

¹ *By the Ionian Sea, Notes of a Ramble in Southern Italy*, ed. by Pierre Coustillas. Northampton, Massachusetts: Interlink Books, 2004, p. 5.

² George Gissing, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (London: Echo Library, 2007), p. 73.

³ Morley Roberts, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1912), pp. 104, 160.

⁴ *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, p. 73.

⁵ Pierre Coustillas (ed.), *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England. The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978), p. 54. Further page numbers for quotations from the *Diary* will be given in the text.

⁶ Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas (eds), *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Three, 1886-1888* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1992), p. 283.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

⁹ *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, p. 73.

¹⁰ *By the Ionian Sea*, p. 5.

¹¹ George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, ed. by Katherine Mullins. Oxford: OUP, 2016, p. 327.

¹² George Gissing, *The Emancipated*, ed. by Pierre Coustillas. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1977, pp. 211-212.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹⁴ Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas (eds), *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Four, 1889-1891* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1993), p. 174.

¹⁵ *Risanamento* (literally: making healthy again) was the name given to the large-scale replanning of Italian cities following unification in 1871.

¹⁶ *By the Ionian Sea*, p. 131.

The Dickens Fellowship of Japan Annual General Meeting: “Dickens and Gissing”

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The Dickens Fellowship of Japan held their 2017 Annual General Meeting at the University of Tokyo on Saturday, 7 October. Following a short paper session in which Akiko Kawasaki (Komazawa University) gave a talk titled, “Sharing Death: Fainting in *A Tale of Two Cities*,” a special symposium on Dickens and Gissing was held. The subtitle of the symposium was “Subterranean Similarities and Differences,” and it was presided by Mitsu haru Matsuoka (Nagoya University).

In his review on *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1898), C. K. Shorter finds it interestingly ironic that Gissing was commissioned to criticise

Dickens favourably. Gissing describes poverty in a darker way, while Dickens provides a brighter description. Dickens is often seen as an optimist when compared to Gissing, whose work is largely pessimistic. And yet, Dickensian humour and laughter can be detected in Gissing's more sombre novels, whereas Dickens left us several novels with the same heavy themes seen in the works of Gissing. In addition, several critics have pointed out similarities between the two novelists, especially evident in their characters, plots, techniques, social problems, and scene depictions of London. However, there are also differences behind these similarities. The differences were produced by the influences of each artist's innate idiosyncrasies, as well as those of their Victorian-era mindsets. Paying careful attention to the subterranean similarities and differences between Dickens and Gissing, the five symposium speakers compared and examined their selected novels from their different perspectives. Here are the five symposium members and their respective short reports:

1. Ayaka Komiya (Meiji University), "From Dickens's London to Gissing's London"

In 1822, a young Charles Dickens left Chatham and arrived in London. There, he strolled around the capital's streets and neighbourhoods. His Wellerian "extensive and peculiar" knowledge of London helped him write novels in that city's settings. It was about half a century later, or in 1877, that Gissing, born in Yorkshire, moved to London. His move took place after a year or so of unhappy wanderings in America. The capital he saw was the very world of Dickens, who was his favourite childhood author. Gissing stated that ". . . four and twenty years ago, when I had no London memories of my own, they were simply the scenes of Dickens's novels . . ." (Gissing, *The Immortal Dickens*, 1925). London became the base and centre of Gissing's later life. Like Dickens, Gissing moved around the capital for observation purposes, and set many of his novels there. As a subject of discussion, Komiya compared Dickens's London with Gissing's London, and provided a special reference to their early novels, which depicted locales in the same slums. Gissing's version of London in his first novel, *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), is a Dickensian London. However, when Gissing wrote *The Nether World* (1889), he made use of his own knowledge of London's slums, which he gained during his nine-year residence there.

2. Fumie Tamai (Doshisha University), "The Politics of Sympathy in the Works of Dickens and Gissing"

The American philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum maintains that literature, particularly novels, can make a rich contribution to education because of its ability to develop the reader's sympathetic imagination. In order to illustrate her points, Nussbaum aptly cites Dickens, who is most clearly aware of his power to form the bonds of sympathy with his readers. Audrey Jaffe argues that in Victorian fiction, "sympathy" offers an individualistic and affective solution to the problems of class alienation and conflicts, and enables an assimilation of individuals into larger communities, such as nations. While Dickens tries to reform society through the evocation of sympathy toward others in his readers' minds, Gissing is sceptical of the possibility of social reform through those means. Gissing writes to Algernon saying that his "methods & aims" are different from those of Dickens. How, though, are they different? Examining the politics of sympathy with a special focus on *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41) and *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), Tamai claimed that Dickens arouses the reader's sympathy by de-emphasising the physical reality of the heroine Nell, while Gissing sticks to realistic representations of the poor, and warns the reader against forming any sentimental identification with them.

3. Atsuko Miyake (Seinan Gakuin University), "Nineteenth-Century British Design Reform in Transition and Its Literary Representations"

The design reform movement began in Britain toward the beginning of the Victorian era. Britain had recognised herself as an artistic backwater in Europe. The Great Exhibition of 1851 can be seen within this cultural context. Design reform was aimed at more closely linking arts, industry, and morality in order to enhance the nation's tastes. At the end of the 19th century, the movement developed into two cultural trends. One was the aesthetic movement, which was centred on the doctrine that art exists for the sake of its beauty alone. The other was a boom in the publication of handbooks and articles on furnishing and upholstery. Miyake compared Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852-53) and *Hard Times* (1854) with Gissing's *The Odd Women* (1893) and *In the Year of Jubilee* (1894), and argued that changes in the 19th-century British art movement lay underneath the different literary representations of room furnishings by the two novelists. For example, the discussion between Sissy and the third gentleman, considered as a satirical representation of Henry Cole, in *Hard Times*,

refers to his famous campaign for “taste,” while Mr. Skimpole’s grumbles on furniture in *Bleak House* remind us of an over-decorated armchair displayed at the Great Exhibition. Gissing’s novels capture well the results of Cole’s efforts; the idea of “taste” had spread throughout society, and room furnishings were connected to the contemporary New Woman issue.

4. Mitsuharu Matsuoka (Nagoya University), “Modern Urban Dwellers and Their Self-denial, Self-alienation, and Self-deception”

The main point in Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-05) is that the Protestant thought of attaining the grace of God by connecting the self-denying culture of Protestantism with the secular commercial activities, which permeated the lives of nineteenth-century urban dwellers, resulted in a major contribution to the formation of modern capitalist society. In the works of Dickens, self-sacrifice as a form of self-denial holds implications for the love of God in giving Jesus as an atoning sacrifice. Another form of self-denial appears in the shape of egoism in self-made men or of self-abnegation in the tortured through guilt. This is especially true when the self-denying spirit is directed toward profit-taking and the accumulation of capital. The egoist is alienated from society and others, whereas the self-abnegator alienates himself. It is interesting, however, that both types fall into self-deception resulting from solitude or uneasiness. The works of Gissing also contain many scenes that are based on the urban dwellers’ self-denial, self-alienation, and self-deception, but their causes are sometimes rather different from those in the works of Dickens. Are the differences all due to naturalism as a literary movement, which finds no meaning in a human’s self-denying aspiration for improvement? After examining Mary Kingcote’s self-denial as a kind of masochistic pleasure taken in medieval asceticism in *Isabel Clarendon* (1886), Matsuoka analysed the connection of lodging-house life with self-alienation in poverty, and the high frequency of self-deception in the love problems described in *New Grub Street* (1891).

5. Ryota Kanayama (Ritsumeikan University), “For Whom is Education?”

In his *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1898), Gissing points out that Dickens’s lack of education reveals itself as a disadvantage to his books, and that it was more important in Dickens’s day than in the late 19th century to have received a classical education. Although Dickens criticises brutal boarding schools, the crammed educational system, and classics scholars, he

still sees, with a certain amount of trust in the schooling system, the need for a comprehensive cultural education to prevent common people from rampaging violence. Gissing began his career as a novelist after the Elementary Education Act of 1870, which legally guaranteed the right of elementary education to all. This does not mean that Gissing was sorry that Dickens could have received much benefit from this educational system if he had been born half a century later. Rather, he does not hide his disdain for the masses; he perceives them as having imperfect educational achievements. Drawing a comparison between the two novelists, who are different in terms of educational philosophy though they were both interested in the lower middle class as a target for description, Kanayama revealed what is behind those differences. Dickens was sure of his social background as a middle-class man, and as such took it for granted that he could have been given a chance to study at an institute of higher education such as Cambridge University. Gissing, on the other hand, hated those who were as daring enough as him to try to climb the social ladder by improving their academic careers, and thus gaining the necessary respect to be accepted into high society.



Notes and News

An extremely rare first edition of Morley Roberts's first novel, *In Low Relief, A Bohemian Transcript* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1890, 2 vols) with Mudie's library labels attached, sold by Keys Fine Art Auctioneers on 29 January 2015 for £120, is now offered for sale on ebay.co.uk by the purchaser for £650. Elsewhere, Richard Neylon, a bookseller based in St Marys, Tasmania, is selling for AUD 450 (£300) a very good Colonial edition of Roberts's 1897 novel, *The Adventure of the Broad Arrow, An Australian Romance*, which he describes as "one of the more famous west Australian lost race novels – though lost race is stretching it a bit. The white tribe here is descended from escaped convicts. But they are swimming in gold and there were pygmy cave dwellers."

Now that *The Limehouse Golem* has had its run in the cinemas with Gissing appearing as a murder suspect, the DVD has just been released for £9.99 on Amazon. Hopefully the extras will include an interview with Morgan Watkins who played Gissing.