Pre-Raphaelitism
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Guide to the Year's Work

In *Victorian Poetry* 54.3 a section of the article by Florence Boos in the Year's Work was regrettably omitted. Here, that entry is reprinted in its entirety.

Pre-Raphaelitism

FLORENCE BOOS

This past year brought many valuable contributions to the study of literary Pre-Raphaelitism, with detailed critical analyses often providing wider philosophic or cultural insights. I will begin this review by examining articles, book chapters, and a monograph that analyze the work of the Rossetti brothers, then turn to several articles and chapters on Christina Rossetti's poetry and two books and several articles which explore the contributions of William Morris. Since Elizabeth Helsinger's *Poetry and the Thought of Song in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Univ. of Virginia Press) includes chapters on all three major Pre-Raphaelite poets, Dante Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, and Morris, these will be discussed separately under the relevant author headings.

Dante Rossetti, William Michael Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelite Poetry

In "Poetry on Pre-Raphaelite Principles: Science, Nature, and Knowledge in William Michael Rossetti's 'Fancies at Leisure,' and 'Mrs. Holmes Grey'" (*VP* 53.1), John Holmes explores the relationship between the Pre-Raphaelites' early respect for empirical science and the critique of its moral limitations embodied in their verse. Holmes is innovative in pointing out in William Rossetti's little noticed "Fancies at Leisure" the modernity, close observation, and appeal to the reader's subjective perceptions which encourage "an enhanced appreciation of our common life within the ecologies that we share" (p. 30). He also finds WMR's "Mrs. Holmes Grey" a sustained exposé of the limits of documentary testimony, as medical witnesses, a judge, jury, newspaper report, and the recollections of husband and friend all fail to explain a deranged woman's alleged death from frustrated adulterous passion. Although the proximate focus of this article is on William Rossetti, Holmes' remarks on the ethos of early Pre-Raphaelitism provide a useful model for understanding other Pre-Raphaelite

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works as "writing poetry *as* science—that is, poems on scientific principles—rather than merely poetry *of* science" (p. 37).

Another exploration of the impetus behind early Pre-Raphaelite art appears in D. M. R. Bentley's "Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'For an Annunciation, Early German: *Einfühlung*, Inspiration, and Significance" (*JPRS* 24, Fall). Examining the first of Rossetti's sonnets on a painting, written in 1847 as a contribution to his initial collection "Songs of the Art Catholic," he notes the similarity of Rossetti's practice with what would later be theorized by the German philosopher of aesthetics Robert Vischer as *Einfühlung*—glossed by Bentley as "a temporary egress from the narrow confines of self and an opening of space within the self for the alterity that has been felt-into" (p. 37). After examining several plausible originals for the yet-unidentified "Early German" Annunciation painting memorialized in the poem, Bentley demonstrates ways in which the sonnet adduces details only apparent to the figures within the painting, which thus "work to absorb the reader further into it and to achieve an 'inner standing-point' " (p. 38).

In her chapter on "Listening: Dante Gabriel Rossetti" (*Poetry and the Thought of Song*), Elizabeth Helsinger traces the significance of listening, sound, and music in evoking altered states of consciousness throughout Rossetti's paintings and poetry. After identifying ways in which his paintings convey the sense of listening, Helsinger explores the importance placed on older musical and ballad traditions by Rossetti and his friends and the influence of the latter on his watercolors and songs. Observing that his lyrics repeatedly explore "that perplexing transit from page to tones to music heard in the ear of the mind to expand the conception of what lyric poetry and painting might do" (pp. 81-82), she offers subtle readings of the effects of musical allusions within Rossetti's actual "songs," his sonnets on paintings, poems replete with musical metaphors such as "Love's Nocturne", and finally, the "Willowwood" and "Monochord" sonnets from "The House of Life," which in her words, offer "the feel of life to those who can no longer anticipate" (p. 116).

In "Speaking with the Dead: The Séance Diary of William Michael Rossetti, 1865-68," (*JPRS* 24, Spring), Andrew Stauffer provides a fascinating glimpse into an unexpected nook of Pre-Raphaelite biography, the Rossetti brothers' shared experiments in alleged communication with spirits, as carefully recorded in William's diary. Eight out of twenty of these recorded séances included attempts to summon the spirit of Elizabeth Siddal, possibly to exorcize guilt, as "she" was asked repeatedly, "Are you now happy?" and "Tilt the table to the person you like best: it came to G[abriel]" (p. 39). The analogies between such séances and Rossetti's evocations of a dead beloved in works such as *Beata Beatrix* and "The Blessed Damozel" are self-evident; more surprising is

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the apparent assent of the more skeptical William, who in later life would note of Spiritualism that "any great addiction to its phenomena tends to weaken rather than fortify the mind" (p. 41).

Another psychologically-informed exploration of Dante Rossetti's relationship with death and the figure of his dead wife appears in Jesse Hoffman's "Dante Rossetti's Bad Photographs," (*VS* 57, no. 1). The "bad photographs" of the title are those of Elizabeth Siddal which Rossetti seems to have destroyed or, in one striking case, painted over, in favor of his carefully preserved sketches of her as well as her own drawings. Through an analysis of the dissolving shapes of "Willowwood," Hoffman demonstrates a pattern of selective concealment, denial, control, and loss: "The lover wishes desperately for the return of the beloved's singular face, which he cannot reproduce" (p. 69). He interprets Rossetti's repetitive later drawings of "Proserpine," which combine features of Jane Morris and Elizabeth Siddal, as a "hiding game" by which Rossetti continues through his art both "to hide and expose Siddal" (p. 80). A further arresting feature of this article is its inclusion of Rossetti's photographs of Siddal's sketches.

A different approach to the Rossetti family's relationship with the beloved dead is provided in Karen Dieleman's "Sacramental Memorializing: Upon the Death of Dante Gabriel Rossetti" (*Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 37, no. 3). Dieleman notes that earlier commentators have emphasized the power of memorials both to obstruct the search for a truthful memory or alternately, to create new meanings, and the three Christian memorials constructed by Frances and Christina Rossetti to the memory of the non-believing Dante Rossetti would seem a clear test case for interpretation. Through an analysis of the themes of resurrection, forgiveness, and hope embodied in Christina's poem "Birchington Churchyard," the engraved stone cross crafted by Ford Madox Brown for Rossetti's grave, and the Rossetti memorial window designed by Frederick Shields for All Saint's Church in Birchington, Dieleman finds that these memorials testify "to their unshaken faith that God's grace could be the chief frame through which to view the life and death of their beloved son and brother" (p. 230). Though it is hard to imagine that a revenant Rossetti would not have found some ironies in these efforts, he would surely have been gratified by their beauty, quiet taste, and direct references to his own artistry.

In "Eros and Revolution: Rossetti and Swinburne on Continental Politics," (*VS* 57, no. 4) Matthew Potolsky argues that both poets responded to political events of their day through eroticized scenes influenced by the European revolutionary movements of 1848, 1870, and beyond. In his examination of the sexual imagery of Rossetti's "After the French Liberation of Italy" and "After the German Subjugation of France" and Swinburne's "Les Noyades"

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and "Arthur's Flogging," Potolsky carries his point that for these poets the political was also personal. Readers of these texts might question whether they were as *erotically* as they were *politically* liberating, however; the metaphor of the degraded prostitute in the act of sex in "On the Refusal of Aid" evokes mere disgust, and Swinburne's contention that the flagellation of young boys is "democratic" seems a clear case of special pleading.

In "'Love that Releases No Beloved from Loving': Christina and Dante Rossetti's Reaction to the Courtly Love Convention of Dante Alighieri and the Idealization of the Female Muse" (*JRRS* 24, Fall), Azelina Flint contrasts the opposing reactions of Christina and Dante Rossetti to the troubadour tradition of courtly love poetry. She observes that in "Monna Innominata" Christina identifies reciprocity and acknowledgment as necessary features of true love, and, lacking these, the poet famously subsides into a "silence of a love that cannot sing again." By contrast, in such artworks as *Giotto Painting the Portrait of Dante*, *Beata Beatrix*, and *Paolo and Francesca*, Dante Rossetti portrays the isolation of the artist, and yet paradoxically, the power of an idealized conception of physical love to effect spiritual union.

In a chapter of her book on *Romantic Imagination and Astronomy*, "Rossetti: Reconciliation and Recursivity," (Palgrave, pp. 142-176), Dometa Brothers traces the influence of competing Romantic and Victorian views of astronomy on the visual perspectives of Rossetti's art and poetry. She argues that his neo-medievalism was not a throwback to earlier forms of art but rather a modern response to intervening shifts in ideas of time and space. Discerning the use of sophisticated astronomical perspectives in "The Soul's Sphere" and "Willowwood," Brothers finds that Rossetti's works confront "a terrifying new world, made reconcilable by recalling characteristics of the older world models" (p. 176).

Brian Donnelly's *Reading Dante G. Rossetti: The Painter as Poet* (Ashgate) probes the tensions inherent in Rossetti's work as it repeatedly enters an unstable space between reading and viewing. Attentive to recent scholarship on visuality as well as to feminist interpretations of the "male gaze," Donnelly argues that "throughout his career Rossetti's work reveals an abiding interest in the relationship between knowledge, power, life, death, between the body and soul, predominantly through the representation of women" (p. 2). The cover image is of a blond "Helen of Troy," flanked by images of a burning Troy, which Donnelly convincingly argues evokes Helen's beauty less than the "cost of her purchase" to a would-be voyeur.

The four chapters of *The Painter as Poet* focus on aspects of this verbal/visual relationship. Chapter 1, "Inscribing Mary," considers the relationship of

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Rossetti's early Marian poems and paintings, among these the sonnets exhibited with *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*. Donnelly argues that the structural composition of the sonnet mirrors Rossetti's double approach to interpretation through word and image, as both poem and painting represent a transformative moment laden with anxieties as well as promise, and that throughout Rossetti's writings "Mary in particular becomes a chameleon figure capable of endless reconfiguration" (p. 35). In the aptly titled chapter 2, "The Poetics of Ownership," Donnelly explores Rossetti's relationship with his predecessor Dante, as embodied in his many poems such as "The Portrait" and "The House of Life" in which a portrait of the dead beloved continues to trouble the artist, evoking a "confrontation with the self that is oftentimes prelude to catastrophe" (pp. 52-53). Donnelly differs with earlier critics who find Rossetti's representations misogynist, instead noting that his "male actors restlessly seek out the ungovernable feminine," and "seem resigned to, and even . . . welcome, the disfiguration of masculine identity it signifies (p. 70).

In chapter 3, "Fleshly Designs," Donnelly considers Rossetti's twelve female portraits and accompanying poems produced during the 1860s in the context of emerging notions of consumerism and consumption. Luxuriant portraits such as *Bocca Baciata* and *Lady Lillith* and poems such as *The Orchard Pit* suggest the possibility of self-renewing female pleasure as women increasingly enter public spaces, gesturing "through their modernity to new forms of femininity and representation," and disrupting the "discourse of masculine visual power" (p. 123). And in chapter 4, "'Found' in the City," Donnelly compares Rossetti's *Found*, his painting of a contemporary "fallen woman," with his poem on a similar theme, "Jenny," noting the ways in which the male who witnesses the woman's degradation is also seen as complicit, impotent, or anxiety-riven. Comparing these representations with fictional tropes of the "fallen woman," Donnelly suggests that Rossetti's ambiguous portrayals locate "feminine agency within masculine fantasies that nevertheless incorporate loss in the figure of the fallen man" (p. 153). An "Afterward" considers Rossetti's painting *Astarte Syriaca* and its accompanying poem as mirroring in its creative doubling of image and text the unstable fusion of spirit and matter for which Rossetti repeatedly strove.

In "The Pre-Raphaelite School: Recent Approaches" (*Literary Compass* 12, no. 11) Laura Kilbride considers possible definitions of a Pre-Raphaelite poetic style. Asserting that concentration on parallels between poetry and the visual arts or on specific poets can distract from the "sense of a common set of innovations at work in the period," she reviews recent articles under the thematic groupings of "ambidexterity," "brotherhood," and "style," and advocates

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further comparison of stylistic traits of several Pre-Raphaelite-associated poets with those of previous and subsequent generations. One might note that Natalie Houston has recently begun this effort in her computerized study of Pre-Raphaelite and other poems (see *VS* 56, no. 3, spring 2014).

Christina Rossetti

Several of this year's articles and book chapters concern Christina Rossetti's poetry. Of these, in "Beyond Measure: Christina Rossetti and Emily Bronte" (*Poetry and the Thought of Song*), Elizabeth Helsinger excavates the basic sonal qualities of Rossetti's work, noting that "for all the deceptive simplicities and apparent perfections of some of her poems, there is something outside or beyond measure in the sounded movement of others" (p. 117). In nuanced readings of poems from each stage of Rossetti's career Helsinger identifies the effects of ballad echoes and rhythms, controlled silences, balanced pauses, and attentiveness to the dangers as well as pleasures of song. Interestingly she also finds parallels between Rossetti's aesthetic and the practice of plainsong, in which the poet engaged twice weekly, and notes Rossetti's encouragement of readers to anticipate "through moments where absence or silence is felt, the unsounded measureless song of a community of souls in heaven" (p. 142). For those who might initially consider Rossetti's poetry simplistic, Helsinger's chapter provides an elegant and convincing guide to the subtleties of the poet's lyric voice.

In his chapter on "Christina Rossetti's *Verses*" (*Imagined Spiritual Communities in Britain's Age of Print*, Ohio State Univ. Press), Joshua King considers Rossetti's best-selling volume during her lifetime, a compilation of 331 poems extracted from earlier devotional books. He emphasizes three of its prominent features: Rossetti's exploitation of the then-popular sonnet form; her call for an egalitarian communion of saints across national boundaries (in contrast to contemporary appeals for imperialism in the name of religion); and her conscious appeal to a wide Christian audience rather than a merely Anglo-Catholic one. The popularity of *Verses* was undercut by several factors: the appearance of WMR's 1890 and 1896 editions of her poems; his mistaken claim that *Verses* lacked an organizing principle; the public's preference for anthologies and collected volumes of a poet's work; and ironically, Rossetti's success in making *Verses* open to multiple markets and thus to the appropriation of individual poems.

Two articles offer related insights into Rossetti's use of sources. In "Christina Rossetti's Tennysonianism," (*Cambridge Quarterly* 44, no. 1 [March]), Simon Humphries argues that rather than concealing the many Tennyson

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echoes in her poetry, Rossetti has rendered these obvious in order to emphasize her radical recasting of Tennyson's original, as in "Three Stages," "When I Am Dead, My Dearest," "Mariana," "The Prince's Progress," and "Enrica, 1865." Humphries concludes: "[T]he calculated reversals and counterings of Tennyson that we find in Rossetti's poetry are indications of a formidable poetic intelligence; and that, predominantly, is a theological intelligence" (p. 61).

An analogous pattern is discerned in "Christina Rossetti and Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight" (*SEL* 55, no. 4), in which Laura Forsberg locates a source for "The Prince's Progress" in the recently published text of "Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight." Noting the many verbal and structural resemblances between the two poems, Forsberg finds that Rossetti recasts Gawayne's quest as an indictment of the "moral confusion, symbolic instability, and knightly imperfection" of the secular masculine heroic ideal, and suggests that Rossetti anticipates modern *Gawayne* critics in her focus on the difficulties of reading ambiguous signs.

In "Rehearsing Social Justice: Temporal Ghettos and the Poetic Way Out in 'Goblin Market' and 'The Song of the Shirt' (*VP* 52.2), Jennifer MacClure contrasts the rhythms of "The Song of the Shirt," which echo the exhaustive and repetitive labor of the Victorian underclass, and those of "Goblin Market," which reproduce the linear but lethal "repetition of pleasurable commodity consumption" (p. 158). In each case, the poet suggests a possible salvation through "repetition with a difference"; the plaint of Hood's seamstress is varied by a final prophetic line, "Would that its tone could reach the Rich!" and Lizzie's reencounter with the goblins in order to bear home the salvific fruity antidote is replete with pointed reversals of the earlier scenes of Laura's fall.

In "Voices at the Convent Threshold: An Exchange between Christina Rossetti and Gerard Hopkins" (*JPRS* 24, Spring). Gerald Roberts notes that the young Hopkins, who admired Christina Rossetti's poetry, composed draft fragments of a dramatic monologue spoken in the voice of the lover to whom the speaker of "The Convent Threshold" had addressed her anguished remarks. Roberts observes that at the time of writing Hopkins's religious sentiments were "as yet fluid" two years before his 1866 conversion to Catholicism, yet notes that the poet later wrote a friend that he now objected to his earlier work "on the score of morality rather than of art" (p. 71). Perhaps the portrayal of internal conflict over the loss of worldly love seemed dangerously unholy to someone who himself crossed a male analogue of the "convent threshold."

In "Four Unpublished Letters by Christina Rossetti," (*JPRS* 24, Spring), David Kent provides context for four Rossetti letters which have hitherto lain unnoticed in the York University Lady Victoria Welby archive. Welby was a

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supporter of women's suffrage as well as the author of several books on language, meaning, and interpretation on what seem to be proto-positivist lines, and the letters record Rossetti's polite deflections of what seems to have been a request to poeticize a spiritual experience of the eminent philosopher of language. Rossetti asserts firmly that Lady Welby herself must describe her own experience, and further admonishes that perhaps Welby's alleged vision should remain uncommunicated after all, since "wise reserve *does* forbid the publication of such an anecdote" (p. 53). The letters record a clear parting of the ways, for as Rossetti later wrote to a friend who had lent her Welby's *Links and Clues*, she found its responses to scripture to contain instances of "absolutely unauthorized statement or suggestion" (p. 45).

William Morris

Two books which consider William Morris's literary works appeared this year, addressing writings composed at opposite ends of his life: my *History and Poetics in the Early Writings of William Morris: 1856-1870* (Ohio State Univ. Press), and Phillippa Bennett's *Wonderlands: The Last Romances of William Morris* (Peter Lang). In *History and Poetics*, I trace a unity within Morris's early writings and thought, from his romantic Oxford poems through preliminary drafts for *The Earthly Paradise*. The introduction places Morris within a tradition of empathetic and socially-critical historicism and notes early signs of his resolutely secular stance toward religion. In chapter 2, "From Antecedents to 'The Oxford Brotherhood,'" I consider features of Morris's childhood temperament and early Oxford associations, observing that the Oxford "Brotherhood" was a truly collective phenomenon, a network of several highly gifted individuals rather than two "geniuses" (Morris and Burne-Jones) and some peripheral satellites.

In chapter 3, "Morris's Earliest Poems: Preparation for *The Defence of Guenevere*," I examine manuscript drafts of Morris's juvenile poems and his early poetic contributions to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, and suggest that their preoccupations with fractured relationships and symbolic and emotion-laden landscapes anticipated the intense and image-laden poetry of *The Defence of Guenevere*. Chapters 4 and 5, "'The Many Shadows of Amiens': Morris's Early Essays" and "Morris's Early Prose Romances," probe his early prose narratives and essays on art, architecture and poetry for the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, arguing that his later belief in the importance of "the lesser arts" was adumbrated and prefigured in these early writings. The prose romances are also distinctive for their use of unexpectedly complex framing devices as indices of temporal displacement and their focus on the role of narrators as artistic "witnesses" of others' lives.

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Chapters 6 and 7 consider Morris's most important early work. "The Sources of *The Defence of Guenevere*" places Morris's Arthurian and Froissartian poems in the context of poetry by his well-known antecedents Tennyson, Rossetti, and Browning, as well as identifies the less expected influence of Robert Bulwer-Lytton and Edgar Allan Poe. "Gender Polarities in *The Defence*" argues that Morris's volume, notable for its representations of isolated and passionate women who define themselves against Victorian moral codes, critiques the stultifying effects of gender-segregation in a violent medieval society, and by inference, Victorian England.

A final chapter, "After *The Defence*: A More Authentic 'Medievalism'" details Morris's response to the sharp attacks on his alleged Pre-Raphaelite "obscurity" advanced by contemporary reviewers. The nine year period between the publication of *The Defence of Guenevere* and his next volume of poems, *The Life and Death of Jason*, was a little-noticed period of poetic refinement and germination, as Morris sought to deepen rather than abandon his historicism. Through the study of classical and medieval sources, translation of medieval texts, and repeated experiments in the sonnet, short lyric, dramatic poem, and blank verse, he improved his initial efforts in a series of increasingly polished poetic drafts. Such empathetic historicism enabled Morris to preserve a duality of privacy and detachment—the intimacy of personal lyric and the detachment (and inadequacy) of historical judgment—which characterizes his later writings.

Phillippa Bennett's *Wonderlands: The Last Romances of William Morris* (Peter Lang) 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" (p. 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" (p. 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 (p. 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

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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" (p. 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" (p. 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" (p. 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 objects, 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

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"how a society that values beauty and encourages craftsmanship free from 'commercial exigencies' might produce such books for all its citizens" (pp. 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 2's association of beautiful body and healthy mind which require qualification, as realism and allegory remain in tension. However, her 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. Tolkien and J. K. Rowling.

Among articles on Morris published this year, two discuss his poetry and several others his essays, translations, and prose romances. In "'Well-Known Things': Experience, Distance, and Perspective in William Morris's 'The Defence of Guenevere,'" (*VP* 52, no. 1), Katja Lindskog approaches anew the issue of how Morris's empathetic historicism permits readers a direct entrance into the past. Lindskog suggests that like his patterns, Morris's early historical poems offer a "continuous surface" which suggests "the possibility of a space in which no lines of perspective between the artist, the artwork, and the reader/viewer can be drawn" (p. 460). Removing borders between the viewer and the viewed, Lindskog argues, creates an ethical perspective in that the reader "must participate . . . as a composite part of the image of the past, thereby participating also in recreating the collaborative and non-individuated medieval mind-set that Morris' poetry seeks to evoke" (p. 466).

In "Unprintable Lyrics: The Unpublished Poems of William Morris" (*VP* 53, no. 2), I consider a seeming anomaly: that many of Morris's lyric poems written between 1869 and 1873 were published obscurely, unpublished during his lifetime, published posthumously in confusing order by his daughter, or never published until their inclusion in the William Morris Archive (http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu). I suggest that the reason for this was their content: Morris's expression of grief over his wife's seeming preference for another (D. G. Rossetti), and his private struggle over how to transcend this sense of loss. An examination of the manuscripts and short poems of the period indicates that in their direct emotions, expressive cadences, and allegorical and allusive references, these troubled lyrics represented his mature poetic preoccupations at their best.

A book chapter and essay consider Morris's translations. In "Nordic Myths in William Morris's Works: Contextualization and Recontextualization,"

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(*Studies in the Transmission and Reception of Old Norse Literature*, eds. J. Quinn and M. A. Cipolla, Brepols Publisher), Alessandro Zironi reviews the development of Morris's understanding of Norse literature and philology, noting the different phases of his involvement from casual early reading through study, translation, Icelandic travel, free poetic appropriation, and later political commentary. Zironi identifies Morris's consistent preference for stories of human drama rather than the more mythological subjects of the *Eddas*, and he suggests explanations for the deep emotional appeal that stories such as *Gunnlaug the Worm-tongue* and *Grettir the Strong* held for him.

In "William Morris' Synthetic *Aeneids:* Virgil as Physical Object," (*Translation and Literature* 24, no. 1), Jack Mitchell explicates the rationale behind what have been considered Morris's anachronistic language usages in his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Observing that for Morris's contemporaries his translation had seemed lucid and appropriate, he identifies its chief feature as its archeological stratification, its layering of classical, early medieval, late medieval, and Renaissance associations onto a single text. Mitchell compares Morris's sophisticated tribute to the process of transmission to its twin enterprise, the illuminated *Aeneid* with illustrations by Burne-Jones, left unfinished and later completed by Charles Murray. Mitchell argues that, given Morris's hopes for an illustrated print edition, his translation was more harmonious with its projected setting than "the introduction of a prose translation in natural contemporary English" (p. 22) would have been.

In "Telling Time: William Morris" (*Poetry and the Thought of Song*), Elizabeth Helsinger examines the aesthetics of Morris's often neglected later poetry as found in the *Chants for Socialists*, *Pilgrims of Hope*, and the "song-speech" of the later prose romances. Helsinger notes that Morris is unusual among late nineteenth-century poets in conceiving of poetry as a the "*collective* voice" of a culture, using blended ballad and epic rhythms to create songs capable of inspiring a unified, purposeful, and orderly community retuned to "the collective rhythms of a productive social life yet to be" (p. 153). She identifies the songs within *A Dream of John Ball* as vehicles for historical protest and unconscious shared memory, and the "song-speeches" in Morris's later prose romances as alternative forms of action and perspective which provide "an experience of living within a community while seeing that community's place in history as most of its members cannot" (p. 163).

In "William Morris, Extraction Capitalism, and the Aesthetics of Surface," (*VS* 57, no. 3), Elizabeth Carolyn Miller identifies Morris's critique of capitalism as "fundamentally incompatible with Earth's ecological balance" (p. 395). Informed by the evils of his original family's mining enterprise, Morris's

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eco-socialism advocates an "aesthetics of surface" to replace the extractive and polluting processes which destroy human society in the service of economic "expansion" and "progress." Miller's readings of passages from Morris's poetry, essays, and *News from Nowhere* explore his conception of beauty as "the sunlight, the fresh air, the unspoiled face of the earth" ("Useless Work and Useless Toil") and his re-orientation of "age-old conceptions of wealth" toward "that which is all around us on the surface of the world" (p. 402).

In "Revisiting Morris's Socialist Internationalism: Reflections on Translation and Colonialism" (*JWMS* 21, no. 2), Owen Holland examines the international scope of Morris's influence as demonstrated in the wide distribution of translations of *News from Nowhere* throughout Europe and Japan in the twenty-five years after its publication. Holland finds that these translations were often circulated by socialists who advocated revolution rather than gradualism, and further argues that this "array of translations provides one way of trying to resolve, or force through, some of the apparent [national] limitations in Morris's internationalism as it is represented in *News from Nowhere*" (p. 33). The essay is accompanied by a bibliography of translations of *News from Nowhere* between 1890 and 1915, a period in which Morris's utopia was circulated in at least 15 languages, including Finnish, Serbian, and Japanese. Holland's bibliography and valuable glosses on the political affiliations of each translator should help inspire future researches into the international ties of British socialism of the period.

In "Versions of the Past, Problems of the Present, Hopes for the Future: Morris and Others Rewrite the Peasants' Revolt" (*JWMS* 21, no. 2), Julia Courtney places *A Dream of John Ball* within the context of late-century concern with "Englishness" and other literary portrayals of the 1381 Peasant's Revolt. Courtney compares Morris's dream vision with two historical novels, Charlotte Yonge's *The Wardship of Steepcombe* (1896) and Mary Bramston's *The Banner of St. George* (1901). Though Courtney does not explore the possibility that Morris's work may have influenced at least one of these novelists, she demonstrates that these alternative portrayals share *A Dream*'s sympathy for the grievances behind the Peasant's Revolt and a desire to apply its lessons to their contemporary setting.

Two brief articles provide biographical and historical context for scenes from *News from Nowhere*. In "Philip Webb's Visit to Oxford, November 1886" (*JWMS* 21, no. 2), Stephen Williams explores the personalities and activities of the Oxford branch of the Socialist League at the time of a visit by Morris's close associate, the architect Philip Webb. Since Webb left behind few personal writings, it is interesting to read his *Commonweal* account of this visit,

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which reveals his laconic wit and deep convictions. And in "The Dixton Paintings: Vision of *News from Nowhere* or Dream?" (*JWMS* 21, no. 2), Patrick O'Sullivan considers the communal agriculture of Morris's utopia, noting its resemblance to pre-enclosure labor practices as depicted in the early eighteen-century paintings of Thomas Dixton. O'Sullivan remarks that Morris would have been aware of such pre-mechanized forms of organization, which offered laborers more autonomy and prosperity than post-enclosure ones.

And finally, digitization has brought new access to Pre-Raphaelite-related materials. The University of Kansas libraries have now made available to the public 300 digitized letters and other documents, much of it Rossetti family correspondence, along with 782 individual images (http://lib.ku.edu/rossetti). The International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam has digitized its entire collection of Socialist League Archives, with 2769 documents available at http://search.socialhistory.org/Record/ARCH01344/Description. And more modestly, the William Morris Archive has added new introductions for *Sigurd the Volsung* by Peter Wright and for *Grettir*, *Egil's Saga*, the *Volsunga Saga* and the *Saga Library* by Marjorie Burns, as well as images of autograph manuscripts held in the Cheltenham, Fitzwilliam, Morgan, Huntington and New York Public Libraries. These include manuscripts for *Beowulf*, *The House of the Wolfings*, *The Well at the World's End*, *The Wood Beyond the World*, *The Story of Halfdan the Black*, *The Story of Magnus the Blind*, *The Story of Kormack the Son of Ogmund*, *The Story of Howard the Halt*, two drafts of *News from Nowhere*, and several political essays, with more in process, enabling viewers to observe Morris's composition practices more fully.

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