

The Pre-Raphaelites

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The year 2018 brought several excellent commentaries on Pre-Raphaelitism in general, as well as new approaches to William Morris. This year's review will consider a monograph and several essays that feature literary Pre-Raphaelitism, as well as three books and additional articles on William Morris.

Pre-Raphaelitism

First, John Holmes's beautifully presented and illustrated *The Pre-Raphaelites and Science* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2018) brings a new sophistication to the discussion of Pre-Raphaelite "truth to nature" in painting and art. His introduction notes that for John Ruskin, as well as for several of his contemporaries, Pre-Raphaelite painting was closely allied with the development of nineteenth-century science; in Ruskin's words, "the grotesque and wild forms of imagination" characteristic of Pre-Raphaelite art were "a part of [recent] science itself" (p. 1). Holmes explains that two divergent Victorian interpretations of scientific discovery accorded with Pre-Raphaelite practice. During the 1840s and 1850s, a respect both for detailed observation as the search for "natural laws" and for nature as an orderly creation expressive of "natural theology" underlay Pre-Raphaelite practice in both art and poetry, as seen in the paintings of Holman Hunt and John Tupper's poems in the *Germ*. By the 1860s and 1870s, however, professional scientists had moved toward a paradigm of scientific naturalism, characterized by skepticism and objectivity, features that their supporters found in the poetry of D. G. Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne (p. 11).

Two chapters deal more directly with Pre-Raphaelite poetry, and both demonstrate the ability of Holmes's approach to unlock meaning from what had seemed relatively marginal texts. Chapter 3, "The Knowing Hand of the Anatomist: Embodied Psychology in Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Poetry," outlines what mid-Victorians saw as the relationship between anatomy and the emergent field of psychology. Though not phrenologists per se, the Pre-Raphaelites believed that emotions would over time imprint themselves on the face and body; observation of gestures and postures was thus seen as granting access to an inner mind. In Rossetti's early, uncompleted poem "The Bride's Prelude," for example, the shock and pain experienced by its central characters, Aloyse and Amelotte, is expressed in outward signs of repressed emotion; in five stanzas cited by Holmes, a character is portrayed as sighing, gasping, bowing her head, covering her eyes with her hands, or experiencing disrupted speech, throbbing temples, or loss of consciousness. For the Pre-Raphaelites, "All emotion, all psychology, is experienced as bodily sensation . . . and expressed in the minute details of our changing gestures and postures" (p. 77).

Holmes offers several examples of the sophisticated presentation of emotion in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. He notes Rossetti's special interest in the annunciation, as conveyed both in a sonnet for the *Germ* and his painting *Ecce Ancilla Domina*; the "absolute harsh nether darkness" experienced by the poem's Mary similarly appears in the painting's representation of a tearful maiden who shrinks in fear from the angel and his message (p. 85). Holmes also suggests the value of psychological approaches in interpreting Pre-Raphaelite narrative poems; in "A Last Confession," for example, the speaker's increasing obsession with the body of his child ward, whom he murders to avoid loss of control, exposes "the possibility for the willful misinterpretation of one's own bodily impulses and desires inscribed on other people's bodies" (p. 92). William Michael Rossetti's "Mrs. Holmes Grey," another less-frequently-discussed poem, offers three forms of external testimony to the circumstances of a wife's sudden death—medical, legal, and journalistic—but Holmes concludes that for its author, "it is poetry, not such morally and intellectually bankrupt 'quackery,' that can lead us to a proper understanding of psychology" (p. 95).

In chapter 7, "The Facts of the Case: Scientific Naturalism and Pre-Raphaelite Poetry," Holmes argues that literary critics who espoused the new scientific naturalism of the 1860s and 1870s were attracted to the aesthetic poetry written by Rossetti, Morris, Meredith, W. B. Scott, and Swinburne during this period. The contributions of these authors were solicited by John Morley, editor of the liberal *Fortnightly Review*, who advocated radicalism in politics, naturalism in science, and literary explorations of human psychology freed

from the constraints of a narrow morality. As Holmes explains, "Science was for Morley a key precondition for the growth of aestheticism, which [embodied] the synthesis of a dialectic in which science is the antithesis of sacramentalism" (p. 185). As examples, poems such as Meredith's "In the Woods" and Swinburne's "Child's Song in Winter" employ natural symbols and poetic rhythms to suggest an immortality confined to natural cycles; W. B. Scott's "Anthony" places the tale of a pious life within a distancing, skeptical frame; and Rossetti's sixteen-sonnet sequence "Of Life, Love, and Death" (an earlier version of "The House of Life") meditates on loss and death from the perspective of "the interior of one man's mind" (p. 191).

Morris's *The Earthly Paradise* likewise attracted Victorian readers, including those of a scientific bent, because of its precise attention to surface details of landscape, wildlife, and external signs of human emotion. As its twenty-five tales unfold, the narrative unflinchingly explores signs of the protagonists' increasing sense of loss and frustration, reminding readers that no temporary satisfactions can escape the forces of time and change, and refusing all hope of an afterlife or even an earthly paradise; in Holmes's eloquent words, "The poem itself becomes the thing its prologue shows us cannot be found. For as long as it lasts, it is an earthly paradise in itself, as, like the tellers and listeners within the poem, we are transported for a time into a clearer and more intense world" (p. 202). In Rossetti's late poems, "The Cloud Confines" and his two untitled sonnets on his drawing "The Question," the poet suggests that even the possibility of knowledge is denied us, confirming aestheticism's ability to remind science of its limitations and "the hubris of its more totalizing ambitions" (p. 205).

The Pre-Raphaelites and Science is distinctive in its ability to identify common principles in both Pre-Raphaelite artwork and poetry, as well as its placement of iconic Pre-Raphaelite works within the context of the less noted poems, essays, and artworks with which they share common features. In moving the debates over the innovative features of Pre-Raphaelite art and poetry from the realms of medievalism and sexual politics to those of science, Holmes also furthers our understanding of why Pre-Raphaelite poetry seemed avant-garde and liberating to its Victorian audiences and why its search for the "truth" of the emotions remains essentially modern and relevant.

In "[T]his world is now thy pilgrimage: William Michael Rossetti's Cognitive Maps of France and Italy" (*Victoriographies* 8, no. 1 [March 2018]: 84–99), Eleonora Sasso interprets William Michael Rossetti's *Democratic Sonnets* (1907) as testimonies to the centrality of travel in the creation of literary and artistic meaning. Rossetti's sonnet sequence is simultaneously a political manifesto

promoting the struggle for liberalism and democracy, as embodied by historical figures such as Napoleon, Mazzini, Cavour, and Garibaldi, and an account of Rossetti's own real and imagined journeys throughout Europe. Sasso suggests that the series forms a "cognitive map" of the poet's mental images of such sites as Paris, the island of St. Helena, the Alps, the Venice Lagoon, and Mount Vesuvius. Many of these evoke historical events of the Italian Risorgimento, as Rossetti through his sonnets attempts to create the sense of history necessary for a future political and cultural revolution.

In "The Character of Pre-Raphaelite Poetry and Fictional Prose" (*JPRS* 27 [Fall 2018]: 4–32), D. M. R. Bentley tackles the complex issue of defining Pre-Raphaelite pictorialism. He cites an early Rossetti letter in which the youthful poet advocates a balance between "hotness" (color) and "repose" (muted tones) in art, in association with originality of expression and the "simplicity of nature." These general principles could be interpreted in many ways, but Bentley traces their application through Rossetti's revisions for the *Germ*, his prose tale "Hand and Soul," and more briefly, his later poems. Also insightful are Bentley's commentaries on the works of Rossetti's fellow Pre-Raphaelites Thomas Woolner and James Collinson, as well as a later Pre-Raphaelite/Aesthetic tradition that included Morris, Wilde, and Yeats. "The Character of Pre-Raphaelite Poetry and Fictional Prose" would be an appropriate essay to assign to an advanced class in Victorian poetry as a synthetic overview of early Pre-Raphaelite aesthetics.

In "Dismantling the Canon: The Pre-Raphaelite List of Immortals," (*JPRS* 27 [Spring 2018]: 5–21), Julie Codell explores the implications of the original Brotherhood's list of admired persons, which was accompanied by the claim that "there exists no other Immortality than what is centred in their names and in the names of their contemporaries" (p. 10). Codell divides the proffered names by occupation, chronology, and country, noting that the Brotherhood's anticanon "meanders across European and American history and geography without an explicit order" (p. 10). This heterogeneity subverted notions of development and privileged past "immortals" who have influenced present artists and serve contemporary artistic needs. By creating a decentered and idiosyncratic historical pastiche, the Pre-Raphaelites proclaimed "the living artist as the source or governor of cultural meanings" (p. 19).

D. G. Rossetti

In "Words about the Picture: Material and Metaphor in Dante Rossetti's Inscribed Picture Frames" (*JPRS* 27 [Fall 2018]: 33–55), Dinah Roe considers the unique status of Rossetti's poems, such as "The Blessed Damozel," "The Girl-

hood of Mary Virgin,” and “Fiametta,” which are literally inscribed on the frames of his paintings. She points out that Rossetti placed a high value on such inscriptions, developing a frame that provided a surface amenable to writing and taking pains to ensure that the text was presented as he wished. Rossetti’s preoccupation with such border spaces draws attention to “the permeability and vulnerability of boundaries, and their potential as threshold spaces ‘where things can happen’” (p. 34). Roe then compares the painting of “The Blessed Damozel” with the stanzas inscribed on its frame, noting that the “painted figure is less transgressive than her poetic counterpart” (p. 45) and that the placement on the frame of an italicized stanza placed in parentheses clarifies the speaker’s identity and marks a shift in time. The frame and poem ultimately suggest a state of “permanent liminality” (p. 48) between poetry and painting, in which a threshold paradoxically both joins and divides its constituent parts.

In “Allegorizing on One’s Own Hook’: D. G. Rossetti’s Illustrations in Moxon’s Tennyson” (*JPRS* 27 [Spring 2018]: 22–41), D. M. R. Bentley traces the common motifs that characterized Rossetti’s five contributions to this famous edition. As is well known, Tennyson found Rossetti’s drawings offensively remote from his original intentions. Instead, as Bentley demonstrates, Rossetti’s designs present Elizabeth Siddal in an array of poses that “capture moments of intense perceptual experience” and, like his other early works, explore “what can and cannot be seen” (p. 25). He examines the details in each design, noting the emphasis on scenes of sight and watching, the blending of Arthurian and religious motifs, and the association of eroticism and death, culminating in “King Arthur and the Weeping Queens,” an original creation virtually detached from Tennyson’s poem. Bentley concludes that by supplementing the text with additional material and in some cases even deviating from it, Rossetti’s designs “decentre and destabilize the poems and even imply that they are inadequate or lacking. The larger effect of this is to undermine Tennyson’s authority . . . as the creator of images in the mind’s eye of the reader” (p. 37).

In “(Re)Discovering Rossetti’s Lady Lilith: The Stevenson Watercolour, Manuscript Sonnet, and Unpublished Letters” (*JPRS* 27 [Spring 2018]: 42–57), Chiaki Kato explores in detail the provenance of a watercolor of “Lady Lilith,” purchased by a chemical-works owner in 1867 and briefly sold to a Japanese owner and exhibited in Japan before its return to the United Kingdom in 2017. Kato traces the successive versions of both drawing and sonnet, noting that the representation of Fanny Cornforth as Lilith in the original watercolor evoked a more abstract sensuality than the final painted version, which portrays Alexa Wilding “confined in a dramatic and idealized myth” (p. 47).

Moreover, the changes to the sonnet render it more dramatic but also less concrete; for Kato, “the original lines evoke a more appealingly visible and tangible image of the lady encircled by an abundance of flowers” (p. 50). She concludes that these changes exemplify Rossetti’s transition from “capturing an aesthetic moment of the individual to creating an idealized and stylized type that embodies th[e] ‘fateful force’ of eroticism” (p. 51).

William Morris

Three of the year’s books consider Morris’s contributions at length. Michael Robertson’s *The Last Utopians: Four Late Nineteenth-Century Utopians and Their Legacy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2018) is at once a work of biography, ethnography, and political theory that offers an account of four utopian fictions or treatises published between 1888 and 1915—Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland*, William Morris’s *News from Nowhere*, and Edward Carpenter’s writings featuring “the intermediate sex” (LGBT). Robertson’s four utopians are carefully selected for prophetic insights into issues still unresolved a century later—the need for social cohesion, meaningful work, economic, gender and sexual equality, and an affirmative, nondestructive relationship with nature. In each case, Robertson offers an account of the subject’s intellectual development before explaining his or her projected ideal societies, a juxtaposition that often suggests some ironies.

Before the publication of *Looking Backward*, for example, Bellamy was a near recluse who would probably have been quite unhappy in the highly regimented industrial society of *Looking Backward*; and Gilman, who struggled with actual motherhood throughout early adulthood, postulated a universal World Mother as the regenerating force of a transformed society. Carpenter similarly envisioned a free society founded on egalitarian ideals of male brotherhood, largely oblivious to the class privilege that had enabled him to establish a rural Derbyshire retreat in association with his partner, George Merrill.

Morris’s mental path to *Nowhere* was arguably more consistent than those of his fellow projectors; as Robertson notes, “Morris had been journeying toward utopia his entire life” (p. 79). Emphasizing Morris’s artistry above his literary writings, Robertson interprets the ethos of his designs; of the early “Trellis,” he notes, “It is a brilliant design, one of Morris’s greatest. The repeated squares of the trellis are simultaneously beautifully realistic and frankly metapoetic. . . . His wallpapers are imbued with a utopian desire for harmony with nature that suffuses his work in every medium” (pp. 92–93).

Throughout, Robertson explores Morris’s attachment to his successive

homes and interestingly suggests that the proximity of Morris's Hammersmith home to a working-class district intensified his discomfort with social inequality. He identifies the great courage it took for Morris to publicly espouse socialism in 1882 and the solidarity that inspired his faithful street preaching of socialism: "the work was exhausting. He had to shout to attract hearers, deal with hecklers, and endure harassment by the police" (p. 108). He offers a lucid and impartial account of the troubled politics of the Socialist League and notes that Morris is unique among the "last utopians" in facing honestly the problem of *how* the desirable social transformation of the sort they espoused could occur. Whereas Bellamy and Carpenter simply assumed that future citizens would voluntarily adopt the new ways, even against their material self-interest, and Gilman's *Herland* postulates a long-past war in which most of the region's males killed one another and the rest were slaughtered by Amazonian warriors, *Nowhere's* lengthy account of "the Great Change" embodies the reflections of someone who repeatedly debated exactly this topic with his fellow socialists.

A fundamental tenet of Robertson's approach is that idealized projections must be embodied in "lived utopias," tested against actual experiments in creating an improved shared life, and a final section narrates the author's personal visits to several "intentional communities." These include the ecological shared-labor communes of Findhorn on Erraid in the Scottish Hebrides and Twin Oaks in Virginia; the Takoma Village Cohousing settlement in Washington, DC; the Edward Carpenter Community annual gathering of gay men in England's Lake District; and, more proximately, a 2011 Occupy encampment in New York City.

Throughout, Robertson commendably eschews sensationalism and gossip to concentrate on the more valuable insights offered by his utopians and their successors. As a result, *The Last Utopians* contributes to the array of books, extending from the *Nicomachean Ethics* onward, that encourage readers to ponder the elusive nature of a "good society."

Ian Felce's *Morris and the Icelandic Sagas* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2018) fills an important gap in Morris studies. Although critics have considered separate aspects of Morris's fascination with Iceland and its literature, and earlier dissertations by Karl Anderson (1940), Karl Litzenberg (1933), and Philip Chase (2002) have surveyed Morris's translation efforts, Felce's work is the first full-length book by a scholar of Old Icelandic to fuse these strands and assess their significance to Morris's other endeavors. Felce observes that Morris's early Arthurian interests suggested the possibility of transcending earthly privations in favor of a spiritual realm, as in the Holy Grail legend, but that in reading

Old Icelandic literature, “Morris perceived, and then increasingly celebrated, an ideal of tenacious commitment to the here and now” (p. 2) that would influence all his future endeavors in art, politics, and literature.

Felce’s introduction summarizes the life of Morris’s teacher and cotranslator, Eiríkir Magnússon, and observes that although Morris and Magnússon revised many of their translations for later inclusion in the *Saga Library* (1891–1905), virtually all were prepared during an intense period of study between 1868 and 1878. Of these early manuscripts, some remained unpublished, tantalizingly suggesting the possibility of recovery. Felce also analyzes the two authors’ mode of work, finding that virtually all the rough drafts were prepared by Magnússon, converted into poetry by Morris, and finally recast and revised by both collaborators. In chapter 1, “‘The Lovers of Gudrun’ and the Crisis of the Grail Quest,” Felce considers Morris’s first long narrative based directly on a saga original, the *Laxdaela Saga*. He finds that Morris failed to perceive aspects of the saga’s original internal structure and ignored its distinctive code of masculine honor in favor of creating a narrative in which all the participants, deprived of love, face a desacralized, post-Christian world devoid of meaning.

Chapter 2, “The Sagas of Icelanders and the Transmutation of Shame,” identifies the many saga locutions that encode the medieval Icelandic obsession with hyper-“masculinity,” defined by a series of homophobic, misogynistic, and physically invasive gestures and insults. Felce details the ways in which Morris “altered the representation of *nið*: a form of institutionalized shaming that is regularly portrayed in the sagas” (p. 53), according to which perpetrators “publicly malign their victim in a manner that, if not adequately avenged, is wholly devastating to his social standing” (p. 55). Although it has long been known that Morris recast saga material according to Victorian views of appropriate speech and behavior, Felce is the first to identify the exact forms of bowdlerization that this required. He concludes that translating “the desperation in the fight for masculinity as it stands in the sagas would have involved representing heroes whose instincts and actions are . . . frequently self-serving, grasping and downright cruel” (pp. 77–78).

In chapter 3, “Grettir the Strong and the Courage of Incapacity,” Felce considers another aspect of Morris’s attraction to the sagas, their celebration of protagonists forced to confront their own vulnerability. He notes that the Victorian image of Norsemen was one of invincibility; by contrast, Morris’s translations highlight their heroes’ incapacity or vincibility rather than their successes. For example, in the *Story of Grettir*, the protagonist continues to fight under ever-worsening circumstances, and Felce hypothesizes that for

Morris, "Grettir's ability to suffer vulnerability had the potential . . . to make him a greater man" (p. 88). Similarly in his treatment of romantic love, Morris's saga translations emphasize the heroes' ability to endure romantic frustration with fortitude. Felce notes that Morris's Icelandic diaries evoke similar preoccupations; during his first journey Morris records the many occasions on which he felt fear or exhibited ineptitude, but during his second visit, he expresses a sense of detachment devoid of personal anxieties. On his return, Morris claimed, "a definite space of my life had passed away now I have seen Iceland for the last time" (Kelvin, ed., *Letters*, 14 September 1873, p. 198), but Felce postulates that even before these therapeutic journeys, "the signs of a new attitude towards heroic masculinity in Morris are visible in the saga translations made in 1868 and 1869" (p. 109).

In chapter 4, "*Heimskringla*, Literalness and the Power of Craft," the author probes the issue of Morris's linguistic literalism, demonstrating that over time he revised his translations to tie them more closely to their Norse/Germanic roots in syntax, word order, and vocabulary, thus making them more "etymologically exacting, often eccentric and sometimes arcane" (p. 126) than in Magnússon's more direct original drafts. Felce disagrees with critics who have claimed that Morris wished to impress on his audience the strangeness of the original; instead, his use of cognates and other Norse expressions attempted to convey the spirit of the original Gothic by using locutions he hoped would relate to his readers' own English-language experience, "forging repeated points of cultural confluence between Old Norse and English" (p. 130). Although Morris partly misjudged his audience, who repeatedly saw these usages as alien, Felce suggests that his translations anticipated his views of medieval craft ideals some years before he began to speak in public on artistic subjects.

In chapter 5, "*Sigurd the Volsung* and the Fulfilment of the Deedful Measure," Felce explores Morris's portrayal of an ethos of action or "deedful measure," as represented in his epic poem based on the *Volsunga Saga* plot. Morris's protagonists are less acquisitive, self-serving, and violent than their saga prototypes, act with greater benevolence and kindness toward subordinates, and view themselves "in symbiotic relationship with the community" (p. 137). Unlike the original shame-obsessed saga characters, who on occasion commit gratuitously vicious acts, Morris's heroes are conscious of their duty to behave virtuously within the ongoing tale of their people. The tale's "unyielding prosody . . . and impermeable diction" also force the reader "to affirm the act of reading or desist altogether" (pp. 142–143) and help create a self-contained epic universe or discrete secondary world remote from our actual one. Arguably Morris's years of translation prepared him for this effort to "restore the

canon's missing epic" (p. 155), providing him with a "vivid and personally graspable" moral code (p. 155) and enabling him to turn from the sagas to a period of practical activism.

Chapter 6, "The Unnameable Glory and the Fictional World," considers two claims of previous critics, that Morris's interest in the *ragnarök* led to a belief in social revolution and that his Icelandic experiences prompted a belief in communal equality. Felce rejects both ideas, observing that Morris's allusions to Norse religion chiefly praise its celebration of stoicism, not destruction, and that the Icelandic society he actually observed was neither egalitarian nor communal. Although it has also been suggested rather loosely that the societies of *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains* reflect Icelandic customs, Felce again demurs, finding that Morris's Germanic romances depict an idealized classless, dignified, and community-oriented society quite different from the individualistic and hierarchical world of the sagas. The influence of Morris's Icelandic translations appears instead in the ability of the late prose romances to fashion alternate worlds replete with "vividly imagined visual authenticity" (p. 170), qualities that contributed to the next century's genre of fantasy fiction.

In conclusion, Felce summarizes that in Morris's attempt to minimize the conflict between his ideal of heroism and "the ethos that the sagas actually portray" (p. 173), he minimized cruel and competitive behavior and accentuated other characteristics such as dignity, benevolence, and maturation through accepting one's own vulnerability. Felce suggests that Morris translated narratives that ironically "*problematize* the very culture that he wished to resuscitate, portraying the strife intrinsic to honor-based societies" (p. 175). Nonetheless, Morris's engagement with the sagas enabled him to construct a positive ideal of secular heroism in the service of a wider community, as embodied in his later writings, craft work, and public activism.

Owen Holland's *William Morris's Utopianism: Propaganda, Politics, and Prefiguration* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave, 2017) explores the socialist/Marxist ideas permeating Morris's writings from the mid-1880s onward as these respond to the events and debates of his time, and as such, it supplements and corrects the work of E. P. Thompson and other previous commentators on Morris's utopian and political writings. Chapter 1, "No Where and Now Here," stakes out Holland's basic thesis, that Morris's utopian writings respond directly to contemporary literary and cultural trends and, more often than has been explored, comment on political issues of immediate interest to him and his Socialist League audience. *News from Nowhere* thus constitutes a "now here" rather than a "no where," and Holland observes that this "present-oriented,

propagandistic function" of Morris's text has been more difficult for later generations to recover than its "futural, heuristic" aspects (p. 20).

Chapter 2, "Twentieth-Century Critical Readings of Morris's Utopianism," identifies what Holland sees as a flaw in earlier readings of *News from Nowhere* by such noted predecessors as R. Page Arnot, Paul Meier, Miguel Abensour, Raymond Williams, and E. P. Thompson, who had viewed Morris's political and utopian writings as largely distinct, and he suggests that their Communist affinities during the 1930s–1970s had prompted them to consider Morris's journalistic writings as less important than his utopia. Holland's account here offers a valuable synthesis of much-earlier Morris criticism; but it should also be noted that critical fashions of the time favored structuralist rather than historical or political readings of imaginative works, and so critics who wished to uphold Morris's literary reputation would have avoided such contextual approaches. As instances of *Nowhere's* political commentary, Holland identifies several scenes that relate directly to contemporary Socialist League debates, including conflicts over the limits of reformism, the need for compromise in decision-making, and the dangers of treating "politics" as a compartmentalized, specialized activity. He suggests that Morris was less concerned with "imagining transcendent alternatives" (p. 39) than in presenting "scenes in which his readers, or at least some of them, would be called upon to act" (p. 44).

Chapter 3, "At the Crossroads of Socialism and First-Wave Feminism," provides valuable context for *Nowhere's* statements on gender and marriage. Holland reviews the concerns of "New Woman" novels of the period, noting that the latter were chiefly realist fictions that celebrated the struggles of middle-class women for independence, whereas *Nowhere's* romance form suggested a broad, historically rooted narrative of an entire people. *Nowhere's* critique of the bourgeois novel plot in which the protagonists marry and live "happily in an island of bliss on other people's troubles" thus constitutes a rejection of realist strategies of representation as well as the limited ideologies that favor a single and relatively privileged protagonist.

Holland also reviews Morris's own history of engagement with the feminist causes of his day, from his initial support for women's trade unions through his later warnings that "equal rights" under capitalism would continue the exploitation of both sexes at each other's expense. He supported "free unions," however, and Holland points out that all three of his explicitly political narratives, *A Dream of John Ball*, *The Pilgrims of Hope*, and *News from Nowhere*, present a central character who forms an extramarital union without narrative censure. In assessing Morris's later prose romances such as *The Wood beyond the World* in the context of Victorian feminism, however, he concludes that these

generally rely on a sexual double standard and conservative view of gender relations. Finally, Holland considers the scene in *Nowhere* in which Guest and his guide are served by three women at breakfast. He notes that one of these women bears the name of an actual Morris family servant and suggests that Morris may be attempting to portray a world in which former servants and housekeepers have attained equal status with their previous employers.

In chapter 4, "The Pastoral Structure of Feeling in Morris's Utopianism," Holland argues that *Nowhere's* pastoralism was "an attempt to appropriate and channel the pastoral structure of feeling dominant in fin-de-siècle radical culture in the direction of political organization," that is, toward social revolution rather than quietist communitarianism (p. 107). Holland considers Morris's qualified response to an array of contemporary pastoral experiments—land colonies, utopian settlements, campaigns for land reform, and environmental pressure groups—all of which he felt failed to confront the necessary task of altering society itself.

Holland traces parallels between the pastoralism of *Nowhere* and the idyllic accounts of rural life in John Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera* and between the peasants' struggle against dispossession of their land in *A Dream of John Ball* and contemporary movements for land nationalization. However, as the ruptured endings of *A Dream of John Ball* and *Nowhere* illustrate, a utopian outcome remains impossible under present social conditions, and Morris's preferred task of "making Socialists" required at least propinquity to a city and large numbers of potential recruits. In evoking the desire for pastoral landscapes within his socialist writings, Morris instead emphasizes the need for his audience to reclaim and create, rather than "find," a nature-based utopia. *Commonweal* pointedly juxtaposed accounts of the dire conditions of rural labor with the pastoral sections of *Nowhere*, and the romance ends with a "counter-pastoral turn" (p. 155), as upon reentering the nineteenth century, Guest encounters a dilapidated farm laborer rather than *Nowhere's* happy and prosperous denizens. Holland concludes that for Morris the use of pastoral was merely one attempt to tie socialist agitation "to the strategic goal of social revolution, without predetermining the complexity or otherwise of a post-capitalist future" (p. 166).

In chapter 5, "Imperialism, Colonialism and Internationalism," Holland examines Morris's many anti-imperialist writings from 1876 until his death, a period when Britain claimed control over nearly one-fifth of the world. He explores Morris's indebtedness to other Marxist writers such as Ernest Belfort Bax for his analysis of the effects of the "World Market" and examines *Nowhere's* critiques of colonial adventurers in the context of *Commonweal's* condemnations of imperial wars. Appropriately *Nowhere's* anti-imperialist critiques

are spoken by Hammond from his quarters in the British Museum, the central repository of imperial artifacts, and echo Morris's own attacks on the ethos of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition of 1886. Holland notes the ironies in John Ball's innocent but misguided happiness at the news of a future (that is, nineteenth-century) world market, as his nineteenth-century interlocutor corrects his enthusiasm by citing the criticisms of "free trade" also featured in *Commonweal*.

Morris was not merely gradualist and "cosmopolitan" but revolutionary and internationalist in his approach; as a delegate to the founding conference of the Second International held in Paris in 1889, he may have met many of the European socialists who would later translate *News from Nowhere* into at least fourteen other languages. Holland argues that *Nowhere* also "manifests an internationalist outlook in symbolic and figurative terms" (p. 208) in such scenes as *Nowhere's* re-creation of Trafalgar Square as a fruit orchard, although Morris's embeddedness in a Eurocentric historical tradition also led him to assume that in some contexts British emigration might be benign.

A final chapter, "Where Are We Now?," considers how a contextual reading of *Nowhere* might remain relevant to our present. Holland suggests that "Morris's reflections on the nature of work in capitalist society and the possibility of pleasurable labour, so central to his utopianism, continue to have an important purchase on present debates and concerns" (p. 251); specifically, he applauds Morris's advocacy of the right to creative work (as opposed to merely shorter hours) and his warning of the limits of gradualism. Both are embodied in *Nowhere's* chapter "How the Change Came," an imagined future retrospective in which Hammond recounts a series of gradualist reforms that had preceded—but failed to encompass—"the great change." Holland concludes that Morris's utopianism was "both romantic *and* utilitarian" and that the tension between these elements was "a process which could only be worked out through praxis—not in utopia, but in the very world" (p. 267).

Inspired in part by several years of photographing Morris's writings in archives in Britain, the United States, and the Netherlands, in "Where Have All the Manuscripts Gone? Morris's Autographs in Diaspora" (*JWMS* 22, no. 4 [2018]: 4–14), I offer a brief history of the posthumous dispersal of Morris's literary and political autograph manuscripts. I suggest that their limited accessibility has helped construct the myth of Morris as a facile writer, prevented appreciation of the range of his calligraphic endeavors, and even helped bury unpublished poems and other shorter writings. In commenting on what I believe to be a hitherto unnoticed poem, "A gloss in rhyme on the story of Howard by William Morris," beautifully inscribed in a Fitzwilliam Founders' Library

manuscript, I observe that Morris's responses differ markedly from modern literary criticism in concentrating on the middle-aged hero's attempt to overcome depression and crippling loss through renewed action, a focus quite similar to that described in chapter 3 of Ian Felce's book reviewed earlier.

In "The Planetary in Morris's Late Romances" (*JWMS* 22, no. 4 [2018]: 15–30), Ayşe Çelikkol views Morris's late prose romances as exemplifying a "planetary," as opposed to a "global," view of spatial and human reality. Defining the "planetary" as an ecological web of relations among peoples, cultures, and locales, she examines how the plots of his five last romances move across natural landscapes to enable his protagonists to encounter alterity, view nature from a panoramic perspective, and forge ties between the local and universal. Çelikkol notes the importance of water as a boundary that also enables exploration of a world of interconnected realms, forcing the protagonists outward to explore alternate societies that abide by different rules. Morris's narrative moves the eye through successive landscapes, offering an expansive sense of space and prolonging the experience of vision in order to "resist the imperial urge to master space" (p. 24). The mixture of alien and familiar appears also in the use of historically resonant and yet intimate archaized language, binding together distant entities and alternate worlds. Çelikkol suggests that this "orientation toward the other is the motor that drives the plots of the romances" (p. 27) and concludes that "Morris's planetary worlds . . . offer an alternative to time-space compression through their temporal structure, panoramic perspective and invitation to imagine the 'wideness of the world'" (p. 28).

The year 2018 also witnessed considerable interest in biographical and historical approaches to the Morris circle. Some years back, I edited Morris's *Socialist Diary*, and a second, expanded edition has now been brought out by Nottingham-based Five Leaves Press. My new introduction probes the many influences on Morris's resistance to electoral politics in the 1880s, including his temperamental predilections and the prevailing views of fellow members of his own Hammersmith Branch of the Socialist League. With the help of the labor historian Stephen Williams, I have also expanded the biographical accounts of the contemporary anarchists and socialists with whom he worked, such as James Tochatti, Henry Charles, and Charlotte Wilson.

Other additions to the biographical record include Barbara Lawrence's "Mrs. Morris's Other Children" (*JWMS* 22, no. 4 [2018]: 47–83), based on research by the late Dorothy Coles, which gathers what can be gleaned of Morris's siblings from extant documents; Peter Faulkner's "In Defence of Haldiday Sparling" (*JWMS* 23, no. 1 [2018]: 39–68), which traces the life of May Morris's erstwhile spouse before and after their unfortunate brief marriage;

and Fiona Rose's "Retelling the Tale of Taylor: A New Look at the Life of Warrington Taylor" (*JWMS* 23, no. 1 [2018]: 69–82), which rescues from obscurity the life of the Firm's first business manager, who contributed greatly to its eventual success before his death from tuberculosis. Stephen Williams resurrects a hitherto unnoticed Fabian and Socialist League activist in "Annie Taylor: The Socialist Years" (*JWMS* 23, no. 1 [2018]: 83–94); and Celia Davies's "Jenny Morris in Her Own Voice: Letters to Sydney Cockerell, 1897–99" (*JWMS* 22, no. 4 [2018]: 31–46) argues that despite Jenny Morris's increasing debility due to epilepsy, her letters of the late 1890s manifest intellectual interests, sensitivity to others, and love of the countryside. This welcome trend toward the recovery of circumambient material on Morris's circle further suggests the possibility of future new biographical and cultural approaches to his endeavors.