

*Algernon Charles Swinburne: Unofficial Laureate* edited by Catherine Maxwell and Stefano Evangelista. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2013. xiv, 256 pp. ISBN 978 07190 8625 0. £70.00; \$110.00.

Between Tennyson's death in 1892 and his own in 1909, Algernon Swinburne was widely regarded as the greatest living English poet, the "unofficial laureate," and even after his death his poetry continued to have an immense cultural impact through its demonstrably broad and deep influence on twentieth-century Modernism. Since his death, however, his reputation has never adequately reflected his achievement, due to the undeniable difficulty of the poetry, and to the less than wholeheartedly enthusiastic critical monographs in the years immediately after his death. Most especially, the decline in Swinburne's popularity was due to Pound's and Eliot's defensive denials of his influence and importance, and their consequently contentious, often careless, and even obtuse representations of his work. As a result, critics of Swinburne, more than those of any other poet of comparable stature, have been constantly on the defensive over the past century. The present volume and this review are no exceptions, though the strengths of this collection, combined with other works inspired by Swinburne's centenary, offer hope that a long-awaited Swinburne revival may be in the offing. Of course, hope springs eternal, and in this case as in others it may bear the stamp of its origins in Pandora's box. Despite many other moments of such hope since Cecil Lang's great edition of the letters in 1959-62, the number of pages dedicated to Swinburne in the major teaching anthologies has continued to dwindle until now, when he is only represented by two or three short poems or excerpts.

Still, along with the special centenary edition of *Victorian Poetry* committed to Swinburne, a centenary collection dedicated to the late works edited by Yisrael Levin, and the centenary conference that led to the present collection, *Algernon Charles Swinburne: Unofficial Laureate* represents a valiant effort to seize the opportunity of Swinburne's centenary and re-situate him "in the light of current critical work on cosmopolitanism, politics, print culture, form, Victorian Hellenism, religious controversy, gender and sexuality, the arts, and aestheticism and its contested relation to literary modernism." Of particular note in this enterprise are the contributions of the two editors, which bookend the collection of eleven essays.

As the first of four essays grouped under the title "Cultural Discourse," Evangelista's "Swinburne's French Voice: Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Mediation in Aesthetic Criticism" demonstrates Swinburne's importance as Victorian culture's greatest and most authoritative critic, advocate, and interpreter of contemporary French literature and culture. As Evangelista