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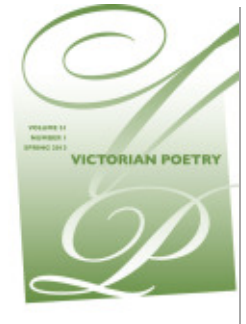
## The Pre-Raphaelites

Florence Saunders Boos

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person who was very much involved in 1890s arts movements, which were renowned for their cross-disciplinarity, is a document not to be ignored by those interested in the 90s—which did not end on New Year's Eve 1899 by any means—and having it available in a form more convenient than an *Essays by Divers Hands* series often is should renew interest in its creator and his work.

The Eighteen Nineties Society's long history of fostering good work in the era bears fruit once again in its annual *Journal* for 2000. All four articles have a biographical slant, although biography per se is not the focus in Peter Frost's "A. H. Macmurdo" (pp. 1-7), in which the subject's ventures into publishing, which created books that were artistic in content and format, and which, possibly of greater importance, established the renowned periodical of the era, the *Century Guild Hobby Horse*, are detailed with admirable concision and precision. A foremost contributor to Macmurdo's periodical occupies Despina Charalambidou-Solomi, whose "Sexual Personae in Ernest Dowson's Love Lyrics" (pp. 27-40) sheds light on that poet's perspective of the beloved female shifting from the asexual innocence in young girls to more somber images of the taint that, for Dowson, inevitably arrives with adult womanhood. Dowson's poems and short stories are read in connection with classical and earlier English lore about femininity, and this article will doubtless occasion responses and call greater attention to his work.

## The Pre-Raphaelites

FLORENCE S. BOOS

The past three years have witnessed a resurgence of critical attention to Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Jan Marsh published her fine critical biography *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet* in 1999; Jerome McGann and others offered a first installment of their electronic Rossetti archive in 2000 (<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu:1828>); and St. John's College, Cambridge hosted a comprehensive conference on "The Rossettis: Victorian Cosmopolitans in London" in July 2001.

McGann has now published *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Game That Must Be Lost*, the most extensive study of Rossetti's poetry since David Riede's *Dante Gabriel Rossetti Revisited* appeared in 1992. In its introduction, he defends Rossetti's poems and paintings as heritors of a late romantic tradition which "began and ended . . . as the quest for an art and

a literature that was no longer possible" ("that must be lost") (p. xiv), noble efforts to "demonstrate the sensuous operations of intelligence" (p. xv), and quasi-philosophical exemplars of "forms of truth unfounded by any myth of enlightenment" (p. xvii). In subsequent chapters he develops these assertions through a variety of reprises into an extended meditation on the somber tonalities of Rossetti's art and poetry.

In "A Dynamic of Reflection," the book's first chapter, McGann responds to modernist critiques that Rossetti was "in one perspective . . . too romantic and idiosyncratic, [and] in another . . . mired in inherited conventions" (p. 3), with a defense of his recurrent preoccupations with the "cognitive nature of immediated sensual perception" (p. 7), his desires to preserve an "inner standing point," his awareness of the recessive and reflective questions of "images [which] call out to images" (p. 23), and his deeply un-Morrisian *citadin*-sensibilities ("uninterested and unimpressed with the country God made, he wanted the Man-made town" [p. 5]).

In the second and third chapters ("Intelligence in Love: Medieval v. Victorian v. Modern" and "Dante and Rossetti: Translation, Pastiche, Ritual, Fate"), McGann considers Rossetti's theories of translation, sacral views of art, and reception of Dante and other medieval sources. In "Intelligence in Love," framed as an argument against T. S. Eliot's hostile view of Rossetti's art, he argues that "apparent excess of detail" in Rossetti's early painting *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* and his poems on paintings guided the viewer toward aesthetic reformulations of the painting's ostensible subject, manifested the painting's "fundamental brainwork," and created a "hyperrealism that anticipate[d] certain Post-modern styles" (p. 32).

As he interprets Rossetti's translations of the *Vita Nuova*, moreover, Rossetti conceived the Beatrice-ideal in terms that were "religious in tone but skeptical in . . . understanding" (p. 43), for "Dante's ideological horizon translated Beatrice into elaborate conceptual equivalents [, but] Rossetti took all the equivalents at face value. They [were] for him decorative additions to the central (artistic) event: not truths but forms of truth" (p. 36). He also reviews Pater's views that Rossetti's poetry manifested originality of vocabulary, "genuine intellectual structure," forms of (*de facto* proto-modernist) self-consciousness, and "mythopoeic" evocations of the past which manifested "the ideal aspects of common things."

In chapter 3, "Dante and Rossetti," McGann identifies certain debts to the Italian *stilnovista*, among them Rossetti's "screen"-like use of displacements and personifications, cultivation of artifice and "impersonal rhetoric" (p. 48), and ambiguities of reference which expressed "magical ideas of art and language" (p. 59). As an instance of the latter, he traces out a pointed biographical application of bleak lines inscribed in a

manuscript begun in 1848 and buried with Elizabeth Siddal in 1862, which William Michael Rossetti published as “Another Love” and “Praise and Prayer” in 1898 and 1911—“I could not thank / God for the cup of evil that I drank: / . . . And so I sank / Into the furnished phrases smooth and blank / Which we all learn in childhood.” McGann views these as uncanny anticipations of “a sudden death [which] turned these poetic exercises of 1848 [into] prophetic poems about his wife, whom he had not even met” (p. 64).

In “The Iconic Page,” his fourth chapter, McGann examines “the continued stress Rossetti place[d] on the idea of the total book, and (correlatively) on the relation between iconic and verbal expression” (p. 70), and considers as examples of this holist paradigm his book designs, frames for pictures, illustrations for translations, and assorted correlations between his translations and their respective originals. He also comments on Rossetti’s rearrangements of his works in “The Kelmscott Love Sonnets,” a selection of “House of Life” poems he copied out for Jane Morris in 1874, and a sequence of “Three Songs” associated with three of his paintings. McGann praises Rossetti for his oft-remarked ability to “see his texts as visible things” (p. 75), in the sonnets on pictures, for example, whose diction and verbal patterning resisted “the sublimities of conceptualization, by an adventure among pure physical forms” (p. 82).

In “Ars Negativa,” his fifth chapter, McGann characterizes Rossetti’s search for an iconography of ideal presences and conceptual *Aufhebung*, in the prose tale “Hand and Soul,” in the painting *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*,” and in assorted verbal and material canvasses of hieratically sensualized women, as forms of “literal” self-reference and mystical *ars negativa* in service to a “transnatural idea” (p. 89). In McGann’s view, Rossetti’s search for such an *ars* prompted him to adopt “an inner standing point” of images, illusions, and “self-ironies,” which were “not critical moves [but] blocking devices that serve[d] to maintain the illusion of objectivity” (the specific reference here is to “Jenny,” p. 192). McGann also contrasts Rossetti’s “fetishized women” with the stylized nude figure in Manet’s “Olympia,” praises Rossetti for a “skeptical view of Impressionism” which “might be usefully recovered” (p. 103), and remarks, somewhat more obscurely, that “[c]oming as fetish forms [Rossetti’s women] come in judgement. . . . If we turn from them, imagining an escape through a new and different language, we will find that they possess the power to return, like Mailer’s armies of the night. For they are us, male and female alike. And their fetishism defines their truth” (p. 104).

In “Venus Surrounded by Mirrors, Reflecting Her in Different Views,” the book’s sixth chapter, McGann considers Rossetti’s many lifelong attempts to realize the elusively narcissistic subject of “Venus surrounded by

mirrors, reflecting her in different views" (a description he jotted down in a notebook in 1870), and construes favorably the absence of geometrical perspective in his work as a prismatic attempt to draw the viewer "into the painting at different angles" (p. 114). Along similar lines, he suggests, the sonnets "complicate[d] the text's system of first-person address by turning its lyrical focus into a theater of different voices and points of view" (p. 138), aspectual shifts which were "poised within some ordering and significant patterns that we can see and hear but that escape conceptual formulation" (p. 141).

In "The Sinking Star," his seventh chapter, McGann reviews the grim decline in Rossetti's last years and thereafter of his artistic powers and posthumous reputation, vigorously defends Rossetti against Ford Madox Hueffer's charge that he was "an amateur who failed in two arts" and undertook to play an illusive "game that must be lost" (p. 144), affirms once again his "startling wordplays, [which] focus[ed] the operation at an atomic level, torquing the poems for odd associations, unexpected meanings, bizarre or seemingly random suggestions," and concludes with a gnomic paradox that the "truth" of "The House of Life" was "so much better than it trie[d] to be because so much worse than it seem[ed]."

Toward the work's end, McGann also contrasts Rossetti's paintings with the work of Marcel Duchamp, remarks that "the later dream of Intelligence in Love was perhaps most completely realized in the astonishing Astarte Syriaca, a dream of knowledge that would be open, shameless, and—consequently—forbidden" (p. 157), and avers that some of Rossetti's later paintings were "repellent," for they went "too far and [knew] too much. . . . They . . . engage[d] in acts of self-exposure at a time and in a vantage that many artists would find too terrible to put on display" (p. 153). The last remark, in my view, almost cries out for forms of feminist analysis and psychological insight that eluded Rossetti's horizon, and may lie outside this work.

Be that as it may, McGann develops a strong case in *The Game That Must Be Lost* for the aesthetic virtues of certain forms of Victorian romantic sensibility, forms that were shared by other "great" poets and artists of the period, such as Tennyson, Robert or Elizabeth Barrett Browning, whose works might be interpreted in analogous ways as embodiments of anti-"modernist" views *avant la lettre*. He is also at his most original when he applies his strikingly extensive knowledge of Rossetti's manuscripts to specific correlations between verbal and visual texts.

On balance, however, Rossetti's intentions and achievements do not seem to bear the full weight of the extensive critical, theoretic, and idea-historical claims that *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Game That Must Be Lost* makes on their behalf, and there seems to be little place for reformist

critiques or feminist responses to Rossettian “fetishization” of *das ewig Weibliche* in the work’s studies of “fundamental brainwork.” Rossetti himself, on the other hand—a man who believed “Imitation is Criticism”—would surely have been pleased to be gathered into the company of “great” thinkers and artists with whom McGann has compared him (William James, Charles Sanders Pierce, Plato, Blake, Manet, Duchamp).

Two of the three articles on Dante Rossetti which appeared during the year focused on his aims for translation. In “The Translation Strategies of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Ezra Pound and Paul Blackburn” (*Ezra Pound and Poetic Influence*, ed. Helen Dennis, Rodopi), Helen Dennis re-examines Rossetti’s sonnet-translations and theory of translation, argues that he sought to “domesticate” a translated text, “rather than enact its foreignness” or translate it “into a contemporary discourse,” and concludes that he made of such texts in consequence “beautiful possession[s] to be treasured by the bourgeois household in the capitalist nation.” Pound and his disciple Blackburn, by contrast, transformed the medieval *canzone*’s erotic focus on the “Lady” into a “mask through which to perform distinctly modernist and masculinist concerns, which focus on performance of masculine personality in poetic discourse.”

In “A Commentary on Some of Rossetti’s Translations from Dante” (*JPRS* 9, Spring), Jerome McGann has also provided a commentary on fourteen poems from Rossetti’s translation of the *Vita Nuova* in his *Early Italian Poets*. Rossetti himself had argued that literal translation is pedantry, and claimed that “the only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation, as far as possible, with one more possession of beauty,” and McGann affirms that “Rossetti’s translations of these poems function within a ‘performative’ aesthetic whereby the act of translational rendering resurrects, as it were, the vital life of the original poetry.” In his detailed glosses of particular poems, McGann examines some of Rossetti’s extensive departures from his originals, and the complex attempts he undertook (critiqued, in effect, by Dennis) to find contemporary English counterparts for medieval locutions.

In “Rossetti’s ‘Jenny’: Aestheticising the Whore” (*PLL* 36, no. 3), Lawrence J. Starzyk argues that the poem’s narrative ambiguities reflected the mental confusions of its speaker; that Rossetti’s uses of imagery sublimated complex and contradictory patterns of desire, frustration, financial insecurity, and threatened self-esteem (“the aureoled countenance of the woman framed in holy light reflects not the honor or dishonor of a vessel but the emptiness of the artist projecting himself within the framing light”); and that “the profligate throwing away of money [in the poem’s final scene] belies the psychological bankruptcy resulting from the speaker’s recognition of how expensive or dear the dawning of emptiness is.” Starzyk’s

views echo early reviewers' responses to some of the gentleman-narrator's evasions, and he would also find them confirmed in more recent feminist studies of Victorian masculinity, among them Susan Brown's "Economical Representations" (*VRev* 17, 1991), in which she pointedly contrasted "Jenny" with Augusta Webster's feminist portrayal of a prostitute in "The Castaway."

Relatively few studies of Christina Rossetti seem to have appeared this year, but two essays proposed new sources for her poems. In "A Possible Pictorial Inspiration for Christina Rossetti's 'The Prince's Progress,'" (*JPRS* 9, Fall), D.M.R. Bentley comments on several parallels between William Windus' painting *Too Late* (exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1859), and Rossetti's "The Prince's Progress," about a man who comes "[t]oo late for love, too late for joy" to his lover's deathbed. Windus's betrayed woman, as Bentley remarks, apparently died of consumption, and Rossetti's heroine suffered from a form of "wasting," whose exact symptoms she left undefined.

In "Another Note on 'Goblin Market'" (*JPRS* 9, Spring), Jan Marsh traces parallels with *Goblin Market* in two of Dante Rossetti's translations in *Early Italian Poets*. Especially striking are resemblances Marsh has found between *Goblin Market's* uneven meter and the two sisters' precipitous escape, and a passage from Franco Sacchetti's "On a Wet Day" in which girls run from a frightening object in the undergrowth: "And flying, stumbling, tumbling, wrong or right; / One sets her knee / There where her foot should be; / One has her hands and dress / All smother'd up with mud in a fine mess; / And one gets trampled on by two or three."

In "'O Wanton Eyes Run Over': Repetition and Fantasy in Christina Rossetti" (*VP* 38, no. 4), Suzy Waldman argues that "psychoanalytic criticism . . . has higher hopes for making sense of a heterogeneous poetic subject like Rossetti than do interpretative strategies which read literature entirely as surfaces of contending discourses" (p. 550). She therefore applies Lacanian paradigms to the poems' "supremely charged expressions of a person desperately trying to keep her desire without losing herself" (p. 550), and finds continuing tension between "symbolic" and "imaginary" orders in Rossetti's work—the former manifested in repetitive compulsions and searches for self-mortification, and the latter in paradoxical views of death as "attempt[s] to free desire from restricted forms" (p. 536).

She also asserts that "it was only through gendered Christian discourses that Rossetti saw a means to escape the bounds of gender" (p. 543), an apparent partial return to discourse-theory, and seeks to recuperate "Rossetti's famous morbidity" not "as an internalization of Victorian patriarchy's misogyny, but as a revolt against its restrictions on her desire" (p. 537). Waldman's rhetorical identification of death-fantasies with pres-

ervation of “the free play of desire beyond sexual roles and social limits” seems dubious, but her variant forms of “recuperation” may offer new insights into several of Rossetti’s poems.

In “Remembering and Recovering ‘Goblin Market’ in Rosario Ferré’s ‘Pico Rico, Mandorico’” (*Critique* 41, no. 4), Ronald D. Morrison examines Ferré’s self-conscious reworking of the plot of Rossetti’s poem, observes that feminist elements latent in Rossetti’s original emerged more explicitly in the work of her successor, a well-known Puerto Rican writer, and argues that “Rossetti use[d] the power of sisterhood as a way to preserve feminine strength and self-sufficiency, whereas Ferré’s story continually points to the social significance of the sisters’ relationship and its challenge to the patriarchal culture.”

In “A Stop Press Correction in Christina Rossetti’s *Goblin Market*” (PBSA 94, no. 1), Maura Ives studies Rossetti’s corrections in the proofs of her best-known volume, and observes that her detailed revisions of a proof-copy now at the Humanities Research Center further delayed the volume’s appearance, already set back by her brother’s tardy provision of agreed-upon illustrations. Ives weighs the liabilities and advantages of Dante’s involvement in the volume’s publication, and concludes that the complex interchanges of the collaboration “served [in the end] to strengthen Christina’s . . . influence over [her first two] books’ bibliographic and linguistic codes.”

Ruth Kinna’s *William Morris: The Art of Socialism* (Univ. of Wales), a strong successor to Bradley Macdonald’s *William Morris and the Aesthetic Constitution of Politics* (1999), offered the year’s most substantial contribution to Morris criticism. Kinna begins her study of Morris’ life, beliefs, and social and artistic thought with a reassessment of the continuity of his “romantic” and socialist views. In her chapter on “Slavery and the Ancient Constitution,” she then subjects Morris’ ideas about women, men, “manliness,” and the family to one of the more searching feminist analyses in print, and concludes that “whether women were lesser beings or simply different, the essence of Morris’s claim was that the conditions for women’s well-being and freedom were not the same as they were for men” (p. 136).

In her study of “Dreams and Reality of Change,” Kinna examines views of literary value, historical progression, and “paradise” expressed in *The Life and Death of Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise*, and remarks of the latter that “Morris’s stories explored the difference between paradise and earth through the eyes of human visitors to the divine realm. . . . The gods take vengeance on their creations, but by threatening to lay waste to the earth, they give humans the opportunity to restore it to its original beauty” (p. 70). In her penultimate chapter on “Literature and Revolu-



tion," she also reexamines representations of "economy," "civility," "family," "politics," "fellowship," and "the character of utopia" in the late prose romances as well as *News from Nowhere*, and concludes, correctly if a bit paradoxically, that Morris' heroes were more reluctant to "fall victim to dreams" (p. 192) in his great utopian romances, and that in them he finally resolved "the tragic conflicts that plagued the lovers in his early literature" (p. 197). Kinna concludes her attempt to reconcile the indeterminacies and divergences of Morris' complex life and work with the cogent observation that "Morris's aim [in *News*] was not to show how the good society should be organized, but to show how good society could be if the barriers to freedom and fellowship were removed" (p. 216).

Several articles and a book-chapter revisited Morris' early poetry this year. In "William Morris's 'The Mosque Rising in the Place of the Temple of Solomon': A Critical Text" (*JPRS* 9, Spring), William Whitla provides a full scholarly apparatus for Morris's unsuccessful entry in the 1855 Newdigate Prize competition at Oxford. He places this 300-line poem in the context of British interest in the history of contested Muslim and Christian "holy places" during the Crimean War, and contrasts it with the entries of Morris' more successful competitors Edward Haydon Osborn and Robert William Henderson, whose contributions "raise[d] the proper nationalist sentiments in the climate of war, trace[d] the roots of sectarian conflict to religious retribution, heap[ed] scorn on Jews and Muslims, and look[ed] forward to a more . . . Christian . . . future foreshadowed in the present political alliances of the Crimean War." Morris' poem, by contrast, "remain[ed] true to the old chroniclers, but avoid[ed] conventional racialist positions and the nationalistic partisanship of contemporary politics." Whitla, who is the first clear advocate and close student of this "juvenile" work (Morris was twenty-one), finds real merits in its anticipation of the *Defence*-poems and its "range of reference, . . . precise observation and . . . refusal to take a narrowly nationalist, racialist, or archaeological side."

In "Medieval Drama and Courtly Romance in William Morris' 'Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery'" (*VP* 38, no. 3), Catherine Stevenson and Virginia Hale interpret Morris' Arthurian poems in *The Defence* as a recreated medieval and Malorian mystery-cycle. Their supplement to traditional interpretations of the Malorian aspects of Morris' early work seems consistent with its dramatic quality, as well as the loose complementarity of the cycle's poems representing different moods and the four seasons. They develop detailed comparisons of "Sir Galahad" with a number of mystery-plays' dreams, visions, opening monologues (usually complaints), allusions to the liturgical seasons, comments on inner protagonists' dilemmas, and resolutions in the form of quasi-numinous revelatory experi-

ences. In their conclusion, Hale and Stevenson draw on their evidence to argue that Morris' drama did indeed "conflat[e], in a most original way, medieval religious drama and courtly romance."

In "Binding Men: William Morris's *The Defence of Guenevere* and the Circulation of Masculine Desire" (*Private and Public Voices in Victorian Poetry*, ed. Sabine Coelsch-Foisner and Holger Klein, Stauffenburg Verlag), Rosie Miles examines motifs of male rivalry in Morris' drawings and poems, and examines male interactions in several *Defence* poems for expressions of the "anxiety about prevailing bourgeois models of masculinity and male sexuality." In marked contrast to Stevenson and Hale, for example, Miles interprets Christ in "Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery" as "a human possessive lover who does not wish the men he loves to relate sexually to women," and reads the death and anticipated execution in "Riding Together" as a manifestation of Morris' anxieties about male bonding and violence. She also comments on erotic relationships mediated by male Morrisian rivals, reads "King Arthur's Tomb" as a poetic emblem of Morris' troubled relationship with Rossetti, and concludes that "Arthurian legend appears to have offered Morris a means of representing relationships between men, [but 'Sir Galahad'] suggests a questioning of the masculinity on offer, and at times a deep disturbance with the possibility of expressing a masculine sexuality."

Miles also extends her interpretation to contemporary reception of Morris' work, reading reviewers' well-known attacks on *The Defence* as veiled expressions of homophobic fears of "the passion of which the outlets are sealed" which Pater praised, and as implicit recognition of "a secretive masculinity, not easily recognizable to others." All these interpretations are compatible with the anxious intensity, outbursts of violence and sublimations of conflict-ridden male loyalty in Morris' early writing, but accord less well with the equally intense, anxious, and idealized heterosexual attractions set out in, for example, "Sir Peter Harpdon's End" and "Concerning Geoffroy Teste Noire." Morris was a model of "negative capability," and he sought to reconcile fierce oppositions in politically restless but personally complementary ways. Miles's interpretations help explain some otherwise puzzling features of these early poems, and she might extend her analysis further to the conflicts of comparable intensity in the archetypically tragic plots of "The Lovers of Gudrun" and *Sigurd the Volsung*.

In "'Love for the Sake of Love,' William Morris's Debt to Robert Browning in 'Riding Together'" (*ELN* 37, no. 3), A. A. Markley contrasts one of Morris' poems with Browning's "The Last Ride Together" along roughly comparable homosocial lines. Morris had praised "The Last Ride" in the *Oxford and Cambridge Review of Men and Women* as an expression of

“love for love’s sake, the only true love, I must say,” and Markley finds a Browningsque “fixed, frozen moment in which one realizes life’s best” in the speaker’s memory of his dead friend’s last moments (“His eager face in the clear fresh weather, / Shone out that last time by my side”). Amorphously pansexual nightmares in Morris’ early prose romance “Lindenberg Pool” lend collateral credibility to Markley’s discernment of “homoerotic overtones” in Morris’ “exten[sion of] the conventional boundaries of gender roles in order to allow his speaker to express an honest feeling of ‘intense, unmixed love’ for his lost friend.” One would, however, have to reconcile such readings with the apparent heterosexuality of other early poems such as “Spell-Bound,” “Golden Wings,” or “The Haystack in the Floods.”

In *Camelot in the Nineteenth Century: Arthurian Characters in the Poems of Tennyson, Arnold, Morris, and Swinburne* (Greenwood), Laura and Robert Lambdin devote a chapter to a review of the nature and sources of all Morris’ Malorian poems, including fragments such as “The Maying of Guenevere,” and offer detailed reinterpretations of the four poems in *The Defence’s* Malorian cycle. Other critics have anticipated the chapter’s observation of the contrasts between the Guenevere-Lancelot poems and those devoted to Galahad and the Grail legend, and endorsed Galahad’s cautious doubts whether “the heavenly rewards for this chaste, loveless life will be worth the loneliness and anguish he has experienced on earth” (p. 74). But the authors’ overview provides a helpful summary of Morris’ use of sources for first readers of Morris’ Arthurian poems and fragments.

In “Ruskin and Morris,” one of several essays in a Ruskin centenary issue of *The Journal of the William Morris Society* (14, no. 1), Peter Faulkner provides a thoughtful account of Morris’ cordial interrelations with his troubled but receptive older colleague. Morris had chanted passages from *Modern Painters* to Oxford friends in his youth, defended Ruskin against the criticism of an unknown 1882 correspondent with the remark that “to say one does not always agree with him is to say that he and I are of mankind” (*CL*, 2:126), paid tribute to him as “a teacher of morals and politics” who “has done serious and solid work towards that new-birth of Society, without which genuine art . . . must inevitably cease altogether” in his Kelmscott edition of “The Nature of Gothic” (1892), and remarked that “it was through him that I learned to give form to my discontent” two years before his death in 1896.

Less well known is Ruskin’s reciprocal respect for Morris, not only as the author of *The Defence* poems (“most noble—very, very great indeed—in their own peculiar way,” 1869, *LJR* 36:280), but also of *The Earthly Paradise*, whose evocations of Greek myth he considered more powerful than those of Keats (*Queen of the Air*, 1869). Ruskin also com-

missioned some of the Firm's stained glass; wrote to Burne-Jones about Morris' anti-imperialist politics in 1876 that "I hope neither Morris nor you will retire wholly again out of such spheres of effort. It seems to me especially a time when the quietest of mankind should be disquieted, and the meekest self-assertive"; and characterized Morris in 1892 as "the ablest man of his time."

In "John Ruskin, William Morris, and the Illuminated Manuscript" (*JWMS* 14, no. 1), Evelyn J. Phimister argues that Morris' familiar views of "the illuminated manuscript [as] a source of inspiration and design, and perhaps most important of all a link with the medieval craftsman" have Ruskinian origins, and draws a parallel between Ruskin's declaration (in 1854 lectures on the principles of manuscript-illumination reported in *The Builder*), that "white lines or dots [in thirteenth-century illumination] were most judiciously and effectively introduced for the purpose of gradating colours," and Morris' much later remark (in "Some Notes on the Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages," 1894), that "the colour . . . is founded on the juxtaposition of pure red and blue modified by delicate but clear bright lines and 'pearlings' of white."

In "The 'Sympathetic Translation' of Patterns: William Morris as Singer, Scribe and Painter" (*JWMS* 13, no. 4), Isolde Karen Herbert finds a number of parallels between Morris' manuscript- and book-designs and the narrative structures of *The Earthly Paradise*. She discerns, for example, a persistent "design of threshold motifs [which] marks moments of change" in "The Lovers of Gudrun," and sees reflections and expressions of motifs of "the period of Morris's most prolific work in calligraphy and manuscript decoration [in] his saga translations (1868-75)." She argues that "the return to the scene of the communal storytelling . . . retains . . . the reader's memory of the work's frame in much the same manner as an observer's eyes move . . . from designs on a carpet to the border," and concludes that "Morris's artistic, social, and political objective involve[d] a method akin to that of the indigo discharge process: the erasure of any unwanted background followed by the application of the lines and colours of a repeating pattern with narrative potential."

In "Water in William Morris's Late Prose Romances" (*JWMS* 13, no. 4), Hilary Newman develops an ambivalent iconography for the water-images in Morris' last three romances (*The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, *The Well at the World's End*, and *The Sundering Flood*), in which the medium of birth becomes a "life-saver as well as a life-taker." It would be interesting to establish whether a duality of water-images flowed equably throughout Morris' work—as it did in the early "Blue Closet," for example—or emerged more prominently in the literary archetypes of his final years.

In "From Pastoral Arcadia to Stable-State Mini-Cities: Morris's *News*

from *Nowhere* and Callenbach's *Ecotopia*" (JWMS 14, no. 1), Martin Delveaux contrasts *News from Nowhere* with Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975) to the latter's detriment. Despite Morris' and Callenbach's apparent common interests in "green" cities, balanced interrelations with nature and pre- as well as post-industrial technologies, Delveaux finds "an ecofascist dystopia" in *Ecotopia*'s central-committee-imposed price controls, limits to contact with the outside world, and programmatically aggressive military responses to potential invasions, and concludes that interpretations of *Ecotopia* as a sequel to *News from Nowhere* are "dubious to say the least."

In "William Morris: 'Back to the Land,' Pessimism and Utopia" (JWMS 13, no. 4), John Payne (author of *Journey up the Thames: William Morris and Modern England* [Five Leaves Press, 2000]), sketches several of the many parallels that might be traced between Morris' views and those of Peter Kropotkin, comments on Morris' responses to the ideas of Edward Carpenter, and considers some of the implications of *Nowhere*'s well-known reconfiguration of the Houses of Parliament as a capacious and socially useful manure-shed. After canvassing other aspects of Morris' utopian thought, he considers which attributes of *News from Nowhere* are relevant in the aftermath of twentieth-century events which "[have rendered] the theory of violent socialist revolution . . . implausible," and finds answers in the ideals of "self-management, unalienated labour, ecological responsibility, distributive justice, [and] sexual equality" which Ruth Levitas has described in her study of *The Concept of Utopia*.

In "William Morris, the Socialist Reviewer" (JWMS 13, no. 4), Nicholas Salmon examines a number of passages from Morris' reviews of George Bernard Shaw's realist novel *Cashel Byron's Profession*, Emile Zola's *Germinal*, and Henrik Ibsen's *The Doll's House* for *Commonweal* and *Justice*, and argues that Morris responded more sympathetically to the conventions of the modern realist novel and drama than many critics have supposed. Morris defended *Germinal*, for example, in his characteristically "plain" first-person style: "I hold that 'What is not too bad to be done, is not too bad to be told about,' though I find no difficulty in imagining that our rulers and masters take a very different view of the subject. . . . I hold that there are dozens of most respectable works which the Vigilance Society wouldn't think of attacking, which are far more demoralising and corrupting than Zola. Henry James's novels for instance [possibly a reference to the anti-anarchist *Princess Casamassima*, published in 1886]; or even in [its] feeble way, Mr. Besant's imitation of Charles Reade." He defended Ibsen along similar ideological lines: "I note that the critics say that Ibsen's plays are pessimistic; so they are—to pessimists; and all intelligent people who are not Socialists are pessimists. But the representation of the cor-

ruption of society carries with it in Ibsen's work aspirations for a better state of things."

A wave of renewed attention to Dante Rossetti's poetry has given a somewhat different direction to this year's outline of recent work on Pre-Raphaelitism. But unawareness or disregard of prior work and feminist insights in a few of the studies I have reviewed may recapitulate Santayana's dictum (in slight paraphrase), that those who ignore the past are condemned to repeat it. Many central preoccupations of Pre-Raphaelite poets, artists, craft-workers, and social critics have engaged commentators for almost a century and a half now, but recurrent cycles of academic attention and inattention seem to bear miniature witness to the revenant's stoic insight in *A Dream of John Ball*, that descendents of apparent winners of struggles for "fellowship" will "have to fight for what they meant, under another name."

## Swinburne

MARGOT K. LOUIS

This has been a good year for Swinburne studies, particularly for analyses which situate the poet within the broader cultural context. Three pieces deserve special mention at the start: Stephanie Kuduk's exploration of the radical literary tradition informing *Songs before Sunrise*; Catherine Maxwell's erudite discussion of how Swinburne transforms the very different literary tradition of the female sublime; and Thais Morgan's precise mapping of the versions of masculinity presented by Swinburne and other Victorian poets. In these pages last year I covered Kenneth Haynes's fine new edition, *Poems and Ballads & Atalanta in Calydon*, as well as John Hollander's "Algernon Charles Swinburne's 'At Eleusis'" (*Paris Review* 154 [2000]: 246-251), so I will say no more of them here.

One of the most innovative studies of the year is Stephanie Kuduk's "'A Sword of a Song': Swinburne's Republican Aesthetics in *Songs before Sunrise*" (*VS* 43 [2001]: 253-278). Kuduk places Swinburne within the radical literary tradition in "a world in which poetry provided a central way of experiencing radical politics" and poets used prophecy to recreate "a democratic human mythos" (pp. 255, 258). The "Hymn of Man," "Hertha," and "Christmas Antiphones" are discussed in detail, and Kuduk shows brilliantly how Swinburne's formal innovations (e.g., the elaborate antimetaboles in "Hertha") convey and enrich the poet's republican vision. Finally, Kuduk shows how reviewers and readers of Swinburne's work within "the vibrant culture of republicanism in the 1860s and 1870s"