Gladstone’s Library as a Writer’s Library and Its Scholarly Contribution

Anne Welsh,
Lecturer in Library & Information Studies, a.welsh@ucl.ac.uk

Writers’ Libraries

“A set of books or other printed works owned by the author at a particular moment in time … Writers’ libraries in the possession of institutions are often (although not always) a collection of their books at the time of their death, or a subset thereof.”


“CRITICS.”

(WHO HAVE NOT EXACTLY “FAILED IN LITERATURE AND ART”)
– See Mr. D.’s New Work.

MR. G-D-S-T-NE. “HM! – FLIPPANT!”

MR. D-S-R-LI. “HA! PROSY!”

“Most of us would agree that a catalogue of a private library can serve as a profile of a reader, even though we don’t read all the books we own and we do read many books that we never purchase. To scan the catalogue of the library in Monticello is to inspect the furnishings of Jefferson’s mind.”

"The mind of Man is recorded in his books, and the catalogues of the great libraries enable the individual to consult the universal mind on any limited subject that happens to interest him. The library collected by one man … expresses only his own mind and special interests … Usually, indeed, no material has existed for such attempts, unless it were an auctioneer’s catalogue …

- September 1939, Geoffrey Keynes."

Cataloguing Writers’ Libraries

“The mind of Man is recorded in his books, and the catalogues of the great libraries enable the individual to consult the universal mind on any limited subject that happens to interest him. The library collected by one man … expresses only his own mind and special interests … Usually, indeed, no material has existed for such attempts, unless it were an auctioneer’s catalogue …

- September 1939, Geoffrey Keynes.”

COLLECTING
An Unruly Passion

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES
BY WERNER MÜNSTERBERGER

Magnificent Obsessions
The Artist as Collector
Netsuke from the collection of Edmund de Waal

Edmund de Waal. Photo: Justin Piperger

WHITE | ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

This unique project at the RA Library and Print Room sees Edmund de Waal explore the colour white and the impact that white objects have on their surroundings, through an interweaving of words and books with sculpture, paintings and photographs.

‘I have spent my life thinking about white. My very first pot thrown on a potter’s wheel as a child was white. Forty-five years later I am still making white pots, porcelain vessels. For the last six years I have been travelling to the places in the world where porcelain was created and desired, researching and writing The White Road about the cost of this obsession. On my journey I dreamed of the images and objects that mattered to me most. And now I have brought some of these together for this project.

There are vitrines filled with manuscripts, poems and ripostes about white – the white pages of Tristram Shandy, Samuel Beckett, the score for John Cage’s 4’33″, Rachel Whiteread’s plaster sculpture FOLDED. There are works that capture the difficulties of white: an early photographic negative, a Renaissance enamel grisaille illustrating the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, an ivory netsuke of a hare. And, crucially for me, one of the first pieces of white porcelain made in the West.

In the library itself, some of the shelves of books are displaced by a drawing, a sculpture, or a vitrine. A Giorgio Morandi still life of vessels on a tabletop takes the place of a run of periodicals. Up high is the fragment of a twelfth-century corbel head of a saint. A marble lantern by Ai Weiwei is juxtaposed with a porcelain table by Amanda Levete Architects: weight and weightlessness. Malevich’s Suprematist Teapot – intensely, angrily pure - sits on a shelf. High above us is a new work by Garry Fabian Miller called It’s Open Clear Light.

http://www.thewhiteroadbook.com/events-list/2015/9/26/white-royal-academy-of-arts
Images: James Capes Story. The Hawarden Temple of Peace: A Description of St Deiniol's Library. Hawarden: [St Deiniol's Library], 1905.
History Room

Gladstone Foundation Collection

WEG / A

Archaeology and History of the Bible and of the Ancient East
Eastern and Biblical Philology
Biblical Folklore
Background of Christianity
Jewish History, Religion, Language & Literature

Gladstone’s Library, used with permission.

[Images removed for copyright reasons]
“As we might expect from a man self-educated beyond secondary-school level, we can see a mixture of university and popular presses. After establishing that most of the Oxford University Press entries on the catalogue actually represent offprints from the same journal, we can see that Dent (the publisher of the Everyman series) forms the largest proportion.”
The Gladstone Reading Database

Developing an understanding of the reading of one of the greatest political figures of the Victorian era

https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/english/research/gladstone-library/
“Word-processors, as well as other apparatuses now beyond our ken, will ultimately supplement the researcher’s notecards and fileboxes, but an unquenchable curiosity about the creators and backgrounds of great literary manuscripts will continually bring forth dauntless scholars in each generation.”