complete or scholarly edition. The meditations, located on the left-hand page when the book is open, consist of a phrase or sentence (a "snippet," if you will) from the corresponding section of Morris's journal entry that is located on the right-hand page. The snippet from Morris's text, printed in red on the left-hand page, becomes the header for Greenlaw's meditations, which consist of a few sentences loosely connected in theme to form a sort of prose poem.

In his July 18 entry, for instance, Morris details how he lost a pannikin (a small cup or pan), which turned out to be the first in a series of objects that he loses (but which are later returned to him). He writes,

> About this time began the first series of losses that I suffered, to the great joy of my fellow-travellers: for, lunch over, I missed the strap that fastened my tin pannikin (which made such a sweet tinkle) to my saddle-bow: I applied to Faulkner for another, and of course he refused me with many reproaches: then afterwards, hunting about, he found the strap, but pride prevented me from asking for it, so I tied my pannikin on with a piece of string, and so off we go and ride presently off the grass on to the smooth black [s]and about Ölfusá, called the skeid, and lo after I have ridden a furlong or so, the knot of the string has slipped and my pannikin is gone. (45)

In Greenlaw's facing-page prose poem, she meditates on a small phrase from Morris's entry, transforming the specific misplacement of objects of comfort into a more profound examination of what loss means when one is far from home:

> — The first of a series of losses
> You let go.
> Discarding.
> You enjoy the joke against yourself.
> Your world is what travels with you: slippers and a pannikin.
> The world restores itself to you.
> You make none of this happen. (44)

Because the selected snippet is not highlighted in any way on the right-hand page, part of the challenge of reading Greenlaw's book is locating the selected phrases in Morris's writing. While highlighting the phrase, perhaps using red ink for the snippet on both pages, would make locating the snippet easier, the current design pushes a "back-and-forth" method of reading that necessitates a breaking of thought that is absent if one reads Morris's entries or Greenlaw's meditations separately. Oddly, this alternating method of reading brings the reader much closer to the act of journal writing, which is often a process of turning scattered thoughts and impressions into a single, smooth entry intended to reflect an entire day's worth of existence.

While *Questions of Travel* was first printed in 2011, a paperback edition and e-book were made available in the U.S. in March 2017. Normally a fan of e-books, in this case I found the hardcopy book worth the paper and ink, as one cannot quite replicate the experience of reading the hardcopy facing-page design on an e-reader. On the issue of design—always of import when considering Morris—my one disappointment with Greenshaw's curation is in the paucity of images included in her book. The version of the *Icelandic Journals* available on the William Morris Achive (http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu/icelandicdiaries.html), for instance, is complemented by gorgeous photographs of Iceland taken by Martin Stott in 2013, images of Morris's handwritten journal, and a map from *The Collected Works of William Morris* (Vol. 8) that details Morris's route through Iceland. Although part of the map appears on the cover of one edition of Greenlaw's book, the pages themselves include only two caricatures by Edward Burne-Jones: "William Morris climbing a mountain in Iceland," which is nestled between the introductory material and the first journal entry; and "Home Again: William Morris sitting in an armchair," which closes the book.

The closing image of Morris in his armchair is nevertheless a suitable way to end a volume that ponders the hesitations and anxieties of travel as much as the advantages of experiencing a place as beautiful and exoticized as Iceland. Inasmuch as the book makes poetic philosophy out of the minutia of travel, it thus also manages to draw upon the universal joy of returning to one's own comfortable home and hearth.

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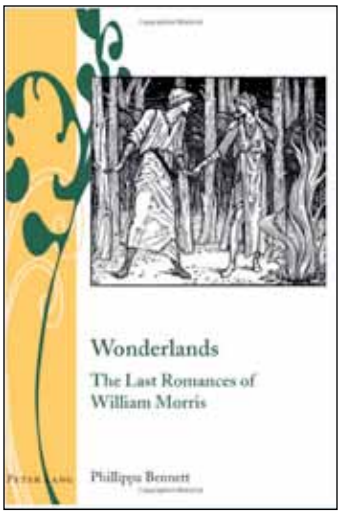
PHILLIPPA BENNETT, *WONDERLANDS: THE LAST ROMANCES OF WILLIAM MORRIS*,

Peter Lang, 2015. 230 pp.

Florence Boos

Phillippa Bennett's *Wonderlands: The Last Romances of William Morris* offers an appreciative defense of the ideological significance of Morris's last tales. Bennett



defines "wonder" as a receptive and celebratory response to the world and "a powerful means of expressing our relationship to it" (6). Noting that commentators and philosophers since the Middle Ages have remarked on the physical and ethical aspects of wonder, she argues that for Morris "the most fundamental and crucial aspect of wonder was its revolutionary potential" (7). Chapter 1, "The Embodiment of Wonder," argues that Morris's celebration of physical life constitutes "one of his most powerful critiques of late nineteenth-century capitalism" with its disfiguring effects on both the body and mind of its victims (25). Bennett suggests that the erotic pleasure experienced by the protagonists of the last romances, *The Well at the World's End* and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, reflects a generosity and mutual respect born of reciprocity, though Morris cautions in *The Story of the Glittering Plain* and elsewhere that mere physical existence without the vigor of labor and effort is a form of death.

In chapter 2, "The Topography of Wonder," Bennett explores Morris's portrayal of wondrous environments as means to an appreciation of familiar or everyday beauty, with emphasis on the two landscapes which most influenced him, Iceland and England. She traces in detail the parallels between Morris's expressions of awe, fear, and wonder when confronted with the difficult and beautiful Icelandic terrain—especially its mountains and bleakly rugged plains—and the emotional states of his protagonists in similar environments. Observing that for Morris a reverential delight in nature likewise prompts an ethic of care for his own, less remarkable but similarly beautiful English landscape, she finds that especially in his last romances, Morris envisages a relationship between humanity and the natural world "bereft of the exploitation and victimization that so often characterized it in his personal experience" (89).

In chapter 3, "The Architecture of Wonder," Bennett explores the built environments in Morris's romances against the background of his distaste for the hideous and unhealthy dwellings of industrial society, his views on the imitative nature of contemporary Victorian architecture, and his work for the protection of ancient buildings. His belief that the contemporary "architectural crisis" could only be resolved "by the will to reimagine the relationship between human beings and the spaces and places they inhabit on a daily basis" (95) is allegorized throughout the romances, in which the buildings which survive are those which enhance the unity and well-being of the people.

In chapter 4, "The Politics of Wonder," Bennett considers the aspects of Morris's socialist vision founded on hope: the ability to imagine a different and better world. She interprets the last romances in the context of his activism, noting that these "provided an alternative and complementary context in which he could explore the implications of wonder's drive towards the movement of challenge" (148). She then identifies features of the romance quest which characterize a "revolutionary consciousness": a willingness to rebel against established hierarchies, even at the risk of life; the search for a worthy purpose for action; and the fulfillment of personal identity in promoting the well-being of one's society.

In the final chapter, "The Presentation of Wonder," Bennett explores ways in which Kelmscott Press editions complement and embody the meanings of Morris's romances. Noting Morris's great excitement at book collecting and his love for books as material aspects, Bennett describes Morris's relations with his illustrators and the variety of designs he created for the six prose romances published at the Press. Bennett argues that the Kelmscott Press books were, like his romances, revolutionary in their quiet beauty, demonstrating "how a society that values beauty and encourages craftsmanship free from 'commercial exigencies' might produce such books for all its citizens" (200-201).

In viewing Morris's romances in the context of his Socialist activism, *Wonderlands* provides an excellent synthesis of the ethos of Morris's late prose romances as well as the unity of his later endeavors. Bennett's case for the aspirational significance of these tales as experiments in a new mode of thought seems convincing, although in my view there are aspects of chapter 1's association of beautiful body and healthy mind which require qualification, as realism and allegory remain in tension. However, Bennett's regret that critics have rated Morris's prose romances as of lesser value than his other literary works may soon be obsolete, for a younger generation seems highly receptive to Morris's romances as an influence on J. R. R. Tolkien and J. K. Rowling.

[Excerpted from a review in *Victorian Poetry* 55.4.]