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"Root of All Social Ill": A Marxist Analysis of Poverty and the Labor of Writing in George Gissing's New Grub Street

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“Root of All Social Ill”: A Marxist Analysis of Poverty and the Labor of Writing in George Gissing’s *New Grub Street.*

by

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Abstract

This paper explores George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891) and the four main characters: Alfred Yule, Edwin Reardon, Harold Biffen, and Jasper Milvain to bring light on the reality of writers' labor in the publishing industry in 19th century Britain. The characters' impoverished lives are analyzed to see what money symbolizes, and how it affects their relationships, career prospects and goals, success in class, and their engagement in society. The theoretical framework of Karl Marx's *Capital* is used to analyze the meaning of labor and money in the literary world of each of the four characters. Gissing carefully places the characters in poverty and compares their career paths to illustrate their methods of success and survival. Abundance of capital brings them luxury of time and class while the lack of it becomes "roots of all social ill" (Gissing 32).

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Chapter I: Introduction

New Grub Street takes place in London, narrating the stories of four main writers, Alfred Yule, Edwin Reardon, Harold Biffen, and Jasper Milvain. Each character approaches writing with personal ambitions, for example, to become a famous writer, a proud father and husband, creative artist, and a lucrative entrepreneur. However, the publishing industry is a risky environment where writers' labor cannot be compensated on the basis of the number of hours that they put into work; rather, the value is decided by their readership and the relationships between the author and the reviewers. The industrial and capitalistic cultural background of *New Grub Street* is parallel to what Karl Marx's describes as "the world of commodities with the product of men's hands" (84). His description shines light on how labor is no longer individuals' and becomes a possession of society. Gissing demonstrates how his four characters, Alfred Yule, Edwin Reardon, Harold Biffen, and Jasper Milvain choose to utilize or become a part of the fundamental labor force in the publishing industry.

However, why does Gissing write about writing? *New Grub Street* was published at the end of 1890, written in less than two months and sold with copyright at a hundred and fifty pounds, which is a trifling sum compared to value of the future editions that were printed after his sale (Arata 10-11). Like Edwin Reardon, Gissing had to start working on his next novel shortly after he had finished *New Grub Street* to support his family. The concept of money and value to writing is something that is constantly dealt with in *New Grub Street,* especially as the labor and time put into the product may not be matched with the price. In addition, each work may have individual a personal value for its writers, so the value of their art can really differ based on the authors' choice to write in a specific manner and style to gain and build relationships within the publishing industry. For each, the question is, will they hold their work in artistic pride or utilize their books as trade for money? The narratives of each character positions him each on his own path of writing. Gissing, too, had been placed

on many paths of writing, from being recognized for his academic brilliance and earning a scholarship to Owens Collage to being exiled for stealing from his students and forced to work odd writing jobs in Chicago (12). Gissing's struggles to make a career or even make enough to live on in the quick changing market is a hardship that can be identified in the characters of *New Grub Street*. Looking at each of their financial outcomes in success and failures, Marx's *Capital* is applied to analyze their actions in business. However, their financial outcome is not just the result of payment for characters' labor, but it affects them as a member of a class, as a figure in the domestic realm, and as an associate engaging in their societies. Abundance of money may bring them comfort and respectability while shortage of it brings poverty to their every aspect of lives "the root of all social ills" (Gissing 32). As Dora, sister of Jasper Milvain honestly describes her brother as, "Jasper's moral nature will never be safe as long as he is exposed to the risk of poverty. There are such people, you know. As a poor man, I wouldn't trust him out of my sight; with money, he will be a tolerable creature as men go" (269). This quote illustrates the contrast of character's identity and behavior around the subject of money. Capital becomes a social power as it dominates how the characters feel and behave as individuals and as a member of a class. Furthermore, the psychological change of characters will also be addressed to analyze their behavior patterns in both wealth and poverty. In a nutshell, Gissing can be found in characters that he writes who struggle to find a balance between economics and aesthetics in the 19th century literary market. However, a careful eye is needed to see the methods and the effects of the characters, whether it is their success or failure in the end.

Chapter II: Alfred Yule

Alfred Yule comes from a family of business, his father being a Wattleborough stationer and his two brothers, John and Edmund Yule, manufacturers of paper. They were well educated and their upbringing indicates that Alfred comes from an affluent middle class family that is dedicated to literary scholarship. Illustrations of the three sons of Yule's household are described as, "Each was well educated, up to the age of seventeen, at the town's grammar school" (Gissing 18). As the eldest, John tries his hand at partnering a paper mill whilst the youngest Edmund attempts to keep the family business. On the other hand, Alfred takes a different turn in paper and takes work at a bookseller in London. The obvious difference in career paths evokes some contrasting opinions of success. John clearly voices his judgement on Alfred's choice in literature career when he says "I should like to see the business of literature abolished" (23). He even advises Jasper, a young amateur in the field of publishing, to "think over your ways whilst you're still young" (24). On the other hand, Alfred expresses the need of literature and remarks that literary production is a part of a process for providing art and civilization, rather than a mere business. According to Sigmund Freud, civilization is a social system of rules and orders that precipitate citizens' discomfort: "what we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and that we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions" (58). In Freudian terms Alfred Yule is pursuing literature to bring civilization, in which his failure to succeed suggests that he is provoking his own sufferings by remaining in the field of publishing literature. Alfred Yule's purpose for writing falters from his urgency and ideal to become a successful writer. Regardless of his ambition and endeavors, Alfred Yule faces difficulty in making his name known for his literary works by his incompetent writing skills, his production of unpopular books, and his vexatious temper that drives his companions and family away.

Alfred begins his career working as an assistant bookseller, immersing himself in the world of books. He takes interest in writing, full of hope and the ambition of becoming a legendary author. First published in *All Sorts*, a weekly paper he himself found, Alfred begins his literary career. After becoming the actual editor of the paper, he leaves his job at the bookseller to dedicate his time for literary writing. His mind is set:

> . . . to become a celebrated man, and . . . he was not unaware [that] the attainment of that end would cost him quite exceptional labor, seeing that nature had not favored him with brilliant parts. No matter; his name should be spoken among men–unless he killed himself in the struggle for success. (Gissing 93)

Here, Alfred takes notice of the fact that he is not a literary genius, but reveals his hope that dedication of time and strong will offset his weakness. Nevertheless, what Alfred does not realize is that being a struggling writer takes not only determination, but time, and results in poor income and deprivation of nourishment. His time and the quality of his labor put into a product does not always result in parallel compensation. From the narrative of Alfred's past employer, the bookseller Mr. Palo, accounts for how assiduous Alfred is, continuously writing and working from his twenty fifth year to his thirties (93). Hence, during these five years of his career, there is no doubt that Alfred took his goal to become a famous writer very seriously. However, since he is producing a commodity, the value of his work depends on its acceptance in society. Therefore, Alfred's reputation depends not only on his efforts, but also on how his books are reviewed by other social factors which decide his books' price and fame. Marx describes the relationship between labor and product as, "Human labour-power in motion, or human labour, creates value, but is not itself value. It becomes value only in its congealed state, when embodies in the form of some object" (59). Despite Alfred's commitment to his career, his dedicated time and energy are not valued by his readers. As a result, his books, the embodiment of his human labor, are worth very little because they

depend on how much they can be promoted by publishers and reviews. Alfred's writing process can be supported by Marx's description of socially determinative outcome in financial worth:

> A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. (83)

Therefore, there is an interactive affiliation between the product, author, and the readers, constructing the career as a writer a very complex, yet social profession.

However, writers can also modify the genre of writing to meet the demand of readership. By writing in a certain style and being aware of the interests of different niches in the market, a writer can gain a broader readership and acquire social value for his writing. In Marxian focus a writer's labor can reappear in a commodity by writing to these interests:"In order that his labour may reappear in a commodity, he must, before all things, expend it on something useful, on something capable of satisfying a want of some sort. Hence, what the capitalist sets the labour to produce, is a particular use-value, a specified article" (197). Accordingly, writers can be pragmatic. They can write for the mass audience, acknowledging the popularity and the super value, which in *New Grub Street* is to write short lighthearted fiction and simple nonfiction, not academic and analytical essays.

Indeed, an alternative path in literary writing is suggested to Alfred, but he remains stubborn in his conception of what successful writing is. Alfred's headstrong will to succeed in literature as art makes it harder for him achieve distinction. He does not write for the general public readership and solely writes academic essays to teach his readers the role of literature. Gissing offers Alfred's potential for mercantile writing, and his chances for success

in a different genre. However, Alfred's ambition "took his efforts *au grand serieux*; thought he was producing works of art; pursued his ambition in a spirit of fierce conscientiousness. In spite of all, he remained only a journeyman. The kind of work he did best was poorly paid, and could bring no fame" (Gissing 96). For Alfred, setting high standards for his own writing and being adamant about his style of writing only hindered his performance in his career.

Unfortunately, neither Alfred's recognition nor his income improves over time. Even as he publishes more literary works in a variety of fields of arts, his efforts are not rewarded and rather become comical. Gissing's tone in addressing Alfred's exertion suggests mild mockery:

> It would be difficult to mention any department of literary endeavor in which Yule did not, at one time or another, try his fortune. Turn to his name in the Museum Catalogue; the list of works appended to it will amuse you. In his thirtieth year he published a novel; it failed completely, and the same result awaited a similar experiment five years later. (96)

Thus, despite his effort and time that Alfred invested which he anticipated would bring him success ultimately failed him. His ensuing efforts to try his hand at fiction were also fruitless. His lack of accomplishment began to take a toll on him and as hard as it is for Alfred to make his name as a successful writer, his personal life also begins to struggle. Trying to make ends meet with little recognition and very scanty earnings, made him look for alternative ways to improve his living situation.

So poor, his nourishment is inadequate and Alfred turned in need of a companion, someone who will be able to take care of him whilst he continues to write. Marriage was a possible option, but the problem of his unsuccessful career and insufficient income became an obstacle in seeking a partner. In regard to his unprosperous situation in career and wealth, finding a partner to share his misery was troublesome. Middle-class marriages were strictly

arranged by money and class, and Alfred's only option was to marry a woman beneath him, someone who was willing to accept poverty with a higher class man. On Victorian marriages, John Tosh offers his interpretation of marital life in the following way: "the tone of early Victorian marriage recommended that spouses share each other's burdens and take – as well as receive – advice; but they left no doubt that the husband should be master" (28). Likewise, Alfred looked for a compassionate woman who was willing to share his hardship and accept his unprofitable career. In the end, Mrs. Yule (whose maiden name is not mentioned) is chosen, introduced by Gissing as "a young girl of no beauty, but, as it seemed to [Alfred], of amiable disposition" (93) who agreed to take on the writer's challenges with him, and Alfred settled for a wife of lower standing.

Nonetheless, marriage between different classes was common. Gissing addresses the frequency of different class marriages with a sacrifice of reputation:

> Many a man with brains but no money has been compelled to the same step. Educated girls have a pronounced distaste for London garrets; not one in fifty thousand would share poverty with the brightest genius ever born. Seeing that marriage is so often indispensable to that very success which would enable a man of parts to mate equally, there is nothing for it but to look below one's own level, and be grateful to the untaught woman who has pity on one's loneliness. (93)

This is exactly what Alfred did, to find a cure to his poor lonely situation with a wife. However, to middle class couples, settling and rushing into marriage is not a natural incident. Nourishment is not an objective of marriage for them, nor had did experience the urgency to be married for security. Rather, they wait to find a suitable home and luxuries as "Young couples were set on beginning married life with a home which was at least as well appointed as their parents', and the time taken to accumulate the necessary resource tended to push the age of first marriage for both men and women of the middle class up and up" (Tosh 24).When

Alfred's urgency for partnership brought the couple to continue living in his single garret, the middle class couples were decorating their household interior as ostentatious as their parents' home. The contrast of their living situation depicts the class variation that took place in exchange of their vows.

Not only are the couple aware of their situation, but the class difference between the newly wedded couple causes reactions from the community. The couple comes from family standings that are not equal; the wife is from a working class where she speaks a different dialect with an accent with no prominent background in education. In fact, her tone is narrated by Gissing as, "Mrs. Yule's speech was seldom ungrammatical, and her intonation was not flagrantly vulgar, but the accent of the London poor, which brands as with hereditary baseness" (85). On the other hand, Alfred's family is the exact opposite. They manage a business with a passion for education. These contrasts are sensed by the husband and the wife and their families, but in addition, their marriage brings a public message to society as a new identity of their class as a married couple. The mix of class is judged by the society and as a united family, their class descends. Joining of classes, in an incident such as a marriage carries a bigger meaning in a social setting and "Under the terms of the older hierarchy, public life was crucial to defining social relationships; in the emerging class system, by contrast, one's private relationships established social status" (Leaver 445). Their martial vow means that their classes unites to form a social position, and in result of decrease in class, Alfred's nourishment was exchanged at the cost of his prior middle class.

Despite how the society received the couple's new status, the union and the marital relationship between Alfred and his wife are favorable than expected. Gissing points to the fact that Mrs. Yule could have been "a vulgar shrew" but his marriage treats him well, the wife possessing qualities such as humility and kindliness (94). In perspective of Mrs. Yule, who marries up, she also acknowledges the difference in educational backgrounds between

the families as “she endeavored to learn of him, but her dullness and his impatience made this attempt a failure; her human qualities had to suffice” (94). Alfred looked for a wife without strict standards as he was more desperate to be married than to be selective. Thereafter, he did not anticipate that his hastiness in marriage would also affect his career, and the society he accompanies, which works against his advantage. However, the amicable qualities of Mrs. Yule accommodate Alfred very well, and his personal opinions on Mrs. Yule are depicted as him not regretting in his decision to marry (94). His main objective in marriage is to receive help and relief from his lonely and poor living situation. The partnership is not equal and the authority sides with Alfred, as the head of the household. Alfred Yule’s relationship follows the illustration of the role structure between the husband and the wife in the Victorian era as, “to the husband on account of the emotional support he received from his wife, and to experience made available to her” (Tosh 24). Alfred gains the emotional support he hoped for in a marriage, even though he married down a class.

However, Alfred’s swift decision to marry lower class for comfort and nourishment of a wife caused his close family to dispute his judgement. Harsh criticism came especially from his brothers, John and Edmund, whose business career made their living situations more comfortable. Their honest reaction “cried out that he had made an unpardonable fool of himself in marrying so much beneath him; that he might well have waited until his income improved” (Gissing 93). However, the situation was different for Alfred, who had chosen to marry due to his dire circumstances of failure. Regardless of how his family felt about his marriage, he earned what he had looked for in a marriage, help and nourishment from a woman. The lower class of Mrs. Yule also bothers him, but in so far as in nutriment and comfort, he is satisfied. Even when they argued, and showed each other the worst of themselves, their life together “did not come to an actual rupture, chiefly because Yule could not do without his wife; her tendance had become indispensable” (94). For his convenience,

Alfred stays committed to his wife. Also, his decision was made after his recognition of her class, and what it signifies. He knew that she would not be knowledgeable about literature and his passion for writing and produce art. This realization did not only take place with Alfred, but also with Mrs. Yule. She wanted to learn from him, but there was only so much she could learn within her scope of understanding. After years of being Alfred's wife, Mrs. Yule still has difficulty in composing and speaking in a middle class manner as she is used to the habits of her earlier life as a working class. "The London work girl is rarely capable of raising herself, or being raised, to a place in life above that to which she was born; she cannot learn how to stand and sit and move like a woman bred to refinement, any more than she can fashion her tongue to graceful speech" (85). In conversations with her husband, her grammar mistakes are constantly corrected by Alfred:

> "Why are you so late?"
>
> "I've forgot the time"
>
> "Forgotten, forgotten. Don't go back to that kind of language again. Come, put the light out." (101)

When their daughter Marian was conceived, Alfred's strictness towards his wife was intensified, limiting her role as an educator of the child. This comes from a fear of Alfred, the belief that the more time the child would spend with the mother, the more likely she will turn to be more like her, a girl of a lower class speech and manner. He sets boundaries for how much Mrs. Yule can be a part of Marian's upbringing, and the majority of their insufficient money is spent on educating and sending the girl to school. Under Alfred's restrictions, Mrs. Yule took cautions around her child with affection but she was not to be trusted with her influence upon the child. For Mrs. Yule, the estrangement was cruel and the time was hardly enough for her to be with her child and "it can scarcely have been a light trial to her mother to know that contact with her was regarded as her child's greatest danger; but in her humility

and her love for Marian she offered no resistance" (94). However, being aware of her faults, she accepted the challenge of being distant to Marian. The alienation does not stop, however, when Marian grows up to be a sophisticated woman of fine manners, an ideal model of what Alfred Yule had wished. Marian's intelligence gratifies Alfred, but because her skills do so, their conversation on literary texts and outings alienates Mrs. Yule even more. The family's rule of Mrs. Yule's remoteness can be explained by the "distinction that ultimately marginalized or excluded other social groups, most notably the lower class, from participation in civil society" (Leaver 445). This distinction is also displayed in beginning of the book, when Jasper Milvain makes acquaintance with Alfred and Marian Yule for the first time in Wattleborough, where the two visit on a vacation without Mrs. Yule. When Jasper speaks of his meeting with the Yules, the question of Mrs. Yule comes up and Jasper's sister Dora shares what she knows of the mother, "Miss Harrow knows nothing about her, except that she was a quite uneducated girl" (Gissing 38). Dora's information establishes that other residents from different neighborhoods are also aware of Mrs. Yule's lower class. The Yule brothers have a hard time understanding Alfred's choices and they continue to disagree on, along with many other subjects, his marriage. John and Edmund's point is made by mentioning Alfred's potential of a better social standing if he would have waited.

Nevertheless, it became a different matter when the family started to rebuke Mrs. Yule. The disagreement of his choice of a partner from his family irritated him, but he takes most offence when his brothers' wives devalue Mrs. Alfred Yule and "as soon as anyone else treated her with disrespect that was quite another matter. Purely on this account he quarreled violently with his brother's widow [Mrs. Edmund Yule], and from that day the two families kept apart" (Gissing 95) and as a consequence of their inter-class marriage, a detachment between families ties takes place.

The conflict between families does not help Alfred Yule's career. His confidence drops which also negatively affects his chances to succeed. The family contention makes him reflect on where he is situated in his literary career. The criticism brings Alfred to his awareness of how much he has failed to pick a lower class wife, and then he begins to pity himself for his underachievement. To Marian, whom he feels most connected to in his home, Alfred confesses his troubles, on the night that he receives the news of the new dictatorial chair of the literary magazine, *The Study.* The news of the new chair, a young gentleman from the country, disappoints him terribly as he hears rumors and expects himself to be asked. That night, Alfred speaks to his daughter:

> When you think of my failures – and you must often do so now you are grown up and understand things – don't forget the obstacles that have been in my way. I don't like to look upon your father as a thickhead who couldn't be expected to succeed. Look at Fadge. He married a woman of good social position; she brought him friends and influence. (Gissing105)

In his conversation to Marian, a hint of Alfred's insecurity as a father is detected. He is self-conscious of what he is unable to accomplish at his age, as a father and the major source of income for his family. Alfred's identity is shaken as his works are denied from the reading community and his family discredits his partner in marriage. His life decisions in marriage and writing career are not accepted and disproved by other editors or family members. According to Tosh, Alfred's outlet of disappointment can be seen as his disturbance of his sense of masculinity. "Full acceptance as a man in society depended on manifestly possessing the independence and the resources to be a household head. What had always been a key qualification for adult masculinity became if anything more absolute during the nineteenth century" (82). For Alfred, he was not able to provide the resources even as a husband when he married Mrs. Yule. If the possession of goods is the qualification of masculinity, then he

failed from the start of his married life. What is interesting is that in despair, Alfred blames his wife for his current ambiguous position in his literary career. His refusal to reflect back on his own flaws is another sign of his insecurity, placing the blame on others and justifying his identity rather than accepting his failure. Despite his contentment with his attained nourishment, Alfred's attitude changes vastly as he turns against his wife by starting "to see only the disadvantages of his position, and, forgetting the facts of the case, to imagine that he might well have waited for a wife who could share his intellectual existence" (Gissing 94). Mrs. Yule, with her amenable qualities, tries very hard to understand her husband. Given his situation where he is old and without recognition, she pities him too, as Gissing narrates Alfred as "such men as he – poor, and without social recommendations" (104). However, reflecting back to Alfred's argument for bringing civilization with the help of literature, his insecurity and inequality can be explained by Freud as a consequence of civilization, "What makes itself felt in a human community as a desire for freedom may be their revolt against some existing injustice, and so may prove favorable to a further development of civilization" (72). Conscious of how the society reviews him, Alfred wants to be free of what is labeled as a failure.

However, Alfred's lack of achievement does point to factual evidence. He is not getting any younger and his name is certainly not gaining any more fame. After years of trying, his living situation does not improve, and he is fifty living in an average neighborhood, making just enough to not to worry about covering basic essentials, "but there was no disguising from himself that his life had been a failure. And the thought tormented him" (Gissing 96). His circumstances, even with a fair income to support his family, is not comparable with what he had planned of achieving. By his terms, success was to become an acclaimed writer delivering valuable lessons through his works with the benefit of power and respect from his magazine and readers. His wish to become the editor of *The Study* describes

what he longs for in a career breakthrough. The literary magazine itself is not of the highest value, but Alfred's attachment to the position holds a different worth, "The delight of having his own organ once more, of making himself a power in the world of letters, of emphasizing to a large audience his developed methods of criticism!" (97). Alfred's ambition is shows that it is not the money he looks for in a career, but it is the rare opportunity to be in a position of power with the excitement of critiquing and making contribution to literature.

However, there is another feature of editing a magazine that appeals to Alfred, to lambaste his contender, Clement Fadge. Their relationship traces back to when Alfred was the editor of *The Balance*. The magazine was earnest for success, but was having a hard time sustaining the readers. Fadge was the reviewer of the magazine, on cordial terms with Alfred. However, as soon as he was able to realize that there were no prospects in *The Balance,* Fadge decided to take side of another well-established paper that maliciously judged Alfred Yule and all his works. Leaving *The Balance,* Fadge was also offered to critique Alfred's new essay, which he took the opportunity to viciously harangue him for publicity. Despite the attempt to get back at Fadge with an article on *The Balance,* Alfred's endeavor just brought more attention to his humiliation. Defeated, *The Balance* disappeared, along with Alfred's reputation while on the other hand, fame and glory came to Fadge. Hence, when Alfred imagines his next possible editorship of *The Study,* he envisions the possibility of disparaging Fadge with his new position of power. Gissing's illustration of Alfred is a bad tempted man, still caught up in past failures, as he thinks "how the gossip column can be used for hostile purposes, yet without the least overt offence, he had learnt only too well" (97). Gissing depicts Alfred Yule as a selfish and vile character, holding a grudge to a coworker's betrayal. Fadge on the other hand, whose behavior was immoral, succeeds with a renowned name that is mentioned multiple times by other writers by being practical and taking advantage of an opportunity. Here, Gissing's understanding of success in publishing is displayed. He shines

light on Clement Fadge, who associates himself with editors of different magazines and is conscious and practical with his publications. Although Fadge does not appear in any direct scenes of the book, he is spoken of by other members of the community, often praised for his work even when his magazine makes errors. On the other hand, Alfred, who sacrifices his time and efforts to make his writing to teach and spread civilization is often betrayed and is used by others for publicity.

Alfred's bitterness brings attention to his personality and character, and the presence of his supporters. Unlike Fadge, he does not have many social ties that helps him succeed. He is often ridiculed by writers in the literary field, and even Jasper, who is a beginner in the writing field, and is very pragmatic does not see value in his encounter with Alfred. In the book, Alfred is a man of strong emotions. When he shares his words of literary works and standing, he speaks of Fadge with strong opinions and defines him as "the most malicious man in the literary world. There's no uncharitableness in feeling a certain pleasure when he gets into a scrape" (Gissing 26) which actually plays a part in driving other possible relationships away from Alfred. After their conversation, Jasper says to his mother, "Whether he could be any use to me or not, I don't exactly know" (39) but in the end, he decides to start working for Fadge instead. Alfred's angry and bitter temperament drives people away from him when he needs supporters of his writing. According to Jasper's terms, "Men won't succeed in literature that they may get into society, but will get into society that they may succeed in literature" (29) and Alfred is not practical in choosing friends that can help him.

The problem is, Alfred's personality is actually turning away opportunities, such as publishers and magazine editors who he needs to help him to reach his goal. They have the power to increase the value to his work and receive positive reviews but Alfred makes it difficult for himself as his temperament is reported as an adversity by Gissing as, "his difficult temper, and an ever-increasing sense of neglected merit, frequently put him at war

with publishers, editors, fellow authors, and he had an unhappy trick of exciting the hostility of men who were most likely to be useful to him" (Gissing 95). Alfred holds pride in his work, and started writing in hopes of achieving and becoming a writer of name, but when he fails, his sense of inferiority seems to aggravate his feelings against others. Alfred's reason for acting in a twisted state of emotions can be applied to Freud's frame of neurosis:

> . . . a person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the amount of frustration which society imposes on him in the service of cultural ideals and it was inferred from this that the abolition or reduction those demands would result in a return to possibilities of happiness. (59)

Alfred's frustration on how he has achieved so little at the age of fifty, put him into social pressure of failure. His temperament is his outlet for his misery, as a relief from the tension built upon him as a veteran writer.

Alfred's frustration extends to his family, his wife and even Marian. Although his temper and lack of helpful colleagues are a part of the reason why his career went astray, he still loses his temper with his closest people. On one instance, a family acquaintance of Mrs. Yule visits Yule's household with a complaint concerning Mrs. Yule's niece, Annie, who works as a servant of the visitor, Mrs. Goby. She demands to speak with the man of the house when Mrs. Yule is not present. Uncomfortable with encounters of the lower class and his in-law's, Alfred is "driven to frenzy by the mention of his wife's humble family" (Gissing 279). As Alfred already believes that his wife's lower class is to be blamed for his lack of success in his career, even brief encounters with her family is considered as an insult. He thinks she ruined his chances in success and is partly responsible for his downfall and Alfred targets his anger towards her. Gissing illustrates Alfred's change of attitude towards his wife, "often suffering from bilious headache of extreme violence, her husband now and then lost all control of his tempter, all sense of kind feeling, even decency, and reproached the poor

woman with her ignorance, her stupidity, her low origin" (94). So when Mrs. Goby visits, yelling and accusing Alfred for the faults of Annie, in an ill-mannered and uncivil tone of her class, Alfred's blood starts to boil. Mrs. Yule is familiar with Alfred's temper and her state of nervousness anticipating her husband's anger is described as "the sick, faint dread always excited by her husband's wrath" (280). The result of his temper outlets take affects Mrs. Yule the most, when he blames her for his failure. The kind nature of Mrs. Yule endures him, but shec breaks when he loses his livid temper on her. She also tells Marian of her troubles:

> "I can't bear with it, Marian. He tells me that I'm the curse of his life – yes, he said that. I oughtn't tell you, I know I oughtn't; but it's more than I can bear. I 've tried to do my best, but it gets harder and harder for me. But for me he'd never be in these bad tempers; it's because he can't look at me without getting angry. He says I've kept him back all through he life; but for me he might have been far better off than he is. It may be true; I've often enough thought it" (281-282)

Here, Mrs. Yule shows how Alfred expresses his accusation of his failings as her responsibility, even in cases when it is clear that Mrs. Yule has good intentions to try and help her family by recommending her niece to an employer. However, the slight association with his family in-law enrages Alfred as a reminder of how underachieved he is. The evident strain on her mother encourages Marian to confront her father, to which Mr. Yule admits his impatience but rationalizes his outburst with his place in life. He says to her, "I am too old to reform. Life has made me what I am, and I should have thought that your knowledge of what my life has been would have gone far to excuse a lack of cheerfulness in me" (285). His justification points to his self-pity, and in spite of Marian's effort to change Alfred's attitude, he strongly asserts without any signs of repentance that it is a natural result of his difficult situations. He also tells Marian, "If you wish me to admit that I am bad-tempered, surly, irritable – I make no difficulty about that. The charge is true enough. I can only ask you

again: What are the circumstances that have ruined my temper" (285). For Alfred, anger is the result of his unfair circumstances and it becomes his defense strategy, an outlet to express his frustration. On the subject of anger, the social context of Victorians' understanding of it is a "necessary to men to give them a useful edge in the sphere of business and politics. Men were expected to control their anger but were also seen as wimpish if they never became angry" (Kemp and Strongman 410). As Alfred struggles to keep his pride and dignity from his failure of writing, his expression of frustration and anger becomes his source of power in the domestic setting as well as in the publishing industry.

There are however, contacts that Alfred keeps, such as Mr. Hinks, Mr. Gorbutts, and Mr. Christopherson. The group has a common characteristic and are identified by Gissing as a "well-defined category of men with unpresentable wives" (102). The men are all engaged in the literary field, whether their focus is poetry or journalism, and shares similar aspiration as Alfred, to become renowned writers. When he invites them for occasional meetings, they often praise Alfred for his comparative advancement in career. Alfred enjoys being the authority figure and being looked up to, but the topic of conversation ultimately comes back to their weaknesses and failures in their careers. Gissing's word on their prospects are narrated as:

> These men were capable of better things than they had done or would ever do; in each case their failure to fulfill youthful promise was largely explained by the unpresentable wife. They should have waited; they might have married social equal at something between fifty and sixty. (103)

Gissing's demonstration of Alfred's friends exemplifies their outcome of impulsive choice of early marriage: reduced class and failure. Conscious of his demerits, the evening only emphasizes Alfred's depressing situation and after their gathering, he stays miserable for days.

Despite his recognition of failure, Alfred makes his living by writing his academic essays. Alfred takes notice of Marian, his daughter who grows up to be an educated and intelligent woman with an insight for writing, and uses her skills as "at the age of twelve she was already able to give her father some assistance as an amanuensis" (Gissing 95). Since then, Marian continues to help her father by reading, writing and editing his pieces that Alfred signs with his name before publication. Alfred develops a dependence on Marian and her writing ability as if her writing is his own. Despite his personal efforts, he realizes that his writing cannot excel as Marian's. With her help, Alfred continues to publish but he faces a conflict as he does not allow Marian signing her name of her own writing by taking the credit of her work. His attitude towards his close family is again highlighted, even bringing light to Alfred's priorities of domestic life and his career. From notes of different edition of *New Grub Street,* Stephen Arata implies, "Yule's productivity depends on the mechanical soul-destroying labor of his daughter. The tradition of human letters he ill-temperedly represents is built upon the back of that labor" (34). Overall, Alfred's poor writing skill, temper, disconnections, and his unwillingness to change are all bound together as impediments to his success. In continuous conflict with himself from his past decisions to marry and make unprofitable choices, Gissing represents Alfred's career as a futile reconciliation of art and commerce.

Chapter III: Edwin Reardon

Edwin Reardon, like Alfred, comes from an affluent middle class household, with a photographer father. Reardon was educated well at a local school, in which he excelled in classics and French. However, the practicality of his talents was limited, only to be used in an office setting labor. An only child and orphaned at the age of nineteen, Reardon inherits two-hundred pounds from his father to move to London, as his mother wished, in hopes of achieving a greater fortune (Gissing 57). Influenced by his artistic father and his middle class mother who aspired to be a part of the intellectual community, Edwin starts his journey in London to become a literary man. Living solely on the inherited capital and engrossed in literature, Edwin buys books and attempts to try his hand at writing. However, without any acquaintances and possible help from other writers or publishers, he soon suffers without any fruitful results. With his capital running low and no progress in writing, Reardon tastes his first spoon of bitter poverty. He tries to sell his possessions but with trifle improvement to his financial status, he pursues a different path as a wage earner and become a bank clerk under Mr. Carter. Relieved from trouble of buying necessities of day-to-day life, Edwin tries again at his hand in writing and publishes two fiction books with multiple volumes. Just as he starts his third literary work, he inherits four hundred pounds from his grandfather and the availability of the capital tempts Edwin to quit his job, to solely dedicate his time with his long literary dream. With the spare time and money, Edwin also begins to take part in a small society with Mr. Carter and Mr. John Yule. As he returns to his writing, he finishes his third book, *On Neutral Ground.* His publications bring more acquaintances during which Reardon meets, his future wife, Amy Yule. Through Edwin Reardon, Gissing takes the readers on a journey to show what future can be expected of a poor writer who rushes into a middle class marriage. The shortage of capital brings as Jasper Milvain later argues as “roots of all social ill” such as low self-regard, sickness, and disruptions in relationships while the availability of

capital brings sympathy and resolutions to the prior problems.

Amy, is the daughter of Edmund and the niece of Alfred Yule. Nevertheless the correspondence between the Yules are told to be sparse due to Mrs. Edmund Yule's insulting attitude towards Mrs. Alfred Yule and the family is known to keep at a distance since. Mrs. Edmund Yule, being used to making luxurious expenses from her husband's income, continues to indulge herself in pretentiousness and puts great effort to conceal her squalid domestic reality after becoming a widow in fear of her friends' perception of her family (Gissing 235). To some degree, Amy is influenced by how her mother behaves around money and reputation. When introduced to Edwin Reardon, however, she looks for a class, a future engagement in an intellectual community rather than his money. On the other hand, Reardon falls in love with Amy almost immediately infatuated with her beauty. Confident after hearing Amy's love confessions, Edwin proposed and within ten weeks, they were married. Though pursued before by many men, Amy rejected them because she seeks for an increase her status and access to intelligentsia. By marrying Reardon, the artist, she hopes learn from him about literature and also to experience an elevation of class.

Despite his triumph of attaining requited love, Edwin begins to worry about his career and poverty that is to strike not only himself but also Amy, now as a family. He knows what misery poverty brings, as he experienced it once before when he moved to London alone. Gissing is aware of the damage caused by poverty and precipitates the upcoming doom by stating "He knew what poverty means. The chilling of brain and heart, the unnerving of the hands, the slow gathering about one of fear and shame and impotent wrath, the dread feeling of helplessness, of the world's base indifference" (66). Gissing implies that poverty is not a status, but becomes a part of their physical condition and identity. The night before his wedding, Reardon instinctively fears what is to come, as he realizes that his married life depends on his labor to bring capital to his household. The struggling writer must now be

responsible to bring the bread to the household and Gissing shows that poverty harms characters' self-esteem, relationships, and physical and mental health.

Poverty makes both Reardon and Amy self-conscious about their social roles. Regardless of the beautiful wife, who claims that she loves the literary man, Edwin Reardon struggles with his career, and expresses his incapability to write. He reflects back to the old times where he wrote spontaneously, flowing with ideas when "he had waited quietly until some suggestive situation, some group of congenial characters came with sudden delightfulness before his mind and urged him to write; but nothing so spontaneous could now be hoped for" (Gissing 68) but that was before he was married. Then, Reardon had his inherited money and spent his time traveling to Europe, in freedom of the financial value of his books. This is a key characteristic of Reardon. He writes carefully to satisfy his standards of what he approves of as art. His belief lies in the fact that he is a novelist, not a salesman striving to sell his books and make a profit from them. His style of writing is to satisfy his own ambition. However, the situation changes; Reardon is now married with a wife and a child to care for. His goal alters as his responsibilities expand into a domestic realm. Under different circumstances, from being a writer to a husband and a father to support the family's living, Reardon struggles to write as he did before. Now, he is stifled with making money for his family's expenses, and begins to spend his time working for his next book or selling his own possessions, including his own most prized books "with battered bindings, stained pages, supplanted editions. He loved his books, but there was something he loved more" (140). As he decides to give up his cherished belongings, Reardon is losing a part of himself as he learns to prioritize his family first. What is more, under the pressure of being the man of the household, he cannot get his thoughts together to write. While the money continues to run out, Amy grows impatient and the dire situation works against Reardon. Ultimately, his circumstances are worse than his life before his marriage, without any prospects of getting

better.

The reason for Reardon's hardship is related to his prior experiences with money and inherited capital. In a conversation with his friend, Jasper Milvain, Edwin admits his personality to be as "feeble and luxurious" and he cannot handle financial pressures (Gissing 78). As soon as he is under the burden to write and earn money, his career becomes a never-ending cycle that strains his energy than an expression of his intellect. Therefore, his work merely becomes an "endless circling, perpetual beginning, followed by frustration" (123) where he cannot rest. However, Reardon desperately keeps writing novels in multiple volumes to support his family but is only able to receive scarce sums of money. Despite his continuous efforts to write does not correspond with his income. He keeps writing to ensure his next paycheck and his creative thoughts and ideas becomes a "particular commodity, with whose bodily form the equivalent form is thus socially identified, now becomes money commodity, or serves as money" (Marx 80). However, Reardon despises to think of his writing as an object of the market and means for business and this method impedes him from writing. Instead, time becomes Reardon's enemy and he undergoes a "torture to his mind was the chiming and striking of clocks" (Gissing 121). He is constantly reminded of the money that is running out despite his labor. Amy tries to manage the money as economically as she can but in a family with a growing baby in a garret with a season's rent, the family struggles with their financial circumstances.

Due to poverty, Amy and Edwin's differences in needs reach its peak and they struggle with two different domestic roles. As he fails to write, Reardon begins to doubt his paternal authority. Tosh elaborates the hardship of the father and the significance behind a child addition to a family as "a moment when awareness of a father's material responsibility was particularly intense. But that sense was integral to the whole experience of fatherhood" (82). It is clear that tension Reardon feels does not just apply to his insecurity in writing but

also in his financial responsibility as a father. Gissing places Reardon in a vicious cycle where he constantly compares himself before he was married, free of financial difficulties and domestic duties.

Amy talks to her husband, in attempt to help him write and earn capital. Amy is practical and she tells him to write in a style that will sell rather than to write for an artistic value. However, Edwin detests to think about the market where the norm is to put a price on his creations. He exclaims, “To make a trade of an art! I am rightly served for attempting such a brutal folly” (Gissing51). Reardon thinks it is degrading to prioritize the monetary value over the artistic value and he admits his weakness at trading. Frederick Engels gives an account of the trading rules in the market, “the attribute of labour force, if he takes it into his head that he need not allow himself to be sold and bought in the market, as the commodity ‘Labour’ the bourgeois reason comes to a standstill” (237). Likewise, as Reardon does not understand the need to take his readership into consideration in order to make money, and be a part of the labor force, there is not much anyone else can do to help him. In this case, the bourgeois are the publishers and the reviewers and they cannot help him add values, when there is such a poor readership and he does not allow himself to be sold. Amy tries to bring back the reality of their situation by telling her husband “You can’t afford to hate it. However, it was before, you must write for the market now” (Gissing 49). Amy’s sharp observation brings the couple’s focus on their poverty indicating that Reardon’s writing style could be spared if they had the money, but in order to sustain themselves, the writer cannot bear to lose any chances. In reference to Marx, he explains the concept of Use-Value and the difference between the recipients:

> His commodity possesses for himself no immediate use-value. Otherwise, he would not bring it to the market. It has use-value for others; but for himself its only direct use-value is that of being a depository of exchange value, and consequently, a means

> of exchange. Therefore, he makes up his mind to part with it for commodities whose value in use is of service to him. All commodities are non-use-values for their owners, and use-values for their non-owners. Consequently, they must all change hands. But this change of hands is what constitutes their exchange, and the latter puts them in relation with each other as values, and realizes them as values. Hence commodities must be realized as values before they can be realized as use-values. (97)

Therefore, it can be seen that Reardon's books, which should have Use-Value to the readers, it is the opposite. They may hold some literary value to Reardon as he carefully crafts his writing, but in fact his efforts goes unnoticed without any rewards. So when Amy tries to advise her husband to practice trade and sell his writing, she is actually telling him to consider the value that could be coming from his readers.

Reardon is self-conscious by Amy's influence, and he tries hard to please her but at the same time he is overwhelmed by his duties as a novelist, a husband, and a father that he begins to believe his writing is no good, and no longer carries any kind of value. Reardon repeatedly begins with a new book with a new topic, but he fails to finish it and when he does, he is terrified of how it will be received and hates it. At last, Reardon comes to believe that he is left with no power and has failed as a writer (Gissing 54). But Gissing places Reardon in a position where he has no choice but to keep writing. Despite his decrease in self-confidence, Reardon's domestic duties do not change. Edwin's fear reflects in his writing as he becomes sure that he cannot produce anything profitable as he asserts that his efforts no longer have any value (51). It is worse as he continues to write, hating the outcome of his time and effort and convinced that his novels are not good enough for the public. As his reviews are printed, Reardon stays determined not to read them, and asks Amy to do the same. Here, Reardon's behavior can be explained as his attempt to maintain his pride as a

husband and as a writer. He depends on Amy for keeping his pride as a husband and asks her to neglect any review that may come from his book. Regardless, in poverty Reardon's efforts to maintain his duties all seem to fail. With Reardon's lack of confidence, there is no solution. Even when Jasper tries to promotes his friend's books by mentioning it in *The Current*, Reardon refuses (162). He keeps to himself, and refuses showing a copy of his book to Amy before it is published. He is scared of what others will think of him as his books become the source of his insecurity and shame. Like Amy, Jasper tells his friend that his book and trade are two different matters when trading them as a business (162). However, Reardon avoids taking the opportunities as he believes his work carries no value and thinks bringing attention to it will only shine light to his failure. When Reardon's *Margret's Home* is offered seventy-five pounds, he accepts it convinced that no other place would provide him more. Regardless, whenever he is paid no matter how small the money is, Reardon expresses relief with "Blessed money! Root of all good" (155). As Engels explains, this instant relief is an example of the working class, "Their sole happiness is derived from gaining a quick profit. They feel pain only if they suffer a financial loss" (188) although Reardon was not an industrial worker, his conditions of labor, being under constant need to earn money and working extended hours of labor without payment, indicates that his labor and status is interpreted to be those of the working class. However, even with his payment, his relief was short and minimal, until he is under the duty to start another book. Reardon claims, "I think it's all over with me. I don't think I shall write any more" (49). The hardship of Edwin Reardon can be summed up by Gissing's words in the novel, "The world has no pity on a man who can't do or produce something it thinks worth money" (198). The market has no sympathy for the writer's circumstances, and rather the burden lies on the artist to earn his pay as he can manage.

Amy also begins to show her self-consciousness behavior as the money slowly runs

out. She married Edwin Reardon seeking to be a part of intelligentsia. Her mother, Mrs. Edmund Yule also held big expectations for Reardon and first name-drops her son-in-law and his books, hoping to attain some recognition. However, with no success, she stops for her own benefit to save herself from embarrassment (Gissing 237). Amy was raised being influenced by her mother, who is an active member of society and "lived only in the opinions of other people. What others would say was her ceaseless preoccupation" (241). However, Amy showed humble behavior in the beginning of her marriage by refusing to go on a honeymoon, and scarcely meeting her friends, determined to make herself and her husband succeed as the successful artist of the day. However, her social disposition becomes a sacrifice, as Reardon fails to sell his book for a large sum. What Amy is doing here is similar to how Reardon is trying to trade his writing for money. Amy is hoping to trade her social nature for her husband's success in his career. Amy ends up rejecting her friends' company when they invite her to engage in social gatherings in fear of showing her appearance as a wife of a struggling writer. She tells a dear friend, Edith Cater, "I don't think we shall ever be able to accept invitations in future" (137) with strong determination, but Amy's fear actually derives from the chance of Mrs. Carter finding out her impoverished situation. Hence, Amy has no choice but to refuse her friends because she cannot serve them back in her home. She prioritizes other's views than have them know the truth. Tosh gives an account of a housewife's duties, "a non-working wife, a complement of servants and a tastefully furnished house reserved for domestic pursuits might be more convincing demonstration of class status than a man's business or profession. There is a sense in which the bourgeois wife existed to show off her husband's capacity to keep her in leisure and luxury" (24). Amy, who comes from a family that likes to socialize and be pretentious, chooses to refrain herself from others than be honest to show her situation at home. She believes as Tosh explains, if she can manage to demonstrate and convince her surroundings that she is wealthy, she and Reardon

could still pass for middle class.

Reardon is aware of Amy's traits, her outgoing personality and the social class she belongs and he places the blame on his poor income for her restraints but he also believes that they can do without pretentiousness. The couple's difference is highlighted when each of them turn to their worries and the solutions. In opposition to Amy's concerns for what others think of her social position, Reardon's distress focuses around his domestic duties to secure the family's financial status. He worries that his earnings irritate Amy and she will leave him. One incident that brings the couple to face their contrasting priorities is when Reardon decides to borrow money from Mr. Carter the husband of Amy's friend, Edith after failing to receive an advance payment for his new book. When Amy finds out, she is outraged for his public declaration of their poverty. Her major concern revolves around how others will view her than Reardon's publications and his earnings. Another instance is when Reardon asks Amy to not read reviews. She tells her husband that she will comply but she is "sensitive to people's talk and opinions" (Gissing 129). Amy shares the same views when Reardon moving to a cheaper hosing in an outer district, in attempt to alleviate their situation in poverty. Nonetheless, Amy coldly replies, "Think what it means, to give up our home and position… That is an open confession to failure" (55). Amy prioritizes appearance to assistance in poverty. It is ironical that Amy is not practical with their poverty and instead asks Reardon to be pragmatic about selling his writings.

Amy's strong-willed decision to not moving can be elaborated as how Victorians think of their homes as an extension of their identity:

> In Victorian England, on the other hand, moving house was one of the surest signs of moving 'up' (or 'down'). Detached from the place of business, the home was free to become a finely tuned and flexible indictor of social status. A change of aspiration or income was quickly reflected in a better address; and over-ambitious move would be

short-lived, resulting in a compensating move ‘down. (Tosh 25)

Although Amy did not have the resource to furnish her home with luxuries, her last piece of pride is to keep by living in the same residence. Their garret has a sitting room, a bedroom and a kitchen which is also used for cooking, dining, and greeting guests. Their home is small and requires people to move rooms for space (Gissing 45). However, Amy shows satisfaction living in the same building as a successful musician downstairs whose carriage arrives every day and with other “gentlefolk” tenants (45). Struggles to pay rent does not show on her face, but the possible alternative to move to a different area would and therefore moving is out of the question for Amy. The study, the front room of the garret, is where Reardon writes but when not present, is where Amy chooses to sit and read. However, when Amy is alone, Gissing gives honest illustrations of her. Amy picks up a new literary volume without any intentions of reading it and turns to the gossip columns (68). This behavior contradicts Amy’s pursuit of intelligence when she decides to marry Reardon, and the change of her character is fascinating to navigate.

What happens after Amy’s marriage to cause such a drastic change in her character? Poverty strikes the couple from the beginning of their marriage which causes Amy to sacrifices her leisure activities and she also gives birth to her son, Willie. Amy loses a sense of herself and takes on new roles as she becomes a wife to Reardon and a mother to Willie at home. The maternal responsibility of Amy can be explained as:

> Childbirth came to be seen as the fulfilment of a woman’s femininity rather than a disruption to her performance of the duties of wife. This was one reason why the prestige of motherhood was on the increase, and it meant that the mother as the bearer of the child became the central figure, rather than the father as bearer of family name. Instead of being the master of ceremonies and focus of public attention, the father was on the way to becoming the nervous bystander of recent times. (Tosh

81)

As Gissing brings Willie into the scenes with Amy, her motherly tendencies are another aspect of Amy where she tries to fit into the same domestic realm as for middle class to confirm her maternal and feminine roles as a woman of class.

Unfortunately, due to Amy and Reardon's inner conflicts in poverty, the couple begins to turn against each other. Reardon anticipated poverty in his marriage even before he was married, but he fears of losing her because of it. As his literary career does not pick up and the capital runs low, Reardon begins to fear Amy does not love him anymore. Lack of financial ability grows into his fear for Amy's dissatisfaction of Reardon not being able to fulfill his duties as a husband. Having suffered loneliness as a beginning writer in London, Edwin's strength depends on Amy's voicing of her love. He relies on Amy's tenderness, wishing that she would talk to him, and offer him words of encouragement and sympathy, as what he calls, wife duties (Gissing 126). Tosh gives account of domestic duties in the patriarchal Victorian era:

> Husbands looked to a partner in life to whom they could pour out their anxieties, their doubts and their aspirations. Home was felt to be the only place where the vulnerability that lay behind the public mask of strength and imperturbability could be shared with someone else. The sympathetic ear and soothing tongue of the wife were regarded as much the most important dimension of the healing power of home. (Tosh 54)

Similarly, Reardon turns to Amy with his vulnerabilities but the couple do not speak of their situation outdoors, even to Amy's mother Mrs. Edmund Yule as Amy does not wish anyone to know. On the other hand, to Reardon, it is more than keeping his pride and it is more so about his ability as a husband to keep Amy as his wife. He does not care for reputation, and tells Amy to have the same attitude and as he is only conscious about how Amy thinks of him.

Hence, Reardon's sufferings come from his worry of losing Amy than living poorly. He repeatedly tells her "If only you will give me more sympathy, dearest. You see, that's one side of my weakness. I am utterly dependent upon you. Your kindness is the breath of life to me" (Gissing 52). However, as she is also suffering from frustrations of poverty, Amy delivers her concern, "But don't you think it's rather unmanly, this state of things? You say you love me, and I try to believe it. But whilst you are saying so, you let me get nearer and nearer to miserable, hateful poverty" (50). Here, it is interesting that Amy brings up gender roles. Just as Reardon had expected the supportive and subservient role of a wife, Amy brings light to what she expects from a husband and what it means to be a "man" in the domestic realm.

Amy's difficulties can be explained. Amy is a wife of a failing novelist who remains idealistic in his writing, where she tries to advise him to write in a different and practical manner. Her action of giving advice is abnormal in the Victorian era as women would have no authority in family decisions. However, due to Reardon's incapability he is an example of how, "representations of suffering men upset the balance of a patriarchal order dependent upon masculine strength" (Guest 638). Amy's interjection to Reardon's career, easily represents how the harmony of their home has been disrupted. Since there is no enhancement to Reardon's career, especially as he detests his writing and refuses to receive help from his fellow writers like Jasper, Amy tries to plan for him. Regardless of her efforts to help, Reardon refuses to listen, and only asks for kinder words of encouragement. Reardon likes to think that Amy is the one person that he can rely on. He does not care for the opinion of others, but Amy's trust matters to him. So to even think about Amy's criticism or the chance of her leaving breaks him as "Amy's anticipation of criticism had made it harder than ever for him to labour at what he knew to be bad" (Gissing 130). As Tosh mentions in his article, the expectations of the wife do not seem unusual, as the patriarchic society in the Victorian era seems to speak for the majority of married couples.

> When the husband returned from work, the wife must be all attention to lighten his load and calm his spirit, and she must present a demeanor of 'cheerful complacency'; but this was not the cue for her to bring up her domestic worries, which could only disturb his hard-gained repose. The need of her husband took priority. The wife's obligation to minister to them was the quid pro quo for the material sustenance and protection she received from him. (54)

Reardon expects Amy's submission to him, as he is entitled as her husband. However, from Amy's side of the argument, "What justified this subordination was the protection and material support supplied by the husband" (62). Reardon sees that he cannot make enough to support them, which does not qualify him to expect and be entitled to Amy's subservience to him, or be the head of the house. In fact, his insecurities and pressure of being the bread-winner turns into resentment and backfires. He begins to believe that the poverty turns her away from him as "Upon him, too, penury had its debasing effect; as he now presented himself he was not a man to be admired or loved" (Gissing 223). He begins to questions whether he is worthy of love, and whether Amy still loves him and just like his books, his insecurities are reflected onto Amy. His constant need to be reassured by Amy's love is explained by a psychological condition as "nervous people are forever demanding 'the sympathy and attention of others to the narration of their own sufferings' describes an act of speech" (Logan 16). Despite his downfall and inability to make capital, Reardon still needs to be sympathized and be recognized as the provider for the family.

Another nervous symptom of Reardon is his accusations of Amy of being unfaithful. As he doubts that Amy still loves him, his suspicion heightens as his friend Japer, contributor to *The Study* is frequently brought to their attention in conversations. As time passes, Reardon is convinced that Amy has lost her attraction for him for he is not successful. He decides to take it out on Amy by picking faults at her duties as a wife. "Your love hasn't stood the test as

it should have done. You have given me no help; besides the burden of cheerless work I have had to bear that of your growing coldness. I can't remember one instance when you have spoken to me as a wife might – a wife who was something more than a man's housekeeper" (Gissing 192). Reardon calls out Amy's faults, and accuses of her relationship with others people in fear that she is revealing his failures as her cause of misery. All of these accusations are a reflection of Reardon's fears and insecurities. However, despite his statement, his source of anger traces back to his built-up frustration and resentment towards himself. As he addresses them to Amy "They consoled him under the humiliating sense of his weakness, and yet he watched with dread his wife's countenance as she listened to him" (193). As Reardon admits he has never spoken to Amy in such a way before, and always treated her with most respect and love, this sudden articulation of his angry complaints can also be explained as a symptom of a nervous condition. "A nervous condition impedes most actions, but it enables the act of speech. The type of speech it generates is remarkable, too, in its specificity" (Logan 17). A radical accusation delivered in his rare aggressive tone on Amy's specific duty connects very well with the nervous temperament. His harsh accusations made at Amy can be an illustration of Reardon's last dignity to lash out in effort to hold onto his power as the father and husband of the house. This behavior is very similar to the temper of Alfred Yule when he starts to take out his frustration towards his family when he starts to realize and believe his failure in his career are due to his wife's lower class.

Unlike Alfred where Mrs. Yule tolerates his temper, Reardon's discussion does not pan out as he wishes. Instead of submission, Amy refutes his accusations. She furiously counter argues him by pointing out Reardon's duties, "You have much to endure, I know that, but it's no reason why you should turn against me. I have never neglected my duty. Is the duty all on my side?" (Gissing194). Amy brings attention to Reardon's duties to consider both sides of the situation. As the argument continues, however, Gissing does not offer a

resolution to their dispute. The couple are left without any changes to their circumstances, but with hurt feelings, damaged trust and disbelief at their heated fight against each other. Poverty, “the roots to all social ill” (32) brings uncertainty and worst of people, and Gissing confirms that there is no taking the upper hand in poverty and there is no control to seize. Rather, capital is the only power that exists, and they are no choices but to submit to it.

After their fight, Amy takes authority and suggests a vacation writing plan for Reardon. She urges Reardon to go away to the countryside to regain his health and write without any distractions, in hopes of Reardon completing a new best-selling book. Surprised by Amy’s quick devise of plans, Reardon’s fear of losing Amy intensifies. He urges that Amy comes with him, but she answers, “We shouldn’t have enough money” (Gissing 196). However, as Amy illustrates the plan, it is clear that her focus is for Reardon to avoid becoming a public failure. He is to write, but in a different environment and in a different style. Despite Reardon’s confession of his inability to keep writing, she is convinced that a change of location and atmosphere will solve their problems. She cannot bear to live in poverty, and rather than owning up to it, she sends Reardon away, to be responsible of earning money than listening to what he really needs. She is afraid of her husband becoming an “ordinary man” (196) and begs him to save her from poverty, which brings out the worst of her. After Amy’s sweet words of persuasion, Reardon decides to follow her plan hoping to make Amy happy. After their fight, Gissing gives illustrations of what it means to possess capital as the couple walk together and observe people on horses and living in luxurious houses in their neighborhood. “They don’t belong to the same world as we poor wretches. They see everything in a different light; they have powers which would seem supernatural if we were suddenly endowed with them” (199). Here, the couple takes a moment to understand the true meaning of capital, and how it affects their identities as they wish to be one of them. Capital is not just a possession of wealth, but also an indicator of their identity. As Engel

confirms, “money determines the worth of the man; he is ‘worth ten thousand pounds’ He who has money is of ‘the better sort of people’ is ‘influential’ and what he does counts for something in his social life” (237) and with the luxurious possessions they see in front of wealthy figures, they wish they could be worth more, and be a part of their community, whether it means to be loved truly or to be able to be considered as elegant and high class.

However, as the day gets closes to the date of his leave for the writing holiday, Reardon is very distressed just as he was before his marriage, only Amy’s writing plan has a bigger stake as he fears he will lose Amy for good. “You are very anxious to get rid of me” (Gissing 204) Reardon makes the remark as Amy gets excited for his leave. Amy, on the other hand, looks forward to what his vacation will bring, with great expectations Reardon’s achievements. To Reardon however, her excitement is what he sees as her growing joy of his absences. His health continues to suffer, and his self-hatred gets worse, willingly wanting his papers to be rejected (207) and even, as confesses to Biffen, his wish to die than follow Amy’s plan. His accusations of Amy also aggravate and when he is told that Amy was seen with Jasper (220). His “a dark fear” magnifies as he knows that she is attracted to Jasper’s successful advancement in his career when on the contrary, he knows that he is a failure. All in all, Reardon makes the decision to reject Amy’s summer plan and jumps at the chance when Mr. Carter talks about a clerkship opportunity at his bank.

“Will you give me the place?” (Gissing 226) Reardon eagerly asks Mr. Carter and happily agrees to start work right away. He feels fulfilled by thinking of the change. He is glad that he is released from the pressures of writing and he can work in a completely different setting with a time-wage job near Amy. He takes pleasure in taking responsibility, being able to control his situation. When he tells Amy, he suggests a new plan. They will move to cheaper neighborhood, where they can save money by leaving all the pretentiousness. All these changes comes from his major concern, “Anything was to be

chosen rather than a parting form you on false pretenses, a ridiculous affectation of hope where there was no hope" (230). Reardon is still willing to make the money to support his family with his new job without any reputation. However Amy refuses, declaring that she is not a wife of a clerk. Reardon does not care for the position of the job, as long as he can fulfill his duties to make money and support his family. He knows he has failed as a novelist, but he fears that he has failed as a husband. He hopes Amy is able to accept him as he is, now as a clerk without any grandiosity. In the end when Amy refuses to change her opinion, Reardon confirms, "I can't stultify myself to please you" (233) which brings Reardon to face the result of what Gissing calls, "the world's greatest prize – a woman's love – but he could not retain it because his pockets were empty" (223). Gissing is illustrating Reardon's poverty overwhelming every other aspect of his life. Reardon tries repeatedly to save his family. But he fails miserably because he physically cannot endure the overwhelming adversity of poverty. Gissing is showing that Reardon should not have to be in this position, and his situation would be easier on his own. Reardon's mistake of marrying so young and poor proves Gissing's "Love is one of the first things to be frightened away by poverty" (256) as it does for the young couple, Reardon and Amy who separate with different plans for their future.

Poverty also becomes one of the main source of Edwin Reardon's illness. The pressure of surviving in poverty, and the consciousness of maintaining his family together as the father and the husband, brings Edwin down to his knees to suffering. Talking to his friend, Jasper who is pragmatic and driven by the power of money, speaks to him with words of encouragement trying to bring Edwin to write:

> "It strikes me as extraordinary. In your position I should work as I never had done before."
>
> "Because you are the kind of man who is roused by necessity. I am overcome by it."

(Gissing 78)

Jasper and Reardon's conversation brings light into what poverty does, not to the economic status of a household, but to the physical condition of the person. As Peter Melville Logan offers his interpretation of the body and poverty, "Conditions endemic to poverty, such as starvations and exhaustion, pose a danger, he acknowledges, but one that does not compare in significance to the infinitely more dangerous disease of wealth" (19). Reardon, having experienced the fortunate conditions of life when he inherited capital twice, this prestige of having money made him more susceptible to suffering in poverty. Reardon inherited money during his literary career (once by his father and next by his grandfather) and did not have to earn his own. Therefore, he does not know how to write to manage his living. So, here Gissing illustrates Reardon under his first difficulty of money not just for himself but responsible for a family of three. Being put under this pressure, he struggles with his lack of confidence and nervous condition. His friend, Jasper concludes by saying "Reardon, is that you are simply ill" (Gissing 78).

Reardon's illness first begins to impact his physical appearance. It displays on his complexion and his sleeping patterns. In fact, the torment affects him more when he tries to control his situation. Whenever he tries to write, Reardon suddenly fails to understand the concept of time as he fails to compose a single sentence throughout the day. The repressed energy begins to show in the physical appearance as Gissing describes Reardon as:

> He looked something older than his year, which were two and thirty; on his face was the pallor of mental suffering. Often he fell into a fit of absence, and gazed at vacancy with wide miserable eyes. Returning to his consciousness, he fidgeted nervously on his chair, dipped his pen for the hundredth time, bent forward in feverish determination to work. Useless; he scarcely knew what he wished to put into words, and his brain refused to construct the simplest sentence. (47)

Attempting to write well, but constantly under the pressure to sell, writing becomes a tormenting task that does not end. The fact is; Reardon turns into a machine where he cannot rest because of the demand for money. Amy and Reardon's state of living is described by Gissing as, "lived in dread of the pettiest casual expense" (190). Even after earning money, Reardon worries about not making enough, and drives him to try make more by starting another book, with no time to rest. A part of his physical illness is due to having more people to financially responsible for. In addition to being a husband, he is a father, a year into his marriage. As Tosh adds, "Childbirth was therefore a moment when awareness of a father's material responsibility was particularly intense. But that sense was integral to the whole experience of fatherhood" (82). Since Reardon is the only source of financial support, his enjoyment from writing is turned into a forceful duty that makes him into a slave. Until finally, Reardon struggles with his duties, his everyday routines and even with his interactions with his family. Whytt explains Reardon's condition by contending that:

> . . . nervous diseases are by definition imitative of other diseases. As he conceives it, the nervous system touches all the organs of the body, so any disruption of the nerves affects the performances of one or more of the bodily organs. A nervous disorder might impair the function of the intestines and present itself to the outside observer as dyspepsia or constipation. Or it might appear in the lungs as congestion, in the heart as an elevated pulse, as typhus, or as delirium. (Logan 20)

Reardon also forgets how to rest, and seeks peace that is impossible to find in poverty. Being continuously put under the pressure, Reardon is chased by what he is supposed to achieve, and turns "illogical – one result of the moral weakness which was allied with his aesthetic sensibility. Putting aside the worthlessness of current reviewing, the critic of an isolated book has of course nothing to do with its author's state of mind and body any more than with the condition of his purse" (Gissing 206). Not being able to find the balance, he craves emotional

support from his wife, Amy as a nervous person would seek for attention. When he is unable to gain Amy's support, the irrational thoughts and nervous anxiety puts Reardon come to the conclusion that he would be better if he takes his own life. His hardship begins to spread beyond his presence, and soon others start to pick up on his misery, including Mr. Whelpdale who claims, "Ah but poor Reardon! He's the ghost of his old self. He can't live long" (272).

When Reardon refuses to accept Amy's writing plan and Amy refuses to accept his new job, the couple separates due to difference in goals. This is when Amy hears about her uncle, John Yule, who passes away leaving Amy an inheritance of ten thousand pounds. This money means a lot of possibilities at this point, as it influences both Amy and Reardon as a couple and as individuals. Gissing takes the readers to show how money changes the characters in how they regard themselves and others. However, the first change begins as the couple deals with the separation and before the capital is available to them.

After the separation, Amy and Reardon respectively find their answers to their predicaments. Reardon finds a job as a clerk at the bank offered by Mr. Carter. Reardon begins to earn money without having to use his brain power. Although he is in distress over Amy's absence, he fulfills his paternal role by sending half of his paycheck. Amy stays at her mother's home where she does not have to worry about immediate problems in the domestic setting. Taking the distance from the urgent necessities, and elevated from the troubles of poverty, both Reardon and Amy undergo changes. The two characters experience change in their personalities and their attitudes as they take a step away from poverty.

Money results in boost of confidence in both Reardon and Amy. With his new job as a bank clerk, despite the decrease in reputation, Reardon is promised with a stable salary every week. He gains control over his purchases when before, Amy managed family expenses. Without any pressure from his labor and being able to be honest with himself, Reardon encounters his spirit uplifting from his new position of power:

> Having brought himself to this admission, Reardon felt more at ease. To what purpose should he keep up transparent pretenses? It was manifestly his duty to earn as much money as he could, in whatever way. Let the man of letters be forgotten; he was seeking for remunerative employment, just as if he had never written before. (Gissing 259)

One of the first decision he makes is to choose to live in Islington, a different part of London, where Amy refused to consider living in. Due to changes in his living situation, he also gains confidence in his ability to support his family, an area Reardon feels he failed to fulfill when he was writing. With his new salary and by sending half of it to Amy, he is proud to be the responsible father figure. In a letter to Amy, he writes that by sending money "I must protect myself against anyone who would be likely to accuse me of not giving you what I could afford" (258). Here, Reardon explain his duty to keep supporting his family, however small, for his own benefit.

By separating with Amy, and in addition to his new job, Reardon also gains freedom. The first is the freedom to fail. Living with Amy, he did not have the time or the money to fail, for his family depended on his income. However, now that he lives alone, his troubles only concern himself. The scale of his success and the repercussions are entirely upon him and himself only. When he receives a rejection letter, he laughs it off as the pressure to succeed does not affect him anymore (Gissing 256). Without the tension from his family, Reardon's freedom to rest follows and he also finds peace within himself. Not being able to rest was one of the significant struggles, but he comes across the "relief" waking up alone in his garret the day after Amy moves out. This new sense of rest is in contrast to all the uneasiness and troubles that he surrounds him before Amy's leave. A sign of his restful mind continues to show in Reardon as a "restoration of youth" (258) as he begins to live alone, with a weekly salary, in a different district with his new sense of freedom. Gissing points that

Reardon is at his happiest single and with money. Reardon returns back the life he had before marriage, when he was single and had money. “A change had come over him; he was no longer rendered miserable by thoughts of Amy” (366). Without Amy, he gains the freedom to also dream, as he plans his future travels with Biffen to Europe. Leaving writing pressures behind, Edwin is also free to pursue different ambition, and he dreams to travel with the money he earns as a “wage earner” (260).

Amy, on the other hand, who moved out from her husband’s garret, now has no source of income, but she is received as a guest at her mother’s house without any domestic financial duties to be held responsible for. The luxury of time is given to her, which enhances her intellect and a feminine quality. Like Edwin, Amy is given some time to spend by herself, not as a wife but as a woman. The difference in atmosphere Amy comes across is a realization that there is luxury that comes with money. Her mother’s place is clean and she has a room and time to be herself, to read and pursue her interest by putting herself first. “Since the parting from her husband, there had proceeded in Amy noticeable maturing of intellect” (Gissing 360) and read literary journals and books. Provided with care at her mother’s without any financial struggle, she regains her health with a womanly grace. Amy is described as “becoming a typical woman of the new time, the woman who has developed concurrently with journalistic enterprise” (361). On her next encounter with Reardon, Amy realizes how she used to live and what could have become of her if she stayed with him. She is able to develop a discerned eye “after the first glance she had averted her eyes, and she did not offer to shake hands. He saw that his muddy and shapeless boots drew her attention” (345). Instantly, as Amy moves out, she fails to see that she used to be married to Reardon and his poverty, and treats him as if she now belongs to a different class. Gissing is indicating that both Amy and Reardon are better off separated, than married in poverty. Amy and Reardon married believing that love and hope would bring them peace, but the reality is that

without money there was nothing left to work with in their relationship. However, when the money suddenly becomes available to Amy, everything changes, not just for Amy but also for her relationship with Reardon.

Money brings sympathy to characters**.** Willie, Amy and Edwin's son, was born a year into their marriage with Amy. Reardon is always in need of Amy's affection and it does not change when Willie joins the family. Though Gissing does not emphasize Willie's presence, whenever he is brought to the scene, Edwin's reactions towards the child are shown as indifference. On one of many nights that Edwin tries to compose another sentence for his book, Willie falls ill. Amy is busy caring for their child and in the midst of their conversation, she leaves to care for Willie and Reardon's attitude is shown as:

> His face showed disappointment. Their evenings together had never been the same since the birth of the child; Willie was always an excuse – valid enough – for Amy's feeling tired. The little boy had come between him and the mother, as must always be the case in poor homes, most of all where the poverty is relative. (Gissing 127-128)

Reardon's fatherly affection towards Willie is further narrated by Gissing as, "Affection for his child had no weight with him; it was Amy's child rather than his, and he had more fear than pleasure in the prospect of Willie's growing to manhood" (194). This quote suggests that Reardon is fearful of Willie and his future. Reardon's worries are perceived to be what Tosh interprets the relationship between the father and the son, "the passage of boys to manhood was deeply marked by their parents, but parental roles were different. Fathers exercised much more authority over son's choice of profession or business than they do today" (103). Considering Reardon's failure in his career, it can be seen that Reardon's fears are projected onto Willie. When Reardon visits Amy after their separation, Amy offers to bring Willie for Reardon to see him. However, in that moment, he refuses immediately by stating, "No. It is you I have come to see. The child is nothing to me, compared with you" (Gissing 351). Thus,

the relationship between Reardon and Willie is described to be apathetic. However, situations change when Reardon has a job, and lives separately from Amy. When he is called by Amy due to Willie's of health, he rushes to visit them with his concerns heighted for Willie's wellbeing. Upon receiving the letter, Edwin simply reacts, to go visit Amy and Willie at once, with his worries for Willie clearly declared as he tells Biffen, "Diphtheria is pretty sure to be fatal to a child of that age" (440). Once reunited, he feels something for Willie "for the first time since Willie's birth a strong fatherly emotion; tears rushed to his eyes, and he almost crushed Amy's hand as he held it during the spasm of his intense feeling" (445). His feelings for the child rebirths as he passes away, and Reardon is left with his thoughts of remorse exclaiming, "Poor little boy! In the future the child should be more to him; though never what the mother was, his own love, won again and forever" (448). The change had been his new job at Croydon, ensured of a bigger salary, which brought him awareness to others, than being so focused on himself.

Amy also grows sympathetic towards her husband once she inherits ten thousand pounds from her uncle. When Edwin offer to a new living situation at Croydon, which she also turns down due to the job's lower class reputation, she begins to think about an official divorce. Amy even doubts the sanity of Reardon's mind, after he dissents to her writing plan. What is more, in opposition to Edwin's struggles with poverty, Amy has a home and no worries for income, which put the two in a different standing. Her disapproval for Reardon is heighted by how he looks, and she confirms her belief to shun him. Amy begins to feel ashamed of him, suddenly aware of his outdated clothes and shabby appearance. She repeats to herself, "I don't love him. I can't love him" (Gissing 346) and the conversation leads the couple to talk of "formal separation" (347). However, with her inheritance, Amy is able to take her position into perspective. She undergoes a change, and now she holds the capacity to reflect and be sympathetic, "the sudden happiness of finding herself wealthy was not without

its softening effect on Amy's feelings. Generous impulses alternated with moods of discontent. The thought of her husband in squalid lodging tempted her to forget injuries and disillusions, and to play the part of a generous wife" (356). With her inheritance, she reaches out to Reardon with a letter suggesting her plan to reunite, "If this money had come to me when you were struggling so hard to earn a living for us, we should never have spoken the words and thought the thoughts which now make it so difficult for me to write to you" (381). She acknowledges that poverty had brought their turmoil and now that she can bring both of them out of it, she is convinced that they can be together. In spite of her initiative, acknowledging their differences Reardon refuses and falls deathly sick. Amy's efforts to care for her husband does not stop however, and when they meet again, she speaks of the two, again as a married couple stating that she will follow Edwin wherever he wishes to go. Reunited, money brings the solution to almost all problems the couple faced in their marriage, their self-consciousness, resentment, and distrust. However, Gissing delivers is also reporting that it is also the absence of money that had brought all of Amy and Reardon's miseries into place. He points to the point that all problems that are caused by poverty, can be solved by regaining wealth but treatments to conditions such as physical sickness are limited to time and cannot be cured with capital if it is too late.

Chapter IV: Harold Biffen

Harold Biffen first makes his appearance by visiting his friend Edwin Reardon, and Gissing introduces the new character by giving illustrations of his ragged apparel. His impression is, from what Gissing illustrates as, “an exhibition in the capacity of living skeleton and the garments which hung upon his framework would perhaps have sold for three-and-sixpence at an old-clothes dealer’s” (Gissing 142). Biffen is a character of concern and Reardon worries for him, especially when his dear friend is in a point of poverty where he has to sell pieces of his clothing to buy enough to eat. He rummages his pockets to buy the simplest meals, and is only able to buy bread on sale for two pence half penny (427), but he shows joy in being able to live and is not offended by his capabilities to only make cheap purchases. While others are conscious of his basic needs of life, such as food, place of living, and clothes, they do not seem to bother Biffen at all. In fact, when Gissing elaborates on the circumstances of characters in comparison, he puts Biffen’s suffering first, “Biffen was always in dire poverty, and lived in the oddest places; he had seen harder trials than even Reardon himself” (143) in comparison to other writers. Regardless, Biffen does not falter at what others consider as necessities and is content at what he can afford. Unlike characters of prior chapters, Biffen is not married and therefore, he is under no pressure to make capital. He abides by his own rules, and Gissing shows that for a figure of a different class and conditions, new rules apply on making relationships, selling his writing, and writing style but only on the premise that he stays single.

Biffen is a character of a warm and compassionate heart. He is engaged in many relationships, with various friends in the publishing industry that he genuinely cares for. One of which is Edwin Reardon, who unlike Biffen is married, holds domestic duties, and struggles to write a single sentence. Biffen and Reardon’s friendship derives from their share

of intellect, their first encounter being Biffen looking for Reardon's published book, *On Neutral Ground*. Both characters being aspiring writers, "Their tastes were found to be in many respects sympathetic" (Gissing 143) where both encouraged each other in their writing careers. Before Reardon married, he and Biffen shared the life of poor single writers supporting each other in their writing journeys. Even after his separation with Amy, Reardon returns to the single lifestyle with the help of Biffen who takes care of him, offers emotional support, and advises him to reconcile with his wife. Other characters also depend on Biffen including Syke and Whelpdale. Syke, a writer in poverty is often found drunk or in prison poor and ill. His name is mentioned in relation to the workhouse and death but Biffen sincerely worries about him and visits his home to make sure he is alive. Whelpdale, on the other hand, makes business from writing and is known for his ridiculous accounts of romance. Jasper and Reardon are also Whelpdale's friends, but while they do not take him seriously, Biffen is the friend that does. Despite Amy and Reardon's viewpoint on being able to afford to keep friends, Biffen shows that instead of money, it takes heart to maintain relationships. Although Biffen's friends may not be useful to him, Biffen gives them his genuine care and time.

Romantic relationships, however, do not occur for the warm hearted fellow. As happy as Biffen may be with his life, he is aware that his living situation is not ideal to win a woman's love. In fact, Biffen thinks of romantic relationships as a form of luxury and he thinks of women as "creatures to be protected" (Gissing 338). Biffen knows too well that he does not have the means to protect any woman, being able to barely provide enough to save himself. Romance remains as his "unattainable ideal; already thirty-five years old, he had no prospect of ever being rich enough to assure himself a daily dinner; marriage was wildly out of the question" (147). Whenever he is told of romantic partners of his friends, however, Biffen is most interested to hear about their good fortune. He is most envious of Reardon for

his wife Amy, who is known by her class and intellect. Biffen treats her with the highest respect and thinks of Reardon's marriage as a miracle for a poor writer to be married to a woman of beauty and intelligence. Even for Whelpdale, as foolish his endeavors seem, Biffen "was eager of details; perchance he himself might yet have that heavenly good fortune" (214). Biffen does bring up one woman he did consider pursuing when he was younger but "on account of his poverty, he could not even hope that his love might be returned, and he went away to bear the misery as best he might" (187). As envious Biffen is, he remains realistic to consider his position first than following his instinctive needs and emotions.

Instead of romance, Biffen follows his passion, writing. Despite his poverty, his perseverance for writing remains strong and determined and he is able to gain trust and credibility from the working class to be their tutor. Other writers recognize his talent, and thereby recommends better jobs to enhance his living status, but his inability to afford better clothing become his obstacles. Biffen simply responds with "What position? No school would take me; I have neither credentials nor conventional clothing. For the same reason I couldn't get a private tutorship in a rich family" (Gissing 211). Something very exterior as clothing stops him from stepping up in society, but this is another indicator to show how Biffen's values differ than his peers. He sticks to his own beliefs than to try and fit into others' sets of values. As Engels give account of the hardship of the working class and the possible solution:

> . . . it is only individuals who starve, but what security has the working-man that it may not be his turn tomorrow? Who assures him employment, who vouches for it that, if for any reason or no reason his lord and master discharges him, until he may find someone else 'to give him bread?' Who guarantees that willingness to work shall suffice to obtain work, that uprightness, industry, thrift and the rest of the virtues recommended by the bourgeoisie, are really his road to happiness? (33)

In Biffen's case, no one can guarantee his success. Nonetheless, Biffen is satisfied by following his own values than following the approaches as advised by the upper class. He is willing to work, but on his own projects. He does not care for appearance or how others perceive him in run-down clothing, and instead lives to satisfy his own goals and needs. In comparison, his duties seem very minimal to other characters such as Reardon and Alfred Yule. Biffen's pursuit for writing also differs to other characters, as he is triggered by realism, writing to deliver truthful circumstances and the realities of ordinary people around him. Biffen phrases his writing's goal by announcing, "I want to deal with the essentially unheroic, with the day-to-day life of that vast majority of people who are at the mercy of paltry circumstance" (Gissing 144) which is in disaccord with the popular genre, light fictional stories. He approaches writing not as art nor lucrative business, but as an artifact that will bring change in people's viewpoint in the dominant reality that surrounds them.

What is more, Biffen's life is driven by his writing, spending up to nine consecutive hours of his day engaged in his book. He shows confidence and enjoyment in his writing projects, and takes pride in the fact that his is different. He experiments with his ideas and declares "I want to, among other things, to insist upon the fateful power of trivial incidents. No one has yet dared to do this seriously" (Gissing 145). This is how his new book, *Mr. Bailey, Grocer* starts, from writing truthful accounts of a man through his marriage and his business. When writing, Biffen is so passionate about his book that he puts writing first than any of his basic needs. Even when he is on the verge of starvation, he continues to work on finishing the novel because he enjoys the process. Even when his building catches fire, Biffen risks his life in order to save his manuscripts by fighting his way through the fire to grab his papers and escaping onto the next building. After a close escape from death, he grieves over his loss of books in his apartment. "Ah, but my books, my books! . . . And all my notes! At one feel swoop!" (435). He mourns for his loss, not of any other possessions, but of his

papers which are the result of his time and effort. Unlike Reardon, Biffen is showing that his value of his work is the most important factor and therefore, carries a Use-Value. The fire incident shows that Biffen is a character that would die for his writing, and his grief for his books show his appreciation for literature. For Biffen, his writing comes before his safety and health as his continues to write.

Regardless of his passion, his dear friends reveal their frank thoughts to Biffen's novel ideas for writing. Since he is attempting to write something completely new, there are concerns for how the audience will receive his book. Honest responses of his friends are expressed and Edwin Reardon confirms, "You will never sell work of this kind, yet you have the courage to go on with it because you believe in it" (Gissing 146) but he still appreciates Biffen's strong will to try. Sykes, who often worries Biffen and Reardon, also expresses his agreement with Reardon on Biffen's new project by suggesting that response of readers derives from their social class and real accounts of the lower class will not sell due to their attitudes. He states, "The working classes detest anything that tries to represent their daily life. It isn't because that life is too painful; no no; it's downright snobbishness" (380). Here, Skyes makes the point that the poor are idealists and they will refuse to read the real narratives as they will refuse to accept the dire situation of their lives. Syke's words speaks for his life, barely existing to write little, and drinking whenever possible to escape the realities of his circumstances. Through Skye's words, Gissing is indicating that Biffen too is being idealistic with his new book and is working against the society and its economics. As he dreams to achieve something novel by showing their aspects on the real life. Biffen hopes to bring a change in literature and Gissing is concluding that the poor have the capacity to dream. Unlike Reardon who had to lose his family's support to return working in an office, in hopes of earning enough money to write as a hobby, not as his vocation, Biffen does not need to lose anything to set his goals and he is able to because he only has himself to consider.

Similarly, Biffen is aware of the reality and predicts the poor outcomes that his novel. He knows that it will not bring him much profit, but writes for the sake of his passion. He enjoys the writing process, and seeks to see them published. He is convinced that his efforts, though they may not be compensated by money, will bring a change to others by being published, which is enough for his purpose. Thus, as expected, Biffen's new book, a biographical narrative of an ordinary working class man, *Mr. Bailey, the Grocer* fails with earnings of fifteen pounds (Gissing 485). However, despite the sum, Biffen is content to have it published as "For the failure of his book he cared nothing. It was no more than he anticipated. The work was done – the best he was capable of – and this satisfied him" (489). Here, in comparison to other characters that are mentioned such as Edwin Reardon and Alfred Yule, Biffen is living by his own rules in the literary world to his enjoyment and he can do so, because he does not have any other domestic duties than to keep himself alive.

Yet, the rules falter when he begins to pursue a romantic relationship. As well sustained as Biffen is despite his poor living situation, Biffen does have a fatal weak spot, his loneliness. In spite of Biffen's satisfaction with his lifestyle with poor earnings and a determined desire to write, he reveals his weakness when he is consoling Reardon after his separation with Amy. After Biffen's dramatic escape from the fire of his flat, Reardon and Biffen share their thoughts on their ideal place of death. While Reardon idolizes dying in a fire with his papers, Biffen confesses his wish to face death at home, which is something he has never known. Though he has multiple friends, Biffen does not speak of any relationship with his family. His loneliness is something he holds at heart, and when Reardon remains stubborn with his dispute with Amy, Biffen responds, "To think that a man should need persuading to win back such a wife" (Gissing 343) for he would clearly give anything to be loved by a family of his own. After Reardon passes away, Amy and Biffen meet to discuss Reardon's possessions. Biffen accompanies Amy to her husband's apartment, showing

Reardon's recent dwelling and for the first time, he begins to feel responsible for protecting the woman that is overwhelmed with deep sadness over her loss. Amy relies on Biffen for condolence after her husband's death, and Biffen is shaken by her dependence and realizes how lonely is. Her sadness wakes his wish to protect a woman as "Every tear she shed watered a growth of passionate tenderness in the solitary man's heart. Parting from her at length, he went to hide his face in darkness and think of her – think of her" (486). Biffen has always been lonely, and through this experience he realizes how much he misses a companion. Once Biffen starts thinking about Amy he cannot stop thinking hopeful thoughts that he may be able to engage in a romantic relationship with her. Biffen begins to dream and fantasize about his relationship as it has been one thing he had been suppressing in his freedom to dream during his writing career a "supreme joy of life which to him was forbidden" (486). This change takes Biffen by his surprise. Before his incident with Amy, Biffen deals with his loneliness. However, as soon as he starts to see Amy romantically, he is shaken to rethink everything that he knows and follows. This awakening brings him to rethink about his priorities and what he wants to achieve for his "starved soul and senses" (489). However, this change of emotion in Biffen is shone in a pessimistic eye by Gissing. The flutter of his heart is not illustrated as a beautiful positive lining for Biffen, but rather a wreck of his original character. He loses a sense of himself, because of the instant infatuation. "To encourage such fantasy was the idlest self-torment, but he had gone too far in this form of indulgence. He became the slave of his inflamed imagination" (488). Gissing is suggesting that Biffen had been removed from his realistic mindset and now he was engaged in a world of uncertainty from his temptations.

Therefore, as hopeful and captivated Biffen is, he hits a wall when he follows his need to go and see Amy at her residence. Despite his best efforts to dress formally, which he did not care to do before even for his career, Biffen finds himself feeling humiliated by other

guests gathered in her drawing room. He is instantly convinced of his shabbiness (Gissing 489) and that he is not welcome, and the fact that he does not belong in Amy's class and in her circle of company. Biffen believes in hope of love, but once denied he loses everything, including his life-long goal of writing and he is left "Companionless, inert, he suffered the tortures which are so ludicrous and contemptible to the happily married. Life was barren to him, and would soon grow hateful; only in sleep could he cast off the unchanging thoughts and desires which made all else meaningless" (488). Biffen undergoes the similar experience as Edwin Reardon who is hopeless after his separation with Amy. Regardless of his vigor for life before, he finds that he cannot find his purpose in living, having failed to even attempt to dream of his feelings be reciprocated. Due to sudden plummet of energy and reason, Biffen begins to think in extreme methods to put an end to his misery. He contemplates the meaning of his life, and without friends that he can rely on, he begins to think about committing suicide. Whelpdale, clueless of his friend's difficulties, makes Biffen's situation worse by bragging about his latest news of his engagement with Dora Milvain. Biffen who would have happily congratulated his friend's accomplishment, now falls to his pit of despair to hear his foolish friend Whelphade succeed in attaining what Biffen has for the first time have attempted to pursue, a woman's love.

With no outlet for his honest emotional changes, he questions his own existence. Not once, has death been an option during his dire poverty, starvation, and in emergencies of fire. But his loneliness brings him to plan his own death as "the result of a subtle process by which his imagination had become in love with death" (Gissing 491). After he buys chemicals, leaves a note to notify his landlord of his absence, and clears his apartment, Biffen heads for the woods, distant from people. In the end, he finds a spot under the tree, where he sits down to gaze into the stars above, thinking of Amy as one of them, seen but unattainable, and rests in peace.

Biffen's loneliness is exemplified by his news of death published as a short paragraph in the paper's columns. In contrast to his two earlier books that had been rejected to be published at all, the article on his death is printed on the newspaper next day. Though Biffen suffered from hopelessness and frustration of his inabilities to pursue a woman, his cause of death varies in opinions from other characters, and many immediately points towards his poverty when his lack of fortune had never been Biffen's grounds for his misery. In Milvain's household, Jasper accepts Biffen's death naturally for his impoverished circumstances and responds, "Really, one can't grieve. There seemed no possibility of his ever earning enough to live decently upon. But why the deuce did he go all the way out there?" (Gissing 495). The lack of interest of individuals, especially if they are lower in class can be explained as what Engel suggests of the people's acceptance of others:

> . . . they crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, and their only agreement is the tacit one, that each keep to his own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd, while it occurs to no man to honor another with so much as a glace. The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellant and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded to gather within a limited space. (32)

In a small city of London, and just within the publishing field, the reaction of a suicide of a fellow writer is harsh and does not come as a surprise. What is Gissing saying here? He writes in Biffen's favor, until he begins to dream of a possibility of a romantic relationship, in which Biffen crashes into despair. Gissing, again, brings light into what marriage signifies, and in Biffen's case, a sense of fancy that did not suit his class or standing. Here, marriage does not mean joining of two people due to emotional attraction but a realistic arrangement between the two parties in match of class, and capital.

Chapter V: Jasper Milvain

> The chances are that you have either understanding nor sympathy for men such as Edwin Reardon and Harold Biffen. They merely provoke you. They seem to you inert, flabby, weakly envious, foolishly obstinate, impiously mutinous, and many other things, You are made angrily contemptuous by their failure to get on; why don't they bestir themselves, push and bustle, welcome kicks so long as halfpence follow, make place in the world's eye–in short, take a leaf from the book of Mr. Jasper Milvain? (Gissing 425)

Interestingly, Gissing begins and ends *New Grub Street* with the same character, Jasper. The name is Jasper Milvain, who in the beginning of the book heartlessly announces on his family breakfast table that a man is being hung on the same day as his family dines on freshly prepared breakfast in Wattleborough. He is the only son of the Milvain household, and lives off of his mother's annuity from the death of her veterinary surgeon husband. With her two hundred and forty pounds a year, Mrs. Milvain manages her household with two daughters in addition to helping to support Jasper's living in London. Jasper's income varies, scarcely earning twenty-five to thirty pounds a year, but he asserts that his time is being invested for his future career and he is waiting for an opportunity which will bring him capital. Jasper's ultimate goal for success is money "Let us use our wits to earn money, and make the best we can of our lives" (Gissing 13) he says and his prime method is to wait for the ultimate opportunity for his career and marriage.

Jasper differs from other characters from the book, mainly because of his confidence in his future. "In ten years, I repeat, I shall be making my thousand a year" (Gissing 9). He is assured that he will succeed, both financially and professionally as a person of middle class. He does succeed in the end, but with very obstinate personality of being practical, calculative,

and realistic with his writing career and with his relationships. Since Jasper's actions are not moral and conscientious, he faces his own obstacles to attaining his goal. However, Gissing still ends the novel by assembling Jasper's success and by bringing other characters into his path to compare and offer lessons of success in the literary market. In order to make money, Jasper knows that he needs money to invest, and this is the reason he financially depends on his mother at the beginning of his career. He believes that it is money that makes everything easier, and will help him succeed. He aspires to be like of Ralph Warbury, who succeeded in publishing by beginning with money and influential friends. Jasper points out that Warbury's writing skill was not anything spectacular, but it does not matter as his favorable conditions guaranteed his success. On the other hand, since Jasper is not qualified by having money or social ties yet, he is determined to wait until the right occasion rises to start his career.

Thus, Jasper despises to think of his career and future without money by giving instances of his friend, Edwin Reardon. He simply puts poverty as, "the root of all social ill" (Gissing 32) and talks about his friend in misfortune. He believes that Edwin made his decisions too fast, on setting the price for his book and marrying Amy, at his beginning point of career. Reardon's novels are acknowledged, but Jasper talks about how it could be better received, if Edwin knew how to wait. He claims, "if I had been in Reardon's place, I'd have made four hundred at least out of *The Optimist*; I should have gone shrewdly to work with magazines and newspapers and foreign publishers, and all sorts of people. Reardon can't do that kind of thing, he's behind his age" (9). He stresses that Reardon's financial management of his books is outdated and he is the "literary man of 1882" (8). Here, Gissing highlights how the two men are different in handling business and money.

Moreover, Jasper confirms that a big part of business is making connections. Jasper assumes that if Reardon had been engaged in society more, he would have made a better bargain. He points to the fact that Reardon:

> . . . after one or two attempts, he made half a success; that is to say, the publishers brought out a second edition of the book in a few months. There was his opportunity. But he couldn't use it; he had no friends, because he had no money. A book of half that merit, if written by a man in the position of Warbury when he started, would have established the reputation of lifetime. (Gissing 29-30)

Therefore, Jasper is determined that money will bring him reputation and opportunities that he is waiting for. He believes the development of his class and identity depends on who he knows. Especially in the market, Jasper believes useful people will help him with selling his writing and it will ultimately bring him success. Gissing defines Jasper's character as, "the kind of man who weighed opportunities; every step he took would be regulated by considerations of advantages; at all events that was the impression his character had made" (112). However, Gissing does not criticize Jasper but highlights how he is being smart by making good impressions and carefully choosing how to act with an open mind. He takes time to consider what is offered, then makes the choice that will bring him the most benefit.

Jasper's criticism continues for Edwin's decision to get married, which was also rushed according to Jasper. Edwin married a middle class woman, where Jasper frankly argues, "A man in his position, if he marry at all, must take either a work-girl or an heiress, and in many ways the work-girl is preferable" (Gissing 7). This comment comes from the fact that Reardon does not have capital to match the status of his wife. A wife from middle class costs money to fulfill her social and material needs. If he had, however, married a woman from a lower class, preferably a woman who worked, she could help him with bringing capital to the household. He confidently insists that Reardon had not been realistic, and was quick to make his choice, which is the reason for his misery in poverty and as the head of a household. On the other hand, Alfred Yule married a woman from a working class, and although he does blame her lower social standing for his failures, they are not in poverty and

therefore do not have to worry about their family financial status.

From his speech, it is clear to see that Jasper is fastidiously practical. His plan in publishing, is to become a business man, rather than a writer. He points to the changes in the market and asserts that "our Grub Street of to-day is quite different place: it is supplied with telegraphic communication, it knows what literary fare is in demand in every part of the world, its inhabitants are men of business, however seedy" (Gissing 9). The outdated method, could be referred to characters of prior chapters, Edwin Reardon and Alfred Yule. Reardon tries to manage his living by writing novels as art and Alfred Yule, believes that writing literature brings civilization and refuses to write anything lacking of literary value. Reardon and Yule's value in writing agrees with what the market had considered "the project of modernizing English fiction involved not only this general tendency towards increased compression but also the more idealistic aspiration that the scale of a work should be determined not by external constraints such as publishing format but rather by the intrinsic nature of its theme. In other words, that fiction was not a commodity but a work of art" (Law 81). However, Jasper suggests that the literary market has changed, and the new culture of literature has to comes with monetary value, because literature is now considered as a business and a trade.

Jasper's aim to make money in writing is so established that his mindset is able to turn a subject into a lucrative plan. His goal is stated clearly as he proposes, "I shall never write for writing's sake, only to make money. All my plans and efforts will have money in view—all. I shan't allow anything to come in the way of my material advancement" (Gissing 120). Even as he is in the publishing field, in opposition to Reardon and Yule, Jasper shows no interest in literary value and but focuses only on the financial outcome. For instance, when Jasper meets Alfred and John Yule during his family visit, between a man of literary writer and a producer of paper, his principle in trade is challenged, where his occupation is assumed

to “induce people to give themselves mental indigestion—and bodily” (25). However, Jasper with no offence taken, brings his criticism to a money-making plan for writing:

> Do you know Mr. Yule, that you have suggested a capital idea to me? If I were to take up your views, I think it isn’t at all unlikely that I might make a good thing of writing against writing. It should be my literary specialty to rail against literature. The reading public should pay me for telling them that they oughtn’t to read. (25)

Even in the midst of disapproval, Jasper sense of practicality remains, so strongly held in his brain that it is the focus of his thinking. His pragmatism is used to determine his own abilities, and he is quick to judge his own merits and weaknesses, and acts fast to enact upon what he can and cannot do. He decides that he cannot write for fiction, but he knows he can write for a specific audience. Jasper decides to follow what is lucrative, what the readers want and will buy to read, rather than to stick with what he believes. Nonetheless, he is sure that he will not write for all:

> To please the vulgar you must, one way or another, incarnate the genius of vulgarity. For my own part, I shan’t be able to address the bulkiest multitude; my talent doesn’t lend itself to that form. I shall write for the upper middle-class of intellect, the people who like to feel that what they are reading has some special cleverness, but who can’t distinguish between stones and paste. That’s why I’m so slow in warming to the work. Every month I feel surer of myself, however. (14)

As he is making his plans to write, he is also indicating his aim to make money and mock his readers. It does not matter to him what his writing is, or what it does, but as long as it will affect the readers to keep buying his books because it may make them feel better, and therefore he will keep writing. Through Jasper, Gissing is saying, that a piece of writing does not need a skill, or a purpose, but rather the audience will only care so much for what they read and how it will make them appear. “The distinction of status and wealth to be found

within the middle class were greater than in either the working class or the upper class" Tosh explains in how class and status were regarded in middle class. They took pride in the class that they belonged, taking in consideration that "the middle class were distinguished from the working class because they worked regularly for a living, and from the working class because they did not stoop to manual labour" (13). Jasper had picked on this, and decided to use his writing in the same cause. Being practical, Jasper does not even let his feelings get in the way. He admits that he despises his readership, but he will continue, because it will bring him capital and make him successful (Gissing 74). But is Jasper good at writing? Gising describes his hand as "the facile pen" (455). So probably not, but Gissing is also showing that as long as Jasper is in the right circles that his writing can be spoken of between the right people, his writing skill does not matter.

His idea for making a business for writing extends to influence his sisters. Maud and Dora, teach occasionally as a governess and a music tutor but they are not happy with their jobs or their income. Jasper's sisters are both in the early twenties and are educated, but Gissing argues that they would be happier if they were not, as "nothing would have encouraged them to look beyond the simple life possible to a poor man's offspring" (Gissing 40). However, educated by the schoolmistress and having received intellectual training provided by the Girl's High school, they are able to see what is offered to them in the society. They have power that can be utilized to break the walls of their limitations. On education Enid Zimmerman illustrates that there was also a sense of class involved:

> The kind of education she received depended upon the class to which she belonged. Working-class and middle-class women were encouraged to participate in technical education to earn a wage, whereas middle-class and upper-class women, who did not need to earn a living, were able to engage in technical education for self-fulfillment or pursue higher education. (108)

The problem the Milvain daughters faced was that their intellect does not coincide with their class, and having experienced more than they can afford to enjoy, they feel trapped in their jobs, still needing to earn a living. Gissing also illustrates their situation as, “To the relatively poor (who are so much worse off than the poor absolutely) education is in most cases a mocking cruelty” (Gissing 40). Even when Maud and Dora’s intellect is recognized by other poeple of higher class, they cannot receive the invitations to their social gatherings, for they know they cannot serve them in return, very much like Amy after she marries Reardon.

All the more, Jasper encourage his sister to try their hand at writing, a vocation that they can still utilize their intellect to make money. His practicality does not stop upon his own realm, but he goes on to plans ahead for his sisters with his practical mindset. Since religious stories are popular selling products, he advises his sisters to try out writing for the same line of business, “I tell you, writing is a business. Get together half a dozen fair specimens of the Sunday-school prize; study them; discover the essential points of such composition; hit upon new attractions; then go to work methodically, so many pages a day” (Gissing 13). He starts to begin their writing process for them, and even goes out to meet with the publishers to inquire about the market. He has a “practical talk” with the publishers, Jolly and Monks, to talk about his sisters’ new projects. Jasper talks about the editor of the magazine, *The English Girl*, “I happen to know Mrs. Boston Wright, who edits it. Met her at a house the other day, and told her frankly that she would have to give my sisters something to do. It’s only way to get on; one has to take it for granted that people are willing to help you. I have made a host of new acquaintances just lately” (109-110). The important point here, is that Jasper’s plan works. His eye for how to start a business plan and keep it running by relationships is exactly what Gissing is showing to be effective. There is no need to seek the personal value by creating art or the possible changes of bringing civilization to his readers and Jasper is pointing at what is happens in the publishing industry and works towards to earn money from

the market.

However, Jasper's position can be questioned when asked about what he is doing for his own good. Jasper is living in London from his mother's support and he is not making enough as he strongly claims that he will. His situation does not match his notion of his business as a trade. Yet, his prime method is to wait. He defends his slow advancement in his career as, "I am slowly, but surely, learning the business" (Gissing 9). However, as practical as Jasper is, he is also aware that his goal to seek money does not come easily, as he wishes. In order to be able to sell a piece of writing, it takes more than the simple skill of one's pen but actually many other instrumental aspects, such as reputation and society that come with making money.

Jasper's practicality does not stop in making connections, with his friends and relationships. He shows openness in meeting new people and he regards making connections in importance, but he is very selective on who he keeps in his circle of society. On his walk with Marian Yule at his hometown, Wattleborough, he says to her, "men won't succeed in literature that they may get into society but will get into society that may succeed in literature" (Gissing 29). What Gissing is indicating here through Jasper is that literature societies are comprised of writers, editors, contributors, and publishers that the bondage between these people could determine your success in the field. In addition, Jasper points to the fact that business all depends on whom one knows, as "The middle class became club members *par excellence.* Clubs were finely graded according to status and income" (Tosh 128). Jasper takes account of this, and spends most of his time in London making acquaintances of the literary society. In his defense of asking his mother for more money he urges that he cannot bear to live on meager sums because he has to connect with the middle and the upper class. Mrs. Milvain agrees on his account of "he has told us so often that it's no use to him to live like that. He is obliged to go to places where he must spend a little, or he

makes no progress" (12). His progress means meeting and dining with new people of class, people who come to be useful to him in his career like Ralph Warbury. Jasper makes sure to be selective, however, to know who can be useful to him. During his holiday in Wattleborough, Alfred Yule had spoken of Fadge as "the most malicious man in the literary world" (26). Despite Alfred's warning, Jasper finds that he is called by Horace Barlow to be introduced to Fadge himself, and is offered a job as a contributor of the monthly magazine (73). Jasper is triumphant because of his accomplishment:

> . . . all things come to the man who knows how to wait. But I'm hanged if I expected a thing of this kind to come so soon! Why, I'm a man of distinction! My doings have been noted; the admirable qualities of my style have drawn attention; I'm looked upon as one of the coming men! Thanks, I confess in some measure, to old Barlow; he seems to have amused himself with cracking me up to all and sundry. The last thing of mine in *The West End* has done me a vast amount of good, it seems. And Alfred Yule himself had noticed that paper in *The Wayside.* That's how things work, you know; reputation comes with a burst, just when you're not looking for anything of the kind. (73)

Jasper waits for a position, and does not falter at a comment of a writer. Instead, he takes the time to make decisions for himself. He even recommends that Reardon makes connections between publishers as he does. "I'll make an opportunity of talking about your books to Fadge. I think Fadge and I shall get on pretty well together. Alfred Yule hates the man fiercely, for some reason or other. By the way, I may as well tell you that I broke short off with the Yules on purpose" (79). Later, Jasper even ventures to writes for Fadge in criticism of Yule. This variety of personality of Jasper reflects how he is layering difference of what he is and he is carefully managing his connections, not to arouse or provoke but to use the connections to his advantage:

> When the demand of male sociability and public duty were added to those of work, the scope for conflict was intensified. Sarah Ellis, in speaking regretfully of the 'two seat of consciences' in many men – 'one consciences for the sanctuary, and another for the desk and counter' – underestimated the complexities. As the historian H.L. Malchow has put it, many middle class men had 'layered identities' corresponding to home, club, office, chapel and so on. Each placed a premium on different qualities, and each was potentially in conflict with some or all the others" (Tosh 140).

Tosh is giving an account of how Jasper matches the right layers of his personality to the right people. He is a realistic and paternalistic brother to Maud and Dora. He calls his friend Reardon as a failure in making poor decisions, but he also writes a complimentary review on Reardon when he passes. Jasper calls Whelpdale a fool to his sisters for his romantic endeavors, but Jasper still listens when he has business ideas. Jasper adds many layers to his personality, to be able to blend in with a variety of crowds and also to be accepted by many.

When relationships turn romantic, Jasper shows his unchanged character. He stays harshly realistic and practical and puts his career first before the significance of his feelings and marriage. His opinions on Reardon's marriage with a middle class woman, without money of her own, are what he calls it troublesome because "Once married you must live up to the standard of the society you frequent" (Gissing 30). Socially middle class marriage is favorable to Jasper, but he knows that without money and security it relegates the couple to a lower class. His sisters

move to London after Mrs. Milvain passes away and Maud shows interest in social engagement in society while Dora settles down to write. Maud's active participation in social circles causes Jasper to discourage her from making hasty judgement on marriage. His advice for Maud is, "As soon as ever it's possible, we'll arrange for you to live with someone who will preserve appearances. All this is contemptible, of course; but we belong to a

contemptible society, and can't help ourselves. For Heaven's sake, don't spoil your chances by rashness; be content to wait a little, till some more money comes in" (270). Now that he and his sisters are all out in society, he begins to consider their chance in marriage, but he once again tells them to wait. He is focused on investing human relationships, until the best outcome can be harvested. In speaking for what Jasper regards as marriage, Tosh can offer an explanation for what was expected of marriage in the Victorian era, "there is no doubt that companionate marriage corresponded to deeply felt need in men: they constantly signaled their allegiance to it in every representational and didactic from available. A more compelling question is how far these needs were met, and how far they conflicted with other expectations of marriage" (54). However, Jasper leaves the choice to Maud and she marries Mr. Dolomore, who is rich but fool. Jasper predicts their compatibility will not match and claims that Maud is making a mistake for marrying him for security when she knows he is a fool. He insists that if she waited, she would "have married one of the leading men of the day" (509).

Jasper holds the same attitude for his own romantic relationships. One his first encounters with Marian, he reveals his lifelong plan, "I must marry someone with money, and a god deal of it. That's a settled point with me" (Gissing 79). Since he is so strategic and is determined to stick to his plan for his future success, he eschews his personal feelings and what may become a distraction. When he feels the slightest attraction towards Marian, he tries his best to avoid it. Instead, his concept of marriage just seems to be a method of gaining capital as he states, "to obtain money somehow or other—and I see no other way than by marriage—is necessary to me, and that with as little delay as possible. I am not at all likely to get a big editorship for some years to come, and I don't feel disposed to make myself prematurely old by toiling for a few hundreds per annum in the meantime" (298). However, Jasper does feel attracted to some specific women, but he just chooses not to pursue them. His brief meeting with Marian at Wattleborough causes him to feel something for her.

Regardless, Jasper soon finds his peace by reminding and directing himself towards his goal. He keeps her friendship, without noticing what the relationship signifies to Marian. Jasper's use of relationships shows again as it would be one thing to lose interest and distance himself, but he leaves room for Marian to think otherwise.

Jasper's determination to pursue a woman all comes down to money, like any other decision he makes. He talks to his sisters about his new acquaintance, Miss Rupert, a rich woman who shows her interest he states "I am a young man with my way to make. I can't afford to lose any opportunity. If Miss Rupert is so good as to take an interest in me, I have no objection. She's old enough to make friends for herself" (Gissing 296) and makes the women responsible for their connections. However, when he hears of Marian's inheritance, the tables are turned. He almost immediately seeks Marian to ask her hand in marriage, now aware of how she can be useful to him. Accordingly, it is interesting to take a look at Jasper's words of proposal, "All the satisfactions I have described would be immensely heightened if they were shared with a woman who loved me–there is the simple truth" (300). To Marian, he talks about fulfilling his satisfaction, not as a couple or as partners but as himself, with a woman who can love him, and not sharing their love. His words are very technical, and when his sisters ask him of Miss Rupert, his shows no hesitation in delivering his change of mind, "Oh, Miss Rupert may go to Jericho for all I care. I'm in a magnanimous mood" (322). Accordingly, Jasper makes a quick change of plans as he recognizes the value of money in his relationships.

Circumstances change again, however, when Marian's inheritance is reduced to fifteen hundred pounds from five thousand pounds. While engaged to Marian, tempted by Miss Rupert's money he proposes to her, weighing both women by saying "Whether I marry Marian or Miss Rupert, I sacrifice my strongest feelings—in the one case to a sense of duty, in the other to worldly advantage" (Gissing 484). He explains that he is tempted by her

capital, and cannot resist to forsake the opportunity. Once Miss Rupert refuses him, he states that he is doomed, as marrying Marian with no fortune would be "a gross absurdity, simply spoiling my career, and leading to all sorts of discontents" (298) as he states in previous conversation with Dora, imagining a marriage with a woman with no money. To the readers' relief, Marian refuses Jasper's suggestion and opposes to marry someone who thinks of their marriage as a burden. She reads through Jasper's intentions, and responds, "I know now, how foolish it is when they talk of love being unselfish. In what can there be more selfishness? I feel as if I could hold you to your promise at any cost, though you have made me understand that you regard our engagement as your great misfortune" (502). Here it is easy to see how Jasper is different to previous characters. It is the moral choice to marry Marian, like Reardon who married by following his feelings for Amy, but Jasper turns her down, as he is able to see how poverty is to strike them in their married life. Alfred, who married a lower class woman, does not struggle with a financial difficulty, but cannot help thinking that his wife is at fault for the obstacles he faces in his career.

In the end, Jasper chooses Amy to be his wife, whom he thinks is also practical and has ten thousand pounds inherited from her uncle, John Yule. The final conversation that concludes the book is a dialogue between Jasper and now Mrs. Amy Milvain:

"Isn't the world a glorious place?"

"For rich people" (515)

The ending of the book brings readers to question whether if any good happens to the morally good, such as Alfred Yule, Edwin Reardon, and Harold Biffen who strives to make a living believing that they can bring good to the society by educating his readers and contributing to civilize them, pursuing art, and trying to bring a new literary change. However, in Gissing's world of *New Grub Street,* there is no good in the world without capital. Capital brings sympathy, and kindness of heart between relationships, especially in

marriages. Gissing shows that in the world of capital, characters cannot simply survive without being practical. Gissing is advising the readers to be like Jasper, who is immoral and evaluates people's utility and the value of their connections. However, Gissing is saying, do it with polite manners and it will bring capital and power to your identity, which is what matters to survive.

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