

THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY IN THE UNITED STATES

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2007



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On the cover: Members and friends at the reception held at the Franklin Inn Club during the Modern Language Association annual convention, Philadelphia, 2006: Linda Hughes and Charles Sligh; Gary Aho, Elaine Ellis, Pat Aho; Evelyn Haller and Jude Nixon; Gary Aho, Mark Samuels Lasner, Elaine Ellis.

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.

For updates on Morris (and associated) events, please visit the William Morris Society's website at www.morrissociety.org.

A LETTER FROM FLORENCE BOOS

This is one of my sadder letters, for the William Morris Gallery in Lloyd Park, Walthamstow—the only public museum which has hitherto preserved Morris' works and an extensive range of Pre-Raphaelite artifacts—is under attack from the councillors of the Borough of Waltham Forest.

Ignoring offers of financial help from the Friends of the William Morris Gallery, the Council has cut the Gallery's hours, imposed gag-orders on its staff, terminated the contracts of its long-time curator Peter Cormack, his deputy Amy Gaimster and attendants Tim Foster and James Mason, and announced its intention to merge the Gallery's administration

with that of the Borough's Vestry House Museum.

These actions negate the possibility of successful applications to upgrade the Gallery's premises and make it more accessible to disabled visitors. Few of the Council's decision-makers seem to have visited the Gallery or viewed its extensive collection of drawings, books and manuscripts in recent years, but several have expressed interest in the site's value as a potential revenue-producing venue for meetings and weddings.

Located in the house Morris' family occupied from 1848 to 1856, the Gallery has for many years now housed displays of rugs, fabrics, carpets, wall-papers, furniture, stained glass and painted tiles designed by Morris and others who together founded Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company in 1861.

It has also given shelter to arts and crafts furniture, textiles, ceramics and glass created by Arthur H. Mackmurdo and the Century Guild, William De Morgan, May Morris, Ernest Gimson, George Jack, C.F.A. Voysey, Selwyn Image and others between 1880 and 1920, as well as prints, drawings and paintings by Pre-Raphaelites and other Victorian and early twentieth-century artists such as Frank Brangwyn.

The Gallery's library has housed rare books, drawings and manuscripts by Morris, and much of the library of his first biographer, J. W. Mackail. So extensive are its holdings that the curator has had to admit one scholar at a time to study them in its small space, and opponents of the cuts have good reason, I believe, to fear that the councillors plan to disperse or if possible sell some or all of these irreplaceable resources.

In response to all this, "Friends of the William Morris Gallery" organized an initial protest last January, another on Morris' birthday in March, and a third in May in which several hundred opponents of the cuts marched to the Walthamstow Town Square and declared its Town Hall a "crime scene." They have also created a website with news and information about ways to help, and we urge members to sign a petition at www.petitiononline.com/savewmg and visit www.keepourmuseumsopen.org.uk.

There are forty-four councillors, whose addresses are all publicly available at www.lbwf.gov.uk. Those most responsible for the cuts seem to be Adam Gladstone, Clyde Loakes (the Council's head), and Geraldine Reardon, the representative for the William Morris Ward and its newly appointed minister of "leisure, arts and culture."

Elaine Ellis, a member of our governing board who has organized many visits to the Gallery, has

written to Mr. Loakes that “you have rushed into the ill-advised decision to [lay off or ‘reassign’] the staff of the William Morris Gallery . . . without any relevant information and then [sought] to justify it on the basis of making this institution more accessible. . . One can only say, ‘Sir, have you no decency?’ Members of your own community, members of the arts community, and the many friends and supporters of the William Morris Gallery stand ready to work with you if you are sincere and if you rescind your completely ill-advised actions.”

We urge all who read these words to express their views to the councillors, who can be reached via mail at

Waltham Forest Town Hall
Forest Road
London E17 4JF UK

and by e-mail to

Adam.Gladstone@walthamforest.gov.uk
Clyde.Loakes@walthamforest.gov.uk
Geraldine.Reardon@walthamforest.gov.uk

and collectively

www.walthamforest.gov.uk/wmg/home.htm

Our Governing Committee met at the Modern Language Association in Philadelphia last December, and held a conference call in May of this year. As I write this, I am in London to teach a University of Iowa summer course on “Victorian Literature and Art,” and have been able to use my temporary residence in London to attend a meeting of the British Society’s Governing Committee at Kelmscott House, and get together more informally with the Committee and Mark Samuels Lasner at a working lunch.

Our chief preoccupations at the latter were monetary. The American membership list has grown, the dollar’s fall has made everything we import more expensive, so we discussed at length ways to reduce our printing and mailing costs.

Earlier this spring, I took advantage of a teaching exchange in France to visit the gothic cathedral in Amiens, which the young Morris seems to have particularly revered.

I had initially prepared myself with the account of Morris’, Burne-Jones’ and Fulford’s youthful journey in John Purkis’ *Morris, Burne-Jones and French Gothic, Being an Account of a Walking Tour in France, July to August 1855* (1985, 1991), and re-read the “The Shadows of Amiens” from the *Oxford*

and Cambridge Magazine in an effort to understand what the twenty-one-year-old Morris might have seen that I could not (and conversely). Morris, for example, would have encountered a low skyline with the cathedral rising above it. Most of these structures were destroyed by bombing ninety years later in World War II, and a new park and university now border the canals and cathedral in 2007.

Morris and his friend also scaled the galleries on the cathedral’s west and south sides, as well as the church’s rather small and delicate spire. Such adventures have since been forbidden, but Morris (I thought) might have liked the annual summer illumination of hundreds of statues on the cathedral’s west front—a pleasing effort to recreate their brightly painted medieval counterparts.

Morris might also have seen some of the dubious nineteenth-century “restorations” Viollet le Duc carried out between 1849 to 1874, and I wondered what the founder of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings might have thought of more recent work on the cathedral’s west front and southern portal, some of it underway as I watched.

Contrasts between shining facades newly cleaned and the encrusted black of adjacent areas were especially striking to the eye, as were the attractive faces of ‘ancient kings’ which replaced the stumps of their un-‘restored’ counterparts. . . . To me at least, the latter had seemd to offer little testimony to medieval craftsmanship, or anything else other than time, erosion and acid rain.

We are pleased to announce that on 25 August the landscape architect Judith Hanks-Henn will host a garden party for the Society in her home in Kensington, Maryland, north of Washington, DC. We hope that many of you will be able to attend.

We would also like to invite you to “Shared Dreams: Partnerships of the Arts and Crafts Movement,” a lecture at the Grolier Club in New York City on 30 October by Nancy Green, senior curator of prints, drawings and photographs at Cornell University’s Johnson Museum of Art. Further details of both these events appear below.

I’ll close this letter with stoic hope for better news of the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, and wishes for good continuation in all your Morris-inspired and other endeavors. Please feel free to write me on any topic regarding Morris or the William Morris Society at florence-boos@uiowa.edu.

In fellowship,
Florence Boos

WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY EVENTS

“Shared Dreams: Partnerships of the Arts and Crafts Movement”

Lecture by Nancy Green

Grolier Club, New York, 30 October 2007

Tuesday, 30 October 2007

6 pm. Reception to follow

The Grolier Club
47 East 60th Street
New York, NY

“Shared Dreams: Partnerships of the Arts and Crafts Movement” is the first in a series of lectures and programs being offered collaboratively by the William Morris Society in the United States, the American Friends of Arts and Crafts in Chipping Campden, the Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms, and the Victorian Society in America.

\$12 reduced rate for members of the Society and the other sponsoring organizations; \$18 for others.

Tickets may be purchased from the William Morris Society in the United States, via the Society’s secure website (PayPal and credit cards accepted) www.morrissociety.org

or by sending a check (please mark the envelope “Green lecture”) to

William Morris Society
P.O. Box 5326
Washington, DC 20009

About the lecture:

While John Ruskin and Morris both vociferously supported the ideal of the individual craftsman and the personal fulfillment achieved through satisfaction in one’s own labor, the reality was much more complex. Many of these artists were successful because of their interaction with a spouse, a sibling, or a close friend. Historically, it is often this other person that is relegated to a more obscure role, either due to their gender or the publicly acknowledged achievements of the more prominent half of the partnership. This lecture evolves from the research Nancy Green has done for her forthcoming book on this subject. In it, she provides a clearer idea of the valuable contributions of both partners, within the framework of their artistic achievements as well as through their emotional bond and how these elements acted on the success of each. The collaborative partnerships, seven in America and seven in Britain, include Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, Mary and G. F. Watts, Evelyn and William de Morgan, William Morris and his daughter May, Ralph and Jane Whitehead, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, and Elbert and Alice Hubbard.

About Nancy Green:

Nancy Green is senior curator of prints, drawings, and photographs at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University. She joined the Johnson Museum staff in 1985 and during the past twenty-two years she has organized dozens of exhibitions at the Johnson Museum and elsewhere. While the subjects of these exhibitions are wide-ranging, her principal interest is in American and European art from the 19th century to the present. She has published numerous articles, exhibition guides, and catalogues including, most recently, *Byrdcliffe: An American Arts and Crafts Colony*

(2004); *Surrealist Works on Paper from the Drukier Collection* (2003), *Dreams, Myths, and Realities: A Vincent Smith Retrospective* (2001), *Arthur Wesley Dow and American Arts and Crafts* (1999), *Susan Rothenberg: Drawings and Prints* (1998), and *Master Prints from Upstate New York Museums* (1995). She is the recipient of research fellowships from the Getty, Winterthur, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, the Paul Mellon Centre, the Wolfsonian, Huntington-British Academy, and a grant from the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design. In 1990 her catalogue *Arthur Wesley Dow and His Influence* received honorable mention in the Henry Allen Moe Prize competition for works in art history from the New York State Historical Association and in 2006 *Brydcliffe* won an award from the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society for Catalogue of Distinction (it also received the Henry Allen Moe Prize in 2007). She is currently working on a catalogue and exhibition *A Room of Their Own: The Artists of Bloomsbury*. Green received her B.A. from Connecticut College and her M.A. in Art History from Williams College, and she worked in the paper lab at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, the Williams College Museum of Art, and in the print department of Christies in New York before coming to Cornell.

William Morris Society Garden Party for Members and Friends Kensington, MD, 25 August 2007

Come to toast and celebrate the life of William Morris among Society members and friends in the very Victorian American garden town of Kensington, Maryland. Fun will begin on August 25th at 2:30 under the great sunflower gable of a historic QueenAnne home amidst the process of Aesthetic Movement renovation. Beginning on the the wrap-around porch welcoming you with cucumber sandwiches and wine, the artist and landscape architect, Judy Hanks-Henn, will host a tour of her Morris-influenced residence, as well as acquaint you with the Victorian adventures to be found in Kensington. Fun and conversation are guaranteed and a unique surprise of a very special treat that you will be— oh, so sorry if you miss. This sharing of food and fellowship will end with a cutting of cake and Morris tribute at 5 pm.

Kensington, Maryland is located just north of Washington, DC. We shall try to arrange transportation from the Metro for those without cars. Members may bring guests. For more details--including driving directions--please rsvp to Mark Samuels Lasner, 302-831-3250, marksl@udel.edu.

Morris Society Session at “Victorian Materialism” North American Victorian Studies Association Conference University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, 13 October 2007

This year the Society will sponsor a session of papers on “William Morris and the Visual Arts” at “Victorian Materialism,” the North American Victorian Studies Association conference, to be held 10–13 October 2007 at the University of Victoria. Our session takes places on 13 October, 3:30–5 pm. The speakers and their paper titles are:

Michelle Weinroth, University of Ottawa, “The Work of Art as Political Disclosure: A Materialist Reading of Morris’ *A Dream of John Ball*”

Andrea Wolk, Yale University, “A Material Empire: Art as Secular Ministry in the Work of Edward Burne-Jones”

Elizabeth C. Miller, Ohio University, “Sustainable Socialism: Morris on Waste”

Florence S. Boos, University of Iowa, “From ‘The Shadows of Amiens’ to Morris’ Mature Socialist Aesthetic”

For further details go to, <http://web.uvic.ca/~navsa>.

**Morris Society Sessions at 2007 MLA Convention
Chicago, 27-30 December 2007**

For this year's annual convention of the Modern Language Association we are presenting two sessions of papers. The first session, "The Pre-Raphaelite (and Aesthetic) Family," moderated by Hartley Spatt, includes

Bansari Mitra, North Georgia College and State University, "'Goblin Market': A New Pre-Raphaelite Christian Myth"

Monica Duchnowski, New York University, "Morris in Context: The Pre-Raphaelite Family as Sign"

Pamela Gerrish Nunn, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, "Kate Greenaway's Place in the Pre-Raphaelite Family?"

For "Morris as Metatext: Editions/Printforms/Illustrations," the second session (chaired by Kathleen O'Neill Sims) the speakers are:

Elizabeth C. Miller, Ohio University, "Socialism in Walter Crane's Political Cartoons"

Charles Sligh, Wake Forest University, "'Love Clad as an Image Maker': The Morris Online Edition and NINES"

Florence S. Boos, University of Iowa, "Jason's Voyage from Notebook to Kelmscott Edition"

For details of time and place and for other Morris events at the convention, please write florence-boos@uiowa.edu or marksl@udel.edu after 1 September.

The topics for MLA 2008—should you wish to plan early—are "Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic Prose" and "William Morris: His Friends and Associates ." Proposals are due 20 March 2008.

**NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR THE GOVERNING COMMITTEE
OF THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY IN THE UNITED STATES**

Help "the cause" of William Morris

There will be new vacancies on the Governing Committee starting on 1 January 2008. We seek members who would be willing to help with decisions and activities, including planning events and publicity, managing our website and helping with the newsletter. If you would be willing to serve (it's a three-year term and there is fun involved as well as work), please contact Mark Samuels Lasner, marksl@udel.edu, or Florence Boos, florence-boos@uiowa.edu.

REPORT ON PAPERS AT THE 2006 MLA CONVENTION

Session 1: Pre-Raphaelitism and the World of Victorian Art

“Eve, Pandora, and the Woman Question in Pre-Raphaelite Art”

Jude V. Nixon, Oakland University

In her poem, “A Helpmeet for Him” (1888), Christina Rossetti considers woman “champion of truth and right,” and grants her an element of reciprocation in her relationship to man—“Him she stays, by whom she is stayed.” But Rossetti’s woman remains for the most part a subservient, “made for man’s delight,” “His shadow” and “moon,” and her “might” veiled with “Meek compliances.” Rossetti’s woman is, of course, Milton’s, whose Eve is a more culturally recognized figure than the Eve of the Bible, of whom the authors of the canonical Scriptures provide very little information. Milton anachronistically writes Eve back into a narrative and text she long ago abandoned. “Such figures as Mary Magdalene, Cleopatra, Queen Gwenevere, and Lucrezia Borgia,” according to J. B. Bullen, “haunted the British imagination in the 1850s and 1860s. They are all highly sexualized, and each of them is possessed of transgressive female desire.” Angela Leighton puts it best: “as angel or demon, virgin or whore, Mary or Magdalene, woman is the stage on which the age enacts its own enduring morality play.” Employing such images as Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, *The Girlhood of Mary*, *Pandora*, and *Venus Verticordia*, Jean Cousin the Elder’s *Eva Prima Pandora*, Lucas Cranach the Elder’s *The Nymph of the Spring*, John William Waterhouse’s *Pandora*, George Frederic Watts’s Eve trilogy, *She shall be called woman*, *Eve Tempted*, and *Eve Repentant*, and Sir Thomas Brock’s *Eve*, this presentation attempts to show that countless Victorians, especially the Pre-Raphaelites and their extensive circle, conducted this Eden debate in disparate aesthetic representations. The Eve story is frequently retold, and made one with Pandora’s and the rise of nineteenth-century Mariolatry. It was also coincident with Victorian attention to Sappho, even by the Jewish Simeon Solomon, in *Sappho* and *Erinna in a Garden at Mitylene* (1864), all of this deployed to register, problematize, and argue the status of women in the nineteenth century. The attempt was either to argue their rights or un-

derwrite the patriarchy. In all of this, there is also an emergent culture of bourgeois Victorian sexuality in which the sacred and the profane, the classic and the pornographic, the Christian and the pagan merge seamlessly. The question that arises in these Eve representations is whether she participates in her oppression or disrupts her canonical positioning, whether she speaks or is allowed to speak, and what exactly she says—whether she is granted agency and with it autonomy and authority. Eve and her daughters, the “Eveish constitution” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning), provided much intrigue to nineteenth-century artists, especially the Pre-Raphaelites, who endeavored to stage and re-present ideas and assumptions about female subjects, especially powerful female iconic figures—Eve, Helen, Pandora, Sappho, Cleopatra, Mary, and Salomé—all of whom are brought together and fused canonically. In reviewing the catalogue for the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition of 1984, Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock observe that “Representing creativity as masculine and circulating Woman as the beautiful image for the desiring masculine gaze, High Culture systematically denies knowledge of women as producers of culture and meaning. . . . In the specific discourses on Pre-Raphaelitism feminine sexuality is construed around the categories of bourgeois definitions of sexuality and gender, that is within masculinist parameters of pleasure, a phallogocentric economy of desire.” Interesting to me is not only how these mostly male artists re-present and contain these iconic women, but how the very subjects themselves de-claim out of their frame in order to re-claim denied subjectivity.

“Strong Traivelling: (Re)Visions of Women’s Subjectivity and Female Labor in the Ballad-work of Elizabeth Siddal”

Jill R Ehnenn, Appalachian State University

Sadly, Elizabeth Siddal is currently better known for her face and her misfortune than for her work as a painter and poet. Apocryphal tales of the beautiful Pre-Raphaelite model recount how she contracted pneumonia while posing in a bathtub for Millais’s *Ophelia*, her unhappy relationship with D. G. Rossetti, who painted her obsessively, her years of illness and depression, her tragic death from an overdose of laudanum in 1862, and Rossetti’s exhumation of her coffin in 1869 to retrieve manuscripts he had buried with her in a fit of guilt and grief. These anecdotes, however, do not do justice to the creative work of a woman whose life included landmarks beyond her

shift from milliner's assistant to fine art model, and who possessed many talents beyond her delicate palor, striking beauty and long red hair.

In the 1850s Siddal designed some paintings after "Clerk Saunders" and several other ballads from Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, intending them for a collection to be edited by William Allingham. She also created drawings after ballads by Tennyson, Rossetti and Browning and began to write poetry, some influenced by ballad forms. Her unique treatment of ballad subjects comes out of and comments upon a complicated social context. At the time, English and Scottish ballads, in bowdlerized and sanitized form, contributed to a set of patriotic, imperialist discursive practices that delineated Englishness and nationalism through and against quaint folklore traditions.

The popularity of ballads created renewed connections to the rural landscape and romantic past, in a time of unrivalled industrial production, and circulated these complex narratives for widespread domestic consumption. At the same time, Pre-Raphaelite artists and authors were using historical themes from myths and ballads to criticize Victorian gender roles, aesthetics and industrialization; and Siddal was literally at the movement's center as fiancée of its leader, and as the face in many Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

This talk addressed Siddal's ballad work in order to consider the following questions: How did Siddal, as a woman artist, use her painting as a space to recast traditional Scottish ballads and ballad poems by contemporary Victorian poets such as Tennyson, Browning and Rossetti? How did Siddal, as a woman author, appropriate and/or modify the conventions of traditional and Victorian ballad forms in her own poetry? How does Siddal's reverse ekphrasis help us understand the relationship between visual and verbal representation in the nineteenth century, especially as they are inflected by gender? I argue that by providing a new step in transmission, Siddal's art and poetry contribute to the ongoing "life" of the ballad subject, which is a cultural form that reflects, in its constant re-modification of the multiply-told tale, much about the culture that continues to tell it. Her work also raises questions about female agency in its relationship to language and image, space and time. Siddal's poetry demonstrates more self-consciousness and emotional engagement with the ballad form than is usual; and her verbal and visual representations of traditional and Victorian ballads feature women in unique moments of struggle where

the body becomes a site of tension between notions of containment vs. specifically female labor. These observations, in turn, can be linked in complex ways with the gendered particularities of Victorian culture, nineteenth-century trends in representing history, and Victorian responses to Pre-Raphaelite aesthetics.

"Pre-Raphaelitism as Experienced by Virginia Woolf and Her Family"

Evelyn Haller, Doane College

This talk addresses Pre-Raphaelitism through Virginia Stephen Woolf's experience as well as that of her family. As her biographer and nephew, Quentin Bell, observed of the Stephen Family: "The Pattle connection [through Virginia's mother] brought with it an interest in the fine arts . . . Watts and Val Prinsep (Julia Stephen's cousin), the Holman Hunts and the Burne-Joneses were fairly close friends." Indeed Burne-Jones's painting, *The Annunciation*, has the face of Julia Jackson (Virginia's mother). Her portrait was also drawn by her cousin, Val Prinsep. Jan Marsh writes of Sarah Prinsep, Vals mother and patroness of painters: "Her home contained G. F. Watts and his studio and functioned as a centre of artistic culture and cultivated unconventionality. Here Ned [Burne-Jones] met Mrs. Prinsep's beautiful and cultivated sisters, Maria Jackson [Virginia's maternal grandmother], Julia Cameron . . ." Before she married Burne-Jones, Georgie was invited to Little Holland House where she later recalled dimly lighted, richly coloured rooms, with dark passages opening into lofty studios and a table spread with boundless welcome. Virginia's mother, Julia, spent much time at Little Holland House during her girlhood.

Perhaps the most important images of Julia are the many photographs taken by her aunt, the Pre-Raphaelite photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron. Virginia Woolf was familiar with her great aunt's photographs, but became more knowledgeable about her work by writing an introduction to a collection, *Victorian Photographs of Famous Men and Fair Women*. Her aunt's eccentricities which Woolf describes therein relate to the characterization of Julia Margaret Cameron in Woolf's only play, the comedy *Freshwater*.

Pre-Raphaelite decoration was part of Woolf's early surroundings as, for example, she refers to the Morris wallpaper at 22 Hyde Park Gate. Virginia's sister, the artist Vanessa Bell, was photographed during her childhood at the Stephen summer home, Talland House at St. Ives, Cornwall. Morris wallpaper

is in that photograph. Pre-Raphaelitism is a recurrent aspect of Woolf's early experience as it was a significant factor in the artistic experience of her family.

“No Life is Complete Without Vice, and Technique’: The Late Victorian Reception of Pictorial Form”

Andrew Marvick, Southern Utah University

Absence of an established methodological approach to formal analysis of art is not evidence of a weakness of perception, and it would be a dangerous error to mistake the poetry of a bygone idiom for the symptoms of a weak eye. In the reception of major works by prominent British artists between 1889 and 1896, a range of views of formal properties explained in part by particular writers' loyalties and tastes may be found, tempered by consistent evidence of formal-critical acumen.

R. A. M. Stevenson, for example, declared the French influence on late-Victorian art a healthy break from stultifying traditions and an embrace of “nature” and “reality” in art, enumerated elements of content to contrast Italian mannerist styles with those of the Baroque, and grouped Whistler, Bonnat, Henner and Legros, artists quite unlike in style, as “having a square touch with melted edges . . . a kind of badge of ‘the French School.’” And Rothenstein, Crane, MacColl, Besnard and others who participated in the formal analysis of art between 1888 and 1896 made comparably free use of ill-defined terms such as “genius,” “feeling” and “charm.”

An examination of formal studies published in 1889 by Royal Academy member J. E. Hodgson, however, offers sustained evidence of late-Victorians' competence in response to matters of form. M. H. Spielmann, a skeptical critic of French stylistic innovations, couched his views of formal aspects of art in thematic language, but his meanings were clear. F. G. Stephens phrased vehement objections to the work of J. W. Waterhouse in 1895 in the language of social class, but he also made clever use of medical terminology to make points about artistic form.

Careful reading of passages like this can bring to light sophisticated sensibilities and penetrating formal-analytical insights often overlooked in current scholarship. Progressive or reactionary, Anglo- or Francophile, late-Victorian art critics did indeed express their views in language imperfectly adapted to the formal and stylistic features of the art they described. But subsequent dismissals of their views as hopelessly “literary” may be inappropriate as well as unwise.

Session 2: Morris and Gender

“Pygmalion Swoons: The Aesthetics of Subjection in Morris, Pater, and Wilde”

Mia L. McIver, University of California, Irvine

Ovid's Pygmalion myth constitutes a unifying theme for the Pre-Raphaelites and their associates, who produced myriad poetic and graphic representations of the story. This paper argues that the Pygmalion figure serves as the touchstone for aesthetic subjectivity at the end of the nineteenth century, introducing into aestheticism a dialectic of contemporaneous and historical time that maps onto the sister-arts relationship between portraiture and narrative. More and less literal versions of Pygmalion archetypes also dramatize the male masochism that Deleuze associates with the suspension of these dual temporalities.

Morris's “Pygmalion and the Image” and Burne-Jones's companion paintings depict an emasculated artist who willingly subjects himself to that which he has created. Morris's “happy slave” thus critiques Ovid's sculptor, who hubristically mistakes the work of Venus for his own. The relatively rigid gender divisions in this poem (suspension is painfully pleasurable for me; animation is pleasurable painful for women) become more fluid in Pater's *The Renaissance*, where the text's pervasive rhetoric of domination is especially apparent in the chapters on Michelangelo and Leonardo. Reading *La Gioconda* as a Cruel Lady, for example, enables us to understand the aesthetic object as expressive of history in itself: it is in fact the result of the historical processes of culture, not of an autonomous artistic agent. The latter finds himself at the mercy of forces for which he serves merely as a vehicle.

Wilde takes up this theme in his dialogues, in which freedom is always the freedom to choose one's own master. The Pygmalionesque critic-as-artist develops a peripatetic strategy to match his museological imagination. Constantly moving around the gallery from object to object, each of which dominates him momentarily, he avoids the narcissistic trap of remaining rapt for too long in any one *attitude*. Whereas other aesthetic masochists find their redemption in frozen, motionless images, Wilde's critic obeys the opposite imperative: to ceaselessly spin images into narrative. Ultimately, this becomes the condition for a utopian cosmopolitanism premised on transnational cultural exchange.

“Beyond Gender: Wordsworth, “The White Doe of Rylston” and Morris’ *Love Is Enough*”

Sharon McGrady, Rutgers University-New Brunswick

When twenty-first century critics think of William Morris in the context of his Romantic predecessors, the first poet who leaps to mind is rarely William Wordsworth. In his own time, though, Morris’ finely realized word pictures of the natural world often evoked comparisons to Wordsworth’s more mystical landscapes. Perhaps later critics took their cue from reports of Morris’s “special aversion” to certain English bards who included the former poet laureate. Morris’s biographer J. W. Mackail explains: “Milton he always abused, though he sometimes betrayed more knowledge of him than he would have been willing to admit; Wordsworth he disliked; nor did he care for the later works of Browning or Tennyson.” While an admiration for John Keats as well as John Ruskin comes through explicitly in Morris’s works and letters, I argue that there is an implicit affinity between the poetry of Wordsworth and Morris, if not between their personalities. At the same time, this talk registers Morris’s “dislike” and otherwise near-silence on his precursor poet as a possible undiagnosed case of the anxiety of influence.

Despite the oblique poetic lineage, Wordsworth and Morris literally share considerable common ground: nature informs their philosophies of art and faith, especially to the degree these notions are bound up in a reverence for specific locales and their legends. Wordsworth’s late lyrical ballad “The White Doe of Rylston; or the Fate of the Nortons” (1815), set in a Gothic ruins, for example, and Morris’ medieval morality *Love Is Enough; or the Freeing of Pharamond* (1872), stoically depict faith from different gender perspectives. The ideals of both poems extend beyond gender, however, by inspiring faith which finds comfort not in transcending the material world, but in loving acts which are inseparable from present pain and larger cycles of nature.

Wordsworth’s ballad, based on Yorkshire tradition and another ballad, “The Rising of the North,” tells of the bereaved heroine Emily Norton and her communion with the mysterious doe of the title. Emily’s physical and spiritual proximity to the doe, with whom her character is blended and emblemized, serves to rekindle her Christian-based faith after the stunning loss of her father and nine brothers in the uprising. Nature’s “hand of healing” touches and

soothes female suffering through the humblest of creatures.

By contrast, in the secularized faith of Morris’ bittersweet *Love Is Enough*, the kingly personage “Love” controls and comments on suffering, while ostensibly suffering himself. Just as the emblemized daughter and doe include but also exceed that which is feminine, so allegorical Love contains and exceeds that which is masculine. More tangibly, the suffering of King Pharamond permeates the elegiac masque being played out before the peasants Giles and Joan and the Emperor and Empress. The protagonist’s internal war between kingly deeds and erotic desire overtakes his waking life and the play itself as Pharamond hovers in a death-like, dream-like state. His freedom comes from journeying north to reach and make real his dream lover, but also from the self-correction which results from losing control of his own fiction. Only after Pharamond accepts what remains and renounces his love for “[a] dream and a lie—and [his] death” does Love grant him the long-sought lover Azalais. Yet *Love Is Enough* ends with the lovers’ separation. The allegory implies that Pharamond and Azalais must seek solace beyond their sexual love in the memory of that love, however fleeting, and in its artistic re-creation. Love himself points to the ineffable healing of the artist’s hand when he promises: “From these hands reward ye shall receive”—even if that reward comes through the “pain of Heaven” and “not of Hell.” Like Pharamond’s need to touch and make real the beloved of his dreams in her northern setting, Morris himself made real the heroic deeds of the Icelandic sagas by translating them with Eirikr Magnusson, and journeying to the actual battle-scenes and burial grounds just before and after composing *Love Is Enough*. In life and art, hands become concrete and allegorical means of separating dreams from reality by the sagas they translate and courage they memorialize.

Wordsworth and Morris then use gender to get at a human perseverance gained only through acts of love which embrace human vulnerability on a scale beyond gender. Referring to her father’s masque, May Morris later describes such love as an open “final absorption in eternal good, that something-beyond-all for which the speech of man can find no defining words and toward which the thoughts of man travel down every path of belief.” That “final absorption” for each poet is manifest in an aesthetic practice attuned to the earth’s cycles wherein all cycles of love and loss ultimately turn.

“Morris’ Polyvalent Women”

Florence S. Boos, University of Iowa

If Hans Robert Jauss was right that “the understanding of [a text’s] first reader will be sustained and enriched in a chain of receptions from generation to generation,” late-twentieth-century preoccupations with gender and sexuality may tell us something about our critical generation, as well as William Morris’ interpretations of the impasses and dilemmas of women, among them the title-figure of “The Defence of Guenevere,” his most often discussed poetic work.

The figure of Guenevere and its wider narrative setting in particular have been subjected to what might be called an over- as well as underdetermined range of moral, rhetorical, thematic, historical, linguistic, deconstructive and logical positivist [!] approaches, as well as a variety of source-, gender- and performance studies, and her uninhibited self-presentation and infringements of medieval and Victorian moral codes have evoked a bewildering array of nit-pickingly literalistic as well as passionate assaults and “defences.”

My principal aim in this talk is to broaden somewhat the range of Morris’ distribution of ‘womanly’ roles from the Guenevere of “The Defence” and “King Arthur’s Tomb,” to Jehane in “The Haystack in the Floods,” the vengeful Stenoboea and Gudrun in *The Earthly Paradise*, and the unnamed but pivotal figure of the lover and mother in *The Pilgrims of Hope*.

Several of Morris’ most complex women--early as well as late--experienced internal divisions and unsharp boundaries of moral identity, and viewed themselves with a complex mixture of satisfaction, rending tensions and a sense of pervasive entrapment, as ambivalent objects of male desire and severely constrained agents of their fate. But some of his narratives’ more complex men--ethically called to engage the world in direct action but rendered powerless by ambivalent forms of stoic fidelity--accepted comparably ambivalent attachments to these threatened women, and waived traditional male dominance as they faced grim catastrophes which would overwhelm their lovers as well as themselves.

Morris often explored the complexities of sexuality and its discontents in female voice, and we remember his women (I believe) because they are complex ‘polyvalent’ figures whose diapason of desire, empathy, sympathy, identification, anxiety, judgment and veiled revulsion elicit contradictory but powerfully

resonant responses, and reflect an empathetic heterosexual man’s efforts to ‘see’ them from ‘within’ as well as ‘without.’ And however idealized and projected they were, these projections were surprising and sometimes persuasive (Otherwise they would be ignored).

Like Eleanor Marx and other socialist feminists, Morris was more immediately preoccupied with women’s sexual autonomy and freedom from physical violence and economic constraints than with access to education, the franchise and other ‘bourgeois privileges.’ But his emotional and conceptual egalitarianism also reflected more abstract efforts to see--simultaneously, as it were--subjects and objects from many angles of incidence, and deepen as well as nuance his responses to sexuality and violence--not only violence against women and other violations of human dignity, but the mysterious entanglements of rage and aggression in baffled attractions for and between members of both sexes.

As he examined and reexamined the latter, he sought to temper judgment and make initial efforts to formulate and refine a form of “socialist” feminism. As he contemplated the former, he sought remedy as well as consolation in political activism, and in forms of stoic contemplation with affinities to feminism and philosophical humanism.

Morris’ views and representations of women finally evolved--not surprisingly--with maturity and experience: with the parenting of two daughters; with changes in his own and other Victorians’ views of women; and with the complex personal imbroglio of his own “cuckolded” marriage. In keeping with these changes his female monologuists were persuasive in their very incompleteness, as the early poetic champion of tormented heroines’ struggles for autonomy sought a broader view of fellowship which would embrace “woman as she shall be.” His imagination was broader than his ideology, and his ideology was broader than most.

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WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

The 2007 William Morris Society Fellowship has been awarded to Holly Dworken Cooley. After receiving her PhD in English literature from Case Western Reserve University in 1988, for many years Ms. Cooley taught Victorian literature and writing at the University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and Rio Salado College in Phoenix, Arizona. Now residing in Florida, she is the editor of www.goblinmarket.com, an electronic journal for children's literature, and a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Ms. Cooley describes her project as follows:

I plan to create a narrative of the life and achievements of William Morris, tentatively titled: "The Making of an Artist: William Morris" and intended for an older picture book audience, ages 8 to 12. In our more visually oriented culture, picture books, especially nonfiction, are not just for very young children any more. I believe this is an important project because as far as I can determine, nothing has been written about William Morris for children of any age. Further, although William Morris is quite well known in England, he is not very familiar to most Americans. Since adults buy most books for children, librarians and parents will read this book as well as children.

My goal in this project is to introduce children to the life and accomplishments of William Morris, whose life is an interesting story in its own right. Further, I intend to show how a child's interests can become part of his life's works, and to tell the story of a writer who influenced Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and others. Of course, my motive is to share my enthusiasm for this artist-writer.

The biography will be told chronologically, from birth to death, with an appreciation / summary at the end. I will touch on Morris' designs in textiles, stained glass, and printing, his writing of poetry and fantasies and his trips to Iceland, as well as his involvement with socialism and the SPAB, all within the context of the 19th century – briefly explaining the Industrial Revolution, etc., as required.

As I envision it, the child-friendly art to accompany the text will illustrate the connection between childhood and later life: for example, a young Morris studying the patterns of leaves and flowers, and then an older Morris working similar patterns into a tapestry. I also see examples of Morris designs in different mediums included throughout the text, to introduce young readers to his distinctive designs. A brief list of resources at the end will include se-

lected works written by and about Morris, as well as internet sites, including the William Morris Society website. Too, I intend to include a list of places in both the United Kingdom and the United States that can be visited to see examples of his paintings and interiors.

I would like to convey a sense of the genius involved in looking at all aspects of life as art and in pursuing art in as many different areas as Morris did. Children, I suspect, will find the range of his interests and accomplishments just as intriguing as older audiences always do.

Elizabeth Carolyn Miller is the recipient of the 2007 Joseph R. Dunlap Memorial Fellowship. Ms. Miller received her PhD at the University of Wisconsin in 2003, and is the author of a book manuscript, *Framed: The New Woman Criminal in British Culture at the Fin de Siecle*. Now an assistant professor at Ohio University, she describes her current Morris-related book project, *Print Culture and Late-Victorian Literary Radicalism*, as follows:

When it is complete, *Print Culture and Late-Victorian Literary Radicalism* will recover a debate about the political efficacy of print and literary media among radical writers in late-nineteenth-century Britain. The sudden surge in print, literacy, and textual production in this era has attracted much scholarly interest, but no critic has looked back to examine the political implications of mass media and mass-market publishing for radical writers on the ground. My project rectifies that oversight by investigating how literature advocating wholesale reform or revolution represented the media conditions of its own cultural moment.

Progress on this project will entail a sustained period of research time at the International Institute of Social History, which houses two archives crucially relevant to my project: the archives for the Socialist League (William Morris's influential political organization) and for its newspaper, the *Commonweal*. Two chapters of *Print Culture and Late-Victorian Literary Radicalism* require research in these archives: Chapter One, which focuses on artist-writer-activist William Morris, and Chapter Three, which focuses on the role of poetry in the late-Victorian radical press. Chapter One considers the apparent conflict between Morris's depiction of print in his political novels and in his own print career. The utopia *News from Nowhere* and the dream-vision *A Dream of John Ball* both conceive of print as an industrial, alienating medium and anticipate a post-print society, but while writing these novels, Morris was also engaged in editing and writing for the *Commonweal* (where both novels originally appeared) and in printing numerous cheap political pamphlets for the Socialist

League. Literary critics who discuss textuality in Morris's neo-Medieval novels have not adequately accounted for his active career in political print. My project shows how critical claims regarding Morris's "nostalgia" for oral culture fail to capture the complex analysis of media that winds through his oeuvre. I argue that the novels exhibit a sophisticated understanding of mass print's inevitable limitations as a political medium, and a corresponding recognition of the textual foundations of modern cultural memory and cultural change. To fully understand Morris's ambivalent relationship with print, however, I need to examine the papers that document production of his own newspapers and pamphlets. These will elucidate his day-to-day negotiation of how to make a social impact via print.

Chapter Three, meanwhile, will provide the first sustained analysis of poetry published in late-Victorian socialist and anarchist periodicals. These publications typically included at least one poem per issue, most of which have not previously been subject to close discursive analysis, but I argue that they played a key role in late-Victorian radical discourse. Poetry functioned to represent the relationship between tradition (signified by language and poetic form) and change (signified by the poems' revolutionary themes); more abstractly, it examined print's loss of authority amid mushrooming periodical organs and accelerating textual production. Ultimately, this chapter will include quantitative analysis of the kind of poetry included in radical journals as well as close examination of numerous individual poems. As the most "literary" and influential of the era's radical journals, the *Commonweal* will be a centerpiece of my analysis, and Morris's role as poetry editor will be as relevant as his role as radical poet. Working-class readers often contributed poems to the *Commonweal*, and many of these were printed anonymously. Access to the *Commonweal* archives at the International Institute of Social History will provide background on contributors and offer insight into editorial decisions about which poems to include in the paper.

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

***The Return of the Pre-Raphaelites*
Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE,
from 23 September 2007**

The Delaware Art Museum is pleased to announce *The Return of the Pre-Raphaelites*, as America's largest collection of Pre-Raphaelite art returns home

from an international tour. The collection goes on view to the public on Sunday, 23 September 2007. The Pre-Raphaelites took as inspiration for their paintings subjects drawn primarily from literature, including the Bible, Shakespeare, and the poets of their own age, such as Tennyson (*Lancelot and Guinevere*) and Keats (*Isabella and the Pot of Basil*). Occasionally, their works reflected the concerns raised by the changes experienced during the age in which they lived. In some cases, they painted scenes of modern life with a moral message, as in Rossetti's *Found*, showing a young country woman who has fallen into prostitution, being unable to find suitable work in the city. In other cases, these concerns were reflected in scenes of fantasy and escape, such as Burne-Jones' *The Council Chamber*, inspired by the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty.

The Pre-Raphaelites were particularly attracted to a type of feminine beauty, characterized by strong facial features and brilliant red hair. They often found their models—whom they called "stunners"—while walking the streets of London. In later works from the 1870s, an area in which the Museum's collection is especially strong, women become the central subject. Rossetti's images from this period are dreamy, sensual, and provocative. As the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood gradually dispersed, new inspiration appeared when William Morris and Rossetti became close friends. In 1861, Morris founded the firm that would become Morris & Co., designing hand-crafted household objects. Morris and his associates deeply believed that beautiful objects would improve individual lives adversely affected by the harsh industrial world. The Museum's collection features a wide range of arts and crafts work, including furniture, glass, metalwork, pottery, and jewelry.

The Delaware Art Museum is located at 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington, DE, and is open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 am.–4:00. For information, 302-571-9590 or 866-232-3714 (toll-free), www.delart.org.

A Brass Menagerie: Metalwork of the Aesthetic Movement

Bard Graduate Center, New York, 12 July–14 October 2007

A Brass Menagerie: Metalwork of the Aesthetic Movement is being presented at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture from 12 July to 14 October 2007. Organized by

Anna Tobin D'Ambrosio, curator of decorative arts at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute Museum of Art in Utica, NY, where the exhibition originated, it contains 75 pieces of brass and mixed-metal furniture as well as accessories ranging from chandeliers and andirons to door hardware, hanging shelves, and clocks. The exhibition continues the Bard Graduate Center's examination of the aesthetic movement, this time with the focus on the United States.

The aesthetic movement was introduced in this country at the centennial celebration in Philadelphia in 1876. It remained popular through the 1880s and was particularly evident in the decorative arts, as manufacturers created innovative and artistic applications of industrial metals that were visually and materially complex called "art brass" or "artistic bronze goods."

Most of the pioneering manufacturers of aesthetic-style metals—such as the Charles Parker Company and Bradley & Hubbard Manufacturing Co.—are represented in the exhibition by numerous objects that show the range and diversity of their products. Among the most imaginative items in the exhibition are Parker Company hanging shelves, tables, and a lamp, all with silver-plated surfaces outlined in brass and embellished by gold- and silver-plated, three-dimensional decoration. The furniture design is an interesting mixture of Anglo Japanese and Modern Gothic forms executed in interchangeable elements with Japanese surface finish and ornamentation.

Many motifs found on aesthetic metals are derived from Japanese art, such as the dragon-like creatures and butterflies that adorn a table by Ansonia Copper & Brass Company of Ansonia, CT, or the stylized Japanese crest images and clouds that embellish other tables. The crane motif, also derived from Japanese art, where it symbolizes longevity, pervaded the ornamentation of art brass goods. Hollings & Co. of Boston incorporated this theme into an exotic-looking floor lamp and accented by earthenware tiles patented by J. and G. Low Art Tile Works of Chelsea, MA. Japonisme is even more dominant in the door hardware made during the same period. Richly decorated doorknobs, escutcheons, and hinges that feature fully articulated Japanese figures and architecture highlight *A Brass Menagerie*.

Vibrant polychrome ceramics and exotic flourishes drawn from Moorish and Persian designs accent the wares made by other firms, such as tables made by Bradley & Hubbard and lamps by a host of other companies. Art brass maximized industrial mass production techniques and helped to set the stage

for twentieth-century decorative arts that would also utilize tubular metals and other industrial materials in the creation of decorative household goods.

The Bard Graduate Center is located at 18 West 86th Street in New York City. For further information please visit www.bgc.bard.edu.

Morris Mania: William Morris and the Howard Family Castle Howard, UK, from 1 March 2007

Castle Howard opens for its 2007 season with a new exhibition displaying works by William Morris. *Morris Mania: William Morris and the Howard Family* (1 March to 3 June) highlights the close friendship between George (9th Earl of Carlisle) and Rosalind Howard and the Morris family, as well as their enthusiastic patronage of the firm of Morris & Co.

The Castle Howard Chapel has long boasted some of the finest stained glass by Morris & Co., but in addition a set of three stained glass panels, commissioned by the Howard family for the Castle Howard Reformatory, will be put on show. These windows were recently discovered to be in the collection of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council and have been kindly loaned for the exhibition. Alison Brisby, assistant curator at Castle Howard, said: "We were thrilled to learn of the whereabouts of these windows, and even more exciting is how we have discovered one of the preparatory drawings by Burne-Jones here at Castle Howard. We are delighted to be able to unite the drawing and the glass in this exhibition."

Rosalind Howard demonstrated her passion for Morris's bold, colorful designs by decorating more than twenty rooms with different Morris wallpapers; even papering over 18th Century Italian frescoes in one instance. Nearly two-dozen unused rolls of Morris wallpaper have survived in the archives and will be put on public display for the first time at Castle Howard. Also on display is a collection of handmade Morris rugs, as well as three richly embroidered panels depicting figures from Chaucer's poem "The Legend of Good Women," which were part of a set that used to hang in Morris' own home. The exhibition will be supplemented by a collection of personal letters, accounts, drawings and photographs.

Castle Howard is open for 2007 from 1 March to 4 November, and 24 November to 16 December. Visit www.castlehoward.co.uk or call 01653 648333 for more information.

HE LAST WORD

THE TABLES TURNED IN AMERICA

Tony Pinkney, Lancaster University

Pamela Bracken Wiens's edition of William Morris's 'socialist interlude' *The Tables Turned, Or Nupkins Awakened* (1994) is as impressive academically as it is delightful physically as a book. Yet it contains one important omission: it fails to note that an American performance of *The Tables Turned* took place in New York on 15 March 1888, exactly five months after its first English production.

Wiens's introduction to her edition is a fine scholarly meditation on all aspects of Morris's play: its literary influences, the actual occasion of its first performance, its immediate and long-term political impacts. As part of this comprehensive treatment she tracks through its stage history after the first performance on 13 October: "at least eleven more performances were advertised in the pages of *Commonweal* between October of 1887 and June of 1888, varying in location from large halls to local clubs." And she notes that the anarchist Prince Kropotkin and his friend Elisee Reclus, the French geographer, were reportedly "talking of putting Nupkins into a French dress, and sending him forth to do additional good in that fashion" (*Commonweal*, 5 November 1887).

Whether *The Tables Turned* made it across to France I do not know; but it certainly did get over to the United States, though it appears that it had to adopt "American dress" in order to do so. In the issue of *Commonweal* for 14 April 1888 there appears a report by Frederic Perrino entitled "'The Tables Turned' in America." A first attempt by members of the Socialistic Labor Party and the Progressive Labor Party to stage the play at Concordia Hall in New York in late February or early March came to grief when, on the evening of the first performance, the police discovered that the hall had no theatrical licence and put a stop to it. Since, however, the socialists had arranged a dance after the play, this aspect of the night's entertainment went on regardless and, "taking their oppression good-naturedly," the comrades at least salvaged something from the evening.

Nothing daunted, our socialist thespians then secured the licensed Roumania Hall for a performance, only to find that the local police chief threatened the proprietor that if he allowed *The Tables Turned* to go ahead he would have his licence revoked the following year. In what might seem an unlikely move, the comrades then appealed over the head of the police chief to the mayor, a "big iron manufacturer"

(presumably Abram Stevens Hewitt), whose bluff paternalism comes beaming through at this point. For he told them "that he had no objection to them performing their little play, provided only it was not immoral; that he knew William Morris, and he was a nice fellow, but a little crazy; that he had not ordered the police chief to make his threat, and that they were to pay no attention to him."

With the coast thus clear and the police chief presumably squared by his political boss, the play went ahead on Thursday evening, 15 March: "On the whole the performance was a very creditable one for amateurs, though, of course, they showed, as all amateurs do, that they were not used to the stage"—which suggests that the American performance suffered hiccoughs to compare with Morris forgetting his lines and Lord Tennyson fainting in the wings on the English first night five months earlier. The standard of make-up was "decidedly good, and very like," and "the best performances were those of Bellows, Neverenough, and Mary Pinch."

Readers of Morris' play will know that, though Mary Pinch does indeed have a central role in it, District-Attorney Bellows and Officer Neverenough do not appear. Clearly, Morris's text had been transposed to the American political situation, as Perrino's account indeed confirms: "all the internal troubles [of the play] had been adjusted." He alas does not give us any further detail of how this putting into "American dress" operated, though it is intriguing that Henry George, who as the United Labor mayoral candidate had been defeated by Abram Hewitt in 1886, features in the list of dramatis personae. Hopefully, further research on this can be carried out by colleagues with better access to the 1880s American socialist press than I (writing from England) have.

It is clear, at any rate, that whether or not *The Tables Turned* ever made it over to Europe, it did transpose successfully to the United States, receiving from American socialist organisations that kind reception from the "otherside kindred" that Morris anticipated for himself if he should ever cross the Atlantic, and confirming, through the police harassment of its attempted and actual performances, just how germane its spirited satire of official persecution of socialists was in these years. Wiens concludes her introduction to *The Tables Turned* by arguing that Morris' "little interlude" is not so little after all. To have included details of its American performance, and thus of its adaptability to political struggles well beyond its own narrow national confines, would only have strengthened her case.

MORRIS-INSPIRED ARTIST BOOKS

Jean Formo



As a book artist and calligrapher, I am captivated by the power and mystery of words, and by the textures and images they invoke. In my books, letterforms themselves become reflections of the chosen text. Their quality of line, weight, spacing and placement on the page all combine to create an expressive visual language. The impetus for a new book may come from my sensory reactions to the words. What do I hear when I think of the words? What images or colors come to mind when I read the text? I see the idea of “text” also in a broader sense, and sometimes to the exclusion of words, which results in books harboring abstract texts made of color and shape arrangements. I like the fascinating ambiguity about a text or meaning which remains veiled, just beyond our complete understanding. Exploring the interaction of form and content is the never-ending and often exciting task of the book artist. For the person who makes one-of-a-kind book structures, the search is always on for un-

usual materials which will amplify and give form to the text. My long-time interest in working with fibers as a spinner and weaver has carried over into my book pieces. Some are woven or lashed with bamboo, linen, or leather. Others are bound with handspun cords and threads during the paper-making process.

It is when I move out of the familiar that I experience the most joy in my work. My interest and loyalty are rightfully placed upon the search and not the destination. My perceptions about “books” are ever-changing, and my books are always a surprise to me.

Embodiment of Dreams: A Tribute to William Morris 1997

William Morris described his work, both written and visual, as “the embodiment of dreams in one form or another.” Morris believed that our best work begins as a dream, with the resulting creation being the embodiment of that dream. His comment about embodiment certainly resonates in my experience as a lettering artist. Not only do I bring an inner intention to each design task, but I often tell my book-art students that they must first “dream a book.” Dreaming and designing are, in a sense, one and the same. For me, it was natural to dream about an artist book which would feature this concept, not only in regard to design, but also to living.

This one-of-a-kind artist book uses an interplay of word and image to tell its story, sometimes in Morris’ own voice. Each of its eight panels or pages has a biographical theme containing landmarks in the life of Morris. The cover panel is layered with walnut ink, and decorated with a Morris monogram framed with an onlay of covered bookboard. The monogram motif appears in a different variation on each page. The cover features Morris’ apple-green text written in hand-ground stick ink with orange, gold and teal accents. The second panel has an image of Jane Morris with a text from a Morris poem. The book continues with Morris’ prose and poetry, reflecting on beauty in art and work. One panel is

devoted to Morris and Kelmscott Manor. This page has the familiar “here then are a few words about a house that I love. . . .,” and the poem Morris wrote about the bed at Kelmscott. The last panel is about the Kelmscott Press, and the hopes Morris held for the creation of fine printed books.

The accordion panels made of heavy bookboard are joined together with hinges constructed of brass welding rods and braided silk, often called a wire hinge binding. Each panel is edged with hand-colored drawings of Morris wallpaper. The face of each panel is made of watercolor paper painted with variegated washes of walnut ink. A number of calligraphic styles are represented throughout, including gothic black letter, handwriting script, contemporary versals, italic capitals, and a contemporary variation of Edward Johnston’s Foundational Hand. Mediums used are black stick ink, gouache, colored pencil and 23 karat gold leaf.

A Kelmscott Diary 2004

Morris was more of a letter writer than a diary-keeper, with the exception of his travel diaries about Iceland. The title of the book does not reflect an actual diary. This one-of-a-kind artist book takes a look at excerpts from Morris’s letters to friends and family. In them, he often sang the praises of Kelmscott Manor, and its idyllic garden, wildlife, and nearby river. His words reveal that Kelmscott Manor was more than a mere house to Morris.



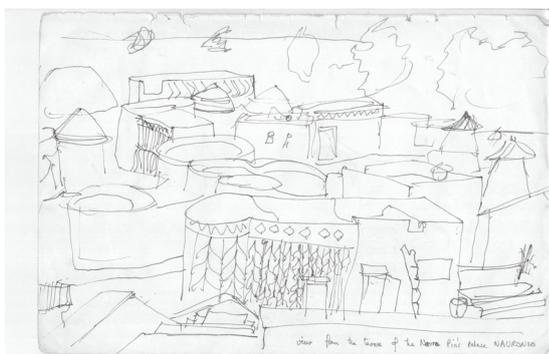
It was an inspiration, and his creative fires burned brightly up in the Tapestry Room, where he liked to watch the swooping doves outside as he worked. When I visit Kelmscott Manor, it is easy for me to imagine what it was like with Morris in residence. Morris had discovered a place on which to spend his heart, and it was Kelmscott Manor. The narrow, winding Upper Thames is just a short amble from the Manor gate. Morris the angler spent lazy hours on the little river, sitting in his punt, hunched over his fishing rod. Even now, the Manor is still a house to visit on a sunny summer day.

A Kelmscott Diary uses book board panels for pages, each one covered with Frankfurt White drawing paper, stained with washes of walnut ink. The cover has texts written with hand-ground stick ink and white gouache. These surround a central window of abstract watercolor design. Each page has an end strip with a vertical text written against a watercolor background in white gouache. The watercolor is used to abstractly suggest the color of garden flowers. The main text is written in an informal contemporary variation of Edward Johnston’s Foundational Hand. Miniature paper collages with 23 karat gold leaf appear throughout the book. The structure is bound in the traditional Coptic manner with brightly colored cotton threads.

Jean Formo, a teacher, fiber artist and practitioner of calligraphy, lives in Savage, Minnesota. She has lectured throughout the United States, spins and weaves a variety of natural yarns, and has crafted several artist books based on the creative ideals of William Morris.

FLOW FORWARD—A MIRACLE OF AGILITY

Faith Kenrick



A few years ago when crop circles began to feature startlingly in our English fields, set in the natural landscape, the sudden magical alteration prompted concern. It seemed that in among the machine-cut fields something was stirring; maybe Martians landing to tell us something! But now it's understood that a few shadowy artists were mainly responsible for the abstract designs, cutting patterns into the full grown cornfields around England. Perhaps it was a bringing up-to-date of the old cornstalk folk arts! Who knows what prompted these inventive minds to

work in secret to astonish the onlooker and delude the credible.

The mazes and designs awaken our senses, appearing where machined uniformity of level plain wheat-fields cancels out the vitality of growing crops, not pierced by poppies or cornflowers as of old.

In a similar way, William Morris understood that his expertise would assist the stylistic transition from Victorian severity to the appearance of fluidity. Less starchy days—that he and his group heralded, by a new way of dressing, with new painters and new designs for homes and furniture. I'd like to hope that by reshaping our landscape to suit our present needs in a beautiful way, we can also create good gateways to

the future. With this in mind, I would like to introduce Andrew Rutter, a planning officer aged over 70 (retired) with a wonderful energy, who took me round the well-adjusted townscape of Winchester in Hampshire to see its design.

When Rutter travelled to Ghana as an impressionable young architect, he sketched the dazzling buildings. Formed out of mud on a wooden structure, the more imposing ones painted white, their sheer naturalness focused his vision in his role as a town planner. Winchester's planners had to adapt winding medieval streets to present use, and the memory of the fresh yet urban feel of these designs, seen under a hot African sun, must have played a guiding part in his re-designing of a medieval town to suit traffic movement, pedestrianization, and the requirements of a university and cathedral town.

The "interventions" help the town dwellers resolve the many traces of architectural medievalism. Town design skillfully flows forward to include the early architecture and future vision. The living sculpture of a townscape is beautifully understood and interpreted here, allowing traffic to ebb and flow among the narrow streets and broader avenues without relegating the cars to an outer neutral highway.

The turrets Rutter saw in Ghana look a little like Red House, in its medievalized spiky adaptation, done for William Morris by Philip Webb. Like a "broken eggshell," it launched the newly wedded couple, William and Janey, and their unusual friends, on into city life and honest manufacturing of a unique kind. This may have seemed a strange cuckoo's egg to outsiders at Bexleyheath in those days, but it has a richness we still find digestible. Webb's design has an earthiness of concept, based on natural observation of the same ilk as Cecil Beaton or Laura Ashley, who blended organic shapes with



fashion sense to produce pleasing designs that last. Like Morris, they made fabrics for people to feel at home with in their usual surroundings. Though color schemes swerve from season to season, and shapes swell in outline or dim away, still the forms and aims retain their essential textural power.

In seeking to explain the attraction of natural styles of architectural intervention in a landscape, I want to explore further how the contribution Andrew Rutter has made leads us into Biodynamic principles of architecture, a system that has spread from Australia and the USA through Spain and now to Britain. A study center of these principles is found outside Winchester in Hampshire.

Taking the early ideas of a town, when arches covered shop fronts to shelter passers-by, Mr. Rutter has worked almost in ‘musical’ variations wherever he could. New shopping streets have similar arched cover; the rear of a retirement home has curved walls for flats over an empty car park on street level, each parking bay the width of the flat above, on the mews, behind a busy one-way street. Even the brick-built pub near the cathedral is set above a parking area that has rugged brick arches supporting its anonymous design. The result is a startling mix of medieval and modern to gladden the heart of such earnest radicals as Morris and Philip Webb and their followers in the Morris Society. We know Morris campaigned to keep old barns and early churches when new Victorians wanted their own new style instead, founding the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, that later on inspired the National Trust and Octavia Hill’s purchases of wild land outside cities for all to enjoy. Old buildings can be “prime energy” examples, to us newcomers, of the way things ought to be, throwing into contrast lazy or compromised architecture that cheats its occupants of enjoyment by taking short-cuts that deny the art of building its dignity.

One can admire the grace of traditional fabrics on African women, the clothes that wrap smoothly around the person. And in a sculptural mood the homes appeal to my sense of the organic, which my clay pieces register with. Taught by John Churchill, a potter who found his identity hard to secure because of mixed English and Caribbean parentage (as well as being adopted by white parents), I favor hand-work, rather than wheel-formed pots. Pots have been used excitingly in one of the interiors Rutter records for us (see illustration).

The smooth curves take us back to my original starting point, the mosaics of crop circles. Some of the most beautiful cities in the world, like Paris, Rome or Edinburgh, have been dramatically redesigned by sheer force. Perhaps the social ills fiercely ruining city lives could be healed if such curves and ellipses could format future urban layout of housing zones to amalgamate light industry, schools and small businesses? Perhaps out of the rubble left in war zones around the world, amazingly new adaptations for peaceful living could emerge?

New types of transport, or revived transportation like trams and canal boats, could mean developers would site houses to follow natural curves of hills and take account of winding river beds. Morris put his factories on tributaries of the Thames where the workers could look out of the windows and enjoy the relaxing view of water moving in a tidal pattern.

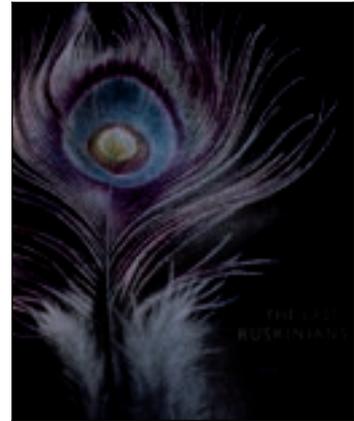
I’d like to continue to express how Morris was welcoming change, and that the arts and crafts movement, or art nouveau, came to typify this. It is tempting to see even his fiercely accurate natural observation—as seen on fabrics and wallpaper designs made in his workshops—as being the prelude to Impressionism’s far more abstract vision that was also to break up surface in a new way, into ever tinier color fragments. Meanwhile, inventions multiplied in this dreamy Victorian empire, which also crushed many souls in Asia, Africa and India, people who served ambition’s purpose very differently to Morris’ ideal worker combination, ironically.

Faith Kenrick first wrote about William Morris for a school project in 1967 that involved several visits to the Walthamstow Morris Gallery to make sketches of the elegant furniture and copies of the decorative publishing letterhead. A trained artist, Faith makes fabric designs for commission and is fixing gardens in London. She hopes to write a short children’s story based loosely around the theme of William Morris’ family and their different homes.

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By Margaret D. Stetz

This volume uses materials drawn from the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection at the University of Delaware to offer a new interpretation of the significance and prevalence of the portrait image during the final decades of the nineteenth century in Britain. It focuses on how and why representations of writers' and artists' faces circulated through the periodical press, through exhibition spaces in London, and through book publishing, while it looks at the ways in which audiences learned to "read" these faces for information about masculinity, femininity, class status, and especially for an understanding of the concept of "genius." Margaret D. Stetz's work highlights throughout the importance of Oscar Wilde as the writer who best exploited the new market for portraits in advancing his own career, but moves beyond him to consider the broader topic of writers' and artists' faces as objects of idealization, caricature, and also of close study by the general public. It examines, too, the portrait as a marker both of celebrity and of modernity, in an age that ushered in the present by defining itself through advertising, public relations, and commodification.

MARGARET D. STETZ is the Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies and Professor of Humanities at the University of Delaware.



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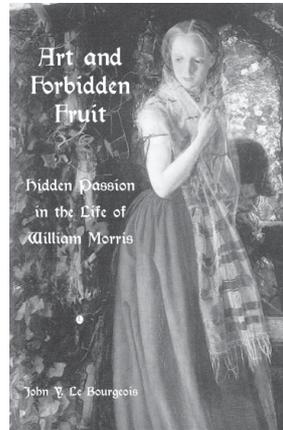
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MARGARET D. STETZ is the Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies and Professor of Humanities at the University of Delaware.

CHERYL A. WILSON is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

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CONFERENCES
AND CALLS FOR PAPERS

**Morris Study Week
Oxford, UK, July 2007**

A Morris Study week will be held in Oxford this summer from 22 to 28 July 2007 entitled “William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement.” The course will examine both the life and influence of Morris as a romantic reaction to industrialization, in his creative work and his political and social philosophy. It will fully explore the influence of his early years and time at Oxford with an opportunity to see significant Oxford sites which influenced him, and the Morris works to be found in the city and university; including Exeter College, Hollywell Street where Jane Burden spent much of her early life, the painted ceilings in the Union Society by Morris, Rossetti, Burne-Jones et al, Burne-Jones tapestries and stained glass, and vernacular cottages saved by Morris thus prompting the movement for heritage preservation. There will also be an opportunity to visit Morris’ Kelmscott Manor and the arts and crafts Rodmarton Manor in the Cotswolds. The course is situated in the beautiful Christ Church College as part of the “Oxford Experience.”

Further details can be obtained from www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/international/oxfordexperiee.asp or from the Oxford Experience, OUDCE, 1 Weellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA UK, ()1865 270428.

Call for Papers: Journal Issue on Victorian Women and the Occult

Increasingly, contemporary scholarship reveals the strong connection between Victorian women and the world of the nineteenth-century supernatural. Women were intrinsically bound to the occult and the esoteric from mediums who materialised spirits to the epiphanic experiences of the new woman, from theosophy to telepathy. This special issue of *Women’s Writing* (an international journal published by Routledge) seeks to address the various ways in which Victorian women expressed themselves and were constructed by the occult through a broad range of texts.

Please submit finished papers (between 3,000 and 7,000 words) for consideration to Dr. Tatiana Kontou, T.Kontou@sussex.ac.uk; English Department, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, Sussex BN1 9QN UK, by 31 October 2007.

THE LAST WORD

Two poems by Brian Lewis:

Hair

“A stunner, look. The waving auburn hair.
The third row.” They saw her from above.
Yes, a stunner. More than enough to share.
Top looked down and instantly felt love.

He imagined Dante by the Arno meeting
Beatrice. Or King Mark’s garden, Ysault
seeing Tristram. Romance defeating
reality – matchless maid, one without fault.

Gabriel drew her first. More than lifesize
determined, the positive jaw line there
for all to see. A sibyl for a genius, wise
beyond her years, someone to share.
A trophy who would listen, make little fuss.
A new life dawning. Aquarius, Aquarius.

Blindness

Melancholia sees it all but sits with hand
on cheek and looks away. Gabriel knows her,
knows the loose dress and the keys. Planned
meticulously, she’s everywhere and nowhere.

Chaos, all’s in disarray, she’s nothing there
beyond the moment. Alchemist as fool.
Quite disillusioned. Prison bait, poor fare.
Her eyes pricked out with an etching tool.

He cannot focus, all there was seems
worthless. Things fall apart, convivial
friends no longer call. Rossetti dreams
of her coffin and a stained book. Trivial
detail, a worm hole. Most cures are tried,
making tragedy into farce he tries suicide.