

## REVIEWS

*The Pre-Raphaelites and Orientalism: Language and Cognition in Remediations of the East* by Eleonora Sasso. Edinburgh Critical Studies in Victorian Culture. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2018. x, 220 pp. ISBN 9781474407168. \$75.00.

Eleonora Sasso's is both an immensely interesting and immensely frustrating study. It is fascinating as it points our attention to the interest of the Pre-Raphaelites – Brotherhood members and affiliates – in the Oriental world, which is often ignored as scholars focus on their better-known antique and medieval re-imaginings. Sasso looks exclusively at the Pre-Raphaelites' reception and reinterpretation of the *Arabian Nights*, or *One Thousand and One Nights* – known to them in bowdlerized versions (Edward William Lane, 1840) as well as unexpurgated (Richard Francis Burton, 1885) – to trace their fascination with the Oriental locale, stories, and personnel. This is a worthy endeavour as Sasso provides a catalogue of texts and images – prose, poetry, paintings, sketches – which bear intertextual connections with the *Arabian Nights* and even, in a 65-page-strong Appendix, summarizes and extracts relevant quotations from the most relevant Pre-Raphaelite texts. (Regrettably, she does not provide illustrations in her monograph.)

Her four short chapters look at different authors' re-imaginings and remediations of themes, tropes, and locales taken from the *Arabian Nights*. Chapter one introduces a wealth of texts and images to suggest that Dante Rossetti, as painter and representative of the "Fleshly School of Poetry," "blends" Eastern and Western images, poetry and painting, Turkish and biblical orients in his response to Oriental culture, thus creating "an entirely new vision of the East."

Chapter two, on Algernon Swinburne and Aubrey Beardsley, looks at how the conceptual metaphor "East Is Sexual Freedom" is translated, converted (or "perverted") in the work of these two artists. Working with Burton's unexpurgated version – which Jorge Louis Borges praised as capturing "the hard obscenity of John Donne, [and] the gigantic vocabulary of Shakespeare" (74) – these two artists' "corporeal Orientalism" in their representation of female figures and *hammam* scenes either maintained an East-West dichotomy where the East was considered superior, or led to an over-orientalizing in a "grotesque" re-imagining of the Oriental world which "undermin[ed] the ideology of the original."