

Thomas J. Tobin, *Pre-Raphaelitism in the Nineteenth-Century Press: A Bibliography* (British Columbia, CA: University of Victoria [English Literary Studies Monograph No. 87], 2002), 231 pp., \$25.00 pbk, ISBN 09206 04811.

Pre-Raphaelite scholars and Morrisians also have much to thank Thomas Tobin for. Not only is he Webmaster for the William Morris Society's much-visited website, but *Pre-Raphaelitism in the Nineteenth-Century Press* marks the arrival of a vital research tool for all scholars working on Pre-Raphaelite art and literature. Tobin acknowledges in his preface that Fredeman's *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* (1965) is the precursor of his own bibliography, but this new work dramatically expands on Fredeman's range of references. *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* had 500 references to periodical criticism on the Pre-Raphaelites and their associates; *Pre-Raphaelitism in the Nineteenth-Century Press* lists 2400 periodical references from 1854-1900.

The bibliography starts with an informative 25-page introduction divided into subsections: 'The Genesis of Pre-Raphaelitism'; 'An Overview of Pre-Raphaelite Bibliography'; 'Methodology and Sources'; 'The Scope of the Bibliography'. Tobin highlights how the need to define Pre-Raphaelitism was an early obsession of art critics affronted by paintings with the mysterious initials 'P.R.B.' on them. He notes the extent to which the Pre-Raphaelites and all linked with them were often vilified or ridiculed, saying 'By far the greatest number of entries in this bibliography deal with Pre-Raphaelitism as an object of derision, a deformed curiosity left over from continental Romanticism' (p. 29). Pre-Raphaelite poetry 'was defined as such only retrospectively, beginning in the 1850s' (p. 26) and entries on the writings of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti, Swinburne and, of course, Morris, are plentiful.

One of the many strengths of this work is numerous references to smaller periodicals that often get left out of bibliographies. Tobin has scoured many limited-circulation periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic, and has also unearthed a number of responses to the Pre-Raphaelites from within mainland Europe, particularly France and Italy. As the century progresses inevitably questions were also raised about the Pre-Raphaelites' relationship to aestheticism, and entries reflect this. The Pre-Raphaelites were also closely connected with

(often very heated) debates about the morality of art, a subject which Victorian reviewers dwelt on at some length.

It is almost impossible to pick out entries of note for the sake of a review because reading through this bibliography as a whole, almost regardless of its primary function as a stimulus to further research, is fascinating in itself. It provides the most extensive account to date of how the Pre-Raphaelites were read and thought about by the culture and contexts which produced them. However, *Punch* was no doubt having its usual dig at anything culturally avant garde with 'The Exhibition as it Might Have Been in Days of Yore: by a Disciple of Retrogress' in 1851 (p. 41); *The Building News* was presumably more exciting than it sounds, with their pragmatically-disguised 'Cruel-to-be-kind Critic' reviewing 'The Winter Exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite Pictures' in 1858 (p. 55); *The Light Green: A Superior and High-Class Periodical* certainly sounds from its title like it's having some fun at the expense of aestheticism, and its first issue in 1872 featured 'Rosina Christetti's' 'Ding Dong' (a parody, no doubt, of *Sing-Song*) and a poem by Algernon Charles 'Sin-burne' called 'Octopus' (p. 82); and L. C. M. perhaps wisely chooses to stay anonymous when writing about 'An Evening with Swinburne' in *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1878 (p. 96).

For Morris scholars *Pre-Raphaelitism in the Nineteenth-Century Press* is a valuable resource indeed. Many readers of the *JWMS* will be familiar with Peter Faulkner's *William Morris: The Critical Heritage* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) which has to date been the main collection of contemporary responses to Morris's writings. Again, Faulkner's volume isn't superseded by Tobin's - *Pre-Raphaelitism in the Nineteenth-Century Press* contains bibliographical entries only and not extracts from the works cited - but Tobin provides many more references. Where an entry on Morris has previously been cited in Faulkner then Tobin notes this (as he also does if a citation was in Fredeman). As the bibliography extends as far as 1900 then it also provides what must be the most extensive list of obituaries and tributes to Morris after his death, as well as reviews of J. W. Mackail's *The Life of William Morris* (1899).

Tobin comments in his introductory section on 'An Overview of Pre-Raphaelite Bibliography' that after the publication of *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* most scholarship on the PRs in the 1970s was 'theoretical, little energy went into unearthing additional sources: Fredeman's bibliography, with its wealth of previously unknown material, provided ample opportunity for original research' (p. 18). We all have reason to be grateful for Tobin's energy too. No one working on Pre-Raphaelitism will fail to find new sources of information or stimuli for further research and comment in this important new work.

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