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ディケンズとギッシング――隠れた類似点と相違点

「小説家の使命――〈共感〉の表象をめぐって」

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米国の哲学者 Martha C. Nussbaum は、様々な著作のなかで文学の教育における意義を論じる際、とりわけ小説が読者に喚起する sympathetic imagination の重要性を強調している。だが、この小説＝共感の喚起とは果たして自明のことであろうか。Audrey Jaffe はヴィクトリア朝文学において〈共感〉は階級間対立を個人的・感情的レベルで解消し、〈国家〉といったより大きな共同体を想像／創造する装置として機能したと論じている。社会改革者としての小説家の使命を強く意識していた Dickens と Gissing は、それぞれのやり方で登場人物間の共感を描いたが、その共感の表象には時代とともに変化する社会や作家の特性を反映した差異が見られる。本発表では、Dickens と Gissing の初期作品、特に *The Old Curiosity Shop*（1840-41）と *Workers in the Dawn*（1880）を中心に、〈共感〉の表象をめぐるポリティックスを検討し、Dickens と Gissing の接点と分岐点を考察したい。

【本日の発表項目】

I　Introduction―小説と共感的想像力の喚起
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【引用】（イタリックは原文、下線部は発表者による）

1) Martha C. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*

As I read, I notice that Gradgrind economics has an even greater hold over the political and intellectual life of my society known to Dickens's characters, or to the narrating voice in his novel. I notice that the type of cost-benefit analysis favored by economics has become so familiar in public policy that it is taken for granted; at the same time, public servants are less and less likely to be readers of literature, where they would discover a more complex vision of human life. And I wonder about these changes, and how they bear on what I, as a concerned citizen, should be doing with my time. In all these ways and many others, I am invited to think about human flourishing and to see how "men and women more ore less like" myself (Dickens's way of describing people his characters encounter when *they* read novels) have lived differently from the way I now live, on account of things that might be otherwise. (8)

2) George Gissing, *Charles Dickens, A Critical Study*

＊ On its better side, then, Dickens's Radicalism consisted in profound sympathy with the poor, and boundless contempt of all social superiority that is merely obstructive. (164)

＊ [Dickens] never desired freedom to offend his public. Sympathy with his readers was to him the very breath of life; the more complete that sympathy, the better did he esteem his work. Against a political folly,

or a social injustice, he would use every resource of his art, and see no reason to hesitate; for there was the certainty of the approval of all good folk. (61)

3) A Letter to Algernon Gissing on November 11, 1880

Certainly I have struck out a path for myself in fiction, for one cannot of course compare my methods & aims with those of Dickens. I mean to bring home to people the ghastly condition (material, mental & moral,) of our poor classes, to show the hideous injustice of our whole system of society, to give light upon the plan of altering it, &, above all, to preach an enthusiasm for just & high *ideal*s in this age of unmitigated egotism & "shop." I shall never write a book which does not keep all these ends in view. (Vol 1: 307)

4) Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. Through our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. Neither can that faulty help us to this any other way, than by representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case. It is the impressions of our own senses only, not those in his, which our imagination copy. By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them. (11-12)

5) Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

Persons of delicate fibres and a weak constitution of body complain, that in looking on the sores and ulcers which are exposed by beggars in the streets, they are apt to feel an itching or uneasy sensation in the correspondent part of their own bodies. The horror which they conceive at the misery of those wretches affects that particular part in themselves more than any other; because that horror arises from conceiving what they themselves would suffer, if they really were wretches whom they are looking upon, and if that particular part in themselves would suffer in the same miserable manner. (12)

6) George Gissing, "*The Old Curiosity Shop*"

Remember, it was to the middle class that Dickens addressed himself, speaking as one of them. His English spirit knows nothing of egalitarianism. The more wonderful that he was equally free from the least taint of condescension. How wholeheartedly he enters into the joys of these social inferiors! As when Kit and his domestic circle spend an evening at Astley's; a chapter which no other novelist could have written. Here is no caricature; it is the mere truth seen by entirely sympathetic eyes and reported with the kindest gaiety. Abstract the sympathy, substitute cold observation, and we should have a truth, perhaps, but wholly uninteresting. (119)

7) Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*

Night is generally my time for walking. In the summer I often leave home early in the morning, and roam

about fields and lanes all day, or even escape for days or weeks together; but, saving in the country, I seldom go out until after dark, though, Heaven be thanked, I love its light and feel the cheerfulness it sheds upon the earth, as much as any creature living.

I have fallen insensibly into this habit, both because it favours my infirmity and because it affords me greater opportunity of speculating on the characters and occupations of those who fill the streets. The glare and hurry of broad noon are not adapted to idle pursuits like mine; a glimpse of passing faces caught by the light of a street-lamp or a shop window is often better for my purpose than their full revelation in the daylight; and, if I must add the truth, night is kinder in this respect than day, which too often destroys an air-built castle at the moment of its completion, without the least ceremony or remorse.

That constant pacing to and fro, that never-ending restlessness, that incessant tread of feet wearing the rough stones smooth and glossy—is it not a wonder how the dwellers in narrows ways can bear to hear it! Think of a sick man in such a place as Saint Martin's Court, listening to the footsteps, and in the midst of pain and weariness obliged, despite himself (as though it were a task he must perform) to detect the child's step from the man's, the slipshod beggar from the booted exquisite, the lounging from the busy, the dull heel of the sauntering outcast from the quick tread of an expectant pleasure-seeker—think of the hum and noise always being present to his sense, and of the stream of life that will not stop, pouring on, on, on, through all his restless dreams, as if he were condemned to lie, dead but conscious, in a noisy churchyard, and had no hope of rest for centuries to come. (9)

8) Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*

There is something distasteful about the very bustle of the streets, something that is abhorrent to human nature itself. Hundreds of thousands of people of all classes and ranks of society jostle past one another; are they not all human beings with the same characteristics and potentialities, equally interested in the pursuit of happiness? … And yet they rush past one another as if they had nothing in common or were in no way associated with one another. . . . No one even bothers to spare a glance for the others. The greater the number of people that are packed into a tiny space, the more repulsive and offensive becomes the brutal indifference, the unfeeling concentration of each person on his private affairs. (qtd. in Benjamin 163)

9) Audrey Jaffe, *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction*

In Victorian fiction and the work of its critics, the term "sympathy" has commonly been used to describe an individualistic, affective solution to the problem of class alienation: the attempt to ameliorate social differences with assurances of mutual feeling and universal humanity. (15)

10) Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*

The throng of people hurried by, in two opposite streams, with no symptom of cessation or exhaustion; intent upon their own affairs; and undisturbed in their business speculations . . . while the two poor strangers, stunned and bewildered by the hurry they beheld but had no part in, looked mournfully on; feeling, amidst the crowd, a solitude which has no parallel but in the thirst of the shipwrecked mariner. . . .

They withdrew into a low archway for shelter from the rain, and watched the faces of those who passed, to find in one among them a ray of encouragement or hope. Some frowned, some smiled, some muttered to themselves, some made slight gestures, as if anticipating the conversation in which they would shortly be

engaged, some wore the cunning look of bargaining and plotting, some were anxious and eager, some slow and dull; in some countenances, were written gain; in others, loss. It was like being in the confidence of all these people to stand quietly there, looking into their faces as they flitted past. (331)

11) Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*

"Dear grandfather, you are old and weak, I know; but look at me. I never will complain if you will not, but I have some suffering indeed."

"Ah! poor, houseless, wandering, motherless child!" cried the old man, clasping his hands and gazing as if for the first time upon her anxious face, her travel-stained dress, and bruised and swollen feet; "has all my agony of care brought her to this at last!" (333)

12) Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*

For she was dead. There, upon her little bed, she lay at rest. The solemn stillness was no marvel now.

She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death. (538)

13) George Gissing, *Workers in the Dawn*

＊ Walk with me, reader, into Whitecross Street. It is Saturday night, the market-night of the poor; also the one evening in the week which the weary toilers of our great city can devote to ease and recreation in the sweet assurance of a morrow unenslaved. Let us see how they spend this "Truce of God;" our opportunities will be of the best in the district we are entering.

As we suddenly turn northwards out of the dim and quiet regions of Barbican, we are at first confused by the glare of lights and the hubbub of cries. Pressing through an ever-moving crowd, we find ourselves in a long and narrow street, forming, from end to end, one busy market. Besides the ordinary shops, amongst which the conspicuous fronts of the butchers' and the grocers' predominate, the street is lined along either pavement with rows of stalls and booths, each illuminated with flaring naphtha-lamps, the flames of which shoot up fiercely at each stronger gust of wind, filling the air around with a sickly odour, and throwing a weird light upon the multitudinous faces. Behind the lights stand men, women and children, each hallooing in every variety of intense key—from the shrillest conceivable piping to a thunderous roar, which well-nigh deafens one -- the prices and the merits of their wares. (I: 3)

＊ One could find matter for hour-long observation in the infinite variety of vice and misery depicted in the faces around. It must be confessed that the majority do not seem unhappy; they jest with each other amid their squalor; they have an evident pleasure in buying and selling; they would be surprised if they knew you pitied them. And the very fact that they are unconscious of their degradation afflicts one with all the keener pity. (I: 8)

14) George Gissing, *Workers in the Dawn*

"Let us stand here for a moment," said Mr. Tollady, "and watch the faces of these people who go past. Is there one upon which vice and crime are not written as legibly as if put there in words? Do not only look at their faces, look at their bodies also. Look at that old woman, scarcely three feet high. What a monster of deformity! What generations of toil-worn, vice blasted, hunger-nipped wretches has it taken to produce a

scion such as that. . . . Oh, Arthur, I could die of pity for them all! You have the hand and the eye of an artist. Paint a faithful picture of this crowd we have watched, be a successor of Hogarth, and give us the true image of *our* social dress, as he did of those of his own day. Paint them as you see them, and get your picture hung in the Academy. It would be a moral lesson to all who looked upon it, surpassing in value every sermon that fanaticism has ever concocted!" (I: 164)

15）Audrey Jaffe, *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction*
[T]he offer of money acts as a sign that the observer has involved his own identity—including his belief in his own ability to tell "truth" from "false"—in an exchange with beggar's. Sympathy and coin, themselves within the realm of representation, are presented as guarantors of authenticity of transaction between charity-giver and beggar, offering evidence of the charity-giver's belief in the truth of the beggar's image, as well as in his ability to read that truth. (56)

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