenological view of Lambeth as an imaginative place."[6] Both combine multiple types of source material including Gissing's fiction, his *Diary* and letters, and contemporary maps with the physical fieldwork of observational walks accompanied by photography and note-taking. Both exemplify Deep Locational Criticism, in which imaginative place – as *both* the combination of materially observable, documented fact *and* imaginative and discursive construction – is traced through repeated returns to sites never known fully and through multiple types of source.[7] The previous article began by "beating the bounds" of Lambeth, both as a tightly packed neighbourhood of streets and earlier of much industry directly across the River Thames from Westminster, and as a larger entity, a long narrow parish extending south from that point towards London's perimeter.[8] Lambeth became part of the County of London in 1889 and was a Metropolitan Borough from 1900 until 1965, in which year portions of the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth were added to form the new London Borough of Lambeth which exists with the same boundaries in 2018.[9]

The Lambeth of the 1880s and 1890s was somewhere not single but multiple. This quality was surveyed via an account of two walks taken in February 2018.[10] One walk headed southwards from the northern extremity of the borough, the other northwards, entering it from the south-west having begun at Lambeth Cemetery, situated outside the borough at Tooting in Wandsworth. Both of these walks terminated near the geographical centre of Lambeth at Brixton, so to say the "capital" of Lambeth since the borough's government has been based there at Lambeth Town Hall since 1908.[11] In *Thyrza* (1887), Gissing used "Lambeth" to mean the parish's northernmost portion, its innermost in terms of London's concentric rings, as an embodiment of "the utterly mundane" in the newly gigantic city.[12] Gissing in the novel meant to juxtapose this particular "Lambeth" with "Hellas," an idea of the elevated and poetic side of the human spirit, able to rise above squalid material conditions.[13] And yet within this construction of a representative inner-city

neighbourhood the music enjoyed and performed on the street and in pubs by its plebeian denizens has an oddly ambiguous status oscillating between Lambeth and Hellas.[14]

If the inner, northern Lambeth portrayed in close-up by Gissing in *Thyrza* contained "the very spirit of London working-class life" as he wrote to his sister Ellen in 1886, there was more to Lambeth than that.[15] The Lambeth Walk area was itself a twenty-minute walk south of the lodging-house neighbourhood next to Waterloo Station (also in the civil parish, afterwards Metropolitan Borough of Lambeth) where Gissing's first wife Nell had died. It is a walk of a similar length from Lambeth Walk to Kennington, and another again from there to Brixton.[16]

The title of this article names Lambeth not South London. This act of naming is problematised by the fact that, in the early 1890s fiction discussed here, Gissing often used settings inside and on the borders of Lambeth as a local government area without identifying them as such. Because Gissing had connected the literary toponym "Lambeth" to the inner-city world viewed close-up in *Thyrza*, he needed to use other toponyms for what he established in writing of the early to mid-1890s as a distinct zone both geographically and mentally in London: that of suburbanites with some money, at least, to spend, but a very insecure social class identity. Gissing's 1880s novels work with a relatively binary distinction between people with culture and education (whether wealthy or not) and people without, the lower orders, situating both sides in the intense, overwhelming inner city where pedestrianism is the dominant mode of movement. But starting with *New Grub Street* (1891), those of the next decade portray instead a new middle class made up of people with both backgrounds and futures in doubt. Outer Lambeth (chiefly the area he identifies as Brixton, not the then much wealthier and still almost rural outermost portions, Streatham and Norwood), and equivalent parts of Camberwell and Wandsworth, adjacent districts, Gissing developed as an imaginative site expressive of such people and their lives.

This distinct zone, the central place setting of novels like *The Odd Women* and *In the Year of Jubilee*, is identified by various names, wavering between the level of the neighbourhood and the larger administrative unit of the civil parish or Metropolitan Borough: Camberwell, Brixton, Battersea. Such names include the names of roads which become attached to wider neighbourhoods: Lavender Hill, Champion Hill, Walworth Road. People become metonymically linked to the address of their house and its associations, suggesting an atomised quality which differs radically from Thyrza's existence in Lambeth. Lambeth, like Camberwell, was a name attached both to a smallish neighbourhood and a large local government area,

containing slums, large houses set in large gardens occupied by wealthy people, and a complex, highly multiple, gradation of social levels in between.[17] But while Camberwell was divided from the River Thames by the extremely working-class and industrial boroughs of Southwark and Bermondsey to its north, 1880s and 1890s Lambeth more fully encompassed the whole range of London environments from inner to outer, excepting the true centrality of the City and West End across the water from it.

The End of *Thyrza*: Death in the Slums of Lambeth Proper

The ending of *Thyrza* reinforces the village-like sense of place which Gissing has built up around the Lambeth Walk neighbourhood earlier in the novel.[18] It is precisely the small-scale and tightly knit character of the locality, for instance, which mean that working-class Thyrza Trent is spied leaving the library building on Paradise Street by the interfering Mr Bower, who assumes that she has been meeting the wealthy Walter Egremont secretly there.[19] Chapter 41, "Her Return," takes Thyrza back to Lambeth and to her sister Lydia.[20] The heroine has been elsewhere in London, staying with a middle-class family close to Regent's Park thanks to Mrs Ormonde, a philanthropist who unintentionally does Thyrza more harm than good. Eventually, Thyrza wants to revisit Lambeth. To return to her "old home" is to return to a room in a multiply-occupied house, not to any Victorian domestic ideal, although Thyrza and Lydia in their purity and care for one another also embody precisely that.[21]

The curious and conflicted nature of home at moments such as this, including the street-like encounters that happen within inner-city houses, give revealing insights into slum life. Such moments, which can be of subterfuge and mystery, sit in the inner Lambeth of *Thyrza* alongside the street names traceable on the map. All is close together, and well known to locals. Egremont, for instance, visits the atheist artisan Bunce in Chapter 22 to bring him a message from Mrs Ormonde; at the end of their encounter, "Bunce led him down to the [street] door."[22] Then, "[a]s Bunce reascended, someone met and passed him, hurrying with light feet and woman's garments, silently."[23] Not quite silently, since feet and "woman's garments" are heard by Bunce, but the staircase was then completely unlit in this sort of house: at night, pitch-dark. Bunce tries to establish if the figure passing him is his neighbour Totty Nancarrow, but the woman coming down says "No […] Miss Nancarrow isn't in."[24] The unidentified woman on the stairs is Thyrza, who has been waiting in Totty's room, on the same floor as that which Bunce and his two children share, and who knows that Egremont has been here. Writing in 1981, Frederic Jameson judged *Thyrza* to be a novel marked by its tortured prolongation of a

Dickensian ideal of family and womanliness.[25] But in the character of Thyrza's friend Totty, and particularly in her acts of caring for Bunce's children something quite different emerges, not social ill but personal warmth and trust.

Two days after her first return to Lambeth, Thyrza goes again, this time hopefully, the "London winter" having provided a rare spell when "[t]he sun—the very sun of heaven—made new the outline of every street[.]"[26] She learns with joy that Lydia has accepted a proposal of marriage from the intelligent, honourable Luke Ackroyd but then suddenly dies in the room earlier home to both sisters, having been unable to return properly as she had planned.[27] To counterbalance Thyrza's own tragedy, a death caused by being carried away by cross-class love, Gissing rewards Bunce and Totty with each other, the atheist widower and the "harum-scarum" but honourable and caring work-girl who enjoys "innocent nights at the Canterbury Music Hall" and finds "warmth and shelter" in the Roman Catholic church.[28] For the Marxist Jameson, Gissing belongs in "a whole tradition of counterrevolutionary propaganda" which also includes Dostoevsky, Conrad and Orwell.[29] And yet the popular voice sounds louder and more clearly in 1880s Gissing than in any of these great writers and nowhere more than in Totty. To contrast her with a contemporary, Henry James's Millicent Henning in *The Princess Casamassima* is presented, tongue in cheek, as an "allegorical" "muse of Cockneyism": "She was, to her blunt, expanded finger-tips, a daughter of London, of the crowded streets and hustling traffic of the great city; she had drawn her health and strength from its dingy courts and foggy thoroughfares[.]"[30]

Compared to Totty, Millicent is a giant waxwork of a London girl down to her "blunt, expanded finger-tips." Not just Totty's quasi-maternal care for the children of the widowed Bunce but also her allegiance to the inferior local shop over the better one a street away may make her a "[t]rue girl of the people."[31] Totty's portrayal by Gissing contains both affection and intimacy. She is an individual as much as she is a class representative. Gissing's portrayals of the working class as a unit are usually negative, sometimes cantankerously so, but his apparent fondness for Totty finds no equivalent in any of his early 1890s South London suburbanites.

Gissing, Edith and Residential Topographies

Gissing's second wife Edith, née Underwood, came from a London family on the frontier between the working class and middle class, with some artistic qualities. While one source calls her father James Underwood "a plasterer's labourer," he "is variously listed in directories and certificates as an artist sculptor, architectural sculptor, marble mason master, marble bust painter, working sculptor, and—on his marriage certificate—stone mason."[32] Gissing

himself, about to be married to Edith, called her the "daughter of [a] reputable working-sculptor," but he did so writing to his brother Algernon, doubtless wanting to claim respectability for his bride-to-be in contrast with his deeply unrespectable first wife Nell.[33] Writing to family members, Gissing also attributed to Edith "the virtue of extreme quietness & docility."[34] Edith's marriage to Gissing on 25 February 1891 was recorded at the Registry Office of the Pancras District in London. It gave her address as 25 St Paul's Crescent, Camden Town, the exact street named as home to Marian Yule and her father in *New Grub Street*, published in the year of the marriage, and the "[r]ank or profession" of the bride's father as "Sculptor."[35] Edith was a denizen of the area, just as the Trent sisters were Lambeth through and through.[36]

The present article traces an imaginative shift in Gissing's artistic perspective on London from one in which people had urban identities closely linked to specific districts such as Lambeth and Camden Town, to one in which they became more mobile, even unrooted. Like his early 1890s fiction, Gissing's relationship with Edith, and the topographies through which they moved, is indicative of this change. Powered by multiple developments in transport networks, London underwent a great physical expansion in the period 1870-1914 while the population growth of the inner city was slowing.[37] As Richard Dennis has shown, Gissing's rewriting of *The Unclassed* crucially changes the novel from one of a walkable London of neighbourhoods to one in which characters live widely spread from one another in districts connected to the centre by train and bus.[38]

Unlike Edith, Gissing himself was a migrant in the city as his first wife, Nell, had also been. Ultimately, marriage dislodged Edith first from her native district of North London, then from the inner ring and finally from London altogether – as well as shifting her into the arena of the insane. Having lived in Exeter, the Gissings moved back to London in the summer of 1893, to newer suburbs in which social roles were more uncertain. In the year of *Thyrza*'s publication Arthur Conan Doyle in *A Study in Scarlet* had presented several aspects of South London suburbs for comprehension by Sherlock Holmes, resident in rooms at 221B Baker Street on the northern side of central London very close to the nonfictional rooms of Gissing at 7K Cornwall Mansions. The first is Lauriston Gardens, an invented street off the Brixton Road with "an ill-omened and minatory look" where unoccupied houses seem as numerous as tenanted ones.[39] In this zone, not yet properly established as a living urban residential district, a corpse is found. A policeman called to the scene is interviewed by Holmes where he lives, at a court in Kennington, "a quadrangle paved with flags and lined with sordid dwellings."[40] Suspicion falls on the son of a boarding-house keeper of French origin, the boarding house placed by

Doyle in the fictional "Torquay Terrace, Camberwell."[41] The South London settings of *A Study in Scarlet* leave no doubt that Holmes belongs in contemporary London, with its mass of successful and unsuccessful new suburbs, its boarding-houses and slum courts. In this zone Gissing chose to live, write and set his fiction during the early 1890s.

Myatt's Fields Park (Jason Finch 2018)

Gissing never refers to the area north of central Brixton into which he and Edith moved in the summer of 1893 with their baby son, near Myatt's Fields and the frontier with Camberwell to the east, as Lambeth.[42] But it belonged to the local government area of Lambeth and had been in the parish of St Mary, Lambeth, from the Middle Ages until 1824.[43] In the 1890s, the construction of residential suburbs was making the centre of Lambeth shift southwards, away from Thyrza's inner streets. Mirroring this, five years after Gissing's death the grand new Lambeth Town Hall was completed south of Brixton's railway station and market at the junction of Brixton Hill and Acre Lane.

In 1893 to 1894, the Gissings lived at Burton Road, today in London SW9, renting a floor in the house of a landlord and landlady he called "very ordinary people."[44] In these months he wrote fiction thematising Brixton's links to the prominent music halls of northern Lambeth. He also worked on

a novel set in the area. From Burton Road, Gissing went to work not far off. He wrote to Algernon on 15 September 1893: "I have a little room at about 10 minutes' walk from home where I go to work every day, a dirty room in a very poor neighbourhood—2/6 a week. I have put in only a table & a chair, but I get on pretty well."[45] In that room, he was working on the manuscript of the novel which would become *In the Year of Jubilee*, first conceived as "Miss Lord of Camberwell" (10 July 1893): a successor to *Thyrza*, Miss Trent of Lambeth, we could say.[46]

76 Burton Road (Jason Finch 2018)

Gissing lost not one wife in Lambeth but two. This point is made clear by Anthony Petyt in an article for *The Gissing Journal* on "The Last Years of Edith Underwood."[47] Petyt records a sad story in which Lambeth initially seems to have only a fleeting part as a setting, but the London district may

have greater significance than at first sight. Having returned to London from Exeter, Gissing and Edith lived together at Burton Road from June 1893 until May 1894, in the Lambeth local government area but always defined by Gissing (in the letters he wrote from there), as being in "Brixton, S.W."[48]

The "S.W." links Brixton to areas such as South Kensington, Chelsea and Clapham, rather than to Lambeth and Kennington which belonged like Southwark, Bermondsey and Camberwell to its east, to the less desirable "S. E." postal district. The Gissings' next permanent address was beyond the borders of London on the same axis, south-south-west of central London, at Epsom in Surrey. In 1897, after years of conflict, the two split up, with Gissing using his financial power to detach Edith from her children and free himself for other relationships. In February of the next year, from Italy, Gissing arranged rooms for Edith and the couple's children at Mansfield Road in Hampstead, North West London. Some months later, Gissing heard that "Edith had attacked her landlord and his wife with a stick and that a policeman had to be called."[49] Gissing had the furniture she was using (his property) taken away; she then contacted the Tottenham Court Road furniture dealer who was storing it, obtained the address where her husband was living in Dorking, Surrey, well outside London and two miles from the station, and went there with their son Alfred (then aged two) to remonstrate with him. Gissing continued supporting his wife whilst they lived apart. The point of recounting these events is that, after being recorded inhabiting "two rooms at 19 Scarbrook Road, Croydon" in 1901, it was from 7 Melbourne Square, on the frontier between northern Brixton and South Lambeth, that Edith was finally removed to an institution for patients judged insane, in January 1902.[50] Melbourne Square was a mere two or three minutes' walk from 76 Burton Road, where the Gissings had lived eight years earlier whilst still together, before Alfred's birth.[51]

Biographical literary criticism is risky and can easily go wrong. Literary critics who identify closely with their author can be particularly vulnerable. Sydney Lott's view that for Gissing in the late 1880s, experiencing "loneliness and frustration," visits to the music hall "must have provided a welcome, if short-lived, palliative," for example, is pure speculation.[52] If Gissing in *In the Year of Jubilee*, say, portrays people whose membership of the servant-owning classes is precarious, and emphasises moments when they fight bitterly with servants who neither fear nor respect them, he is drawing on his own personal experiences in the portrayal. In 1892, the year before he wrote the novel, similar struggles had been a feature of the Gissing household, with its master and mistress both raised on the lower fringes of the Victorian servant-owning middle class, and over time they got worse.[53]

Along with the increasingly authoritative, sharp-witted prose, hallmarks of Gissing's writings in the early 1890s include extreme precision in toponyms and place settings. The art of the writer of fiction, perhaps the realist novelist in particular, is to form something other than the biography out of the material gathered in a life. When Gissing left Edith and their baby son in Exeter in the spring of 1893 and travelled to London, staying in a boarding house on Kennington Road and roaming around South London suburbs such as Brixton and Clapham on foot, he was not just scoping possible districts where the young family could live pleasantly and affordably.[54] He was also seeking a new milieu for his London fiction, one clearly distinct from the extreme contrasts between wealthy, educated people and the slum-dwelling working class and poor that had been at the heart of his 1880s novels. This milieu is more than a setting in novels such as *The Odd Women* and *In the Year of Jubilee*: it is their theme and subject.

Burton Road survives, and the house where the Gissings lived is externally at least little different from how it appeared in the 1960s and indeed when the Gissings lived there.[55] Melbourne Square was demolished around 1970. Today the site is occupied by the Myatts Fields South estate of social housing built by the London Borough of Lambeth.[56] In 1969 photographs, the doomed Melbourne Square contained abandoned cars and its houses had overgrown gardens with broken-down wooden fences. It was part of an inner London of hippies and squatters.[57] What meaning do these afterlives have in relation to the Brixton which Gissing and Edith knew in the 1890s? Why was Edith, who had transferred her London residency from north of the river to south, from Camden to northern Brixton, drawn back to the neighbourhood near the Brixton Road? A topographic literary criticism will always face questions such as these.

Brixton Culture: "The Muse of the Halls"

In Gissing's story "The Muse of the Halls," written over four days in late September 1893 in a bare room near Burton Road, musical entertainment and South London topography combine, as in *Thyrza*.[58] The main setting is Brixton, never identified here as part of Lambeth. The story emphasises the localised London setting in its opening sentence: "[t]hey were together in the parlour at Brixton, the faded little parlour with its scent of musk and gentility."[59] In the opening scene a young vocalist, Hilda Paget, declares her wish to start performing with "music-hall people," proclaimed by her "quite as respectable as the singers I have been associating with."[60] Her interlocutor Denis Bryant, introduced as "the musician," his "dark locks in picturesque disorder" and his clothes shabby, tries to put her off: "First they'll stare, and

then they'll hoot. You'll be choked with tobacco. You'll be sickened by the atmosphere of blackguardism before and behind the curtain. And when you have to give it up, there'll be no more hope for you at respectable concerts."[61] The art Denis speaks for here is put into contest, ironically, with a suburban respectability which Hilda, appealing to her mother, ascribes to "music-hall people" in contrast to long-haired artistic types like Denis: "Mr. Briggs has assured me that music-hall people are, on the whole, quite as respectable as the singers I have been associating with. He named several who go to church regularly. He says that the men are very fond of gardening–just like you, mamma."[62] Hilda says, "We'll go in for Art when we have nice clothes and nice meals, and a house that wasn't built to last only three years."[63] Rejecting high culture, Hilda goes on: "I'm sick of half-hearted applause and insincere encouragement. I'd rather have the shouts and stamps of a music-hall audience. And above all I want money."[64] She declares that "[e]verybody, in every kind of art, is beginning to play to the gallery," imploring Denis to "write popular music."[65]

The toponyms of the story itself are all South London ones. Besides Brixton, Mr Briggs, music-hall director, has a "villa at Streatham," while Hilda's first engagement, billed as "Miss Lilian Dove" is at "a South London music-hall, a place of small pretensions."[66] But the plot revolves around a song with, instead, a North London suburban setting. Many music-hall songs of the 1890s did indeed reference specific London place names and this contributed to their success: it was to the taste of the music-hall audience and to the fiction readers to whom Gissing's short stories were marketed.[67] As never in *Thyrza*, Gissing here caricatures Cockney speakers as speaking in an ugly and non-standard way. Following her try-out in the small "South London" hall, Hilda informs Denis that she has been offered "an engagement."[68] He has surreptitiously watched her from the back of the hall alongside "rowdy clerks and mechanics" and has heard them sneering about her, confirming him in the self-consoling belief that she will fail in this arena.[69] Leaving the hall, he is jeered at by "a ragamuffin's voice": "If you cawn't afford a shyve, git yer 'air cut!"[70] This South London suburban environment seems closely linked to a pervasive and debased commercialism that is handled in more depth in the novel Gissing was struggling with just when he dashed off "The Muse of the Halls": *In the Year of Jubilee*. There, too, music-hall ditties surround the characters such as Beatrice French who dream of making fortunes and becoming fashionable through naked, unashamed greed via a trick or coup.

"The Muse of the Halls" could be read as a commentary by Gissing on the hard-nosed negotiations at which he was himself becoming more adept in the literary business.[71] So Denis Bryant's journalist friend Williamson tells

him, "you would make more by one such song than by a gross of Cantatas."[72] Like his creations Hilda and Denis, Gissing, according to his diary at least, became skilled at cool, business-like self-promotion, gaining a keen awareness of his market worth, and so improving his financial position.[73] Wishing to marry Hilda and blaming himself for not earning enough money to do so, Bryant wonders "Why not woo the muse of the suburban drawing-room, nay, even the muse of the halls?"[74] Williamson then writes the lyrics and Bryant the music to a song called "My Peter."[75] In the lyrics to this song, the speaker's husband earns two pounds and two shillings a week and they have "a nice little home at Stamford Hill," or in other words in a North London equivalent of Brixton and Camberwell villadom.[76] On the London maps of the era, Stamford Hill is next to South Tottenham, where the formerly impoverished mathematician Micklethwaite of *The Odd Women* is able to settle in "placid happiness" with his bride.[77] Bryant goes to sell the song, like Gissing himself in the literary world engaging in serious negotiations. Offered five pounds for the copyright, which will bring him no performing rights income, Denis holds out, in a "long conversation, stuffed with slang and technicalities."[78] Ultimately he is successful when a popular young singer, Bella Lancey, sees her way "as she put it, to 'knock 'em all round'" with "My Peter."[79]

The song is an instant success, heard at leading music halls within a week. These are named in the story as "The Pavilion" (at Piccadilly Circus in the West End) and "The Canterbury" (at Westminster Bridge Road in Lambeth), with the implication that the readers will know them.[80] As such they contrast with the unnamed hall, located only out of the centre in "South London" where Hilda makes her debut. Bryant has written "My Peter" under a pseudonym and Hilda, hearing it, chides him: if he could write a song like that they would both make their fortunes.[81] The fame of the greatest Lambeth music hall is asserted more forcefully when Hilda gets her "second engagement," asking archly "[a]t a place called the Canterbury–have you heard of it?"[82] Denis is shocked, since it is precisely "[a]t the Canterbury" that Bella Lancey is "making a nightly *furore* with 'My Peter.'"[83] On the night of Hilda's performance at the Canterbury, Denis travels by tram to Westminster Bridge Road, arriving after Hilda. Westminster Bridge Road and Brixton are juxtaposed as city centre versus suburb, yet in reality both are parts of long, thin Lambeth with its great north-south extent and its span of different urban concentric rings. Eventually, Denis is exposed when Miss Lancey addresses him as "Mr Thomson"; he and Hilda squabble, the story closing with their agreement that he will write another song for her.[84]

As a story, "The Muse of the Halls" on the surface seems slight. But it has depth, indicated by Pierre Coustillas in his observation that the story's title is an allusion to "the Sala delle Muse (the Hall of the Muses) in the Vatican Museum," recalled by Gissing from a visit in December 1888.[85] The story describes a surrender to materialism. Lambeth is not emphasised in it: the shared identity as portions of Lambeth, of Brixton, and of Westminster Bridge Road is unmentioned. Compared to the tight-knit if brutal world of *Thyrza*, the suburbs of this story contain flimsy, new-built houses and respectabilities that are malleable. Such areas, exemplified by Brixton, are experienced in a binary opposition with a growing, brightly-lit world of central London entertainment, the two connected by mass transit (the tram). The story leaves much unanswered. It is never clear whether Denis and Hilda will actually profit by selling out, either in the long term financially, or personally. Perhaps they will fail in the commercial world, with its mercilessly short memory, and then be, as Denis early on foretold, no good for serious work anymore.

The 1890s City: Self-Control and Long-Distance Transport

Like "The Muse of the Halls," Gissing's two major South London novels of 1893 and 1894, *The Odd Women* and *In the Year of Jubilee*, have as their spatial framework the topographies of a London of enlarged magnitude in which there are multiple sorts of public transport and vehicles for hire, for those with differing financial resources. Both, like *Thyrza*, also juxtapose with their London settings a suburbanising seaside England, whether on the South Coast or in the West Country. The London plot of *The Odd Women* moves around an inner south-western arc from Walworth Road in Southwark to Chelsea via the Clapham Common area. Repeatedly, in *In the Year of Jubilee*, characters flit between southern suburbs (chiefly in Camberwell and on the borders with Lambeth) and the central districts of London, with the in-between passed over or through unsighted. This is a bit like a plane journey: there is no mental engagement with the pieces of ground you are passing over. The more fully urban inner South London, home to Thyrza and her neighbours, is almost entirely absent, although the hard-working Luckworth Crewe does lodge there, calling time on an evening at De Crespigny Park by announcing "I'll be trotting homewards. It'll be time for by-by when I get to Kennington."[86]

Nancy Lord regrets, to her father on his deathbed, her lack of "control upon myself."[87] Perhaps the quality of abandon, of being out of control, which Gissing gave to this heroine, toponymically associated with specific southern suburbs, can be linked to the zone itself. Nancy and her contemporaries are to

be opposed with tragically repressed figures from an earlier generation, like her father Stephen Lord, Edmund Widdowson from *The Odd Women* and Michael Snowdon from *The Nether World* with their kingly or saintly first names. In the novel the figures of materialistic novelty are "[t]he people over there" (the household at De Crespigny Park), who have a riotous, dirty home filled with cheap commercialised music.[88] In superficial contrast with them are seemingly authentic gentry, representatives of old money like Lionel Tarrant. His governing place axis seems to be countryside-central London, although at a time when Champion Hill has been surrounded by new buildings and the Inns of Chancery are on their last legs as places for a bachelor gentleman to live. This class in *In the Year of Jubilee* shows as effete, their money draining away. At Staple Inn, Lionel has a decrepit cleaner and an ugly paint scheme that he cannot change.[89] Someone like Crewe, by contrast, seems extraordinarily vigorous (precisely the adjective Gissing had in mind when shaping *In the Year of Jubilee*).

In the Year of Jubilee stages, repeatedly, a move over the inner city's most crowded and dirty housing zones, from suburb to centre, which averts its gaze from the fact that there is anything in between. In both 1893-1894 novels, the working classes, like Lambeth, are almost entirely unmentioned, excepting a few domestic servants: who do not appear as characters, nor are the districts where they live mentioned. As in the earlier fictions material struggles are everywhere. But they range from the struggle of middle-class people to live and maintain gentility on a pathetically small but still regular and reliable private income like the Madden sisters of *The Odd Women*, to people like *In the Year of Jubilee*'s Luckworth Crewe, who are part-way in a move from rags to riches. Real people in the social positions of these characters would of course have had some knowledge, however vague, of the fact that there were very many poor people in London, but the day-to-day lives of those people, and the topographies they inhabited, were easy to ignore once one lived in a suburb.

Nor were Brixton and Camberwell without their own slums. H. J. Dyos, in the founding moment of British urban history, took Sultan Street, Camberwell, in the far north of the borough very close to the border with Southwark, as the emblematic late Victorian slum, pointing out that every portion of the newly gigantic city had them.[90] Across that very border lay Walworth Road, where Monica Madden in *The Odd Women* works after coming to London with a tiny inheritance, her job viewed by her sisters as "slavery" in a very doubtful and unrespectable place.[91] Grove Lane, De Crespigny Park, and Champion Hill are given distinct characters within the suburbs in the early chapters of *In the Year of Jubilee*: old-fashioned,

modish, and authentically upper-class, respectively. But these streets (all just inside the Camberwell local government area) are physically very close indeed to each other and to the border with Lambeth across which the Gissings lived at Burton Road.[92] They were ambiguous streets, some in Lambeth for local government purposes but in Camberwell as a parliamentary borough.[93]

When he cast off the slums as an identity or specialism, Gissing also expelled something else from his urban writing. This can be seen by comparing the house in Walnut Tree Walk, on the eastern edges of Lambeth, where Thyrza and her sister Lydia live in the early chapters of *Thyrza*, with the physically proximal Kennington Road boarding house where Gissing's 1898 novel *The Town Traveller* opens. This boarding house, where the maid Moggie works, is scruffy – slummy, even – in a way that anticipates much twentieth-century London fiction. 1930s to 1960s novels, for example by William Plomer, Norman Collins, Lynne Reid-Banks, and Alexander Baron use the house in multiple occupation as a setting and as a means of occasioning plot via the differences of gender, age, social class, and origin between characters it brings into connection with one another.[94]

> Sunshine through a landing window illumined the dust floating thickly about the staircase and heated the familiar blend of lodging-house smells—the closeness of small rooms that are never cleaned, the dry rot of wall-paper, plaster, and old wood, the fustiness of clogged carpets trodden thin, the ever-rising vapours from a sluttish kitchen. As Moggie happened to be wiping down the front steps the door stood open, affording a glimpse of trams and omnibuses, cabs and carts, with pedestrians bobbing past in endless variety—the life of Kennington Road—all dust and sweat under a glaring summer sun.[95]

This lacks the sense both of doom and of something hidden that is perhaps the secret of the city as a whole which Gissing sought in the parts of London gradually being officially labelled as "the slums" during the 1880s and 1890s. And yet here, before the death of Queen Victoria, the Victorian housing stock of London is getting old and barely being renewed; turning into a mausoleum of the semi-dead Victorian age.

Finally, *Thyrza*, *The Odd Women* (with Micklethwaite in North London), "The Muse of the Halls" and the story of Gissing and Edith all contain a characteristic switching between sectors as a notable characteristic of the new, physically expanded London. If it doesn't work in one, you go to another. North and South contain equivalent districts: Lambeth Walk and Caledonian Road; South Tottenham and Camberwell; Stockwell and the part of Hampstead where it blurs into Gospel Oak then Kentish Town. A need to wipe the slate but still be in a London which is knowable from experience of

its other sectors is apparent. In terms of its concentric rings, North London mirrors South, then. And in this respect, anyway, Gissing's portrait of inner Lambeth and suburban Brixton, otherwise opposed as having a deep versus a shallow connection to urban locality, resemble one another.

[1] "Lambeth: The Parish," in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 4*, ed. H. E. Malden (London: Victoria County History, 1912), pp. 50-64. British History Online: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol4/pp50-64 [accessed 3 September 2018].

[2] Hugh Clout, *The Times London History Atlas* (London: Times Books, 1991), p. 88 (the same page contains a map of "London's Growth 1800-1914").

[3] Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and Its People* (London: Viking, 2001), p. 124.

[4] *Stanford's Library Map of London and its Suburbs* (London: E. Stanford, 1891), sheet 11, reproduced in Peter Barber, *London: A History in Maps* (London: British Library, 2012), p. 271.

[5] But see Richard Dennis, "Mapping Gissing's *Workers in the Dawn*," *Gissing Journal*, 46:4 (October 2010), pp. 1-20, and "*Thyrza*'s Geography," in George Gissing, *Thyrza*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2013), pp. 560-567.

[6] Jason Finch, "Gissing and the Topographies of Lambeth, Part One: Boundaries, Walks, *Thyrza*," *Gissing Journal*, 52:3 (July 2018), pp. 1-26. On theory, methodology, and historical backgrounds, see the notes there (pp. 20-26).

[7] Jason Finch, *Deep Locational Criticism: Imaginative Place in Literary Research and Teaching* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2016).

[8] Finch, "Gissing and the Topographies of Lambeth: Part One," pp. 3-7.

[9] The Metropolitan Borough was thinner east-west than its successor and its area was smaller: 16.5 km^2 versus 26.82 km^2. See *Wikipedia* (English Language) articles "Metropolitan Borough of Lambeth" and "London Borough of Lambeth."

[10] Finch, "Gissing and the Topographies of Lambeth: Part One," pp. 7-13.

[11] See "Brixton Hill area," in *Survey of London: Volume 26, Lambeth: Southern Area*, ed. F. H. W. Sheppard (London: The Athlone Press for London County Council, 1956), pp. 100-105. British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol26/pp100-105 [accessed 16 August 2018].

[12] Finch, "Gissing and the Topographies of Lambeth: Part One," p. 16.

[13] Letter from George Gissing to Ellen Gissing, 31 July 1886, in *The Collected Letters of George Gissing*, eds. Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas, nine volumes (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1990-1997), Vol. III, pp. 48-49; see Finch, "Gissing and the Topographies of Lambeth: Part One," p. 8.

[14] On the varying social qualities of music in *Thyrza*, see Patricia Pye, *Sound and Modernity in the Literature of London, 1880–1918* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 85-86.

[15] Letter from George Gissing to Ellen Gissing, 31 July 1886, *Collected Letters,* Vol. III, pp. 48-49.

[16] On 1890s Kennington, see also Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (London: The Bodley Head, 1964), pp. 1-74.

[17] The population of the area governed by Lambeth vestry in 1891 was 275,203; in 1901 that of the Metropolitan Borough of Lambeth was 301,895. The equivalent figures for Camberwell were 235,944 and 259,339.

[18] Finch, "Gissing and the Topographies of Lambeth: Part One," pp. 13-18.

[19] George Gissing (1887), *Thyrza*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2013), p. 239.

[20] *Ibid*., pp. 502-510.

[21] *Ibid*., p. 505.

[22] *Ibid*., p. 278.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] *Ibid*.

[25] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 188. According to Jameson, *Thyrza* "demonstrates how the refuge of the 'hearth' has in Gissing become a kind of ghetto." See also Finch, "Gissing and the Topographies of Lambeth: Part One," pp. 8-9.

[26] *Thyrza* (2013), p. 511.

[27] *Ibid*., p. 518.

[28] *Ibid*., pp. 395, 408, 414.

[29] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, p. 202.

[30] Henry James (1886), *The Princess Casamassima* (London: Penguin, 1987), pp. 83-84. For a recent take on Millicent, see Pye, *Sound and Modernity*, pp. 88-89.

[31] *Thyrza* (2013), p. 406.

[32] *Collected Letters*, Vol. IV, p. 255, fn.1.

[33] Letter from George Gissing to Algernon Gissing, 11 January 1891, *Collected Letters*, Vol. IV, p. 254.

[34] *Ibid*.

[35] *Collected Letters*, Vol. 4, between pp. 128-129. See also Christopher Douglas, "25 St Paul's Crescent: Bleak Home of the Underwoods and Yules," *Gissing Journal*, 52:3 (July 2018), pp. 27-30.

[36] Edith's birth certificate shows that she was born on 28 January 1867 at 16 Kentish Town Road, Camden Town, less than a mile west of St Paul's Crescent, the daughter of James Underwood ("Marble Mason") and Ann Underwood, formerly Neville (*Collected Letters*, Vol. 4, between pp. 128-129).

[37] Clout, *London History Atlas*, pp. 88-89; M. H. Port, introduction, in Ann Saunders, ed., *The A–Z of Edwardian London* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Harry Margary, 2007), p. 1.

[38] Richard Dennis, "Mapping Gissing's *Workers in the Dawn*," *Gissing Journal*, 46:4 (October 2010), pp. 1-20.

[39] Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Stories* (Ware: Wordsworth, 2007), p. 27.

[40] *Ibid*., p. 35.

[41] *Ibid*., p. 43.

[42] *Survey of London: Volume 26, Lambeth: Southern Area* (ed. F. H. W. Sheppard, 1956), section "Myatt's Fields, Denmark Hill and Herne Hill: Introduction and Myatt's Fields area": donated to the LCC in 1889, Myatt's Fields was a leftover area of the former Minet estate.

[43] "Lambeth: The Parish," *Victoria County History of Surrey, Volume 4.*

[44] George Gissing, diary entry for 24 June 1893, in Pierre Coustillas, ed., *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist* (Hassocks: Harvester, 1978), p. 308.

[45] *Collected Letters*, Vol. V, p. 143. This writing space at Crawford St, Camberwell, replaced an even worse garret in Cranmer Road, off the Brixton Road north of Burton Road towards Kennington.

[46] Gissing, entry for 10 July 1893, in *Diary*. Having abandoned a novel set in Birmingham, Gissing wrote on 2 June 1893 that he was about to "go to London, & there […] set to work upon a vigorous book, of which the scene will be in Camberwell" (*Collected Letters*, Vol. V, pp. 114-115).

[47] Anthony Petyt, "The Last Years of Edith Underwood," *Gissing Journal*, 46:3 (July 2010), pp. 280-291.

[48] *Collected Letters*, Vol. V, pp. 107 through to 208.

[49] Petyt, "The Last Years of Edith Underwood," pp. 280-281.

[50] *Ibid*., p. 282. Melbourne Square lay approximately midway between Burton Road and the room Gissing had once rented for writing in at Cranmer Road, Kennington.

[51] As indicated on *Stanford's Map of Central London* (London: Edward Stanford, 1897), http://mapco.net/stanford/stan75.htm, and the Ordnance Survey five feet to the mile map from 1895 (OS London 1:1,056 - Sheet XI.34, https://maps.nls.uk/view/101202258).

[52] Sydney Lott, "Gissing and London's Music Halls," *Gissing Journal*, 36:4 (October 2000), pp. 24-31, here p. 24.

[53] See Gissing, entries for 13 May 1892 and 4 October 1892, *Diary*, pp. 278, 286.

[54] Gissing, entries for 30 and 31 March 1893, *Diary*, p. 300. On 31 March Gissing reports: "Very fine, hot day. Spent the whole of it on foot. First went to explore Brixton. Walked up Brixton Hill to Streatham Hill, and by a long circuit through Clapham back to Kennington Park, making a lunch of oranges on the way."

[55] See *Collected Letters*, Vol. V. between pp. 212-213 for Coustillas's 1960s photograph of it; for mine, taken in February 2018, see Jason Finch, "Lambeth, February 2018," a publicly accessible Flickr album: https://www.flickr.com/photos/jasonfinch1970/albums/72157691388994762, photo nos. "DSC_4359," "DSC_4360."

[56] *Ibid*., "DSC_4191" – "DSC_4210," showing the site formerly occupied by Melbourne Square on 18 February 2018.

[57] See images of Melbourne Square from 1949–1969 on the London Metropolitan Archives online picture archive, *Collage*: https://collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk/quick-search?q=melbourne square.

[58] George Gissing (1893), "The Muse of the Halls," *Gissing Journal*, 42:3 (July 2006), pp. 2-14.

[59] *Ibid*., p. 2.

[60] *Ibid*.

[61] *Ibid*.

[62] *Ibid*.

[63] *Ibid*., p. 3.

[64] *Ibid*.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[66] *Ibid*.

[67] For example, the song "If It Wasn't For the 'Ouses in Between," made famous by the performer Gus Elen (1862-1940), which mentioned in its lyrics Epsom, Chingford, Hackney Marshes, Leather Lane, Rye House, Hendon, Wembley and the River Lea.

[68] Gissing, "The Muse of the Halls," p. 6.

[69] *Ibid*.

[70] *Ibid*., p. 7.

[71] The story grew out of Gissing's business relationship with Clement King Shorter, who wrote to Gissing on 30 March 1893 asking for one story resembling the Bank Holiday scene in *The Nether World*. See Gissing, *Diary*, p. 300. See also *Diary*, pp. 315-316 for Gissing's

account of further negotiations with Shorter over the quantity and price of short stories, during 1893.

[72] Gissing, "The Muse of the Halls," p. 8.

[73] In September 1893 Gissing was advised by the literary agent William Morris Colles (*Diary*, p. 316) that "in selling short stories, I ought to get 3 gu[ine]as a thousand words, for the English serial rights" of a story. In December, Gissing managed to negotiate a price of four guineas per thousand words for "The Muse of the Halls" and a number of other stories.

[74] "The Muse of the Halls," p. 8.

[75] *Ibid*., pp. 8-9.

[76] *Ibid*., p. 8.

[77] George Gissing (1893), *The Odd Women*, ed. Patricia Ingham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 194.

[78] Gissing, "The Muse of the Halls," p. 9.

[79] *Ibid*.

[80] In the 1890s, the Canterbury Music Hall had expanded considerably from its origins as a room attached to a public house: its capacity by then was 3,000 people.

[81] Gissing, "The Muse of the Halls," pp. 9-10.

[82] *Ibid*., p. 11.

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] *Ibid*., pp. 12-13.

[85] Pierre Coustillas, introductory note to Gissing, "The Muse of the Halls," p. 1.

[86] George Gissing (1894), *In the Year of Jubilee* (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1895, New Edition), p. 96.

[87] *Ibid*., p. 160.

[88] *Ibid*., p. 159.

[89] Gissing, *In the Year of Jubilee*, pp. 156, 154.

[90] H. J. Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1961); Clout, *London History Atlas*, p. 89.

[91] Gissing, *The Odd Women*, pp. 38, 72.

[92] As is clear from J. G. Bartholomew, *Handy Reference Atlas of London and Suburbs* (Edinburgh: John Bartholomew, 1908), squares R19, R20, S20 (http://mapco.net/bart1908/bart48b.htm).

[93] As indicated in a map headed "London Boroughs: Metropolitan and Parliamentary" from the 1912 edition of *Bacon's Large Scale Atlas of London and Suburbs*, facsimile reprint as Saunders, *A–Z of Edwardian London*, pp. 44-45. The ambiguity is compounded when considering that Myatt's Fields, where the London Borough of Lambeth's archives and library is situated in 2018, was earlier known as 'Camberwell New Park': Gissing's sphere in these writings lay in the borderland between the two (see *Bacon's New Map of London* [1902], Moretonhampstead, UK: Old House Books [n.d.], squares O15, O16).

[94] On boarding-house and lodging-house fictions of the twentieth century, see Emily Cuming, *Housing, Class and Gender in Modern British Writing, 1880–2012* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 73-122.

[95] George Gissing, *The Town Traveller* (London: Methuen, 1898), p. 6.

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BOUWE POSTMUS
University of Amsterdam

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"Barbara's Dower," *Torquay Times, and South Devon Advertiser*, 26 May 1905, p. 7; *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 8 November 1907, p. 6.

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"Between the Leaves of a Book," *Norfolk News*, 6 October 1906, p. 2; *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard*, 5 October 1907, p. 6; *Chichester Observer and West Sussex Recorder*, 3 March 1909, p. 8.

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Remembering John Halperin

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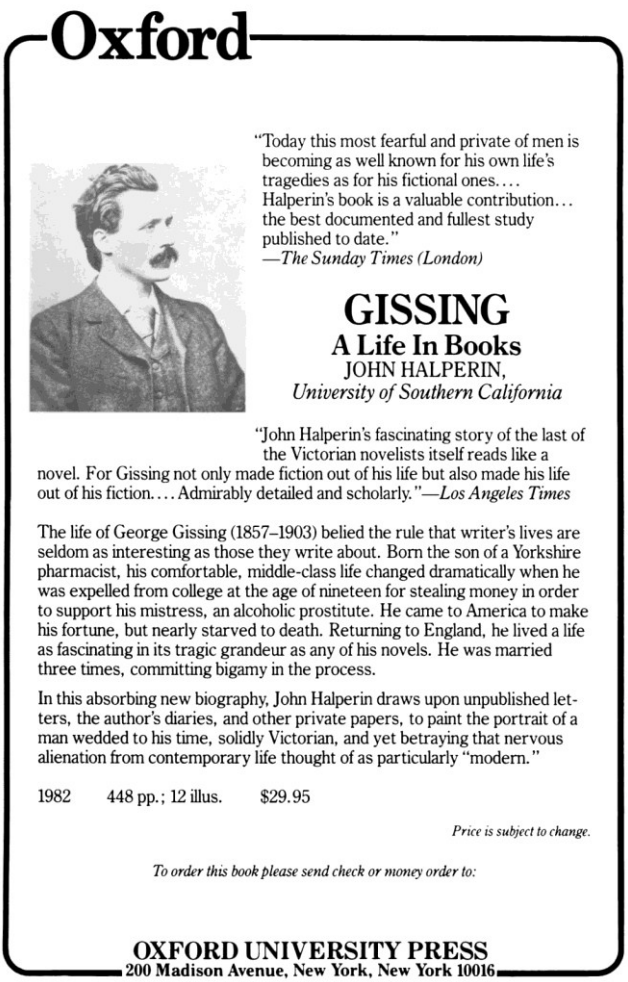
In his 1977 article, "How to Read Gissing," John Halperin remarks on the close correspondence between Gissing's life and writing. "To read his books without a detailed knowledge of his biography," he observes, "is to read blindfolded. The critic who attempts to deal with Gissing's fiction phenomenologically or from a narrow structuralist approach has little chance of understanding him. Gissing's work offers an unrivalled challenge to biographical criticism to show what it can do" (188). Gissing's biography enables us to understand his central subjects: money, sex, and class. Halperin does not dismiss the value of literary theory; rather, he argues for an interplay between biography and semiotics: "To recognize that Gissing's life and work are inseparable, in some ways symbiotic, is important, but it is not to investigate this relationship or show how it exists. The fiction and the biographical materials must be encountered, and assessed, together" (197). This theme finds expression in *Gissing: A Life in Books* (1982), a study that he dedicated to Pierre Coustillas (see figure 1). According to Halperin, "Gissing saw his own life as 'a piece of biography', and his novels duly constitute an extended piece of autobiography" (9). What distinguishes him from nineteenth-century writers like Austen, Eliot, Trollope, and Hardy, who offer histories of fictional characters, is that his "'histories' often are in fact case-histories of his own thoughts and actions – and thus really real" (9). In "Some Notes on the Gissing Revival," the appendix-essay of this study, Halperin charts the many exciting developments in Gissing studies from 1961 onwards. This shift in the literary canon is discernible through the publication of new editions of his fiction; his letters and private papers; and bibliographical, biographical, and critical studies. By numbers, this revival may not measure up to Hardy, Trollope, or the Brontës, and there are fewer works on Gissing than there are on Dickens or George Eliot; but "Gissing has been keeping pace with such other acknowledged 'major' Victorian novelists as Thackeray, Mrs Gaskell, and Meredith, and for whatever it is worth, he is leagues ahead of Disraeli, Collins, Butler, and George Moore" (367).

Halperin himself contributed to this revival. He was born on 15 September 1941, and he was the son of S. William Halperin and Elaine P. Halperin, respectively a professor of history at the University of Chicago, and translator



(Oxford University Press 2018)

and editor. Halperin gained his BA from Bowdoin College, his MA from the University of New Hampshire, and his MA and PhD from John Hopkins University. His thesis, on "The Language of Meditation: Four Studies in 19th-Century Fiction," was supervised by J. Hillis Miller and it became the

subject of his first book (1973). Halperin taught at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the University of Southern California. He joined Vanderbilt University in 1983 as Centennial Professor of English, a position he held until his retirement in 2007. The recipient of numerous awards, fellowships, and honours both in research and in teaching, Halperin was a prolific biographer, critic, and editor. He was shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize for Biography for *Gissing: A Life in Books* and for *The Life of Jane Austen* (1984), and he introduced *Denzil Quarrier* (1979), *The Emancipated* (1985), *Will Warburton: A Romance of Real Life* (1985), *In the Year of Jubilee* (1987), and *New Grub Street* (1992). His studies include *Egoism and Self-Discovery in the Victorian Novel: Studies in the Ordeal of Knowledge in the Nineteenth Century* (1974), *Trollope and Politics: A Study of the Pallisers and Others* (1977), *Jane Austen's Lovers and Other Studies in Fiction and History from Austen to Le Carré* (1988), *Novelists in their Youth* (1990), and *Eminent Georgians: The Lives of King George V, Elizabeth Bowen, St. John Philby, & Nancy Astor* (1995), and articles, book chapters, and reviews on a wide range of subjects including Gissing, Austen, and Trollope. Halperin was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1985. He died of heart failure on 1 March 2018.

J. Hillis Miller, Halperin's colleague Jay Clayton, and his former PhD student Laura White share their memories.

John Halperin was my graduate student at Hopkins, as you know. That is a long time ago, but I remember him as self-possessed and determined, already very much his own man. I didn't have the feeling I was teaching him much. As he says in the preface to his admirable Trollope book I apparently suggested that he write a book on Trollope, but he thought at the time that was not a good idea. Later of course he fulfilled that non-promise. We remained in cordial correspondence over the years, especially when he was at Vanderbilt, and he kindly sent me copies of his books. The Trollope book is really wonderful, by far the best book on its subject, as is the Gissing.

J. Hillis Miller, Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus, English and Comparative Literature, University of California Irvine

From pioneering work on the genre of the novel to elegantly crafted biographical writings, John's contributions to English literary studies have been a touchstone for countless scholars of the nineteenth century. I was lucky enough to be John's colleague at Vanderbilt for just under twenty years. I tried once to embarrass him by saying how much I'd learnt as a young graduate student from reading his brilliant *Egoism and Self-Discovery in the Victorian*

Novel and his edited collection, *The Theory of the Novel,* but he would not take the bait, no doubt because John was always young at heart himself. His undiminished enthusiasm for the literary arts shines through his last works on Edwardian and Georgian writers. But on one topic – of special interest to the readers of this *Journal* – we could never agree. For as long as I knew John, he insisted that as a novelist of the city, Charles Dickens never equaled another urban chronicler, George Gissing!

Jay Clayton, William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor, Dept of English, and Director, Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy, Vanderbilt University

John was a marvelous mentor, generous and knowledgeable. I owe much of my early career to his help and guidance. His biographies were important and ground-breaking, and he will be much missed by multitudes of friends and students who like me are in his debt.

Laura White, John E. Weaver Professor of English and Coordinator of Literature, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Notes and News

In the 2 August issue of the *Times Literary Supplement* we were pleased to see J. C. (James Campbell) mention the July number of our *Journal*, and praising the topographical article by Jason Finch. He also referred to Gissing as the best English novelist of place and joined sides with us in calling for a film version of one of his novels, suggesting in particular *Thyrza* as a worthy cinematic subject. He writes, "It takes no feat of the imagination to visualize *Thyrza*, for example,

on the screen: a novel intended to 'contain the very spirit of London working-class life', starring the Lambeth hat-trimmer with the beautiful singing voice. Serious versions of *The Crown of Life* or *In the Year of Jubilee* would have audiences switching over in droves from the usual rubbish. If it's relevance you want (that specious quality), then get to work on *The Odd Women*."

We note that in response to J. C.'s remarks, Kathleen Adelaide, the author of *Between the Pages: Reflections on Reading* (2018), headed her 6 August "mirabile ictu" blog "The Missing BBC Adaptations of George Gissing." She applauds J. C. for championing Gissing, writing: "he is a hard-core George Gissing fan, and I, too, love Gissing. I have read Gissing's best known work, *New Grub Street* […] and *The Odd Women*, several times, along with more obscure books that I've had to buy second-hand. In J. C.'s latest N.B. column, he quotes a piece from *The Gissing Journal* by Markus Neacey, who says the BBC has never adapted a novel by Gissing. And J. C. thinks they would make good films." She then goes on to make her selection for a BBC drama series: "I can't wait to see a TV series of my favorite Gissing novel, *In the Year of Jubilee.* Many years ago I noted in my book journal: It is Gissing's best book, the story of a smart heroine, Nancy Lord, and Gissing takes on the subjects of New Women, upper-class seduction, class snobbery, yellow journalism, and secret marriage." Myself, I think *Born in Exile*, which in some respects anticipates Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, would make a cracking period piece with its portrayal of class conflict and various types of religious charlatanism.

Peter Morton, who wrote some useful articles about Gissing on the Internet for our *Journal* some years ago, has recently put his George Gissing website back online https://sites.google.com/site/petermortonswebsite/home/george-gissing-homepage. In recent years he tells me that he has devoted himself more to the life and works of Grant Allen, whose biography he wrote over a decade ago. This year he plans to publish a volume of Allen's short stories. His Gissing website still has some interesting content to which he adds from time to time, including an article on Gissing streetscapes and two essays by George Orwell on Gissing.

According to his critics the novels of Gerald Murnane (b. 1939), the Australian writer, are often plotless, monotonous, and extremely difficult to read. Nevertheless, his latest novel, *Border Districts* (2017), has just been put on the shortlist for the Australian 2018 Miles Franklin Literary Award and was recently reviewed in the *TLS* (24th and 31st August double issue, p. 29). The story is essentially about the unselfconscious musings of a mildly eccentric man about to enter happily into early old age. About halfway through the novel, as William Ward informs me, the narrator fixates on the photograph of

a female biographer on the back cover of a biography she has written about Gissing (there is only one contender here) and says: "that image has remained with me during the 30 or more years since I first bought the book and stored it on my shelves." He then writes at length about her face. Ward adds that "Murnane's narrators all tend to write in a reflective, rueful, Ryecroftian register." The critics suggest that the book has been chosen because of the beauty of its prose. After reading the novel myself I can add that it is indeed plotless and the female Gissing biographer is definitely the above contender: the only clue I can give is that she is also a novelist and former winner of the Somerset Maugham literary award.

On 23 August 2018 Forgotten Women of Wakefield led a guided tour from St John's Square to the Black Horse Pub in Westgate via The Gissing Centre with talks by Lorraine Simpson and Sarah Leah Cobham on Edith Mackie and Florence Beaumont, and a presentation on the Gissing sisters.

(Forgotten Women of Wakefield 2018)

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Recent Publications

Volumes

Maria Teresa Chialant, Emanuela Ettorre, Christine Huguet (eds), *A World Within the World. George Gissing's Vision of Art and Literature*. Rome: Aracne, 2018. Pp. 200. ISBN 9788825515879. PB 16 Euros.

Takashi Akaiwa (Mie University, Japan), "The Study of Short Stories (12): George Gissing and Another Fin-de-Siècle," *Philologia*, 49 (March 2018), pp. 1-21.

J. C., "Appropriation Blues," *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 August 2018, p. 36.

Heidi Liedke, "W. H. Hudson, His Thinking Machine and *Idle Days in Patagonia* (1893)," in *The Experience of Idling in Victorian Travel Texts, 1850–1901* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 145-171.

Heidi Liedke, "George Gissing's *By the Ionian Sea* (1901) as a Paradise of Idleness," in *The Experience of Idling in Victorian Travel Texts, 1850–1901* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 229-261.

Tara MacDonald, "The Retreat of the New Man at the Fin de Siècle," in *The New Man, Masculinity and Marriage in the Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 109-128. MacDonald discusses Gissing's *The Odd Women* alongside Grant Allen's *The Typewriter Girl* in chapter four of her book. She cites Everard Barfoot and Edmund Widdowson with Mr Blank from the latter novel as the types of male who could never be "committed husbands" to New Women seeking such a "far-off ideal."

Alexandra Mulry, "The Still Uproar of Conrad's Press: A Breakdown of 'High' Literature in the Modern Metropolis," *Oswald Review*, 19:1 (2017), pp. 29-38. The article looks at Joseph Conrad's *Secret Agent* and Gissing's *New Grub Street* in relation to the impact of the press on the battle between high culture and mass culture.

Lorraine Simpson, "Wakefield's Forgotten Women: The Gissing sisters left an indelible mark on our children's education," *Wakefield Express*, 17 August 2018, p. 4.

Bruce Strauch, "Let's Read about Single Women," *Against the Grain*, 29:2 (April 2017), p. 10. List novels about single women selected by Strauch with *The Odd Women* grouped with F. M. Mayor's *The Rector's Daughter* (1924), Elaine Dundy's *The Dud Avocado* (1958), Vita Sackville-West's *All Passion Spent* (1931), and Alison Lurie's *Foreign Affairs* (1984).

D. J. Taylor, "Obituary: Pierre Coustillas," *Guardian*, 27 August 2018.

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Information for Contributors

The Gissing Journal publishes essays and book reviews on Gissing and his circle. Contributions may deal with bibliographical, biographical, critical, and topographical subjects. They should be sent as a Word document to the editor, Markus Neacey, either by e-mail to forfarmarkus@fastmail.co.uk or by post to:

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