

THE GISSING NEWSLETTER

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

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The Erotic Martyrdom of Emily Hood

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It is generally recognised that the plot of *A Life’s Morning* owes a great deal to Charlotte Brontë.¹ The novel embodies a conflict between passion and conscience in which passion corresponds to the heroine’s desire for elevation into a world to which she feels she belongs by right of nature; and conscience, to a personal inviolability in the face of social disadvantage. The movement in *Jane Eyre*, for example, is towards elevation through the harmonising of these conflicting aspects of “intellectual egoism.” *A Life’s Morning* repeats this central movement, but it

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does so in a way that completely transforms the issue involved.

This difference is perhaps best seen in the novel’s dual structure which understandably confused contemporary reviewers. In general, they tended to identify Wilfrid Athel as the novel’s hero, though, like the reviewer in the London *Guardian*,² many were uneasy about Athel’s heroic claims. The drama which opens the narrative engages at one level an educational issue. It is the conflict between Athel’s positivistic approach to knowledge, and Emily’s self-cultivation through

the “literature of beauty”(I, i.). Athel characterises himself as “a one-sided academical monster” for whom the pursuit of rational certainties, the “knowledge of books,” has given way to the cultivation of feelings and “knowledge of a deeper kind” (I, i, 49). In this sense, Athel’s collapse and recovery closely parallel the situation described by J. S. Mill in his *Autobiography*.

The triangle which places Athel between Beatrice Redwing and Emily also represents conflict between conventionality and an inward ethical demand. This pattern repeats in part Waymark’s choice between Ida Starr and Maud Enderby in Gissing’s earlier novel, *The Unclassed*; but whereas for the lower middle-class hero of *The Unclassed*, the choice between the “conventional” and the “natural” engaged a problem of class, for Athel and the “free” world of the country house, it emerges as a purely private issue. Athel urges Beatrice to surmount the inconsistency and insincerity of a life divided between religiosity and the social masquerade by surrendering to the spirit of the age. This involves self-cultivation through aestheticism and humanistic pursuits:

“There is a self in every one of us; the end of our life is to discern it, to bring it out, make it actual. You don’t yet know your own self; you have not the courage to look into your heart and mind; you keep over your eyes the bondage of dogmas in which you only half believe ... Cannot you see that the world has

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outgrown the possibility of one universal religion? For good or for evil, each of us must find a religion in himself (I, ii, 86-87).

For Athel, the pursuit of passion and individuality may encounter social disapproval, but no higher ethical sanction. In the free world of wealth and privilege, aestheticism and respectability sit comfortably together. Athel’s choice of Emily, the choice of aestheticism and individuality, is a personal issue in which passion and ethical demand are finally unproblematic. It is within this space that the novel’s drama of elevation and transcendence is ultimately acted out. At the centre of the novel, however, is Emily herself for whom passion and duty are elements of a fierce internalised class conflict.

The conflict here is between the freedom of the country house and the psychological and material oppressions of “home.” Emily manifests the “deliberate reticence” and “extreme moderation” characteristic of Charlotte Brontë’s heroines. This is explained as her “concession to the fate which had made her a governess,” and paradoxically as her means of exercising power over “those whose bread she ate” (I, iii, 107). It is the force of her individuality betraying itself “even under the disadvantage of complete self-suppression” which first attracts Wilfrid Athel (I, i, 28). Yet if for *Jane Eyre*, the obstacle to passion is a fierce ethical demand ambiguously rooted in the need for social as well as personal elevation, for Emily Hood this demand is seen, by contrast, to derive not from individualism or personal judgment, but from involuntary social attachment. It is not so much that Emily sacrifices her happiness “in the name of an austere personal morality,”³ but rather that the sense of betrayal that attends her social and intellectual elevation sets in motion a psychological mechanism of guilt and sacrificial atonement.

The relationship between culture and sensibility here constitutes the novel’s problematic centre. Emily’s humble life is offered as an illustration of the inner dissolution which attends “that

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intellectual egoism which is the note of our time” (I, v, 187). Her response to the conflict between

her “religion of beauty” and the pull towards sympathy and sacrifice is to retreat to “the sheltered purity of her own heart” (I, vii, 229). The anecdote of Emily’s childhood sacrifice for the dog by the roadside is offered as the origin of that dread of compassionateness which she later feels towards her father and the world of home:

the haggard gaze of fate should not daunt one; pity is but an element in the soul’s idea of order, it should not usurp a barren sovereignty. It is the miserable contradiction of our lot that the efficiency of the instincts of beauty-worship waits upon a force of individuality attainable only by a sacrifice of sensibility. Emily divined this. So it was that she came to shun the thought of struggle, to seek an abode apart from turbid conditions of life. She was hard at work building for her soul its “lordly pleasure-house,” its Palace of Art. (I, v, 189-190)

Emily’s “Paterian” folding together of art and life in a fierce cold chastity is her solution to the conflict of culture and sensibility. It marks a refusal of the disabling pity of the weak victim-man such as her father who is unable “to feel unkind even to a town” (I, v, 203). Yet, as the novel shows, this rejection of pity cannot free Emily from her attachments. Rather, it becomes the psychological spring of her entrapment and final exile.

One of the striking aspects of the novel is its recognition of the psychological as well as external traps that lie in wait for the individual in the new industrial order. Paradoxically, this finally supports an overarching mystification in which the enlightened grand-bourgeois world of the Baxendales and the Athels is seen to exist outside the inhumane system presided over by the mill owner and capitalist, Dagworthy. The isolation of the old humanitarian order from capitalism is

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historically false and misleading, and yet it plainly corresponds to the *apparent* conditions of existence in the “free” consumptional world of the country house. On the positive side, the novel shows both capitalist and worker, master and man, enchained together in the same psychological snares of an inhumane system. The analogy which links the hungry dog by the roadside with Emily’s father is extended to include the employer of labour, the “hunger god” himself, first showing his chained dogs (I, v), and later “like a beaten dog” before Emily (II, x). In setting a trap for her, Dagworthy is himself entrapped by frustrated desires which have been perverted to instincts of accumulation in one who

represented an intermediate stage of development between the hard-headed operative who conquers wealth, and his descendants who shall know what use to make of it. (II, viii, 2)

One of the implicit correspondences that emerges from Emily’s encounter with Dagworthy is the parallel between his refusal of feeling and her resistance to pity. If feeling, for Dagworthy, is destructive of his resolve (II, x), pity, for Emily, is destructive of her “Palace of Art” (II, xi). Both are ensnared in an inhumane order in which desire attaches itself to the free personality whose foundations are in separation rather than in social relation. For Dagworthy, the appropriation of value can only express itself in the mentality of ownership and domination, of “having,” which would reduce Emily to an object. Yet Emily’s own desire and resistance in turn can only express themselves in a self-regarding aestheticism that fixes the self as a precious commodity. In Emily’s case, the conflict between education and solidarity finds a parallel in Hardy’s *The Return of the*

Native, but whereas Clym Yeobright chooses to raise the class at the expense of the individual, Emily Hood chooses individuality at the expense of the class. Both paths lead equally to entrapment. The force of circumstance cannot be overcome within an “idealist conscience.” Emily resists

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external forces only to fall into the chains of an internalised social conflict.

In her attempt to transcend her social origins, Emily is taken on a “guilt-trap.” In refusing the contractual love that belongs properly to community and fraternity, she invokes the example of Isabella’s “passion for purity” in *Measure for Measure*. Betrayal is chosen in the knowledge that the sacrifice she has been asked to make is “disproportionate to the disaster threatened” (II. xii, 181). This is of course perfectly true, and the story must be said to suffer accordingly; but this is clearly not the point. The Oedipal drama at the centre of the novel is nakedly symbolic. It is a concrete rendering of the tensions of the upward-striving individual in a class-stratified society which has given itself over to individualistic doctrines and post-Enlightenment beliefs in man’s essential nature. Here, the literary reference finally measures a distance rather than enforces a comparison. In *Measure for Measure*, the metaphysical sovereignty of justice and the “Soul” remains absolute in spite of the secular challenge to theological rigidity. In the pervasively secular world of *A Life’s Morning*, the idealistic specialization of virginity and individual conscience has no metaphysical foundation or absolute sanction over social bondage or material needs.

Emily’s renunciation of passion and social elevation in the wake of her father’s death answers, in Freudian terms,⁴ to a double need – to the need to preserve her “forbidden wish,” and the need for this wish to be punished. The first unites, in Emily’s image of Athel and the country house, all that connects with the highest in human nature – Emily’s aesthetic, her moral and her cultural goals, as well as her social aspirations and drives towards self-assertion. Emily’s “ego-ideal” is in this sense her father’s wish. She is the recipient of his failed aspirations and thwarted hopes. This is the bond between them. He has tied himself to the capitalist’s mill, choosing to subordinate and sacrifice

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himself to secure her education (I. v.), and ultimately in awe of her “mental and moral independence” (II. ix, 77). Yet Emily’s “ego-ideal” has its shadow in the sense of injustice and pity with which she regards her father’s passivity and sacrifice. The conflict of Emily’s nature is, in the language of the novel, between “culture” and “sensibility,” in which the former corresponds to her “ego-ideal,” and the latter to her sense of injustice and ultimately of guilt.

It is significant that, at the moment of her renunciation, these two conflicting sides of her nature are described in the sado-masochistic image of martyrdom:

What was her first sensation when the door closed, then the gate without, and Wilfrid in the very deed was gone? Was it hopeless misery, failure, dread foresight of the life which she still must live? Rather her mood was that of a martyr who has held firm to the last wrench of torture, who feels that agony is overcome and fear of self surpassed. This possibility had there ever been in Emily, though associating with such variant instincts. Circumstances had brought the occasion which weighed one part of her nature against the other, and with this result. (III. xvi, 31-2)

That this possibility had “ever been in Emily” indicates that her chosen martyrdom is a symptom of

a psychological compulsion rather than a response to an arbitrary event. Emily's renunciation is a symptomatic regression to "moral masochism," to the need for "sin" and punishment, in which unsublimated desires are turned inwards against the self. In this sense, the novel's central drama is an external rendering of Emily's inner condition, of the "trouble" evoked by Athel's suggestion that a case might arise which would call upon her to make some sacrifice on her father's behalf (I. i.). Masochism, as Freud argues,

regularly occurs where a cultural suppression of the instincts holds back a large

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part of the subject's destructive instinctual components from being exercised in life.⁵

One of the notable features of Emily's social and cultural aspiration is her fierce self-suppression in the Athel household (I. iii.). It takes the form of a compensatory cult of beauty; a "Paterian" fantasy of contemplative detachment from the material conditions of existence. It answers both to the need to deny the "wish" which is in a sense *killing her father*, and to the need to deny the "compassionateness" which would destroy her ideal. Yet, as the central drama shows, this aesthetic specialization of the self, like her forbidden wish, is answerable to the sanctions of betrayal, responsibility and guilt. Within the specific context of a world of class division and "meritocracy," Emily stands, as in Freud's own image of man, as a battleground of life and death instincts, trapped within the intolerable choice of either destroying others or destroying herself. Her final renunciation, in which life instincts are turned inwards in an erotic martyrdom, contrives the supreme punishment – faithfulness to her "wish" and denial of its fulfillment. It is a condition which the novel characterises in its own Romantic, pre-psychoanalytic terminology as "idealism" charged with "morbid dominance" (III. xvi, 32). Emily's sterile asceticism is, in the final analysis, the resistance of the victim; the self-denial of one who has already been denied.

What is valuable in *A Life's Morning* derives from its ironic supersession of its own idealistic centre. Its perspective, unlike that of *Villette* or *Young Werther*, for instance, in which the ideal survives, however, ambiguously, even in defeat, is one of ineluctable and finally "destructuring" materialism which may be abhorred but cannot be refused; which, in terms of the novel's symbolic rendering of Emily's internal conflict, reaches out to include both inner and outer worlds. This is the point of impasse and irresolution to which Gissing's major novels of the eighteen-nineties, such as

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New Grub Street and *Born in Exile*, will come unequivocally to rest. Here, in *A Life's Morning*, there is a retreat from this intolerable disclosure to a mythological resolution in the ideological wish. It involves both structural disjunction and a metonymic displacement from the social to the private.

Mrs. Baxendale's view of Emily's renunciation, that

"We are not living in a novel; there are no such things as mysteries which last a lifetime" (III. xvii, 57),

contains a double irony. They are characters in a novel, and it is precisely because they are that the mystery to which she refers is open to some form of resolution. Yet these words indicate too a distinction between life itself, in which contradictions may be resolved in the "lived," and fiction, in

which ideology may be thrown into crisis and disarray. The irony here is that what is seen to be the novel's mystery, its enigma awaiting resolution, is in fact its real knowledge. Through its fictional concretization of the "petty-bourgeois" crisis of conscience in the world of industrial capitalism, the novel exposes a contradiction between ideology and the real relations of existence which cannot be resolved within the liberal humanist resources of the ideologically given.

The novel's retreat from this disclosure involves a structural shift from the problematic heroine to the "free" hero whose choice lies between a public and a private life, between society and personal cultivation. The triumph of feeling over thinking which directs the final choices is in fact the force that embraces both Emily's resistance and her psychological injury, but which here in the free world of the country house is granted a transcendental status. The degree of freedom available in this emotionally charged but unproblematic world is particularly evident, for instance, in

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Beatrice's renunciation of marriage and conventional society for the self-discovery of a singing career: what in Gissing's later novel of the eighteen-nineties, such as *The Odd Women* and *The Whirlpool*, will constitute the crisis of female identity and individualism in a patriarchal society, is here presented as a personal and thus a negotiable issue. Through its displacement to the "personal," the novel enters an area of abstraction which nevertheless exposes its decentred nature. In the shift from heroine to hero, Emily emerges from her purgatorial exile as a pure, noble being rather than, as the central dilemma suggests, an idealist who embodies in her religion of beauty an internalised class conflict. The Christian purgatorial theme is here invoked (III. xxii) to produce a contrived mythological resolution in which, in the realm of the personal, the hero appropriates the individuality and ethical resistance of the "petty-bourgeois" heroine, and the heroine in turn realises her forbidden wish.

1. John Goode, *George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction*. London: Vision Press, 1978, p. 84.
2. Unsigned Review, *Guardian* (London), 23 January 1889, xlv (I), 136; reprinted in *Gissing: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Pierre Coustillas and Colin Partridge, London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, p.131.
3. Jacob Korg, *George Gissing: A Critical Biography*. London: Methuen, 1965, p. 81.
4. See Sigmund Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, tr. under the general editorship of J. Stanley in collaboration with A. Freud, Vol. XIX. London: The Hogarth Press, 1961, pp. 159-70.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[Dr. John Sloan has recently completed a doctoral thesis at Balliol College, Oxford, on the subject

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of *Culture and Circumstance: A Study of George Gissing's Fiction in Its Ideological Context.*]

Gissing and Camberwell

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In Gissing's savage satire on the London middle class, *In the Year of Jubilee*, one of the things the heroine, Nancy Lord, has to do to make herself a fit wife for Lionel Tarrant is to rise above the mediocrity of her education. At first she thought that she had had a good education,¹ and certainly considered herself highly-educated – “‘cultured’ was the word she would have used” (p. 14). Until the age of eighteen she had been a pupil at a day school “reputed modern,” and until she met Tarrant she was completely satisfied with this, deeming herself superior to her friends the French sisters, with their “sham education and mock refinement” (p.7).

Nancy lives with her father in Grove Lane, Camberwell, a suburb which Gissing, even though he allows it a “certain picturesqueness,” classes as “a neighbourhood in decay, a bit of London which does not keep pace with the times.” His choice of this locality, then, for the setting of his satirical novel is obviously deliberate, and he shared his distaste with Matthew Arnold, who twenty-eight years earlier had poured scorn on the “illiberal, dismal life of Camberwell” in a

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vehement attack on the middle classes.²

There is no doubt that Gissing portrayed the social setting for his novel with even more dedication and accuracy than usual: his diary records that he went to a great deal of trouble to ensure fidelity of detail:

1893 Wednesday August 30	... All day walked about in search of my Camberwell book.
Tuesday September 5	E. found me an empty room at 32 Crawford Street, Camberwell, not far from the Station. I took it for 2/6 weeks, and shall put in table and chair.
Sunday September 17	... In morning walked about Camberwell and got some good ideas. ³

The novel's accuracy of detail about Camberwell extends even to the type of trees it mentions. Nancy Lord gazes from her window on to a view which includes a lime-tree across the street, a detail which accurately reflects the social typing which H. J. Dyos mentions in his history of Camberwell: “planes and horsechestnuts for the wide avenues and lofty mansions of the well-to-do; limes, laburnums and acacias for the middle incomes; unadorned macadam for the wage earners.”⁴

Dyos describes Grove Lane in detail:

Grove Lane, which ran nearly parallel to The Grove a stone's throw to the west, lacked its regularity of building line, its width, and its straightness, but it, too, contained a few presentable late-Georgian terraced houses towards the crest of the hill. Here also in the grandiloquent mansions on Grove Hill, Champion Hill and thereabouts was to be found the very apex of Camberwell society (p. 174).

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This attests to the accuracy of Gissing's description:

Grove Lane is a long acclivity, which starts from Camberwell Green, and after passing a few mean shops, becomes a road of suburban dwellings. The houses vary considerably in size and aspects, also in date, with the result of a certain picturesqueness, enhanced by the growth of fine trees on either side. Architectural grace can nowhere be discovered, but the contract-builder of to-day has not yet been permitted to work his will; age and irregularity, even though the edifices be but so many illustrations of the ungainly, the insipid, and the frankly hideous, have a pleasanter effect than that of new streets built to one pattern by the mile. There are small cottages overgrown with creepers, relics of Camberwell's rusticity; rows of tall and of squat dwellings that lie behind grassy plots, railed from the road; larger houses that stand in their own gardens, hidden by walls. Narrow passages connect the Lane with its more formal neighbour Camberwell Grove; on the other side are ways leading towards Denmark Hill, quiet, leafy. From the top of the Lane, where Champion Hill enjoys an aristocratic seclusion, is obtainable a glimpse of open fields and of a wooded horizon southward. (p.13)

Such attention to detail arouses one's interest in the accuracy of other social minutiae, and a minor but interesting speculation is whether the "day-school ... reputed 'modern'" which Nancy attended could have been based on a real institution. The fact that one such institution did (and does) exist in Grove Lane adds fuel to these speculations.

The Mary Datchelor School was founded in 1877, from the proceeds of the Datchelor Charity, which had been set up in 1726, and derived its funds from an estate at 61 Threadneedle Street.⁵ By the nineteenth century, the income was "much too great to be given to the poor inhabitants" (!), and

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so land was purchased in Camberwell for the purpose of establishing, in the words of the Charity Commissioners, "a day school for the education of girls of middle class resident in, or connected with the said parish." The land acquired by the Trustees was Nos. 15 and 17 Grove Lane, and had originally been part of Camberwell-Buckingham Manor, an estate which dated back to the Domesday Book.

It is quite possible that this was the school Gissing had in mind when he mentioned Nancy's day school. It was "modern" in a number of respects: first, in that it had a woman as head, and a very young woman at that. Miss Caroline Edith Rigg was only 24 when she accepted the appointment, and there had been some doubts among the Trustees about whether a woman could adequately do the job. They wrote in 1874 that "the superintendent or head teacher must be thoroughly conversant with each subject taught in the school and the duties of the person filling that post will be multifarious and will require the exercise of considerable administrative and intellectual abilities, and also great tact and patient firmness, all of which will be more readily found at the present day in a gentleman than a lady" (p. 25).

The school expanded rapidly, with an enrolment of 324 pupils by 1881, a year when eight more classrooms, an Assembly Hall, Museum, Library and other buildings were added. Music was always taken very seriously, and in 1887 the first Liszt Scholarship was won by a Datchelor girl (p. 31). Elocution was taught, and also callisthenics – at first by a drillsergeant, but later by female teachers. The school had an all-female staff by 1890, a fact which may or may not be taken as evidence of its modernity.

It is possible, at least, that the Mary Datchelor School was the model for Nancy Lord's alma mater: certainly the history of the school does not seem to suggest that a great deal of emphasis was placed on classical studies or solid subjects like English Literature or Mathematics, at least in its

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early days. Nancy Lord's sham intellectualism, which allowed her to borrow from the library Hemholz's *Lectures on Scientific Subjects* but kept her ignorant of the works of Keats and the location of the Bahamas, is shown by contrast with Lionel Tarrant's sound masculine education to be sadly deficient.

The dates suggest the connexion too. The Mary Datchelor School opened its doors in 1877. At the beginning of *In the Year of Jubilee*, the year is 1887, and Nancy is twenty-three. She had left school "in her eighteenth year," and so probably finished her education in 1882 or 1883, a time when the Mary Datchelor School was still new and modern (pp. 12, 14).

The Story of the Mary Datchelor School makes no mention of either Gissing or *In the Year of Jubilee*, so the link can probably never be proved, but certainly it would have been a school of this kind that Gissing supplied for his heroine, and its geographical location, in the same street in which the Lord family lives, is, to say the least, tantalizingly co-incidental.

It is not quite clear from the novel whether Jessica Morgan and the French sisters attended the same school as Nancy, although from Jessica's remark that "You were much better at mathematics than I was" (p. 16), and the fact that Nancy's friendship with the French sisters was a long-standing one, one might legitimately infer a school connexion. But the Mary Datchelor School would surely claim no credit for a Fanny French or an Ada Peachey, nor even, one suspects, for a Jessica Morgan, especially in the light of the prayer which the Rector of St. Andrew Undershaft composed for the opening ceremony of the school, which includes the words: "... from all idleness and disobedience, from all vanity and folly, from all unruly tempers and untruthful ways, Good Lord, deliver us" (p. 27). Nancy Lord, however, with her inborn strength of character, is able eventually to benefit from her education, and become a middle class lady, rather than "the spawn of Whitechapel" that her friends were. Whether Mary Datchelor would claim the credit in her case, though, is equally doubtful.

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1. George Gissing, *In the Year of Jubilee* (1894) (1895; rpt Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1976), p. 14. All reference will be to this edition.
2. Matthew Arnold, "My countrymen," *Cornhill Magazine*, 13, Feb. 1866, p. 166.
3. George Gissing, *London and the life of literature in late Victorian England: The diary of George Gissing, novelist*, edited by Pierre Coustillas (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1978), pp. 314-15.
4. H. J. Dyos, *Victorian suburb: a study of the growth of Camberwell* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1961), p. 188.
5. *The Story of the Mary Datchelor School, 1877-1957* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957), pp. 24, 25, 18.

Additional Notes to *The Whirlpool*

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Paris

[The edition referred to is the Harvester edition, 1977, reprinted 1984.]

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- p. 8, l. 10

“‘But I wanted to tell you that I am going down to Waterbury.’ He looked at his watch.”
Perhaps a curious collocation considering that a Waterbury was a popular type of watch at the end of the 19th century.

- p. 39, l. 21.

“He did not like the name ‘Alma.’ It had a theatrical sound, a suggestion of unreality.”
According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names* this name had a temporary vogue, following the battle of Alma, 1854.

- p. 42, l. 19.

“He was a citizen of no city at all.” Recalling “A citizen of no mean city” in The Acts of the Apostles, XXI.39.

- p. 43, l. 28.

“the local habitation of the Britannia Loan, Assurance...” Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, V.I.17: “A local habitation and a name.”

- p. 45, l. 29.

“beat the British drum.” This suggests a quotation; perhaps from a patriotic song?

- p. 48, l. 20.

“a ghastly whirlpool which roars over the bottomless pit.” Revelation, XX.I: “the key of the bottomless pit”.

- p. 54, l. 6.

“It’s a pity they no longer bury at four crossroads, with a stake in his inside. (Where’s that from? I remember it somehow.)” A reference to Thomas Hood’s poem *Faithless Nelly Gray*.

- p. 59, l. 10.

“something would of course ‘turn up.’” A reference of course to Micawber in *David Copperfield*.

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- p. 85, l. 38.

“guarded by the divinity which doth hedge a member of the upper-middle class,” Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, IV.V.123 : “There’s such divinity doth hedge a king.”

- p. 86, l. 7.

“the hem of whose garment had never been touched,” St. Matthew, IX.20: “a woman ... touched the hem of his garment.”

- p. 87, l. 36.

“perhaps because he had so often come and seen and conquered.” A reference, of course, to Julius Caesar.

- p. 88, l. 6.

“the art which conceals art has become indispensable.” A reference to the well-known Latin saying “Ars celare artem.”

- p. 101, l. 31.

“If this statement should appear to you at all germane to the matter,” Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, V.II.165: “The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides.”

- p. 124, l. 28.

“more impressed by the girl’s sweet reasonableness.” The phrase “sweet reasonableness” comes from Arnold: *Literature and Dogma*, Ch. XII. Gissing again used it on page 167 (“that air of sweet reasonableness which showed her features at their best”).

- p. 131, l. 5.

“Did the life of every man speed up so mockingly?” Rolfe’s reflections on old age remind one of *Ryecroft* (Autumn XXIII).

- p. 134, l. 26.

“the unmistakable atmosphere of plain living and high thinking”. Wordsworth: Sonnet beginning “O Friend! I know not which way I must look” (“Plain living and high thinking are no more”).

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- p. 141, l. 27.

“Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit.” From Johnson’s epitaph on Goldsmith. “Nihil” would appear to be a misquotation for “nullum.”

- p. 144, l. 15.

“If her own lot had fallen in such tranquil places!” Psalm XVI, 6: “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places.”

- p. 147, l. 35.

“But he did not consider the phenomenon too curiously.” Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, V.I.226:

“Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.”

- p. 230, l. 13.

“Felix Dymes would of course be a tower of strength.” Shakespeare: *King Richard III*, V.III.12:
“The king’s name is a tower of strength.”

- p. 237, l. 36.

“But Alma was to take no thought for the cost.” Echoing “Take therefore no thought for the
morrow,” St. Matthew, VI.34.

- p. 240, l. 7.

“Alma had begun to compassionate herself – a dangerous situation.” An interesting remark in
view of a detailed discussion of “self-pity” in *Ryecroft* (Spring VII).

- p. 276, l. 34.

“There are more things in life – particularly woman’s life – than your philosophy ever dreamt
of.” Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, I.V.166: “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than
are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

- p. 310, l. 15.

“Her conscience ceased from troubling.” Job, III.17: “There the wicked cease from troubling,
and there the wicked be at rest.”

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- p. 326, l. 13.

“And that History which he loved to read – what was it but the record of woes unutterable?”
Ryecroft, Winter XVII: “History is a nightmare of horrors.”

- p. 326, l. 35.

“at the time of my exodus from Houndsditch.” The phrase also occurs in *Ryecroft*, Winter XXII,
and indeed comes from Carlyle.

- p. 327, l. 1.

“cheerfulness kept breaking in.” See Boswell: *Life of Johnson*, April, 17, 1778.

- p. 327, l. 23.

“We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.” Shakespeare : *King Henry IV*, Part II,
III.II.231. Also quoted in *Ryecroft*, Summer XIX.

- p. 340, l. 19.

“Thoroughness is all.” Echoing “Ripeness is all” in Shakespeare : *King Lear*, V.II.11.

- p. 340, l. 37.

“What better thing for her, and for the community, than to make her a good cook?” It is
interesting to find Gissing holding such views even at a time when he was less obsessed by
cooking. These remarks were repeated in *Ryecroft*, Winter XI (“I had far rather see England
covered with schools of cookery than with schools of the ordinary kind”).

- p. 359, l. 7.
“All this sound and fury has been too much for you.” From Shakespeare: *Macbeth*, V.V.27.

- p. 360, l. 17.
“wild Wales.” Perhaps influenced by the title of Borrow’s book.

- p. 372, l. 24.
“Something of a ‘boom’ – the word then coming into fashion – ...” The *Oxford English*

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Dictionary has traced this word to 1879. When Gissing used the word in *Ryecroft* (Autumn XXI) he again found it necessary to apologise: “young Mr. This or young Miss That, whose book was – as the sweet language of the day will have it – ‘booming.’” Cf. also “what the sweet language of the day calls a square meal” (*Our Friend the Charlatan*, ch. XVIII). Obviously Gissing disliked slangy or familiar English in writing. Again in *The Whirlpool* (p. 404) Dymes, an unattractive character, says: “You had to be boomed, you know – floated, and I flatter myself I did it pretty well.”

- p. 372, l. 28.
“to spread her conquests farther.” From Robert Burns’s poem *Bonnie Lesley*.

p. 377, l. 33.
“Some enemy has done this.” St. Matthew, XIII.28: “An enemy hath done this.”

- p. 380, l. 3.
[She had never] “been so fervid and eloquent on behalf of the ‘simple life.’” Crabbe: *The Village*, book I, line 110: “I sought the simple life that Nature yields.”

- p. 384, l. 16.
“He was the giver of life.” Holy Communion: The Creed (in the *Book of Common Prayer*):
“The Lord and giver of life.”

- p. 390, l. 17.
“She will grow old with honour, love, obedience, troops of friends.” From Shakespeare:
Macbeth, V.III.25.

- p. 424, l. 14.
“In the sight of God, Mr. Morphew already has a wife.” A reference to the Solemnization of
Matrimony (Exhortation) in the *Book of Common Prayer*: “*Here in the sight of God...*”

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Review Articles

George Gissing, *The Whirlpool*, edited with a new introduction and notes by Patrick Parrinder, Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1984.

Reviewing Patrick Parrinder's new edition of *The Whirlpool* in 1979, Pierre Coustillas began by commenting on the significance of Gissing producing another long novel in 1897:

He had come to think in the mid-nineties that if short fictions for magazines or new popular series of one-volume novels meant a better income and new readers, they did not increase his reputation as an author who wrote for the following generations as much as for the present one.¹

As the Harvester version passes from hardback to paperback reissue almost a century after the novel's first appearance, it seems a good moment to look more closely at the implied connections between authorial immortality and the state of the book market. Such questions, as Coustillas suggests, are inseparable from the historical situation of novel and novelist in 1897. They are equally bound up with the social and artistic concerns of *The Whirlpool* itself.

After the watershed of what Gissing referred to in 1894 as "the recent Mudie revolution,"² the bottom dropped out of the market for solid triple-deckers which had been guaranteed by the circulating libraries. If the result was not a whirlpool it was at least unsettling. The "revolution" cast overboard what had been a stable, if over-weighted regulator of literary form: to be a novelist meant in practice to be sometimes, if not exclusively, a writer of three-deckers. The traditional literary market was now open to be flooded by all the modern currents of publishing profit and puffery which had swept forward over the past ten years, and whose emergence Gissing had analysed with such acuity in *New Grub Street* (1891). While no contemporary author would have wished to identify genuine literary value with the bulk of the triple-decker, the loss of security in a relatively

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fixed material shape could stand for a general unease about the changes taking place in the literary market.

The metaphor in the book's title, well analysed by Parrinder and others, brings together in metaphoric analogy the endless (ceaseless and pointless) "whirl of fashionable life" and the equally circular and groundless circulation of money. Social and economic values, two sorts of sign which ought to have stable, recognisable meanings, have become fluid, indicating both danger and possibility: both on social questions and in financial ventures, risky speculation is the norm. The whirlpool is also London, centre of a whirled-wide empire which figures as a boundless colonial arena for profit-making and personal adventures. It is a centre which by definition does not hold, represented as a state of "over-refinement" against the "barbarism" of the outer regions. There is no happy medium and the whirlpool signifies the point at which the stable oppositions of nature and civilisation or heredity and environment seem to have lost their ground. Civilisation as a whirlpool is not civilisation but nature gone wild and menacing.

The novel documents this breakdown through its exploitation of social issues such as the crashing of economic enterprises, the instability of family life and marriage, and the claims of the New Woman. As well as structuring the plot, these questions are amply discussed as such by the characters. The lengthy passages of dialogue which result are part of what lies behind Henry James's criticism of the novel, which Parrinder mentions. James complained of the lack of "form" in the whirlpool: "the whole business of distribution and composition he strikes me as having cast to the winds."³ Yet this is surely a structural necessity, since a smooth and seamless formal cohesion

would only detract from the novel's irreducibly unstable, disordered premises. It is about confusion and excess, and the form, or formlessness, accords with this.

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The alteration between realistic and melodramatic modes is symptomatic of this. Instead of there being an exceptional crime or case of hereditary madness, *The Whirlpool* overflows with sexual and legal subversiveness, everything from possible adulteries to accidental murder. All forms of transgression emerge as part of a general atmosphere of suspicion, which places them all on the same indeterminate level and reinforces a sense of "the rottenness of society" (286). At the same time, these disparate types of social and individual disorder are shown as norms of the whirlpool society, like the ordinary/extraordinary sensational news of the popular press, a new force at the time whose significance is apparent in the novel. The juxtaposition of melodrama and domestic realism marks a splitting apart of identifiable meanings that is both social and literary; or rather, the absence of social or literary norms is manifested in the impossibility of a consistent style that recognisably either describes or distorts social reality.

Both economic and cultural values have lost balance. Money, not work, makes money; and culture, as Alma Rolfe's musical venture shows, has become a field for celebrities, media hype and professional salesmanship. For the comfortably off middle classes represented by the Rolfes and the Carnabys, lacking either a necessity to earn or an obvious avocation, the question of how to spend one's life takes on the form of an existential choice. The various possibilities are ranged in global abundance – colonial activities in Australia or the Far East, the simple life in North Wales, suburban leisure, provincial investments and so on – are all considered in terms of their capacity for satisfying the "natural" man, be he an active, physical Hugh Carnaby or a scholarly Harvey Rolfe. Yet the very proliferation of choices, whereby almost anything is possible but nothing is preordained, removes them from any seeming order of nature. The predicament in which Rolfe and Carnaby find themselves is one in which established patterns and identities can no longer be experienced as natural. They experiment with different lifestyles and different dwelling-places with

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all the restlessness of Cyrus Redgrave, the millionaire man-about-town with his selection of continental residences and his chic bachelor hideaway in Wimbledon.

The difference is that it is not a position in which they feel at home. Like two otherwise dissimilar contemporary literary figures, the Des Esseintes of Huysmans' *A Rebours* (1884) and the Henry Adams of the *Education* (1900), they can find no fulfilling form of existence, and their very compulsion to choose and to change between more than one mode aligns them with the dilettante consumer of just that artificial "over-refinement" which they sought or thought to escape.

It is against this background that the country town where Carnaby and Rolfe grew up, and where their schoolmate Basil Morton lives still, comes to figure for Harvey as both a retreat and an ideal solution to his unsettled state. It takes him back, literally, to a world of stable and worthy values, where boys go to their father's grammar school and wives are rosy-cheeked and loving mothers. As a corn-factor, Morton represents a form of trade which can be pointedly contrasted to city speculation. "I like my trade," he says to Rolfe,

"I like turning over a sample of grain; I like the touch of it, and the smell of it. It brings me near to the good old Mother Earth, and makes me feel human." (323)

A moderate, balanced and old-established trade is given all the credentials of the farmer's occupation: exchanging the corn is as close to Nature as growing it, and commerce and the classics (Morton's hobby) can be harmoniously combined.⁴ So the contrast is not between a moneyed economy and a pre-commercial culture of the land, but between the regular, useful trade of a man like Morton and the spiralling, uncontrolled turnovers of the metropolis. There is also, however, an experiment which seems to offer an urban equivalent of this pastoral stability which, as Parrinder points out, is anachronistic since the business of someone like Morton is already "doomed in the

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face of modern competition."⁵ Rolfe joins up with his erratic friend Cecil Morpew to run a photography shop. Like Morton's work, this represents a modest and regular form of trading, unlike other city enterprises it is not an investment aimed only at maximum profits, but a personal service involving specialised knowledge and interaction with customers. It is also, like the bicycle factory Carnaby invests in, geared to (or focused on) new leisure industries with a definite future.

The venture's collapse is due not to economic reasons, but to the owners' personal troubles: Alma Rolfe's progressive mental instability which culminates (with a little wish-fulfillment, perhaps, on the part of a maritally miserable author) in her suicide, and Morpew's long-term fiancée who backs out on account of his discovered infidelity. This shows at one level how prevailing sexual and marital mores work against any approach to individual security. But it is also typical of the way that anything represented in the novel as a genuine attempt to live a reasonable normal life tends to be on the part of men, and tends to be stymied by feminine interference. There is a sense in which male incapacities are blamed as much on individual women as on society, and this is brought out by the persistent association of women and the whirlpool: the fashionable life is inherently more attractive to women, and both women and whirlpool are dangerous distractions which suck men in.

On the face of it, Rolfe and his wife are parallel seekers of self-fulfillment within marriage. But Harvey's is clearly presented as the more authentic quest, even though its object is never more specific than a vague possibility of writing. Alma's pursuits have a series of definite aims – musical expertise, the simple life, performing celebrity, being a good mother – and all appear under the sign of artificiality, as emanating principally from a feminine wish for flattery. On music, for instance:

Alma had no profound love of the art. Nothing more natural than her laying it completely aside when at home in Wales she missed her sufficient audience. To her, music was not an end in itself. Like numberless girls, she had, to begin with,

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a certain mechanical aptitude, which encouraged her through the early stages, until vanity stepped in and urged her to considerable attainments. (p. 245)

Alma's musical interests are merely on the surface. There exists a genuine "art" of which she could but does not have a "profound love," and this presumably would not need the approval of an outside "audience" on which Alma depends. Superficiality and vanity go together as "natural" to Alma who is "like numberless girls." She wishes to be taken for more than what she is, and her appearance of artistic dedication is actually a simulacrum of precisely what she is not.

Sibyl Carnaby's activities are represented in an equally questionable form:

She did not read novels, and not at all in the solid books which were to be seen lying about her rooms; but Lady Isobel Barker, and a few other people, admired her devotion to study. Certainly one or two lines had begun to reveal themselves on Sibyl's forehead, which might possibly have come of late reading and memory overstrained; they might also be the record of other experiences. (430)

The narrative voice here has all the insinuating slyness of the dubious Mrs. Strangeways, centre of the melodramatic plot whose telling relies on the premise that things are not what they seem. The suggestion is not only that Sibyl's literary interests are inauthentic, but that she deliberately constructs an image of herself as the serious reader she is not, through the "solid books ... to be seen" in her home, and that the appearance of studious zeal is a cover for "other experiences." More than a misleading image, as in Alma's case, it is a sign open to a quite different and sinister interpretation.

In the case of Harvey, reading is not a pose but a real love ("He gets more and more booky" says his friend [p. 66]) – a love which is thwarted, however, by external circumstances. He succumbs to a literary whirlpool of "books from the circulating library, thrown upon his table

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pell-mell ... The intellectual disease of the time took hold upon him: he lost the power of mental concentration" (p. 381). Instead of the reasons for his failure being individual or related to gender, as with Alma, they are social. The implication is that it would be difficult for any man to resist the overwhelming forces of distraction and corruption which are outside himself not innate, and which infect a previously wholesome and serious love of literature.

Taking the novel as a whole, it seems that success in a cultural sphere already defined as degraded must be incompatible with genuine artistic values and is more likely to appeal to women's wish to appear, without being, artistically gifted. Femininity and commercialisation go hand in hand, and Rolfe's castigation of a "draggle-tailed, novelette-reading feminine democracy" (p. 15) shows the extent to which the two could be assimilated. At one point Rolfe and Carnaby dream of a world without women, free from the problems of sexual mores, childrearing, domestic management and cultural degeneracy, which are all related to the whirlpool way of life in which women, for reasons said to be in their "nature," rebel against their "natural" place. And so the Rolfe's son is named after Hugh Carnaby, as if ideally he would be the child of the two men.

The figure of Rolfe is drawn with some humour and ironic distance, and there is no need to identify his position with Gissing's. But clearly questions of the literary market and authorial celebrity were close to his own preoccupations during this period when he was enjoying his greatest public recognition so far, and when public recognition had recently taken on the popular journalistic forms – interviews, celebrity photos and so on – characteristic of the 20th century. Just as Alma in the novel might have become the centre of "a 'boom' – the word was then coming into fashion – [and] ... been much photographed and paragraphed" (p. 372), so Gissing had noted in his diary for January 16, 1895:

Saw a paragraph in the *Literary World* to effect that my "boom" set going by W. Besant, must have startled its originator. (Didn't know of the "boom")⁶

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Six years before *The Whirlpool*, *New Grub Street* had furnished a devastating portrait of the man of

letters as entrepreneur in the person of Jasper Milvain. Gissing was profoundly ambivalent about the significance of literary success, and *The Whirlpool* is no more sanguine about the possibilities of artistic authenticity in the 1890s than the earlier novel. As if to ward off the implications of the author's own relative arrival, it is a novel about a man incapable of settling to a literary life and a woman who wants to bask in the glow of an artificial limelight. At the very moment when Gissing might see himself as having achieved a compromise between commercial and artistic demands, he writes a novel which represents the two terms as even further apart. Success itself is itself a sign of inauthenticity, of pandering to the "novelette-reading feminine democracy" of mass culture. All the more reason, then, to prove with a solid three-decker that short story fame is no better than the short-lived bloom or boom of a second-rate female violinist.

Rachel Bowlby, Sussex University.

1. *Gissing Newsletter*, Vol. XV, no. 4, Oct. 1979, p. 30.
2. Pierre Coustillas, ed., *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978), p. 343.
3. Pierre Coustillas and Colin Partridge, eds., *Gissing: The Critical Heritage* (London: RKP, 1972), p. 290).
4. This differs sharply from the situation in *New Grub Street*, where the pleasures of Greek are both a respite from and an antithesis to the miserable daily grind of trying to eke out a living in literature.
5. "Introduction," p. xx.
6. Coustillas, *London*, p. 360.

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Martha S. Vogeler, *Frederic Harrison: The Vocations of A Positivist*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, £27.50.

This is an important book, and scholarly work of the first order. For years one had felt that this biography – or critical biography – had to be written; it was known to be on the stocks, then to be undergoing a process of thorough revision, and now more than ever one feels that it had to be written and that it was worth writing.

It is first of all a splendidly produced volume – some 500 pages long, attractively printed, and the 390 pages of text are accompanied by all the additional information one could reasonably hope for in a volume of this kind. The copious yet concise notes (pp. 392-470) supply the references to the extraordinary wealth of material consulted (published as well as unpublished), and since an efficient system of abbreviations was devised for the most commonly used sources, printed or manuscript, these eighty-odd pages offer, together with the bibliographical essay which precedes the notes, the equivalent of a detailed bibliography of Harrison. The index, which has been tested repeatedly, is a fully reliable tool, and the twenty-two illustrations constitute a most welcome pictorial supplement, most of it apparently reproduced for the first time in a book.

Another material approach to the vast scope of the subject is provided by a mere enumeration

of the various aspects of Frederic Harrison's career, that is the "vocations" of the subtitle. Harrison is of interest to historians of jurisprudence, labour, politics and religion, but he is also worthy of our attention as a biographer and a literary critic. There is scarcely a major Victorian name that is not mentioned in close connection with his manifold activities. As a Positivist who from the late seventies onwards became England's principal advocate of Auguste Comte's doctrine, he was led to defend his views against a number of polemicists who have long received their due – Arnold, Ruskin, Spencer, Huxley and Fitzjames Stephen, the brother of the better-known Leslie Stephen. He was acquainted with a large number of figures who recur in the biographies of eminent and not so

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eminent Victorians : (Sir) H. H. Asquith, (Lord) Balfour, E. S. Beesly, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, John Henry Bridges, John Uright, Sir James Bryce, Carlyle, Joseph Chamberlain, Richard Congreve, Moncure Conway, Henry Crompton, Lord Curzon, Sir Charles Dilke, Disraeli, George Eliot, Patrick Geddes, Gladstone, (Sir) Edmund Gosse, Hardy, Thomas Hughes, T. H. Huxley, Benjamin Jowett, Sir James Knowles, George Henry Lewes, Sir Godfrey and Vernon Lushington, Sir Frederick Macmillan, F. D. Maurice, John Stuart Mill, James Cotter Morison, (Lord) Morley, Mark Pattison, Lord Rosebery, Lord Salisbury, G. B. Shaw, Herbert Spencer, Mrs. Humphry Ward and Beatrice Webb – to list only the better known names which occupy more than a few lines in the index.

Considering the variety of Harrison's activities, Professor Vogeler was confronted with serious problems of organization in disclosing the pattern of Harrison's achievements, family connections, numberless friendships and inimical relationships from 1831 to 1923, a period which extends from the early days of William IV's reign to the politically chaotic times of George V. And these problems have been solved in an original manner. If, as could be expected, the account of the early life follows the chronological order with Ch. I on childhood and student days (1831-1855) and Ch. II on Neo-Positivism (1855-1861), the seven next chapters are fundamentally thematic and only partly chronological. The titles and dates, in all cases followed by four subtitles, give one a clear idea of the arrangement: Ch. III Alliances with the Working Class (1861-1870), Ch. IV Shaping a Positivist Polity (1870-1880), Ch. V Shaping a Positivist Religion (1875-1901), Ch. VI Positivism, Politics and Philosophy (1880-1901), Ch. VII The Edwardian Positivist (1901-1914), Ch. VIII The Positivist as Man of Letters (1870-1914), and Ch. IX The Positivist as Historian (1880-1914). Only at the end, with the ultimate chapter, The Positivist as Prophet (1914-1923) does the narrative resume a straight chronological course. The consequence of this arrangement – and this is by no

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means a drawback in a Life which is more concerned with factual ideas and factual achievements than with day-to-day progress, personal or national – is that the reader is carried forward and backward a number of times, Harrison getting older then younger as though he partly resisted the onward march of time until with the outbreak of the Great War he was at long last carried forward to his inevitable demise, long enough after the return of peace to have had time to realize that the post-war world was nearly incomprehensible to him.

Splendidly documented as it is, this account of Harrison's life and thoughts never gives, simply because there is no information available, any intimate view of Harrison. Of his family life we are offered various vignettes, thanks to Austin Harrison's lively book on his father (*Frederic Harrison: Thoughts and Memories*, 1926), but we never go deep under the surface of his personality. In typical Victorian fashion he thought that confession must stop where matters of the heart begin.

Perhaps this is even less surprising if we remind ourselves that he was nearly forty when he married and that his wife was no other than his first cousin, though twenty years his junior. Temperamental he certainly was – self-confident to a point which implies a poor capacity for self-criticism – but his intemperance was only a matter of the mind and of the pen, and more than once when reading his innumerable articles and letters to the editor of *The Times* and other papers, do we feel that he began to write before he gave himself the benefit of reflection. This Martha Vogeler does not say in so many words, but she suggests as much. Indeed one of the virtues of her remarkable book is that, while she never self-consciously conceals her sympathy for Harrison and his noblest ideas (a catalogue of them would be impressive), she makes no mystery of his ideological limitations and contradictions. But the biographee's psychology – a fact which would have satisfied Harrison since he fought shy of this subject – is explored only incidentally and in its external manifestations.

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Harrison was a wealthy man, something of an autocrat, albeit a generous one, and though he lived to the over-ripe age of ninety-one, he seems to have had no time for self-probing, hesitation or remorse. Professor Vogeler does allude to moments of depression (when his wife was away from home for a short period), but they certainly did not affect in any concrete way the tenor of his life. To the end, despite the failure of Positivism to develop roots of an institutional nature, despite the many attacks he and it had to suffer, despite the many rebuffs he had to bear in his public life, he remained an optimist, although he surely cannot have found around him many reasons for optimism in the last few years of his life. Fortunately, he had been born too early to see the worst political developments of the interwar period – the rise of dictatorships in at least five European countries. We close the book with a sense of double achievement – Harrison's and his biographer's and there is something especially gratifying in the quotation of Vigny's motto, which in turn Auguste Comte and Harrison had taken for themselves: "What is a great life?" the French poet had asked, "A thought of youth fulfilled in the maturity of age."

At this point and for the last of many times, one is compulsively reminded of Gissing, since he himself transcribed in one of his notebooks the French version of Vigny's aphorism. It is a common complaint that a writer is as a rule dealt with unsatisfactorily in the biographies of his friends and acquaintances – for instance, the surveys of Wells's life, with the partial exception of *The Time Traveller*, give a deplorably inaccurate image of Gissing's personality and of his relationship with the author of *Tono-Bungay*. Martha Vogeler's book is a shining exception. Gissing is given the space he deserves, he is viewed objectively and with sympathy, and the facts about him – inevitably a selection – are as accurate as full knowledge of Harrison and Gissing scholarship can make them. Because of the pattern of the book their relationship is discussed in two different chapters – first the

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period which began when Gissing sent Harrison a copy of *Workers in the Dawn* and ended more or less when the novelist ceased giving lessons to the Harrison boys, secondly the later period which includes some correspondence and encounters in the 1890s and extends beyond Gissing's death as far as the publication of *Veranilda* with Harrison's preface and his disenchanting comments in the *Positivist Review* after he had been attacked by a good many reviewers.

It is clear that Professor Vogeler would have liked to give much more space to the Harrison-Gissing friendship had she been allowed to write a bigger book. One feels behind each sentence that she has much more to say and must be content to suggest. Nowhere do we have this impression in a more urgent manner than when she refrains from naming Mrs. Gausson and later

Gabrielle Fleury lest the mention of these names should hinder the flow of her narrative. Still the pages she devotes to Gissing are much more than well-informed abstract of relationships which could hardly be dealt with comfortably in less than 80 to 100 pages. Witness these remarks on "The Lady of the Dedication," which was first published in *George Gissing: Essays and Fiction* (1970): "In 'The Lady of the Dedication,' a short story, he may have more realistically depicted his relationship to the Harrisons, and perhaps for this reason did not publish it. The hero, a writer, lives near Tottenham Court Road, as Gissing once did, and is close to starving. He loves a nursemaid in a family much like the Harrisons, who in fact had a nursemaid for the two younger boys during Gissing's years at Westbourne Terrace. The husband in this family studies the Irish Land Bill and is preoccupied with his writing and editing, while his wife graciously manages the house and supervises the care of three young children – one of whom is named Godfrey." For the first time Harrison's wife, Ethel, appears in a book as a full-length figure and this is a very useful contribution to our understanding of the days when Gissing, the poor tutor and budding novelist, was a regular visitor at the Harrisons', giving lessons to Bernard and Austin and often staying to lunch, as Austin

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was later to recall in his suggestive assessment of his father's life and work.

Outside the two Gissing sections proper, *Frederic Harrison* is studded with passages which offer as many pictures of the material and human environment in which the novelist moved at particular moments in the twenty-three or four years during which he was personally acquainted with the Harrisons. On the one hand we are taken to places where Gissing would see the Harrisons, that is, besides 38 Westbourne Terrace, Sutton Place, the Tudor manor-house near Guildford, and Blackdown Cottage in Sussex, on the other we come upon perhaps two dozen contemporaries with whom he was in touch at some time or other after his return from America in the autumn of 1877: Charles and Montague Cookson and the latter's son Hubert, of *Wreckage* fame, E. S. Beesly and Vernon Lushington, Cotter Morison, Grant Allen, Charles Gaskell Higginson, all more or less avowedly Positivists; or again John Morley, who published Gissing's Notes on Social Democracy, H. H. Champion, the socialist, C. T. Hagberg Wright of the London Library, Margaret L. Woods, whose *A Village Tragedy* Harrison seems to have admired as much as did Gissing, and even Lady Dorothy Nevill, whom he did not care to meet. And this leaves out even better known names like those of Meredith, Hardy and Zangwill. For the first time we have between the covers of a book a number of photographs of Harrison (notably in 1862, 1885, 1889, 1907 and 1919) and of his wife. The 1889 portraits of husband and wife have been reproduced from the copies that Gissing was sent as presents shortly after his second marriage. Most interesting of all is the photograph of the Harrison family at Elm Hill, Hawkhurst, probably taken on 17 August 1907, the Harrisons' thirty-seventh wedding anniversary. Further pleasant additions are portraits of John Morley in 1883 and of E. S. Beesly about 1880, that is about the time he put Turgenev in touch with Gissing.

One further fascination of the book for those readers who, as was the case of the present

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reviewer, have so far largely tended to see Frederic Harrison through Gissing's eyes, consists, as the narrative unfolds, in mentally compiling a list of all the questions, political, social, religious, philosophical and literary, about which the young novelist and his patron could have agreed or disagreed in the 1880s and twenty years later when *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* were being written in the early days of the Boer War. Attending a hot discussion between the two men would have been an intellectual treat, a treat which we can even now enjoy by proxy in Austin's

memories of his father.

Perhaps when Professor Vogeler has completed her own book on Austin, she will think it worth her while to edit for some enterprising publisher a new edition of these memories, unless she chooses to prepare a volume of selected correspondence of Frederic Harrison. Meanwhile, we should be grateful to her for having made available such an informative and well-written study of Harrison's life and thoughts. This is indeed scholarly biography at its best.

Pierre Coustillas.

Notes and News

Landscapes and Literati: Unpublished Letters of W. H. Hudson and George Gissing, containing Hudson letters to George and Algernon Gissing as well as what is left of George's letters to Hudson, is to appear shortly after some delay in production. The publisher is Michael Russell Publishing Ltd., The Chantry, Wilton, Salisbury, Wilts., SP2 0JU. The book has been announced at £12.95.

Wulfhard Heinrichs, of Hamburg, has sent two press-cuttings from German journals which show to what extent the anecdote of Gissing-Ryecroft using the British Museum toilet in a sense the authorities had not contemplated (Spring X) has been twisted out of its original meaning. In

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Börsenblatt des deutschen Buchhandels (Bulletin of the German Book Trade) for 3 July 1984 (p. 1589) we read that there were and still are eccentrics among the regular users of the great Reading Room and that one of the worst offenders was Gissing who used to wash his socks in the toilet there. The same story was retold in *Die Zeit* for 21 December 1984, p. 60 ("Ein Platz für Geister und Gelehrte," by Anna v. Münchhausen). Both articles mention *New Grub Street*, not *Henry Ryecroft*.

Victorian Periodicals Review, whose new editor is Barbara Quinn Schmidt, has moved from the University of Toronto to:

English Dept., Box 43
Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville
Edwardsville, Ill. 62026-1001
USA.

P. F. Kropholler, of Paris, reports that he was interviewed on 29 January 1985 by one of his countrymen, Mr. Van der Poel, the chaplain of the Paris branch of the Dutch Protestant Alliance, for a literary programme in Dutch on Radio Notre-Dame. The subject was the life and work of Gissing. Mr. Kropholler was given a good opportunity to review the main events in the novelist's biography and the major characteristics of his work, and to outline the evolution of his reputation since the early 1960s. He offered no challenging revision of the scale of values in Gissing's literary production, and though he duly observed that the interest in the novels, as opposed to other works, has increased considerably in the last twenty-five years, he did not hesitate to say that *Henry*

Ryecroft remains the best-known title.

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Recent Publications

Volume

George Gissing, *Workers in the Dawn*, edited with an introduction by Pierre Coustillas, Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1985. Pp. cii + 374 + 436. Red cloth with grey panel on spine and gilt titling or grey and red pictorial paperback. Hardback: £25, paperback £9.95. Distributed in the United States by Methuen Inc., 733 Third Avenue, N.Y. 10017. This edition, the first to appear since Gissing paid for the publication of his story in 1880, contains a bibliographical note, a twenty-two page introduction, an important note on the text with list of corrections (84 and 121 respectively for Vols. I and II of the Doubleday, Doran edition from which the text of the present edition is reprinted), the text, notes to the text, the author's unfinished revisions, a thirty-page study of the MS containing very significant hitherto unpublished passages, and a bibliography.

Articles, reviews etc,

Laurel Brake *et al*, "Nineteenth Century: Victorian," *The Year's Work in English Studies*, London: Published for the English Association by John Murray, 1984, pp. 330-31.

Jeffrey David Malkan, "Literature, English," *Dissertation Abstracts International*. Vol. 43, no. 12, June 1983, pp. 3920-21A. Abstract of dissertation on "George Gissing: The Literary Intellectual of Fiction."

Enid Sue Dame, "Literature, English," *Dissertation Abstracts International*, Vol. 44, no. 5, November 1983, p. 1460A. Abstract of dissertation on "Creation of a Working Class in the Victorian Novel: George Gissing in Perspective."

Robert Lee Wolff, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 2 D-K, New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1983, pp. 122-25. Entry on the Gissing brothers.

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Victor Bonham-Carter, *Authors by Profession*, Vol. II: From the Copyright Act 1911 until the end of 1981, The Bodley Head and the Society of Authors, 1984. Gissing is mentioned on pp. 140 and 152.

George Watt, *The Fallen Woman in the Nineteenth-Century English Novel*, London & Canberra: Croom Helm; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1984. Contains a chapter on *The Unclassed* and various references to other works, *The Odd Women* in particular.

Gillian Tindall, "The Haunted Books of George Gissing," in *Essays by Divers Hands*, being transactions of the Royal Society of Literature, New Series, Vol. XLIII, ed. Angus Wilson. Published for the Royal Society of Literature by the Boydell Press, 1984.

Geoffroy Deffrennes, "Nouvelles anglaises de la Belle Epoque," *La Voix du Nord* (Lille), 20 February 1985, p. 18. With references to Gissing.

Andrew Hassam, "The Oscillating Text: A Reading of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 28, no. 1 (1985), pp. 30-40. This is an essay which breaks new ground. An anonymous notice of Francesco Badolato's *Antologia Critica* appears in no. 2, p. 216, under "Briefer Mention."

Robin Barrow, "Reviews," *Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 351, no. 141, February 1985, pp. 119-20. Review of *Gissing: A Life in Books*.

Pierre Coustillas, "Comptes Rendus," *Etudes Anglaises*, 38th year, no. 1, January-March 1985, pp. 93-94. Review of Robert L. Selig's *George Gissing* (Twayne).

Susan Wiseman, "Now in Paperback," *City Limits*, 1 March 1985. Short review of *A Life's Morning* (Harvester).

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- F. W. Boreham, "Spring Time," *Decision*, April 1985, pp. 10-11. This is a reprint of a 1929 essay originally published by its author in *The Three Half Moons and Other Essays* (London: Epworth Press) and now revived as a review of the Harvester edition of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.