



The William Morris Society Newsletter: July 2006

A LETTER TO MEMBERS FROM FLORENCE BOOS

We're grateful for the many book orders and contributions which arrived in response to our February renewal notice, and want to thank those who have renewed or supported the Society in other ways for their generosity. As of January we are a non-profit organization, on the way to receiving tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, and we hope to use any contributions beyond basic dues to maintain our fellowships and expand our other activities.

A recurrent problem for the U. S. Morris Society is the geographical dispersal of its officers and governing committee members--in Illinois (Tom Tobin), Connecticut (Adrienne Sharpe), Pennsylvania (Shannon Rogers), Iowa (Florence Boos), Washington, D. C. (Mark Samuels Lasner and Fran Durako), and New York City (Hartley Spatt, Frank Sharp, and Elaine Ellis). Last March we arranged for a conference call for eight of us, in which we worked through questions of outreach, finances, the Society's web page and a potential Morris conference in 2010. We also agreed to meet in person, and will do so for two days in New York City this coming September.

Suggestions for agenda which members would like us to consider at this gathering would be welcome.

In the meantime, Elaine Ellis has arranged for Morris Society members in the Berkeley, California region to attend a talk given by Alan Crawford, a noted historian of *fin de siècle* British architecture and decorative arts, to the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association on August 15th, 2006. He will speak on the topic of "William Morris: Socialist and Shopkeeper," and fuller details are provided in an announcement within.

We are happy to announce that a public reading of *Red House*, by our 2005 fellowship winner Ignacio Zulueta, was given at the Bus Barn Theatre's 2006 Summer Festival in the southern San Francisco Bay Area. Directed by John Aney, a new draft of the script was the third full-length play presented at the festival, held July 20 to July 22 (see announcement within). An excerpt of this lovely and poetic dramatization of the lives and memories of the Morrises and Burne-Joneses will appear in the December Newsletter.

At the Modern Language Association Convention in Philadelphia on December 27th and 30th, 2006, the Society will host sessions on "Pre-Raphaelitism and the World of Victorian Art," with talks by Jude Nixon, Jill R. Ehnenn, Evelyn Haller, and Andrew Marvick, and on "Morris and Gender," with talks by David Faldet, Mia McIver, Sharon McGrady, and Florence Boos. In November we shall send out a notice with more exact information to members. We hope as many as possible will join us for the annual Society dinner, which will be held in Philadelphia during the time of the MLA convention.

Sadly, the dollar's recent fall against the pound has made it too costly to match all four annual British Newsletters with American counterparts, but we hope to enlarge our semi-annual June and December Newsletters in partial compensation, mail an announcement of MLA-related activities to the membership each fall, and place news of time-sensitive events promptly on www.morrissociety.org. Judith Hanks-Henn, Anna Matyukhina, Monica Duchnowski, Mark Samuels Lasner and I have contributed essays and reviews to the current Newsletter, and we hope readers will help us swell the progress of future issues. Inquiries and submissions may be sent either to me or our Newsletter editor Shannon Rogers at [shannonr @ ptd.net](mailto:shannonr@ptd.net).

The Society has recently made it possible for members or prospective members to use credit cards to join, renew, or purchase books from the Society at <http://www.morrissociety.org/>. We have also supplemented the site with international texts such as Wald Zachrisson's 1926 *William Morris: Stråda Drag ur Hans Liv* in Swedish and Sean De Vega's Spanish translation of *The Pilgrims of Hope* (Los

Peregrinos de la Esperanza). In seeking material for the site, Kazuko Shimizu, a Japanese friend, has also located Japanese translations from the 1920s of *News from Nowhere* and Morris' essays on art and socialism, as well as a remarkable 773-page translation of *The Earthly Paradise* in 1926--the only Japanese translation of Morris' great poetic work of which I am aware. In the months to come, finally, we hope to enrich our web site with more resources for students of all ages who may not have ready access to such online summaries of Morris' life and achievements as Fiona MacCarthy's fine entry for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (available by subscription only at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>).

Until then, we wish you "days of peace and rest, . . . cleanness and smiling goodwill."

In fellowship,

Florence Boos

WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY SESSIONS, MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION CONVENTION PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, December 27th - 30th, 2006.

Pre-Raphaelitism and the World of Victorian Art

- Moderator, Mark Samuels Lasner, University of Delaware
- "Eve, Pandora, and the Woman Question in Pre-Raphaelite Art," Jude Nixon, Oakland University
- "'Strong Traivelling': Elizabeth Siddal, Women's Vision and Female Labor," Jill R. Ehnenn, Appalachian State University
- "Pre-Raphaelitism, Virginia Woolf and Her Family," Evelyn Haller, Doane College
- "'No Life is Complete Without Vice, and Technique': Late Victorian Reception of Pictorial Form," Andrew Marvick, Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery and Southern Utah University

Morris and Gender

- Moderator, Florence S. Boos, University of Iowa
- "Revisiting the Garden: Fruit and Sexual Expression in the Work of William Morris," David Faldet, Luther College
- "Pygmalion Swoons: The Aesthetics of Subjection on Pater, Morris, and Wilde," Mia L. McIver, University of California-Irvine
- "Beyond Gender: The 'Hand of Healing' and Figures of Consolation in Morris's *Love Is Enough* and Wordsworth's 'The White Doe of Rylstone'"
- "Morris's Polyvalent Women: Sexual Violence and the Dramatic Monologue," Florence S. Boos

2007 MORRIS SOCIETY FELLOWSHIPS

Since 1996 the Society has offered an annual award, now called the Joseph R. Dunlap Memorial Fellowship, which is intended to help scholars, researchers or creative artists in early stages of their careers. It will provide up to \$1000 to be used for research and other expenses, including travel to conferences. Projects may deal with any subject--biographical, literary, historical, social, artistic, political, typographical--relating to Morris.

A second award, the William Morris Society Award, may be offered at the Society's discretion. The amounts of the award also may vary, and several smaller awards may be offered up to a total of \$1000.

In addition, if it chooses the fellowship committee may offer some or all of the William Morris Society award in recognition of a recent translation of one of Morris's works from English into another language. The translation should have been completed or published within the three years prior to the award. We would like (though we do not require) that the translator grant permission for some portion of the translation to appear on our web site. For the translation prize, the "early stage" restriction does not hold. Please send applications by December 15th, 2006 to florence-boos@uiowa.edu. Applications for assistance with research or travel should include a two-page description of the proposed project, including a timeline and indication of where the results might be published, a c. v., and a letter of recommendation (which may also be sent by e-mail). For a translation award, please include a copy of the translation, an explanation in English of its scope and contents, publication information if relevant, a c. v., and if possible, a testimonial to the quality of the translation from another native speaker.

We will also hold a Morris Society dinner to which all are invited. For guest passes to the Morris

Society sessions and reservations for dinner, please write **florence-boos @ uiowa.edu** or **biblio @ aol.com**. 2007 session topics will be "The Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic Family" and "Morris as Metatext: Printforms, Editions, Illustrations," and proposals should be sent to **florence-boos @ uiowa.edu** by March 20th, 2007. 2008 session topics will be "Pre-Raphaelite Prose" and "William Morris: Friends and Associates."

RED HOUSE SELECTED FOR SUMMER THEATRE FESTIVAL

Following its presentation at the Magic Theatre last December, a public reading of *Red House* is being presented at the Bus Barn Theatre's 2006 Summer Festival in the southern San Francisco Bay Area. Directed by John Aney, a new draft of the script will be presented as the third full length play of the festival lineup, from July 20 to July 22. *Red House* takes a postmodern view of the entangled lives of three iconic Pre-Raphaelites: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Can the artists who embraced integrity in painting apply the same ruthless honesty to the tempestuous days of their youth? In the twilight of Sir Edward Burne-Jones' life, his long-suffering spouse Georgiana must decide if a lifetime of comfortable deception is worth more than an hour of honest happiness. For more details, see the Summer Festival web page at <http://busbarn.org/shows/index.php?id=71>.

To receive updates on *Red House* and future presentations, send Ignacio an email at **i.zulueta @ yahoo.com**.

SPECIAL INVITATION TO WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY MEMBERS

A Talk by Alan Crawford "William Morris: Socialist and Shopkeeper," Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, Tuesday, August 15th, 2006 8 p. m.

Members of the Morris Society are cordially invited to attend a talk by distinguished art historian Alan Crawford and sponsored by the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association to be held at the Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar Street, Berkeley, Ca. 94709 (<http://www.hillsideclub.org/>). Doors will open at 7:30 p.m., the talk itself will begin at 8, and refreshments will be served. The talk is free to members of the William Morris Society but reservations are required. Please reserve in advance with Elaine Ellis at **artsandcraftstours @ gmail.com**.

Alan Crawford is a freelance historian specializing in British architecture and decorative arts in the decades round 1900. His monograph *C. R. Ashbee: Architect, Designer and Romantic Socialist* (1985) won the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize and the Henry-Russell Hitchcock Award, and his study, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh* (1995), was described in the *New York Times Book Review* as 'remarkable for its freshness, poignancy, imaginative understanding and wealth of new research'. He is currently working on a history of the Arts and Crafts movement in England for Yale University Press, and on Court Barn, a new museum and study center in Chipping Campden devoted to the Arts and Crafts movement and its legacy in the north Cotswolds.

Mr. Crawford will speak on "William Morris: Socialist and Shopkeeper." He describes the subject of his talk thus:

Morris's career in the decorative arts began in a spirit of romantic playfulness and ended in a stubborn confrontation with modern society. His later years were full of contradictions: he was both capitalist and communist, socialist and shopkeeper. These contradictions allow people to dismiss Morris's work, but this lecture argues that, far from calling his work in question, the contradictions are signs of its authenticity.

BIRTH OF THE BESTSELLER: The 19th Century Book in Britain, France, and Beyond

The Bibliographical Society of America invites proposals for papers to be delivered at "Birth of the Bestseller: The 19th Century Book in Britain, France, and Beyond," a conference on book history to be held in New York on 29-31 March 2007.

The nineteenth century saw enormous changes in the world of books. The rise of a mass readership, the invention of machine-driven technologies, new reproduction methods, and an astonishing variation in literature, authorship, publishing, periodicals, printing, typography, illustration, marketing, taste, and design contributed to an era of intense complexity and development. Yet, despite growing interest over the decades, some aspects of the period remain largely unstudied. This conference, to take place at three prestigious venues, will focus on the physical book in nineteenth century Britain, France, the United States, and elsewhere.

The conference topic and location are occasioned by concurrent exhibitions at the Grolier Club ("Lucien and Esther Pissarro's Eragny Press"), the Morgan Library & Museum ("Victorian Best-sellers"), and the Fales Library, New York University ("Nothing New: The Persistence of the Bestseller"). Related exhibitions and events will be held during Spring 2007 at the Bard Graduate Center and the New York Public Library.

Subjects for proposals may include, but are not limited to:

- production, publication, circulation, and marketing of bestsellers (not limited to fiction)
- genres and formats specific to or developed in, the nineteenth century, such as books in "parts," the three-volume novel, yellowbacks, penny dreadfuls, cheap reprints and original series, editions de luxe, private press books, illustrated books and magazines, photographically-illustrated books
- development of a mass reading public, the rise of periodicals
- new publishing and marketing strategies
- international production and markets across the Channel and the oceans through communication, travel, and shipping
- changes in production technology—including printing, typography, papermaking, bookbinding, and reproductive methods—and the impact on content, the publishing and printing industry, and the economics of bookmaking
- illustration for popular and elite audiences
- authors and authorship, illustrators, publishers, designers, agents, and printers, their roles, their relations, the rise of celebrity status
- book collecting, bibliophily, the rise of bibliographical studies
- copyright and piracy
- Arts and Crafts reaction against industrial book design, private presses, limited editions
- implications for research on print culture and publishing history

Abstracts (one page maximum) for 20 minute papers, together with a curriculum vitae or resume, must be received by the conference committee by 1 September 2006. Proposals may be sent via e-mail or regular mail to the Chair of the committee:

Mark Samuels Lasner
Senior Research Fellow
University of Delaware Library
181 South College Avenue
Newark, DE 19717
marksl@udel.edu

For further information, go to: <http://www.bibsocamer.org/>.

ELECTRIC TIFFANY

June 3-October 8, 2006, Paine Art Center and Gardens, Oshkosh, WI

In the largest exhibition of Tiffany lamps in 20 years, the Paine Art Center and Gardens showcases an extraordinary exhibit featuring 50 original lamps created by the studios of renowned American artist and designer Louis Comfort Tiffany. Tiffany created the exquisite lamps between 1895 and 1920. Electric Tiffany presents superior examples of the full spectrum of his inspired use of electric light. Tiffany Studios produced more than 400 different designs for both shades and bases in a variety of forms, ranging from table and floor lamps to hanging fixtures. Botanical themes inspired most designs, but other motifs show Tiffany's interest in insects, Moorish art and architecture, and geometric patterns. Electric Tiffany demonstrates this immense diversity and celebrates the creativity, innovation and exquisite craftsmanship of Tiffany's magnificent lamps: <http://www.thepaine.org/>.

NINETEENTH CENTURY REPRODUCTIONS

Weigley Lounge, History Department, Gladfelter 914, Temple University Main Campus. Sponsored by the Center for the Humanities at Temple and the Nineteenth Century Forum. For information, contact **reproductions@temple.edu**.

October 5, 2006, 4:00-6:00 Light

- Kate Flint, Department of English, Rutgers University

- Chris Otter, Department of History, New York University
- Respondent: Alan Trachtenberg, English and American Studies, Yale University

November 16, 2006, 4:00-6:00 Evolution

- Nancy Armstrong, English, Comparative Literature and Modern Culture Media, Brown University
- Jay Clayton, Department of English, Vanderbilt University
- Respondent: Henrika Kuklick, Department of History and Sociology of Science, University of Pennsylvania

February 15, 2007, 4:00-6:00 Birth

- Rachel Fuchs, Department of History, Arizona State University
- Kathy Psomiades, Department of English, Duke University
- Respondent: Sally Mitchell, Department of English, Temple

February 24, 2007, Graduate Student Conference

- 8:30-5:00, Student Center, Rm. 200, Temple Main Campus
- Keynote Speaker, Nancy Cott, Department of History, Harvard University

March 29, 2007, 4:00-6:00 Performance

- Jonathan Rose, Department of History, Drew University
- Alison Winter, Department of History, University of Chicago
- Respondent: Deirdre David, Department of English, Temple University

CARLETON COLLEGE STUDENTS CREATE AN EXHIBITION OF PRE-RAPHAELITE BOOKS

This past spring Susan Jaret McKinstry, Helen F. Lewis Professor of English at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota and her students mounted an exhibition on Pre-Raphaelite Printed Books at the College's Gould Library. The Library's substantial Pre-Raphaelite holdings include miniscule gift books and a facsimile Kelmscott Chaucer. According to the College's web site, "The large variety of rare books owned by Carleton awed Jaret McKinstry's seminar class of 12 students. They carefully looked through the delicate pages, examining each book for its artistry, content and style of composition, eventually selecting a group of books they felt best demonstrated the fundamentals of Pre-Raphaelitism. After thoroughly researching each book, class members composed placards expressing how it interpreted aspects of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." With help from the library's curators, the students then designed an exhibit in the library's Rookery lounge space, including a PowerPoint presentation of Pre-Raphaelite texts, history and paintings. The presentation expressed the students' passion for the subject by emphasizing the significance of holding actual antique books. As senior Chris Parsons (Ann Arbor, Mich.) noted, "Getting to hold the book lends a perspective. If we want to think about authors or works of art in a social and historical context, then seeing editions that people of the time read is important. Nobody would choose to see a slide of a painting rather than the painting itself." Or as Jaret McKinstry put it, "It's taking students who are used to looking at Norton [anthologies] and making them think about the visual."

PRE-RAPHAELITES IN THE THEATRE

Although the opening is past and the run is complete, readers might be interested to know about the play *Rossetti's Circle*, which premiered at Hollywood's Ruby Theatre in March, on William Morris's birthday. Written and directed by Anne Hulegard, it was produced by Moonstar Productions at the Ruby Theatre, Hollywood 90038 between 24 March-29 April 2006. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) was a celebrated poet, painter and designer who co-founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of English painters and poets who hoped to bring to their art the richness and purity of the medieval period. "Rossetti's Circle" is much more than a historical drama: Ninety years before the advent of rock and roll, the scene was Sex, Drugs and Art! Prepare to be seduced into a world of romance, madness and Art.

"One of England's most charismatic characters, Dante Gabriel Rossetti painted, wrote and loved with equal passion. "Rossetti's Circle" is the romantic and mad journey of Rossetti and the women who

haunted him: his ethereal artist wife Lizzie Siddal, his earthy blonde mistress Fanny Cornforth, and William Morris' wife Jane Burden. Rossetti's striking accomplishments were often overshadowed by suicide, adultery and addiction. Rebelling against the 19th Century academic art establishment, Rossetti founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood along with John Everett Millais, Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris. All of these historic figures come to life in an exciting and entertaining way, combining both humor and drama." Anne Hulegard was trained by Stella Adler and Uta Hagen. Anne founded and was artistic director of Hermosa Playhouse. Among her previous directing credits: the West Coast Premiere of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the award-winning "A Quiet End," the L. A. Premiere of "Prelude to a Kiss," the Off-Broadway production of "All My Sons" with Joy Franz (the latter two of which Hulegard also produced and starred in) , plus much more. Her new film starring John Waters favorite Mink Stole, "Out of Mind," will be released later in 2006. Her critically acclaimed play "Greetings From South Philly" is in pre-production as a feature film. She wrote an acclaimed documentary, "Mothers in Prison." Anne has produced and received multiple citations and awards for local television programming.

Daniel Kaemon plays Rossetti. He has extensive classical credits at A Noise Within and The Grove Theatre. He's also had recurring characters on daytime TV dramas "Days of Our Lives" and "Passions." The cast of "Rossetti's Circle" also includes Amy Fitzmaurice, Brian Graves, Carmit Levite, Jennifer Seifert, Adam Smith and David Webb. John Batdorf ("Touched By An Angel," "Promised Land") composes the original music. Costumes: Diana Mann. Lighting designer: John Toome. Get ready to enjoy yourself. This play is as seductive as its famously romantic leading character.

ARTICLES

THE ALCHEMY OF A TRIP: AN ARTS AND CRAFTS TOUR OF BRITAIN

by Judy Hanks-Henn

There is an alchemy that creates an unforgettable trip abroad, and it is tricky to even begin to put it into words. Look at Morris when he took his trip to France: those elements that created his openness to new experiences such as the stage in his life, his rich imagination manifested in dreams and ideas, his myriad of passions, his assimilation of ideas from Ruskin, reading of Thackeray, and his traveling companions. Added to those elements there was a chemical heat from seeing the ancient buildings and landscapes of France that blazed a new direction in his life which left our world with his bountiful legacy, and sealed a bond with his friend, Burne-Jones, that weathered both their lifetimes of love and heartbreak. Even upon returning from that journey, his essays were distilling his experience and its import. Just returning from such a trip that followed Morris' life and work, I am left with gold; yet unable to chemically separate out the concrete from the conceptual and the personal thoughts from any public discourse. Journeys are such a mysterious concoction of feeling and thinking, dreaming and reality. I am left with the wonder of that fusion....

It was fifteen years ago I dreamed running out of a great church through a manicured graveyard, announcing to those in sight, "Morris is not dead!"

My life as a designer and artist has been a reflection of that dream. Morris' role in my life has been an active one as a spiritual mentor speaking to me from the world of books on his philosophy, his design work, and his deeds during his lifetime – personal and professional. All those around me know of Morris as a great designer who possessed a noble character. I have restored my family's turn-of-the-century home in the Morris way. With all this attention to Morris, the mystery that lurks in my thoughts is the fearful question of whether he would have personally liked me or I, him. His allegedly brusque manner and violent temper might have kept me guarded and aloof or even hurt and resentful. Yet I also cherish the thought that we would have been close artistic friends.

At age fifty-one, I took the opportunity to get closer to my mentor's work and go beyond all I could glean from using books. Now was the time to see the reality of his work, and see his England - which was his muse in creating that "sense of place" found in all of his design work. My landscape architecture projects were taking a marked turn towards historical Arts and Crafts estates. I wanted my work to be an authentic influence of that British style which began with the Red House and moved across the Atlantic to my region in the Eastern United States.

To begin, I chose Martin and Caroline Easton's Arts and Crafts Tours of Great Britain, as they offered a small personalized tour and came recommended and posted on Mark Golding's premier web site, the Arts and Crafts Home (<http://www.achome.co.uk/tours/tours.htm>.) I e-mailed Martin my intention to go in May, and gave him my wish list: mainly Morris related sites and gardens. (see

sidebar)

Following my commitment, my business associate, Ann, was interested in this tour, and soon after that, a Canadian architect named Mike Ulford who studies the homes of C. A. Voysey. The trip with the three of us was confirmed. Martin kept us informed of the general itinerary, developing it from our responses. Ah, but he also packed in special things about which we hadn't a clue!

The typecast notion of Canadians being so very polite and thoughtful held true. Mike's plane came late to Gatwick, so the first stop of our tour – Standen – had to be rescheduled for the end of the trip. Mike felt personally responsible for this glitch, and it seemed to burden him for eight days until we finally visited the place. While waiting for his plane to arrive, Ann and I met our guide Martin and his well-equipped van full of pillow neck-rests and well-chosen Arts and Craft books. Martin was a gentle giant, knowledgeable on most things pertaining to The Arts and Craft Movement, attentive, and witty. Caroline, his wife, couldn't come along as planned as her mother's health required close attention. But Caroline also had a sharp wit that followed us throughout the trip. She and Martin kept up a constant dialogue and we all got to enjoy her perspectives via Martin's instant messaging.

When we all were finally together, Martin whisked us away in sunny weather to a restaurant about two blocks from Red House for us to become acquainted. We chatted through the early afternoon until our appointment to see Red House drew closer. Leaving the restaurant refreshed, in full sunshine, Martin wound around the streets that hid Red House. From the road, it was tucked away, behind a brick wall. When Martin let us out to park the van, a sudden gale storm blew up and the skies opened. Wind tugging at my umbrella, I dashed through the gates to find the Red House front door just twenty feet away. Yes, my heart was in my throat at catching the first sight of it. Because it had a protective vaulted alcove, a number of us ran straight to it. We had all arrived simultaneously for the scheduled next tour. The magnificent door was locked and signs directed visitors to the back of the house. We were stuck. As it became apparent that the storm would not let up, we dashed to the rear servant's entry and through a threshold which was littered in umbrellas. The drenched late arrivals, like us, stood puddling in a hall plastered in informative maps and photographs, while the previous tour members were sitting at two long tables in a little bookshop, dry and comfortable, having tea and cake!

Two chaps were standing among them, who seemed casual and relaxed while speaking in clever repartee. Their laughter created warmth in my bones in spite of the distressful and soaked beginning of my most anticipated house tour of the trip. As it turned out, one of these two men was our tour guide.

It took me back a bit, but the guide conveyed a William Morris personality I didn't at first recognize. Did Morris appear at his front door in full body armor, in a partying state, to greet his weekend guests – also dressed in similar costume? Did he delve deeply into medieval *warfare* for his design details throughout the house? That new information shifted my understanding of the man. I could see some frivolity in the Morris I read about when he created the brightly colored cart that pulled his guests from the train stop to the house, as well as his willingness to make himself the butt of jokes, and his love for wine and friendship. But was he a party-hearty type? From his poetry and his socialist lectures I had seen a romantic, earnest and unaffected person, not a poser or a party animal like an Oscar Wilde. If he also wrote in high spirits and mischievous fun, I need to read those passages.

In spite of my prior reading, I found the orientation of the house different from what I had imagined. In my favorite photo, the garden well actually faces the southeast whereas I had imagined it facing northeast. And I never had a sense of how the house held together and, well, after seeing it once, I still don't. That puzzle must have spurred Rossetti's comment that it was more of a poem than a house. The greatest surprise was the discovery of the decorative painting behind the lower wall of the first floor drawing room, which Morris wished to be "the most beautiful room in the world." The discovery is so new that it hasn't been published in any book! From that startling piece of decoration I desperately wanted to see the whole room restored. I also wanted all the needlework panels of the great legendary women made and hung, and all the furniture returned to the Red House to see William Morris' ultimate vision! Couldn't replicas be done? The replica of the Daisy hanging by Iowa's Perry needleworkers (see the Newsletter, New Year 2006) was proudly displayed there and commented upon by our tour guide!

I walked away from the Red House knowing I needed to return, after more reading of his original words and thoughts (and activities) during the time of his residency there. Also I left with a desire to find a benefactor committed to the restoration of the home to Morris' idealized state – the state he left uncompleted but left a record clear enough to create that dreamed vision. As a designer, I felt so much frustration not to see it in its realized form, because I believe it would have been a tour-de-force in its time and an even stronger influence on the minds and tastes of the time, just as Ruskin's written work had effected. Instead, the Red House was left as an early, unwritten masterpiece with a prologue and a sketched out thematic plot.

Two days later in our trip, Martin took our group to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford to see the "Prioress's Tale" Wardrobe that was in Janey's room at Red House. Ann and I took photos of it from head to toe, inside and out. It stood like an orphan, alone among a disparate assemblage of paintings and pieces, unaware of the many kindred artifacts and Red House homeland back in Kent. I wished it were conscious of its identity and could journey back to its sympathetic surroundings. Down a picturesque alley off the main street in Oxford, Martin led us to the Oxford Union Society, which is where it all began. It held the paintings of young Morris, Rossetti, and Burne-Jones who were incubating their talents with efforts at mural painting.

The most remarkable portion was not the frescos, but Morris' own colored and decorative motifs in the stairway's stained glass window and the leafy patterns on the ceiling's arched beams. I walked away a bit envious that Oxford students had daily access to this work: the hatchery of all Morris' future design developments.

The very next morning Martin took us to the annual first day opening of William Morris' chosen and beloved historic home, Kelmscott Manor. Everyone was in high spirits, affected by the clear blue sky, mild temperature, songs of the birds, noises of the babbling brook on the grounds, and the smells of freshly groomed gardens. I could see with my own eyes the inspiration of Morris' love in the surrounding liveliness and beauty of English nature that was woven in his fabric and wallpaper designs. It felt like an Earthly Paradise to be walking on those grounds that morning. Now, I thought, I could internalize that muse that Morris experienced and loved so well.

From day five:

I was tickled when Martin announced he had a surprise in store for me. This was the afternoon spent in the van heading to a Voysey home in the Lake District. We had just had a tour of the unmatched taste of Wightwick Manor and an afternoon tea at another amazing place! It was both touching and amusing to see Martin's delight in his role as tour director cum Santa Claus. Martin ceremoniously lifted the upholstered front seat head-covers to reveal two LCD screens for the back seats. And he handed me a video of Red House. With some bustle of finding earphones and getting the movie underway, I was lost in the world of William Morris. It was a very good video which included remarkable computerized graphics to reveal the decoration of the beamed ceiling of the "most beautiful room in the world," the first floor drawing room's ultimate appearance. The effect was breathtaking, and I wanted to study it further in book form. It steeled my desire to see the Red House transformed into Morris' unrealized vision. BUT...perhaps and instead...it would be a book with computerized graphics that would satisfy my urge for closure on this matter? The Red House preservationists would certainly like to keep the Red House within the reality of Morris' life, thank-you-very-much, and not confuse it with his visions! Yes, I wanted his vision but I had never seen it in books! Here was a need to be filled! My thoughts were full after absorbing so much new information, but the film concluded and I received an even greater, unexpected surprise.

The landscape outside had transformed. The light and weather had too. I was looking up at rising emerald green hills neatly divided into many tidy stone rooms with sheep inside them. It felt like looking down at a house plan, but having it tipped up forty-five degrees. Never had I been "contained" in a 360 degree space like this. There was an eerie and glowing/spiritual green light in the grass rising up and touching the dark, low, steely swirling gray clouds which covered everything. The clouds and hills had obliterated the defined ceiling of what one usually experiences as "above" and "below." Quite dizzying!

We were near the Lake District and were about to reach the crest to reveal the Lake on the other side and the land beyond. Upon reaching that side, the landscape had changed again. The sky and land had returned to their typical orientation of "above," and "below." The sun was once again visible, and thus, time had magically turned back to earlier in the afternoon.

Martin stopped the van immediately for a leg stretch next to a cove in the Lake. We had the place to ourselves since it was early in May and we had arrived at the end of a day. Boats were beached, but the place was made for crowds. Protected from the street along the Lake, rustic stone walls with built-in benches defined a park space and there was an adjacent rustic building designed for good food and dancing jutting out over the scenic Lake. The landscape surrounding the Lake was still hilly. Across the street and lording over it from above was a newly minted piece of architecture: white with classic detailing and appearing as a marble ship carved from the hillside. It was a hotel for the gentry. I imagined myself as a British patron on holiday.

Martin told us we had to go as we still needed to get to our hotel before six o'clock. We drove away from the Lake through a hilly village full of picturesque inns. When we came out of the town and onto a

long, winding wood road, I was disappointed that we were going further from the Lake and the potential adventure to be found in a walkable, interesting village.

"This is it!" announced Martin as he pulled off the road onto a shady lane of crushed stone. We had arrived at a gleaming turn-of-the-century castle-mansion on the bluffs of the Lake, both lake and castle shimmering gold in the setting sun.

Martin lightly stepped out of the van and we crawled out with our mouths open. None could speak for its landscaped beauty and the surprise of it all. Never had I felt so full of remarkable experiences in such short sequence – Morris' Red House video, the sheep in the green rooms in the sky, a Lake of great beauty and NOW a castle to sleep in! Shaking, in tears, I kissed Santa Claus. That night we lived the life of hose at Wightwick!

It is equally hard to describe the rest of the tour, for it was an unparalleled one. The last night in England at was spent in a South Coast villa house by the sea with Peter Rose, advisor to the National Trust on Red House, and Mark Golding was one I will always treasure. It is still hard to believe it happened to me.

Peter Rose is a gentleman and a generous host. Somehow Martin had wangled for our group on that last afternoon a personal tour from Peter of his house filled with paintings and priceless treasures. It would have been great to just let him talk forever as he knew so much that I want to know about the Arts and Crafts designers. He gave me permission to photograph De Morgan pieces, furniture of Bruce Talbert, and Benson lights with Whitefrairs glass. He saw me trying to sketch his stunning main hall chandelier created by Benson and Powell in my journal. He noticed among the recent sketches I made that day (from the house tour at Standen) an Arts and Crafts chair with advanced craftsmanship, with its tricky curved arm rests, balanced design detailing and proportion throughout the piece. "Well, that IS an interesting piece," he commented, and he proceeded to show me its identical twin upstairs!

At the tour's end there was a ring at the door and Mark Golding appeared at Peter's house. It was easy to see the tremendous affection and loyalty he had for Peter. I was reminded of William Morris and his circle, as their relationship was deep and both professional and personal and filled with a love for Arts and Crafts.

We said our quick goodbyes and took off to the hotel to freshen for dinner. This dinner was different than the rest. At Standen, Martin had presented us with a Morris designed invitation which announced "The Martin and Caroline Arts and Craft Tours of Great Britain's" farewell dinner at Peter's favorite French restaurant, and among the guests were Peter, Mark, and Martin's wife, Caroline! I have the invitation pasted in my journal. And Caroline had drawn dinner place cards for us done in a Morris acanthus border. I have that pasted in, too. Caroline had so similar a temperament and interests to my own that I regretted not to have gotten the opportunity to know her better.

What I couldn't paste in my journal was the conversation at dinner. I had Peter Rose and Mark Golding on each side of me! Mark let me know that Gibbs Smith, Publisher is actively looking for Arts and Crafts topics for publication ... and that Brian Coleman wrote the book featuring Peter's Arts and Crafts collection which Peter had dedicated as the Albert Dawson Collection, titled *The Best of the British Arts and Crafts* (ISBN 0-7643-2013-00) ... and that Brian Coleman had Martin drive him all over England to get photographs for his new book ... and that Brian Coleman is someone I would enjoy meeting too ... At the dinner's end, both Peter and Mark offered me their business cards. I have them pasted in my journal. I took that gesture seriously and very much to heart as their stamp of approval ... and in that epiphanic moment the alchemy occurred. The journey turned spiritual and golden and I felt that maybe, well, maybe ... William Morris would have liked me after all.

A NEW MORRIS LETTER ABOUT THE STORY OF THE GLITTERING PLAIN

by Mark Samuels Lasner

Thanks to Norman Kelvin's assiduous work in compiling his magisterial edition of Morris's correspondence it is rare to come across a Morris letter that remains unpublished. Yet they do exist—hidden in unknown or uncataloged private and public collections. Some years ago, in looking through a file in the library of the Grolier Club in New York, I came across two Morris letters. One, the text made available by a previous owner, had appeared in Kelvin's edition, the other was new, and is printed on the cover of this Newsletter for the first time. In making this letter available I wish to thank Eric Holzenberg, the director/librarian of the Grolier Club, and our fellow member, Barbara J. Dunlap, who cataloged both letters when organizing the club's archives.

The letter, dated 8 May 1891, is addressed to J. and J. Leighton, the London bookbinders who bound all the Kelmscott Press books. It refers to the press's first title, *The Story of the Glittering Plain*,

and helps to explain the short note to Leighton, sent later the same day, printed by Kelvin (no. 1873), making it clear that even at the moment of publication the binding of the book was being done in stages. Indeed, Morris was still dealing with the finer points of how he wished the binding to be produced. That the silk for the headbands for the vellum-bound copies (in green vellum) came from Morris and Co. appears to be a new piece of information. I have not been able to determine what the "MS. of mine (bound in an old Venetian binding)" might be. The phrase is somewhat ambiguous, and might refer to an illuminated manuscript Morris owned (likely not one acquired at the sale of Edward Hailstone's library at Sotheby's only the week before), or, possibly, to the manuscript of one of his own writings. Perhaps one of our readers will be able to identify the manuscript with certainty.

Kelmscott House,
Upper Mall,
Hammersmith.
May 8th [1891]

Dear Sir

I enclose a cheque herewith. May I remind you that you had an MS. of mine (bound in an old Venetian binding) which you were to repair for me. Re the binding of Gl. Pl. the 5 extra press copies you might keep till I can see you on Monday morning as I have a mind to have their edges trimmed a little[.] We might try it with one copy while I wait. I will send (per Morris & Co) 2 oz of silk for headbands for the vellum copies. The 8 new G.P.'s look very well. Please get on with binding the vellum copies in the green.

Yrs truly

William Morris

Founded in 1884, the Grolier Club is one of the country's oldest and most prestigious societies for bibliophiles and iconophiles. The club, located in midtown New York City, holds public exhibitions, issues publications, and maintains an extensive library (open to serious researchers) on book arts, the history of the book, and printing. As one might expect, Morris is well represented in the collections. The club was one of the handful of institutions to which in 1895 Morris sent copies of *Sidonia the Sorceress* in order to have Kelmscott printing represented in American libraries (the book is still in the library, together with the letter of presentation from a Chicago book agent). Additional materials now include several volumes from Morris's library (three marked book auction catalogues, a work by Dibdin, and an album of reproductions of medieval manuscripts), other representative Kelmscott Press titles, and secondary works about Morris and the revival of printing. For further information contact: The Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, New York, NY 10022, <http://www.grolierclub.org/>.

TEACHING MORRIS IN ST. PETERSBURG

by Anna Matyukhina

I became acquainted with William Morris as a third year student in the History of Arts Department of the Historical Faculty at St. Petersburg State University. The main degree courses were concerned with different aspects of art history, but we were also offered a wide range of compulsory subjects dealing with social and political history, for which we had to prepare seminar reports. As an art historian, I always tried to find some topic that would allow me to talk about the medieval tapestries that were my special interest from the very start.

When I was asked to make a report on eighteenth-century history I chose the problem of tapestry decline, and since I touched on the tapestry revival in my presentation, I thus encountered Morris for the first time. A year later we were offered a wonderful course in nineteenth century art and our professor devoted one of her lectures to the Pre-Raphaelites. Of course she told us about William Morris, though very briefly, for she had to cover the development of painting and sculpture all over the world within this time-period, and applied arts were only mentioned in passing.

A number of years later I began to work in the same department from which I graduated and started teaching English to future art historians, who, like almost all their predecessors, had to become acquainted with William Morris during a single lecture on Pre-Raphaelites. Students in this program study English in their first three years at the University, but unfortunately, "Foreign Languages" are not a major so I have only one ninety-minute class a week with each group. The main aim of the English

classes is to teach students to translate scholarly writing and to increase their competence in grammar and art historical vocabulary.

Each term our lessons are united by one topic, and the second term of the first year, devoted to "a famous person," gives me the fortunate opportunity to open up the works of William Morris to my students. We read and translate texts which provide a general idea of his biography and diverse activities, and I show them many pictures that make these texts clearer and more vivid. Usually I also pay special attention to the problem of the tapestry revival, since, thanks to the "Adoration" tapestry woven at Merton Abbey and put on display at the State Hermitage Museum, my students can see original fruits of Morris's genius with their own eyes. At the end of the term I ask them to write an essay on William Morris and their attitude toward this great man.

I am also teaching "Translation from English" for senior pupils at the Extracurricular School of Guides. The goal of the school is not only the increasing of language competence in the schoolchildren, who already have a rather good command of the basic English, but the cultivation of a cultured and multifaceted personality. This year I taught my second year pupils in the Extracurricular School the same course of study dealing with William Morris as my University students, and they were also asked to write a composition on Morris. In the Extracurricular School I have much more time and freedom for talking about William Morris, and we had several lessons at the Hermitage in which we looked at the "Adoration" tapestry and the medieval tapestries of the "Golden Age" of tapestry weaving, showing my pupils the kind of tapestries that were the source of inspiration for Morris.

Next term I am going to start a special course devoted to translation of texts by Morris. I hope to write about this course as well as about the School in general in the future, but now I would like to offer some of my students' responses to the attention of William Morris Society members, in the hope that they may be interested in what Russian fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds from different Petersburg schools (most of whom are not sure yet of their future careers) and seventeen through nineteen-year-olds who are future art historians have come to think of William Morris after our lessons. Some of the essays, though good, were mere abstracts from the texts we read, often with additional research, but here I want to quote only the essays showing students' personal viewpoints on Morris, his art and the Hermitage "Adoration" tapestry. Such works are represented here, lexical and grammatical mistakes included.

Of about seventy pupils and students I taught over a three year period there were only two girls, both future art historians, who had previously heard about William Morris before I told them about him in class.

Lilia Lebedeva, who entered University in September 2004 and whose first and second year term papers were devoted to William Blake, first became acquainted with Morris's works at a school which gave an English major: "As for me William Morris is one of the greatest masters of the world. His books, furniture, textiles were the presage of modern art, however he and his friends – the Pre-Raphaelites were inspired by the heritage of medieval artists... His masterpieces are always bright, rich, with no empty spaces. Every petal and flower brings the spectator to the rotation of senses and emotions, beauty and eroticism, eternal life where death is not important. His art is graphical and voluminous at the same time and it refers to sensual perception...One can feel this getting in touch with his books, furniture, etc. This non-realistic art makes men to be carried away to his dream-world. "

Anastasia Zemskova, a first year student in the History of Art Department, had intended to enter the Saint Petersburg State Academy of Art and Design after finishing the Art School, but decided to enter the State University instead. She is fond of impressionism and post-impressionism as she feels these art movements are the closest to her inner world, perhaps because she is a painter herself. Besides the history of art she is interested in journalism and has worked in broadcasting and the press. She wrote: "I have already heard about William Morris when I learnt at the Art School but I never attached great importance to him and his work. But at the University English lessons I understood that he was a prominent artist and his contribution to the development of modern art was great. He returned the tapestry to applied arts, he regarded it as the highest form of textile design. Morris turned his attention to traditional methods of tapestry weaving, he also tried to revive the natural vegetable dyeing and traditional ornamental elements. He led tapestry away from excessive realism and, complicated perspective and led it back to decorative composition, simplification of space organisation, and colour conventionality. This was a base of a new prosperity of tapestry art. Besides William Morris wrote poetry and translated Icelandic sagas into English, consequently he discovered the wonderful world of sagas to a wide public and his Red House influenced the affirmation of new principles in modern architecture. That is why I think Morris was a unique person. In spite of problems in his personal life he continued his work, he created. He believed that mass-production degraded the craftsman and tried to save crafts. In my opinion he was a strong and confident person. "

In contrast to these two students, the others had never heard of Morris but were pleased to come to know about him. For example, according to first year student Nadezhda Smurova, she was so interested in William Morris after she heard about him during English lessons that it gave her pleasure to write an essay about him since "he did so much for future generations," and she has no doubt that "his talent, life and style shall be never forgotten by people." Another student, Ekaterina Berger, wrote: "Who is William Morris? Not long ago I could not answer this question but in our lessons of English I got to know very much about him, his work and moreover his private life. I knew little about tapestries and tapestry weaving but from our lessons I understood that it is very absorbing, especially after visiting the State Hermitage according to our teacher's advice... Morris was a person who was faithful to his work and he was rapt, loving and romantic... it would be great if Russians knew more about Morris and his endowment into art."

Only one student, who generally preferred the study of Russian artists, confessed she was not much impressed by William Morris after our classes. She thought that "no doubts there are no less outstanding personalities than Morris in Russian art and they are respected in Russia, however, if we ask an ordinary foreigner about them, he or she won't be able to tell us anything." That is why the fact that she (as a great deal of her co-evals) had never heard of Morris before entering the University "must not be considered frightening and showing the low level of intellect." She believes that English and other foreign artists must be known by scholars and people in their native countries,

but this is not an obligatory knowledge for average people in other countries.

But most of her classmates found much warmer words about William Morris and his art. For instance, Nataliya Dudkina wrote: "To my mind Morris in all his works was a poet. As a man of uncommon abilities he created his tapestries going by a wonderful ideal. Morris was an adherent of free creative process and his example, as it seems to me, should inspire artists nowadays. Morris breathed mood into his works. I feel the mystic atmosphere in his pieces is literally sensible. Morris decorated his tapestries with patterns of legends and fairy tales. It seems that his works are full of spirituality... I think Morris was a remarkable person because he had touched the spiritual sources of culture and he was also a humanist and his tapestries bring back old melodies that sound affecting all over again... For me art is the reflection of an historical epoch and thus the reflection of ideology and world vision of the people of that time. I'm interested in different periods of art--baroque, romanticism, modernism. It is a deep and subtle sense of history that is the most interesting for me in the art of the Pre-Raphaelites. As for William Morris, the revival of the wonderful medieval craft by him is especially interesting to me from the viewpoint of the new understanding of the past and this is vital nowadays."

Evgeniya Alexandrova, a third year student in the Department of the History of Culture, who studied English with the art historians, was also impressed by William Morris. Her special interest is Michelangelo's influence on the artists of mannerism, and though she had a general idea of the Pre-Raphaelites she had never heard about Morris before our lessons. She went to the Hermitage to see the "Adoration" tapestry, since "it's always interesting to have a look at what you've read about," and moreover started reading about Morris in both Russian and English to get to know more about him. In her essay she wrote: "Being a gifted person, he managed to create a wide range of practical and decorative things such as stained glass, furniture, ceramics, textiles, engraving and others. He also wrote some poems and took part in social life. I'm really impressed by the variety of Morris' talents. I wonder how a man could have had as much energy, time and inspiration as Morris did."

Some art historians call him a dilettante. And they use this word to describe all of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. I don't agree with it. In my opinion, his work was an endeavor to say something new in Art. His innovation was based on old traditions. He was inspired by medieval times. It seemed to be a mysterious and romantic time. I think Morris' work and his socialistic beliefs confirm that he was a romantic person.

To my mind, his most impressive project was the Red House. Designed by Philip Web, it reconstructed a medieval workshop. Morris himself learned how to make dishes, furniture and other items. I can imaginethe delight and surprise of the visitors when they came to the Red House and felt the creative atmosphere of thecraftsman workshop. Their feelings were intensified by Morris himself, who met visitors wearing an apron and with his arms dirty with paint or clay... "

Of my pupils at the "School of Guides and Interpreters," none of them, as I have already mentioned, had heard of William Morris before our lessons. Looking back at my own past, I remember well that long before the art of Morris had become my special interest I had been truly afraid that I would say "Morrison" instead "Morris" during my first report on the tapestry revival, since I was very fond of "The Doors" music at that time and Jim Morrison had been much closer to me than William Morris... Of course I have never told my pupils about that fact, and so my surprise was great when I

started reading one of my pupils' compositions written by fifteen-year-old Dasha Yurchenko: "Morris? Who is that Morris? Perhaps we are going to speak about Morrison, about Jim Morrison? But what bond is it between Morrison and the fine and applied arts? – I'm sure such thoughts had everyone who heard this surname! And I also had thought so before I understood what Morris I should know. And it must be said that it was a real pleasure for me! There are a lot of names in world history which are well-known not only to professionals, but also to ordinary people who are distant from the details of art history, for example, it's hard to find such a person who has never heard about Da Vinci or about Rembrandt or Dali! But there are a lot of talented artists who probably are very popular in their motherlands but whose names are known only to specialists and collectors abroad. How shall I put it... None of my friends has any conception about William Morris!!! But as a matter of fact, he's a cultural idol in English culture! It was a real surprise for me! I'm sure that this personality is worthy to be said more about at lessons in Russian schools, in Russian books and art albums, because William Morris was an absolutely bright and great personality! Just think, speaking about him we can't perceive him only as an artist or only as a poet! It'd be wrong and unfair due to the fact that he was a real man of the Renaissance. How could he be called so living in the 19th century? Nothing strange – we know that this phrase has a stable meaning – it's a person who has large knowledge on different spheres of arts, crafts and sciences and whose interests and activities are also vast. And Morris, I think, is a best example of such a man, moreover he made his own Renaissance in the art of his own time! Like Leonardo, like Boccaccio! ... I'm sure that it's a great success to spend your life like Morris! To do so much, to try yourself in different spheres! I share his proclamation – "don't have anything in your house you can't use or enjoy." Isn't it wonderful when you have a lot of beautiful and practical things around? And the creation of such things was the main aim of Morris's life!"

The whole group was impressed by William Morris. For instance, Kristina Vorozhova, fifteen years old, wrote: "I've heard about Morris for the first time this year, we have read information about his life and I was shocked by his biography as he was interested in so many different things and everything he did he did excellent. We also visited the Hermitage where we saw his tapestry "Adoration." It was very beautiful and I was delighted and I admire him and his tapestry... I think that such an interesting person as William Morris should be known by people all over the world and it would be interesting to get to know more about him. "

Her classmate Dasha Ivanova also wrote: "I find Morris a very interesting and attractive person. I wasn't sure that there are some people who can do a lot of different things, who can lead everything to the end. But now I know that such people exist on our planet. I'm very proud of our city that we have a masterpiece by this extraordinary and astonishing man in the Hermitage." Two girls confessed that they became interested in Morris only after our lesson in the Hermitage Museum, and that it was Adoration tapestry they enjoyed "live" that aroused their interest in Morris.

Dasha Belousova wrote: "I have been living in St.Petersburg for 16 years since my birth and I love my city. I am fond of visiting museums and theatres but if you had asked me about William Morris 6 months ago I would have told you that I did not know him. I got to know about Morris for the first time in the lesson. We were going to speak about his life and his work with our teacher. Frankly speaking at first I didn't find it interesting to read about him – I liked a few facts about his biography but I didn't become keen on him. Learning about Morris's tapestries I also didn't have a great interest in the matter but this was only in class. When we had a lesson in the Hermitage where we could see the Adoration tapestry – this tapestry made me think about it. I liked this work and was really interested in other works by him. I looked for some other materials about his biography and this very tapestry. And at last I became interested in making tapestries – I consider this work to be incredibly interesting and I'm thinking over about visiting some school or courses where I could learn tapestry weaving. "

Dasha's friend Anna Gurina, also sixteen years old, also wrote: "It was in the School of Guides and Interpreters where our teacher first told us about William Morris. At the beginning we just read information about him, his works, tapestries he made and so on. All that time I wasn't much interested in Morris's works and such type of art as weaving of tapestries in general – I found it boring. However soon I with my group and our teacher went to the Hermitage to see a tapestry made at Merton Abbey. When I saw it I suddenly realised that there is something attractive in this type of art, I admired this tapestry! It was really magic! I was listening to the information the teacher told us about *Adoration*, process of weaving, about what every plant and flower depicted in the tapestry symbolised and didn't understand how could I undervalue it?! After that I found it interesting and I wanted to see other works by Morris, but unfortunately it was the only one of his tapestries in Saint-Petersburg. May be one day I'll manage to visit other countries to see his masterpieces. Later I saw lots of other tapestries in the Hermitage and they were certainly good, but nowhere I could find something as beautiful as the

"Adoration" – you'll say it's just my taste, but I think it's so because he was a real master."

It should be said that the "Adoration" tapestry produced the deepest and most lasting impressions on my pupils -- most of the essays either mentioned our Hermitage visit or were completely devoted to this Merton Abbey tapestry. Fifteen-year-old old Xeniya Ohapkina became interested in William Morris from the very start when she first heard of him since she herself is "really into the Middle Ages." According to her, in this tapestry "Morris returned to the harmony which humanity is losing every moment of its history... it's a paradox that though the tapestry is not realistic I got an impression of looking at the real place and real men. There is a secret behind carefully depicted colours, peaceful and beautiful angel-like faces and a subject that brings your mind to another world full of beauty and harmony."

But perhaps Xenia's fellow student Masha Saladina wrote the fullest tribute to the powerful effect of a Morris tapestry on the viewer: "When I have looked at any tapestry I usually imagined a weaver, who had been weaving it during months, or an old castle, in which it had been hanging. The plots which are represented on the tapestries never exited my imagination and even made on me a gloomy impression. Their faded colours have absorbed a century of dust and the plots and people represented on them seemed stiffened. It seems that any movement on the tapestries has died the same moment they were woven. However the Merton Abbey "Adoration" tapestry makes a different impression. When you see it for the first time it, undoubtedly, attracts attention with harmony of colours, clearness of lines and bewitching plot. But if you stop and look at it for some time you will forget where you are. You feel as if you have become an invisible witness of the action which is taking place on this tapestry. You already hear rustle of trees and feel the aroma of flowers. Just an instant and the angel will wave you by his wings and the baby will turn his head and look directly at you. You are afraid to disturb pacification of this place even by a sigh and this pacification begins to penetrate into your soul. Having seen the "Adoration" tapestry I have changed my view on this kind of art. I have understood that it is impossible to approach tapestries the same way as you usually approach pictures. Near a tapestry it is necessary to stop and wait until it allows you to penetrate into it and after that the people on it will come alive, flowers will produce aroma, birds will sing and the century-old dust will whisper to you about everything that this tapestry has seen during its existence."

I am really happy that the presence of one of the finest Merton Abbey tapestries in St. Petersburg is not only an "illustration" for our lessons on Morris but a source of inspiration for my students which makes them think, appreciate and even practice this form of art. (It was quite notable that one of my students was considering the making of tapestries herself). As a teacher I am very pleased that my students appreciated Morris's ideals and practices, which despite the century-long gap are still able to attract and inspire a new generation.

MINA LOY AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITE AESTHETIC

by Monica Duchnowski

Our gaze enters the circular composition of a mysteriously beautiful woman in a photograph whose flowing hair caresses the soft fabric of her Victorian style dress while she lifts a specially chosen object towards her pale and slightly upturned face. The image draws us into the ethereal aesthetic of Pre-Raphaelite painting. We might be looking at the young bride of George Frederic Watts in *Choosing* (1864) as she lifts her face and hand towards a camellia flower. The woman in the photograph, however, is not the bride of Watts but that of a lesser-known visual artist named Stephen Haweis. In staging the photograph Haweis chooses to have his wife Mina Loy hold a Rodin sculpture instead of a flower—ostensibly so that she may partake in the pleasure of art; yet he paradoxically denies her access to the selected object by positioning her with face upturned and eyes half-closed in a detached manner. The viewer confronts the same paradox in *Choosing*—its muse cannot sensually appreciate the camellia because it has no scent.

Although the camellia has no natural scent, it has traditionally symbolized femininity, elegance and style. *Choosing* represents the beauty of the camellia by transforming it into an artifice adorning the muse; it adorns her so that she, too, becomes an object of pleasure for the male painter and his viewers. Similarly, Loy's pose serves as a pretext for the viewer to have access to a man's object of art—the Rodin sculpture. She becomes an object of delight transformed by the masculine gaze of Haweis as artist and photographer.

Haweis's image of Loy conforms to the standard set by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in *A Sea Spell* (1877), a painting in which the muse takes on the detached expression of one who is transported into another world. Rossetti translates this spellbound detachment into an ekphrastic text where the poet

interrogates his muse's passive stance: "But to what sound her listening ear stoops she? / What netherworld gulf-whispers doth she hear . . ." The Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic abstracts art from life in such a way that even the sensuous Victorian nudes bear impassive looks on their faces, creating a strange disjunction between creator and created. Nowhere is this fact more evident than in the unmoved face of Galatea as Pygmalion caresses her in Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones's *Pygmalion and the Image: The Soul Attains* (1868-78).

Loy endeavored to become an artist in her own right, as did many of the women who played the passive role of muse for Pre-Raphaelite artists and poets. Her life span bridged the Victorian era and nascent twentieth-century modernism. No matter how much she tried to become an artist through the same pathways as men (she attended the same art school as Haweis), her beautiful long hair and lovely features contributed to her reputation as a "stunner." She allowed her husband to photograph her in the nude (at least from the back), since his photographic art style conformed to a Victorian aesthetic ideal. To a certain extent she self-consciously cultivated the look of Rossetti's muses.

Loy's drawing style resembles that of the Pre-Raphaelite-influenced Aubrey Beardsley. Many of her black-and-white ink drawings and gouache works employ fine, sensuous lines in the manner of Beardsley's *The Peacock Skirt* (an illustration for Oscar Wilde's play "Salomé"). The figures of women in her works are elongated and idealized according to a late Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic that prevails even in the first decades of the twentieth century, as, for example, in her 1906 drawing and gouache *L'Amour dorloté par les belles dames* (Collection of Roger L. Conover). She practiced self-censorship and would never have ventured into the more sexually explicit satire acceptable in masculine visual art, as exemplified in Beardsley's pen and ink *Cinesias Entreating Myrrha to Coition* (1896) or *The Impatient Adulterer* (1896). Later in life, she would become more daring in her poetry but it would be censored by editors and publishers who were not yet ready for women to express sexual desire explicitly.

During her youth Loy did not cast herself in a role different from that of Pre-Raphaelite women for the simple reason that she reaped many benefits from it. She reacted against the values of Victorian England and cultivated a personality that would be accepted in the artistic circles of her day. Her first marriage to Haweis proved to be her greatest obstacle and she eventually divorced despite having had children with him. A caretaker for the children provided her with the freedom to pursue her desire to become a painter, designer and writer. Virginia Kouidis has researched her career and argues that she remained a late Pre-Raphaelite astride the line between Victorianism and early High Modernism. I would agree with Kouidis that Loy's "Songs to Joannes"—a collection of thirty-four poetic texts satirizing the male love-song tradition—follows Christina Rossetti's text "Monna Innominata" in liberating the voice of the female muse (Kouidis, *Mina Loy, American Modernist Poet*, 1980).

In my opinion, critics do not emphasize enough how Loy's artistic career took inspiration from William Morris himself. Her work is characterized by the search for a "sense of beauty" that Morris believed essential to art, as he expressed in these lines from a lecture delivered to the Ancoats Recreation Committee at an art exhibition in Manchester ("At a Picture Show" 1884):

. . . it seems to me that the sense of beauty in the external world, of interest in the life of man as a drama, and the desire of communicating this sense of beauty and interest to our fellows is or ought to be an essential part of the humanity of man, and that any man or set of men lacking that sense are less than men, and lack a portion of their birthright just as if they were blind or deaf.

This "sense of beauty" for both Morris and Loy enters into a progressive social ethic that requires the artist to assume social responsibilities in his or her community. Loy's own aesthetic and ethical ideals might be summed up in these remarks made by Morris in his Ancoats lecture regarding the workman's alienation from beauty:

From that slavery of the worldmarket, the mother of lies and theft, of pestilence, war and famine, the worker must free himself if he is ever to take any part again in the enjoyment and production of beauty . . . think how it must be to a workman who has in him any artistic feeling, who, after spending an hour looking at beautiful works of art in a public place, has to go back again to his close wretched house, a den, no better, buried amidst the miles and miles of vile filth into which the earth of S. Lancashire has been turned: I tell you if he feels anything short of rage at least if not despair, it is because he is used to it, that is his manhood has been crushed out of him . . .

Morris's manifestos served as models for Loy's political "aphorisms" and essays addressing the relation between artist and public. She battled sexism, racism and poverty during her entire artistic

career. She understood what it meant to have a sense of self "crushed out" of her because she grew up in Victorian England in a "mongrel" household with a Hungarian- Jewish father and an Anglo-Christian mother. Identifying with society's outcasts in her old age, she cared for the homeless "Bowery bums" in Manhattan's East Village where she lived as an expatriate until her death. She discovered a "sense of beauty" in ordinary objects found on the streets and made collages and assemblages out of them. She remained a late Pre- Raphaelite whose artistic sensibility was shaped in reaction to the nineteenth-century aesthetic of art-for-art's-sake. The Yale Beinecke digital library contains images of Loy's designs for various "applied art" constructions ranging from unusual lampshades to corselets. She felt more confident in her ability to design crafts than to create fine art. This confidence was instilled in her as she grew up in the working class of Victorian England. Although she may have disliked her father's notion of trade (he prospered in the men's clothing business), she looked favorably on women's participation in companies such as Morris and Company. William Morris, sole owner of the company after 1875, championed women as independent artists. His daughter May, a gifted designer and embroiderer, was placed in charge of the company's embroidery department. If Loy overturned assumptions about the superiority of fine art, it is partly due to the fact that Victorian women entered the applied art market. No matter how lowly the found objects may have been Loy breathed new life into them in the form of lamps, collages, and other constructions. For instance, she created lamps and wall sconces in the shape of celestial spheres; existing photographs of these works reveal a mysterious and fragile beauty that recalls the ethereal objects in Pre-Raphaelite paintings—particularly stained glass windows.

Loy's biographer Carolyn Burke notes the importance of colored glass in the shaping of her artistic aesthetic (*Becoming Modern*, 1997:13). She did not design stained glass, as did William Morris, but her poetry often displays kaleidoscopic visions and makes reference to the experience of colored glass, as in the excerpt below from "Songs to Joannes" (Ed. Roger L. Conover, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker Poems* 1999):

must live in my lantern
Trimming subliminal flicker
Virginal to the bellows
Of Experience
Coloured glass. (53)

Burke recounts one of Loy's most poignant childhood memories involving a stained glass window; this psychologically primal moment formed the wellspring for her creative work. The experience of stained glass requires the viewing subject to make a coherent whole out of fragments. She inherited the nineteenth-century's obsession with fragmentation and wholeness, as evident in the line "We splinter into Wholes" from her text "The Dead" (*Lunar Baedeker* 72). Medieval stained glass provided a model for Pre-Raphaelite compositional organization in painting and poetry. Nevertheless, Pre-Raphaelite women were aware of the masculinist bias in the organizing principle of nineteenth-century visual and verbal compositions. In searching for a perspective that would permit the fragmented parts to be viewed as an organic whole, women artists assimilated masculine patterns with a feminine difference. Within the medievalism of the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic women artists created new forms of self-expression.

The Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic anticipated modernist movements such as Surrealism that transformed the *objets trouvés* of everyday life into works of art in opposition to high culture. Loy's lantern with "subliminal flicker" in "Songs to Joannes" continues Pre-Raphaelite traditions but engages with new forms of modernist fragmentation like Vorticism and Cubism. She admired the Cubism of Gertrude Stein and the Vorticism of Wyndham Lewis. Lewis drew inspiration from the work of Burne-Jones, such as *Perseus and his Bride* (a gouache "cartoon" from an unfinished series of paintings circa 1885) where Perseus shows his wife Andromeda the head of the Medusa reflected in a well (Kenneth Clark, *Feminine Beauty* 1980); Lewis admired the three figures reflected in the well as a precursor to the surrealist game of "one thing inside another."

The exchange of sister arts offered possibilities for both men and women to find new patterns of self-expression. "Missing" from Morris's *A Book of Verse* exemplifies the Pre-Raphaelite "double text." Its theme is the disjunction of lovers who never meet but "miss" each other in a dark wood, as these lines indicate: "That these had met, and missed in the dark night, / Blinded by blindness of the world untrue, / That hideth love, and maketh wrong of right." Word and text mirror each other, just as the external face of a portrait mirrors the psychological depth of the mind. The sequence of mental states in Morris's narrative is depicted in three illustrations at the end of the text.

Loy's journey from Pre-Raphaelite sea spells to the sea changes of modernist fragmentation led her

to plunge deeply into surrealist automatism. Surrealist photographer Man Ray took a portrait of her wearing a darkroom thermometer for an earring, as if he were trying to gage her mercurial temper. Indeed, she was mourning for her real-life "missing" husband Arthur Cravan—whose accidental drowning haunted her throughout her life. The poet in "Missing" regrets his inability to feel the deep sensations of mourning; Loy's emotively-charged face in Man Ray's photograph exposes a "truer" reality sensed behind closed eyelids. This truth would remain inaccessible to her if she were *blinded by blindness of the world untrue*.

In the text "Der Blinde Junge" Loy renounces "blind" traditions as part of her dadaist protest against the violence of World War I. This text presents war casualties and blind youth as the offspring of the Roman mythological war goddess Bellona, sister of Mars: "The dam Bellona / littered / her eyeless offspring / Kreigsopfer / Upon the pavements of Vienna" (*Lunar Baedeker* 83). *Kreigsopfer*, meaning war victim in German, refers to the blind ("eyeless" is Loy's term) offspring of war. The personification of war in female form opens up the text to ambiguity. The verb "litter" has the double meaning of "giving birth to a litter" and "dropping filth" onto the pure pavements. This vile filth (as Morris would have referred to it) crushes the dignity and sense of beauty out of human beings. In the next lines of her text we encounter a "visionless obstacle" and a "slow blind face/pushing/its virginal nonentity/against the light." Loy transforms the figure of the war goddess into a "pure purposeless eremite"; an eremite is a Christian recluse, and, thus, a "purposeless eremite" is a martyr without a cause. The figure of the virgin martyr loses its iconic stature in Loy's text; "black lightning" desecrates its sacred altar, which is the retinal altar of the eye itself.

Having been familiar with Christian narratives of redemption popularized by Pre-Raphaelites, Loy would have known the Roman legend of St. Agnes (first appearing in the text of poet Aurelius Clemens Prudentius in 405 A.D.) in which lightning brings redemption to a Christian martyr by striking down a man ready to rape her. Pre-Raphaelite painters John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt offer reinterpretations of Christian iconography associated with the martyrdom of St. Agnes. Yet Loy's post-war lack of faith in visual perception eclipses the potentially positive effects generated by ambiguities in Pre-Raphaelite imagery of love, religion and sexuality. Gleaning metaphors of blindness and insight from the shrinking fields of Victorian civilization, she confronts the irony of "black lightning" wherein seeing no longer means believing.

BOOK REVIEW

A PRE-RAPHAELITE 'NEW WOMAN'

Graham R.: *Rosamund Marriott Watson, Woman of Letters*. Linda K. Hughes, Ohio University Press, 2006, 397 pp.

reviewed by Florence Boos

Linda Hughes' biography, awarded the 2006 Robert Colby Memorial Prize by the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals, effectively restores to early twenty-first-century readers' attention the life and work of Rosamund Marriott Watson (1860-1911). A major *fin de siècle* poet, essayist, and editor, Watson affronted Victorian mores with two divorces before she formed a permanent if extralegal union with Henry Brereton (H. B.) Marriott Watson, with whom she raised one son, after losing custody of the three children she bore with her first two husbands. Born Rosamund Ball in 1860, Watson had by this point also changed her authorial identity several times, and in moderately complex ways. When married to her first husband George Francis Armytage, she published some of her early poems anonymously, or signed them as Rosamund Armytage (*Tares*, 1884). After marrying Arthur Graham Tompson, she then published *Sylvia, a Journal* (1892-94) and two volumes of verse (*The Bird-Bride: A Volume of Ballads and Sonnets*, 1886 and *A Summer Night and Other Poems*, 1891) as the pseudonymous Graham R. Tompson, and as Rosamund Marriott Watson, she published essays (*Art of the House*, 1897; *The Heart of the Garden*, 1907) and poetry (*Vespertilia, and other Verses*, 1895; *After Sunset*, 1904, as well as a posthumous collection of *Poems*, 1912). "Tomson"'s finely crafted poems had drawn favorable critical attention for their sophistication and dramatic force, but Hughes demonstrates quite clearly the extent to which twentieth-century reviewers slighted her work as Rosamund Marriott Watson and excluded it more or less systematically from their summaries and anthologies.

Hughes' carefully researched study of the social parameters of a late-Victorian literary career is supplemented by astute interpretations of many of Watson's poems, among them "In the Rain," from *A Summer Night and Other Poems* (1891).

What struck the poet's perceiving eye in the first half of the poem . . . [was a] verbal impressionist

painting of a night-lit city in the rain . . . The end of one journey suggested the permanent end of life's transit, but the joy of living and seeing was so great that the speaker . . . [returned to haunt] later generations as an imaginative presence (every poet's hope, after all):

When I lie hid from the light,
Stark, with the turf overhead,
Still, on a rainy Spring night,
I shall come back from the dead. . . .

Though the poem never lost the driving trimeter rhythm that suggested both churning engines and beating rain, the poet's imaginative flight had to end . . . in an outburst of frustrated mortality and unyielding love of being in the world: "Ah, might I be--might I stay-- / Only for ever and aye, / Living and looking on Life!" The poem was a technical *tour de force*, a modern urban impression, and a paean to life and London all at once.

Hughes chronicles Rosamund's complex relations with patrons and literary figures, among them Andrew Lang, William Ernest Henley and Thomas Hardy. The latter, for example, attracted to her but angered by what he perceived to be her desire to publicize their friendship, ended "An Old Likeness (Recalling R. T.)" with the following posthumous tribute: "Though she lies cold/ In churchyard mould/ I took its feinting/ As real, and kissed it,/ As if I had wist it/ Herself of old." Hughes' probing studies of Watson's emotions and motivations also canvass her original family ties, the aftermath of her mother's early death of uterine cancer, and the losses and disappointments of her failed marriages and separation from three of her four children.

In the book's final section, Hughes describes Rosamund and H. B. Marriott Watson's struggles to hold onto their income and professional standing in the face of dwindling demand for his stories and her own work, as well as the social ostracism they both shared. After Rosamund died of uterine cancer in her turn in 1911, at fifty-one, their son Dick, also a poet, entered the ranks of death in 1918 in the Battle of the Somme, and H. B. Marriott Watson, already reduced to an application for relief from the Royal Literary Fund in 1914, succumbed to his grief and died of alcohol-induced cirrhosis of the liver in 1921.

Hughes' empathy and deep critical respect for Watson's achievements are especially evident in the book's closing lines:

Because she demonstrated the possibilities--and limits--of what a woman of unusual talent, intelligence, wit, and beauty in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could do; because she anticipated modernism in subordinating personality to lyric form and postmodernism in her fluid identities; because she left behind a substantive body of work that indeed comprised a "gamut of song"; and because she lived a contradictory, complicated, and fascinating life, the names of this poet--all four of them--should be, as in "Asphodel," repeated in after times.

Among many other things, Hughes' careful readings and summaries clarify along the way the extent of Watson's acknowledged indebtedness to several of her romantic and Pre-Raphaelite predecessors. Watson was well-read in the romantic literatures and balladic and folkloric traditions of Italy, France and Germany, and she remarked to Nora Chesson that her favorite poets had been "[f]or sheer intimacy of thought and feeling I think the two Rossettis, Swinburne, W. Morris, and (in earlier years) Jean Ingelow. . . ." (12). Like other *fin de siècle* poets, Watson also wrote sonnets suffused with echoes of D. G. Rossetti's sequence "The House of Life" (1881). Her uses of *revenants* echoed Christina Rossetti's poems in which a speaker imagined her death and subsequent oblivion, and Swinburne's ecstatic rhythms and iconoclastic assaults on Victorian ideology influenced the language and substance of several of her poems, among them "Nirvana" and "Hymn of Labour."

Especially marked, however--in my view, at least--was Watson's affinity for the themes and motifs of William Morris' *Earthly Paradise*, *Sigurd the Volsung*, and *Poems by the Way*. She alluded explicitly to the elusive ideal of an "earthly paradise," for example, and crafted folkloric *Earthly Paradise*-like magical transformations and affairs with supernatural beings which ended--as in Morris's redactions of such folkloric motifs--in guilt, bittersweet longing and/or meditative regret.

One such encounter appears "The Ballad of the Bird-Bride," in which a man entices a swan-maiden to become his lover but is devastated by her departure, a plot which varies, as Hughes has observed, that of Morris' "Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon" (his *Earthly Paradise*'s medieval tale for September). Both poems are also narrated from the perspective of the maiden's male lover--a less

predictable choice for Watson than for Morris, and the differences are interesting: Watson's seducer, unlike Morris's, has not only trapped the swan-maiden against her will but killed four of her fellow birds, and in retaliation she absconds with their three children, a gender-reversed echo and perhaps a fantasy-reversal of Watson's personal loss.

Even more interesting are the variations in "The Moor Girl's Well," a retelling with a somewhat different key-signature of Morris' "Lady of the Land" (the *Earthly Paradise's* medieval tale for June). In Morris' narrative, drawn loosely from chapter 16 of Mandeville's *Travels*, a mariner meets a beautiful young woman who pleads with him to return and break a curse which has condemned her to a dragon's existence for all but one day each year unless someone kisses her in her reptilian form. Overconfidently, he promises to fulfill her request but when he returns he is overcome by fear and revulsion, and strikes out at her now-hideous visage before fleeing in shame and remorse. The poor weeping dragon withdraws thereupon in utter misery, and the mariner dies raving in delirium. In Morris's allegory of fatal irresolution, the deepest betrayals follow from unsustained promises of unselfish love.

In Watson's equally powerful but quite different version, a man meets a beautiful woman arrayed in her own "dusky hair" who dips her feet into a well and sings in "some outland tongue. . . . Her long eyes pierced me with their diamond light./ She told me of an old spell laid on her/ That bound her in the semblance of a snake./ Lonely and mute as in the sepulchre." Her sole salvation, once again, lies in the hope that someone will kiss her in her herpetetic form, which he sincerely promises to do, "for fervently/ I longed to free her from the evil spell--/ Pity and love so swiftly wrought on me!/ (Scarce I beheld her but I loved her well.)"

Sadly, he too recoils reflexively from the task, and pleads with her to "[l]eave me,' . . . 'Love me, and loose me from thy loathly hold!'," and he hears "A slow, sad voice from out the depths complain./ 'Redoubled tenfold is the cruel spell.'" Though he returns disconsolately to the well many times, and pleads into its depths ". . . come back and I will do thy will!," he meets only his own reflection in the "steely deep" (itself a Morrisian metaphor). To me at least, the ballad's wistful moral is unclear: did Watson intend her protagonists' predicament to reflect the irretrievability of personal failure, or perhaps something deeper about the inviolable chasms which separate us from other beings superficially unlike us?

Several of Watson's early political poems such as "On the Road" (1889) echoed something of the ethos of Morris' "Chants for Socialists":

The sands of Tyranny are slow to run.
Alas! that this and many a morrow's sun
Must see the goal ungained, the work undone!
The road is long. (1889)

Another poem, "The Quern of the Giants" (1888), is so Morrisian in its echoes of *Sigurd the Volsung's* denunciations of economic injustice and 'heroic' retribution that her publisher Andrew Lang remarked, "There is just one objection [to its publication]. . . --William Morris" (74). In this powerful poem, Watson altered the plot of a tale from the Prose *Edda* to frame an allegory of working *women*, not male warriors, who bring about the downfall of an exploitative regime.

"The Quern" narrates the tale of wealthy King Frodi, who possesses rare Quern-stones [mill-stones] too heavy for any in his kingdom to turn, but a fellow prince from the North presents him with two heroic bond-slaves, Frenia and Menia, whose grinding labor he proceeds to exploit. At first these two obedient sisters bowed "their proud heads to the grinding and murmured not," and the land prospered from their Bunyan-like labor ("Then no man was famished with hunger, nor evil of heart,/ And banished was want from the homestead and guile from the mart").

Frodi's demands become insatiable, however, and he spurns the sisters' pleas for rest: "Our eyelids wax heavy with sleep, sore aware are we;/ Grant us respite, O King, for a while, from our travail for thee." The once-docile sisters then recall their ancestry in the House of the Giants and cry out for revenge ("Let the fire and the sword have their will, aye let slay and let burn!"). The poem's final scene recalls the conflagration of the house of Atli and the Niblungs in *Sigurd's* final book:

. . . red shone the feet of the maidens, the Quern-stones were red,
As they ground, dealing death to the living and flame to the dead; . . .
Still over the dead and the dying the flames flickered high,
They leapt in the blood-reek, rejoicing, and reddened the sky . . .

Lo! this is the song of a king and his lust of the gold,
Of a king and his glory gone by as a tale that is told.

Morris' premise in *Sigurd* that the Niblungs were oppressors and the Volsungs defenders of liberty is ill supported by the epic's focus on tribal warlords, but Watson's allegory neatly defines the sisters as alienated Amazonian laborers, whose proletarian rage is rendered the more horrific by their initial docility.

More fundamental than Watson's interest in shared Scandinavian sources and eddic plotlines was her endorsement of the Earthly Paradise's basic tenet that we must not seek or yearn for a 'heaven on earth,' but a better and more just 'earth on earth.' Readers of this Newsletter will recognize Morris' own redaction of this (ultimately somewhat Kantian) ideal of an earthly 'realm of ends', "midmost the beating of the steely sea":

Of heaven or hell I have no power to sing,
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years . . .
So with the Earthly Paradise it is,
If ye will read aright, and pardon me,
Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss,
Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
Where tossed about all hearts of men must be;
Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,
Not the poor singer of an empty day.
("The Apology")

Watson's ideal was distinctly more urban than Morris', and her style in this case was not particularly Morrisian, but it would seem fitting to end this review of Linda Hughes' excellent biography with a similarly extended quotation from Watson's poetic evocation of this shared ideal:

Never for us those dreams aforetime shown
Of white-winged angels on a shining stair,
Or seas of sapphire round a jasper throne:
Give us the spangled dusk, the turbid street;
The dun, dim pavement trod by myriad feet,
Stained with the yellow lamplight here and there;
The chill blue skies beyond the spires of stone:
...
Life and Life's worst and best be ours to share,
Charm of the motley! undefined and rare;
Melodious discord in the heart o' the tune,
Sweet with the hoarse note jarring everywhere!
Let us but live, and every field shall bear
Fruit for our joy; for Life is Life's best boon.

"Of the Earth, Earthy" (1891)

CONFERENCES AND CALLS FOR PAPERS

NEMLA SESSION ON "THE ART OF THE MANIFESTO"

Papers on Morris or Pre-Raphaelitism (among other topics) are sought for a Northeast Modern Language Association panel on "The Art of the Manifesto," which will consider the relationship between art and the manifesto (visual art, politics, literature) during the Pre-Raphaelite era and beyond. For details of the convention, scheduled to be held in Baltimore March 1st-4th, 2007, please see <http://www.nemla.org/convention/>. Those interested should send an abstract by September 15th, 2006 to Monica Duchnowski at duchnowmon@msn.com. Graduate student submissions are welcome.

NEW STAINED GLASS ORGANIZATION AND CONFERENCE

The premier conference of the American Glass Guild will be held in Albany, NY from July 21-24, 2006. One of the international speakers is Linda Cannon from Scotland. She has worked on a number of Burne-Jones windows and will be talking about a large project of Cottier windows she is working on now. For more details about the guild and the conference in particular, please visit their web site at: <http://www.americanglassguild.org/>.

19: INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

The May 2006 issue is now available, free, at <http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/>. This issue tackles 'The Long Nineteenth Century: The Future for Victorian Studies?' and draws from the November 2005 conference on this theme, co-organised by David Feldman for the Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London. This issue covers a range of disciplines including history of art, history of science, literary studies and history with contributions by Elizabeth Prettejohn, Iwan Morus, Ella Dzelzainis, Adriana Craciun, Margot Finn and David Feldman. We are confident that the exciting new material presented in this issue will stimulate, inform and provoke debate. '19' is the first scholarly, refereed web journal dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary study in the long nineteenth century. Based at Birkbeck College, under the general editorship of Professor Hilary Fraser (Geoffrey Tillotson Chair, Birkbeck College, University of London), '19' aims to extend the activities of the Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies by making the high quality, original scholarship presented at its regular conferences, symposia and other events available to an international audience. We publish two themed issues annually, each consisting of six peer-reviewed articles that showcase the broadest range of new research in nineteenth-century studies. For a chance to join in the debate inspired by these articles and to explore our selection of the best and most interesting sites on the nineteenth century, please visit us at <http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/>. The October 2006 issue will be on nineteenth-century periodical publishing and will be guest edited by Jo McDonagh. Further details online.

VICTORIAN REVIEW

(on-going submissions accepted) The editors of *Victorian Review* invite scholarly papers on all aspects of Victorian culture, including literature, fine arts, history, politics, law, science, economics, sport, and music. Essays should be 5000- 8000 words in length and be written in MLA style. The editors welcome a wide variety of topics and theoretical approaches. Submissions and book review guidelines available at <http://web.uvic.ca/victorianreview/journal.html>.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ESSAYS ON SCIENCE IN 19TH CENTURY BRITAIN

Papers are being sought for a collection of essays on *Science in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Edited by Amanda Mordavsky Caleb, the collection will be printed by Cambridge Scholars Press in Spring/Summer 2007. Papers are invited on all aspects of research broadly relating to science in nineteenth-century Britain. Proposals may focus on areas including, but not limited to: art, astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, continental influences, history, literature, mathematics, medicine, music, philosophy, physics, religion, sociology, and zoology. Deadline for submissions: 10th August 2006. Essays are to be 5-6,000 words in length and follow the author/date system (Chicago style). Inquiries and submissions to: amanda.caleb@googlemail.com.

THE CREATIVE TRANCE IN 19TH CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE

38th Convention, Northeast Modern Language Association (NEMLA), March 1-4, 2007, Baltimore, Maryland. This panel will examine the discourse of spontaneous literary creation in nineteenth-century British poetry and fiction. Paper proposals are invited on topics including but not limited to mesmerism/animal magnetism/artificial somnambulism, opium use, improvisational poetics, and automatic writing. Papers exploring the relationships between these themes and issues of authorial agency, voice, gender, and reputation are particularly welcome. Suggested authors include but are not limited to Coleridge, Mary Robinson, Mary Shelley, Letitia E. Landon (LEL), DeQuincey, Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Sheridan LeFanu, Yeats, and Georgie Hyde-Lees. Please submit 250-500 words abstracts to Anne DeLong at amdb@lehigh.edu. Deadline: September 15, 2006 Please include with your abstract: Name and Affiliation Email address Postal address Telephone number A/V requirements (if any) For the complete Call for Papers for the 2007 Convention, please visit: <http://www.nemla.org/>. Interested panelists may submit abstracts to more than one NEMLA panel; however panelists can only

present one paper. Convention participants may present at a paper session panel and also present at a creative session or participate in a roundtable.

THE EDWARDIANS

2 Day Conference, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Monday 24-Tuesday 25 July 2006. This two-day conference offers a forum to scholars and students from a variety of disciplines whose research is concerned with The "Edwardian" period in its broadest sense. The aim of the event is threefold: to review this often overlooked decade, to bring together a variety of approaches to important texts, personalities, themes and events and to include discussion of key issues including definition of the term "Edwardian." The scope of the conference encompasses literature, journalism, drama, the visual arts, music, historical studies and other allied disciplines The full programme and booking details are now available at: <http://perseus.herts.ac.uk/uhinfo/index.cfm?2C396E44-D606-A422-9C95-B177F7DC07F4> Attendance is available on a single day rate or 2-day rate; reduced rates for registered students.

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COLOPHON

This newsletter was written and edited by Shannon L. Rogers. Items for inclusion, books for review, news from or about members, calls for papers, conference announcements, event notifications, and comments are welcomed.

Shannon Rogers
77 Church Street
Kingston, PA 18704
[us_news @ morrissociety.org](mailto:us_news@morrissociety.org)

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Contacts: United States: us@morrissociety.org • United Kingdom: uk@morrissociety.org • Canada: info@wmsc.ca

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