Reviews


This collection of ten substantial essays suggests a dual project. On the one hand, it constitutes a roughly chronological history (though not, as the editor Richard Maxwell emphasises, a comprehensive one) of the Victorian illustrated book; on the other, it belongs to the body of inter-art inquiry historicised as nineteenth-century 'visual culture'. *The Victorian Illustrated Book* thus continues the work of John O. Jordan and Carol T. Christ's *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination* (1995), Kate Flint's *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (2000), and Gerard Curtis's *Visual Words* (2002). However, there is more to the enterprise of visual culture than exploring demonstrated relationships between visual and verbal texts, and the essays in the present collection investigate the notion of illustration itself. In his essay 'Serial Illustration and Storytelling in *David Copperfield*', for instance, Robert L. Patten reminds us that to 'illustrate' is to elucidate and enlighten; illustration does not merely embellish the work of 'a verbal master whose production is the prior, authoritative signifier' (p. 91). At the other extreme, Nicholas Frankel shows how the competing realms of image and text interpenetrate and dissolve in Aubrey Beardsley's work, to the point where 'illustration' becomes a questionable term (p. 260).

Maxwell introduces the volume with a succinct and useful survey. He argues that the illustrated book becomes in the Victorian period 'a cultural form of the first importance', and he traces a shift in nineteenth-century book illustration away from the satiric and grotesque projects of the 1830s and 1840s (Dickens's collaborators and the *Punch* circle, for example) towards the 'poetic naturalism' of the 1860s and eventually to William Morris's 'total art of the book' at the century's end (p. xxi). The illustrated book satisfied the Victorian need for visual stimulation even in the face of competing media such as the shop-window and public spectacle, while mass production ensured that the book was 'portable property *par excellence*' (p. xxv). Throughout the century the book increasingly draws attention to its own material status within the world of cultural products or 'things'. Authors and illustrators were very much engaged with the processes of book production, particularly the remarkable innovations in serial publishing.

Maxwell's fine essay 'Walter Scott, Historical Fiction, and the Genesis of the Victorian Illustrated Book' is the first in the volume and demonstrates how changes in book illustration created new interpretive contexts that 'desta-
Scott understood 'illustration' in the older sense of 'example' as well as a visual image, and book illustrations became part of his attempt to authenticate his imaginative work. There are several phases to the history of Scott's work, but each provoked new publishing trends. First, collections of picturesque views were published as illustrative adjuncts to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* well after the poem's original issue date. With * Provincial Antiquities of Scotland*, however, Scott tried to 'illustrate' manners and customs with images of historical objects, and the 'detail' vignette duly entered other spheres of publishing such as history and journalism. Finally, the posthumously published *Abbotsford Edition* sought to unite three separate but related aesthetics – picturesque landscape, antiquarian 'details' and narrative scenes – with images that were less illustrations than 'visual embodiment[s]' that disrupted the relationship between the primary text and accompanying image (p. 2).

Robert L. Patten continues to explore how visual images modify narrative in his treatment of serial illustration and storytelling in *David Copperfield*. Using Hablot K. Browne's illustrations for the fifth part of the 1849 serial edition as his example, Patten attempts to recreate Browne's illustrative process in order to show how the 'dialogue between text and image' might have been practised mid-century. Plates enact text by showing not one but a series of moments based on the illustrator's recollection of preceding instalments and a careful reading of the past proofs (p. 117). Browne therefore pictures not one but 'multiple Davids that are present in the narrative and the multiple positions from which David is seen within that narrative' (p. 106). In the plate 'I make myself known to my Aunt', for example, Browne figures the dishevelled boy as the absolute contrast of the opening sentence's 'hero'. We have here the child re-collected, the child about to be re-born to a second mother, and the child aware of how he must appear to the world. In Betsey's case, however, the plate complicates rather than realises Dickens's verbal description, which, Patten argues, 'reads more like instructions to Browne than autobiographical recollection'. Illustrative imperatives, then, have determined the novel's rhetorical strategy. The work of both Browne and Dickens requires a 'serial' mode of reading.

In his essay 'Literal Illustration in Victorian Print' Herbert F. Tucker discusses what Maxwell calls 'a poetics of the word as image' (xxvii). His subject is the graphic depiction of words on the page, particularly initial words and letters. This 'alphabetic textuality' (p. 166), however, enjoys a deceptive neutrality in the 'war of signs' or the traditional sister-arts rivalry between word and image. Is the illustrated letter a visual or a verbal sign? Or does literal illustration produce a 'material embodiment' out of both? The logical extension of this notion would produce a truly 'Ideal Book', or in other words a symbolic archetype that could not be said to be a material book at all. Yet William Morris's Kelmscott Press productions, surely the nonpareil of nineteenth-century art objects, defy this idealising tendency. Kelmscott editions such as Tennyson's *Maud: A Monodrama* of 1894 prioritise form over language; for example, the primary relationship of the lines of verse is with the page and book layout rather
than with each other. We are thereby forced into unfamiliar ways of reading (this theme runs through most of the essays). Tucker's view is that, on the whole, Victorian representations of writing exploit rather than minimise the conflict between word and image. Kelmscott productions, however, come down on the side of literacy and thus keep faith with an earlier generation that maintained the power of the word over the image, such as the Punch illustrators of the 1830s and 1840s.

Tucker's essay introduces the Morris section, and the two articles that follow offer a study in contrasts. Elizabeth K. Helsinger's essay 'William Morris before Kelmscott: Poetry and Design in the 1860s' takes as its point of departure Morris's decision to devote himself to design rather than to work exclusively within any one discipline. From 1861, Morris becomes 'an artist of the wall and page', undertaking 'a new kind of poetry that would share the aims and forms of his designs for rooms and books'. Central to all three areas of design (poetic, decorative, bibliographic) are 'recurrent pattern and rhythmic repetition within an overall architectural structure' (p. 209). To separate the poetic enterprise from the others is to miss the point of Morris's insistence on the 'lesser arts' of design. According to Helsinger, Morris's original plans for a Kelmscott edition of The Earthly Paradise clearly indicate his totalising approach: illustrated by Burne-Jones, it was to be a folio volume, intended as part of a room's furnishings (the book would have been placed on its own special lectern) and designed to be read aloud. The poem itself, characterised by rhythmic repetition and other forms of patterning, was as much an 'ornamented public object' as the book. Thus the total work - book, artefact, and poem - would resist the concept of poetry as a heroic great art, offering instead a stylised ornamentalism that imitated the rhythms of daily life and labour. When the poem was read aloud, listeners could attune their activities to its repeating rhythms. It is well known that Morris read his poetry to family and friends as they worked, but Helsinger also points out that George Eliot and George Lewes read parts of The Earthly Paradise aloud to each other on their daily walks (p. 223). Aware that his art required him to translate artisanship into the terms of mechanised production, yet mindful of the repetition and monotony that characterised industrial labour for millions of workers, Morris sought to 'mediate[e] the effects of modernity on the body through an aesthetics of ornament' (p. 209); that is, by extending a poetics of the repeating pattern (sound and image) into the realm of labour itself.

Conversely, Jeffrey Skoblow argues that Kelmscott books reveal 'the modernity of Morris's enterprise' (p. 239) by questioning the process we call 'reading'. When we approach a Kelmscott book, we must discard our notions of 'writing as intellectual act' and embrace a totalised idea of the book that may be alien to us ('writing' includes for Morris calligraphy and graphic design). Noting how attempts to discuss the art of the book tend to collapse into a chain of metaphors ('organic', 'growth', fountainhead', 'source'), Skoblow states that Morris was fully aware of medieval art forms' obsolescence; in fact, the antiquarian nature of the Kelmscott enterprise bespeaks its utter modernity (p. 156).
Morris's project is no less than 'the redemption of the senses', and his vision derives as much from Keats as from Marx (p. 242). Indeed, Skoblow regards modernity as the culmination of the Romantic project and its dreamvisions, and he concludes his essay by suggesting that 'a dialectical relation between reading and dreaming' characterises the Kelmscott enterprise (p. 256–7). Like most of the other contributors, Skoblow insists on the 'pervasive materiality' of a Kelmscott book, but goes further in his insistence that the book as total object is almost wholly detached from its 'textual business'. In describing Kelmscott books as detached 'fetish-objects', however, Skoblow undercuts his own argument that Morris tried to rescue everyday objects from 'commodification'. I also found his arguments less convincing when he applies them to non-illustrated Kelmscott editions; in claiming that 'great, virtually unbroken blocks' of printed text indicate little beyond print itself, Skoblow shrinks the book's 'textual business' to a narrow literalism that Morris would surely have rejected.

The illustrated book's fate is to become the Victorian illustrated book, as Maxwell writes in the volume's afterword. So much a part of nineteenth-century reading from childhood onwards, illustrated books were felt by the turn of the century to be a characteristically Victorian enterprise, and subsequently the art of book illustration was relegated to children's books and other, sometimes marginal, publishing realms. It is fitting then that Katie Trumpener's study of children's picture books as urban guides concludes the edition. The late nineteenth-century urban picture book stages a 'confrontation between the printed page and mass experience' (p. 345); city books increasingly ignored the social inequalities that had preoccupied mid-century writers. Certainly, Maxwell concludes, other forms of popular visual culture were competing for public attention even before the First World War. Yet the Victorian illustrated book as a period object did not merely disappear into history. Surrealist artists incorporated Victorian book illustrations into avant-garde texts, examples of which include E. V. Lucas and George Morrow's pastiche biography What a Life! (1911), cut-and-pasted from Whiteley's General Catalogue, and Max Ernst's 'collage' novels. After World War II, this tradition of recycling Victorian illustration continued in ways that often suggest a blend of parody and homage, for example in the work of Edward Gorey and Tom Phillips.

At $45.00, The Victorian Illustrated Book is a work to be consulted in university libraries, and it is unfortunate given the rich material that there are no colour illustrations. This is our loss, particularly in the case of the children's books that Trumpener and Maxwell discuss. The contributors are mainly literature specialists and, despite its status as an academic study in 'visual culture', this edition certainly gives the impression that the word speaks more powerfully and persuasively than the image. That said, its range and high critical standards make this collection a valuable contribution to interdisciplinary studies.

Hilary Weeks

Whilst researching my PhD on Morris's poetry several years ago I inadvertent­ly stumbled across a 1904 edition of *The Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems* quietly hidden on the shelves of Birkbeck College Library, London. The edition was published by John Lane at the Bodley Head and was profusely illustrated by Jessie Marion King, a member of the turn-of-the-century 'Glasgow School'. The book hadn't been checked out for decades. Further library searches revealed numerous other illustrated editions and I found myself with a new area of interest in Morris, on which I’ve since presented several papers. At some indeterminable point I passed from being an interested researcher into also being a collector. Unbeknown to me Robert Coupe, a now retired dermatologist from Canada, has also been tracking down Morris’s illustrated editions for over 20 years. The result is this annotated bibliography.

An interest in book collecting and in book illustration are both apt 'Morrisian' activities. Morris himself owned a large collection of (mostly) medieval books and manuscripts, and from the 1860s onwards and his failed attempt to produce an illustrated edition of *The Earthly Paradise*, Morris had a clear desire to integrate image and word in the presentation of his own works. Collecting and illustration come together in the publications of the Kelmscott Press and Coupe’s bibliography thus includes all Kelmscott editions of Morris’s works that are illustrated. Kelmscott books spawned many imitators and a few appear here, such as *Pre-Raphaelite Ballads* (New York: A. Wessels Co., 1904) illustrated by Helen Marguerite O’Kane and William F. Northend’s limited edition of Morris’s early story ‘A Dream’ (Sheffield: School of Art Press, 1908).

But of most interest to me are the various editions that do not slavishly try to emulate the Kelmscott model but which offer their own form of ‘reader/viewer response’ criticism to Morris’s texts through their style of illustration. Amongst the most successful illustrated whole volumes are Maxwell Armfield’s strikingly quirky *The Life and Death of Jason* (London: Swarthmore Press/Headley Bros., [n. d.] 1915) and Florence Harrison’s *Early Poems of William Morris* (London: Blackie & Son; New York: Dodge Publishing, 1914). The early twentieth century saw a glut of illustrated selections from *The Earthly Paradise*, all aimed at children and rendered in prose rather than poetry, and Coupe has meticulously catalogued the numerous editions of such works, some of which appeared in several subtly different guises. At the one end of this particular market are large format gift books with embossed covers and colour illustrations; at the other are cheap school textbooks with minimal black and white drawings and study questions in the back!

Aside from commercial publishers a number of small presses have also produced illustrated editions of shorter extracts from Morris’s writings, containing a single poem, a short story or an essay. Coupe rightly singles out for particular
praise Barry Burman’s startling images to accompany the 1858 poem ‘Shameful Death’ (Leamington Spa: Gazebo Press, 1969). Another pleasure of this bibliography is the rare gems that Coupe has unearthed. These include a 19-part serialisation of News from Nowhere in the New York journal The Comrade: An Illustrated Socialist Monthly illustrated in every part by the German artist Hans Gabriel Jentzsch (1901–03), and a single illustration by Sidney Meteyard for the poem ‘The Defence of Guenevere’ tucked away in the pages of the Birmingham art journal The Quest (1895). Coupe has certainly done his research and he has attempted to find out what he can about the publication history of all the works included as well as the illustrators. He also offers a brief comment on the effectiveness of the illustrations in each volume.

As with all Oak Knoll books Illustrated Editions of the Works of William Morris is attractively produced. The page design allows for generous margins and squares and rectangles of Kelmscott ornamentation are used throughout the text at the beginning of chapters and in between items. It goes without saying that the book is illustrated, with more familiar images from Kelmscott Press books intermingled with the less familiar images from twentieth-century editions. Coupe offers one illustration from every work of note. They are in black and white aside from a select few images in colour on the dust-jacket. The book will no doubt appeal to Kelmscott Press devotees, but will also hopefully convince them that there is more to the topic of Morris and book illustration than the Kelmscott Press alone. As the subject of the Victorians and book illustration more generally remains a live one (recent publications include Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, The Artist as Critic: Bitextuality in Fin de Siècle Illustrated Books [Scolar Press, 1995] and Christina Rossetti: A Publishing History [Ohio UP, 2002], Nicholas Frankel, Oscar Wilde’s Decorated Books [University of Michigan Press, 2000] and Richard Maxwell, ed., The Victorian Illustrated Book [University Press of Virginia, 2002]), Coupe’s bibliography alerts us to the fact that there is more work to be done on reading Morris via those who have illustrated his works.

If only one image from each work featured just isn’t enough then starting your own collection of illustrated editions of Morris will not cost as much as you might think (Kelmscott Press books aside). Many of the works Coupe mentions can still be picked up cheaply enough. Is there a Holy Grail? Coupe and I may disagree on this point, but I finish where I began, back with Jessie King’s exquisitely ethereal volume of The Defence of Guenevere with its illustrations evoking Beardsley-meets-Botticelli-meets-an-Arthurian-acid-trip. Enjoy.

Rosie Miles

Lorraine Janzen Kooistra is one of the most sophisticated and engaging scholars of Victorian book illustration and production. Her first book, *The Artist as Critic: Bitextuality in Fin-de-Siècle Illustrated Books*, explored the dialogic relations of image and text in illustrated first editions of the 1890s, and, in addition, used an awareness of the challenge to sexual norms with which the fin de siècle is often associated to highlight the gendered implications of the relationships of word to image and writer to illustrator. Morris and Burne-Jones feature in a consideration of the Kelmscott edition of *The Well at the World's End*.

Kooistra goes one step further in *Christina Rossetti and Illustration: A Publishing History*, where her attention is not only on the relationship of image to word in editions of Rossetti, but on what she terms Rossetti's 'visual imagination' that 'informed both her poetic practices and her modes of production' (p. 6). The book's sub-title also locates its attention not only in the nineteenth century during Rossetti's lifetime but also in the intriguing afterlife of illustrated editions of her work in the twentieth century.

The book is divided into two parts: 'Part One: Victorian Productions' and 'Part Two: Twentieth-Century Reproductions'. They are preceded by an Introduction, 'A Materialist Aesthetic and a Materialist Hermeneutic', which maps out Rossetti's career-long interest in combining word and image, setting her in the context of a publishing industry in the mid-1860s that was keen to exploit the potential of the visual. Rossetti's first publication, *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (Macmillan, 1862) coincided with what is commonly termed the 'Golden Age' of book illustration. Kooistra's theoretical approach to her subject is a 'materialist hermeneutics', a term indebted to the work of Jerome McGann in *The Textual Condition* (1990). Such an approach – which has been influential in terms of studies of Morris and the book – argues that:

... texts are not composed of unmediated words. The material features of production – including such physical details as typeface, paper, cover design, and decorative or illustrative material, as well as such institutional issues as copyright, price, advertising, and distribution systems – contribute to their signifying structures ... For this reason the interpretive act must include an analysis of all the social processes that go into the making of a book. (p. 7)

The Introduction also focuses on Rossetti's authorial control in the production of her books during her lifetime through her collaborations with brother Dante Gabriel and fellow Pre-Raphaelite Arthur Hughes as illustrators. It also makes some excellent comments about reading twentieth-century illustrated versions of Rossetti's poetry, noting that 'the artist who illustrates a 'classic' engages not only with the verbal text but also, often, with previous pictorial (and, some
times, critical) interpretations of that text’ (p. 14). Kooistra concludes the Introduction with the suggestion that the failure of critics to pay attention to the specific materiality and reception of Rossetti’s texts has resulted in certain oft-quoted errors – such as the mistaken belief that *Goblin Market* was a favourite Victorian children’s poem.

Part One is further sub-divided into four chapters. The first, ‘Christina Rossetti’s Visual Imagination’, records Rossetti’s early desire to be an artist herself in the 1850s and then moves on to a fascinating consideration of her own illustrations for various books she illustrated with marginal drawings. Kooistra reproduces some rarely-seen material here (a feature of the book overall), including several pages from John Keble’s *The Christian Year* (1837) featuring Rossetti’s naïve but symbol-laden headpieces. She argues that ‘in picture and word, Rossetti sought ways of expressing the spiritual in the sensuous, the numinous in the material’ (p. 38). These early attempts to combine image and word are precursive to Rossetti’s ‘unique verbal-visual aesthetic’ (p. 43) which would inform the rest of her career. Where possible Rossetti tried to have her published poetry accompanied by illustrations and the remainder of chapter 1 considers other lesser-known contexts for her poems such as those illustrated in periodicals.

Chapter 2, ‘Pre-Raphaelite Bookmaking’, focuses in detail on Christina and Dante Gabriel’s partnerships for *Goblin Market and Other Poems* and *The Prince’s Progress and Other Poems* (1866). The harmony of parts and unity of design in these volumes is compared favourably to the Moxon *Tennyson’s mish-mash of visual messages’ (p. 60). As well as using Macmillan’s archives to trace the precise conditions of publication Kooistra also suggests how Dante Gabriel’s illustrations offer their own simultaneously spiritual and sensuous readings of the poems, and, particularly in relation to *Goblin Market*, hint towards the sexual nature of the poems’ subject matter, to which later illustrators will return. The chapter then shifts to the 1890s and the gift book edition of *Goblin Market* illustrated by Laurence Housman (1893) with its distinctive long, narrow format designed specifically to suit the poem’s short lines. A key issue for any illustrator of *Goblin Market* is the goblins. What do they look like? They take many varied guises as we move from the nineteenth into the twentieth century.

Kooistra opens chapter 3, ‘Books for Children’, by noting that Rossetti did not consider herself a children’s writer at the time *Goblin Market* was going to press. Ten years later this had changed, with the publication of *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book* (1872) and *Speaking Likeneses* (1874). We are then offered a publication history of *Sing-Song*, charting Rossetti’s brief defection from Macmillan to Boston publishers Roberts Brothers, and the problems with finding an appropriate illustrator. Arthur Hughes was eventually commissioned, which Kooistra refers to as ‘one of the happiest strokes of fortune in the history of children’s books’ (p. 97). She then discusses the ‘Blakean Dialogue of Image and Text’ in *Sing-Song*, showing, with numerous examples, how Hughes illustrated these short verses. Once again Rossetti’s own manuscript shows that she
drew her own pencil illustrations above each poem, which Hughes frequently adapted. Hughes remained as the illustrator for Speaking Likenesses, which saw Rosserri returning to Macmillan and — surprisingly — selling the copyright. Kooistra notes that ‘All Rosserri’s correspondence over the publication of Speaking Likenesses stresses its status as a commercial commodity’ (p. 128), planned for the lucrative and burgeoning Christmas market. Aimed at a readership of older girls, the book also hoped to capitalise on the success of the Alice books. Hughes’ illustrations are wonderful, with a fantastical suggestiveness reminiscent of both John Tenniel and Edward Lear.

Rosserri wrote six books of devotional prose. Only one — Called to Be Saints: The Major Festivals Devotionally Studied (SPCK, 188r) — was illustrated. This work was intended as a companion to the Book of Common Prayer and celebrated all the saints’ festivals throughout the Church’s year. In chapter 4, ‘Devotional Books’, Kooistra outline Rosserri’s longstanding relationship to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, a High Church publisher, and then discusses Called to Be Saints as a Victorian emblem book. Each saint was given their own flower, and these are then rendered as botanical drawings throughout (by an unknown artist). Through her choice of ‘ordinary flowers of the English countryside ... [and] even ... weeds’ Rosserri ‘demonstrate[s] that saintliness is best represented by the lowly and the commonplace’ (p. 159).

Part Two of Christina Rossetti and Book Illustration traces what Kooistra calls ‘Our cultural memory of Christina Rossetti’ through the creating of her various posthumous reputations into the twentieth century. We are reminded more than ever in the second half of the book that how we understand Rosserri has been ‘shaped by the productions in which she has appeared — by their covers, frontispieces, title pages, illustrations, prefaces, typography, advertisements, prices’ (pp. 188-89). Chapter 5 charts the SPCK’s role in the canonisation of ‘Santa Christina’ after her death. As ‘The Religious Rosserri’ the SPCK used images to represent Rosserri as a model of exemplary Christian womanhood to its readers, and set up its own ‘Rosserri industry’ (p. 186), repackaging and republishing selections from her devotional poetry and prose.

Chapter 6, ‘The Children’s Rossetti’, opens with an informative history of how the demand for children’s books to be illustrated was consolidated from the 1860s onwards with the rise of the illustrated gift book. The rest of the chapter then explores how ‘a new Christina Rossetti was manufactured in the pages of many books and anthologies that reproduced her work for the juvenile market’ (p. 193). In the twentieth century Rossetti has most popularly been regarded as a writer for children, not least because of numerous editions of Goblin Market. First appearing as juvenile literature in a school textbook in the 1880s, Goblin Market has ever since had to negotiate its way — and illustrations are key here — through its having a constructed readership of adolescent girls. Nothing makes clearer the point that Goblin Market was not originally intended for children than the fact that various editions (including those into the later twentieth century) have seen fit to ‘sanitise’ (p. 204) the poem and adapt or omit certain lines. Particularly problematic have been Lizzie’s call to Laura to ‘Hug me,
Kiss me, suck my juices' (l. 468) and 'Eat me, drink me, love me' (l. 471).

Twenty-two illustrated editions of *Goblin Market* appeared in the twentieth century, and Kooistra notes how illustrated editions are caught between both child and adult — they must appeal to both — and *Goblin Market* editions frequently never quite seem to be sure just whom they are for. Arthur Rackham’s Harrap edition of 1933 is a case in point: this edition established *Goblin Market* as a ‘children’s classic’ (p. 207) but Kooistra argues that its ‘primary intended consumer was not the child reader but the adult collector’ (p. 208). With a deluxe edition bound in vellum and signed by the artist, this is most certainly the case. This chapter concludes by focussing on how the nursery rhymes in *Sing-Song* have also kept the children’s Rossetti to the fore in the twentieth century.

‘Christina for the Connoisseur’ opens with a discussion of the relationship between collectors and critics — both of whom want or need access to (or ownership of) original materials. Kooistra acknowledges her own ‘obsession’ (p. 222) with tracking down every possible illustrated edition of Rossetti, which is perhaps not so far from the bibliomania of the collector. The craze for the Book Beautiful of the 1890s, inspired not least by the Kelmscott Press, gave us Lucien Pissarro’s Eragny Press edition of Rossetti’s privately-printed *Verses* of 1847, and in the early twentieth century Glasgow-based Blackie & Son produced the ‘enormous’, ‘weighty and worthy’ (p. 236) *The Poems of Christ* in a Rossetti, illustrated by Florence Harrison. I have seen a copy of this latter work and it is indeed a sumptuous edition. It is perhaps of additional interest in relation to Morris as Blackie also issued *The Early Poems of William Morris*, illustrated by Harrison, in 1914.

If you are not familiar with Kooistra’s 1994 article in *Victorian Poetry* on illustrated editions of *Goblin Market* then the next inter-title — ‘Porn, Panelology, and Possession’ — may come as a surprise. In 1973 *Goblin Market* appeared in *Playboy* (yes, you read that right) as part of its ‘Ribald Classics’ Series, with illustrations by Kinuko Craft. Once seen they are not easily forgotten, and Kooistra includes a full-colour image of the goblins assailing Lizzie, though not Craft’s even-more-explicit final illustration. When teaching *Goblin Market* I make a point of showing students some of the illustrations which have accompanied the poem since its first publication and jaws always drop when we come to *Playboy*. Kooistra notes (after Sharon Leder) that the “erotic dimension of the sisterly love theme” — and its explicit visualization — is transferable between the pornographic and academic markets’ (p. 244) in that recently feminist critics of *Goblin Market* have also celebrated this graphic representation of lesbian sexuality originally produced to titillate an adult male market. She also discusses John Bolton’s 1984 adult comic version of *Goblin Market*, before concluding with a brief account of how the late-twentieth-century academic rehabilitation of Rossetti has resulted in not only much new scholarship but also a raft of new ‘souvenir’ editions of her poetry for the popular gift market.

The final chapter, ‘Visualizing Rossetti in Print, Pigment, and Performance’, goes beyond ‘conventional concepts of illustration and publishing his-
tory to include forms of visual reproduction and public dissemination other than those contained on printed sheets between bound covers’ (p. 250). After briefly considering the ‘Virtual Christina’, but acknowledging that how Rossetti has been reconfigured on the internet is beyond the scope of her book, Kooistra considers some of the single paintings which take Rossetti’s poetry as their muse (see, in particular, those by Edward Hughes and Fernand Khnopff from the 1890s. Who would have thought that Rossetti’s poetry could inspire images where figures look like they’re on drugs!). In addition, *Goblin Market* has also been turned into plays (and also, therefore, illustrated playbills).

I loved this book. In a long review I still do not feel I’ve done it justice. There is an absolute wealth of newly-discovered material here, combined with a highly-readable yet scholarly style. The book is attractively produced and the quality of images is excellent. *Christina Rossetti and Illustration* should be required reading for anyone interested in Rossetti and/or book illustration. At one point Kooistra suggests that ‘the hybrid form of the illustrated book requires a methodology that addresses both art forms equally’ (p. 192). Her work exemplifies what this looks like in practice and lays down the gauntlet for future work on both illustrated books and their material production.

*Rosie Miles*

When, in 1896, the Kelmscott Press issued the book which Edward Burne-Jones described as being ‘a little like a pocket cathedral’ (p. 306), he and William Morris were participating in a tradition which stretched back to the earliest manuscripts of Chaucer’s _Canterbury Tales_. This volume traces that tradition from the Ellesmere Manuscript (arguably the earliest and best Chaucer manuscript, dating from the first years of the Fifteenth Century), through the coming of printing, Blake’s painting of the pilgrims setting out from the Tabard Inn, and Morris and Burne-Jones’s Kelmscott _Chaucer_, to the 1930s, in a sequence of (mostly specially-commissioned) essays by experts in their fields. It is both a history of the reception of Chaucer’s poem, and an introduction to the technical and cultural history of book illustration, over a period of five hundred years.

The story seems to me to fall into three periods, of which the first takes us from the earliest manuscripts to the last of the black-letter printed editions in the Seventeenth Century. Mary C. Olson writes on the Ellesmere Manuscript, Phillipa Hardman on the other surviving illustrated manuscripts, and David R. Carlson on the incunabula. The illustrations of the period (whether manu-
script painting or woodcuts) are characterised by a preference for horseback portraits of the pilgrims, often placed at the beginning of their tales, almost as if speaking them; but also by what may seem to us a surprising disregard for the text they are intended to accompany. Aside from a few obvious identifying marks (such as the Cook’s ‘mormal’), these are generic figures with stock faces—to the extent that the printers Caxton and Pynson could use the same woodblocks to stand for different pilgrims; their concern is not so much with the naturalistic representation of the ‘real’ people Chaucer is supposedly describing, but with the rhetorical or conceptual appropriateness of the image to the text it introduces—with establishing what Hardman calls the ‘voice of the text’ (p. 45).

In the Eighteenth Century, Chaucer illustration sees a shift of emphasis under the influence of narrative painting; although pilgrim portraits persist, the new tendency is for the depiction of a particular scene (or, most often, a particular couplet) from their tales. The process is described here by Betsy Bowden, who highlights some lesser-known artists: James Jefferys, who reinvented the pilgrim portrait, to show Chaucer’s characters caught in the act of posing—more or less self-consciously—for their portraits; or Lady Diana Beauclerk, who drew the warring cousins Palamon and Arcite as chubby toddlers. Bowden’s chapter is followed by a reading of Blake’s painting and subsequent engraving of the *Canterbury Pilgrims* by Warren Stevenson. Though Blake’s is today one of the best-known of all illustrations of the *Tales*, at the time it was far less successful than its rival, the markedly similar depiction of the pilgrims leaving the Tabard painted by Thomas Stothard, and subsequently engraved for the entrepreneur Robert Hartley Cromek, as described in the essay by Dennis M. Read. Cromek was patron to both Blake and Stothard, and while Stothard’s painting came out first (1807 to Blake’s 1809), Blake maintained that the idea had been his, and was stolen by Cromek. The controversy (which scholarship has not fully resolved) is replayed in these essays: Stevenson has Blake ‘probably swindled’ (p. 205 n. 1), while by contrast Bowden’s Blake is repeatedly presented as delusional (pp. 165–7); Read (who has published on the dispute elsewhere) states measuredly: ‘there is no evidence to support Blake’s claim that he started his first’ (p. 222). The colour plates of Blake’s and Stothard’s paintings are rather too small and indistinct to support the detailed analysis that Stevenson in particular attempts, and it is a pity that Read’s chapter could not have been accompanied by a reproduction of the Stothard engraving. It may seem ungracious to find fault on this account with a volume so generously illustrated, but I was, in general, a little disappointed with the colour plates: some of the manuscript miniatures are, well, miniature, and some of the later paintings are fairly murky, and not helped by a rather inferior print quality. In the case of the Blake and the Stothard, however, these shortcomings are offset by the bonus of two appendices which print descriptions of the paintings: Blake’s own, taken from the *Descriptive Catalogue* of his 1809 exhibition, and a detailed account of the Stothard published in 1818 by William Paulet Carey, and here reprinted for the first time.

The Kelmscott *Chaucer* is pivotal to the book’s final four chapters. Before it,
the earlier Victorians, from the illustrations in early nineteenth-century Chaucer editions and modernisations to Ford Madox Brown’s Chaucer Reading, are surveyed by Judith L. Fisher and Mark Allen. They show how the images are informed by a new emphasis on historical verisimilitude, whilst at the same time being overlaid with contemporary cultural constructions of (especially) class and gender. Their example is the Griselda story, which reflected back to the Victorians an ideal image of patient, chaste, womanly subservience. Duncan Robinson’s essay on the Kelmscott Chaucer itself is particularly good on Burne-Jones’s compositional techniques, and benefits from being able to place alongside the printed woodcuts his original drawings and preliminary sketches from the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum (of which he is the Director), often to fascinating effect. To cavil: the chapter is a reworking of a previously published essay, and it does not fit perfectly into its new context. Morris’s book was a complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, rather than simply a Canterbury Tales, and, truer to his subject than this particular volume, Robinson deals less with the Tales than with some of the other Chaucerian texts. A quick tally of the black and white figures to this chapter reveals eight illustrating the Knight’s Tale, and one each the Prioress, Squire’s, and Wife of Baths; but one also for the Book of the Duchess, four each for Troilus and the Legend of Good Women, and six for the Romaunt of the Rose. The collection’s last two illustrators both look back to the Kelmscott volume. Rockwell Kent, who did a lively series of woodcut-like pilgrim portraits for a deluxe 1930 US edition of the Tales, was (according to Jake Milgram Wein) ‘a committed bibliophile who was deeply influenced by the visionary writings and drawings of William Blake, and a proponent of the achievements of William Morris and his Kelmscott Press’ (p. 319); while Eric Gill’s illustration (or decoration) of the four-volume Golden Cockerel Press edition of the Tales (1929–31) employed techniques of wood engraving which Peter Holliday situates meticulously within the Arts and Crafts movement.

As the editors recognise, Gill’s was not the last programme of illustrations to be inspired by the Canterbury Tales. As stimulus for further work, they mention some more recent examples in their introduction (p. xxxii). William K. Finley also provides the introduction to the book’s final offering (in a third appendix), Robert van Vorst Sewell’s own description of the mural depicting the pilgrims en route which he painted at the beginning of the Twentieth Century at Georgian Court (New Jersey). Here we learn also of a number of other Chaucerian murals in the US, including a series at the Best Western Canterbury Hotel (San Francisco), which also ‘has a copy of the Canterbury Tales in every one of its 255 guest rooms’ (p. 424). What must the Gideons think?

E A Jones

In this comprehensive and thoroughly accessible study of the Pre-Raphaelite art housed in the V&A Museum, Suzanne Fagence Cooper has two principal objectives: firstly, the book seeks to 'offer a fresh approach to the Pre-Raphaelite movement, one in which paintings and the decorative arts are given equal status' (p. 8); secondly, Cooper attempts to trace the transformation of the Pre-Raphaelite ideal during the 1850s and 1860s as the movement moved towards Aestheticism. Cooper's discussion encompasses the full range of art produced by the Pre-Raphaelites, and the broad scope of this book offers an enjoyable overview of the work and artistic ideologies of Rossetti, Millais, Holman Hunt, Burne-Jones and Morris. Yet what is perhaps the most unique feature of this book is Cooper's analysis of the growth of Pre-Raphaelite art through less known pieces typically overlooked in favour of more dramatic and immediately recognisable works. Most importantly, this book provides readers with a valuable research tool: an extended, informed guide to the extensive collections of the V&A.

Chapter one, 'The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood', describes the formation of the movement and considers the significance of William Dyce, Ford Madox Brown and John Ruskin to the early ideals and technical characteristics of Rossetti, Holman Hunt and Millais. Readers of this journal are undoubtedly already familiar with the Brotherhood's ambition to reinvigorate British painting, but Cooper atypically illustrates this initial search for 'a new visual language' (p. 17) with Rossetti's pen and ink drawing *The Raven* (c. 1848), Millais' *Compositional sketch for Christ in the House of his Parents* (1849–50), and Rossetti's wood engraving *The Maids of Elfenmere* (1855). Cooper indicates that the early drawings by Rossetti and Millais express not only the central motifs that inform much Pre-Raphaelite art, but also the style that caused such uproar at the 1849 and 1850 London exhibitions. In the subsection entitled 'Reaching a wider public' Cooper goes on to state that *The Maids of Elfenmere* 'is one of the finest of Rossetti's creations, bringing together many elements found in works throughout his career' (p. 25). Despite Rossetti's apparent frustration with the engraving process, this final section of the chapter emphasises the importance of illustration in the Pre-Raphaelites' impact on the mid-Victorian art world, and their exploration of the complex relationship between literature and visual art.

'The Next Generation' is the focus of chapter two, in which Cooper discusses the disparate artistic aspirations of Millais, Holman Hunt and Rossetti after the dissolution of 'the whole Round Table' in the early 1850s. Cooper tells us that with Millais' 1853 exhibits at the Royal Academy, he 'got into his stride as a mature artist' (p. 30), and that his marked shift in style and subject matter is reflected in works like *Study for The Order of Release*, 1746 (1852) and the watercolour *My Second Sermon* (1870–86). Like Millais, Holman Hunt 'wanted to
follow his own artistic path' (p. 36), and his determination to create invigorating religious imagery found expression in the etching *The Desolation of Egypt* (1857). It was Rossetti, however, 'who was the mentor for the next generation of artists' (p. 38), and Cooper provides an account of the second phase of Pre-Raphaelitism, in which Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Morris pursue their passion for medievalism and medieval crafts. In a detailed discussion of the firm's decoration of the Green Dining Room (1866–67), Cooper identifies the changing direction of Pre-Raphaelite art, as 'the moral messages of the early PRB' gave way to a 'focus on the aesthetic qualities of a work' (p. 41).

Cooper regards Rossetti's *The Borgia Family* (1863), with its 'jewel-like colours and troubled sensuality' (p. 45), and Burne-Jones' piano decoration *The Ladies and Death* (c. 1860) as barometers of the artists' concentration on the 'sensation of beauty' (p. 48). In the third chapter, 'Towards Aestheticism,' the developing aesthetic approaches of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Millais are carefully compared with the artistic methods of James McNeill Whistler. The author reminds us, however, that despite the various adaptations of style and technique within the movement, a number of central subjects, particularly romantic literature and medievalism, were lasting sources of inspiration. Chapter four's discussion of 'The Natural World' highlights the Pre-Raphaelites' enduring fascination with the treatment of nature, although, as Cooper is careful to point out, '[for] the later Pre-Raphaelites, a love of the Middle Ages and a delight in the natural world produced very different results' (p. 60).

Chapters five and six, 'The Painter of Modern Life' and 'Legends and Literature,' address the ways in which the Pre-Raphaelites and their associates negotiated the relationship between the literary and the visual in their work. Chapter five focuses on the wood engravings that accompanied modern texts and reflected contemporary social concerns. Millais' *The Bridge of Sighs* (1858), for instance, sensitively portrays the plight of the young prostitute of Thomas Hood's 1844 poem, while Frederick Sandys responded to the suffering of the Lancashire weavers with *The Waiting Time, or a Lancashire Sermon* (1863). Conversely, Cooper indicates that Burne-Jones, like Rossetti, had abandoned modern themes by the mid-1860s, choosing instead to engage with 'the great issues of love, loss and conflict through myth and poetry' (p. 71). Chapter six enumerates the wealth of literary sources that preoccupied the Pre-Raphaelites, and shows the challenge the artists' merging of text and image presented to Whistler's aesthetic principles. Cooper discusses the movement's fascination with Shakespeare, Tennyson, Dante, Keats, fairy tales and classical mythology, but the detailed readings of the designs for books, furniture, and stained glass inspired by the works of Chaucer and Malory are perhaps the most engaging discussions of the chapter.

Chapter seven, entitled 'Women,' investigates the turbulent relationships of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Sandys with the women who modelled for them. According to Cooper, from Rossetti's early drawings of Elizabeth Siddal and his numerous depictions of Jane Morris, we see the development of his vision of an
idealised, distant, beautiful woman. Comparing a number of photographs of
Jane Morris—which include Jane Burden Standing (1858)—with drawings like
Study for Astarte Syriaca (1875), Cooper demonstrates how Rossetti subtly
manipulated Jane’s image in a variety of media. Burne-Jones and Sandys equal­
ly idealised the female figure, and Cooper asserts that the three artists ‘were
more interested in depicting their ideal of female beauty than exploring the
characters of real women’ (p. 133).

In chapter eight Cooper states that ‘[religious] images were at the heart of
the Pre-Raphaelite story’ (p. 136); this chapter, ‘Religion, Death and the Spirit,’
examines the religious iconography and spirituality of Millais, Rossetti, Sime­
on Solomon, Madox Brown and Burne-Jones. Close readings of Millais’ bibli­
cal wood engravings point to the artist’s concern ‘with the boundaries between
life and death’ (p.138), while the tension between the sensual and the spiritual,
its argued, can be clearly seen in Rossetti’s Study for the Blessed Damozel (c.
1873) and Amor Sacramentum (1868) by Solomon. Similarly, for Burne-Jones,
the spiritual world was constantly overlapping with the world of men’ (p. 158).
Cooper indicates that the boldness and immediacy of his images of Christ, and
the angelic figures in his 1894 tapestries Angeli Laudantes and Angeli Minis­
trantes, demonstrate ‘the interconnectedness of this world and the next’ (p. 158).

Chapter nine, ‘Music,’ further investigates this mingling of the physical and
the spiritual worlds through a discussion of Burne-Jones’ depictions of musical
instruments and musicality. It is suggested that works like The Mill (1870–82)
portray the artist’s enduring fascination with the evocative union of ‘soft sound,
still waters and slowly moving girls’ (p. 159). Cooper notes that even Burne­
Jones’ earliest painted piano, decorated with Le Chant d’Amour (1863–64),
expresses feelings of nostalgia, reflects upon the ephemeral, and explores the
links between music and desire.

In the Introduction Cooper claims that by ‘focusing on the objects collect­
ed by the V&A, a new story of Pre-Raphaelite art begins to emerge’ (p. 8). While
the book is ultimately successful in unravelling this ‘new story,’ in the process of
exploring the relationship between the Pre-Raphaelites and the V&A new and
exciting questions arise. For example, Cooper notes that the Ionides family,
prominent members of London’s Greek community, were patrons of Rossetti
and Burne-Jones and provided the museum with many of the works it now
holds. Burne-Jones’ model Maria Zambaco was another ‘leading light’ in the
Greek community and a cousin of the Ionides. Further investigation into the
Pre-Raphaelite artists’ close association with the Greek community, and the
Greek community’s relationship with the V&A, would further enhance Coop­
er’s rich and insightful study of Pre-Raphaelite art.
The recent exhibition of Rossetti’s paintings at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, and then at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, was a timely event. It was encouraging, at a time when Pre-Raphaelitism is so often seen as a kind of romantic, late-nineteenth-century poster art, to read reviews in national newspapers expressing surprise and delight at the power of Rossetti’s oeuvre when seen together in one place. One of the most welcome features of the exhibition was the space which it devoted to the first half of Rossetti’s career. When I visited the show in Liverpool, on a busy Saturday, I found groups of viewers, sometimes two or three deep, poring over the often tiny drawings and watercolours which Rossetti produced during the 1850s, and which had been hung, crowded up to one another, round the walls of the first room of the exhibition. Few people seemed in too much of a hurry to go next door and get a look at Proserpine or Lady Lilith.

This book, which was published to accompany the exhibition, is also timely. The last few years have seen a series of important publications in Rossetti scholarship. Of these, the late William E. Fredeman’s edition of the Correspondence (2002–) may eventually add most substantively to our knowledge of Rossetti’s life and career; but it is Jerome McGann’s monograph Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game that Must be Lost (2000) that is likely to have the deepest effect on how we see his work. By turns brilliant and frustrating, McGann’s book has the effect of liberating the reader to consider Rossetti’s as the overtly intellectual art that McGann insists it is; yet its lacunae and occasional unsupported assertions tend to leave one with more questions than answers concerning Rossetti’s aims and methods. This book, or at least Julian Treuherz’s and Elizabeth Prettejohn’s contributions to it, is the first major, chronological study of Rossetti’s work to attempt to grapple with some of those questions.

Treuherz and Prettejohn provide a composite history of Rossetti’s career, with Treuherz dealing with the works of the 1840s and 1850s, and Prettejohn taking over with Rossetti’s painting, in 1859, of Bocca Baciata, the Venetian-inspired ‘stunner’ that would set the tone for the rest of his career. In the third and final essay of the book, Edwin Becker gives an account of Rossetti’s influence on continental art at the end of the nineteenth century.

Of the two essays dealing with Rossetti’s work itself, Treuherz’s is the less unified, and inevitably so. In the years between his early illustrations for Poe’s ‘The Raven’ (1846–48) and the ‘ultra-mediaeval’ watercolours of the late 1850s, Rossetti experimented with a startling array of styles, techniques, subject-matters, and even moral perspectives in his visual work. Treuherz does an admirable job of representing this diversity. He deals with the young Rossetti’s avant-garde literary tastes; the collaborative enterprise of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; his struggles with artistic technique and with contemporary subject-matter in pictures such as the notoriously unfinished Found; his obsessions with Woman and Love; and his interest in the supernatural and the uncanny.
Treuherz finds unifying threads in Rossetti’s relentless experimentalism, and in the anti-naturalist instinct which lay behind much of that experimentation. He makes the crucial point that, in choosing during the 1850s to produce small-scale drawings and watercolours on subjects that would have appeared eccentric to many contemporaries, Rossetti was ‘subverting the hierarchy of media and scale favoured by the Academy as well as the hierarchy of subjects’ (p. 24). The success of this project was borne out wonderfully by the knots of people crowded around The Blue Closet (1857) and Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee (1858–59) at the exhibition in Liverpool. It is unfortunate, then, that Treuherz’s chapter is too short give these innovative works the space that they deserve: sections on Rossetti’s formal experimentation (‘Anti-naturalism’, ‘Radiant colours and vibrant surfaces’) and on his thematic concerns (‘The power of love’, ‘Other worlds’) are confined to a couple of pages, while the subject cries out for more lengthy analysis.

Prettejohn is given, or chooses to take, considerably more space for her study of the second half of Rossetti’s career, and in it she provides an impressive and coherent account. Importantly, she demonstrates the development of Rossetti’s style between 1859 and his death in 1882, and his espousal of different artistic models at different times: Titian and Veronese in the 1860s, Michelangelo in the 1870s. Prettejohn regards Rossetti’s adoption of a Venetian style from 1859 as ‘a willed progression to artistic maturity’, driven by a new desire to undertake large-scale work (p. 54). She places considerable emphasis on his ambition to become a painter of great, public works of art, and appears to regret that this wish was largely frustrated. I find it hard to share this sentiment. The large-scale works which Rossetti did succeed in executing are less than completely satisfactory. The Seed of David (1858–64), his triptych for Llandaff Cathedral, is not one of his most successful works. The huge Dante’s Dream (1871) is an impressive painting in many ways, but Rossetti’s most compelling visual engagement with the Vita Nuova remains Beata Beatrix. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine that any of the ambitious mythological subjects which Rossetti occasionally attempted to persuade his patrons to commission would have been as powerful as Proserpine or Astarte Syriaca. Nevertheless, Prettejohn’s stress on Rossetti’s attempts to resist being considered solely as a painter of single female figures is valuable.

Like Treuherz, Prettejohn emphasises Rossetti’s deliberate anti-naturalism. She writes particularly well on his experiments with perspective. In the two paintings of The Blessed Damozel (1871–81), for example, she points out that ‘conventional perspective operates in the predella scene [depicting the earth-bound lover], ... but Heaven in the upper scene is a place where space does not function as it does on earth’ (p. 101). Interestingly, Prettejohn sees these works as ‘argu[ing], retrospectively, that the pictorial type of the late paintings is thoroughly consistent with his earliest poem – that one imaginative impulse connects Rossetti’s earliest thoughts with his latest work’: both focus on the figure of the woman, on the relationships between heaven and earth, soul and body, and on the depiction of supernatural worlds. Likewise, the picture’s unortho-
dox use of perspective reflects a concern which had been exercising Rossetti since his earliest work.

Edwin Becker’s essay is somewhat disappointing. There is much important work to be done on Rossetti’s influence on modern art, but Becker has chosen to concentrate on a small group of mostly rather minor Symbolist artists. With the exception of two by the Belgian decadent Fernand Khnopff, none of Becker’s illustrations show Rossetti to have influenced continental works of any great merit. Perhaps most suggestive of the ways in which Rossetti anticipated twentieth-century art is a reported comment of 1887 by the French-Swiss critic Edouard Rod, who saw Rossetti as having recognized that ‘the “plastic” period of art (concentrating on technique and pure form) was over, and that in the “intellectual” period (Symbolism) that lay before them, painting would have to aspire to a different ideal’ (p. 115). This is an astute remark, and the implications of it, both for Rossetti’s art and for his influence, are yet to be fully explored.

On the whole, this book is without doubt the most up-to-date, complete, and stimulating introduction to Rossetti’s work as a visual artist currently available. It is also, as one would expect, lavishly illustrated; and the exhibition catalogue which it includes is an invaluable reference tool, containing reliable information on the great majority of Rossetti’s major works. One of the book’s most valuable services will be to point out avenues for further research; but its cogency and insight make it in itself an important work of Rossetti criticism.

Richard Frith

Elliott and Helland’s publication offers a stimulating approach to a study of women’s role, and their achievements, in the decorative arts. The negative judgements experienced by women artists are explored and their work examined, as is the hierarchical division between fine art and craft. The editors’ endeavour is to track how the dominant discourse of the period marginalised and feminised much of women’s work. The collection of ten essays, written by some of the leading scholars of women’s accomplishments in the arts, seeks to demonstrate that female artists of the ‘early modernist period’ were successfully engaged in all aspects of the decorative arts.

Readers of the Journal will no doubt find the essay on May Morris of the most relevance. Through an absorbing account of her life and work, Jan Marsh seeks to redress the balance that has reduced the importance of May Morris’s impact in the arts and crafts movement. In common with other women embroiderers, the work and reputation of May Morris has faded in a comparable way to the embroideries themselves. Although May was one of the leading exponents, her ‘disappearance’ has occurred through prejudice and omission in
subsequent histories. Marsh argues that although the arts and crafts movement was generally sympathetic towards women by allowing them greater involvement, hostility was encountered from other institutions, such as C. R. Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft, and through the exclusion of women from membership of the Art Workers' Guild.

Embroidery was one of the fields dominated by women: the Royal School of Art Needlework, set up in 1872, and the Morris & Company embroidery department, which May took over at the age of twenty-three, demonstrate this. The School of Art Needlework was established to restore ornamental needlework to the esteemed place it once held amongst the decorative arts. For some women, the decorative arts provided a financially successful career; for instance, Lily Yeats earned enough in May's embroidery department to support, for a time, her whole family, including her literary but poor brother, William. Interesting accounts of several of May's works are given, including one of her most popular designs for wallpaper, *Honeysuckle*, which has only relatively recently been attributed to her. Members may be interested to learn that the William Morris Society has the original design for *Honeysuckle* in its collection at Kelmscott House. Marsh asserts that the formation of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society was of paramount importance to May, who became one of the foremost exhibitors, both with Morris & Company and individually for many years. She adhered to the principles opposed to the division of labour by being both designer and maker.

Apart from her design and embroidery work, May also offered important contributions to the British arts and crafts movement in the fields of literature and teaching. She published several articles on embroidery, and her own instructional manual, *Decorative Needlework*, in 1893. May taught at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, edited her father's *Collected Works* and founded the Women's Guild of Arts, over which she presided over for 30 years. The loss of the Women's Guild of Arts' archives, together with the ill-documented nature of embroidered works, have made May the 'missing woman' that this essay seeks to redress.

Elizabeth Cumming's thought provoking-essay considers the significance of the ways in which the Celtic artists Phoebe Anna Traquair and Mary Seton Watts designed their remarkably different memorial chapels, in Edinburgh and Surrey. In decorating the Compton Chapel, Watts declared that her ambition was to create 'something completely beautiful' and in keeping with arts and crafts philosophy it was a community project, for use by the community. When devising the painted gesso work, Watts sought advice from Traquair, Edward Burne-Jones, Walter Crane and William de Morgan, as well as being influenced by W. R. Lethaby. Both Mary and G. F. Watts supported the principles and work of the Home Arts and Industries Association, and the creation of the Compton Pottery was a direct result of this endorsement. In Edinburgh, the mortuary chapel decorated by Traquair was intended as a room of comfort, provided for grieving parents by the Royal Hospital for Sick Children. A reworking of Rossetti's *St Cecilia* of 1856–57 is amongst the images she chose to
portray. Cumming's essay underlines how both Phoebe Traquair and Mary Watts, although working independently, supported their local communities and how the modernity of their work placed an emphasis on the dynamics of arts and crafts practice.

An exploration of the British Pottery industry in the 1930s is the subject of Cheryl Buckley's informative chapter, concentrating on the designers Susie Cooper, Clarice Cliff, Millicent Taplin and Star Wedgwood. The central theme of this study analyses how these designers used decoration to address consumers' desires within the framework of emerging modernism in the domestic interior. The North Staffordshire pottery industry discussed here was visited and praised by Pevsner, particularly as the designs epitomised contemporary social and economic conditions in Britain by portraying the 'spirit of the age'. Sandra Alfoldy contributes an illuminating re-appraisal of the textile work produced by Hungarian artist Laura Nagy. Her concern with preserving the indigenous crafts and motifs of Hungary was instrumental in the establishment of an artist's colony near Budapest in 1904. The ideas of Ruskin, whose Stones of Venice had been translated into Hungarian in 1896, and William Morris, were influential in that the colony was designed to be a centre for social reform and to revive and preserve ancient craft techniques.

Jane Beckett focuses on a discussion of the Women's Exhibition in Amsterdam in 1913, and its relationship with the suffrage campaign. Thea Proctor and the Australian avant-garde of the 1920s are considered in subsequent chapters, as is the role of the court dress and its association with the revival of the home arts and industries association. The much overlooked costumes and set designs of Natascha Rambova, wife of Rudolf Valentino, are also discussed in an illuminating piece by Jennifer Cottrill. The work of Eileen Gray, Romaine Brooks and Gluck is re-evaluated by Bridget Elliot, one of the editors, and an informative examination of Florine Stettheimer's art is the subject of a further study.

The inclusion of only black and white images, two of which are incorrectly attributed, is regrettable, particularly as the numerous designs would have benefited from colour reproduction. However, this is a minor point. It is a pleasure to see such a refreshing and well-researched study, encompassing such a range of designers and makers and variety of art forms. It is hoped that this thought-provoking collection of essays will encourage further research into the important and much overlooked role women played in the history of the decorative arts in this period.

_Helen Elletson_
Ruskin and Architecture is a valuable book that approaches John Ruskin's work from a number of perspectives. The variety of responses contained in this erudite collection of essays underlines the experience of reading Ruskin: the attitudes and opinions may not always please, but the range and scope can hardly fail to impress.

Gill Chitty examines Ruskin's readership. It is tempting for the contemporary reader, struggling with Ruskin's elaborate syntax and prophetic style, to assume that he was addressing an elite readership but Chitty contests this idea. She argues convincingly that as an architectural writer, when compared to antiquarians and ecclesiologists, Ruskin was decidedly populist. He wrote for the layman rather than the clergyman and for the enthusiast more than the architect. Ruskin did not write for the working classes (at least not in the 1840s and '50s) but according to Chitty for 'people like his parents' who were 'part of a new middle class, uncertain how to judge and to value art'. This indeed was part of the originality of his books, written at a time when the market for architectural criticism was 'near to saturation'. Rosemary Hill's chapter enables the reader to arrive at an enhanced understanding of the relationship between Ruskin and Pugin. She points out that they may have reached similar conclusions independently due to similarities in their backgrounds, though Ruskin's denial of having read Pugin is still hard to swallow. Equally interesting is Hill's account of the way that some of Pugin's buildings anticipated many of the 'Ruskinian' features of High Victorian Gothic: he used brick, liked Italian Gothic and seems to have been turning towards plainer, more 'massive' buildings by the late 1840s.

Several authors argue that John Ruskin was an important influence on later Victorian architecture. Aileen Reid, in an essay that will surprise some, underlines Ruskin's influence on E. W. Godwin and contests the idea that this influence died away (as claimed by Godwin himself) after the famously Ruskinian Northampton Town Hall. By examining Godwin's writings, Reid presents an architect who was not so much an apolitical aesthete as an architectural critic whose writing was loaded with Ruskinian morality. Reid's chapter contains some balanced comments on the distinction between the Arts and Crafts Movement and the Aesthetic Movement - the trial between Whistler and Ruskin might suggest two clearly divided parties but in fact many people had a foot in both camps. Geoffrey Tysack shows how Ruskin's influence came to dominate much Arts and Crafts thinking on domestic architecture. He shows that domestic building was the subject of Ruskin's first architectural writings.
REVIEWS and with some revealing attention to the houses that Ruskin himself lived in, argues that the idea of home underlay much of what he wrote. Here one of the attractive and very English sides of Ruskin is teased out: a love of the picturesque, the importance of the house as a home and the idea that a house should be built by its inhabitant. Ruskin practised what he preached when he extended 'Bramwood', his Cumbrian house. Here, as Tysack points out, we can see an almost DIY urge in Ruskin (though I suspect he would be more likely to approve of 'Grand Designs' than 'Changing Rooms'). Malcolm Hardman presents a dense chapter that apparently draws heavily on literary theory ('jouissance' is a term rarely used to describe a Ruskin sketch). Although we know Ruskin as an apologist for Gothic, Hardman adopts an interesting stance and argues that Ruskin's agenda for intellectual and moral improvement was essentially derived from a Classical perspective. The chapter is at pains to link Ruskin to a diverse range of pre and post Victorian figures and movements (Surrealism, Jan van Eyck, Margaret Atwood, David Hare) but will, perhaps, lose many a reader in its somewhat ephemeral argument. In a satisfying final chapter Richard MacCormac describes the creative process that he went through in designing the Ruskin Library at Lancaster University. The reader is let inside the thought process of a contemporary architect, informed by, but not following Ruskin. MacCormack frankly admits that there are features of the design that Ruskin would not have liked, but by creating a monumental building with an array of metaphoric meanings, the reader is left feeling that this is an appropriate translation of Ruskin's ideas.

Ruskin's theories of work and his attempts to realise these theories will continue to fascinate scholars and this interest is apparent in Ruskin and Architecture. It was, after all, Ruskin's plea for the liberation of the working man through creative labour that meant so much to William Morris and his followers. Several authors engage with this theme in detail, and examine just how architects either attempted to encourage artisan creativity in their buildings, or moved towards a more prescriptive architectural method. Peter Howell describes how Ruskin himself was involved in the Oxford University Museum. He shows that the celebrated carving, executed by James and John O'Shea, was encouraged largely by Benjamin Woodward rather than Ruskin. While the O'Shea brothers seem to have been working in a very 'Ruskinian' way, collecting plants and worked directly from nature, Ruskin himself had been trying to procure designs from Pre-Raphaelite artists. Brian Hanson presents a detailed and illuminating account of the affinity between Ruskin and Scott, while suggesting that Street's attitude to the creative artisan was in fact quite different. While Scott tried to encourage artisan creativity through the establishment of the Architectural Museum, Street had far less confidence in the power of the artisan. Hanson's analysis is detailed and stimulating – he sees Scott and Ruskin developing parallel attitudes through different sources: the German Bauhaustätte for Scott and, amongst others, Carlyle and Maurice for Ruskin. He eventually traces the dissolution of this ideal with the dispersal of the Architectural Museum into its antithesis at South Kensington. Michael Hall finds a comparable
narrative in the work of G. F. Bodley, who initially tried to implement Ruskin's ideas and then moved in a different direction. Particularly satisfying is Hall's nuanced reading of All Saints, Selsley, a building that demands a visit from any enthusiast of High Victorian Gothic. Hall describes how Bodley, at least at Selsley, managed to encourage the talents of a local carver, Joshua Wall. But even Wall's lively carving is overpowered by a memorable set of windows by Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. This wonderful glass may not have the poise and elegance of the later windows but is bursting with vitality and lively detail. Morris himself designed a charming Annunciation (the background surely related to his 'Trellis' wallpaper designed about the same date) and a spirited scene of 'St. Paul Preaching'. The drawing in Burne-Jones's neighbouring 'Christ Blessing Children' has just enough naivety to make it really moving. For Hall the west window signals Bodley's departure from Ruskin. This window—a masterly composition by Webb and Morris—embodies the contemporary belief in the union of science and religion, an idea not in harmony with Ruskin's architectural vision. As Hall explains, soon after this window was made, Bodley moved away from Ruskin's idea of the creative craftsman and away from Morris's company and so Selsley marks a brief but spectacular moment in the development of the Victorian Gothic Revival. Paul Snell picks up the theme of Ruskin and craft in tracing how the encouragement of local labour resurfaced under the practise of J. D. Sedding. Snell traces Sedding's career and is particularly interesting in his discussion of Ermington church in Devon where Sedding's men trained the Vicar and his seven daughters, who were enthusiastic amateur carvers. While the interest of this example is not in doubt, Snell underestimates the numbers of amateur craftsmen and women engaged in ecclesiastical decoration; in many ways Ermington represents the continuation of a tradition fuelled by ecclesiology rather than an isolated example of Ruskinian theory.

Chris Brooks expands on a thesis first presented in his seminal *Gothic Revival*: a chapter that the editors tell us was left unpublished at the time of its author's sadly early death. He points out that the idea of Gothic was saturated with political connotations and that the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* was written during a year of unprecedented revolutionary activity in Europe. Brooks traces the politics of Ruskin's writing and shows how both the radical and conservative connotations of Gothic surface in his works: his conservative wish for stylistic obedience and distrust of 'Liberty' are at odds with his critique of industrial capitalism particularly noticeable in 'The Nature of Gothic'. This latter strand of Ruskin drew heavily on the traditions of Gothic political theory, an idea picked up by Morris when he imagined the revolutionaries of the nineteenth century as Goths who would overthrow the 'Empire of Capitalism'. For Brooks, it is the radical Ruskin who wins and in this sense he is comparable to Karl Marx, but, as Brooks points out in a way that underlines Ruskin's idiosyncrasy, Ruskin's source material was not Political Economy but Gothic Architecture. Brooks alludes to the way that Morris developed into a convinced Marxist as evidence of the direction that Ruskin's thought was taking—he sees Morris's political activity as the culmination of the radicalism evident in
Ruskin's thought.

Michael Brooks' introduction contains a nicely observed historiography of 'Ruskinisms'. He traces the adoption of Ruskin in High Victorian Gothic, the modified Ruskin of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the rejection of Ruskin by Modernists and his rehabilitation by Postmodernists. His opening observation that 'Ruskinian' is a widely used but enormously complex term is undoubtedly true, but happily this excellent book will help many a Ruskin enthusiast towards a deeper understanding of this intriguing man.

A reprint of Pugin's *Contrasts* and *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* is good news for scholars and enthusiasts of Victorian architecture. With the 1969 reprint of *Contrasts* out of print, and nineteenth-century editions of Pugin's works being well beyond the budget of most individuals, this reprint will be both useful and enjoyable. When placed beside the 1969 reprint, Spire's edition compares well. It is slightly smaller, being a slight reduction of the original's size, but the quality of the text and the important illustrations come across well. This is a well thought out publication, containing what are, from most people's perspective, Pugin's two most essential texts.

*Contrasts* (here in the revised 1841 edition) is a seminal publication. Precedents can be found for many of Pugin's arguments but his conviction and insistence on the links between morality and style came across to his contemporaries as something quite new. *Contrasts* is an engaging read largely due to the strong strand of satirical humour running through it. From the famous frontispiece dedicated to 'The Trade' to the series of contrasted views, Pugin mocks the nineteenth century by looking back to the Middle Ages. While *Contrasts* announced Pugin's agenda *True Principles* set it out in detail. Here for all to see are the roots of 'Design Reform' and it is obvious just how much Henry Cole and his cronies at South Kensington took from Pugin (though of course they did not favour the Gothic style). One of the original features of *True Principles* is that Pugin took apparently insignificant details very seriously: where else in the early 1840s could you read someone talking with so much passion about iron railings, mouldings, wallpaper, and even upholstery fringes? This alone must have aided the rise in status of the decorative arts that was such a noticeable feature of the later nineteenth century.

Timothy Brittain-Catlin's introductions to both works are concise but scholarly. He points out what was new, effectively traces some of the influences that acted on Pugin, and tells readers what they need to know about the publication history of the books in question.

The fact that Spire Books are not the only publisher in the field (Gracewing have recently announced reprints of four Pugin works including *True Principles*) just goes to show how far the rehabilitation of Pugin has come. It is satisfying to think that, as a direct result of publications such as these, more students and enthusiasts will now have the experience of reading Pugin first hand.

Jim Cheshire


Anyone who has had the good fortune to be a guest of the William Morris Society of Canada in Toronto will remember with pleasure having been shown some of the attractive buildings of the architect Eden Smith. Now Douglas Brown has published the results of his research on the architect in an attractive quarto paperback, with numerous black-and-white photographs, so that it is possible for the first time to become aware of the scale and quality of Eden Smith’s achievement. He is also able to give a fuller account of the life than has previously been available, and a more accurate one than Eden Smith was apparently inclined to provide. (This information is the result of research by Frances Spalding on behalf of the architect’s granddaughter, Pamela Morin). Eden Smith was born in Birmingham, England, in 1859, the son of a partner in a construction firm. He entered an architect’s office in Birmingham in 1876, and soon became active in the Birmingham Architectural Association. He married Ann Charlton in 1881, and seems then to have entered his father’s firm. But in 1885 or 1886 he emigrated to Canada, possibly as a result of the failure of the firm. In 1887 he was working as a draftsman in an architectural practice in Toronto, completing his apprenticeship in 1890. He then took the bold step of setting up his own practice. His early commissions were ecclesiastical, including St Thomas in Huron Street, the photographs of which support Brown’s description of it as ‘a true Arts and Crafts church’ in its simplicity and skilful ordering of space. He then went on — in two successive partnerships — to provide attractive houses for many members of what Brown describes as ‘Toronto’s arts community’. His houses were erected largely in the affluent suburbs, Wychwood Park, the Annex, Rosedale, the Poplar Plains area and Forest Hill Village. Like other Arts and Crafts architects, he had a small office and did all the designing himself. His career declined after the Great War, and he retired in 1920, living on a farm in the country.

From the Morris point of view, the second and third chapters of the book are of particular interest. In Ch. 2, Brown gives a brief history of the Gothic Revival, devoting a good deal of attention to Morris, and in Ch. 3 he discusses ‘The Influence of Birmingham’, drawing attention to the twelve lectures Morris gave in the city between 1879 and 1886, and stressing its importance in the development of the Arts and Crafts movement; Brown thinks it ‘almost certain that Eden Smith would have met Morris and attended his lectures’. Certainly his whole approach to architecture suggests an allegiance to Morrisian principles. Brown goes on to consider Eden Smith’s contribution to the debate about...
the professionalisation of the architectural profession, which was a matter of controversy in both Britain and Canada; Eden Smith followed the lead of Norman Shaw and W. R. Lethaby in resisting the idea of making qualifications and registration compulsory. ‘Individuality in Simplicity’ is the appropriate title of the chapter on Eden Smith’s architectural approach – I won’t call it his ‘style’, as he wrote in an important article that he had not mentioned style in it ‘because style is a consideration absolutely of no importance esthetically’, a statement that Brown neatly compares to Warington Taylor’s view that ‘Style means copyism, the rest of good work would be an absence of style’.

We are then given an account of the ground plans of Eden Smith’s houses, to which much of their success is attributed. Brown notes that Eden Smith built many smaller houses than his contemporaries in England, and mostly in the city. He also had to bear in mind the Canadian climate and the comparative lack of servants. The results were sometimes ‘buildings that were asymmetrical and irregular in shape, with dormers, gables, bay windows, oriel s and prominent chimneys’, but many were based on simple squares or rectangles; a common feature is the concealing of the entrance in a sidewalk at right-angles to the street. Above all, he was able to offer the ‘domestic convenience’ his clients sought. The material that he used was mainly the standard Toronto brick, and inside dark-stained wood panelling and painted plaster. In ‘The Buildings’ we learn of the forms characteristic of Eden Smith’s work, and the variety that he achieved within his overall Arts and Crafts commitment. A final chapter on ‘The Man’ suggests that, although he was involved in both the church and a number of arts organisations, he was naturally retiring, and he spent the last part of his life, after retirement, living a simple rural life, though regularly visiting both Toronto and England. His granddaughter is quoted as saying that he is still ‘something of a mystery’ to her, a man who could ‘inspire affection but without intimacy’. She then remarks: ‘Artists are permitted a degree of egocentricity denied us ordinary mortals and I think it is for his architectural achievements that he should be remembered’.

Those achievements are made clear to the reader by the impressive list of buildings in various parts of Toronto provided by Brown – although it is sad to see the number that have been demolished – and particularly by the excellent photographs, showing, in addition to cottages by Butterfield and Webb’s Red House, 27 of Eden Smith’s buildings. Apart from churches and private houses (of which it is particularly grim to note the demolition of the handsome 190 Warren Road, apparently replaced in 1997 by ‘an enormous house with no redeeming features’), Eden Smith built some secular public buildings. The Spruce Court Apartments of 1913, built as working-class accommodation for the Toronto Housing Company, look like fine social housing, and the 1915 Wychwood Library (the prototype for two others of the same year) shows how well Eden Smith could contribute to community building. The book concludes with an extensive Selected Bibliography. We are indebted to Douglas Brown for informing us so lucidly and comprehensively about an Arts and Crafts architect whom we cannot now fail to respect.
Harold Falkner – as the sub-title of Sam Osmond’s book suggests – is a stranger and less easily categorised architect, whose personality certainly exhibited the ‘degree of egocentricity’ that Pamela Morin was prepared to grant the artist: the word ‘maverick’ is always in the air. Born in 1875, Falkner lived his whole life near or in Farnham, in Surrey, where he died in 1963. All his architectural work is concentrated in the Farnham area where, Osmond shows, he was responsible for some 30 commercial buildings and some 85 houses; the book includes a full list with maps showing the locations on his buildings. Osmond’s well organised and lively book – in which he makes good use of Falkner’s own autobiographical and architectural writings – begins with a scene-setting chapter on ‘British Architecture in 1900’. Then we have a chapter on Falkner’s early life, stressing the significant influence on him of the principal of the School of Art, W. H. Allen, who combined an allegiance to Arts & Crafts principles with an interest in Georgian design and craftsmanship. He decided to become an architect, beginning his training by spending two years with a local building firm, where he learnt to carve mouldings. He then entered the practice of Reginald Blomfield, who was at the time developing an interest in the work of Wren and the Georgians. At 21, Falkner inherited the large sum of £10,000, and set up his own practice in Farnham. His financial security meant that he could please himself about which commissions he undertook, and gave him a certain freedom in relation to his clients. An early commission was a house for Allen, but in 1907 and, in Osmond’s view (supported by two illustrations), ‘a fine example of the fashionable “Wrennaissance” style’. Osmond goes on to consider ‘Farnham—the Garden Suburb’—and ‘The Small Country House and Country Cottage’, showing Falkner’s extensive contributions to the neighbourhood and noting that his work was commended by the influential Lawrence Weaver in *Country Life*. The book is amply furnished with many of Falkner’s excellent drawings, many of which were published in architectural periodicals. Chapter Five, ‘Falkner and Domestic Garden Design’, reveals that he became a close friend of Gertrude Jekyll and came to share many of her ideas; from 1900, ‘every month for the next thirty years she summoned him by postcard to visit her at Munstead’ though she never worked with him, as she did with his better known local contemporary, Edwin Lutyens. Chapter Six discusses what Osmond calls Falkner’s greatest achievement, his overseeing ‘the piecemeal reconstruction of Farnham’s town centre to make it more Georgian’. This was an extraordinary if contentious accomplishment, in which he was greatly helped by his friendship with the local politician Charles Borelli. Among other things, it involved in the 1930s the removal and replacement of the 1862 Town Hall and of Norman Shaw’s huge Elizabethan-style bank of 1867 (which Falkner apparently liked in itself and carefully recorded).

Falkner also recycled two of Shaw’s great chimneys onto other nearby buildings. The recycling of building materials became one of his most characteristic practices, which he was able to indulge particularly in what Chapter seven calls ‘The Dippenhall Fantasy’. Between 1920 and 1963 he built nine private houses in this area, on land which belonged to his own family. In discussing these
buildings, which he concedes were often structurally unsound and certainly disregarded building regulations, Osmond shows his greatest enthusiasm: ‘Despite all this, they are works of genius, a brilliant combination of imagination with his love of old buildings, some magical architectural fantasies buried among the woods and fields’. Falkner’s method, we are told, was to find pieces of old buildings – or even complete old barns – and reassemble them into new buildings that look old. In the well chosen photographs the buildings look attractive, and apparently their current owners enjoy living in them, but it is interesting to try to relate what is here called ‘Falkner’s magpie style’ to the principles of Morris and the SPAB. At all events, by the end of the book the reader is very glad to have been introduced to the man whom Roderick Gradidge, evidently a great admirer, once called ‘that great Farnham original’. But Osmond is fair-minded enough also to quote the judgment of George Sturt, who blamed Falkner for the ‘multitude of villas’ going up in what had formerly been the open country, and described him as ‘the evil genius of this countryside’.

Peter Faulkner

New editions of Morris's prose romances must always be welcome. They will inevitably attract some new readers and generate wider interest in narratives still relatively unknown outside Morris circles. I remember buying a new paperback edition of *The Well at the World's End* in 1996; it was my first introduction to William Morris and the reason why I chose to return to university. I also remember my subsequent frustration when trying to find available and affordable editions of Morris's other late romances. So it is heartening to see Inkling Books making some attempt to address this problem with their recent publication of *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains*.

In his Forewords and Introductions to these editions, Michael W. Perry reveals a genuine enthusiasm for Morris's 'marvellous' tales and delights in his ability to imagine a world 'with such skill that those who inhabit it seem as real as our next-door neighbour.' Perry draws briefly on comments by May Morris and Morris himself, and more extensively on C. S. Lewis’s *Rehabilitations*, to enable the unfamiliar reader to approach these narratives with some understanding of their historic context and cultural significance. He is particularly keen to emphasise that Morris's romances 'can still delight and inspire' a twenty-first century readership, claiming that *The Roots of the Mountains* is 'a tale of
Everyman living in Anytime.'

Raising awareness of these narratives and enhancing Morris's reputation appears not, however, to be the only motivation of the publisher. Each of these books is dedicated 'to the many Tolkien fans who long for more tales like Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings in the hope that they will be satisfied'. And there lies the rub. These editions have emerged in a period of renewed and intense enthusiasm for the adventures of Middle Earth, and Michael W. Perry draws directly on Tolkien's acknowledgement of the influence of Morris's romances on his own work in his introductory comments. Indeed, the single volume comprising both The House of the Wolfings and The Roots of the Mountains is titled 'More to William Morris'. This is, Perry identifies, a fragment from a letter by Tolkien in 1960, in which he admits that the Dead Marshes and the approaches to Morannon in his own narrative 'owe something to Northern France after the Battle of the Somme', but 'more to William Morris and his Huns and Romans'.

There is nothing objectionable in foregrounding connections between the work of Morris and Tolkien. Richard Mathews has explored some illuminating links in his recently re-issued Fantasy, The Liberation of Imagination (Routledge, 2002), and it is fascinating to consider the influence of Morris's late prose romances on the fertile and diverse fantasy genre as it developed in the twentieth century. Perry himself makes some pertinent observations, noting, for example, that the decisions of Morris's Thiodolf and Tolkien's Frodo involve, on different scales, a similar sublimation of the desires of the individual through concern and action for the wider social good. But difficulties do arise when one author's merits are articulated primarily through the popularity of another—difficulties which are, I believe, apparent in the Forewords and Introductions to these new editions.

In attempting to emphasise similarities between Morris's narratives and Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, Perry draws a series of comparisons in which it is hard not to conclude that Morris is the loser, however unintentional that conclusion might be. Thus, in the 'Foreword' to the combined edition, we are told that, 'These two men knew either much (Morris) or most (Tolkien) of all that was to be known' about the ancient Northern races. A few paragraphs later we hear that Morris 'proved quite successful' in his attempts to reinterpret the spirit of the old Northern tales, but that 'much of his success would come through others, such as Tolkien'. More disconcertingly, in the Introduction to the single volume of The Roots of the Mountains, Perry notes that Morris 'had no personal experience with warfare', whilst 'Tolkien, on the other hand, experienced first hand what war could be like in World War I trenches'. 'As a result', Perry concludes, 'Morris seems less aware of what war demands physically, particularly in the age of sword and spear (hence his pretty young maiden warriors)'. Leaving aside (with some difficulty) such sweeping gender assumptions, it would be hard for anyone familiar with the tremendously powerful battle scenes in either The Roots of the Mountains or The House of the Wolfings to agree that their author lacked awareness of the demands of early warfare. Characters such as Iron-
hand, War-well and Thiodolf demonstrate compellingly the animal strength, agility and endurance demanded of the warrior, and Morris depicts the uncompromising brutality of the fight no less convincingly than Tolkien in his battle at Helm's Deep.

Morris is, readers will be relieved to hear, 'almost as talented as a story-teller' as Tolkien, and where he does surpass Tolkien, Perry decides, is in his 'warm romances between men and women'. There is much to excite the prospective Hollywood script writer as we read that *The Roots of the Mountains* has a plot which 'contains romance, including one involving two women' who 'both want to wed Burgstead's most eligible batchelor, the heart-stoppingly handsome Gold-mane'. Such narrative threads will, Perry believes, be a welcome feature for those Tolkien fans somewhat starved of love interest in the adventures of the Fellowship of the Ring. (Unfortunately, these threads become a little tangled in Perry's introduction, as Thiodolf from *The House of the Wolfings* is, for a moment, romantically pursued by Sun-beam from *The Roots of the Mountains*.)

Both Morris and his romances do, of course, deserve better than this. Norman Talbot, whose recent death has deprived Morris scholarship of its most enthusiastic advocate of the romances, expressed their deserts with powerful clarity when he wrote: 'It may be true that they make special demands upon the reader—as do many other works of extraordinary merits—but there is never any need of special pleading' ('Women and Goddesses in the Romances of William Morris', *Southern Review* 3, 1968–69). The 'extraordinary merits' of Morris's romances are insufficiently recognised in the introductions to these new editions, but it would, I think, be churlish not to appreciate Inkling Books' efforts to attract a new readership for *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains*. The publisher also advertises a joint edition of *The Well at the World's End* and *The Wood Beyond the World*, and forthcoming single editions of these later romances. All of which is, in the end, good news, both for Morris's narratives and for prospective readers who will hopefully judge them on their own terms. It is pleasing to see the romances once again acknowledged as a significant influence on work as remarkable and enduring as *The Lord of the Rings*—but it would be sad to see them appropriated and subsumed by the current wave of Tolkienalia.

*Phillippa Bennett*

In April 1885, on his way home from a lecturing tour in Scotland, William Morris stayed overnight with Edward Carpenter at Millthorpe. It seems to have been a highly amicable visit, and during it Carpenter presented Morris with a copy of Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*. The book was an influential one in
radical circles during these decades. It had been a revelation to Henry Salt, for example, playing a part in the extraordinary transformation of his life from Eton master in the 1870s to sandal-wearing simple life enthusiast, and hardly a day passed by without Salt jotting down a few inspiring lines from the great tome.

Walden remains no less inspiring today, and one could not wish for a more genial or illuminating guide to the literary tradition to which it belongs than Don Scheese’s Nature Writing: The Pastoral Impulse in America. Scheese’s volume is a salutary one politically as well as academically. Under the rogue administration of George W. Bush it is the militaristic rather than pastoral impulse in America that rides roughshod over everything else, so it is good to be reminded that there is more than one America, that gentler and more environmentally alert voices are active there too and, who knows, perhaps as in Ernest Callenbach’s Ecotopia they might even achieve a decisive political breakthrough at some point.

Nature writing as Scheese defines it comes into being as a remarkable new generic hybrid, as earlier traditions of natural history writing, spiritual autobiography and travel writing fuse and take on an urgent new life under the pressures of industrial modernity: ‘The typical form of nature writing is a first-person, nonfiction account of an exploration both physical (outward) and mental (inward), of a predominantly nonhuman environment, as the protagonist follows the spatial movement of pastoralism from civilization to nature’. An ‘Overview’ chapter tracks the generic precursors of nature writing and its metamorphoses from Walden onwards in broad brushstrokes, while the body of the book is devoted to close analyses of Thoreau, John Muir, Mary Austin, Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey (whose writings inspired the radical environmentalist group Earth First!) and Annie Dillard. The ‘nonhuman environments’ explored vary from Walden Pond itself to the Sierra Nevada mountains, the Mojave Desert and the southern Wisconsin prairie.

Don Scheese is an admirable guide to these giants of the American pastoral tradition. His accounts of them are lively and accessible, so if this is your first introduction to any of these writers (and I had never heard of Austin and Dillard), then he enthralls you to explore further. But there is a sensitive attention to complexity and contradiction here too, so if you do know the texts well, you find your own readings deepened by Scheese’s chapters. I certainly won’t be able to return to Walden in quite the same way now that Scheese has brought Thoreau’s 1846 encounter with the sublime on Mt. Katahdin so tellingly to bear upon it.

Also welcome is Scheese’s insistence that ecologically-minded literary critics must get their hands – and walking boots – dirty, that they must get out into the field and investigate at firsthand the terrains of the writers they are discussing; and his own chapters shuttle productively between textual analysis and fieldwork in just this sense, often conjuring new insights out of the juxtaposition. The implications here for the study of William Morris are challenging, to say the least. Does this mean that none of us will dare to write about News from
Nowhere in the future without first having rowed one hundred and twenty miles up the Thames from London to Kelmscott?

Don Scheese's general claims for the genre he studies in this book are entirely persuasive: 'Combining the place-consciousness of pastoralism and the scientific curiosity of natural history, the religious quest of spiritual autobiography and the peregrinations of travel writing, the lyricism of nature enthusiasts and the polemical tone of cultural criticism, nature writing as a cultural activity is more vital than ever as we enter the 21st century'. Yes surely; and in the epoch of George W. Bush and worldwide environmental degradation we shall have our work cut out to transform the dream of harmonious human-natural relations which such writers individually evoke into a collective vision we can all politically work towards.

Tony Pinkney