

the “papal aggression crisis of 1850”) for the letter being written around the middle of November 1850 (*LMA* 1: 178nn1, 5).

<sup>4</sup> See Honan 16-17 for a discussion of the “Faustian syllabuses,” which included studies in Italian, prepared for young Jane, Matthew, and Tom, by their father, Thomas Arnold, shortly after he was elected Headmaster at Rugby School.

<sup>5</sup> In an analysis of Matthew Arnold’s “early dislike and distrust” of William Edward Forster, the “lean social activist and . . . gaunt shrill Quaker” who was to become the beloved “K’s” husband, Honan asserts that Forster “sickened” Matthew, casting “an “obvious, thickening, blackening cloud” over what had been an intensely close brother-sister relationship (187-88, 200-01).

<sup>6</sup> Jane married Forster on August 15, 1850, and there is compelling evidence that Matthew did not attend either the wedding breakfast or the ceremony, instead leaving his brother, Edward, with the honor of escorting their sister into Rydal Chapel and performing other duties required of the father of the bride (*LMA* 1: 175 & n1, Honan 213-14).

<sup>7</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, volume I of *Opere di Torquato Tasso*, ed. Bortolo Tommaso Sozzi, 2nd edition (Turin: Unione Tipografica, 1966) 17.26. All English translations of passages in the *Liberata* will come from Ralph Nash’s excellent prose translation (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1987). Quotations from the Italian original will hereafter be cited in parentheses in the text.

<sup>8</sup> See Anthony Hecht’s “The Dover Bitch,” *Collected Earlier Poems* (New York: Knopf, 1990) 17, for a parody that magnifies the Altamorean qualities within the persona of “Dover Beach.”

<sup>9</sup> *The Poems of Matthew Arnold* 627. Flavius Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, *The Complete Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (1737; Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1981) bk. 6, chap. 5, p. 582. All quotations from *Wars* will come from this translation and will hereafter be cited in parentheses in the text.

<sup>10</sup> *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, note to lines 35-37.

<sup>11</sup> In a letter to Jane, written on January 25, 1851, Matthew opens with the following sentence: “Since you do not write to me, I must be the first” (*LMA* 1: 188). Perhaps the Tasso was not as effective as Matthew had hoped!

<sup>12</sup> *The Poems of Matthew Arnold* 253-54.

<sup>13</sup> Honan 103.

### MORE LIGHT ON DREISER’S CHESTER GILLETTE/ CLYDE GRIFFITHS FAMILY

For nearly seventy-five years, since the publication of *An American Tragedy* in 1925, critics have noted that Theodore Dreiser used for the structure of his narrative an historical incident, the much publicized trial of Chester Gillette who was ac-

cused and convicted of contributing to the drowning death of his lover, Grace Brown. Although some critics insist that the story is more indebted to Dreiser's childhood than to that of Chester Gillette, Dreiser clearly depended upon the running accounts of the trial which appeared in *The New York World*. In the novel, Dreiser changes the name of Chester Gillette to Clyde Griffiths, but he retains the social and religious background of the character, drawing out the influences of religion, social pressures, and economic hardships on the character of Clyde.

In the Ballou family archives held by Nancy Bidwell Barcus of Waco, Texas, additional information about the Gillette family has come to light. In a letter written in 1927 to relatives back East in Cleveland, Ohio, Louis Ballou of Helena, Montana, describes his surprise at learning that a descendent of a family he knew in 1888 had been convicted of murder and become the subject of Dreiser's novel. This letter is significant to Dreiser studies for at least two reasons. First, it documents the reception which *An American Tragedy* received in 1927, when Montana was in many ways still a frontier state. Secondly, the letter gives a first-hand account of the extended Gillette family, supporting Dreiser's characterization of the family, and it recounts an early romance between Chester Gillette's aunt, Carrie, and a Will Sutherlin, editor and part-owner of a local newspaper.

In 1927, when Louis Ballou<sup>1</sup> wrote to his cousin Marie Ballou Garvin<sup>2</sup> of Cleveland, Ohio, Montana had been a state for only 38 years. The population, which totaled 549,000 people, was widely scattered, the density being 3.8 people per square mile. Cities like Helena, which, according to the 1994 United States census, had only 26,339 citizens, were not exactly intellectual centers. That Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* was being read and discussed by a woman's club in 1927 in Helena, Montana, testifies both to the reputation which Dreiser was enjoying and to the efforts of a segment of the Montana population to read the latest best sellers in spite of their isolation from the cultural and publishing centers of the East Coast. Scholars have long noted that the publication of *An American Tragedy* gave Dreiser his first financial and critical success. True, H.L. Mencken, one of Dreiser's champions, did not like the novel, but most contemporary reviewers were favorable. Since Louis Ballou is more in-

terested in the family connections with the Gillette family than he is with the novel (in fact it is not clear that he knows the novel very well), his letter does not tell us what the members of his sister's reading club thought of the book, but clearly the novel was being read avidly in a probably small circle of friends.

Moreover, Louis Ballou's account of Chester Gillette's grandparents provides reliable first-hand insight into the values and principles of the Gillette family. The letter reveals that Chester's parents attempted to live out the grandparent's values. Thus, the rigid, fundamentalist worldview which Chester Gillette believed to be a chief cause of his conflicts and which Dreiser detailed so dramatically in the life of his character Clyde Griffiths was a motivating factor in the family as early as 1888. In addition, the account of the aborted romance between Carrie Gillette, Chester's aunt, and William Sutherlin is intriguing in the light of Dreiser's use of the name Carrie in his 1900 novel, *Sister Carrie*. It is unlikely, if not impossible, for Dreiser to have known of Carrie Gillette, and critics have pointed out repeatedly that the character of Carrie is drawn from the experiences of Dreiser's sister. Nevertheless, Dreiser's account of the beginnings of the earlier novel are curious in light of the appearance of a sister Carrie in this letter. Malcolm Cowley reports that "one day in October, 1899, he [Dreiser] found himself writing two words on a clean sheet of paper: 'Sister Carrie'." Dreiser went on to say that his mind was blank except for the name and that there was something mystic about the event.<sup>3</sup> That Chester Gillette, who would appear as Clyde Griffiths in the 1925 novel, would have had an aunt named Carrie is an odd coincidence.

In the transcript which follows, the editor has not normalized spelling, grammar, or typographical errors except to indicate where the author omitted word endings as he ran out of space at the end of a line.

Home, some days before Christmas, 1927

My dear cousin,

Sister reminds me a reply is due from me to a letter of yours received five months ago, a surely long time for a reply. I fancy it must have come when I was absent at Canyon Creek,<sup>4</sup> where I spent two of the summer months overhauling the home of a friend.

A rather unusual experience has come to us, that a family with whom we were intimate in Helena long ago are the leading characters in a novel by Theodore Dreiser, called "An American Tragedy." We learned of it thru a woman author living in the city just three block away, and she said the novel was in the public library. It was about two months before I was able to get it. The members of the Women's Club were reading it turn about with the intent of discussing it after Sister read it and said it was true to life as far as she knew. Maybe I better write of how we came to know this family. In the year 1888 we were living in a rented home in Helena much too large for us, and when father went to Shoshone Agency, Wvo we rented the back rooms to a family named Gillett, consisting of a father, mother, four grown sons, and a daughter Carrie, my age then 18.

The father had owned a saw mill about twenty miles away, and with this girl Carrie I made two trips to the mill helping them move in. The two oldest boys were janitors at the High School, and the Sawtell theatre.

The Territorial legislature<sup>3</sup> was in session the winter following, and Will Sutherland editor and half owner of a paper published at White Sulphur Springs,<sup>4</sup> and attending the session as reporter for his paper.

Will was engaged to Carrie Gillett, and I in the confidence of both often carried letters back and forth, and occasionally given Will's love letters to read. The Gillett family were deeply religious, believing that a sinful place, and I an often patron of the theatre when money could be found, and Carrie trying to persuade me to cease going.

The Sawtell's put on a play where there were not members enough to do it and persuaded the two janitor Gillett boys and the sister Carrie to take part. All the three had to do was walk on the stage, and possibly forgive themselves in the fact no words were spoken. Carrie felt she had done a thing not right and spoke of it to me. When valentines were due I got a flaming comic of a girl stage struck, addressed it myself in imitation of Will Sutherland's hand, delivered it myself along with a letter from Will.

I remained, saw the valentine opened, and Carrie's face flamed, and when I asked what had disturbed her showed the valentine. My next question was who sent it, and she said Will, and she would flail him when he came.

I was disturbed after seeing how she was so offended, and suggested that another than Will had done it. She shoved the envelope under my eyes and look at it cant you see its Will's work. I believed when Will came it would all blow away. When Will came he got a roasting, and the engagement broken. I did not confess but used every persuasion I could think of to change Carrie's mind, all unavailing. A few months later we three children, I and two sisters drove to Shoshone Agency, and three years later on returning to Helena found the Gillett family had moved to Spokane.

Some years later the youngest sister moved to Spokane to live, and again we were in touch with the Gillett's. Maybe ten years later I was in Spokane saw Carrie and she confessed. Carrie said she had no regrets, it was all for the best, and if I had any regrets to forget them. The regret is still with me. Carrie's brother Frank married in Spokane, two children the resul[t]

Frank and wife soon joined the Salvation Army, both preaching on the street [t] nearly every night. The children were just street waifs, and the boy as soon as able got a job as bell-boy in a slum hotel. With his first money became a drifter, going from place to place, finally landing in New York where Warner the corset king, an uncle by marriage lived.

This boy, called in the novel Guy Griffith,<sup>7</sup> soon won a girl, tired of her soon and tried to be rid of her. She would not go and in desperation took for a ride in a row boat on a lake, rocked the boat, threw her out and drowne[d] her. When the girl was missing it seems that the boy was last seen with her and the girl's family knew she was soon to become a mother, So Guy was at once under suspicion. He denied all knowledge of her, and it was some weeks later before the girl's body was recovered. The boy was arrested, found guilty, and sentenced to death, all on circumstantial evidence. Now his aunt Carrie went on from Spokane to see the youth, and to her he confessed, said he deserved death, and blamed only his parents for their neglect, permitting him to form evil companions. On Carrie's return to Spokane she told sister all the details of the confession and she wrote it to us. My remembrance is that this happened about 26 years ago.<sup>8</sup>

Had one told me that a Gillett had resorted to violence of any sort I could not have believed it, to me they seemed the farthest removed from it of any human I had known. Here was the confession so it must be believed.

All of this family have passed away, and Will too, neither married. I wonder some how you feel at Al Smith and the possibility of his being president? It would be a terrible misfortune to the country if it does come true, and I believe it will. It would be the beginning of the end for free American to have this man directing its destiny. You are quite likely to live to see what will follow his rule. The repeal of the state liquor laws at the last election is bearing fruit, done with many women's votes too. Drunks are a common sight now on the streets, and three drunken auto drives have had trials for murder in the last ten days, two getting four and eight years each, and one going free. All should have got life.<sup>9</sup>

Central avenue is a blaze of lights in each tree on each corner of each block for seven blocks, and smaller evergreens in sockets in between. A very pretty sight. The Blizzard that came to us the afternoon and night of the fifth was a fright, our section of town in darkness for twenty minutes due to a radio aerial blowing across the light wires and shorting them.

The night following we were again in darkness for an hour, our wires parted, and nothing but candles to burn. This is too long a letter for one to get who is doing things, so a fond good-bye.

Your cousin,  
Louis Ballou

James E. Barcus

*Baylor University*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Although the Ballou family records do not provide additional information on Louis Ballou, the letter suggests that he lived most of his life in the Helena, Montana, area.

<sup>2</sup> Marie Ballou Garvin (1878-1967) was born in Springville, N.Y., but spent most of her adult life in the Cleveland, Ohio, area. In addition to raising three daughters, she carried on a professional life as an actress and producer of children's theatre. Her literary interests probably account for Louis Ballou's long account of connections with the Gillette family.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Cowley, "Sister Carrie: Her Fall and Rise." in *The Stature of Theodore Dreiser*, ed. Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955) 175.

<sup>4</sup> Canyon Creek lies about 15 miles northeast of Helena, Montana.

<sup>5</sup> In 1888, Montana was still a territory. It formally joined the Union in 1889.

<sup>6</sup> White Sulphur Springs is situated about 45 miles due east of Helena, Montana.

<sup>7</sup> In fact, in Dreiser's novel, the character is named Clyde Griffiths, not Guy Griffith. Undoubtedly, Ballou is writing from memory and does not have the text in front of him.

<sup>8</sup> The Gillette murder trail made the national news in 1906.

<sup>9</sup> Apparently, Ballou does not approve of the repeal of prohibition. He is, however, correct in noting that the anti-prohibition forces enlisted the aid of the women's vote in their efforts to repeal the constitutional amendment.

\*Permission was granted by Nancy Bidwell Barcus, owner of the Ballou Family Archives, to *English Language Notes* for the one-time publication of this letter written by Louis Ballou.

### "JUST JUNK": GEORGE ORWELL'S REAL-LIFE SCAVENGING AND *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*

In compiling *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (1968), Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus omitted six of the nine "Saturday Essays" on English life that Orwell wrote for the *Evening Standard* between December 1945 and January-February 1946.<sup>1</sup> The omission of one of these, the January 5, 1945 installment "Just Junk," is especially unfortunate, for the essay is a revealing draft towards a central episode in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. An account of Orwell's visits to the junk shops of London, it outlines the basis for Winston Smith's experiences at Mr. Charrington's "frowzy little junk shop" in the "slummy quarter" of town.<sup>2</sup> Its details corroborate efforts to classify the novel as allegorical autobiography, rather than futuristic fantasy.<sup>3</sup> Most significantly, it enhances our understanding of the episode in Orwell's intellectual career that Winston's visit to the junk shop is meant to represent.

Several details in Orwell's descriptions of actual shops anticipate his account of Charrington's. First, the geographical location. The shops Orwell frequented were located in his