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# Meddlesome Markets and Epistolary Escapes: Mediating Discourses in Gissing's New Grub Street

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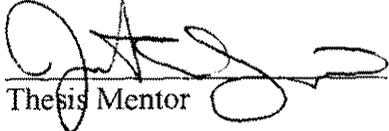
Meddlesome Markets and Epistolary Escapes: Mediating Discourses in Gissing's

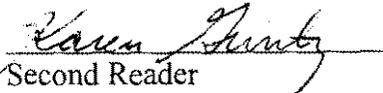
*New Grub Street*

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Thesis Mentor

  
Second Reader

“He is the old type of unpractical artist; I am the literary man of 1882. He won’t make concessions, or rather, he can’t make them; he can’t supply the market. [...] Literature nowadays is a trade. Putting aside men of genius, who may succeed by mere cosmic force, your successful man of letters is your skillful tradesman. He thinks first and foremost of the markets; when one kind of goods begins to go off slackly, he is ready with something new and appetizing. He knows perfectly all the possible sources of income.[...] 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; he sells a manuscript as if he lived in Sam Johnson’s Grub Street. But our Grub Street of to-day is quite a 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)

In George Gissing’s *New Grub Street*, Jasper Milvain introduces Edward Reardon as one who “can’t supply the market” and the literary market as defined by “goods” or pieces of writing, which must always remain “new and appetizing,” an edible “fare.” *New Grub Street’s* narrative tells the story of Jasper Milvain, the new age literary man who believes in the production and pacing of the periodical print. His friend, Edwin Reardon, is a failing novelist who shares the novel’s narrative space. Jasper seeks a reputation as he produces hack writing. His literary endeavors precede his understanding of human relationships. He does not desire to sustain any bond with anyone, including Marian Yule, daughter of the esteemed and cynical literary critic Alfred Yule. Reardon, on the other hand, as the novel’s idealist, struggles to maintain his literary reputation. His literary success remains pivotal in his relationship with his wife, Amy Reardon. Her financial security and care for her son Willie come before any loyalty to her husband. Harold Biffen, a poverty-stricken tutor, encourages and supports Reardon’s endeavors. Biffen remains Reardon’s consistent friend throughout *New Grub Street*. Biffen’s eventual literary production, the “realist” novel, *Mr. Bailey, Grocer* fails miserably. Despite the abundance of men of letters in *New Grub Street*, none of these writers’ “market” writing appears. Rather, we are left with only their correspondence between one another, which mediates tenuously the spaces between public free indirect discourse and private direct discourse.

The literary “men of genius” set aside, Jasper markets himself as a businessman. Throughout *New Grub Street* he speaks of literature and his decisions regarding his own writings as transactions. A successful “man of letters,” Jasper’s profession indicates a tradesman, a hack journalist or publisher who produces what the market demands. However, Gissing’s ill-fated Reardon, presumably morally superior to Milvain as an artist who does not sell out to the demands of the market, cannot and does not publish any text in Gissing’s novel: we cannot read Reardon’s work. The only indications of Reardon’s work are mere descriptions of words per line, lines per slips, and number of slips he produces. Although Reardon remains “behind his age,” the more shrewd Jasper cannot succeed when he competes against the speed of information magazines and newspapers produce. Gissing also refrains from “reproducing” or sharing Jasper’s writing for Clement Fadge or any other periodical.

By “reproduction,” I do not suggest these works exist beyond Gissing’s novel, but rather that the writings characters allegedly produce in the novel do not exist within the novel. The only fictional writings that Gissing’s *New Grub Street* reproduces, besides epistolary exchanges between characters, exist in snippets; one-liners suggesting an actual text exists that Gissing feels no need to “reproduce” within the novel. The novel’s lack of reproduction demonstrates the ill-fated destruction of Reardon and Jasper’s literary endeavors. Harold Biffen’s “realist” novel only suffers the same fate. Reardon’s “brain burned with visions of the books he would henceforth write, but his hand was incapable of anything but a love-letter. And what letters! Reardon never published anything equal to those” (Gissing 66). The second half of *New Grub Street* produces Reardon’s writing and Jasper’s reviews through letters. The epistolary exchanges between Reardon, Jasper, and Amy Reardon disrupt the omniscient narrative with direct discourse. As I will argue, *New Grub Street* discriminates between direct epistolary discourse and omniscient,

free indirect discourse to reflect the friction between a nostalgic epistolary space of incorrupt direct discourse and the iniquitous commercial literary “market,” a public domain of free indirect discourse.

“Market” dominance saturates *New Grub Street’s* pages. As Reardon, Jasper and the self-conscious narrator fall into the pit of the market place, so do their lives. The changing market, as N. N. Feltes examines in *Modes of Production*, indicates that “new journalism” sought the emotional and temporary pull of its readers’ emotions. As Feltes states, “what needs to be emphasized here is that the writer’s task in defining reality [in new journalism] [...] was itself being thus newly defined, a writer’s place in the social apparatus newly determined, and skill reduced or restricted to filling of predefined genres, even to a predefined style” (Feltes 67). Gissing’s writing shifts between two Victorian modes of production, namely the vanishing three-decker novel and serial publication.

So much of the market depends on predefined styles and genres that Jasper always distinguishes the importance of genre over content: “My line won’t be novels; I have failed in that direction, I’m not cut out for the work” (9). Jasper’s mother Mrs. Milvain comments, “He is studying his profession” (11). “Studying” reaffirms Jasper’s contention to determine genre before topic. His suggests to his sisters, “why don’t you girls write something? . . . There’s a tremendous sale for religious stories; why not patch one together?” as if to reaffirm that writing was not an act of creativity but one of mechanical reproduction, an assembly of generic parts. (13). After his sister Maud’s initial resistance to the idea he remarks, “I’d make a specialty of Sunday-school prize-books; you know the kind of thing I mean” (13). The very “thing” Jasper speaks to suggest both the novel as a form and reduces the novel’s content to generalities similar to those “Sunday-school prize books.”

Jasper's references to his writing reaffirm his difficulties. He must produce a text that conforms to the increasing journalistic trends of the late nineteenth-century market. Eltan Bar-Yosef comments, "this is precisely what *New Grub Street* tries to illustrate—in an objectified narration style, which of course resembles a journalistic report" (Bar-Yosef 189). As a journalistic report, *New Grub Street* demonstrates what Feltes recognizes in *Modes of Production*. He argues the increasing readership of serial texts also emphasized the increasing use of the interview. Published in serial form the personal interview exposed the "class" associated with the publication. The serial form Feltes describes shares similarities with the relationship between narrator, letter, and reader in *New Grub Street*.

Gissing's epistolary reproduction recalls Jane Austen's conversion of epistolary form into omniscient narrative at the beginning of the nineteenth century. William Galperin's *The Historical Austen* argues that Austen's shift in revising *Pride and Prejudice* from epistolary to "the relatively stable operation of direct narrative" was "likely more didactic in explicitly measuring the liabilities" of Elizabeth (Galperin 125). He argues that this comes at the cost of Austen's "achievement of authority" as its narrative succumbs to a "cultural hegemony" of her period (Galperin 125). The characters of Austen channel an omniscient authority that limits and is limited by their own biases and limitations. Unlike narrative omniscience, epistolary writing implies a silent space of events as letters move from invisible hand to invisible hand. Galperin suggests works like *Lady Susan* show Austen's writing challenges "the indeterminacy of form [as it] stands in provocative relation to the belated attempt by the letters' editor [presumably Austen] to rein in and contain the narrative's attack on the culture of domesticity" (135). As a speculative epistolary novel transformed into omniscient realist narrative, Austen's writing,

“parses, even as it unites, artistic or narrative authority” and “the authority of what the knowing artist (or narrator in this instance) is condemned to recapitulate on the other” (134).

Austen, according to Galperin, allows the omniscient narrator to serve as an “instrument of cultural dominance” (129). In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane’s letters to Elizabeth break this cultural hegemony, and the potential avenues of indirect discourse are avoided when Austen produces Jane’s direct discourse. Jane’s letters suggest that Austen’s letters “work, in conjunction . . . to suggest other values and possibilities in the world of the novel in which Jane’s former prestige as an alternative to her sister is once again freestanding and sustained without the props of either narrative indulgence or authority” (137). Jane’s letters allow her to maintain her individualism apart from the narrative. She retains values associated with epistolary form and exemplifies the “compromise and consent,” present in *Pride and Prejudice* (137).

The parallels I draw between Gissing and Austen indicate that *New Grub Street* aspires to transcend the commodity market’s production of free indirect discourse and public province. *New Grub Street’s* private letters succeed because they are independent. The market and its meddling narrator cannot lessen the “literary” value the letters achieve. Jasper’s comment regarding literary value--“we talk of literature as a trade, not of Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare”--will suffice here for a definition (Gissing 13). Epistolary discourse can create the effect of literary value by transcending the commoditized writing of the market. The letters’ counterparts-- Reardon’s novels, Jasper’s reviews, Yule’s writing, the newspapers, magazines, and other serial publication--suggest the reproduction of texts for the mass public. Gissing removes what Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” terms a work’s “aura” or authenticity. The free indirect discourse of the novel exists as the commercialized counterparts to the letters’ more authentic private discourse. In conjunction with

Galperin's reading of *Pride and Prejudice* and Austen's indirect discourse, I will demonstrate the way the unique and un-replicable epistolary form in *New Grub Street* guards the existence of Reardon, Jasper, and Amy from narrative authority and cynicism. The tension between their commercialization and private individuality reflects the novel's tenuous strain on discourses. Narrative influence creates bias and limitations that reflect the perilous language and questions of the market. Does this writing supply the market audience? How does it perform to entertain? What profit do we gain from publishing this? The epistolary letters subvert the commoditized market by producing direct discourse as a literary-niche free from these concerns.

*New Grub Street* watches Reardon struggle to produce a novel that saves not only his career, but his marriage with Amy as well. After Reardon fails to earn enough income to sustain the family household, Amy leaves Reardon and returns home taking their son Willie with her. They correspond through letters, and shortly after the first few exchanges Reardon writes, "I have a reason for wishing to see you... It must be understood that I shall see no one else" (Gissing 343). Reardon acknowledges space, distance, and the public discourse of private concerns. His request to see "no one else" suggests exclusivity away from commercialized market-driven writing. Amy and Reardon's marriage abstains from public discourse via private correspondence. The letter's placement within *New Grub Street* as a physical text recalls Reardon's specific concerns expressed to Biffen pages earlier. He worries over Amy's distaste for insufficient dwellings. However, the ambiguity of his letter and "reason" to visit Amy demonstrates the mediation between private and public discourse. Reardon rejects concerns with the housing "market" expressed in the narrator's indirect discourse.

Reardon's experience prior to the letter comes from the free indirect discourse of Carter, Reardon's former and current employer during Reardon's days as a clerk. A chance encounter

with Carter leaves an impression on him that he later shares with his wife. Carter reveals an “unfortunate clerk” whom he is “on the look-out for [with] employment that would be more suitable” to a man who talks “in the most extraordinary fashion” (341). Carter goes as far as noting he “had begun to think there might be a foundation to Mrs. Yule’s hypothesis –that the novelist was not altogether in his sound senses” (340). Reardon’s assertive, gentle nature in the letter contrasts with Gissing’s depiction of Reardon’s “conflicting passions” articulated by Carter’s earlier indirect discourse. With free indirect discourse refracting Reardon’s insecurity into destitute illness, Reardon’s reputation dissolves around his failures to “supply the market.” He only achieves freedom and reputable standing in epistolary spaces.

The market control developing in Amy, Reardon, and Jasper’s letters show striking similarities. After Reardon’s meeting with Amy, their communication dissolves in the months that follow. The narrator implies Reardon’s physical and mental health deteriorates. Amy during this period continues to live with her parents, and following the death of her uncle, John Yule, acquires an inheritance. Only when Amy renews the correspondence with Reardon does the first indication of any hope to reclaim both status and money in a market Reardon “can’t supply” surface:

You must, of course, have heard [she wrote] that my uncle John has left me ten thousand pounds. It has not yet come into my possession, and I had decided that I would not write to you till that happened, but perhaps you may altogether misunderstand my silence.

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 thoughts which now make it so difficult for me to write to you. What I wish to say is that, although the

property is legally my own, I quite recognize that you have a right to share in it. Since we have lived apart you have sent me far more than you could really afford, believing it your duty to do so; now that things are so different I wish you, as well as myself, to benefit by the change.

I said at our last meeting that I should be quite prepared to return to you if you took that position at Croydon. There is now need for you to pursue a kind of work for which you are quite unfitted, and I repeat that I am willing to live with you as before. If you will tell me where you would like to make a new home I should gladly agree. I do not think you would care to leave London permanently, and certainly I should not.

Please to let me hear from you as soon as possible. In writing like this I feel that I have done what you expressed a wish that I should do. I have asked you to put an end to our separation, and I trust that I have not asked in vain.

(Gissing 380-381)

As Reardon's composure constantly fails and as his ill health expresses the unprofitability of his literary endeavors, Amy recognizes and exposes several narrative truths about him. Consistent with the rest of the novel, omniscient authority tells us that "Reardon heard the postman, but he had ceased to rush out on every such occasion, and to-day he was feeling ill" (380). Reardon's sluggish, idle character exposed by indirect discourse marks how the narrator invades Amy's letter.

When Amy states, "You must, of course, have heard [she wrote] that my uncle John has left me ten thousand pounds," the brackets advertize narratorial intrusion (380). The "you" marks a tonal and structural similarity to the indirect discourse penetrated by the authorial voice earlier

in the novel. This usage of “you” recalls Amy and Reardon’s earlier conflict concerning financial matters and space. The narrator states, “it was only when the dread of the future began to press upon him... You see how complicated were the miseries of the situation, one torment involved another, and in every quarter subjects of discontent were multiplied” (135). This “you” implicates readers, conscripting them as parts of the literary market insofar as they comply with the narrator’s perspective. The narrator’s imposing omniscient authority appears in the tonal and linguistic choices of the character’s direct discourse. Narrator and reader perform the same way the letters do by occupying the narrative’s conversational space. Gissing’s narrator attempts to mask the epistolary discourse by juxtaposing it against free indirect discourse.<sup>1</sup>

Amy’s letter then remains a didactic force in the unstoppable, corrupting and penetrating influence of the market on private exchange. It becomes the last refuge for Reardon’s voice to produce writing that achieves literary success. Amy’s letter suggests a dangerous correlation between economics and literary space when she acknowledges, “If this money had come to me when you were struggling so hard to earn a living for us” then these letters would not exist. The capital from inheritance can allow Reardon to return to novel writing, for “There is no need for you to pursue a kind of work for which you are quite unfitted” (381). Reardon’s “unfit” character for secretarial work recalls Carter’s indirect discourse naming him an “unfortunate clerk” who struggles to “earn a living” to support Amy and Willie.

Gissing also mediates the space of transition from Amy’s writing to Reardon’s return correspondence. In the space where epistolary novels demonstrate silence between exchanged letters, Gissing supplies the indirect discourse of Reardon. He responds, “It was such a letter as

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<sup>1</sup> For further discussion of the Gissing’s narrator implicating the reader as passive receptor to his omniscient asides, see Stewart, Garrett. *Dear Reader: The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. Print.

he might have expected, but the beginning misled him, and as his agitation throbbled itself away he suffered from an encroachment of despair” (381). Authoritative discourse here redirects the attention of the reader to the letter’s beginning, while forcing the narrative forward simultaneously: “His reply, written by the dreary twilight which represented sunset, ran thus” (381). The text shifts from epistolary space to narrative space and back again. It fails to subvert the epistolary spaces of the characters as they correspond without direct pressures of the commoditized-literary market.

Amy’s only indication of Reardon’s connection to the market is her remark that he is “quite unfitted” to pursue work not suited to him; it indicates a narrative not in place. Amy’s letter implies Reardon’s potential to succeed in the commercialized market and her comments re-open discourse on producing literature that retains some sort of “literary” value. Although not expressed in her letter directly, Amy implies Reardon’s ability to produce literature supplying the market. This suggests his writing can transcend and carry the commercial market’s pressures. She does not distinguish Reardon’s commercial value from his literary value. However, the content of her epistolary writing does not reflect the form her letter embodies. *New Grub Street* consistently uses epistolary space to transcend commoditized writing as a way for private discourses to achieve literary value. Epistolary space here also indicates the strength of Reardon’s own writing. The letters he writes Amy prior to the novel’s commencement that are not produced in the text we know contain “literary” value because Reardon “never published anything equal to those” (66).

Gissing reproduces the content of Reardon’s letter but also mediates it with indirect discourse. Reardon’s acknowledgement of Amy’s “regard for social conventions” that “necessitate your living with me again”; his obstinate refusal to “share your wealth” of Amy’s,

and his confession that “some great and noble sorrow may have the effect of drawing hearts together” recall authorial intrusions and free indirect discourse. Reardon notes, “to be crushed by care about shillings and sixpences –that must always degrade” (382). The sorrow and its effect derive from indirect discourse introduced in the beginning of Reardon’s separation from Amy. The narrator reminds readers that “refuge from despair is often found in the passion of self-pity and that spirit of obstinate resistance which it engenders” (335). It also evokes Amy’s regard for social conventions of man and wife in marriage. Biffen’s noble attempts are also to no avail. He does “his best to oppose Reardon’s harsher judgments of Amy,” moments after Reardon previous posts a letter he “would gladly have recalled” (335). Reardon’s agitated response to Amy demonstrates the importance of epistolary writing as a space only valuable if the money market can remain absent. The indirect discourse of the later letters indicates Reardon’s frustration: “It was such a letter as he might have expected, but the beginning misled him, and as his agitation throbbled itself away he suffered an encroachment of despair which made him for a time unable to move or even think” (381). Reardon reminds us the letter is one “he might have expected,” and in doing so indicates Amy’s missed “market” opportunity for emotional reconciliation. Her inherited financial security does not resolve the unbalanced emotional market Reardon fears will collapse their marriage. The market Reardon eventually achieves before his death does not involve monetary gain but emotional repentance and sustaining love. His letters retain the economy of feeling as they disavow the economics of literature for sale.

Mary Poovey’s *Genres of the Credit Economy* finds a similar narrative value to Austen’s writing as ascribed to Gissing’s *New Grub Street*. The free indirect discourse, authorial intrusions, and epistolary writing of the novel and “the density of these perspectives . . . invite the reader to reread, for these devices create a fist impression that one is seeing everything and a

second impression that something has been missed” (Poovey 360). Gissing succeeds in creating complex densities of narration through indirect discourse that precede the epistolary writing of *New Grub Street*. Poovey summarizes George Levin’s argument, “if money is not used for some ethical end, it ruins heroes, debases higher goals, and threatens the aesthetic value of literature; but denouncing money . . . can ennoble a character, just as preferring love to money” (Poovey 373). Reardon, his reputation and his remaining noble attributes preserve themselves through his letters to Amy. As a result, he freely accepts his death in the literary market place and in his personage. Like his public reputation Reardon fades from the text an impoverished, unsuccessful author.

Throughout Gissing’s novel, epistolary spaces mediate between corrupt market concerns and authoritative free indirect discourse. Social conventions saturated by market concerns refute and escape omniscient narration. As a mode of direct discourse, epistolarity in *New Grub Street* removes the money economy from market control and privatizes these funds. In these private exchanges, Reardon, Jasper, and Amy find control over their earnings free from the public market of indirect discourse. They demarcate the boundaries between the destructive narrative and the integrity that reaffirms their character.

When Reardon writes, “enclosed in this envelop you will find twenty pounds...it seemed best to me to sell the furniture, and now I send you all the money I can spare at present,” he reacts against the earlier indirect discourse’s depiction of him (Gissing 255). Reardon’s indirect discourse finds him concerned, obsessed and driven by pinching “every penny he could save [that] was of importance [to] him” (Gissing 254). The narrator acknowledges that he “was too well aware that he would certainly be cheated, and shrank scornfully from the haggling of the market,” in a tone that differs from the indifference of Reardon’s own direct discourse: “as for

my privations, I think very little of them; they are a trifle in comparison with the thought that I am forsaken just because my pocket is empty” (Gissing 337). Absent in Reardon’s epistolary space is concern over his financial ruin. His reputation among the “forsaken” dominates his epistolary concerns. What *New Grub Street* recognizes and addresses in epistolary space the text attempts to mediate. The characters remain fully conscious that market-driven reputation precedes literary reputation. However, they do not care. Instead, the text provides epistolary space where characters may defend and remove their financial concerns instead establishing epistolary writing as the mode of judgment.

Reardon and Amy’s correspondence does not dominate the entire epistolary space of *New Grub Street*. Jasper’s letter to Yule performs similar refuge from the market for Jasper. Embedded in the market, he performs as mediator between market and literary space, and provides the best opportunity to reconcile the commoditized market and transcendent literary value. Jasper’s letter results from his marital interest in Marian Yule after the death of her uncle. As a result, Alfred Yule’s fear of Jasper stems from his knowledge of Jasper’s economic intent. He believes, partly because Yule sees himself in Jasper, that Jasper seeks to secure a reputation through his daughter’s inheritance: “The question with her father was whether these things resulted simply from her consciousness of possessing what to her seemed wealth, or something else had happened of the nature he dreaded” (399). The fear of Jasper’s hand in his daughter’s outcome confirms itself when “his doubts came to an end two days after that proposal of a title for the new review” when a letter from Jasper arrives (399). Yule’s reaction does not produce unfamiliar results as “half an hour after reading this [letter] Yule was roused from the gloomiest brooding by Marian’s entrance” (401). Yule’s gloom and his confirmed doubts surrounding

Jasper's letter reproduce in his emotional response. Articulated through omniscient narration, Yule produces a subjective view of Jasper's desires.

Jasper's case complicates itself when he simultaneously reaffirms his market concerns and rejects his reputation as solely interested in his ability to "supply the market": "I used to work in the Museum Reading-room, and there I had seen Miss Yule, had ventured to observe her at moments with a young man's attention, and had felt my interest aroused, though I did not know her name" (400). Jasper's implications here are clearer. His interest in Marian Yule comes before any knowledge of her personage or her purse. Jasper's reading room work also suggests a character history that predates the novel's beginning. His discourse remains free from market driven pursuits that provide him reputation through capital.

The rest of Jasper's letter mediates direct discourse as both corrupt and free from the meddlesome concerns of a market-driven reputation. When Jasper states, "I learnt to my extreme regret that my connection with *The Current* and its editor would make any repetition of my visit very distasteful to you," he acknowledges the dangers of the new market, and its intrusive impact on his relationship with Yule. Jasper remains "conscious of nothing in my literary life" that could offend Yule, and "at this day can say the same" (400). Yet, Jasper's intentions remain at best torn when he notes, "My means were very slight; I had no choice but to take such work offered, and mere chance had put me into a position which threatened ruin to the hope that you would some day regard me as a not unworthy suitor for your daughter's hand" (400). The indirect discourse of Yule surrounding the letter complicates Jasper's intentions of an "interest aroused" by Marian's personage. He claims he has "no choice but to take such work," and hints at his dissatisfaction over his choice. Jasper wishes to write, but with an established name backed by money. The letter produces a market sales pitch that further complicates Jasper's relationship

between the direct discourse of his character and a narrative authority that suggests otherwise.

Jasper's ethical proclivities involve money and in this his ethical ends remain ambiguous. He establishes his reputation through money and marriage, but also hopes to produce an oeuvre of critical literary work that the public finds valuable. Jasper's redemption occurs when he produces his final tribute to Reardon's work. Jasper's tribute suggests a moral conscience. He remains the antithetical comparison to Reardon and Biffen, performing heroic acts to an anti-heroic climax. Perhaps it is this complex role that allows Gissing to "elevate [his] character over the degraded value of the market" in the same way epistolary space elevates what remains of Reardon and Amy (Poovey 373).

Jasper's role remains more ambiguous and complex than Reardon or Amy. Understanding Jasper's character suggests that his marriage to Amy seems inevitable as she both supplies Jasper's market ambitions and exhibits Reardon's ideals regarding reputation. She believes in Reardon's ability to write something "literary," away from the commoditized market. Like Austen and mid-nineteenth-century writers, Gissing's *New Grub Street* does "sharpen imaginative writers' critique of the market economy," but does not succeed in using prevailing attitudes devoid of money (Poovey 374). *New Grub Street's* characters struggle against market concerns while simultaneously reflecting the "corruption and greed" of the outside world and market (Poovey 374). Poovey notes that Austen's readers must reread Austen because initial readings of *Pride and Prejudice* demonstrate through objects "how information is conveyed, who conveys it and where it surfaces" (366). A second reading reveals unnarrated events that do not occur but are alluded to by narrative events in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Gissing's *New Grub Street* in its epistolary space demonstrates the various ways letters' direct discourse reveal part of the narrative located outside the concerns of the market.

Reardon's devotion to Amy through his mailing of money he earns, her utilization of the money in her devotion to their son Willie, and Jasper's inability to procure work under any respectable literary pundit except the infamous Fadge. The events that exist in epistolary space introduce aspects of each character's mutual obligations. This obligation remains free from the corrupting influence of a literary market that demands unattainable levels of production from Jasper and Reardon.

The placement of the letters toward the second half of the novel also indicate Gissing's shift away from the novel's early concerns of supplying the market. Here, Reardon surrenders to the workforce and quits attempting novel writing, Biffen ends his life when poor reviews of his novel appear, and Jasper concludes the novel in a mode of significantly slower speed. He writes less as his sociability increases until the pinnacle of his experience with Amy and friends at the novel's conclusion.

According to Poovey, the letters of Austen open a space for a money plot not present in the first two volumes of the *Pride and Prejudice* narrative. What then do Gissing's epistolary spaces in *New Grub Street* ascertain about Reardon, Jasper, and Amy? With the saturation of the market, the free indirect discourse absorbed in production of articles for publication, writing for the commoditized market, and the Yule sisters' economic turnaround, the epistolary space procures direct discourse as a novelty with noble ends, ethical desires, and an economy of feeling. Jasper, Reardon, and Biffen's need to produce texts that accommodate the market differ from the letters occupying the novel's space. Unlike their commercialized article counterparts, the letters produce a "literary" value, composed of intrinsic irreproducible feelings. It determines and creates value inherent in the letters' existence. They abstain from market concerns and introduce nobler, honest characters. The creation of this public private discourse unveils new

discourses for Jasper, Amy, and Reardon. Their epistolary language speaks directly without the social accountability of speech.

How does Jasper's fascination with producing wealth before success in the market affect his portrayal? And what do these letters suggest about the correspondence between private and public discourse and the reconciliation between novel as genre and serialization? Jasper notes "to have money is becoming of more and more importance in a literary career; principally because to have money is to have friends." Gissing demonstrates the way indirect discourse infiltrates Jasper's direct discourse. Jasper's self-consciousness shows his awareness of the power of a new "literary" market saturated with journalistic discourse -- to borrow Alfred Yule's term -- "watered down into worthlessness" (Gissing 37). While seeking to produce his own writing for economic profit, Jasper recognizes the importance of financial security. Marian and Amy's wealth initiates in the dispatch by telegram of Alfred Yule's brother's death (290). As John Yule's debts and estates are settled, the absent text of the letters to Amy and Marian confirm privately what Gissing produces as public knowledge. They inherit sizable incomes and as a result, new marketability in the social status of their character.

However, this space of public knowledge in a private sphere marks an important craftsmanship absent, as Jasper suggests, in the writing of the time. Market "literary" status implicates increasing degrees of sociability and economic stability. Jasper relies on courting Marian and Amy to build his reputation. He invades their epistolary space when he acknowledges his knowledge of their inheritance. Christina Lupton and Tilam Reitz note *New Grub Street's* "occurrence and articulation of knowledge about the way in which writing is produced changes the nature of this writing, namely the structure" and that "describing the mechanisms of the literature allows readers to evaluate the role of literature in their life" (Lupton

133). Lupton and Reitz note that Jasper, Reardon, Marian, and Yule are all self-conscious and exist as characters “endowed with realistic degrees of knowledge about their own chances of success” (Lupton 134). Thus, Alfred Yule is aware he will gain nothing by Marian’s inheritance, Jasper recognizes his position within the new market, and even Reardon foresees his own failings as a novelist and husband. As Lupton and Reitz argue, this does not prevent characters from being consumed by the situation their intellect fully recognizes.

Lupton and Reitz demonstrate the ways *New Grub Street’s* self-consciousness exposes the commodities or character’s themselves, but “offers no guarantee of change ... [in a] very particular structure [that] inscribes a place for the reader’s increasing consciousness about the novel” (Lupton 144). The importance of *New Grub Street’s* self-consciousness and the reader’s self-consciousness, however, does not explain the way epistolary space demarcates the boundaries of the commodity market. *New Grub Street’s* self-conscious narrator attempts to penetrate but cannot ultimately control the letters’ direct discourse. Lupton and Reitz also recognize the relationship between commodity market and self-consciousness. As a discourse that seeks to saturate every part of the novel, it is also important to discuss how the economic space of Gissing’s London functions.

Economic concerns caused by the evolving market saturate the indirect discourse of the novel as the priority of every character. As Jasper notes, Johnson’s Grub Street and the writing as art for art’s sake has replaced itself as the “commodity-text” that Feltes traces. Feltes notes that the “main forms of capitalist control of serial novel production in magazines at mid-century were the new division of periodicals into ‘clique’ or ‘class’ journals” (Feltes 64). Gissing’s novel and its characters struggle against the nineteenth-century’s changing mode of production. The Grub Street periodical of the late nineteenth-century “interpellated its readership” by the ideology of

production it created. Gissing's novel and the characters within it have no choice but to perform in a way conducive to the market place.

Fighting against control over correspondence, the characters attempt to create a safe haven for their own economy. The conversation between Yule and Jasper in the early pages of *New Grub Street* discusses the state of Grub Street. Here Yule "unfolded a London evening paper, and indicated a long letter from a casual correspondent" (Gissing 36). The published letter exposes conflicting reviews of a novel existing in a periodical called *The Study*. Yule notes to Jasper, "I have private letters on the subject" reducing the periodical's internal misprint to a personal feud between the editor and writer (36). Yule recounts to Jasper the possible legal ramifications his letters detail. Yet, Yule's letters, unlike Amy's and Reardon's letters, and even Jasper's, remain absent from the text. The publication of epistolary writing in public papers, however, and Yule's collection, suggest an absence of private direct discourse in letters containing public affairs. The letters become commoditized and redefine the boundaries between private and public discourse. They remain absent from the text because they are published, and show the way the market can eradicate epistolary space for the sake of journalistic form.

Letters and their control over economy, and the shifting between private and public knowledge of the content of letters, also frame the approach Gissing takes with direct address in *New Grub Street*. Like "Thackeray's eccentric metaleptic shifts from plot to extra narrative context," Gissing's intrusions and "reader asides" that address his audience reflect a correspondence between writer and his platform (Stewart 330). The form of Reardon's, Jasper's and Amy's letters coincides with Gissing's narrative. Letters in *New Grub Street* emphasize the "human interest" story of "new journalism" in the 1880s and 90s (Feltes 67). Gissing achieves this style in his authorial intrusions, corresponding with the reader through indirect discourse. By

the time the novel produces Reardon, Amy, and Jasper's letters, the reader's familiarity of mutually shared knowledge of events, names, and occurrences in the literary gossip world of *New Grub Street* appear as frequently as periodical pieces.

Gissing's narrative structure "shows no hesitation in shattering the invisible pane of omniscience to put epithets in your mouth" (Stewart 331). However, unlike Stewart who argues, "Gissing's ironic setpiece effects its own 'address' in precisely the explicit way that cheapjack journalism, in its tawdry transparencies of report, would rigorously avoid," Gissing's intrusions and forms of indirect discourse do correspond with journalistic endeavors (331). Gissing's *New Grub Street* partakes in journalistic tendencies and gossip. It exposes private correspondence and emotion to public display as it implicates its readers and their access to correspondence. *New Grub Street* creates an arbitrary relationship that implies the genres of journalism, letters, and nineteenth-century novels emphasize form over content. The language of Gissing's interjecting narrator, his omniscient point of view, and the correspondence between characters share a similar prose style. These similarities implicate the importance of form, a repeated point of interest in Jasper's *Grub Street* periodicals.

The cultural shifts of the late nineteenth century demonstrate a quickly evolving and growing market economy. As the century came to a close changes in form from the three-decker novel to newspapers and serial publications highlight the shift of interest in publishing. Most critical understandings of Gissing's *New Grub Street* reflect on Gissing's conflicted feelings on realism and his concern over the fading three-decker form. Eitan Bar-Yosef notes that for Gissing, "the novels emphasize their own artificiality not by relying on the omniscient narrator's constant commentary [...] but by presenting the novels themselves as commodities, inseparable from the capitalist marketplace in which they were produced" (Bar-Yosef 186). The economic

market changed the novel's production and shaped writers' discourse. *New Grub Street* criticizes the changing market as it moves away from three-decker novels to serial publication in newspapers and magazines. The self-consciousness of *New Grub Street* recognizes its commodification in the market as it is played out in the novel.

*New Grub Street's* awareness shows Gissing caught between two areas of writing: the first simplifies arguments at stake for the public, and the other creates more complex, artistic arguments. The latter requires thoughts and development on the reader's end. In mediating these forms, Gissing also mediates between a journalistic form of simple, short, conversational pieces, and the lengthy, involved content of his predecessors. Gissing's *New Grub Street* settles for the former while aiming for the latter.

In exploring form over content, Nicholas Dames' discussion of speed reading offers evidence of letters and authorial intrusion as moments of "new journalism." Dames argues that Gissing's novel comes at a time when speed reading only begins to exist as a nineteenth-century phenomena. It succumbs to speed-reading itself, despite Gissing's attempts to slow its narrative. Gissing's text silences the other texts of the novel, which Dames argues, could compromise Gissing's own. These eliminations and avoidance of discussing speed, suggest that

the novel resolutely silences its many referenced texts, in a move as bold as it is timid;[ . . . ] to think of opportunities for parody and biting stylistic analysis that are foregone in *New Grub Street*. This refusal might be, in fact, Gissing's sense of the novel's only remaining cultural role: to resist incorporation into the new, more rapid or telegraphic styles of the day. (241)

Gissing cannot keep pace, and he only wishes to protect the novel from the mass rate of consumption in which speed-reading begins to shape the market.

In conjunction with Dames, Martin Ryle's view of *New Grub Street* believes that men of letters exist, "for Gissing, [in a way that] 'brains' connotes not just intelligence, but a critical sensibility, both socially determined and deliberately cultivated, that drives its possessor to reason about society and politics in ways that 'cannot be comprehended' by much of the public" (Ryle 121). Ryle argues that language and ideas are not shared but disputed between the narrator or author and his reading public. He also argues that Gissing's "authorial discourse requires an alert response" (122). Gissing succeeds in accomplishing a developed dialogue between narrator and audience, which does not force, but implicates the audience in a mutual understanding of the socio-economic status of its characters in 1880's London.

What Ryles and Dames seek to understand are the impact of reading and the level of investment readers share in *New Grub Street*. What *New Grub Street* also meditates is the relationship between producing market-free literary content and indirect discourse shaped by market concerns. *New Grub Street* tenuously explores the destructive force that the market produces on the reading public's literature, and examines the ways the preservation of literary value is performed using modes of direct discourse. This achievement appears in the epistolary writing of the novel, and reconciles literary value in reputable private writing.

Throughout the novel significant discussion occurs over the aforementioned market. It penetrates reviews of both Reardon's and Biffen's novels, as well Jasper's contribution to the marketplace. The space where these texts have opportunity to exist Gissing instead fills with commentary and reviews of these writings, but never the writing itself. Dames explores at length the potential of the eye as a motor and the novel as a technology to continue to train reading habits. However, he also notes Gissing's refusal to participate in this new literature. That "Gissing significantly abstains from any pastiche" and silences his other texts – Reardon's

novels, Yule's reviews, even Milvain's sisters' text – suggests to Dames that “*New Grub Street* poses itself against the new speed reader[ . . . ] its acerbity is a result of its obstinate preference for the vanishing world of slow reading,” but, “as readers get faster . . . *New Grub Street* is possessed by the knowledge that over time, it will only seem slower” (Dames 242). Gissing's *New Grub Street* fights against this inevitability, and may have “knowledge” of its own destiny as an eventual slow read.

Yet, Gissing's novel acknowledges it cannot escape perpetuating speed by the discourses that involve terms and objects associated with new technologies. Speed exists in the language and actions apparent in both letters and the rest of the novel. When Reardon quickly notes, “this was no sooner posted than he would have gladly recalled it” he recognizes an immediate urgency in his failure, and the quickness of a posted letter (Gissing 337). The speed at which Reardon's response escapes his grasp and his inability to retract the letter parallels the speed by which letters arrive at their destination. Both Jasper's mentioned letter to Yule and the two “dispatched” letters to Amy and Marian employ language of haste and locate Gissing's text in the cultural mode of quick exchange. Telegraphic communications, as I call them, denote any telegraphs or same day posts that occur in George Gissing's *New Grub Street*. Arriving over a matter of mere hours rather than days or week, these communications rapidly move around London. Jasper's long-winded narrations stylistically replicate this rapid movement. However, his narrative cannot compete with the space and distance covered using modern technology.

Gissing's stretch to maintain a novel protected from the “degradations of its consumers, from the increasingly distorting ways it was being read in culture of speed” also marks its inability to escape this culture of speed by the employment of the culture's language (Dames 246). Where Dames' argument suggests that Gissing follows rapidity with moments of

retardation, he indicates that Gissing's novel has no alternative. *New Grub Street* finds itself caught in the hegemonic language of speed, and produces a three-decker novel intended for the same market Gissing despised.

Reardon's novels fulfill a function in their silence beyond the acerbity. Their absence demonstrates the ability of Gissing's commoditized market discourse to permeate the space of the novel. The market achieves this through indirect discourse and through the character's oral recantations and their criticisms. By refusing to produce evidence from these novels, Gissing's narrator also refuses any opportunity to explore or examine these writings beyond the novel's text. The novel's parameters and boundaries set by the framework of the physical novel maintain the streamline narrative authority. *New Grub Street* as a novel produces the short, stylistic blurbs that parody critics' novel reviews of the period. Gissing adheres to the journalistic style focused on observation and not production.

From the novel's opening scene Gissing places his character's texts outside the boundaries of the novel. Jasper's comment on Reardon's work demarcates the external boundary his novels will occupy: "Because one book had a sort of success he imagined his struggles were over. He got a hundred pounds for 'On Neutral Ground' and at once counted on a continuance of payments in geometrical proportion" (Gissing 7). Jasper's comment recognizes a temptation to step away from the text, before reining the narrative back into the text at hand: "Well, his next books brought only another hundred, and now, even if he finishes this one, it's very doubtful if he'll get as much. 'The Optimist' was practically a failure" (Gissing 7). Reardon's novels exist in a space prior to the opening of *New Grub Street*, and Jasper's own dismissal of the texts terminates any desire to discover them. It also demonstrates Reardon's inability to "supply the market." The repeated onslaught of Reardon's inability to survive in the market with his initial

literary endeavors again comes at the expense of Reardon's novel, "The Optimist." According to John Yule "of all the morbid trash I ever saw, that [novel] beat everything" (22). If Gissing's narrator penetrates the direct discourse of every character's speech, he also echoes disapproval in the different critical reviews of the novel. Every criticism of the novel's "morbid trash" fails to offer any supplemental text to accompany the criticism (25).

The indirect discourse reduces the form of *New Grub Street* to a literary review. It not only changes the tone, but also demonstrates how knowledge of the novel's content does not supply a market concerned with printing in rapidity. The absence of Reardon's novels produces no effect and the characteristics of Reardon's form remain inept at best: "It was clear the author had no faculty for constructing a story, and that pictures of active life were not to be expected of him; he could never appeal to the multitude. But strong characterisation was within his scope, and intellectual fervour, appetising to a small section of refined readers, marked all his best pages" (62). Reardon's "characterisation" and "intellectual fervour" display only a trace of the entirety of the novel and its parts. Every piece of writing is reduced to the very Chit-Chat Whelpdale wishes to produce: "No article in the paper is to measure more than two inches in length, and every inch must be broken into at least two paragraphs" (459). Whelpdale's ambition reflects an emphasis on form and trivialization of content. Whelpdale's emphasis reflects the treatment Reardon's novels receive. Readers can construct information through indirect discourse that speaks to Reardon's writing faculties, but never to specifics of the novel. His work remains an induced ambiguous entity of generic qualities associated with three-decker production.

Narrative authority reminds the reader that Reardon's "third book sold for fifty pounds. It was a great improvement on its predecessors, and the reviews were generally favourable" (63).

Marian's commentary states that Reardon's novels and their reviews "are very disagreeable" and that the book, "isn't good, but I have seen many worse novels more kindly reviewed" (177). Reardon also cannot abstain from deprecation of his novels. His indirect discourse tainted by omniscient authority reflects that, "Reardon's story was in itself weak, and this second volume had to consist almost entirely of laborious padding. If he wrote three slips a day he did well" (131). The "laborious padding" creates no indication of Reardon's content, but the "volume," the number of "slips a day," the "worse novels" reviewed, and the "reviews [that] were generally favourable" all dictate the importance of form over content. By virtue of their absence, the reviews fall back to conveying only form and genre.

Reviewers of Reardon's latest work, *Margaret Home*, fall under the same ambiguity. His distaste for them and their articles remains clear: "The judgments could not but be damnatory, and their expression in journalistic phrase would disturb his mind with evil rancour. No one would have insight enough to appreciate the nature and cause of his book's demerits; every comment would be wide of the mark; sneer, ridicule, trite objection" (207). Another review notes that "this particular critic only said what was quite true—that the novel contained not a single striking scene and not one living character" (207). The judgments made by Reardon's indirect discourse reflect the disgust of the journalistic form inherent in the reviews. The free indirect discourse associated with Reardon's concerns notes, "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" (207). The narrative discourse here opposes the journalistic style it incorporates. Gissing's narrator produces none of Reardon's work. It only provides brief reviews and snippets of the critical reception of his writing. Gissing's narrator reaffirms, as does Reardon, the "worthlessness of current reviewing" and

sardonically suggests the condition of “his purse” is no less affected than Reardon’s “state of mind.” The corrupt and meddlesome market reflects Reardon’s deterioration the same way the narrative style reflects hack journalistic brevity and emotional exploits *New Grub Street’s* periodicals abstain from mentioning.

Jasper’s success as a literary critic diametrically opposes Reardon’s failure. Jasper, unlike Reardon, recognizes the dangerous games of the market. As Feltes argues, the true danger came from the capital gained by the literary magazines and newspapers that forced authors to receive a flat fee. As with Thomas Hardy’s writing, Feltes notes, “it forced and shaped the ‘sheer drudgery’ of Hardy’s revisions, surrounded his text with illustrations, tidbits and advertisements [...] and in that way, by those techniques, it ‘capitalized’ to its own profit” on the success of Hardy’s writing (Feltes 75). Jasper’s self-awareness of his literary skill parallels him to Reardon, but his market knowledge secures control over his career.

While Jasper stands the most financially capable of survival in the market, the market’s wealth dictates itself by a larger mode of production at work. As a result, Jasper becomes among the most financially dependent on the security of his capital gain in the market through letters. After he learns of Marian’s inheritance, Jasper must contemplate the benefits of marrying Marian Yule. Jasper knows, “to marry her[...] without money would be a gross absurdity, simply spoiling my career, and leading to all discontents” (Gissing 298). Jasper acknowledges that “to obtain money somehow or other—and I see no other way than by marriage—is necessary to me [...] I am not likely at all 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” (Gissing 298). Despite Jasper’s ability, as often relayed by his direct discourse, to survive on

Grub Street's periodical publishing market, Jasper undermines his own ability to sustain a living by indicating his need of financial security.

*New Grub Street's* textual absences resist any opportunities to move beyond the narrative. The growing absence of reviews, Jasper's own self-awareness of his writing, and his classification of it into genre and style suggests the commoditized writing he produces is beyond his control. When John Yule asks Jasper what he writes about, Jasper speaks of his subjects as "nothing in particular. I make a salable page or two out of whatever strikes my fancy" (25). In contrast, the authority of the text states, "Jasper was too young to have thoroughly mastered the art of somnambulistic composition; to write, he was still obliged to give exclusive attention to the matter under treatment" (304). His indulgence in his work and his reviews are never traced or examined for their content, rather they are only produced as "things": "That 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*" (73). Jasper reduces the physical size and content of his writing when he acknowledges his writing is "equal to that contents of a mould nut" (181).

If any content arises from the production of the market, the closest opportunity occurs through Jasper. The narrator notes Jasper "coming down from the office of the *Will-o'-the-Wisp* one afternoon, after a talk with the editor concerning a paragraph in his last week's *causerie* which had been complained of as libelous" (260). The "libelous" content Jasper's article produces undermines and reduces its content to a "paragraph" form. Reading a copy of *The Current* Marian notes, "Of the cleverness of Milvain's contribution there could be no two opinions; it drew the attention of the public, and all notices of the new magazine made special reference to this article" (112). Where the narrative initially begins with the understanding of Jasper's cleverness, it concludes with special reference to the "article" as the form.

The article forms and the incapability to recognize content sustain the suspension of silenced texts throughout *New Grub Street*. At the novel's conclusion, no trace of Reardon or Jasper's writing can exist beyond their epistolary productions. The commoditized-market driven indirect discourse succeeds. As *New Grub Street* concludes the control and dictation of form over content provides the only space for Reardon and Jasper's writing to exist. After the death of Reardon, Jasper puts together a periodical honoring the ill-fated author. His article arrives as Reardon's earlier work goes to a second printing. In an extended passage Jasper

seated himself so that the lamplight fell upon the pages, and read the article through. It was an excellent piece of writing (see *The Wayside*, June 1884), and in places touched with true emotion. Any intelligent reader would divine that the author has been personally acquainted with the man of whom he wrote, though the fact was nowhere stated. The praise was not exaggerated, yet all the best points of Reardon's work were admirably brought out. One who knew Jasper might reasonably have doubted before reading this, whether he was capable of so worthily appreciating the nobler man. (462-463)

The physical pages and the self-indulgent Jasper mock the empty spaces where the narrative controls these silences. When the indirect discourse suggests that readers "see *The Wayside*, June 1884," it hints at just enough content to eradicate any opportunity to step outside the text and read Jasper's work. This mode of illusion relays the novel's events and Jasper's review while only providing a glimpse at the article's content through the "pages" it occupies. The indirect discourse leaves one final reminder that Jasper's writing is not accessible because "any intelligent reader" reading Jasper's text also remains absent.

As Bar-Yosef notes, Gissing's own embedded disposition toward a realist culture he could not escape also requires discussion on the absence of the only "realist" text of the novel, Biffen's *Mr. Bailey, Grocer*. Like Jasper and Reardon's literary productions, Biffen's novel remains unreadable, absent from the text. Absence relies on the unknown or unrelated information about Biffen's text. In one of the only moments where written criticism outside the text exists, the narrative reveals sentences from the periodical's reviews that follow the release of Biffen's novel. The narrative hints at but never the full content. These fragments also indicate a generic format:

But reviewers in general were either angry or coldly contemptuous. "Let Mr. Biffen bear in mind," says one of these sages, "that a novelist's first duty is to tell a story." "Mr. Biffen," wrote another, "seems not to understand that a work of art must before everything else afford amusement." "A pretentious book of *genre emuyant*," was the brief comment of a Society journal. A weekly high standing began its short notice in a rage: "Here is another of those intolerable productions for which we are indebted to the spirit of groveling realism. This author, let it be said, is never offensive, but then one must go on to describe his work by a succession of negatives; it is never interesting, never profitable, never—" and the rest. The eulogy in *The West End* had a few timid echoes. That in *The Current* would have secured more imitators, but unfortunately it appeared when most of the reviewing had already been done. (485-486)

This acerbity of the indirect discourse that quotes the "sages" reviews reflects a critical disposition. The form of *New Grub Street's* narrative reflects and interplays with the form of journalistic reviews and articles. By offering fragments of these reviews to occupy space where

excerpts of Biffen's novel should appear, Gissing's narrator implies that genre and form are privileged over content. Each fragment focuses on the novelist and novel's "duty is to tell a story," the "book of *genre ennuyant*" and the "intolerable productions" of "groveling realism." Reviewers not only describe Biffen's novel by "a succession of negatives," but also stress the importance of obtaining genre and form as the dictator of content. Without the form of the realistic novel, or the genre of the novel itself, *Mr. Bailey, Grocer* falls into indeterminacy and remains absent of a value.

If the letters' content remains one of the few indirect discourse free areas of a commoditized market, the style of letter writing remains under the narrative control that reproduces letters within the novel's textual space. *New Grub Street* achieves this as it opens its textual space to the reader. Letters are not private, nor ever intend to contain information unknown to the other characters of the novel. By becoming indistinguishable from the rest of the novel in style, they place no demand on Gissing to create unique discourse. He does not differentiate his writing style from his characters' style in *New Grub Street*. The emphasis on uniformity here suggests the diluted nature of Amy, Jasper, and Reardon, whose correspondence, in conjunction with the narrative, reveals a universal despair; they must conform to the discourses of the commoditized market or risk having no voice at all.

The narrative discourse present in the novel, through authorial intrusion, asks what Gissing's characters fail to achieve. Does unique literary voice stand out from a commoditized practice where "writing against writing" fuses every genre and form of writing into one voice? Gissing's voice, as Stewart argues in *Dear Reader*, tells the reader what Gissing himself despised of literary reviews. Gissing indicated what to read and what not to read. However, Gissing encourages the reader to continue on *through New Grub Street* by this same force, suggesting

that his narrative achieves some higher value. Yet, by the conclusion of the nineteenth century, epistolary writing remains a fading trend, with travel and technology growth including advancements in telephone communications. As James How notes of epistolary space, “they are spaces of connection, providing permanent and seemingly unbreakable links between people and places,” that “presented new avenues for behaviour and hence new forms of behaviour,” where people can “develop their relationships, their alliances, their enmities and their connections” (How 5-6). He acknowledges, “as a function of this connectivity, the public nature of epistolary spaces had a hand in changing the very way in which letters . . . were approached and written” when delivered by Post Office or even telegram (How 7).

How’s argument on epistolary spaces of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century letters performs the same function as the epistolary space of *New Grub Street*. The letters provide Jasper, Reardon and Amy with a last refuge in which they discover intrinsic values of their relationships to one another. Within this space they can reject the commoditized, performative space of market writing. Their performances and public-private discourse supply their relationships with the sincere emotional economy of privatized markets. As the only “reproduction” of any text in the novel, Gissing’s omniscient narrative exposes its readers to a tranquility its journalistic production and acerbity cannot produce: value in unbreakable human connection free of market meddled indirect discourse.

Reardon, like Gissing, fears the collapse of the three-decker novel. Its collapse also suggested what Feltes terms a collapse of dignity and worth. The serialization of writing into daily newspapers, weekly magazines and monthly periodicals diminishes the value placed in three-decker novels. The use of epistolary writing in the novel preserves the potentially meaningless collapse of genre within *New Grub Street*. Gissing’s novel is marked by its own

hegemonic conformity to the language of speed and the collapse of time and space present in the epistolary letters. If any writing found within the novel avoids the arbitrary trap of hack journalism, it is revived by the consistent form of letters, which for the characters remain the only writing not altered by the new market concerns with spacing and subject matter. Instead, *New Grub Street's* characters remain connected to one another by their own pen.

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