The Journal of William Morris Studies

Volume XVIII Number 1 Winter 2008

Editorial – Fears and Hopes
Patrick O’Sullivan

The Art of Printing and ‘The Land of Lies’: The Story of the Glittering Plain
Terence Hoagwood

James Leatham’s Eye-Witness Account of William Morris’s 1888 Visit to Aberdeen
Michael Bloor

A ‘desert in solitude & an Eden in beauty’: Rossetti at Kelmscott.
Peter Faulkner

Lucy Faulkner and the ‘ghastly grin’: Re-working the title page illustration to Goblin Market
Emma Ferry

The Defence of Yseult: Swinburne’s Queen Yseult and William Morris
Richard Frith

Reviews. Edited by Peter Faulkner

Simon Dentith, Epic and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Britain. (Peter Faulkner) 96

Elizabeth Prettejohn, Art for Art’s Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting. (Tony Pinkney) 99

Guidelines for Contributors 108

Notes on Contributors 111

ISSN: 0084-0254
Printed by the Short Run Press, Exeter.

Editor: Patrick O’Sullivan (editor@morrissociety.org)
Designed by David Gorman (dagorman2000@yahoo.co.uk)
Editorial – Fears and Hopes

Patrick O’Sullivan

One year after taking over from Rosie Miles as editor, and the world is in a very different state from that of August last year. The prolonged economic growth and ‘prosperity’ of the years 1992–2006 appear over, and current economic prospects, according to a certain source which ought to be well-informed, are ‘at their lowest for sixty years’. The optimism of the boom years has been replaced by doom and gloom, falling house prices and repossessions triggered by the collapse of the ‘sub-prime’ housing market in the United States. Once again, as in the early 1990s, capitalism and the prospect of short term wealth have over-reached themselves. Once more, as in previous economic crises, it is the victims who are suffering most, and not the beneficiaries of the years of ‘get rich quick’, greed and arrogance, many of whom are now being bailed out with public money by governments who for a generation have sworn by competition, the free market, and ‘standing on your own feet’. Meanwhile, under a so-called Labour government, inequality in UK society is greater even than some twenty years ago, during one of the most divisive administrations of the twentieth century.

In the light of the above problems, how should we proceed? It seems that the world is being pulled along two quite different pathways, both of which our leaders claim to be following. One is the apparently inexorable march of globalisation, with, as indicated earlier in these pages, the increasing production of most of the world’s goods and services in Asia, and their consumption in North America and Europe. The other is the desperate need to reduce our impact on our planet, before, or so it is said, our climate system flips into irreversible change. And yet it seems impossible that both of these things can be accomplished at the same time, for surely one is directly opposed to the other?

At present, the impact of the global human economy on the Earth – its ‘ecological footprint’ – is calculated to be the equivalent of the use of ca 2.2 hectares (ca 5.5 acres) of land annually for every person on the planet.1 If correct, this figure is unfortunate to say the least, because, in fact, the amount of productive land actually available for our support is only ca 1.7 hectares (ca 4.2 acres). In other words, we are currently exceeding the human carrying capacity of the Earth by a factor of ca 1.3. Or, if you like, we are each of us presently using up the products of an extra 0.5 hectares (1.2 acres) of land we do not possess.

And yet such global figures mask something potentially even more unsettling
that whilst the average global footprint is equal to 2.2 ha, that of the G8 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, United States) is 5.7, whilst that of the G33 poorest nations is only 1.36. Even weighting these values for numbers of people only gives us a ‘coefficient of impact’ of ca 49 for the G8 economies, and 45 for the G33. In other words, the 850 million people of the G8 countries exert a greater ecological impact upon the Earth than all of the 3.3 billion members of the thirty three poorest nations together – a result which also neatly gives the lie to old shibboleth so beloved of authoritarian environmentalists that it is ‘population’ which is the problem, and not consumption. Therefore, if we were to raise the living-standard of everyone on Earth to that of the average citizen of a G8 country (to say nothing of the United States), whereas at present we are consuming the equivalent of 1.3 planets, in order to support everyone in the manner to which we in the richest countries have grown accustomed, we would need a total of 4.4 Earths. And as we all know, there is only one.

At the same time, it was recently announced that, as a result of ‘anthropogenic forcing’, global climate may be nearing a tipping point, where it will shift irreversibly into a new, and therefore unpredictable state. Sadly, the response of the official scientific community has been to suggest ‘more of the same’, in the form of ‘geoengineering’ of the Earth’s climate, in order to try to alleviate the problem. But such simplistic, linear approaches to the workings of a complex system are not only naïve – because they stand almost no chance of working without causing another set of problems – and irresponsible – because they suggest to the unwary that such solutions are even possible – but also fail to address the root cause of the problem – the global overproduction of goods and services beyond what is required for local need.

The purpose of the World Trade Organisation, the main institutional agent of globalisation, is to promote economic growth ‘for all’ by removing ‘obstacles’ to the liberalisation of world trade. But how can this policy – of the majority of the world’s goods being made in one continent, and sold in two others – continue, when one of the fastest growing components of global carbon emissions is transport? How can we possibly meet such targets as an 80% reduction in global carbon dioxide emissions by 2050, when globalisation of production, management and leisure, involves increasing movement of goods and people from one continent to another? Someone, somewhere, will need to square the circle of how to achieve ecological stability in an economic system founded on limitless expansion on a finite planet.

If we are faced with finding a new pathway, two further questions often posed are ‘How will we possibly convince developing countries that they should not follow the same historical route towards “prosperity” we ourselves have followed? How can we ask them not to pollute when we have enriched ourselves by doing exactly that?’ Indeed, developing nations often use precisely this kind of argu-
ment when seeking relief from emissions targets and other environmental standards. I confess that I do not have an easy answer, and for once, maybe Morris does not either, in that the suggestion

‘… but look, suppose people lived in little communities among gardens and green fields, so that you could be in the country in five minutes’ walk, and had few wants, almost no furniture for instance, and no servants, and studied the (difficult) arts of enjoying life, and finding out what they really wanted: then I think one might hope civilization had really begun …’

does not seem to give much detailed guidance. What is more, attempting to persuade developing countries not to make the same mistakes we ourselves have made would not just be going against what appears currently to be the tide of history – something which seems never to have worried Morris – but would also involve a major shift in our own thinking – that what we have done to ourselves, and our fellows, and the Earth, since the rise of the global merchant economy some four hundred years ago, is not only economically unjust, but, in global ecological terms, not merely unwise, but just plain wrong.

Underlying the forces for globalisation on the one hand, and sustainability on the other, are two mindsets which possess diametrically opposing views of nature – one of the Earth as placed here entirely for our own benefit, as ‘wealth’ with which to enrich ourselves, the other of the world as a home, to be lived in, enjoyed and cherished, but not destroyed. Of course, it is clear from every part of Morris’s life and work which of those two mindsets he shared, and what he thought should be done.

The first step … is to get the means of making labour fruitful, the Capital, including the land, machinery, factories, etc., into the hands of the community, to be used for the good of all alike …

And as ever, even in the darkest of times, Morris does offer hope

Meanwhile, if these hours be dark, as, indeed, in many ways they are, at least do not let us sit deedless, like fools and fine gentlemen, thinking the common toil not good enough for us, and beaten by the muddle; but rather let us work like good fellows trying by some dim candle-light to set our workshop ready against to-morrow’s daylight—that to-morrow, when the civilised world, no longer greedy, strifeful, and destructive, shall have a new art, a glorious art, made by the people and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user.

In this issue Terence Hoagwood discusses the relationship between Morris’s social vision, and his artistic theory and practise – ‘the ideas and the ideal’ – and Michael Bloor recalls a first hand account by James Leatham – a life-long
socialist whose biography of Morris contains one of the best known accounts of him speaking in the open air – of a visit by Morris to Aberdeen. Peter Faulkner presents an account of Rossetti at Kelmscott which complements his article in the last issue on Morris’s relationship with that village and its environs, and Emma Ferry puts forward a well-documented theory that at least some of the work attributed to the designer Kate Faulkner, who contributed much to the early years of Morris & Co., is actually that of her elder sister Lucy, who, like so many women, ‘disappeared’ from history as a result of marriage, and a change of name. Richard Frith examines the influence of Morris’s poetic ideas, and his passion for medieval literature, especially the Arthurian legend, on the young Algernon Charles Swinburne, and we also print reviews of books on ‘Epic and Empire’ in Victorian Britain, on Aestheticism in Victorian painting, and three books on the meaning and significance of contemporary craft.

With this issue, we also welcome Tony Pinkney of Lancaster University to the editorial board, who, like his fellow initiates from the last issue, has already been at work on behalf of the Journal. I look forward to working further with Tony, who is not only a noted Morris scholar, but who also offers another ‘green’ perspective on matters such as those examined above.

NOTES


8. As recommended by the UK Climate Change Committee and adopted by the UK government 16 October 2008; http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/oct/16/greenpolitics-edmiliband [last accessed 29 October 2008].


The Art of Printing and ‘The Land of Lies’
The Story of the Glittering Plain

Terence Hoagwood

1. A ‘Love Born of Images’

Others have noticed that William Morris’s beautifully made romance, The Story of the Glittering Plain, is at once a critique of beautiful illusions and an example of them. For example, Norman Talbot has recently shown that ‘Morris is subverting exactly this kind of sentimental quest-romance, and the beguiling “love” born of images’.¹ Because an editor is accustomed to working deliberately with the ‘materiality’ of printed texts, it is perhaps fitting that Talbot, himself an editor of a recent edition of Morris’s romance, cogently explains the book’s anti-illusionism, its critique of the escapism which others have attributed to it:² the theme of The Story of the Glittering Plain, Talbot says, is ‘that you’d have to be a damn fool not to be tempted by the glittering legend of an Earthly Paradise of eternal youth, love and unselfish happiness – and a damned fool to be seduced by it’. I agree with Talbot that the book is about a ‘readiness to live a wholly mortal life’, and ‘the thinning out of value and meaning on the Glittering Plain’, which is no earthly paradise but ‘a land of lies’.³ As Talbot indicates passim, Morris’s critique of the ‘land of lies’ is a critique of fiction, of fictitiousness, illusionism and escapism, all of which Morris (like the fictitious Hallblithe) treats as examples of deceit and (sometimes malicious) fraud.⁴

Talbot connects that theme in the romance with Morris’s resignation from the Socialist League in 1890, the year in which The Story of the Glittering Plain first appeared,⁵ and he interprets the book as, in part, a revisionary response to Morris’s own, slightly earlier News from Nowhere (published in Commonweal, 1890), whose arcadian socialism, Talbot suggests, is likely to have appeared differently to Morris after the political conflict which resulted in his resignation from the League. In more general terms, Amanda Hodgson has suggested that ‘it is as if Morris were warning himself not to place too much reliance on the coming of
Both scholars judiciously contextualize the work's theme in terms of Morris’s political history and in biographical terms, including his newly diagnosed and untreatable illness.

In the present essay, I propose to consider again the book’s anti-illusionism, but within a different context. From Morris’s contemporaries onward, it has always been obvious that his artistic theory and practice are thoroughly engaged in a social vision whose utopian premises include disalienation of work and the actualisation of beauty in conjunction with the values of use: as we know, from his undergraduate reading of Ruskin’s ‘The Nature of Gothic’ in *The Stones of Venice*, Morris argued consistently and often that the character and quality of art are ‘bound up with the general condition of society’.7 The theoretical foundations of such a project are eloquently articulated in Morris’s essays about printing, about woodcuts, illuminated manuscripts, and (more generally) all of the arts under the social conditions of capitalism. After more than a decade of Morris’s social polemics, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* develops, in contrast, a reflexive or metatextual theme about its own *modus operandi*. Much of Morris’s earlier work had done likewise, including the manuscript *A Book of Verse* (1870).8 Like other books printed at the Kelmscott Press, but in a special way, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* of 1894, with all its artful typography and pictorial illustration, is at once a visible signifier of the social value of beauty and a metafictional critique of escapism, including its own highly-crafted illusionism. Examining the material book, however, in bibliographical detail, reveals more: in at least one significant way, the 1894 *Story of the Glittering Plain* knowingly contradicts some of the aesthetic, social, and moral principles which, in Morris’s own terms, such work was meant to illustrate and to promote.9

II. Ideas and the Ideal

In an essay of uncertain date not published until long after his death, Morris writes of a scholar’s book printed in the Renaissance: ‘the craftsman, scribe, limner, printer who had produced it had worked on it directly as an artist, not turned it out as the machine of a tradesman’; and the craftsman’s ‘relation to art was personal and not mechanical’.10 From this historical observation, Morris elsewhere derives a prescription for printing: the business of the printer and engraver, Morris writes, ‘is sympathetic translation, and not mechanical reproduction. … This means, in other words, the designer of the picture-blocks, the designer of the ornamental blocks, the wood-engraver, and the printer, all of them thoughtful, painstaking artists, and all working in harmonious cooperation for the production of a work of art’.11 The preference for handicraft becomes an explicit point of doctrine: ‘This is the only possible way in which you can get beautiful
books’; and, further, book illustration ‘is seldom satisfactory unless the whole page, picture, ornament, and type is reproduced literally from the handiwork of the artist’.12

That principle appears often in Morris’s lectures and essays: ‘things grow beautiful under the workman’s hands’; but under conditions of industrial capitalism, the dominant modes of reproduction are obviously ‘mechanical’ as opposed to the ‘handiwork of the artist’, and thus ‘it must be the rule that all things made by man for the use of his daily life will be ugly and base… They will be tokens of the enduring sorrow and slavery of the great mass of mankind’.13 Morris considers the principle in the context of historical change: ‘In these days [of mechanical reproduction] the inborn instinct for beauty is checked and thwarted at every turn [and what is produced is] sham ornament’.14

In ‘Art Under Plutocracy’, Morris’s wording indicates very clearly that the artificiality of mechanical production leads to falsehood–‘sham’–where beauty should be. Sometimes, too, in the same essay, Morris’s language includes terms of bitter enmity: those who would compromise with the modern, degraded condition of art ‘would be traitors to the cause of art’.15 Again, the stakes are not only aesthetic, but very broadly social: ‘machines should never be used for doing work in which men can take pleasure: whereas at present, as we all know too well, men do the work of machines, and machines of men – both disastrously’.16

111. FICTION AS ‘THE LAND OF LIES’

As the genre of romance calls for, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* presents its plot with magic and mystery and unpredictable apparitions aplenty. Despite its fanciful and defiant anti-realism at the level of the plot, one systematic feature of the story in *The Story of the Glittering Plain* is the consistency with which it develops the theme of the ‘sham’ which Morris had been articulating in his polemical lectures and essays.17 Some illusions are manufactured, but some are simply dreamed, and the unreality of the dreaming is emphasized by the placement of dreams within dreams: for example, on the boat with the professed thief (Puny Fox), on which he embarks hoping to retrieve Hostage, Hallblithe asleep has ‘dreamed that he had dreamed’. His enclosure in the dream, like its unreality, is doubly emphasised: in the dream he dreams in a doorless and windowless room. Arriving at the Isle of Ransom, he undergoes an illusion which is ambiguously a dream or a vision, in which it is not Hallblithe ‘but the image’ of her which appears to him. Not only is there another double-removal from reality (not her but an image, and even that image appearing only in a dream), but further, upon awakening, Hallblithe complains, albeit to nobody: ‘even that image of my Beloved which I saw in the dream, perchance that was a mere beguiling.’18
The numerous manufactured illusions in the story in *The Story of the Glittering Plain* represent metaphorically the same one to which Morris had devoted himself with legendary productivity all of his adult life. The book is itself an assemblage of such illusions—the verbal narrative, its typographic form, and its woodcut illustrations in the 1894 volume. *The Story of the Glittering Plain* was first published without the woodcut images by Walter Crane, but, as everyone knows, Morris had been working on illustrated pages since his undergraduate days, and he had been writing and lecturing about ornamental art for many years prior to the composition of this tale. When he writes in *The Story of the Glittering Plain* about the carved wooden images which decorate the room in the hall where he sleeps on the Isle of Ransom, he therefore writes of a craft in which he had been personally involved for decades; and his reflections about the unreality of the imagery, in contrast to the reality of personal and interpersonal presence, possess a reflexive significance in relation to his life’s work and to the arts to which he devoted that work, including this volume itself. The people around Hallblithe pay him no more heed than ‘if he had been an image’. The unreality takes on a commercial frame of reference: Hallblithe says that he is not regarded more than he would be ‘if I were an image which they were carrying to sell to the next mighty man they may hap on’.19

The fictional critique of fictitiousness has (like Morris’s own work) a multimedia reach: after the episode of play-acting in which his hosts enact a pretend-battle, Hallblithe says, ‘mummery hath not slain me’. Sometimes, however, the domain of illusion threatens its devotees with amnesia: a hoary old man tells Hallblithe that, in the Land of the Glittering Plain, ‘thou shalt see me as I was’—not as, in fact, he is. When he arrives in that land, Hallblithe is told, ‘such as come hither … soon forget what they were’. As the narrative itself makes increasingly clear, this last sentence might be positioned as a warning over the door of a bookshop (or a video store), as Dante posted his more famous warning over the gate of Hell. In the beguiling land of amnesia, a person is strong and full of joy, whereas, in reality, he is ‘but a gibbering ghost drifting down the wind of night’. Unlike Henderson’s ‘land of eternal youth spent in the delights of free love’, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* presents, at the expense of its own beguiling charm, a contrast between the artificially sweetened land of lies, and the ghostly and ghastly emptiness of withering age which Morris situates outside and—despite its grimness—evaluatively above the land of lies: without, there is battle, famine, and longing unsatisfied; within, there is ‘pleasure without cease’; nonetheless ‘I seek no dream, but rather the end of dreams’.20

The half-page illustration for Chapter Thirteen depicts a beautiful woman holding a book which contains a mere image with which she has fallen in love; it is an image of Hallblithe. As we know and as Hallblithe learns subsequently, he has been beguiled into the land of lies in order to gratify the illusion and desire of
this woman, the daughter of the ‘King of dreams and lies’. His adventures, he sees and says, are a ‘tangle of lies wherein I have been entrapped’. Hallblithe’s question, ‘What is this tale about a book?’, might fruitfully be read, ‘What is this tale about? A book’. Hallblithe wonders, ‘Has the earth become so full of lies[?]’, and he decides that it has indeed become a domain of untruth: what has happened to him is ‘nought true and real but a mere beguiling’. The tale’s climax is Hallblithe’s escape from the illusion of text and image (the Land of the Glittering Plain); its happy ending is his restoration to home and Hostage, to marry her, making thus ‘an end of her sitting in the hall like a graven image’. The romance’s moral tags are *sententiae* stating his lessons about fictions: his mentor in the Land of the Glittering Plain tells him, ‘I have been trying to learn thee the lore of lies’. Hallblithe affirms, ‘I have been straying amongst wiles and images’, and he refers specifically to the means of production of those deceptions – i.e., text and image: ‘images have mocked me, and I have been encompassed by lies’; and his beloved Hostage replies, ‘I also have been encompassed by lies, and beset by images of things’. At the level of diegesis, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* is organized by the dichotomy of the ‘true and real’ as opposed to ‘images’ and ‘lies’. The text and the woodcut illustrations deny the truth and value of text and (woodcut) illusion.

### IV. Truth and the Material Text

Partly because of the striking and undeniable beauty of the illustrated books published by Morris’s Kelmscott Press, and partly because of his own eloquent statements about the importance of the particular form of beauty in which ‘the whole page, picture, ornament, and type is reproduced literally from the handiwork of the artist’, Morris’s works are sometimes beneficiaries of a nostalgic myth of integrity, whereby the physical work of one’s hands somehow represents or expresses the untrammeled truth of feeling and thought. Despite Ruskin’s (and Morris’s) consistent emphasis on the importance of collective production, the art of a group, the romantic and post-romantic illusion of authorship and artist—the individualistic model of personal intention and integrity—have so endeared Morris’s works to those who admire fine books that in 2006, according to the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, a single leaf from the 1896 Kelmscott *Chaucer* (with a floral border by Morris and a woodcut by Edward Burne-Jones) was offered for $1,500.00. To examine the 1894 *Story of the Glittering Plain* in some bibliographical detail is to discover, however, some ways in which the facts of that volume’s production connect informatively with the metacritical themes of the book’s internal narrative, its denial of the truth, and ultimately the value of its own illusions – the mix of falsehood amongst its
appealing verbal and visual figments.

Emphasising the physical manufacture of the visible book, and not the conception of the tale, the 1894 colophon (p. 179) dates the work ‘the 13th day of January, 1894’, with no reference to its prior publication. In fact, after the half-title page and the full-title page (which encloses its gothic-font title in a text-box surrounded by floral vines), the text of the tale begins in a way which visually recalls Morris’s own prior publication of the work, also at the Kelmscott Press, in 1891, but which marks a significant visual advance over the earlier work. Already in 1891, the first word of the text (‘It’) begins (Figure 1) with an ornamental capital which, imitating medieval and early-modern illuminated books, inserts slots in the stem of the letter through which vines pass, representing in a visual metaphor the tie-ribbons in the spine of the vellum binding of the book itself. Morris uses a very similar capital ‘I’ in his printing of ‘Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery’ (Figure 2), in his 1892 Kelmscott edition of The Defence of Guenevere.25 In the 1894 printing of The Story of the Glittering Plain, however (Figure 3), the first initial in the text (in the text-box) is the lower-case ‘t’ of ‘It’; the initial capital ‘I’ of that word ‘It’ is located outside the text-box altogether. In the marginal decoration, it is ornamenteally slotted like the earlier initial ‘I’ letters in the 1891 and 1892 versions, but here vines amongst the floral ornaments in the non-textual margin loop through the pictorial slots in the ‘I’. Moving of the initial capital outside the frame of the text and into the floral ornamentation abrogates the distinction between text and ornament; the language is itself presented as a visible ornament, honoured in the design as a shape rather than a lexical entity.

The tendency to see and to present even words and the parts of words less as meaningful utterances and more as visible artifice, valued for the sake of the shapes, is also evident in the colophon in the Kelmscott edition of The Water of the Wondrous Isles (1897):

Here ends the Water of the Wondrous Isles, written by William Morris. It was printed at the Kelmscott Press, Upper Mall, Hammersmith, in the County of Middlesex & finished on the first day of April, 1897 by William Morris, except the initial words Whilom and Empty, which were completed from his unfinished designs by R. Catterson-Smith.26

The art and craft of ‘Whilom’ and ‘Empty’ are treated as such utterly visual art that one does not see those words, in the sense in which the author(s) writ, except by seeing them on the page which Morris (and Catterson-Smith) made. The reason for the collaborative work on those visual elements is of course that Morris died on 3 October 1896: Sydney Cockerell writes in his diary for 4 September 1896: Morris ‘sat up & was going to design “Empty” for the 3rd part of The Water of the Wondrous Isles – but only just managed to black in the spaces, & just rough in the word’; and two days later, ‘W. M. rather tired, but decidedly
SIR GALAHAD, A CHRISTMAS MYSTERY.

T is the longest night in all the year,
Near on the day when the Lord Christ was born;
Six hours ago I came and sat down here,
And ponder’d sadly, wearied and forlorn.

The winter wind that pass’d the chapel door,
Sang out a moody tune, that went right well
With mine own thoughts: I look’d down on the floor,
Between my feet, until I heard a bell

Sound a long way off through the forest deep,
And toll on steadily; a drowsiness
Came on me, so that I fell half asleep,
As I sat there not moving: less and less

I saw the melted snow that hung in beads
Upon my steel-shoes; less and less I saw
Between the tiles the bunches of small weeds:
Heartless and stupid, with no touch of awe

Upon me, half-shut eyes upon the ground,
I thought: O Galahad! the days go by,
Stop and cast up now that which you have found,
So sorely you have wrought and painfully.

Figure 2. William Morris. Detail from The Defence of Guenevere, Hammer-smith: Kelmscott Press, 1892, p. 28.
no worse. He had done a little more to “Empty”.27 That account of the word ‘Empty’ as a physical project (rather than a concept) illustrates a philosophical principle: physical reality has a tendency to supersede or to contradict an author’s intention and idea.

That philosophically materialistic principle is already a theme in *The Story of the Glittering Plain*. In the 1894 volume, the printing of the text and the ornaments, including the marginal flora and the woodcut illustrations, is uniform and solid, with exceptions which are easily visible under magnification: initial capitals, and most frequently the smaller initial capitals, some of which are used repeatedly here and there in the work, are printed poorly, their letter-forms containing white spots in the black printed ink. I have examined three copies of the 1894 edition (two at the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, and one at the University of Chicago) under the magnification of a hand lens, and all three exhibit this same feature: the spots are not uniformly located, but they appear with great frequency in the repeated, small initial capitals, though not so often in the larger, woodcut initials, and not at all in the woodcut illustrations or in the floral ornaments outside the frame of the text. The faulty (spotty) printing is uneven and inconsistent. For example, one opening (pp. 166–67) uses the same initial ‘t’ three times. In one of the copies at the University of Texas, the first two printings of this ornamental initial ‘t’ are not spotted with white, but the third printing of the same initial is spotted; in the second copy in the same collection, that same pattern appears—the third printing of the ‘t’ is weak with white spots. In all three copies whose printing I have examined under magnification, both the initial ‘t’ and the initial ‘y’ on p. 3 are printed spottily. Page 11 includes the same ornamental ‘t’ as p. 3, with different spotting from p. 3 and different in each copy, but obvious under magnification, in all three.

The reason for the anomaly in the printing is suggested by documentary evidence, in the form of a sheet (located at the Pierpont Morgan Library) on which Emery Walker, the printer whose lecture on 15 November 1888 on the art of printing had inspired Morris, and whom Morris consulted often during the Kelmscott Press years, displays four ornamental initials, each printed twice. Walker’s note says, ‘One row printed from wood, the other from electrotypes. (Done to convince W.M. that electrocs cd be used without artistic loss ] ]).’28 The fact that Morris resorted to electrotypes for the printing of the ornamental initials has been known for some time—for example, Paul Thompson says in passing, and without comment, that ‘the title pages and initial words were printed from woodblocks, but the recurring initials and ornaments from electrotypes. Otherwise the old methods were used’.29 More substantively, the Ransom Center’s excellent (but unsigned) online exhibition catalogue *William Morris and His Circle* states that ‘the woodcut initials and intricate borders (usually with floral or vine motifs) are directly related to the ornamentation of Morris’s tapestries, chintzes, and wallpapers. They were specially designed to contribute to the total visual effect of the Kelmscott book, alongside the type, woodcut illustrations, paper, and ink, and were later imitated by sores of commercial and fine presses in England and (especially) the United States. The initials were produced using
a modern electrotyping process’. 30

In fact, the Ransom Center’s catalogue also specifies the crucial issue, in terms of Morris’s theory of art including the art of printing: ‘text would be balanced by complementary illustrations, by which Morris meant woodcuts, rather than conventional wood or metal engravings. Finally, Morris argued that woodcut ornaments, borders, and initials were important, if not essential, elements of the printed page; these were also appropriately part of what was fundamentally a handmade object’. 31

Of course ‘fundamentally’ means ‘not entirely’ or ‘not really’; and that concept or theme – the ‘not-really’ theme—is doubly interesting here, in connection with the 1894 Story of the Glittering Plain because it inhabits the physical features of the book, its production history, and the artistic and intellectual theme of the narrative itself. One troubled relationship of which the narrative has much to say is that between illusion and realities of earthly kinds: the illusions and images, for example, in the ‘land of lies’ are relentlessly resisted by Hallblithe’s determination to ‘seek no dream, but rather the end of dreams’. At the level of printing, Morris’s determination to produce ‘a handmade object’ is part of his longstanding project to recover and to promote important social values, so that it would be true of the book that ‘the craftsman, scribe, limner, printer who had produced it had worked on it directly as an artist, not turned it out as the machine of a tradesman’; and the craftsman’s ‘relation to art was personal and not mechanical’. The fact that on the Isle of Ransom Hallblithe saw not his beloved but rather ‘the image’ of her, expresses—with deliberate intention or not—the same problem as a woodcut initial that is not really a woodcut initial but is printed from electrotypes. 32 Of these conflicts between idea and object, illusion and the earthly facts of the matter, A Story of the Glittering Plain has much to show and tell.

Because no object is ideal, and every printed book is an object, it is no particular condemnation or complaint about The Story of the Glittering Plain to say that it is not only about failures of idealism but is also, itself, a failure of idealism. Philip Webb did find fault with Walter Crane’s illustrations in the volume, including the accuracy of the depicted costumes, and Sydney Cockerell wrote on Webb’s letter that ‘Morris was no less dissatisfied than Webb with Crane’s illustrations to his Glittering Plain & thought this volume his one Kelmscott Press failure’. 31 However, as I have tried to suggest, both the narrative within The Story of the Glittering Plain and its methods of manufacture represent, with beauty and clarity, a much larger and apparently inescapable problem: no object is ever and only a dream. One of the book’s great achievements is the clarity and grace with which it unfolds the failure of the dream.
'The Art of Printing' and 'The Art of Lies'

NOTES


3. Talbot, p. 27.

4. Talbot is not alone, or even first, to interpret the romance in this way, in contrast to Henderson’s suggestion that the book celebrates escapism: more than a decade earlier, Amanda Hodgson, for example, had written that The Story of the Glittering Plain ‘employs the form and conventions of romance in order to criticize an unquestioning acceptance of the romance ethos’. Within the story, Hodgson aptly observes, the land of the glittering plain ‘turns out to be one of lies and evasions’: Amanda Hodgson, The Romances of William Morris, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 151–152 (Afterwards Hodgson).

5. The Story of the Glittering Plain or the Land of Living Men was first published serially in English Illustrated Magazine, vol. 7 (June–September 1890); Morris published an edition at the Kelmscott Press (1891); and an edition was published in London by Reeves and Turner, also in 1891. According to Temple Scott (A Bibliography of the Works of William Morris, 1897; reprinted. Ann Arbor: Gryphon Books, 1971, pp. 14–15), the London edition appeared after the Kelmscott Press edition. In 1894, Morris published a different edition, including twenty-three pictorial illustrations, new ornamental capitals, a Gothic typeface, and a colophon which says nothing whatsoever about the prior publication of the work. Because I will be discussing the visible and material features of this illustrated edition of 1894, I will be taking my quotations from that edition of the romance. This 1894 edition (afterwards Morris 1894) was reproduced in 1990 in facsimile by Dover Publications.

6. Hodgson, p. 151 (see note 4).


9. Amongst others who have written previously and trenchantly on contradictions involved amongst Morris's political commitments and artistic works, the most influential is E. P. Thompson: ‘There is a sense in which Morris, as Utopian and moralist, can never be assimilated to Marxism, not because of any contradiction of purpose but because one may not assimilate desire to knowledge and because the attempt to do so is to confuse two different operative principles of culture’ (William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary, rev. ed., London: Merlin Press, 1977, p. 807). More recently, and more negatively, Laurence Davis has argued that ‘Morris’ hostility to modernity severely diminishes the force of his otherwise radical criticisms of art and labour under advanced capitalism’ (Laurence Davis, ‘Morris, Wilde, and Marx on the Social Preconditions of Individual Development’, Political Studies 44, no. 3, September 1996, p. 719). It will become evident in the course of the present essay that I am less concerned about the opposition of desire and knowledge than I am interested in the opposition of desire and knowledge (on the one hand) and the facts of the matter on which and amidst which Morris worked. Nonetheless, at the level of its themes, inside the fiction itself, the work recovers the idealism which its material form cannot—or at least does not—consistently sustain.


15. Kelvin, ibid.


17. Pauline Dewan’s excellent essay on the structural coherence of The Story of the Glittering Plain discusses the problem of ‘fantasy and illusion’ and the systematic display of the dangers posed by those meretricious values. Writing only one year after Talbot’s essay (cited above), Dewan shows how the plot of the work sets out from an illusion to return to illusion, and that, like the Isle of Ransom and the enclosed Glittering Plain, this circularity in the narrative ‘underscores the idea of entrapment’: P. Dewan, ‘Circular Design in Morris’s The Story of the Glittering Plain’, Journal of the William Morris Studies Winter 2008.
23. See note 12, above.
30. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, Online Exhibit: *William Morris and His Circle*. [http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/morris/#kelmscott_images; last accessed 9 September 2008]. I would like to thank Rich Oram, curator at the Ransom Center, for helpful conversation about this feature of the Kelmscott Press books.
31. *ibid*.
32. Webb’s letter to Morris, and Cockerell’s note, are quoted in Peterson 1984, p. 61.
James Leatham’s eyewitness account of William Morris’s 1888 visit to Aberdeen

*Michael Bloor*

James Leatham (1865–1945) was a pioneer socialist, who towards the end of his life printed, published, edited and largely wrote a monthly magazine, *The Gateway*, from the little Aberdeenshire town of Turriff where he was the Provost (leader of the local council). In 1940 (issue no. 323), Leatham began to serialise his memoirs. Around eight to ten pages of each subsequent issue would then be devoted to the memoirs, but they remained incomplete when Leatham died aged 79 in 1945. The very last issue (no. 361), dated ‘January–August 1945’ is prefaced as follows:

After months spent in a hospital bed, latterly under protest, I am glad to issue a number of the Gateway once more. I am anxious, for one thing, to finish my memoirs, now nearing the last long stage. The book is already partly sold in advance. I thank those who have written at this time, as well as those who, in cases seeing the newspaper notices as to my disablement, refrained from writing. It has become a distasteful effort to write, and I set type direct, as others typewrite.¹

Leatham was a lifelong devotee of Morris and his writings. His eldest daughter was called May Morris Leatham. He wrote, printed and published one of the very earliest studies of Morris (*William Morris: Master of Many Crafts*, 1908),² and *The Gateway* is scattered with references to Morris, including quotations from a seemingly lost correspondence. Some of Leatham’s papers were donated by another daughter (Mabel M. Leatham Aiken of Charleswood, Winnipeg) to the University of Aberdeen; they contain several letters from May Morris to Leatham, but none from Morris himself.

The memoirs are Leatham’s political testament as well as his autobiography, and readers are offered, in passing, Leatham’s views on the 1939–45 war and the German nation (‘slaves to authority’), on the virtues of municipal enterprise and public housing (with Turriff as an exemplar), on the commercial press (from
a man who had edited Scotland's first socialist newspaper), on Burns (from a man who had published a wide range of literary studies, including seventeen on Shakespeare's plays), and on public fashion (a beard is 'nature's adornment' – Leatham sported a full beard). One whole section of the memoirs (in issue no. 333) is devoted to Morris. Some of Leatham's material is culled from other Morris studies and some is reproduced from his own book on Morris. And some of the asides, such as the need to bury telephone lines and the virtues of hydro-electricity, have the air of an old man's hobbyhorses.

However, there is much that is original in the memoir to interest Morris scholars. In particular, there is an account of Morris's only visit to Aberdeen, his lukewarm audience, and the friendly conversation amongst socialist comrades which followed the political meeting – in particular, Morris's clear-sighted response to Leatham, who had fallen victim to the Victorian fad (à la Spencer) for equating social and evolutionary change. Since circulation of The Gateway was small, and copies are difficult to come by (with only Aberdeen University and the British Library holding a complete run), the relevant section of Leatham's memoirs, with annotations, is reproduced below.

James Leatham (Figure 1) was born in 1865, the youngest of five children of a Yorkshire soldier who died of cholera in India. His mother, a handloom weaver, took the children to live with her father, also a handloom weaver and an old Chartist, in Aberdeen. Leatham was apprenticed to a local printer, but had shown an interest in political questions from an early age: he remembered hearing his grandfather and fellow weavers discussing the Paris Commune when he was only five. In 1887, he helped J.L. Mahon set up a branch of the Scottish Land and Labour League (affiliated to the Social-Democratic Federation) in Aberdeen.

By the time of Morris's visit to Aberdeen in 1888, which he helped organise, Leatham was already contributing articles to the London magazine, Progress. He had a great love and knowledge of literature and was an acute judge (witness his choice of the adjective 'chiming' to describe Morris's Defence of Guenevere in the extract below). When Mahon left the SDF with Morris to form the Socialist League, Leatham remained in the SDF, serving in due course on its national executive council. Aside from Morris, he met all the great figures and speakers of the labour movement, such as Henry George and George Bernard Shaw, and he was a close friend of that other Morris-worshipper, John Bruce Glasier.

In 1891, Leatham took over a small Aberdeen printing business of his own, and was still only thirty when he brought out the first issue of The Workers' Herald, Scotland's first – albeit short-lived – Socialist newspaper. He later worked on Robert Blatchford's Clarion in Manchester, where he was a co-founder of the SDF branch. He moved to work for a commercial printer in Manchester but was blacklisted for his union activity, and in 1897 returned to north east Scotland as a
Figure 1 – James Leatham in 1943, reproduced with permission from the Special Libraries and Archive Section of Aberdeen University Library.
compositor, writer, manager, and later briefly owner of the weekly Peterhead Sentinel, where William Morris, Master of Many Crafts first appeared in serial form.

In 1905 Leatham became a freelance jobbing printer and journalist, and publisher, establishing the Clerkhill Press. He remained active in socialist politics, speaking at meetings, helping to found a Peterhead branch of the ILP and playing a part in a bitter trawlermen’s strike. In 1908, he was appointed editor-manager of a group of weekly ILP newspapers in Yorkshire, including The Worker (in Huddersfield). Resigning on a point of principle, he set up as a printer at Cottingham near Hull, and it was from there that the first issue of The Gateway emerged in 1912.

In 1916, he moved for the last time, to the small Aberdeenshire town of Turriff, where he set up the Deveron Press. In 1918 he joined the Labour Party and became founder-president of the Turriff branch in 1922, only to resign from the party in disgust in 1924, over the performance of Ramsay Macdonald’s Labour Government. Henceforth he devoted himself to local government: he was first elected to the Turriff town council in 1923, and was Provost from 1933 until his death in 1945. He was also chair of the local Public Assistance Board and, when war broke out, was chair of the billeting committee, housing four hundred evacuees. He was particularly and justifiably proud of his council’s record in building council houses, and was awarded an MBE for his services to local government in 1942. Many more details can be found in the only biography of Leatham, Bob Duncan’s James Leatham, 1865–1945. Portrait of a Socialist Pioneer.3

The remainder of this article consists of annotated extracts from ‘Sixty Years of World-Mending. Recollections and the more or less pertinent reflections. XI. – William Morris’ published in The Gateway.4 I am grateful to the Special Libraries and Archives staff of the University of Aberdeen for their assistance and permission to reproduce this extract. I also wish to thank Tom Deveson for his scholarly copy-editing, and the Editor, and an anonymous referee, for their speedy and helpful response to the original submission.

Leatham’s Introduction

Provincial cities seemed to have more visits from notables in the old days than now. Lectures and speeches now given on the radio were then delivered on local platforms to a local audience, supplemented by such additional publicity as the press cared to give. Among distinguished speakers in Aberdeen in my time I recall Gladstone, Huxley, Kropokine [sic], ‘Labby’ and Sir George Trevelyan (who came together), Henry Ward Beecher, Churchill, Lloyd George, Professor Patrick Geddes, and Sir Charles and Lady Dilke (separately). But the biggest of them all, for the number and quality of the things he knew and could do, and a
certain aura of mental and moral integrity and power which he carried so lightly
and offhandedly, was William Morris, who came to Aberdeen in the month of
March, 1888.5

Morris found Scotland ‘raw-boned’, and among his many friends there were
no Scotsmen whom he took to his generous heart as he did with Englishmen.
His voluminous and always racy printed correspondence has no Scots names
in it, as if we took no active interest in the arts, crafts, and literature in which
was absorbed. He knew our literature and proverbial philosophy better than
most Scotsmen do; but I recall how chagrined I was when he said he regarded
‘Holy Willie’s Prayer’ as Burns’s best poem. He liked Scott and admired Sartor
Resartus, but nevertheless condemned the ‘gloom’ of Carlyle as if that were his
chief characteristic. He admitted to a possible ‘pock-pudding prejudice’, but he
had as a rule only too good a reason for the specific flicks of disparagement in
which he occasionally indulged at the expense of Scotland and individual Scots.
He preferred Iceland – though he loathed its geysers – because the people were
not commercialised, loved literature, were kind and hospitable, and country and
people were unspoiled. It may be some solatium to Scots that he wished to see
London thinned out to extinction, and referred to its businessmen as ‘smoke-
dried swindlers’.

Morris’s only visit to Aberdeen

Morris’s reception in Aberdeen would not have impressed him in our favour. He
lectured to not more than a couple of hundred people6 in the lesser St. Katherine’s
Hall. The Rev. Alexander Webster7, who was his host, presided, and, apologising
for the absence of the intelligentsia, suggested that the Principal of the Univer-
sity8 ought to have been introducing our illustrious visitor. The Principal had
not been asked but he might well have been there. A great and prolific original
poet, handling classic themes with unrivalled mastery, ease, and sweetness, the
translator of Homer, Virgil, and of sagas from the Norse and Icelandic, the man
who refused the Laureateship on the death of Tennyson, such a man might well
have attracted an impressive academic audience, even if he had not been the
world’s most noted reformer of the arts and crafts as well. But I know of only two
university men who were in the audience that night.9 The one was William Sem-
ple, M.A., B.D., B.Sc, an Ayrshire man, a teacher at Gordon’s College,10 and as
handsome and good-natured as he was learned. The other was William Charles
Spence, M.A., English Master at the Girls’ High School. Semple had been with
us heartily from the outset. He was one of the many converts of Patrick Ged-
des,11 who had turned him away from dead theology and made his B.D. useless.
Semple was a splendid teacher and sports leader, but his open association with the
new politics and his ‘way of teaching history’, with, as credibly alleged, a hostile rector\textsuperscript{12} eavesdropping outside the classroom door, led to his leaving Aberdeen.

When the centenary of Morris was celebrated in 1934, Mr Stanley Baldwin, then Prime Minister, referred to Morris as ‘a glorious human being.’ Their families had been acquainted. Ruskin in his day had said, ‘Morris is beaten gold.’ And yet another description of him was, ‘Six giants rolled into one.’ I have written a book about some of his achievements in literature and the arts and crafts in general.\textsuperscript{13} Here I deal with the man as he appeared in actual social contact.

\textbf{A CANARD}

As already indicated, the band did not turn out for him in Aberdeen. Indeed the frigidity of his reception seems to have been found so impressive in some quarters that a story was started of his having been found in the Shiprow\textsuperscript{14} looking for the hall close on the hour when the meeting was due to begin.

The truth is that I met him at the station when his train came in in the middle of the day, and took him in the tramcar to Leslie Terrace, where Webster then lived. I had my work to attend to – being then only a foreman, and not the boss, who could be spared for days on end – but I left him in the hands of the hospitable Websters. In the evening I called again in good time for him and Webster and took them by tramcar most of the way to the meeting-place. If the motive of the canard was to suggest that the meeting was imperfectly advertised, it was not entirely unworthy. Some excuse seemed called for.

\textbf{THE OUTWARD MAN}

I do not know if Morris was afraid of being mistaken for a bagman, but anyhow he carried his considerable dunnage in a couple of capacious brown canvas satchels slung over his broad shoulders. He wore a grey checked Inverness cape at this time. When next I met him this had been discarded for a substantial blue overcoat. He himself mentions in one of the letters in the McKail \textit{[sic]} biography, that, with reference to the grey cape, a London youngster had shouted ‘Yah, Shakespeare!’ A black soft hat surmounted his abundant grey hair, and his white beard spread down over his turndown collar, with no tie. Though the weather was typical March, he carried no umbrella, but a stout stick. When I held my umbrella over him for a moment he said, ‘You look after Number One; never mind Number 11!’ (Two 1’s of course). His jacket suit was of blue serge. Of middling height, he was broad and powerful.

His get-up was in keeping with his strong, decided, yet essentially benevolent
character. He was interesting to note because he had a theory or reason for everything he ate, wore, used, and did or refused to do. He piled jam on his bread when in his own house, said ‘I like pig’ when other people would have used the less pagan words bacon or ham, and at the table he drank tea from an enormous cup which suggested a different use. Among other unrecorded tastes of his was a preference for Latakia tobacco, and for blankets rather than sheets in bed.

There have been attempts to classify his appearance - such as that of farmer or owner-shipmaster; but they are all wide of the mark. He was not to be classified. Visiting a famous old church in the south of Scotland along with Scots acquaintances, his comments on the building so impressed the old beadle, accustomed though he was to distinguished visitors, that at a suitable opportunity he asked a straggler from the company ‘Whae’s that?’ his startled tone reflecting his excitement.

A REALLY PIous WISH

Morris’s one Aberdeen lecture was delivered from manuscript. He sometimes did that, although he was ready and hearty in extempore speech too. His concluding sentence declared that he spoke for a movement which sought to make ‘the earth one garden and all men our friends’. That was fifty-three years ago, and of both aims it may be said, more than ever at the moment, that their realisation, like the Kingdom of Heaven, ‘cometh not with observation.’

In one of those enjoyable symposia which followed such meetings, with supper and the putting up of burnt offerings – though Webster himself did not smoke – Morris that night was very ‘matey,’ especially when one considers the circumstances. It was the first time he had met us, we were Scotsmen, not supposed to be interested in arts and crafts, but very likely, as he would suppose, devoted to the adoration of the Machine God which since then has more and more mastered us, so that two men in an aeroplane can send a whole cityful scampering like terrified rats to their holes down below. Not every man will lend his pipe to another; but I had unaccountably come out that night without mine, and Morris must needs go and return with three or four to choose from. Fortunately – seeing the place was Aberdeen – I had my tobacco-pouch!

A CATHEDRAL AND A COLLEGE, BOTH RIGHT

I did not see as much of him then as I wished. Next day he went with Webster and ‘old William Lindsay, the publisher,’ to see King’s College and Oldmachar Cathedral, the latter one of the great churches of the middle ages, and still a
grand old pile with its twin spires, clerestory, stained windows, and ancient sculpture, despite all the vandalism of those who mistook destruction for religion. The chapel at King’s would have delighted him with its hand-carved seats, the work of long-dead craftsmen who would have had what he placed above everything else, pleasure and pride in work which was in itself worth doing.

On mediaeval craftsmanship he could be intensely interesting, and he had special knowledge of the monastic life and churches of the middle ages. He had been ‘intended’ for the Church, and while at Oxford he and Burne Jones had together visited old churches and taken rubbings of mural tablets and carvings. As the eldest son of a well-to-do man he had at college an allowance of £900 a-year, from which he was able to finance the *Oxford and Cambridge University Magazine*, as later in life he subsidised *The Commonweal*, the Society for the Preservation of Historical Buildings [*sic*], and other enterprises which appealed to him.

There is, of course, any amount of work in which it is impossible to take a craftsman’s pleasure. Dennis the hangman might enjoy ‘turning them off,’ but only a sadist could have pleasure in the taking of life, human, animal, or fish, yet the litter of civilisation is borne on the shoulders of men who slay in shambles, grub in cesspools, labour in the darkness and danger in the mine, and shiver aloft on telephone and telegraph poles, without much element of craftsmanship about the work. The wires should be put underground, we might all become vegetarians, and electricity generated from falling water might provide power, light, and heat, supplemented by peat and wood, so that the last miner might come up from the last shift for the last time. That would not end the drudgery which machinery relieves or abolishes, as in road-making, where the machine breaks the stone, mixes it with tar, and spreads the mixture from tipping wagons in a flowing tide. If the old, deep, hand-made Roman road lasts longer, the answer is that it was made by serfs who did not have the craftsman’s pleasure in the work or much pleasure of any kind. The mediaeval stonemason put ‘the mason’s mark’ on the stones he dressed, and if the stone carried a decorative design he might well have an artist’s pride and pleasure in it. But most of the stones in a building were plain and many were beyond close inspection. Workmen have pride and satisfaction in any big piece of good work as a whole in which they have had a part. ‘Ours’ may be a better word than ‘mine,’ as Morris himself expressly recognised. And yet artistry is an individual thing. No committee could have written the play of ‘Hamlet.’
Life is, or should be, more than even great creative labour. There are over-engined people who must always be using their hands. Thus on a slow, long voyage up the Thames on a boat called The Ark, Morris must needs do the cooking, though there were a number of women on board. He fancied himself a cook, and once said no woman ever invented a new dish or failed to spoil an old one. It's a mercy we're all spared. A man of intense energy, he wore himself out at sixty-two. With Shakespeare, Burns, and Dickens it was the same. To look a gifted horse in the mouth is not to reject it.

The value attached by Morris to ‘useful work versus useless toil’ is inherent in any planned community, which would take bagmen off the road, close unnecessary shops, abolish competitive advertising and overlapping services. It would cut out war by ending the craze for foreign markets and so-called lebensraum. It would make ‘the earth our garden’ in a sense and on a scale not dreamt of in commercial economics, with only one-fifth of the earth under any kind of cultivation and the tillers of it everywhere the worst-treated class of the community.

Enjoyment in Service

A favoured child of fortune, Morris at Oxford had played cricket and rowed for his college (Merton). On taking his M.A. he entered the architect’s office of G.E. Street for a time; but he did not need to draw plans for a living, and at twenty-four he had published for him the lovely, chiming ‘Defence of Guenevere’ and other poems which already had all the characteristics of his later work – as in ‘Jason,’ ‘Sigurd,’ and ‘The Earthly Paradise,’ an output in verse alone far exceeding that of any contemporary poet. The prose tales, some of which have been translated into several European languages, were, in the author’s allowance, trifles thrown off day by day as a change from the work of Morris & Co. at the Merton Abbey home of the crafts.

There his people carried on the weaving of carpets and tapestry, the designing and making of stained glass windows, the making of house furniture in native oak and walnut, as against mahogany or veneer with tortured ogee mouldings; wallpapers in natural patterns and colours, such as the much-copied acanthus leaf, the manufacture of fabrics which were what they pretended to be. His dyes were extracted from natural substances such as twigs and leaves, producing colours that were pleasing even as they slowly faded, unlike the ghastly hues of drysaltery in decay. He had looms to weave a carpet 25 feet wide and weighing over a ton. The Kelmscott Press was housed in a roomy cottage near Morris’s home in Hammersmith. In our homes he aimed to make the wall beautiful, the floor beautiful,
the house beautiful, and, last of all, the book beautiful. The changes he initiated have not only been largely followed, but in some directions overdone. It is easier to catch the manner than the spirit; to copy genius and simplicity, but to achieve simplicity only, as in modern so-called ‘functional’ building, all glass, iron, and straight lines.

H.M. Hyndman tells how Morris and he, in Oxford one day, had occasion to visit the Bodleian Library. As they were leaving, the librarian, recognising Morris, said they had just received a consignment of mediaeval books; would he kindly give his expert advice about the placing of them? Morris at first demurred, but at last consenting, he wrote out slips to accompany the various books, with such details as: Written at the monastery (sic) of so-and-so in approximately year such-and-such. This done with only occasional hesitation. The particulars were at once accepted, and Hyndman believed they were as near accuracy as human knowledge at this time of day could attain.

Morris had, indeed, an extraordinary knowledge of old books and of all things mediaeval. He would pay £1000 for an ancient painted book, even, on one occasion, £200 for a couple of leaves that were missing from a book he had in view. He made purchases on the Continent, sending an agent to Munich to buy a psalter (at £1200) when the owner refused send it on approval.

This was only one aspect of his multifarious lore. A friend who met him often says he could ‘go on for hours’ about birds, and it would be vivid talk without posing or self-consciousness. He never ‘performed’ in talk, but was a good listener if you had anything more or less worth while to say. I can speak of this from experience. I did not share his belief in the possibility of sudden social change, and told him that I thought harm was done by the raising of expectations of social revolution. Society allows the law of growth as with other organisms much less complex and full of contradictions and centres of resistance to change than the modern State, by which I mean the whole people. At our first meeting, I had pointed out that the tadpole changed suddenly into a frog, the tail wriggling, perhaps in protest, but the head and body were the directive organs, and they had no objection to the process. Presently there was no tail left to wriggle: it was all absorbed into the frog, which had no tail. But that was one small individual creature, whereas society was a congeries of warring classes, some of whom objected strenuously to any metamorphosis, while the great mass of the body was not alert.

Morris answered that analogy was a dangerous thing, that we must not run animal biology too hard, that human beings were conscious agents, and that it was our mission to convert the head and body, which consisted of all the workers with hand and brain. Let the tail of useless people wriggle and resist. They will be absorbed right enough. It is our job to see to that, and it is necessary for us, in the first place, to believe that it can and should be done.

That, in effect, is what he said, and he said it breezily, with a sharpness of feel-
ing which is perhaps not reflected in my summary; for he added disarmingly, ‘I say that, not because I’m an older man than you, but because I think its right.’ He must have thought he had sounded dogmatic. I passed the matter off by saying I did not make love to gradualness. The change could not be too quick for me.

But Morris seemed to have been dissatisfied with his visit. In an article in the party organ, *The Commonweal*, he complained that he found his audience ‘heavy to lift,’ and suggested that we were ‘held down by local Radicalism.’ He was, anyhow, to come round declaredly to our view of policy later in the day.

The last time I met Morris was in Manchester, which he visited repeatedly during my time there. He was by this time (1895) supposed to be in failing health, though he was but 61, and he died the following year; but he was speaking out of doors, by his own choice, though it was a cold March morning, and the pitch, by Trafford Bridge, crossing the Ship Canal, was then open and exposed. The meeting was under the auspices of the Social-Democratic Federation, from which he and many of his friends had seceded ten years before. The Branch had invited him to come and speak on my suggestion; but not satisfied with two free addresses – he spoke again in the Free Trade Hall in the afternoon – they pressed him to become the Socialist candidate for South Salford! At the Sunday-morning meeting he handsomely admitted that Hyndman had been right in standing by a policy and program of specific political proposals, and ‘we are now hand-in-glove,’ he said.

We may meet him again in these pages. He is my greatest human topic.

NOTES

4. Published May 1941.
6. Leatham may be making a comparison with the twelve hundred people he mentions were in the audience to hear the author George MacDonald; James Leatham, ‘Sixty Years of World-Mending V’, *The Gateway* no. 327, September 1940, pp 10–19.
7. The Rev. Webster, a Unitarian minister, was another local pioneer socialist who, in the previous year, had taken part with Leatham in a successful local free speech campaign when J.L. Mahon (organiser of the Scottish Land and Labour League and a co-signatory of the manifesto of the Socialist League) was arrested for obstruction when he tried to hold an open-air public meeting in Aberdeen on the Scottish Sabbath. James Leatham, ‘Sixty Years of World-Mending VII & VIII’, The Gateway nos 329 & 330, November 1940 & January 1941, pp. 10–20 & 10–19. Webster also wrote his memoirs (Alexander Webster, Memories of Ministry. Aberdeen: A. Martin, 1913, 267 pp.), but these are concerned with church events and Morris goes unmentioned.

8. The office of Principal in the Scottish universities is equivalent to that of Vice-Chancellor in English institutions.

9. The university was not a Tory stronghold: many of the students were ‘lads o’ pairts’ who had won their places at the competitive bursary examinations and many of the professoriate had similarly humble origins. Nevertheless, the University – like the city – tended at that time to a liberal rather than a socialist radicalism, although a William Ogilvie, Professor of Humanity, had published a book advocating land nationalisation back in 1782!

10. Robert Gordon’s College, an independent school in Aberdeen dating from 1750.

11. Professor of Botany at the University of Dundee, follower of Huxley, and widely regarded as a founder of the disciplines of town planning, and ecology.


13. See note 2.


15. The church officer, subordinate to the minister. The church in question might be the Rosslyn Chapel, a Templar church, only a short journey from Edinburgh, a city which Morris visited repeatedly, both in order to speak, and to conduct the Firm’s business.

16. Kings College (founded 1495) is one of two colleges (the other is Marischal College) merged in 1860 to form the University of Aberdeen; Kings Chapel is the only surviving part of the original fabric. St Machar’s Cathedral is located close by Kings. Leatham is allowing affection to colour his judgement: although the cathedral roof is impressive, St Machar’s is not ‘one of the great churches of the middle ages’. Leatham was to be buried in the cathedral churchyard. His tombstone reads: ‘James Leatham 1865–1945: Man of Letters; Pioneer of Social Reform’.

17. Leatham was mistaken: Morris attended Exeter College.

18. The same event is described at greater length in Leatham’s book on Morris (see note 2) in a passage which has been cited by other authors, well-captur-
ing the deep affection which Morris inspired in Leatham and other contemporaries. ‘He was speaking from a lorry pitched on piece of waste land close to the Ship Canal, his whole environment probably as distasteful to him as possible. It was a wild March morning, and he would not have been asked to speak out of doors, but he expressed a desire to do so; and so there he was, talking quietly but strenuously, drawing a laugh every now and then by some piece of waggish wisdom from the undulating crowd, of working men mostly, who stood in the hollow and the slopes before him. There would be quite two thousand of them. He wore the well-known blue overcoat, but had laid aside his hat, and his grizzled hair blew in wisps and tumbles about his face. As he stood there squarely upright, his sturdy figure clothed in blue, even to the shirt with the turndown collar, and swaying slightly from side to side as he hammered out his points, he looked a man and a gentleman every inch of him’. (pp. 125–126)

19. Aside from a broadside against the author of an American book on Morris, there is only one further substantive reference to Morris in Leatham’s (unfinished) serialised autobiography. In extract XVIII, from James Leatham, ‘Sixty Years of World-Mending’, The Gateway 330, July 1942, p. 15, where Leatham recalls his time writing for Robert Blatchford’s Clarion in Manchester, he digresses about his concerns over the sectarian character of the socialist movement.

He had written to Morris, apparently in lugubrious terms, expressing his concern that the Clarion and its followers might become another socialist sect, and he quotes in full Morris’s reply:

Kelmscott House, Upper Mall,
Hammersmith, April 21, 1893.

Dear Leatham, – Thank you for your friendly and interesting letter. I hope you will soon pull yourself up again. We hear in London much more rose-coloured views of Lancashire Socialism, which, however, I do not at all believe, especially after your account of things there … I saw Blatchford last night, and rather liked the looks of him. You see, you must let a man work on the lines he really likes. No man ever does good work except that he likes it: evasion is all you can get out of him by compulsion. However, since I am moralising, I had better leave off with best wishes to you.

Yours very truly, WILLIAM MORRIS.
A ‘desert in solitude & an Eden in beauty’
Rossetti at Kelmscott

Peter Faulkner

In this article I will discuss the two periods Rossetti spent at Kelmscott Manor, in 1871 and 1872–4, not from the point of view of what they reveal about his relationship with Jane Morris, but for what they show about his attitude to nature, as he experienced living in the country for the first time. I will therefore concentrate on what Rossetti wrote while he was at Kelmscott in relation to the question of his awareness of, and response to, the neighbourhood. Most of the evidence will come from his letters, now available in Volumes 5 and 6 of The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in the fine edition inaugurated by W.E. Fredeman and handsomely published by D.S. Brewer.

The fifth volume of the correspondence, dealing with the years 1871 and 1872, includes the letters describing Rossetti’s first contacts with Kelmscott Manor. Although he visited the Manor on 20 May 1871 and took the joint tenancy, with Morris, in that month, the earliest letter explicitly referring to it is one of 5 July to Barbara Bodichon in which he writes, ‘I have taken, jointly with Morris, a most jolly old house in Oxfordshire. The only drawback is that it takes a long while to get there’. At this time, the nearest railway station was at Faringdon, some seven miles (11 km) from Kelmscott. The first letter sent from the Manor, on 14 July, is to Murray Marks, asking him to make urgent arrangements to send a writing table. But on 16 July he tells his friend Ford Madox Brown:

I have been here some days now, & it is simply the loveliest place in the world – I mean the house and garden & immediate belongings, for there is rather a want of variety & interest for walks in the surrounding country. We have got the house well filled with furniture, though still rather
chaotically; but the place is just such a ‘haunt of ancient peace’ (to quote Tennyson, who remains the most quotable of poets about natural beauty) that one can hardly believe one has not always lived here … This place by the bye is an absolute solitude – as much so as Penkill.

Penkill was the castle in Ayreshire owned by the wealthy Alice Boyd, who had a liaison with William Bell Scott; Rossetti was a frequent visitor to Penkill. In the next few days Rossetti gives similar accounts of Kelmscott to his brother William, to his mother, to William Bell Scott and to Mrs. Cowper-Temple. Perhaps the most attractive is to his mother on 17 July:

I have been here since last Wednesday, and am already greatly benefiting by the change. This house and its surroundings are the loveliest ‘haunt of ancient peace’ that can well be imagined – the house purely Elizabethan in character though it may probably not be so old as that, but in this dozy neighbourhood that style of building seems to have obtained for long after changes in fashion had occurred elsewhere. It has a quantity of farm buildings of the thatched squatted order, which look settled down into a purring state of comfort, but seem (as Janey said the other day) as if, were you to stroke them, they wd move. Janey is here with her children, & she is benefiting wonderfully, & takes long walks as easily as I do. The children are dear little things …

Oswald Doughty, in his 1949 biography of Rossetti, remarks that ’Both Janey and Gabriel delighted in Kelmscott’, and that ‘Gabriel’s love of the old place indeed rivalled Morris’s’. He adds, ‘These few weeks at Kelmscott, passed in a normal tranquil daily round of work and relaxation such as Gabriel had seldom known, were probably the happiest of his life’. Jane’s account, in a letter to Philip Webb, is more prosaic, and perhaps also reflects Rossetti’s views:

The country I find is not so beautiful after one gets away from the river, thought it is all delightful and home-like to me, and I love it, still I can well understand others not being much impressed with it, who are not used to it; every field is lovely by itself, and every house, but somehow when one looks far out there is a sameness, a bareness of tree, which makes one begin to want more, but of course I am only speaking of the few miles in the immediate vicinity.

Rossetti tells Scott, also on 17 July, that ‘the solitude is as absolute as at Penkill, but not nearly so impressive in its natural features’ when away from the Manor. He is planning to stay ‘for 2 months at least’ and to do some drawing – he wants to draw both Jenny and May (whom he found particularly ‘lovely’), and indeed was to do so very finely. Jane was taking walks of five or six miles ‘without the
least difficulty’ – presumably in his company, as ‘her children are the most darling little self-amusing machines that ever existed. The nearest town to this is Lechlade, some 3 miles off, a beautiful old place & not a station’ – though it was soon to become one. To Mrs. Cowper-Temple he writes on ca 18 July, ‘This is a most lovely old place – a desert in solitude & an Eden in beauty – just my idea of a change from hateful London’. A longer letter, to Scott on ca 26 July, appends a poem, then called ‘The River’s Record’, of which Rossetti writes with some modesty:

I send you a little ballad or song or something made in a punt on the river – not a very poetic style of locomotion. It’s rather out of my usual way – made aiming at the sort of popular view that Tennyson perhaps alone succeeds in taking – not (I hope) that it’s at all chargeable with imitation of T. – but I mean that nobody but he tries to get within hail of general readers. But I fear, however much I might like to do so, that it’s not my vocation except in such a trifle as this once in a way: and I dare say this wd be voted obscure. I fancy it ought to be suited to music.

The poem is a narrative in five stanzas, its setting implied in the local names of its opening line:

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
The river-reaches wind,
The whispering trees accept the breeze,
The ripple’s cool and kind:
With love low-whispered ‘twixt the shores,
With rippling laughers gay,
With white arms bared to ply the oars,
On last year’s first of May.

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
The river’s brimmed with rain,
Through close-met banks and parted banks
Now near, now far again:
With parting tears caressed to smiles,
With meeting promised soon,
With every sweet vow that beguiles
On last year’s first of June.

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
The river’s flecked with foam,
'Neath shuddering clouds that hang in shrouds
And lost winds wild for home:
With infant wailings at the breast,
With homeless steps astray,
With wanderings shuddering tow'rds one rest
On this year's first of May.

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
The summer river flows
With doubled flight of moons by night,
And lilies' deep repose:
With lo! beneath the moon's white stare
A white face not the moon,
With lilies meshed in tangled hair,
On this year's first of June.

Between Holmscote and Hurstcote
A troth was given and riven;
From heart's trust grew one life to two,
Two lost lives cry to Heaven:
With banks spread calm to meet the sky,
With meadows newly mowed,
The harvest paths of glad July
The sweet school-children's road.

There are a number of later references to this poem. On 2 August Rossetti writes to Scott, agreeing that 'your objection to the title [‘The River’s Record’] is valid’, and wondering whether ‘May and June’ would be any better. He defends his use of ‘cool’, and the repetition of ‘rippling’: ‘this seems necessary, as you will observe that two epithets are exchanged in each stanza between the landscape & the emotion’. To his mother on 11 August he sends what he describes as ‘a few verses suggested by the river here’. He adds in a P.S., ‘I doubt not you will note in the above the intention to make the first half of each verse, expressing the landscape, tally with the second expressing the emotion, even to repetition of phrases’. Although the poem is in a ballad-mode seldom practised by Rossetti, it is an effective and affecting narrative, successful particularly in its use of the contrast between the human suffering and the tranquil surroundings.

The poem was soon to be illustrated, but not by Rossetti himself. Writing to Scott on 25 August, Rossetti mentions that Brown has asked him for a poem to illustrate for the Oxford magazine Dark Blue, adding, ‘I sent him that “Holmscote” thing now called “Down Stream” which removes your just objection.
to title’. A letter to Brown on 31 August concerns the illustration, for which he advises Brown to ask £20; he adds, ‘Do you think of seeking a background here? We have a punt of our own where you could study actions’. Brown does not seem to have responded to this suggestion, for on ca 2 September Rossetti tells Scott: ‘Brown is doing the cut for my verses, & I wanted him to come here (en garçon) for his background, but he seems not easy to move.’ In a letter to Dr Hake of 2 September Rossetti refers to Brown’s illustration for his ‘verses about “Hurstcote &c”, which I have now called “Down Stream” (as the other title seemed dubious) & which are now to appear in the Dark Blue as an appropriate outcome of Oxfordshire scenery and Oxford morals’. The fact that Rossetti intends the story narrated in the poem, which involves seduction, infanticide and suicide, as a comment on ‘Oxford morals’ is striking, and reminds one that at this stage Rossetti did not avoid social observation and criticism in his work. His 1870 Poems had included the dramatic monologue ‘Jenny’ which dealt subtly with the subject of prostitution; Jan Marsh rightly praises its verbal vigour and ‘topical intervention into the social issues of the day’. On ca 25 September Rossetti is telling Brown of his concern over the future of Dark Blue and in his generous way advising Brown to seek payment for his illustration before it is too late, ‘as your work must have taken time. Mine gave no trouble so I’ll just chance it’. And on 1 October he writes again to Brown:

I expect to see you in a few days, but must write meanwhile & say how very excellent I think your drawing in Dark Blue. It is like a tenderer kind of Hogarth, & seems to me the most successful of your book illustrations, unless perhaps the Traveller & I think it licks that. The little one is very pretty too. I can’t of course judge of the cutting, but I think it looks well on the whole. At any rate an eye new to the design finds nothing out of harmony.

At first sight the 2 people in the boat look both like rustics, but I suppose this may be otherwise when one considers the costume. I meant my unheroic hero for an Oxford swell, though you may say certainly that the internal evidence is rather less perspicuous than Lord Burleigh’s shake of the head in the Critic. By the bye you have certainly not minced the demonstrative matter – but would there perhaps be a slight danger of overbalancing? At any rate, whatever may happen to the boat, I should think there was no doubt of the Mag’s capsizing (to say nothing of our share in its cargo) when it contains one article on Browning as a Preacher and another on Walt Whitman.

On 2 October, Rossetti writes to Scott that ‘Brown’s drawing to my verses (Stanza 1) in the Dark Blue is a very fine one I think – 2 indeed there are, & the minor one (Stanza 4) is also very nice’. The illustrations deserve this praise.
Elsewhere in the 26 July letter to Scott, Rossetti writes: ‘I have discovered some nice riverside walks, now the floods have subsided, and there is a funny little island midway in one walk, which can be reached by a crazy bridge, & does very well as a half way house to commit sonnets to paper going & coming. It may perhaps lead to further effusions. I got one sonnet out of it today.’ However, a little later he remarks, ‘I’m afraid I shan’t do much poetry here, as my walks are seldom taken alone, Janey having developed a most triumphant pedestrian faculty; - licks you hollow I can tell you … If I were at Penkill I know, as you say, that I should do something decided in poetry – to wit, the “Orchard Pits” poem which I much want to do; but I find it almost impossible to write narrative poetry in a scenery that does not help it, and so have little chance of setting to that here’.

Around the same time, on ca 26 July, Rossetti writes to Brown about the changing weather at Kelmscott:

Weather has got chillier & more changeable here, and walks are less frequent in consequence, but on the whole I suppose one needs look for no desperate weather … The fields are no longer flooded, & I have found some nice riverside walks & a little island which makes a good out-door snuggery for versifying.

On 31 July he is in a more negative mood to Webb: ‘The house and surroundings are delicious, and some of the riverside walks very sweet & pleasant when not flooded, but I must say that, to my own tastes, the country round is about the most uninspiring I ever stayed in. It’s so flat that to see anything is not easy, & when you do see it, it isn’t worth seeing’. But writing to his aunt on 4 August, Rossetti is a good deal more positive:

You will see by my address that I have left town, having taken, jointly with the Morries, a share in this very nice old house, – as good and genuine a specimen of old middleclass architecture as could be found anywhere, I suppose. Its aspect is absolutely Elizabethan in every respect, but it is probably a century later, that style of building having lasted in this primitive neighbourhood a long while. The place is quite a little paradise, both as to itself, garden & immediate surroundings, but the country is rather flat & monotonous for views, though the riverside walks (the house is quite close to the river) are charming.

The observation about the date of the Manor is perhaps based on Morris’s estimate. Morris was to write to Charles Eliot Norton on 19 October 1871 of the Manor as ‘a beautiful and strangely naïf house, Elizabethan in appearance though (not) much later, as in that out of the way corner people built gothic till the beginning or middle of last century’.

The following day, 5 August, Rossetti tells Brown that he is painting ‘a little
picture of Janey’, and means to ‘put the winding river & this house in the back-
ground’. There are several allusions in subsequent letters to this painting, which
was to become Water Willow. Rossetti is also making drawings of the children.
He adds: ‘I shd get thoroughly in the writing vein too if my walks were taken
alone; as it is, I have done a few songs & sonnets – one song an Italian one!’ He
writes more fully on 7 August to Dr Hake, praising the draft of Hake’s poem
‘Her Winning Ways’ and urging publication. He then goes on to write of his
own work:

I have also got to work at a little picture with a river background from the
neighbourhood here; and want to write a few things if I may, but this is
doubtful, as my walks (my muse’s cud-chewing times) are seldom taken
alone. I may as well send you one of the few little things I have yet done
here. It is a little ballad suggested by the riverside surroundings, which are
lovely though rather unvarying, while the country is everywhere so flat that
objects are few to the eye. The house itself, with its garden & belongings,
are simply perfection – the house a quite unaltered relic of Elizabethan
middleclass architecture, though whether actually built in Elizabeth’s time
or even perhaps a century later in this dozy primitive undeveloping region,
may be doubtful. I hope you will come and see it some day …

The poem, still with the title ‘The River’s Record’, is appended.

On 8 August, Rossetti tells Brown that the ‘weather has grown perfect summer
here now – indeed almost too hot for walking’. He concludes, ‘We read an awful
lot of Shakespeare & are very jolly. The place looks now as if it had been in our use
for years. I am going to put this house & the river as a background to a little pic-
ture of Janey I am about here’. The painting, Water Willow, is described by David
Rodgers as a ‘small and personal picture’, painted ‘at the height of Rossett’s love
affair with Jane’; he notes that Rossetti ‘retained the picture until 1877 when he
was financially straightened and in poor health’.10 He also argues that the willow
which Jane is holding is a symbol of melancholy, and alludes to the willow song
in Othello – though the willow is a very obvious part of the scenery around Kelm-
scott, and attracted Morris’s attention too, with no suggestions of melancholy. It
is certainly one of Rossetti’s freshest and most engaging works. Joseph Acheson
describes the painting, accurately, as a ‘happy portrait of Janey at Kelmscott, in
the background of which there is a glimpse of the house and church, a rare refer-
ce by him to factual landscape’.11

The young May Morris did not find the landscape factual enough. In her
Introduction to Vol. IV of The Collected Works she says of the painting:

The Water-Willow picture by Rossetti is a portrait of my mother. It is
not so happy a likeness as some of his other studies, the face being rather
pinched and the nose too long. Mr Rossetti brought into the background of the picture Kelmscott Manor, where he was living at the time of painting it, the little old church with its elegant open belfry, and our boat-house with the fishing-punt moored below … We girls were fond of the picture when it was finished, but it bothered me to have house and church and boat-house all brought together, when they were in different directions. I confided to my mother my doubts as to the morality of this, and demanded an explanation. But the child’s ‘That isn’t how things really are!’ can’t be met by explanation.12

The painting still retains its direct appeal; the Kelmscott background provides an attractively open effect very different from the claustrophobic atmosphere of some of the larger later paintings. The original is now in the Delaware Art Museum at Wilmington, but a copy made by Fairfax Murray in 1890 may be seen at Kelmscott Manor.

The weather features again in Rossetti’s letter of 11 August to his mother: ‘The heat here is now excessive – so great indeed that walking even at the close of day is no pleasure, & one is tempted to keep indoors altogether. However I yesterday evening strolled out when the sun was quite gone & found it cool and delightful, so I think I shall time my walks chiefly so at present, only the twilights are very short & there is no moon now, and walking in pitch darkness is not pleasant.’ On 13 August, Rossetti writes to Scott about some of Scott’s recent journalism, and remarks that ‘I send you another little poem (done from nature)’ – presumably ‘Sunset Wings’, though the introductory note by the editors suggests that the poem was not actually enclosed. He certainly sent the poem to his mother on 18 August: ‘Having no news in answer to your letter I’ll send you another little poem done from nature. I don’t know if you ever noticed the habit of starlings referred to which is constant here at sunsets at this season of the year.’ He ends – before appending the poem – by referring to ‘the beautiful old churches’ of the neighbourhood, a ‘famous one’ at Lechlade, and ‘still more interesting to me, one or two simple ones – the Kelmscott church as good as any – of the most primitive order with two bells hanging visibly on the roof at one end – just as one fancies chapels in the Morte d’Arthur, particularly from one side when one sees it above some wild-looking apple-trees. I shall certainly get it into some picture if I keep on coming here’. Water Willow was to profit from this affectionate observation. The appended poem is in six stanzas:

Tonight this Sunset spreads two golden wings
  Cleaving the western sky;
Winged too with wind it is, and winnowings
Of birds; as if the last day’s hour in rings
Of strenuous flight must die.

Sun-steeped in fire, the homeward pinions sway
Above the dovecote-tops;
And the clouds of starlings, ere they rest with day,
Sink, clamorous like mill-waters, at wild play,
By turns in every copse.

Each tree heart-deep the wrangling rout receives, –
Save for the whirr within,
You could not tell the starlings from the leaves;
Then one great puff of wings, and the swarm heaves
Away with all its din.

Even thus Hope’s hours, in ever-eddying flight,
To many a refuge tend;
With the first light she laughed, and the last light
Glows round her still; who nathless in the night
At length must make an end.

And now the mustering rooks innumerable
Together sail and soar,
While for the day’s death, like a tolling knell,
Unto the heart they seem to cry, Farewell,
No more, farewell, no more!

Is Hope not plumed, as ‘twere a fiery dart?
Therefore, O dying day,
Even as thou goest must she too depart,
And Sorrow fold such pinions on the heart
As will not fly away.

‘Sunset Wings’ was not to be published until 1873, when several informative letters refer to it. Thus on 20 May 1873 Rossetti tells his mother that *The Athenaeum* will soon be publishing ‘a little piece of mine, which I wrote when I first came here, and embodies the habit of the starlings which quite amounts to a local phenomenon & is most beautiful & interesting daily towards sunset for months together in summer and autumn’. On 9 May, Rossetti had sent the poem to the editor, commenting:
The habit of the starlings referred to in them [the verses] quite amounts to a local phenomenon, & was entirely new to me when I first took this house 2 years ago, at which time the verses were written. It was new to Morris also – a great rural observer – & might perhaps seem strange to some readers, but is very exactly described. The noise is, as said, just like the wheels at a water-mill, or (more prosaically) like a factory in full spin.

Doughty remarks of the poem that ‘the inevitable now obsessive themes of Love and Death’ are here ‘touched … to an exceptional beauty against a stormy Keldscott sunset through which homing doves, starlings and rooks sweep down to their nests’. It is characteristic of Rossetti’s poetry that natural observation should give way to personal emotion, but the transition is here skilfully managed.

During these summer months of 1871 at Kelmscott Rossetti was, as we have seen, both painting and writing. A long letter to Scott on 25 August includes discussion of some sonnets he had sent to Scott, and of his current work: ‘I am painting a little portrait of Janey for a beautiful old frame I have, & am getting into the background the leading features of Kelmscott – the house, the picturesque old church, & the river-banks. I think it will be pretty. I have made chalk drawings too, of the kids and of their mamma’. Meanwhile, in letters to new correspondents Rossetti continues to offer accounts of Kelmscott. His uncle Henry Polidori is told on 27 August:

It is a most lovely old house, purely Elizabethan in character, though perhaps built somewhat later, as in this district architectural style wd change but slowly … The garden, and meadows leading to the river-brink, are truly delicious – indeed the place is perfect; and the riverside walks are charming in their way, though I must say the flatness of the country renders it monotonous and uninspiring to me. However, it is the very essence of all that is peaceful and retired – the solitude almost absolute. Kelmscott is a hamlet containing, I am told, 117 people, and these even one may be said never to see if one keeps, as I do, [to] the field-paths rather than the highroad. Rossetti remarks that ‘Morris & I had been for some little time in search of a place to take jointly in the country, when this one was discovered in a house-agent’s catalogue – the last place one would have expected to furnish such an out-of-the world commodity’. On ca 3 September Rossetti writes to Fanny Cornforth about the unfortunate death of a fawn that she had sent to him; he adds, ‘The wild flowers here are wonderfully beautiful and I think in greater variety than I ever saw before. The other day I found a poor lapwing, or peewit, a beautiful bird that I had never seen before, and which is just the sort of bird I ought to have had
to paint in that picture of Beatrice. The poor thing had his beak broken, I fancy by a fish hook, as they go a great deal near the water. He seemed well enough at first, but died in about an hour, and I have had his wings spread out and kept them to paint from.

In an affectionate letter to James Smetham on 5 September, Rossetti writes of the Manor:

This is a lovely old house – quite a genuine specimen of middleclass Elizabethan building, though perhaps built somewhat later in this dozy neighbourhood. It is really a jewel in its way, garden, meadows & all – built almost on the riverbanks (Thames, Oxon) and affording lovely river-walks as you may suppose, though I confess such flat country does not help the sources of inspiration with me. Such a ‘haunt of ancient peace’ as this never was, I think. No railway station at all near it, & only 117 inhabitants in Kelmscott, a hoary sleepy old lump of beehives as ever you saw. From a distance the thatches look like so many pussycats asleep in the sun, and as if when you stroked them they would purr.

On 10 September, Rossetti tells William that he will soon be returning to London and that he has done ‘a little picture of Janey with background of this place & river, made to fit a lovely old Italian frame I have’. This is Water Willow, discussed earlier.

On 11 September Rossetti writes to Dr Hake about a new poetic undertaking. He is writing ‘a longish ballad poem about a Beryl or Magic Crystal’; he had intended to ‘intercept the stanzas with a running and very varied burden’, but had found that the poem was ‘too long & intricate for such treatment’. However, he sends Hake two of the ‘burdens’, which he obviously did not wish to discard:

1. Water-willow and wellaway
   With a wind blown night and day.

2. The willow’s wan and the water white,
   With a wind blown day and night.

3. The willows wave on the waterway,
   With a wind blown night and day.
4.
The willows wail in the waning light,
With a wind blown day and night.

The four sections of the second burden are by contrast attractively summery:

1.
Honey-flowers to the honey-comb,
And the honey-bee’s from home.

2.
A honey-comb and a honey-flower,
And the bee shall have his hour.

3.
A honeyed heart for the honey-comb,
And the humming bee flies home.

4.
A heavy heart in the honey-flower,
And the bee has had his hour.

Jan Marsh notes that these ‘burdens’ which Rossetti wrote for *Rose Mary* are ‘pure Kelmscott … Alliterative and assonant, they dwell on its key attributes, the river and garden, water and murmuring sweetness’.

They were to be reused in later poems, as we shall see. By now, however, the summer idyll was coming to an end, and the external world was beginning to impose itself again on the ever-sensitive Rossetti. On 2 October, he begins a letter to Scott, ‘Here comes my last Kelm-scott letter’. And disturbingly, in the light of later events, he mentions having seen advertisements for an anonymous article on ‘The Fleshly School of Poetry’ in the forthcoming *Contemporary Review*.

Doughty’s summary of this period emphasises Rossetti’s poetic productivity. In addition to *Rose Mary* he wrote thirty new sonnets for *The House of Life*, the sequence which he had first published in his Poems in 1870, when it consisted of fifty sonnets and eleven songs. Doughty also remarks that other sonnets of the year, including ‘The Lovers’ Walk’, ‘Youth’s Antiphony’, ‘Beauty’s Pageant’ and ‘Silent Noon’, are ‘a record of physical passion amidst some such rustic environment as Kelmscott …’.

This is a not inaccurate, if slightly evasive, way of describing these poems, all of which except ‘Silent Noon’ are part of the sequence identified by J.R. Wahl in 1954 as the ‘Kelmscott Love Sonnets’. In these poems
the passion – whether physical or not – has precedence over the setting. Neverthe-
less the observed details of ‘The Lovers’ Walk’ – ‘Sweet twining hedgeflowers’,
‘An osier-odoured stream that draws the skies/Deep to its heart’ – and the pastoral
setting of ‘Silent Noon – the ‘long fresh grass’, the ‘golden kingcup fields with
silver edge/ Where the cowparsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge’ – are delicately
suggestive of the Kelmscott scene.

Rossetti left Kelmscott on 8 October 1871, not to return for almost a year, after
his devastating breakdown. But in the months after he left, he continues to give
new correspondents accounts of the Manor and his life there. To Alicia Losh, the
aunt of Alicia Boyd of Penkill Castle, he writes on 28 October:

I have been 3 whole months at a beautiful old-fashioned house in Oxford-
shire – near the borders of Gloucestershire – at a little hamlet called Kelm-
scott, the nearest town to which is Lechlade, – that being however but a
‘one-eyed’ town as the Yankees say, & the nearest station being Faringdon,
5 or 7 miles off. So Kelmscott is quite as quiet a place as Penkill, and I
only wish I could say it is equally interesting. The country is deadly
at,
though of course the river walks – for the house is built almost on the banks
of the Thames – are extremely pretty, if somewhat monotonous. How-
ever the house itself is and its belongings are simply an ‘Earthly Paradise,’
appropriate you will say to our old friend Top, who was and is my joint
tenant in it. The house is absolutely Elizabethan in style and in a perfectly
genuine state, though it may probably be really built somewhat later, as
styles would change but slowly at Kelmscott, which is about the doziest
clump of grey old beehives to look at that you could find anywhere. Its
inhabitants number 117.

… By the bye, there is one serious drawback to the charms of that resi-
dence, viz: that it gets flooded after rains to such an excess that before I left
it I went out in a boat on the fields I used to walk over. Thus for much of
the winter I suppose the place must be well-nigh inaccessible. Moreover
the roads at the same time got thoroughly swamped, and such walks as I
could take had to be got out of stubble-fields & queer byeways which were
not very delectable. But if you saw the house you would not wonder that
it proved irresistible to us.

By now Rossetti was becoming preoccupied with the attack on him in ‘The
Fleshly School of Poetry’, but in writing to Frederic Shields on 15 November he
reverted to the safer subject of Kelmscott:

I was away in the country 3 months, at a house which I took jointly with
Morris on the banks of the Thames at Kelmscott, Oxon. There those
verses you write so kindly about were suggested, with other writing of a
more elaborate kind, and I also did some painting there. The house and its immediate belongings are a perfect Paradise and the place peaceful even to excess. It is an Elizabethan house, quite unaltered, and my studio was hung with tapestry which no doubt had always been in it. I wish you could find such a place, within artistic limits.

No doubt the presence of Jane, and perhaps also that of the two little girls, contributed most to Rossetti’s sense of well-being at the time, but it can be reasonably argued, on the evidence of these letters and the accompanying poems, and the painting *Water Willow*, that Kelmscott Manor and its surrounding landscape exerted a considerable – and positive – influence on him in 1871, although he was there for only a brief period. Unfortunately, as we know, it would not be enough to save him from breakdown in the following year. Joseph Acheson remarks: ‘For Rossetti this most idyllic phase of his life was over.’

Rossetti was not to return to Kelmscott until after his breakdown and attempted suicide on 8 June 1872 at Dr Hake’s house in Roehampton. Fortunately, his earlier sociability had won him a number of stalwart friends, who rallied admirably in support. Brown looked after him at his own home for several days before Rossetti was taken by Brown and George Hake, the doctor’s helpful and sympathetic son, to Urrard House in Perthshire, the first of two houses in Scotland made available to him by the generosity of his patron William Graham. On 28 June he moved on to Stobhall, near Stanley in Perthshire, then on 28 July to a rented farmhouse at Trowan, Crieff, in Perthshire, which he liked and where, in September, he was able to begin painting again. He wrote appreciatively about Trowan to his mother on 12 September, describing his daily walks, and to Brown on 22 September: ‘The air here is the best I was ever in – infinitely superior to Urrard or Stobhall – the walks far more beautiful & breezy, and the comforts of the place itself, as well as the sense of independence, make it a great improvement on the desolate flunkyism out-of-use which was the atmosphere of the other places.’ But on 11 September he had told Fanny Cornforth, ‘I do not expect to be staying very much longer here, but am not inclined to return to London if I can help it. Perhaps I may go for awhile to Kelmscott, where I should be living at much less expense than here’. A long letter of 17 September to his brother William defends his decision not to make ‘a sudden & violent move in respect of the Chelsea house’, which he planned to keep on until the situation became clearer. He argued that ‘I have at Kelmscott quarters already fitted for my work’, where he might remain for ‘the whole winter’. He was planning to leave Trowan
for Kelmscott the following Monday, remarking that he was now finding that he could work again without difficulty. He then added a sentence which has been often quoted: ‘Wherever I can be at peace, there I shall assuredly work; but all, I now find by experience, depends primarily on my not being deprived of the prospect of the society of the one necessary person.’ It is evident that he was hoping for the restoration of regular contact with Jane that Kelmscott might supply; his friends had kept them apart in recent months, afraid that Jane would have an unsettling effect on him.

On 24 September Rossetti returned to the Manor, writing on the 25th to Dr Hake in good spirits: Hake’s son George was continuing to prove a most sympathetic helper: ‘Here we are all right, and wonderfully comfortable. I feel quite myself again, and George puntet little May Morris about this morning to her heart’s content.’ In a business-like mood, Rossetti writes to William the same day, ‘you had better at once send me £100 in notes registered. I must pay arrears for my share of the rent and place money in Janey’s hands for George’s & my expenses’.

The natural surroundings at Kelmscott were beginning to affect him again. Also on 25 September he writes enthusiastically to Brown: ‘Here I am, as well as ever I was in my life, which perhaps is a pretty good reason for coming here … What a heaven seems to surround me here after the hateful jumble of Scotch crags & brakes. However I must do justice to Trowan where I believe the air wd set any body on his legs whose legs had not absolutely tumbled off. I mean to make up for lost time now, as to work & earnings. I have a great repugnance to returning to London …’ In a similar mood, on 26 September he tells William: ‘My strength seems completely re-established here today. The floods are not out as yet, so that walking is feasible & the weather splendid. The place is a perfect Paradise. You must really come & see it sooner or later. George says he never knew such a place in his life.’

The letters in the following months suggest that Rossetti was generally happy at Kelmscott, and enjoyed its natural features. On 28 September he tells Dr Hake:

Today George has gone out fishing with Morris and the two little girls – the elder having returned. She will I dare say soon be as great an ally of George’s as her sister is already. He seems to enjoy himself greatly here, and certainly the place is perfection, only a gale of the most furious kind has sprung up these two days, yesterday with rain, today without, but I fear, as soon as it subsides, the rain will fall and the floods rise in good earnest.

This does not seem to have happened immediately. On 1 October Rossetti tells Brown:
George Hake is in raptures of a lasting nature, & punts the kids about & rides them abroad on ponies to an endless extent. The last 3 days however he has spent entirely on the river with Topsy [Morris], fishing to no purpose whatever, as they caught nothing to speak of. What can be the fun of it I cannot conceive. Janey is very delicate, & appallingly unable to walk compared with her condition last year. However, one must hope for improvement. Had I not renewed correspondence and resolved to come here, I should never have got a bit better or been able to take up work again in Scotland.

On 6 October Rossetti writes inviting William to visit the Manor and giving detailed travelling arrangements via Faringdon: ‘this place would really take you some time to see … The weather is changeable now but not very bad yet on the whole, and there seems a fair prospect of some fine spells yet. I have renewed my tenancy & paid up arrears, so I have as good a right to ask you down as anyone else. Jane joins warmly & so would Top if he were here. George yearns also. He seems as happy here as it is possible to be, and gives the children all kinds of treats on the river &c.’ On 8 October Rossetti tells Dr Hake that, although there has been no great improvement in the condition of his leg, ‘It has been capital walking weather hitherto, and I avail myself of it daily’. On 10 October he writes to his mother that William is now at the Manor, and looking better ‘after a good walk’. He goes on:

The weather seems unluckily just today to be breaking up, & the rain at this moment is very heavy. Hitherto we have had on the whole fine weather, and I have walked daily. The worst of this place is that a few days of rain fetch the floods out in no time & the country becomes impassable for pedestrians or indeed for anything but a boat, while even the roads get completely turned to bogs, so badly constructed are they.

He later refers to the ‘most comically fat & stolid pony … which Morris brought back last year from Iceland. He is more like Sancho’s donkey than anything equine, and was never seen but twice from the window to do anything but eat in his private field. On two occasions only was he meditating with his back against a tree’.

There are few references to nature in the next few weeks, when many of the letters concern business matters. On 11 November Rossetti writes to Howell that ‘John Marshall [his doctor] strongly advises me to continue in country air’, but that he has been unable to find a suitable house nearer to London, which he would find more convenient. He is thinking it may be best to stay on at the Manor, but is well aware of likely problems with a Kelmscott winter: ‘this house is fearfully likely to be cold in the winter’. Perhaps Howell can find some material
to use to shut out the drafts. On 14 November Rossetti writes to thank Barbara Bodichon for her offer of her house Scalands in Sussex for six months. He is indecisive about his plans, wanting not to return to London but ‘not certain whether this place may not become extremely inconvenient for my daily walks if persistent wet weather sets in, as the Thames then floods the whole neighbourhood’. On the other hand, he has at Kelmscott his ‘artistic “plant” which wd have to be moved with me’. He therefore suggests an agreement that would permit him to make the move, but not commit him to it.

Business matters and Brown’s application for the Slade Professorship at Cambridge form the substance of the following letters, but on 6 December Rossetti writes to Alice Boyd that he is hoping for a visit from Scott: ‘He will soon fill a sketch-book with jottings of the place, even in winter’. Later in the letter, he remarks: ‘The floods are out here, restricting the field for walks a good deal, but the weather is getting frosty & brisk which is a great improvement.’ Writing to Mrs. Cowper-Temple about Brown’s candidature on 11 December, he tells her, ‘I am very well, & steadily at work in this place, beautiful even at the approach of winter’. On the same day, he presses Brown to come to the Manor for Christmas, with his family, Emma, Lucy and Nolly: ‘Do manage coming here. You will be simply enchanted with the place even in winter’ – although there have been severe gales. These he describes more fully to William on the same day:

The floods have been out here now for a long time, but walking is still possible in the higher meadows. The tremendous gale of last Sunday night had some disastrous results, uprooting no less than 6 important trees – 3 in the avenue of Mouse’s [the pony’s] field, & 3 in the island by the boathouse. Three others – very large elms opposite the front gate – are so shaken that they will be sure to fall in the next gale.

On 18 December Rossetti assures George Rae, ‘I am wonderfully well here, have got thoroughly to work, & don’t feel at all inclined at present to go in again for London gloom and suffocation. This is the loveliest of places even in winter, & what between last year and this year, I have gradually established a complete artistic “plant” here’. He spent Christmas with his family in London, but he returned to the Manor on 28 December.

Rossetti’s letters of 1873 and 1874 – in Volume 6 of The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti – continue to show him reacting to Kelmscott in various ways according to his moods, but with nature often playing a significant part. On 2 January 1873 he writes to his mother that he had enjoyed spending Christmas with her and the family, and goes on:

I find the weather here has not been so fine during my absence as it was in London. George [Hake] has brought down an additional dog – a very
intelligent black & tan terrier which he has had from a pup. So now we have 3 dogs, what with the sheep dog I got (named Turvey), the dog sent to George from Scotland, which is a cross between a Scotch deer-hound & a collie, and is named “Bess,” – and the new dog who rejoices in the name of Dizzy, after a celebrated politician. [Benjamin Disraeli]

Having been absent on Christmas Day, we were last night serenaded with a Carol by the village-children. The weather here is decidedly colder than it was in London, & today is very dismal. Moreover a dreadful man in the neighbourhood, who has a beetroot-spirit factory, has established a steam-whistle to call his workmen. This goes 7 times a day, beginning at 5 AM, & is the dreariest of super- or subhuman sounds. It is a long way off but still one hears it here much too distinctly to be pleasant.

It is remarkable that this is the only reference in the correspondence of either Rossetti or Morris to the modern farm development being carried on at the time in the nearby village of Buscot.18

On 1 February Rossetti writes to Brown to encourage a visit, showing unusual awareness of a local farming matter:

I told you if you’d come here you might do a bit of landscape. There is the loveliest thing developed close by here within a day or two, – a breeding-fold – a quadrangle of hurdles thatched & walled with straw, and adjoining a scooped-out haystack in which the shepherd sleeps. It is inhabited by about 30 ewes at the approach of lambing-time which is expected daily. It would make a most charming and most attractive picture. If I were doing it, I should put a Christ walking up & down the centre of it. You could stow your belongings in the haystack.

Writing to Dr Hake on 16 February, Rossetti devotes two paragraphs to the exploits of ‘Poor old Dizzy’, which clearly give him much pleasure. On 22 February he writes to Hake again, remarking that ‘Howell & Dunn are down here – the latter helping me at work at present writing – the former in bed – 3 P M – twelve hours after 3 A M when we went to bed after endless palaver.19 George is out getting more pike (if he can). His last finds in that line have been wonderfully good’. To his mother on 7 March, Rossetti writes from ‘this wilderness’:

I take walks regularly. The floods are now gone again, but even while they lasted, there were the higher fields to walk in, which remained free though not over easy walking. Only during the heavy snow, which occurred at two intervals, I was driven to the roads to walk, which are cheerless & monotonous enough. My health continues better than I am habitually in London, but I have lately been getting terribly fat again, which I fear is the healthy
condition with me, but is not desirable. I suppose it is partly attributable to
good appetite, as my walk always precedes dinner by an hour or so.

Later in the letter Rossetti tells his mother: ‘The weather here has been brighter &
better for the last few days. When settled towards summer, or in summer as
most feasible, perhaps you might manage a visit here with Christina & Maria too
if it might be. George will drive you, boat you, & punt you to any extent.’ On 26
March he writes to Charles Eliot Norton, the American critic, who was in Lon-
don, apologising for a delay in replying to his letter, and commenting: ‘I myself
have been so much better since carrying out my long-standing project of settling
in the country than I ever found myself in London, that I do not feel tempted
to leave it as yet, particularly as I find my painting goes on to the full as steadily
here as there.’ On 6 April Rossetti gives his mother a full account of the doings
of Dizzy and two new dogs, Nero – ‘a splendid black retriever’ – and Jemmy – ‘a
funny sort of rough terrier …’ Apologetically, and ingeniously, he concludes, ‘I
fear the above caninities exhaust the Kelmscott budget of news’.

The approach of spring at Kelmscott was evidently good for Rossetti’s spirits,
as on 14 May he writes to Brown: ‘The cold spring, not yet warmed through, has
inspired me with a sonnet which I enclose’. The sonnet is called simply ‘Spring’,
and refers to the lambing-fold described in the earlier letter to Brown:

Soft-littered is the new-year’s lambing-fold;
    And in the hollowed haystack at its side
    The shepherd lies o’ nights now, wakeful-eyed
At the ewes’ travailing call through the dark cold.
The young rooks cheep, mid the thick caw o’ the old:
    And near unpeopled streamsides, on the ground,
    By her spring-cry the moorhen’s nest is found,
Where the drained flood-lands flaunt their marigold.

    Chill are the gusts to which the pastures cower,
    And chill the current where the young reeds stand
    As green and close as the young wheat on land:
Yet here the cuckoo and the cuckoo-flower
Pledge to the heart Spring’s perfect gradual hour
    Whose breath shall soothe you like your dear one’s hand.

This is a characteristically accomplished sonnet, in which evocative natural obser-
vation gives way only in the last line to the romantic moment. However, Rossetti
does not want to acknowledge anything too Wordsworthian in himself, for in the
letter to Brown he goes on: ‘I shall get used to the country in time I suppose but
as yet the cuckoo suggests to me that some one has been to Holborn & bought a
cuckoo-clock. Everything is very jolly here & walks begin to be delightful.’

On 20 May 1873 Rossetti writes to invite his mother to come with his sisters to the Manor:

The apple blossom in our orchard has been in full glory & is still delicious, and everything is most lovely. I shall try if I can pack you a bouquet safely to Euson Square today, including wild flowers – especially the yellow Mary-buds (or marsh marigolds) which are most splendid in the fields wherever the floods have been most persistent.

In the same letter, he tells her that The Athenaeum will soon be publishing ‘a little piece of mine’, ‘Sunset Wings’, which ‘I wrote when I first came here’. It is not clear why so long a delay occurred before the publication on 24 May of this poem, which was discussed earlier. Rossetti ends the letter by enclosing the new sonnet ‘Spring’, which he also sent to Scott on 22 May.

Rossetti's mother and sisters did visit the Manor in June, and he wrote about their visit to Hake on 27 June: ‘My mother and sisters enjoy the place vastly – garden, house, dogs, and all. Unluckily hitherto the weather has been so windy that George has thought it too cold to take them on the water, to which Christina looks forward with great pleasure.’ Christina herself writes appreciatively on 30 June to Amelia Heimann:

Did you know that here we are at Gabriel’s?

Yes, here are we, ever since last Wednesday, my Mother and I; in a pretty old house, in a charming garden, in a green and flowery world, (a rainy world too, this morning), hard by a river …

I should like you to picture our day to yourself. We breakfast at 10 nominally (please accept all hours as nominal), and dine at 8; between which meals a bit of bread and butter is very acceptable as luncheon, but I don't think Gabriel takes a morsel … Mr. [George] Hake … took us out in the boat on Saturday; and a most delightful row we had; my Mother enjoying it greatly. Our river is the Isis …

Christina is more specific in writing to her friend Ellen Heaton on 1 July:

What would you say to our quiet life here, after the gaieties of your London season? Our greatest gaieties are being rowed in the boat by amiable Mr. Hake, or playing a stakeless rubber at night. But to me the boat is delightful: and I don't think gold & glitter in Guildhall can have been more beautiful, than the gold and enamel of our river flower-banks here. Then water-sounds are so delightful, – and so are bird's notes in native freedom, – and so are all sorts of things in the country.

Subsequently, on 19 July, Rossetti writes affectionately to his mother about
her recent visit – ‘It is a privation not to see your dear old self trotting about the garden’ – and tells her about the arrival of Jane with the girls. He continues, showing an uncharacteristic interest in the garden flowers – he was well aware of his mother’s enthusiasm for them:

The white lily in the garden has grown to a perfect decorative cluster now & is most divinely lovely. Another white lily is developing also, but the others which excited your curiosity remain as yet unexplained. Janey planted them & believes them to be tiger-lilies.

St. Swithin should be called St. Swindler this year, for he has bene-cently cheated us. There has not been a drop of rain since his ominous downfall; though at times the sky has threatened again. Today however all seems settled into sunny serenity.

On 19 July Rossetti tells Brown that everything had been reorganised in time for the coming of ‘Janey & the babes’; now ‘The weather has become magnificent, & the view from the window is Paradisiacal’’. He remains concerned for the health of the children and their mother, telling George Hake on 20 July that the girls have not been well: ‘Even I have been pressed into the propulsion of May’s swing, so much is your absence felt’. On 22 July he tells Dunn, ‘The weather here is divine at last’. On 31 July Rossetti writes to Brown describing the comic exploits of Dizzy, which ‘I assure you made 5 people happy’. In a letter to Scott on 31 August, Rossetti tells him of his mother’s visit: ‘My mummy used to trot about after wild flowers & was as pleased with everything as a baby or an angel, – once or twice took my daily walk with me too! Christina improved inconceivably.’

Similarly, in a long letter to his mother on 13 September, Rossetti recalls her visit and her response to the garden and the flowers:

The amount of enjoyment you get out of the simplest things is indeed a rebuke to the younger ones around you. I never told you that the tall flowers you felt curious about turned out to be tiger-lilies, &, being pretty numerous, made a fine show when in bloom, as a few of them still are. But the garden is fading fast now – the most noticeable things at present being some most curious flowers growing on long stems.

[unusually in Rossetti’s letters a small a drawing appears at this point]

They are a bright red at top and a paler flame colour below, & are here familiarly termed red-hot pokers, but I have some reason to believe that their real name is Ixia. Do you know them? They are perhaps more like foxes’ tails than anything else. We have a nice garden-seat now in the arbour opposite the front door & porch of the yew-hedge. I often regret that it was not
there during your visit, but will not doubt your sitting in it yet. The river-
growths have continued to develop one after another. The arrow-head rush put forth eventually a most lovely staff of blossoms just like a little sceptre.

[another drawing occurs at this point]

The way that the white blossom grows triple round the staff is most lovely, & the whole might really be copied exactly in gold for a sceptre.

Rossetti’s knowledge of flowers was not perhaps extensive; the botanical name for the red-hot poker is not Ixia but *Kniphofia*. His response to the arrow-head rush, *Sagittaria sagifolia*, shows the way his imagination sought to transform nature into art. Letters like these show the justice of Doughty’s observation that ‘The effect of his county environment as well as the other gracious influences of this summer at Kelmscott revealed itself even more clearly in his letters than in his verse’. 22

There are few references to Kelmscott in the next few months, though on 4 December Rossetti thanks William Davies for sending him his recent volume of poetry, *The Shepherd’s Garden*, and appends a copy of ‘Spring’ with the comment that: ‘Instead of tearing off the blank leaf, I’ll fill it with a sonnet resulting from these Kelmscott ruralities. But indeed I have done nothing but my daily painting all my time here.’ He spent Christmas in London before returning to Kelmscott at the end of December. Jane and the girls came in early January 1874; but Jane was back in London by the 17th. On 21 January Rossetti tells Hake that his son Cecil, and Brown, have recently visited, but ‘Otherwise George & I have all along been monarchs of all we survey – which is at present chiefly water, the floods having come at last. The weather is extremely mild’. On 19 February Rossetti tells Dunn that he has ‘painted the 3 heads straight off from little May successfully’ for the *Triple Rose*. On 23 February he writes to his mother about her summer visit, hoping she will come again. He continues:

Today the little Morris girls collected all the flowers we could find in the garden – no very choice gleaning – and they were sent on to you – so perhaps you have them ere this reaches you. I know they will be better than nothing to your flower loving heart. This extremely mild winter causes many things to be very forward already. The children were quite sorry afterwards that they had omitted to send you some branches of the palm-willow with its furry buds not yet as yellow as they will be. The gum-cistus you planted thrives but of course is very gradual in growth.

Later in the letter he tells her, ‘I’ll enclose a Winter sonnet written lately’. He doesn’t seem to have done so, but the sonnet had been written:
‘Winter’

How large that thrush looks on the bare thorn-tree!
A swarm of such, three little months ago
Had hidden in the leaves and let none know
Save by the outburst of their minstrelsy.
A white flake here and there – a snow-lily
Of last night’s frost – our naked flower-beds hold;
And for the rose-flower on the darkening mould
The hungry redbreast gleams. No bloom, no bee.

The current shudders to its ice-bound sedge;
Nipped in their bath, the stark reeds one by one
Flash each its clinging diamond in the sun:
’Neath winds which for this Winter’s sovereign pledge
Shall curb great king-masts to the ocean’s edge
And leave memorial forest-kings o’erthrown

This is clearly a companion piece to ‘Spring’, in that observation of nature continues to play a central part. The simplicity of the first line and the rest of the powerful opening section succeed in evoking the bleak atmosphere, culminating in the figure of the ‘hungry redbreast’ and the succinct ‘No bloom, no bee’. The octave begins with similar force, but perhaps the conclusion fades into over-familiar imagery.

At this time Rossetti’s social activities seem to have been taking their toll. On 10 March Howell is told: ‘Everyone in the house is playing at hide & seek which they are likely to keep up till one in the morning! All day they have been snow-balling in the garden! I begin to feel very old indeed.’ However, Rossetti’s spirits recovered, and on 4 April 1873 he writes genially to the young Oliver Madox Brown, telling him that his friend Francis Huever may be coming to the Manor for the weekend. He continues in friendly fashion:

Would you accompany him next Saturday to stay a week with us here? And do you think you could get your father to come with you? Perhaps really it might be good for him. There are no floods at present, & though everything is looking bleakish just now, I dare say a week may bring improvement.

The two younger men did make the visit, Huever insisting on walking much of the way. But there was no visit from the elder Brown.

It is on 9 April that Rossetti writes an important letter to the house agent which shows that he was still enjoying his time at Kelmscott and intended to
remain there:

I beg to enclose the quarter’s rent due at Lady Day last.

I should be glad to take a lease of this house for 7 or 14 years, conditionally on my obtaining whenever needed the use of the outbuilding before in question. For this I should be willing to pay a small additional rent if required. My use for it would be as a studio, & in such case I should spend a considerable sum in adapting it to the purpose, which would add materially to the value of the property.

In a similarly positive mood, he tells his mother on 16 April: ‘The country is getting genial & pleasant. Many flowers are coming out, – abundant daffodils in the garden, marybuds all over the fields near the river, and the island by the boathouse is rich in wild periwinkles – a large beautiful blue purple flower. I must try and send you some gleanings.’ But on the same date, Morris was writing to Rossetti, enclosing his share of the quarterly rent, in a distinctly unfriendly tone:

I send herewith the £17.10.to you, not knowing where else to send it since Kinch is dead. As to the future I will ask you to look upon me as off my share, & not look upon me as shabby for that, since you have fairly taken to living at Kelmscott, which I suppose neither of us thought the other would do when we first began joint possession of the house; for the rest I am both too poor, & by compulsion of poverty, too busy to use it much in any case, and am very glad if you find it useful & pleasant to you.23

No reply from Rossetti has survived, but the letter must have made it difficult for him to further his plan for continuing to live at Kelmscott.

On 23 April, Rossetti asks his mother, who had decided to go to Eastbourne, ‘Why, WHY,Why did you not come to Kelmscott if you had to leave town? The weather is divine here & everything lovely. Unless indeed sea-air was thought needful – or unless Maggie is not allowed to go so far afield as to a brother’s roof’. Perhaps we can feel in the tone of the last remark a hint of the suspicion of other people’s motives that was increasingly to inform Rossetti’s behaviour in the coming months. But the tone of the letters generally remains steady. On 17 May he tells his mother:

The weather here wd be genial now as to sunshine if it were not for the persistent east winds. However the improvement is very decided & I trust will soon merge into complete Summer.

The Winter sonnet you liked & the one on Spring I have sent to the Athenaeum where they will appear Saturday after next.

The two sonnets appeared in *The Athenaeum* on 30 May 1874 entitled, accurately if unromantically, ‘Thames Valley Sonnets’.
To Brown on 18 May Rossetti comments: ‘The weather hangs back here, & things as yet are not thoroughly genial. We had about 10 days of perfect weather just after Nolly [Brown] left here, but since then various degrees of discomfort. I suppose it must have been pretty much the same everywhere’. On 23 May he writes to his brother’s bride, Lucy, about a possible visit:

Yesterday I went for a walk rather earlier than usual, & was astounded to find everything changed for warmer & brighter – wind south-west, & swarms of dragonflies round one’s head – to such an extent that to walk under the sun in one’s usual clothes was quite a labour. Today all has receded to gloom with addition of rain.

On 29 May Rossetti tells his mother: ‘Things are very lovely here, but not quite so redundant as this time last year, owing I judge to the absence of fertilizing floods during the past winter.’ However, his state of mind was becoming increasingly disturbed, and in a postscript to a letter of 31 May he tells Brown: ‘I am in a state of great despondency and low spirits. I can hardly make myself work …’ He did, however, arrange to receive a series of visitors soon after this. On 9 July he tells Dunn: ‘Besides Leyland and the Howells, I expect Watts & Brown – or if Brown does not come, Sandys is likely to be here: so that all space wd be occupied.’ But matters seem to have changed rapidly; and for the worse. Doughty records the crisis:

the auditory hallucinations and persecution mania of paranoia had returned. Strolling one day by the river with George Hake, Rossetti passed a party of three or four anglers when, fancying that they had called out some insult to him in passing, he suddenly turned and attacked them with reproaches and abuse for the supposed outrage. Hake ran up and parted the disputants, apologizing and explaining as well as he could, to the astonished anglers. Rumours of this outbreak quickly spread about the neighbourhood, and finding Kelmscott impossible Rossetti, before the month was over, returned to Cheyne Walk.24

Suddenly, on 15 July, we find Rossetti writing to Howell: ‘I am obliged to put off Sandys after all – being unexpectedly called to London. I shall try to see both him & you if I stay at all. Don’t tell people I am coming, as I don’t want to be besieged.’ He was never to return to Kelmscott, and seldom to refer to it again.

III

The strongest evidence for Rossetti’s feeling for nature, stimulated by his time at Kelmscott, is, as we have seen, to be found in his frequently eloquent letters.
As far as artistic results are concerned, the list is quite meagre: four poems and some alliterative ‘burdens’, and one painting, Water Willow. To these it might be possible to add the painting The Bower Maiden, painted and sold to William Graham in 1874, for which Rossetti used the local girl Annie Cumley as model, although it does not take the viewer outside the Manor; and The Bower Meadow, ‘a fine, richly atmospheric work in subtle greens and pinks’, of which Jan Marsh has remarked that, although originating at Sevenoaks in 1850, in its revised form it is surely ‘inspired by Kelmscott’.25

The case will be considerably strengthened if we add to the evidence the two poems which Rossetti developed from the unused ‘burdens’ to his Rose Mary, referred to earlier, in particular ‘The Water Willow’. Jerome McGann follows J.R. Wahl in arguing that the manuscript of these poems was given to Jane by Rossetti ‘in the summer of 1874, when he was leaving Kelmscott for what turned out to be the last time’. He adds the suggestive comment: ‘Perhaps both of them understood that it would be the last time’.26 Very small changes seem to have been made to the poem in 1876, and the title changed to the more sombre ‘A Death Parting’; it was published under this title in Poems and Ballads in 1881:

Leaves and rain and the days of the year,
(\textit{Water-willow and wellaway.})
All these fall, and my soul gives ear,
And she is hence who once was here.
(\textit{With a wind blown night and day.})

Ah! but now, for a secret sign,
(\textit{Willow’s wan and the water’s white,})
In the held breath of the day’s decline
Her very lips seem pressed to mine
(\textit{With a wind blown day and night.})

O love, of my death my life is fain;
(\textit{The willows wave on the water-way})
Your cheek and mine are cold in the rain,
But warm they’ll be when we meet again.
(\textit{With a wind blown night and day}).

Mists are heaved and cover the sky;
(\textit{The willows wail in the waning light})
O part your lips, leave space for a sigh,–
They seal my soul, I cannot die.
(\textit{With a wind blown day and night.})
Leaves and rain and the days of the year,
   (Water-willow and wellaway.)
All still fall, and I still give ear,
   (With a wind blown night and day.)
And she is hence, and I am here.

This one of Rossetti’s most poignant poems. The ‘burdens’ work powerfully to
relate the human situation to the natural setting, while the repetition creates a
deepening sense of tragic inevitability

The more summery of the 1871 ‘burdens’ adapted later by Rossetti produced
a less powerful emotional effect, in the slight but accomplished alliterative poem
created as ‘Chimes’ in 1878, and published in 1881. Of the seven sections of the
new poem, the first two derive from Kelmscott. The first, in four couplets, is
unchanged from 1871 and was quoted earlier; the second, in a further four, is
new:

II

A honey-cell’s in the honeysuckle,
    And the honey-bee knows it well.

    The honey-comb has a heart of honey,
    And the humming bee’s so bonny.

A honey-flower’s the honeysuckle,
    And the bee’s in the honey-bell.

    The honeysuckle is sucked of honey,
    And the bee is heavy and bonny.

The poem then moves on, in five further section of increasing despondency.
William Michael Rossetti called ‘Chimes’ ‘clearly an exercise in alliterative verse
… It represents, rather than aught else, a number of thoughts and images passing
through the writer’s mind in dreary dimness, when he was already too prone to
gloomy impressions’.27 But the Kelmscott section with the honey-bee, ‘bonny’
and full of nectar, seems both clearer and more optimistic than the later part of
the poem. Kelmscott had helped Rossetti, but it could not save him.
It would be pleasant to invent a Wordsworthian later life for Rossetti, with nature leading him to salvation via the Church of England. But he remained largely shut within his own concerns, and these increasingly narrowed on him as his life moved towards its premature and unhappy end in 1882. As Doughty puts it, dramatically but not inaccurately:

During these Kelmscott years, Rossetti’s introvert, introspective tendencies were being counteracted, extraverted as never before. All around him were new interests – human, animal, scenic – floral, all the many sights, sounds, relationships of country life, creating in the life-long townsman a new awareness that was evidently a new source of strength and joy. In leaving Kelmscott Rossetti lost all this wide variety of life he was learning to love. From these bright influences of earth and human companionship he now returned to the gloomy, silent house in Cheyne Walk, with its coarse, grasping mistress, to deliver himself up once more to the dark internal gods …

The letters show that in his periods at Kelmscott Rossetti was sensitive to his surroundings and could write about them with vividness and an eye for detail. In a small number of poems and paintings this attentiveness to nature produces positive results, but he was no Manley Hopkins to create new poetic forms to convey his awareness of nature as a force beyond the self. The works ‘done from nature’ are certainly not those most characteristic of Rossetti’s art, and his move back to London allowed him to revert to his more usual style. Jan Marsh has written well of his ‘ornate sonnets in which intricate conceits are used to convey abstract ideas’. These qualities would be evident again in the poetry written after Kelmscott, leading us to see his periods there as giving rise to work suggestive of unfulfilled possibilities in his art.

Notes

1. This article is based on a lecture given at Kelmscott House on 29 March 2008. I am grateful to Peter Preston and Tony Pinkney in particular for their contributions to the discussion that followed the lecture.
Clarendon Press, 1967. As full dates are provided for each entry, no page numbers are given in these Notes.

3. The phrase is from Tennyson’s ‘The Palace of Art’, line 88.


8. Lord Burleigh is a character in Sheridan’s play The Critic; the implication is that the evidence provided is unclear.


15. Doughty, p. 533.


17. Acheson in Kelmscott, p. 34.


19. Rossetti’s behaviour at the Manor, including his fondness for late hours, has attracted a good deal of criticism. In a well-known letter of 25 November 1872 Morris had complained to Aglaia Coronio that ‘he [Rossetti] has all sorts of ways so unsympathetic with the sweet simple old place, that I feel his presence there as a kind of slur on it’; Kelvin, I, p. 172.


22. Doughty, p.558.

23. Kelvin, I, p. 222.
26. Jerome McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game that Must be Lost*.
   New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, p. 73.
Lucy Faulkner and the ‘ghastly grin’

Re-working the title page illustration to Goblin Market

*Emma Ferry*

Since its publication in 1862, Christina Rossetti’s poem *Goblin Market* has been the subject of extensive critical interpretation; consequently, the images illustrating the text have also received a certain amount of attention. Perhaps best known are Lorraine Janzen Kooistra’s analyses of designs produced for successive editions of *Goblin Market*, which demonstrate the ways in which these images can both determine target audiences and influence interpretations of the text.¹ Whilst Kooistra’s discussions cover the entire publishing history of *Goblin Market*, other scholars, notably the late W. E. Fredeman, have examined the production of the original frontispiece and title page designed by D. G. Rossetti.² Fredeman’s discussion of the changes to the title-page illustration forms the focus of this article, which aims both to revise this piece of publishing history and recover the *œuvre* of a professional craftswoman from obscurity.

D. G. Rossetti’s design for the title page (Figure 1), ‘Golden head by golden head’ illustrates ‘the unspeakably beautiful litanies praising the poem’s loving sisters’:³

Golden head by golden head,  
Like two pigeons in one nest  
Folded in each other’s wings,  
They lay down, in their curtained bed:  
Like two blossoms on one stem,  
Like two flakes of new-fall’n snow,  
Like two wands of ivory  
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their rest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.4

The significance of this passage, in which the sisters lie down together after one has succumbed to temptation and exchanged a lock of her golden hair for the goblins’ fruit, is that it makes no moral distinction between Laura and Lizzie. And neither does the illustration. Indeed, in her detailed analyses of Rossetti’s composition, Gail Lynn Goldberg (1982) notes:
Rossetti did not individualise or identify the maidens in the title page vignette. [...] The faces of the girls, turned towards each other, revealing opposite sides, seem nearly identical as if two halves of the same physiognomy.5

Whilst the nature of the relationship between these ‘loving sisters’ has also been the focus of interesting analysis, with later readings of this illustration offering erotic interpretations of the image, it is not my intention to engage in this particular debate.6 Instead, I aim to examine the roles played in the production of this title page by a very different set of sisters, whose individual identities have become equally indistinct.

Charles Faulkner’s lasting friendship with William Morris has been well-documented, and through their brother, Lucy and Kate Faulkner were also involved with the activities of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co.7 Beginning as amateurs, both sisters earned money for their work as professional craftswomen, contributing to the production of many items produced by the Firm.8 Yet, very few of the standard secondary texts on Morris, or even those recovering the history of the ‘Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood’, consider the Faulkner sisters in any great detail.

Described by Philip Webb as ‘that excellentissimus of workwomen’, Kate Faulkner (1841–98) is the relatively better known and arguably the more prolific of the two sisters, producing designs for a number of furnishing items, many of which have survived in national collections. These include designs executed during the 1870s for ceramic tiles (Peony and Hawthorn), fabrics (Carnation, Peony, and Vine & Pomegranate), and wallpapers (Loop Trail, Acorn and Mallow, and Carnation) manufactured by Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. She also produced several wallpaper designs for Jeffrey & Co. during the 1880s, and may have decorated ceramics for Doulton’s, but she is best known for her gesso-work, decorating the grand piano designed by Edward Burne-Jones for Alexander Ionides, and now on display at the Victoria & Albert Museum.9

In contrast, much less is known about the life and work of the elder Miss Faulkner, Lucy (1839–1910), yet she too was a talented craftswoman, who worked for William Morris from ca 1861 until her marriage to the engraver and bookbinder Harvey Orrinsmith in 1870.10 Now often referred to only as ‘Mrs Orrinsmith’, the author of The Drawing Room (Figure 2) First published in 1877 as part of Macmillan’s ‘Art at Home Series’, the life and work of Lucy Faulkner has been obscured.11 This is partly the result of the way in which primary materials, in particular, Georgiana Burne-Jones’s Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones (1904), give priority to the work and personality of the younger of the two sisters, Kate. For instance, recalling the 1860s, Georgiana Burne-Jones noted:
Figure 2, Mrs Orrinsmith’s The Drawing Room, London: Macmillan, 1878 (author’s copy).
Both sisters shared Faulkner’s own skill of hand, and one of them, as it proved, was but waiting time and opportunity to develop a power of beautiful ornamental design: friendship with them was a foregone conclusion, and between Kate Faulkner and me there grew up a lifelong intimacy: both Morris and Edward loved her also.¹²

However, I would suggest that the real reason for Lucy Faulkner’s virtual disappearance is simply that she married and changed her name. Deborah Cherry has commented:

For women, the making of an author name was entangled in and disrupted by sexual asymmetry. Its form and circulation often registered sexual difference. Those who married had to negotiate a change of family name and either re-establish their career with a second or sometimes third name or retain that by which they were already known.¹³

Once Lucy Faulkner was married she all but disappeared, leaving only one Miss Faulkner. For instance, with no mention of her contribution to the Firm, Charlotte Gere has commented:

Mrs Orrinsmith (née Lucy Faulkner, sister of William Morris’s associates Charles and Kate Faulkner) married the print maker Harvey Orrinsmith. The Orrinsmiths lived in a villa at Beckenham and she was a great advocate of do-it-yourself decoration, recommending the painting and varnishing of furniture and woodwork over the time-wasting activity of ‘dabbling’ in watercolour. She was also considered an authority on flower-arranging.¹⁴

Her ‘disappearance’ has led to the subsequent misattribution of many pieces of her work to her younger sister. Indeed, much of the research I have undertaken in recovering her history has involved the search for Lucy Faulkner’s tiny ‘LJF’ monogram: ‘a trademark, a distinctive logo, an “author name” which authorised the product and tied it to a specific maker’.¹⁵ For, as Cheryl Buckley has stressed, ‘attribution is critical if women’s design history is to be written’.¹⁶

Able to translate the designs of artists including William Morris, Philip Webb, Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti in a variety of media, Lucy Faulkner’s main contribution to the output of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., was the decoration of hand-painted figurative tiles. Richard and Hilary Myers’s survey, William Morris Tiles: The Tile Designs of Morris and his Fellow Workers (1996), provides detailed illustrated information about surviving examples of Lucy Faulkner’s work in this medium and is the one of the few sources to identify her as a significant contributor to the work of the Firm.¹⁷

A number of surviving tile panels which she decorated for the Firm form an
important part of the exhibitions at the William Morris Gallery, whose curators have ‘always aimed to represent properly her historical significance’. The Gallery also holds the largest surviving collection of Lucy Faulkner’s work and artefacts, including two pastel drawings of her daughters by Arthur Hughes, pieces of domestic embroidery, and letters addressed both to ‘Miss Faulkner’ and ‘Mrs Orrinsmith’ dating from between 1861 and 1905, from correspondents including William Morris, Jane Morris, Philip Webb, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Georgiana Burne-Jones. Whilst these letters position her socially within the Morris circle, they also indicate her role as a craftswoman. Of particular significance is a note from D. G. Rossetti, which discusses a commission for a wood engraving, and which brings us back to the title page of *Goblin Market*. For it appears that as well as decorating tiles, Lucy Faulkner also worked as a professional wood engraver, having learned the ‘technique of the process at Messrs Smith and Linton’s’, the engraving firm run by Harvey Orrin Smith (later Orrinsmith) and his former guardian the radical Chartist poet, William James Linton.

Housed in ‘ramshackle premises in Hatton Garden’, the office of Smith and Linton, is vividly recalled by Walter Crane, who served a four-year apprenticeship with Linton from 1858. However, Crane makes no mention of a female pupil in the office; thus, Lucy Faulkner’s training at Smith and Linton seems to have begun after he left the office in 1862. By 1865, she had begun to undertake professional commissions and engraved at least one of the wood blocks for William Morris’s *Earthly Paradise*. Entitled ‘Cupid leaving Psyche’, this block, part of the only series to be cut into wood, is now displayed at the William Morris Gallery (Figure 3). But Lucy Faulkner’s skill in the art of wood engraving is best illustrated by a forgotten episode in the production of the title page to the second edition of Christina Rossetti’s *Goblin Market* (1865).

In August 1861 D. G. Rossetti sent Christina Rossetti’s volume of MS poetry to the publisher Alexander Macmillan, and offered ‘to contribute a brotherly design for frontispiece (& even another for title-page if time served)’. Rossetti’s initial design for the frontispiece illustrated the poem entitled ‘The Birthday’, for as Rossetti explained, he ‘could not on trying suit myself from “Goblin Market” for the larger drawing but will make a vignette from it for the title page’. However, Rossetti later withdrew this image and produced designs for the frontispiece and the title page vignette, both illustrating lines from *Goblin Market*. Inscribed ‘Golden head by golden head’, the title (Figure 1) page shows the two girls lying asleep folded in each other’s arms. Together, the sisters rest in the safety of their bower, indicated by the pillows and drapery which surrounds them. Balancing the sleeping female forms and positioned in a circle in the top left corner, are the figures of four goblins carrying away their fruit by the light of the moon and stars. Some commentators have suggested that this is a circular window depicting a scene outside the girls’ cottage: others argue that it represents
a dream vision experienced by one of the sleeping girls. The words ‘Golden head by golden head’ appear along the bottom of the image within a frame decorated with floral motifs on each corner. In the published design, this frame is extended to encompass the title of the volume, the name of the author, the publisher, place and date of publication, and the monograms of the illustrator and engraver.29

Valued at between £2000 and £3000, the original pen and ink design for the title page, which measures only 65 x 85 mm, was sold at Sotheby’s on 12
November 1992, and is now in a private collection.30 The drawing relates closely to both engraved versions, the first of which Rossetti drew on to the wood at the end of November 1861. Having completed the frontispiece and title page designs, initially Rossetti asked William Morris’s friend and business partner C. J. Faulkner to engrave one of the blocks in time for the publication of the poems at Christmas. It seems that Morris had suggested that George Campfield, the foreman at Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., should engrave the other.31 The correspondence suggests that both blocks were given to Faulkner, who intended to ‘have the 2 blocks cut by Xmas Day or a little before but not much’.32 However, Faulkner was unable to complete the work and in mid-December, Rossetti wrote to Macmillan asking whether he should take both blocks to W. J. Linton. He commented that:

They are both good drawings & will require good cutting, though not by any means very elaborate, I suppose therefore they would not prove unusually expensive. 33

Whilst Faulkner retained and engraved the woodblock for the frontispiece image ‘Buy from us with a golden curl’, Linton was given the block of the title page in early January 1862.34 Rossetti, who also undertook to design the binding, was hopeful that the engraving would be completed by the end of the month.35 The Macmillan Archive records that the 750 copies of the first edition of *Goblin Market and Other Poems* were printed in February 1862.36 However, the correspondence indicates that the book, priced at five shillings, was not issued until April 1862.37

Unfortunately, or perhaps typically, after publication D. G. Rossetti was unhappy with the printing of the first edition, which had been undertaken by Bradbury & Evans of Whitefriars. He complained to Macmillan about the appearance of the engravings:

… which I am sorry to say have been sadly mauled in the printers in almost every instance I have seen. I specially wrote to the printers to print them full & black, instead of which they are as blurred & faint as possible – more like a penny newspaper than a careful book. I really think you should ask them how this has happened after what I said, as the illustrations are completely ruined by it.38

He was particularly angry that ‘the printer managed to print the whole first edition so as to give the appearance of a gap in the block’.39 Despite Rossetti’s complaints, the illustrations received favourable comments in the *London Review* and the *British Quarterly*, the latter praising the ‘rich and exquisite’ designs of Mr Rossetti.40

A second edition of *Goblin Market* was suggested by Macmillan in June 1864.
Lucy Faulkner and the 'ghastly grin' and was eventually printed, again by Bradbury & Evans in March 1865.41 One thousand copies were produced, with ‘Second Edition’ added in the vacant space originally left for them above the vignette42 and the date altered from 1862 to 1865. The Macmillan catalogue does not record any changes to the illustrations,43 but in an editor’s note in Victorian Poetry in 1982, W. E. Fredeman drew attention to modifications to the title-page illustration.44 Printing the title pages of each edition side-by-side (Figure 4), Fredeman noted alterations to the faces of the two women, in particular the chin of the recumbent sister, whom he later described as ‘a jowly Fanny Cornforth-like figure in the first edition’.45

Fredeman also published a Rossetti letter ‘written to Miss (probably Kate) Faulkner’ in order to cast ‘important light on Rossetti’s title-page illustration for Goblin Market’.46 This letter, the final piece of correspondence relating to the re-cutting of the wood-block, has been dated 27 February 1865, and describes the alterations Rossetti required:

Dear Miss Faulkner

Can a block accomplish a ghastly grin? If so I should think this one would so greet you on returning to torment you again.

When I first re-drew the chin, I now find I drew it too small. This looms on me in seeing a completed impression of the cut.

I therefore send a retouched proof, an untouched one and a copy of the print in the first edition. Could you even once again get the cut like the original and untouched proof. You will see a certain blurriness also in the chin of the untouched proof – which I suppose shows that a little deeper cutting would do good. The bearer will call again for the block when you tell him.47

In a later essay for the Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies (1996), Fredeman briefly expanded this episode in the production of the illustrations for Goblin Market. Drawing on D. G. Rossetti’s correspondence, he constructed a narrative which described the problems encountered during the re-working of the title page. However, my research, which has located previously unpublished primary materials including correspondence within the Macmillan Archive, offers an alternative conclusion.

It seems that following Rossetti’s complaints about the quality of the engraving, the original woodblock was ‘plugged’ in order to allow a small but significant part to be re-engraved.48 The consequences were disastrous.49 Rossetti complained:

The phenomenal stupidity of the fool who has plugged that block is enough to make one loathe one’s kind. How the printer managed to print the whole 1st edition so as to give the appearance of a gap in the block I
Figure 4. ‘W. E. Fredeman’s comparison’ W. E. Fredeman, 1982, pp. 145–159. (Plates 28 and 29, pp. 152–153; see Note 2) Reprinted by permission of West Virginia University Press.
cannot think. But from the first proof taken by this plugger (really there is a nautical rhyme to the word which one would like to use!) it became evident that the block was all right, whereupon, without consulting me at all, the beastly ass goes and cuts half a face out.\textsuperscript{50}

The Macmillan Letterbooks reveal that Alexander Macmillan apologised immediately:

I am very sorry indeed. You named Wells [the plugger], so I thought you know something good of him. I would be very glad indeed to have the block done to your liking and will pay a woodcutter you employ with pleasure.\textsuperscript{51}

Consequently, Rossetti contracted ‘Miss Faulkner’ to revise the title page engraving. On 3 February 1865, Rossetti informed Alexander Macmillan, that ‘The engraver I am employing is Miss Faulkner, 35 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, whom I will ask to state her charge & let you know’.\textsuperscript{52} Later, on 11 February 1865, Rossetti wrote:

Here at last is the Goblin Market block, all right as regards Miss Faulkner’s (the engraver’s) work, for which will you please send her what is right to her address 35 Queen Square W.C. She has had a good deal of trouble but I cannot get her to name a charge. I should think £2 would be right. She is a professional engraver, & I could not have thought of going to her unless with the idea that she would accept payment, as you mentioned your willingness to pay necessary expenses. She tells me that the plug is not quite perfect in the vignette, but is likely unless very carefully printed, to show a white line. Will you let me have a first proof or two that I may attend to this & the general printing which was very bad in the 1st edition.\textsuperscript{53}

Accordingly, on 13 February 1865, Macmillan wrote to Miss Faulkner (though interestingly he refers to the frontispiece rather than the title page illustration):

Madam
I enclose a cheque for £2 which Mr Rossetti thinks will be the right sum to pay you for the work you have kindly bestowed upon the block for his frontispiece to Miss Rossetti’s Poems. Will you kindly acknowledge its receipt.
I am madam yours faithfully

Alexander Macmillan\textsuperscript{54}

Before the printing, however, Rossetti decided to re-draw the chin of one of
the figures. Thus, at the end of February it was returned to ‘Miss Faulkner’ who was asked to ‘even once again get the cut like the original & touched proofs’.55

In his article, Fredeman concluded that ‘Rossetti had to request Kate Faulkner, to whom the recutting of the block was entrusted, perhaps because Linton was unavailable, to rework it’.56 However, having located the engraved proof used for the title page, and referred to in the letter to ‘Miss Faulkner’, I would argue that Fredeman’s attribution is incorrect.

Auctioned by Sotheby’s in March 1980, this fragile proof (Figure 5) was

Figure 5, Proof of ‘Golden Head by Golden Head’. By permission of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

acquired by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Significantly, the lot included an envelope with the following inscriptions (Figure 6):

Lucy Falkener [sic]  
Early meetings at Burne-Jones in Gt. Russell St.57
Little is known about the proof or the envelope. The misspelled ‘Lucy Falkener’ is written in pencil along the top-centre of the envelope, whilst the second inscription, which runs diagonally across the front, is in ink. It is possible that the two inscriptions are in different hands and it might be that the pencilled ‘Lucy Falkener’ is a later curatorial addition. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that Lucy, rather than Kate Faulkner, was the ‘Miss Faulkner’ responsible for re-cutting the block.

However, whilst the title page includes the initials of W. J. Linton and D. G. Rossetti, Lucy Faulkner’s distinctive ‘LJF’ monogram is absent. The Macmillan-Rossetti correspondence indicates the professional nature of Lucy Faulkner’s artistic activities, but Fredeman’s subsequent misattribution demonstrates the way in which Kate Faulkner’s work and skills have been given greater prominence. Consequently, Lucy’s contribution to the production of the title page to *Goblin Market* has been forgotten.

In order to reap the benefits of modern print culture, Rossetti’s original design was translated from pen and ink drawing to published title page; a complex
procedure involving engravers, publishers, ‘pluggers’ and printers. Fredeman’s article highlights the importance of engravers within this process. In his survey of the ten illustrations which comprise D G Rossetti’s ‘total engraved canon’, Fredeman commented:

The quality of the actual woodcuts is less attributable to the artist than to the skill of the three engravers who executed his designs, while he hovered over their shoulders like an avenging devil taxing their patience by demanding the impossible.

Listing only the Brothers Dalziel, C. J. Faulkner and W. J. Linton, Fredeman’s account has obscured and misattributed the work of Lucy Faulkner. Yet Rossetti, who it seems ‘regarded all engravers as “ministers of Wrath”’, employed her to re-work a significant element of his illustration, confident that this ‘professional engraver’ would achieve the desired result.

Rossetti’s illustration ‘Golden head by golden head’ makes no distinction between the sleeping sisters. Laura and Lizzie may even represent different aspects of a single character, but the Faulkner sisters should not be discussed as an indistinct ‘Miss Faulkner’. Just as Rossetti’s original drawing and the published engraving are distinct pieces of work, each with its own history, so too should Lucy and Kate Faulkner be re-considered individually as talented craftswomen who led very different lives.

Acknowledgment:

I would like to thank Peter Cormack for his enthusiasm for my research on Lucy Orrinsmith and for sharing his knowledge so generously.

Notes

2. W. E. Fredeman, ‘Editor’s Note’ to G. L. Goldberg, ‘Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s “Revising Hand”: His illustrations for Christina Rossetti’s Poems’, Victorian


8. The original Minute Books and Balance Sheets, which have survived from December 1862, make no mention of the Faulkner sisters, but J. W. Mackail’s notes from an earlier (now missing) Minute Book for Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., recorded that in October 1862 payment was made to Miss Kate Faulkner and ‘the other Miss Faulkner’. Hammersmith and Fulham Archives and Local History Centre hold photocopies of the originals now at the Huntington Library [Reference: DD/235/1]. These however also only begin in December 1862. The William Morris Gallery holds J. W. Mackail’s unpublished notes for The Life of William Morris, 2 vols, Longmans, Green & Co., 1899, Vol. 1, 375 pp, Vol. 2, 364 pp.

10. Lucy Faulkner’s marriage to Harvey Edward Orrinsmith took place on 8 January 1870. Several sources [A. Callen, Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870–1914, London: Astragal Books, 1979, 232 pp. (p. 223) (Afterwards Callen); L. Parry, William Morris Textiles, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., 1983, p. 46; N. Kelvin, ed, The Collected Letters of William Morris, Volume 2: 1881–1884, Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 386 n.1] have given the date of her marriage as 1861, which implies quite wrongly that Lucy Orrinsmith continued to work for ‘the Firm’ after her marriage. Although The Drawing Room (1877) remains her best-known work, she continued to design and make decorative objects during the 1880s and 1890s. The Catalogue of the first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society on 1 October 1888 records that Mrs Orrinsmith exhibited a ‘Cover or case for book: cloth, decorated in gold’ for James Burn & Co., who also contributed designs by the late D. G. Rossetti and Philip Webb. See Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society: Catalogue of the First Exhibition 1888, pp. 118. At the second exhibition the following year, Mrs Orrinsmith exhibited a mural brass (See Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society: Catalogue of the Second Exhibition 1889, p. 226, no. 646), but an examination of the archive of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society has found that Mrs Orrinsmith was not a member; nor did she exhibit at the 1890 or the 1893 Exhibitions. In 1893, however, Gleeson White published a book-cover design by Lucy Orrinsmith within Practical Designing: A Handbook on the Preparation of Working Drawings, London, George Bell & Sons, 1893. A full-page illustration of this design, a repeating motif of acorns and oak leaves, appears on p. 226 accompanying a chapter ‘On the Preparation of Designs for Book Bindings’ written by her husband.

11. Mrs Orrinsmith’s contribution to the ‘Art at Home Series’ was written at the suggestion of her friends and Beckenham neighbours, George Lillie Craik, a senior partner in Macmillan & Co., and his wife, the novelist Dinah Mulock Craik. For information on the publishing history of Macmillan’s Art at Home Series see E. Ferry, “… information for the ignorant and aid for the advancing …”, Macmillan’s “Art at Home Series”, 1876–1883; in J. Aynsley & K. Forde, Design and the Modern Magazine, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007, pp. 134–55. (Afterwards Ferry 2007).


Cherry, p. 155. My discovery of her monogram on tile panels in major collections has caused them to be firmly attributed to Lucy Faulkner. These include the Cinderella over-mantel purchased by Sandford Berger from the dealer Richard Dennis in 1970, now at the Huntington Library in California; the Sleeping Beauty panel at the Ashmolean Museum; and the Sleeping Beauty panel now on show at the Victoria and Albert Museum. I am grateful to Richard Dennis, Dianne Waggone, formerly at the Huntington Library in California, Colin Harrison, Curator of British Art at the Ashmolean Museum, and Alan Clarke, Keeper of Ceramics at the V&A for their help.


R. & H. Myers, William Morris Tiles: The Tile Designs of Morris and his Fellow Workers, Shepton Beauchamp, Richard Dennis, 1996, 152 pp. Callen (see Note 10) is another secondary source which discusses Lucy Faulkner. This book included photographs of her domestic embroidery and a wood engraving, though surprisingly, not the far more significant hand-painted tiles. Confusingly, this study did not refer to ‘Mrs Orrinsmith’ but, in the spirit of ‘second wave feminism’, preferred to use only to her maiden name. Lucy Orrinsmith (née Faulkner) is also mentioned in Linda Parry, ed, William Morris, London: Philip Wilson/V&A, 1996, pp. 16, 181–2, 189, 192, 258.

Email from Peter Cormack to Emma Ferry, 6 June 2003.


W. J. Linton (1812–1898) had worked for Harvey Orrinsmith’s father, the wood-engraver John Orrin Smith, becoming his partner in the firm of Smith and Linton in 1842. In October 1843, John Orrin Smith died suddenly and for the next six years Linton assumed responsibility for Smith’s widow and four children. Rather touchingly, in a letter of 1882, Harvey Orrinsmith thanks Linton for ‘the colour given to my early life’ (National Library of Australia: Canberra: MS 1698/118; Letter from Harvey Orrinsmith to W. J. Linton dated 11 April 1882). Harvey Orrin Smith (1830–1904), was a wood engraver and master bookbinder and from 1868, a director of James Burn & Co., the bookbinding firm which had bound Goblin Market. Rodney Engen’s Dictionary of Victorian Wood-Engravers, Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1985, p. 241 notes that after having worked in partnership with Harral, and later with C. S. Cheltnam, Orrin Smith appears in the London directories working on his own at 85 Hatton Garden from 1852. During this time, he undertook commissions for the London Illustrated News, ‘generally after royal portraits or full-page copies of exhibited paintings’. He also engraved Richard Doyle’s illustrations to John Ruskin’s fairy tale, The King

26. Ibid. Macmillan had been critical of the illustration for ‘The Birthday’, but Rossetti made it clear that this was not the reason he had withdrawn the image. He wrote: ‘I have made both drawings now from Goblin Market – not in the least, mind, because you told me that the one you saw was mannered. That simply showed you did not understand it. My work never resembles any work but my own. So much for plain speaking!’
30. Sotheby’s, ‘Victorian Paintings, Drawings and Watercolours, Thursday 12 November, 1992, Lot 149, p. 96. It now belongs to Jacqueline Loewe Fowler,
and has since been exhibited at ‘The Post Pre-Raphaelite Print’ at the Wallach Art Gallery in New York (1995) and at ‘The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts: Symbolism in Britain 1860 – 1910’, an exhibition held at the Tate Gallery (1997).


36. The Editions Book, quoted by permission of The Macmillan Archive. I am very grateful to Ruth Tellis, former Assistant Archivist at Macmillan for this information.


42. Packer, pp. 40–1, Letter 33: D G Rossetti to Alexander Macmillan, 3 February 1865.


45. Fredeman, 1996, p. 16.

46. Fredeman, 1982, p. 158.

47. William Morris Gallery: J 549, Letter from Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Lucy
Faulkner. The original letter is dated ‘Monday’. Fredeman, 1982, p. 158 states that it is ‘datable as February 27, 1865’.


52. Packer, pp. 40–1, D G Rossetti to Macmillan, 3 February 1865.


54. British Library Manuscripts Collection: Macmillan Archive Add. MS 55384/133: Alexander Macmillan to Miss Faulkner of 35 Queen Square, 13 February 1865. Macmillan’s letter to Rossetti, written on the same day and appearing on the same page in the Letter Book Vol. DXCIX, thanks Rossetti for ‘all his kind pains’ and informs him that he has sent ‘Miss Faulkner her £2’.

55. William Morris Gallery: J549.


58. I am very grateful to Tessa Sidey, Curator of Prints and Drawings at Birmingham Art Gallery and Museum for her help in locating this proof.


61. Fredeman, 1996, p. 8


84
On 13 December 1857, Algernon Charles Swinburne, twenty-year-old undergraduate of Balliol College, Oxford, wrote to his friend John Nichol about a poem on which he had been working. ‘I read it one evening to Morris and the others. […] They all […] praise the poem far more than I (seriously speaking) believe it deserves. Morris says it is much better than his own poem, which opinion I took the liberty to tell him was absurd’.1 Swinburne’s poem was called Queen Yseult, and the ‘others’ to whom the letter refers probably included Edward Burne-Jones and other members of the group of artists whom Dante Gabriel Rossetti had assembled in 1857 for the purpose of decorating the ceiling of the Oxford Union debating hall. Swinburne had been introduced to Morris and Burne-Jones just six weeks earlier, on 1 November, by Edwin Hatch or George Birkbeck Hill, depending on which account one follows.2 On 10 November, Hill reported that he had heard part of Queen Yseult.3 By mid-December, Swinburne had apparently written the six cantos that were all he was to complete of the poem.4 Queen Yseult was Swinburne’s first poetic work of any considerable length or importance; it was heavily influenced by Morris, was begun within ten days of meeting him, and was, if not finished, then brought to an end a little over a month later. These are striking facts, as critics have occasionally remarked;5 and the purpose of this article is to consider Swinburne’s youthful effort in the light of them.

We do not know which of Morris’s poems it was that its author thought inferior to Queen Yseult (though, in the light of the correspondences which I will highlight, I would suggest ‘The Defence of Guenever’ as a possible candidate); but his generous opinion testifies to the close relationship which seems to have existed between the two young men at this period of their lives. The evidence, which Peter Faulkner has marshalled very ably in this journal, suggests that as an undergraduate Swinburne hero-worshipped Morris.6 In the words of Swin-
burne’s first biographer, Edmund Gosse, ‘he was [with Morris] on the footing of a devoted younger brother’ (Morris was twenty-three). Swinburne was certainly in awe of Morris’s poetry: according to Gosse, when he first heard Morris read ‘The Haystack in the Floods’, ‘the poignancy and splendour of the ending caused him an anguish which was more than his nerves were able to bear’. It would appear that Morris was more than ready to reciprocate Swinburne’s enthusiasm for his new friend’s work. Gosse also gives a suggestive indication of the shared pursuits which fuelled their early friendship, saying that it was to Morris’s conversation that Swinburne owed the opening of new fields of intellectual pleasure, and particularly an introduction to the romance of medieval France. Swinburne’s decision to begin an extended poetic narrative on the subject of Tristram and Iseult only days after this friendship was initiated suggests that Morris’s conversation, and no doubt Morris’s readings of his own verse, had struck him with the force of a revelation. It also suggests that Swinburne’s mind was fertile ground for such an influence.

Queen Yseult is a fragmentary retelling of the Tristram legend. Only six of the projected ten cantos were completed. They tell of Tristram’s parentage and birth; of his voyage to Ireland to win Yseult as a bride for his uncle, King Mark of Cornwall; of the drinking of the love potion; of Tristram’s exile to Brittany and his unconsummated marriage; and of Yseult’s loneliness at Tintagel in her lover’s absence. The main source for the plot, which Swinburne simplifies considerably, is the Middle English metrical romance *Sir Tristrem*. This is regarded today as a rather minor version of the story, but in the nineteenth century it had a certain cachet, thanks largely to the patronage of Sir Walter Scott, who published the poem for the first time in 1804. Swinburne also seems to have been familiar with the various metrical fragments of the Tristram legend in French and Anglo-Norman, which had been collected and published in 1835 by Francisque Michel. It is thus clear that Swinburne’s interest in the Middle Ages was already well-established by the time he met Morris. In fact, his medieval studies had begun during childhood, in the library of his uncle, the Earl of Ashburnham. The Earl was a keen collector of medieval manuscripts and early printed texts, and it is very likely that he would have possessed copies of both Scott’s and Michel’s editions. In later life Swinburne told a correspondent that the Tristram legend had been ‘my delight (so far as a child could understand it) before I was ten years old’. Swinburne was clearly also familiar with Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*, the golden book of 1857 for Morris, Burne-Jones, and Rossetti. Like Malory, but unlike most of the metrical romances, he has Tristram visit Camelot; and one of the incidents which was to have been included in the later cantos of the poem, Tristram and Yseult’s stay at Joyous Gard, is found in Malory but not in any of the metrical versions which Swinburne could have consulted. Yet the fact that the *Morte* is such a relatively minor influence on Swinburne’s poem emphasises just how
highly developed were the undergraduate’s medieval interests by the time he met Morris. It also reminds us that, however derivative it may be in some respects, *Queen Yseult* is a precocious literary experiment. In demonstrating the breadth of his source knowledge (which may well have exceeded Morris’s at this date), Swinburne was seeking to compete with Morris even as he paid homage to him. *Queen Yseult’s* debt to Morris’s poetry is undoubtedly huge. It is evident first of all in the verse form. *Queen Yseult* is written in catalectic tetrameter tercets; so the first stanza of the poem runs:

In the noble days were shown
Deeds of good knights many one,
Many worthy wars were done.13

Swinburne took this form directly from two of Morris’s early compositions, ‘Blanche’ and ‘Twas in Church on Palm Sunday’, neither of which was included in the *Defence of Guenevere* volume of 1858. It is worth noting that this precise stanza form is not (to my knowledge) found anywhere in medieval English literature; however, the early twentieth-century Swinburne scholar Georges Lafourcade suggested that Morris may have derived it from the Middle English romance *Sir Perceval*, where such tercets are followed by a fourth line which rhymes with the eighth, twelfth, and sixteenth lines, rather like an extended version of the stanza of ‘The Lady of Shallot’.14 The metre of *Queen Yseult* and of Morris’s two short poems is vaguely balladic, though it bears no real resemblance to the ballad-metre of Swinburne’s main source, the Middle English *Sir Tristrem*. This is not the only example in the poem of an apparently medieval feature deriving actually from Morris.

In thematic terms, the most important Morrisian influence is unquestionably the poem ‘The Defence of Guenevere’. Swinburne’s poem and Morris’s share certain basic concerns, as is clear even from their titles. Each focuses on one of the major sexually transgressive women of the Arthurian cycle. In Swinburne’s case especially, the fact that he has transformed a work called *Sir Tristrem* into one called *Queen Yseult* is eloquent in itself. The two poems also share, to a large extent, a common attitude towards their subject matter. Readers of Morris such as Virginia S. Hale and Catherine Barnes Stevenson have demonstrated, convincingly in my view, Morris’s highly sophisticated appropriation of what the twentieth century would come to call the ‘courtly love’ ideology of Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*, to create in his Guenevere ‘a fully sexual woman who makes no apology for her adulterous love but rather celebrates herself and her status as loyal Queen’.15 These two writers in particular have argued that Morris in ‘The Defence of Guenevere’ employed his already prodigious knowledge of the Middle Ages to mount a thoroughly medieval defence of King Arthur’s adulterous
consort. This expertise, they suggest, included not only ‘courtly love’ ideology, but also medieval legal, theological, and scientific discourses. This general attitude was not peculiar to Morris, of course, but was rather to a large extent the informing ideology of the whole Oxford Union enterprise – though Morris’s detailed knowledge of medieval literature and culture enabled him to create a more sophisticated and historically tenable defence of Guenevere than could, say, Rossetti or Burne-Jones. Yet it is important to bear in mind that, in their emphasis on the female characters of the Arthurian legends, the Pre-Raphaelites were essentially innovators. Morris, famously, was putting into Guenevere’s mouth a self-vindication that is never heard in Malory.

Morris lost his religious faith during his time at Oxford, as is well known; and the moral heterodoxy of ‘The Defence of Guenevere’ has perhaps some of the youthful fervour of a recent convert from Christianity. Swinburne underwent a similar ‘unconversion’ experience as an undergraduate, and as a result conceived a violent anti-theism which would prove to be lifelong. The young Swinburne found the code of ‘courtly love’ to be an agreeably anti-Christian philosophy, and he was evidently stimulated by the way in which Morris, in ‘The Defence of Guenevere’, effectively uses ‘courtly love’ ideology to justify romantic passion outside of wedlock. In *Queen Yseult* Swinburne appropriates this idea and takes it to extremes. He uses the simplicity of the verse form of his poem to suggest that the code of morality which he is implying is in fact self-evidently correct. This is seen most clearly in the first canto, which tells the story of Tristram’s parents Roland and Blancheflour. Here Swinburne is compressing and simplifying his medieval source even more radically than he does in the remainder of the poem. Swinburne presents the relationship of Tristram’s (unmarried) parents as something not just morally neutral, but laudable:

For long since Queen Blancheflour
Took a knight to paramour,
Who had served her well of yore. […]

‘Lo!’ she said, ‘I lady free
Took this man for lord of me
Where the crowned saints might see.

‘And I will not bid him go,
Not for joyance nor for woe,
Till my very love he know.’

The implication is apparently that in medieval romance, such unions are so universally accepted as not to require extended comment. The purity and nobility of Roland and Blancheflour are emphasised throughout.

88
The relationship of Tristram and Yseult is treated in a similar way. Swinburne includes the incident of the love potion, but he does not dwell on it, for the physical love of a noble man and woman is presented as an edifying thing in itself, needing no external stimulus to justify it. Significantly, Tristram falls in love with Yseult at first sight: the narrator tells us that he ‘knelt with heart aflame’ before her, and ‘thought it very good | He should perish where she stood | Crowned upon with maidenhood.’ In the passage which describes the drinking of the potion, the supernatural exoticism evoked by the love drink is quickly succeeded by other, more earthy, concerns:

So the chaliced wine was brought,
And the drink of power that wrought
Change in face and change in thought.

And the wine was fierce and sweet,
But the lady, drinking it,
Shuddered to her hands and feet. […]

At their hearts it stirred and crept,
Round their hearts it grew and leapt,
Till they kissed again and wept.

So was their great love begun,
Sitting silent in the sun,
Such a little thing was done.

And Queen Yseult, weeping still,
Tristram had to do his will
That his list she should fulfil.

Tristram had her body fair,
And her golden corn-ripe hair,
And her golden ring to wear.

The uncanny effects of the potion, the shuddering, weeping, and the ‘hot and bitter drouth’ which it engenders, are almost undercut by the rather flat statement that the fatal deed was done ‘sitting silent in the sun’, and by the subsequent emphasis on its carnal outcome: ‘Tristram had her body fair, | And her golden corn-ripe hair.’ The natural is emphasised at the expense of the supernatural.

Yseult’s golden hair is the central image of the entire fragment, symbolising her beauty and her purity. As with Rossetti’s ‘The Blessed Damozel’, which is verbally echoed in the term ‘corn-ripe’, there must here be intended a profane
analogy with traditional representations of the Virgin Mary. Yseult is the first of many Swinburnian femmes fatales, and the young poet repeatedly lingers over descriptions of her beauty, while Tristram’s knightly adventures are passed over briefly. He devotes an entire canto to Yseult’s distress in her lover’s absence. This is an aspect of the story which held little interest for medieval writers, including the author of *Sir Tristrem*, but it is of course a clear parallel to Morris’s attempt to give a voice to the accused Queen Guenevere. This canto is the last that Swinburne wrote, and in some respects it provides a fitting end to the fragment. Yseult’s final speech, spoken by moonlight in her chamber at Tintagel, constitutes a defiant valediction of her love for Tristram, in a series of stanzas into which Swinburne inserts parenthetical, quasi-religious descriptions of her beauty:

And she said, ‘This love put by
(In a holy voice and high)
Shall not perish tho’ I die.

‘And when men shall praise him dead
(Both her cheeks flushed royal-red)
All my story shall be said.

‘For I shall not blush to know
(And she rose up, speaking so)
That men speak of this my woe.

‘For that I love Tristram well
(And her voice rang like a bell)
Is no shame for them to tell. […]

For the wars he warred of old
(Straight she drew the hair of gold)
In all people will be told.

‘So by Tristram the good knight
(All her face was full of light)
Shall I stand in all men’s sight.

In this speech, the haughty tone of which echoes that of Morris’s Guenevere, it is notable that Yseult defends her passion not on the grounds that it has been induced by a philtre, but rather on the basis that it will become the subject of a great romantic story. This is in marked contrast to some of Swinburne’s medieval sources: in Béroul’s version of the legend, for example, the love potion wears off after three years, and the lovers immediately set about attempting to reconcile
Iseult with King Mark. Swinburne clearly believes that the courtly tradition vindicates the adulterous woman, and where his sources disagree with him, he selectively ignores them (perhaps assuming that they represent Christian ‘pollutions’ of the original story) and substitutes a justification that better suits his own sexual and artistic ideas. Morris’s poem, as well as the Oxford murals themselves, must have been influential on Swinburne’s interpretation.

For all the parallels between Swinburne’s poem and Morris’s, however, there are also contrasts which highlight the differences in temperament between the two men. It is necessary to be careful here, because some of the most striking features of Queen Yseult must be attributed, at least in part, to its author’s inexperience. Even in the December 1857 letter to John Nichol already cited, Swinburne was admitting that, while canto I might stand well enough on its own, the rest were ‘too imperfect, feeble and unfinished to publish for a year or two’. The first canto was therefore printed in Undergraduate Papers, the little magazine with which Swinburne was involved at the time, but the rest remained among his private papers, only to be discovered after his death. In later years he described the poem as ‘some awful doggerel on the subject of Tristram and Iseult’, and compared it unfavourably with the work that Rossetti had produced by the same age. Certainly there is a good deal of youthful crudity about Queen Yseult, in spite of Morris’s initial admiration (which probably owed much to the temporary influence on Morris of Rossetti’s habit of thinking well of his friends’ work whatever its merits). The tercet stanzas, which work well enough in Morris’s short lyrics, become decidedly monotonous when stretched out over six cantos, and they have the inherent drawback that an idea can often be expressed adequately over two lines, rendering the third line of the stanza redundant. As a result, there are moments when the poem verges on the unintentionally humorous: it is perhaps difficult to suppress a smile at Swinburne’s description of the reaction of a hall full of feasting knights when the young Tristram bursts in to avenge his father’s murder: ‘A great laughter laughed they all, | Drinking wine about the hall, | Standing by the outer wall.’ Furthermore, even though (as I have suggested) Swinburne often appears to be using the simplicity of the verse form to suggest the naturalness of the code of ‘courtly love’, it is true that there is a lack of sophistication in his articulation of that code which is perhaps surprising from a writer of Swinburne’s powers, who had evidently been studying it since childhood.

In some respects, though, Queen Yseult’s manifest juvenility makes even clearer the divergences between Swinburne’s aims and methods and those of Morris, for it presents some of Swinburne’s most important and lasting concerns in a rather bald form. I have already touched on the poem’s strident anti-Christian polemicism. Swinburne appropriates the exaltation of erotic love which Morris sometimes in The Defence of Guenevere presents as characteristic of medieval
romance, but he removes the element of ambivalence that saves Morris’s volume from becoming simplistic. The poem ‘The Defence of Guenevere’ has of course a pendant piece, ‘King Arthur’s Tomb’, which presents a markedly different view of the love of Launcelot and Guenevere. Swinburne’s poem has no such sense of balance, nor would his work ever develop it. Already for him in 1857, there is absolutely no question that the erotic is intrinsically superior to the ascetic, and Queen Ysulit’s occasional shrillness can even be seen as an attempt by its author to outdo Morris in the sincerity and fulsomeness of his praise of courtly love.

This points to a second, though related, difference between the two works. Morris’s Guenevere is very much a human being, whose depiction shows to its best effect the psychological penetration that is one of the strengths of Morris’s verse (and one of the qualities that he himself most underrated). Guenevere ‘wrung her hair, | [and] Spoke out at last with no more trace of shame, | With passionate twisting of her body there’, and her rhetoric is characterised by a corresponding ‘passionate twisting’, which conveys vividly the mixture of anger, fear, and pride driving forward her discourse. Swinburne only rarely achieved such convincing characterisation. His Ysulit is very much a symbol, far more like Rossetti’s women than like Morris’s. Swinburne’s apparent lack of human fellow-feeling seems to have been one of the aspects of his personality that made Morris inclined to keep his distance in later life. It is perhaps in this context that we can best understand Morris’s later opinion that Swinburne’s poetry was ‘founded on literature, not on nature’ — a view that might otherwise seem slightly odd as a judgement of the author of such important Victorian nature poems as ‘By the North Sea’ and ‘The Lake of Gaube’.

Queen Ysulit, as we have seen, was abandoned in mid-December 1857, but Swinburne’s interest in the Arthurian legends continued unabated, as did Morris’s in how he approached them. In the late 1850s, Swinburne composed four further Arthurian poems. Three of these are dramatic monologues, which borrow Morris’s trick of exploring the thoughts of Malory’s characters. These are ‘King Ban’; ‘Lancelot’ (a poem based on Rossetti’s Oxford Union mural Sir Launcelot’s Vision of the Sanc Grael); and, most pointedly, ‘The Day Before the Trial’, a kind of short prelude to ‘The Defence of Guenevere’ in which King Arthur reflects bitterly on his wife’s betrayal. These poems suggest that Swinburne may have been contemplating a full Arthurian cycle, like the one that Morris had in mind when he composed the Arthurian poems of the Defence of Guenevere volume — another indication of Swinburne’s urge not just to emulate Morris but also to compete with him. The fourth poem is ‘Joyeuse Garde’, a vignette of Tristram and Iseult’s interval of rest and happiness at Launcelot’s castle. This poem, the remains of which appear to be only a fragment, may have been intended as part of the same planned cycle, or perhaps even of a new full-length treatment of the Tristram story.
It is possible, however, that the influence was not all in one direction: Morris’s oil painting of 1858, now in Tate Britain, which has most often been known by the name _Queen Guenevere_ but which Morris himself seems to have called _La Belle Iseult_, may well have taken _Queen Yseult_ as its immediate inspiration. It depicts a tall, powerful, erect woman (modelled by Jane Burden, as she then was) in the act of dressing. The small dog on the bed behind her, symbolising fidelity, is probably Tristram’s dog Houdain. Since the linen on both sides of the bed has been disturbed, perhaps Tristram has just departed; or perhaps, given Iseult’s melancholy expression and the presence of Houdain (whom Tristram, according to _Sir Tristrem_ and other medieval versions, left with Iseult during their separation), the picture represents Iseult at Tintagel during Tristram’s exile. One thinks of Yseult’s soliloquy in the sixth canto of Swinburne’s poem, during which she ‘rose up, speaking so’. If Morris did indeed think _Queen Yseult_ ‘much better than his own poem’, such a pictorial interpretation (rather like the ones he made in poetry of Rossetti’s paintings _Arthur’s Tomb_, _The Blue Closet_, and _The Tune of Seven Towers_) would have been an appropriate tribute.

Over the years, critics have perhaps been more alive to the differences between Morris and Swinburne than to the similarities, despite the fact that the two men maintained a steady if not intimate friendship throughout their lives. What is most striking from works such as _Queen Yseult_ and Morris’s _La Belle Iseult_, however, is how much they had in common, not only during the heady days of the late 1850s but also long afterwards. Both were strongly drawn to the profound eroticism which they found in what they would have seen as the greatest literature of the Middle Ages. Swinburne in particular came to identify a rebelliously pagan strand within the medieval imagination, among the results of which he numbered works as diverse as Villon, Troubadour poetry, and the border ballads, as well as Arthurian literature. This emphasis, present in embryonic form in _Queen Yseult_, was eventually to become one of the great informing ideas of _Tristram of Lyonesse_, Swinburne’s later and immeasurably better version of the legend, begun in 1869 but not completed and published until 1882. A similar emphasis on the ‘pagan’ elements of medievalism can also be found in _The Earthly Paradise_ and, to a much greater extent, in _Sigurd the Volsung_. It is possible that Swinburne’s meeting with Morris in November 1857 suddenly confirmed this conviction in his mind, and it may have been this which impelled him to start work so furiously on _Queen Yseult_. It was ultimately a belief in the importance of art, not only for art’s sake, but also for life’s sake; and this ideal, which brought Swinburne and Morris together in their youthful studies of the Middle Ages, was ultimately much more important to both of them than anything which later drew them apart.
NOTES


2. Cormell Price noted in his journal on 1 November: ‘To Hill’s, where were Topsy, Ted, Swan, Hatch, Swinburne of Balliol (introduced I think by Hatch) and Faulkner.’ In December 1895, however, Swinburne told William Michael Rossetti that ‘an Oxford friend, Hill, who knew Jones and Morris and through them Gabriel, introduced me to them.’ See J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899, vol. I, p. 127 (afterwards Mackail); *Swinburne Letters*, VI, p. 92.

In the light of his subsequent career, Hatch would make an unlikely catalyst for Swinburne and Morris’s friendship: he later took holy orders and became Professor of Classics at Toronto University, and is best known today as the author of such staple Victorian hymns as ‘Breathe on me, breath of God’.


8. Throughout this article I will use the forms ‘Tristram’ and ‘Yseult’ when referring specifically to Swinburne’s poem, but the more generic form ‘Iseult’ when referring to the legend more generally.


THE DEFENCE OF YSEULT

12. See Lafourcade, II, p. 43.
28. For Morris’s plans for an Arthurian cycle, see Mackail, I, p. 134.
29. Lafourcade (vol. II, pp. 49–50) prints another fragment that he takes to be a continuation of ‘Joyeuse Garde’. It was also Lafourcade who published ‘The Day Before the Trial’ for the first time (vol. II, pp. 52–53). ‘Joyeuse Garde’ and ‘Lancelot’ can be found in volume I of the Complete Works, and ‘King Ban’ in volume VI.

95
In this cogent and clearly written book Simon Dentith gives a convincing account of the part played by epic in nineteenth-century literature and culture, which he shows to have been larger than we might casually assume. The Introduction declares that the book’s field will be that of ‘epic primitivism’ (p.10), an understanding of epic as the expression of a much earlier stage of culture than that of the nineteenth century, and a form whose ‘archaic’ qualities bring out by contrast the assumptions of modernity. Later in the book Dentith gives an account of the arguments of Hegel’s Aesthetics, which greatly increased my respect for that philosopher. Hegel writes, ‘All the truly primitive epics give us the vision of a national spirit ... in short a picture of a whole way of thinking and a whole stage of civilization.’ (qu.p.106) This stage of civilization is one in which humanity is not ‘cut adrift from a living connection with nature’, unlike the worlds of ‘Our modern machines and factories’. (qu. p.108) It is interesting that Hegel, unlike some other German scholars, shows no enthusiasm for the rediscovered Nibelungenlied, which he sees as dealing with ‘a past history, swept away with a broom’. (p.109) Hegel’s admiration for the Iliad is based on the contrasting view that its story is that of the triumph of European over Asiatic values, and is therefore of world-historical significance. The idea of social alienation, which was to mean so much to Marx and to Morris, emerges in this context. Epic in the nineteenth century can serve as a critique of contemporary civilization, as well as an acknowledgement of it, according to the ideological position of the particular writer. Concern with national identity brings epic close on occasion to elements in the ballad tradition.

Beginning necessarily with a thoughtful discussion of Homer and his reputation, Dentith goes on to consider in some detail works by Scott, particularly The Lady of the Lake and The Lay of the Last Minstrel, Tennyson, Arnold – primarily for his views on the translation of Homer – Barrett Browning, Morris and Kipling. Barrett Browning was the most explicit in her attack on anything but modern subject-matter in Aurora Leigh (1856). She declares it the poets’ task to
represent the age,
Their age, not Charlemagne’s, – this live, throbbing age,
That brawls, cheats, maddens, calculates, aspires,
And spends more passion, more heroic heat,
Betwixt the mirrors of its drawing-rooms,
Than Roland with his knights at Roncesvalles.

The story she tells is accordingly set in her own time, although Dentith views
the poem overall as ‘generically hybrid’, but showing the poet’s capacity, ‘inter-
mittently though emphatically, to forge an epic idiom that is adequate to the
contemporary world’. (p. 97)

The chapter of most interest to students of Morris is the fourth, ‘The Matter
of Britain and the Search for a National Epic’. Here Dentith briefly contrasts the
conservative attitude of Tennyson in his ‘Guinevere’ with Morris’s radicalism in
‘The Defence of Guenevere’. He then goes considers the two mythologies with
the highest claims to providing material for a British national epic, the Celtic
one centred on King Arthur, and the Nordic one centred on Siegfried or Sigurd.
(For some reason, King Alfred had ceased to be a serious contender). Tennyson’s
*Idylls of the King* are well known to be based on the Celtic material, and so have
the problem for English nationalism of celebrating a king who fought against
the English; Arthur is also described as doing so, as Dentith points out, in a con-
text that owes more to medieval romance than to the epic tradition. Moreover,
Tennyson was evidently unhappy with the militaristic element in the epic, and
wanted to direct his poem towards a Christian ethos. This is brought out clearly
in the contrast Dentith draws between a narrative passage quoted from ‘The
Coming of Arthur’ and what he terms ‘another bloody extract’ taken from Book
I of Morris’s *Sigurd the Volsung*. In fact, Tennyson is far less ‘bloody’ than Mor-
ris, partly because his conventional pentameter lacks the rough energy of Mor-
ris’s hexameter, and partly because his intention in the poem is quite different
from Morris’s. As Dentith convincingly puts it: ‘Morris is seeking to provide a
nineteenth-century equivalent of the poetry of the heroic ages, while Tennyson
is seeking to provide a highly moralised story or set of stories which can prove
exemplary to the present day.’ (p. 74) Dentith is appreciative of the energy of
Morris’s poem, and brings out, in discussing a later passage, Morris’s remarkable
success in conveying within the poem the characteristics of the society in which
the story is taking place. He shows that ‘Morris’s hatred of modern civilisation led
him to propose the values of epic barbarism as a counterweight to the paltriness
and ugliness of the contemporary world’, but his conclusion is that ‘the poem is
undoubtedly a virtuoso exercise in an astonishing idiom, but it is both wonderful
and a poetic dead-end’. (p. 83) I think that most admirers of Morris would reluc-
tantly agree with this conclusion. As we know, Morris was disappointed with the
reception of *Sigurd* by the reading public, and wrote no poem of similar ambition again, using prose for his later long narratives. However, it would be interesting to know what Dentith might make of *The Pilgrims of Hope* in this context, since in this poem Morris dramatises an important recent historical event, the Paris Commune, and relates it to the imagined future of humanity.

In the later parts of the book, Dentith address the question of the form the epic spirit took in the increasingly imperialistic British world of the later Victorian period. In this context he discusses both the novels of adventure by writers such as Stevenson, Rider Haggard and Henty, and the ballad-based poetry which made its way into patriotic anthologies such as Frederick Langbridge’s *Ballads of the Brave: Poems of Chivalry, Enterprise, Courage and Constancy* (1896) and W.E. Henley’s *Lyra Heroica: A Book of Verse for Boys* (1891). This included a lengthy extract from the fourth book of *Sigurd the Volsung* entitled ‘The Slaying of the Niblungs’ – although it actually consists of the preceding section, ‘Of the Battle in Atli’s Hall’. A note tells us that the extract was included by permission of the author, but one wonders how the Socialist Morris would have reacted had he looked into the company he was keeping in the anthology. In relation to these poetic anthologies, Dentith cheers himself by noting ‘boys’ resistance to many forms of official indoctrination’, as suggested strikingly by Kipling in *Stalky & Co.* (p.147). But he cannot avoid going on to consider Kipling as ‘Bard of Empire’ (Ch.8), in an account which brings out well what was the disturbing modernity of Kipling’s approach, embodied in his demotic language, which puts his work at the opposite extreme from *Sigurd*. As far as the adventure novels are concerned, Dentith notes how it came about that ideas of the archaic epic society came to be reanimated in accounts of societies that imperialism had discovered on the edges of the modern, expanding, world. Thus in *King Solomon’s Mines* in 1885, Haggard’s narrator Quatermain records a victory-chant by the Zulu Ignosi which is translated into quasi-Homeric poetry, with all the conventional components of epic language. Similarly, though in a more complex mode, in the account of Conrad in this context we are shown a writer in whose early novels ‘the martial virtues … appear as characteristics of native rather than imperial peoples’. (p.192)

Dentith’s final chapter is entitled ‘Coda: Some Homeric Futures’. This includes a thoughtful examination of T.E. Lawrence’s *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, and introduces a book that I was previously unaware of, *Emperor Shaka the Great* by Mazisi Kunene, published in South Africa in 1979. Dentith describes it as ‘an epic told without irony … constructed out of the oral traditions of a subject people as part of its struggle to build a nation’ (p.205), and compares its ambition to that of Morris in *Sigurd*. It would be interesting to know whether the poem has played, or is playing, the part aimed at by its author in developing a democratic ethos in the new South Africa. Morris makes a final appearance in a discussion of his influence on the ‘now hugely developed genre of fantasy epic’, leading through
Tolkien to Robert H. Jordan’s ‘Eye of the World’ cycle and David Eddings’s ‘The Malloreon’. In passing, Dentith remarks that the late romances were ‘much less self-consciously serious in Morris’s own estimation than his earlier epic’ (p.209), but this raises an interesting question about the value of an author’s seriousness. For me – perhaps under the influence of the late Norman Talbot’s critical defence of the romances – there is a sense that the freedom of the new genre which Morris was developing in his last decade allowed him to express his ideas with less constriction than in more obviously serious works like Sigurd.

The dust-jacket of this well-produced but expensive book shows the powerful naked figure of Achilles in Henry Fuseli’s The Obsequies of Patroclus. This is a highly appropriate image for the theme of epic primitivism in the context of the question asked by Karl Marx in 1857, in this excellent book’s opening quotation: ‘Is Achilles possible with powder and lead? Or the Iliad with the printing press, not to mention the printing machine?’

Peter Faulkner


Elizabeth Prettejohn’s sumptuously produced book on Aestheticism has an important, and threefold, historical mission. It aims to put painting back at the very centre of Aestheticist debates; it shifts attention away from the late Victorian period to the 1860s when, in its view, doctrines and practices of l’art pour l’art begin to take shape in English culture; and it aims to stress the Continental, and above all German, affiliations of such work. Since it is as magnificently documented as it is richly illustrated, it succeeds handsomely in these three objectives; and yet its essential energies are elsewhere, in a project more philosophical than historical. For, as the book itself stresses, you can always tell two stories about modern art: one is Hegelian, emphasising the powerful narrative progression of the various modernist movements, as they boldly break beyond each other in their iconoclastic quest to ‘make it new’; the other is more Kantian, and stresses individual works rather than collective movements, seeing each one of those works as an intolerable wrestle with certain enduring problems of art and aesthetics at large. Historically rich though this book’s analyses are, it is the other, more philosophical perspective which in the end predominates; and Prettejohn therefore offers her study as ‘an experiment in art-historical method’, breaking both with the progressivist narratives of what she wittily at one point terms
‘manly Modernism’ and with the dominant ‘social history of art’ approach of the contemporary academy.

Her first exhibit is John Millais’s haunting painting of *Autumn Leaves* (1855–56), in which the painter breaks away from his earlier Pre-Raphaelite literalism and aspires, in his wife Effie’s phrase, to produce ‘a picture full of beauty and without subject’. Aestheticism, as Prettejohn construes it, thus becomes an ever-renewed, ever-defeated effort to resolve the conundrum posed by Effie Millais’s phrase. If you do not want your painting (or poem or novel, for that matter) to be merely the secondary reflection of some pre-existing subject-matter, whether that be Ruskinian Nature, or a transcendental realm of higher reality, or a literary or historical narrative, or contemporary bourgeois morality or even a radical political cause, if you want it instead to be an entity in its own right and for its own sake, then how do you proceed? Aestheticism in Prettejohn’s account does not have a clear historical beginning (though it has a definite end, with the trials of Oscar Wilde of 1895), but it has a precise enough philosophical starting point. It may not possess a public identity (like Pre-Raphaelitism or Impressionism), or a shared style or subject-matter, but is rather given its unity by ‘exploring a shared artistic problem ... the problem of what art might be, if it is not for the sake of anything else’. The great slogan – ‘art for art’s sake’ – is, on this showing, an empty tautology, the name of a problem not of a solution; it does not predetermine the outcome of the philosophico-artistic exploration, which, in Prettejohn’s view, is only available in unique individual cases, in the concrete works which she analyses with such care and flair in this book, not as some general theoretical position.

So she takes a raft of well-known Victorian artists – Solomon, Moore, Leighton, Whistler, Rossetti, Burne-Jones – sandwiches them between chapters on the critical writings of Swinburne and Pater, and then, in a series of scintillating readings of particular paintings, persuades us that these artists are a good deal more philosophically interesting, and often philosophically knowledgeable, than we had assumed; and that they thus, as a group or movement, deserve a more prominent part in the Hegelian historicist narratives of the emergence of modern art. We all know that Walter Pater had carefully read his Hegel, but Frederick Leighton, for example, displayed familiarity with many aspects of Hegel’s thought too, and is not just the academical classicist one had lazily taken him to be.

It must be said, however, that Aestheticism’s supposedly unique individual cases show some pretty recurrent commonalities, as Prettejohn herself well knows, to a degree which may fundamentally vitiate its underlying philosophical project. Female figures, female bodies, female faces, appear to a quite obsessive degree, so that the Aestheticist realm does indeed end up as ‘mysteriously self-contained worlds inhabited by female figures’, albeit occasionally varied by the androgyynes of Simeon Solomon’s more syncretistic ambition, or the hermaphrodites of Swinburne. You can then argue, as Prettejohn spiritedly does, that such images are
radical in their particular historical moment or, more philosophically, that ‘the aesthetic dissolves the gendered distinction between manly activity and female passiveness, for the subject judging beauty is both active and passive at once’. But I do not think such necessary caveats are going to save the author, or her painters, from the weight and wrath of contemporary feminism, and justly so!

Yet it is perhaps the human body in general, and not just its femaleness, in such paintings, which is the ultimate problem here. Immanuel Kant himself was convinced that figurative representation of any kind would always entail extraneous judgements (moral, social, sexual) which would contaminate the pure autonomy of the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful. So perhaps the most radical and consequent of Prettejohn’s Aestheticists is Albert Moore, whose use of geometrical grids in his compositions is implicitly beginning to move him away from figuration altogether towards the pure geometricist and subjectless abstractionism of Mondrian and Kandinsky (‘there may even be an historical connection’, Prettejohn adds, provocatively).

This study persuades us that Victorian Aestheticism is not just the re-investment in art of a faith which once found its underpinnings in traditional religion, or merely a reflection in the realm of art of late-Victorian commodity-culture (though it is surely both these things, from an historicist viewpoint). Its full glory, rather, lies in its stubborn, tormented will to resolve a philosophical impossibility, to paint Effie Millais’s ‘picture full of beauty and without subject’; for, as Elizabeth Prettejohn finely puts it, paying due tribute to the artistic heroism of her subjects, ‘it may remain logically impossible to make the “freely beautiful” work, but the act of trying to do so acquires a special significance as an exploration of that very problem’.

Tony Pinkney


Soon after being appointed to my first academic job, I naively agreed to take over a module on the history and theory of contemporary craft. The difficulty of my position did not really become apparent until I attempted to strengthen a very thin reading list: I found the lack of scholarly books on the subject quite astonishing, in fact if it had not been for the recent publication of Tanya Harrod’s
excellent book *The Crafts in Britain in the Twentieth Century*, I doubt whether I could have run the lecture programme at all. It was therefore with some satisfaction that I undertook a review of three recent books, all centrally concerned with the meanings and significance of contemporary craft.

There are people who would be discouraged by the starting point of Glenn Adamson’s *Thinking Through Craft* for, as the title states, this book treats craft more as conceptual framework rather than a material practice. Sculpture, architecture, ceramics, textiles, jewellery and furniture all feature, but many of the works discussed would normally be considered as ‘fine art’ rather than ‘craft’. The book is structured around five themes: ‘supplemental’, ‘material’, ‘skilled’, ‘pastoral’, and ‘amateur’. Whilst the last four are categories which might be expected to crop up in a book on craft, ‘supplemental’ is a term explicitly linked to the work of the philosopher Jacques Derrida, a character not frequently encountered in this context. I would urge potential readers who do not like the sound of this to read on, as the chapter is very lucid in its use of theory: a minimum of post-structural evasion and a reassuring impression that the theory is here an analytical tool rather than an end in itself. Thus Derrida's idea of 'supplement', something which is a necessary part of an entity, but considered external to it, is equated to craft’s relationship to modern art. This strategy is pursued through a discussion of Constantin Brancusi, iconic modernist sculptor and pioneer of direct carving, whose career drew upon strategies which can be equated to the ‘supplemental’: the way he exhibited sculptures both as works in their own right and pedestals for other sculptures is seen as playing on the relationship between the sculpture itself and that which is supplemental to it.

The argument moves on to a discussion of the fascinating work of Dutch designer Gijs Bakker, a moving force in the avant garde ‘Droog’ group. In his ‘Real’ series, Bakker acquired some flashy pieces of costume jewellery and then commissioned a jeweller to imitate the cheap paste with real stones. The two pieces were then combined into the same object and in this Adamson sees ‘a brilliant exercise in the supplemental’ in that each of the jewels relies on the other while simultaneously exposing and questioning the other’s authenticity.

Binary oppositions form the logic for most of the chapters and from ‘autonomy’ versus ‘supplemental’ in the first chapter Adamson moves on to ‘material’ v. ‘optical’, initially through Anthony Caro’s sculpture, and then on to postwar American ceramics. Rather than select makers who sing the praises of their chosen material, Adamson seems attracted to those with a more ambivalent response to their discipline: ‘If [Robert] Morris was a sculptor who did not want to make a modern sculpture, then the story of postwar ceramics is primarily that of potters who did not want to make pottery.’ (p. 42)

This is a book which is both broad and narrow – broad in its eclectic theoretical approach (classical Marxism, Adorno and Derrida are all invoked), the wide
range of disciplines and practitioners discussed (from canonical Modernists to niche studio craft practitioners) and its geographical range (though unsurprisingly Britain, America and Japan are the key areas of interest). The narrowness comes from the book’s preoccupation with the avant garde – a deliberate focus which leads to the surprising admission in the conclusion that ‘traditional craft’ does not demand critical analysis. In fact Adamson is quite assertive about what is not good for craft: ‘If people who care about craft above all else are to shake off the air of crabby conservatism that hangs about that word, they must not hold the notions of studio, action, and object as sacred’. (p. 168) As this quotation implies, this is not the book to read if you are hoping to have your enthusiasm for studio craft reawakened. Adamson is not reassuring about its recent role or status, in fact, in what could be interpreted as an attempt to reassure his readers, he states in his conclusion that two of his ‘most prized possessions’ are a chair and a pot made by studio craftsmen. This book is, however, full of thoughtful and pertinent analysis and achieves an impressive theoretical take on the role of studio craft within the history of modern art.

Howard Risatti’s *A Theory of Craft* sets out to produce a rigorous definition of what a craft object is and how it should be interpreted. Many of his propositions will be surprising for both the contemporary maker and the historian. He believes craft objects to be the fundamental things which aid humans in their survival within nature, objects which fall into three categories: containers, supports and covers. This narrow definition forces him to reject categories of objects which most would consider craft, such as jewellery, tapestry and stained glass. He contends that craft objects can only be meaningfully united if they possess at their core ‘practical physical function’, though it later transpires that ‘function can be abstract and metaphorical without the object necessarily losing its identity’. Because of their functional status, craft objects are awarded a privileged ontological status: ‘craft objects are “real objects” in the sense that they exist in the world as tangible things apart from our perceptions and apart from language’ whilst the opposite is true of fine art objects: ‘as physical objects their existence is socially contingent on a language of signs, so much so that, in a sense, they have little meaningful existence independent of them’. (p. 86) This fundamental status of craft objects gives them a universal appeal: ‘embedded within the craft objects we use every day resides the memory of our evolutionary moment, a memory that transcends ethnic and racial, economic and class, cultural and national boundaries’. (p. 59)

I must admit I was not convinced. In seeking to privilege craft, Risatti becomes rather simplistic about the disciplines which he sees as a challenge to craft, notably fine art and design. He seems to think, for example, that designers just formulate abstract ideas and produce drawings or CAD designs, whilst *making* of some sort is fundamental to the practice of most of the designers whom I have worked
with, and we need look no further than Morris for an example of a designer who got his hands dirty. I simply do not believe that the boundaries between craft, design and fine art are distinct enough to make the kind of assertions necessary for Risatti to maintain his argument.

Despite purporting to be a new approach to the subject, several of Risatti’s ideas are distinctly nineteenth-century in flavour, but never acknowledged as such. One of positive features he attributes to craft objects is the fact that the maker works ‘in concert with the material’ whilst machines ‘force material into forms that have little to do with a material’s organic properties’ (p. 194) thus evoking an argument familiar to Pugin, Ruskin and Morris. Another section urges the reader to look beyond the surface of an object when interpreting it: ‘We must take into consideration how the object was made and how making, as a conscious process, is a bearer of meaning, whether the object is machine-made or hand-made’. (p. 190) At this point many people familiar with Ruskin will be thinking of the frequently quoted passage from The Nature of Gothic, when the reader is urged to look around the room and see the highly finished machine-made products within as signs of slavery. Neither Ruskin nor Pugin is mentioned and Morris receives one oblique footnote.

Perhaps a book which deals with contemporary craft should be excused for not wanting to be diverted on to a discussion of Victorian designers, a distraction largely avoided, as Gottfried Semper is the only nineteenth-century design theorist discussed in any detail. A fault which is far more difficult to understand is the book’s lack of attention to more recent discussions of craft. Although many of the examples discussed relate to American makers or objects in American collections, this book sets out to discuss craft in a global context and with this in mind it is strange to notice Risatti’s avoidance of British craft writers. I began this review by bemoaning the lack of scholarship on craft, but several key books have pushed the subject forward. Tanya Harrod’s history of twentieth-century British craft is not mentioned or cited. The work of Peter Dormer and Paul Greenhalgh is omitted completely. The collection edited by the latter entitled The Persistence of Craft (published in 2002) proposed a far more fluid definition of craft and shows sophisticated awareness of the relationship between craft and design. The absence of any reference to Peter Dormer is indeed strange. A chapter entitled ‘Technical Knowledge and Technical Manual Skill’ deals with the interesting relationship between materials and craft skills, just the area examined so well in Dormer’s exposition of the work of Michael Polanyi in The Art of the Maker. Risatti’s discussion is largely plausible, but for anyone who has read Dormer’s work, it is unlikely to seem original. Risatti does discuss David Pye’s influential book The Nature and Art of Workmanship (first published 1968) although he seems to find Pye’s approach to the subject hard to accept. Risatti’s own argument is forced into all kinds of untenable positions because of its premise: any attempt to rigidly
define such a fluid category as craft is surely doomed to failure. The idea that craft objects somehow transcend historical and cultural difference is very hard to swallow: surely the complexity of the debates surrounding craft are the best evidence that both the ideas and the objects which fall into this category are deeply influenced by the specifics of historical and cultural context?

Richard Sennett’s *The Craftsman* is an ambitious book which is less concerned with creative practitioners than with proposing the idea of the craftsman as concept which, if valued, can potentially improve many people’s working lives, and it is in this sense that the book is exciting: a real attempt to put the politics of work back on the agenda. Sennett’s craftsman can be a cook, a nurse, or a Linux programmer, as well as a goldsmith or a glass blower, and whilst this might be frustrating for a reader hoping to learn about creative practice, it is also intriguing to broaden out the idea of craft in this way. This approach is in some ways reminiscent of Morris’s conviction that the right kind of work was central to a fulfilling human existence.

Sennett argues that recent patterns within institutional structures and economies have prevented workers from achieving the satisfaction of the craftsman. The British NHS is an example referred to at some length and illustrates Sennett’s approach well: he proposes that the skills of an effective nurse rely on a type of knowledge which can only be gained in oblique ways: ‘… nursing craft negotiates a liminal zone between problem solving and problem finding; listening to old men’s chatter, the nurse can glean clues about their ailments that might escape a diagnostic checklist’. (pp. 48–9) This type of practice must be learned through experience – it cannot be communicated through textbooks or accounted for in ‘Fordist’ economic models.

Sennett uses a wide range of historical material in order to create his argument: the workshop of the medieval goldsmith, the working methods of the musical instrument maker Antonio Stradivari, Christopher Wren’s plans for rebuilding London, Diderot’s *Encyclopaedia*, Ruskin’s *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Brunel’s engineering, and two houses constructed in Vienna during the early twentieth century, by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, and the architect Adolf Loos. The more recent examples include Frank Gehry’s use of a new alloy needed for the Guggenheim Museum at Bilbao, and the story of how a glass blower, Erin O’Connor, learned to blow a new type of goblet. Such breadth is impressive, although in areas where I possess specialist knowledge, I was not always happy with Sennett’s analysis. A case in point is his account of the Great Exhibition of 1851 (annoyingly styled the ‘Great Exposition’). Here he implies that the ‘Crystal Palace’ was made possible by the development of rolled glass during the 1840s, when in fact it was not glazed with rolled glass. Unlikely as it may seem, every pane of glass was made by artisans using the ‘blown cylinder’ method: individuals blew long bottle-shaped cylinders of glass which were then split open in order to
form sheets. The size of these individually blown panes of glass became the basic unit from which the design of the building was formed: craft skills were fundamental to the building’s creation. The analysis of Ruskin which follows is far more sophisticated, but I still feel that Sennett adopts a rather superficial attitude to the 1850s in order to promote the ‘Enlightened’ attitude of Diderot, an enthusiasm which later becomes explicit his statement ‘We want to recover something of the spirit of the Enlightenment on terms appropriate to our time’. (p.269)

The question which constantly emerges when reading The Craftsman is how Sennett is going to relate his analysis to social change. At times the reader is offered a tantalising glimpse. A chapter entitled ‘The Hand’ provides a fascinating account of the relationship between the human ‘grip’, nuanced ‘touch’ and how these physiological issues combine with mental processes in ‘prehension’ – the technical name for ‘movements in which the body anticipates and acts in advance of sense data’. (p. 154) The chapter then ranges through the Suzuki method for teaching violin to the story of a classically trained pianist adapting his technique to jazz piano through to the technical skill of the ‘Chinese cleaver chef’, who is notable for using a large tool with minimum force. Such force is then related to self-control, which is finally merged into a discussion which compares brute force and minimum force within diplomatic and military strategy. Sennett suggests that self-control might be seen as consisting of two dimensions: ‘one a social surface beneath which there lies personal distress, the other a reality at ease with itself both physically and mentally, a reality that serves the craftsman’s development of skill. This second dimension carries its own social implication’. (p. 171) Here the reader is given a hint about how the approach conducive to craftsmanship can be related to the social and the political, but a hint is all that is offered. Other passages suggest ways in which craftsmanship could be related to institutional reform: ‘The drive to do good work can give people a sense of vocation; poorly made institutions will ignore their denizens’ desire that life add up, while well-crafted organizations will profit from it’. (p. 267) Just what a ‘well-crafted organization’ might be is not explored in detail, but as this is only the first of a three-volume project, perhaps we will find out in the next.

The fact that this book is reticent about social change should not disguise its value. Sennett mounts a subtle critique of contemporary attitudes to work: repetition does not mean meaningless drudgery, ambiguity should be embraced rather than eliminated, and obstacles (as other craft writers have suggested) can often act as stimuli to creative solutions. In fact, as Sennett notes, he avoids the word ‘creative’: much of the book breaks down this often mystifying idea into a more tangible series of processes – another marked strength of this volume.

Some readers will find Sennett’s style annoying: the book at times becomes almost anecdotal in its eclectic range of sources. Personally I feel he is most engaging when discussing examples which draw upon his own experience as a
proficient cook and cello player, as in a wonderful passage which discusses different approaches to cookery writing. In the Prologue, Sennett describes himself as ‘a philosophically minded writer asking questions about such matters as woodworking, military drills or solar panels’ (p. 9), and to be fair to him, this is how the book come across; it is much more about ideas than material culture. Given the book’s subject matter, it should contain fewer typographic errors, but despite its imperfections this work is easily good enough to make me to anticipate the next volume with considerable interest.

Jim Cheshire
Guidelines for Contributors

Contributions to the Journal are welcomed on all subjects relating to the life and works of William Morris. The Editor would be grateful if contributors could adhere to the following guidelines when submitting articles and reviews:

1. Contributions should be word-processed or typed using 1.5 spacing, and printed on one side of A4 or 8.5 x 11 paper. They should be ca 5000 words in length, although shorter and longer pieces will also be considered.
2. Articles should ideally be produced in electronic form (e.g. as a Word.doc, or .rtf format). Please send your article as an email attachment to editor@morrissociety.org, or on a floppy disk or 're-writable' CD (e.g. CD-RW), marked for the attention of the Editor, JWMS, to

   The William Morris Society,
   Kelmscott House, 26 Upper Mall,
   Hammersmith, London W6 9TA,
   United Kingdom

3. Contributions in hard copy only are also accepted, and may be sent to the same address.
4. In formatting your article, please follow JWMS house style by consulting a recent issue of the Journal. Back issues are available from the William Morris Society at the above address, or online at http://www.morrissociety.org/jwms.samples.html. Articles which do not follow this house style may be returned to authors for re-editing.
5. Notes. These should be numbered consecutively and should appear at the end of your article. Please avoid using the automatic note-numbering facilities available with some word-processing packages, as they slow down final editing considerably. Instead, please cite all references in your text by superscript (e.g. 1), and list them at the end of the article, in normal script, under the heading NOTES.
6. Quotations. Refer where possible to primary rather than to secondary sources, and give all direct quotations in single quotation marks. Quotes within
quotes should be identified using double quotation marks.

7. Citations. When citing books, please give the following details: (i) author/editor, (ii) title of book (*italicised*), (iii) place of publication, (iv) publisher, (v) date of publication (and original date of publication if different from that of the edition which you are using), (vi) volume, if appropriate, (vii) page number(s) of quote or information cited; e.g. May Morris, ed, *The Collected Works of William Morris*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910–15, XIV, pp. 212–13. If no specific citation, please give number of pages in book (e.g. 364 pp.).

8. When citing articles from, or chapters in, books, please give: (i) author, (ii) ‘title of article’ (in single quotation marks), (iii) in (iv) name(s) of editor(s), (v) title of book (*italicised*), (vi) place of publication, (vii) publisher, (viii) date of publication, (ix) page number(s) of quote or citation; e.g. Jan Marsh, ‘Concerning love: *News from Nowhere* and gender’, in Stephen Coleman & Patrick O’Sullivan, eds, *William Morris and News from Nowhere. A Vision for Our Time*. Hartland, UK: Green Books, 1990, p. 116. If no specific citation, please give number of pages in article/chapter (e.g. pp. 107–125).

9. When citing articles from journals and other periodicals, please give: (i) author, (ii) ‘title of article’ (in single quotation marks), (iii) title of journal (*italicised*), (iv) volume/number, (v) date, (vi) page number(s) of quote or citation; e.g. Margaret D. Stetz, ‘The Changing Politics of Fantasy: From Morris and Schreiner to the Present’, *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 10, Spring 2001, p. 94. If no specific citation, please give number of pages in article (pp. 90–98).

10. When citing articles or other material from electronic sources, please give (i) author (if applicable), (ii) ‘title of article/item’ in single quotation marks (if applicable), (iii) location of passage (in parentheses), (iv) title of complete work/resource/website, (v) publication details (volume, issue, date), (vi) full electronic address (i.e. Universal Resource Locator – URL), (vi) [date last accessed] (in square brackets); e.g. ‘Chapter 2 – Mediaeval Society’, in William Morris & E. Belfort Bax, *Socialism From The Root Up, or Socialism Its Growth and Outcome*, 1886–1888, as published in *Commonweal*, Volume 2, Number 19, 22 May 1886, p. 61, quotation from paragraph three.http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1886/sru/ch2.htm [last accessed 28 March 2008]. Many electronic sources, especially databases, do not possess editors or authors, however, and may need to be cited in more general terms, e.g. *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891*; http://www.uk1891census.com [last accessed 28 March 2008]. The most important information is the URL, which allows the reader to access the material you wish to quote. Many of these are ‘case sensitive’, so beware to quote them correctly, and to check that they work.
11. Numbers in the text should only be used for NOTES, dates, line numbers of poems, exact large numbers, sums of money, and data. For dates use day, month, year (e.g. 6 July 1855); for decades use numbers (e.g. 1890s); for centuries spell in full (e.g. nineteenth); for figures up to and including one hundred, and for round numbers thereafter, use words (e.g. fifty, forty-five, two hundred and fifty, three thousand, two million). For exact large numbers, upwards of one hundred, use numerical values (e.g. 464; 5,280; 95,600). For sums of money, use numbers (e.g. £2,500).

12. Illustrations. Please do not embed your illustrations in your text, but include them separately with your article, as JPEG files or some other accessible electronic format, or as hard copy. Please note that articles proposing the use of a large number of illustrations, or citing famous and well-known works only, may be printed without such figures, or with their numbers reduced. If using digital images, please ensure that they are of sufficient resolution to reproduce well, and send them to the editor by email (editor@morrissociety.org), or on a rewritable CD, with one hard copy, to the William Morris Society at the above address.

13. Copyright. Remember also to obtain permission from the copyright owner/owning institution(s) (e.g. the Tate Gallery, William Morris Gallery, etc.) to reproduce the image(s) you wish to include. Please note that it is ultimately the author’s responsibility to secure permissions to reproduce an image. Copies of permissions to reproduce copyright illustrations will be requested from authors by the editor once articles have been accepted for publication. Permissions relating to Morris’s own works should be sought from

The General Secretary,  
Society of Antiquaries of London,  
Burlington House,  
Piccadilly, London, WIJ OBE,  
United Kingdom,

or by email at admin@sal.org.uk.

14. At the end of your article please include a short biographical note of not more than fifty words.

Please note that the views of individual contributors are not to be taken as those of the William Morris Society.
Notes on Contributors

Michael Bloor is a sociologist and lifetime Morris enthusiast. He currently holds two part-time professorial research fellowships, at Cardiff University, and the University of Glasgow.

Jim Cheshire is Senior Lecturer at the University of Lincoln. He is currently working on an exhibition about Tennyson and visual culture, and editing the associated catalogue (forthcoming, Lund Humphries, 2009). Recent publications include ‘Space and the Victorian Ecclesiastical Interior’ in Craft, Space and Interior Design 1855–2005, Ashgate, 2008.

Emma Ferry specialises in nineteenth century British art and architecture. She has worked for Southampton Art Gallery and the National Trust and has recently been appointed Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture at the University of the West of England at Bristol, UK.

Peter Faulkner taught in the School of English at the University of Exeter and until recently was the Honorary Secretary of the William Morris Society.

Richard Frith has written a Cambridge doctoral thesis and published articles on the medievalist poetry of Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne. Until recently he worked in academic publishing. He is currently studying theology at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford, in preparation for ordained ministry in the Church of England.

Terence Hoagwood is Professor of English at Texas A & M University, and is the author of several books and articles on nineteenth-century literature and the editor of twelve volumes of previously rare works of nineteenth-century literature.

Tony Pinkney is Senior Lecturer in the Department of English at Lancaster University. He has edited We Met Morris: Interviews with William Morris, 1885–1896 (Spire Books, 2005) and has recently published William Morris in Oxford: The Campaigning Years, 1879–1895 (illuminati Books, 2007).