

REVIEWS

Ford Madox Brown: The Manchester Murals and the Matter of History by Colin Trodd. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2022. xiv, 245 pp. + 12 colour, 14 b/w illus. ISBN 978-1-5261-4243-6. \$120.00.

Colin Trodd's new book is a welcome addition to the growing body of scholarly work on Ford Madox Brown. Those with an interest in Brown's work will find this text an invaluable contribution to the literature on the artist, and those with a broader interest in Victorian art will find much here to challenge and expand their understanding of the period.

Ford Madox Brown: The Manchester Murals and the Matter of History offers readers a meticulous analysis of Brown's final artistic project, which he completed over a period of thirteen years from 1880 to 1893 (the year of his death). It is fair to say that the murals have suffered from a general lack of scholarly interest, often dismissed as strange and incoherent late-career productions of an otherwise lauded figure in Victorian art. The twelve murals (in fact, only seven can be considered murals; the others are large-format oil paintings on canvas) portray subjects from the history of Manchester, a city renowned in the nineteenth century as a centre of manufacturing and industrialization. The project was sponsored by the city of Manchester as a decorative program for the town hall. Upon their completion, the town council received the murals with tepid enthusiasm – a fact that perhaps explains the lack of interest in them among early twentieth-century scholars.

Trodd's text is arranged in two parts. Part I provides a theoretical and historical foundation for his central claim that Brown represented history in ways that scholars have typically discounted and maligned. Drawn largely from primary sources and contemporary criticism, chapters 1 and 2 offer a detailed account of what Trodd calls Brown's "social activist" aesthetic. In these chapters, Trodd provides a thorough contextualization of Brown's imaginative engagement with history. This background sets the stage for his analyses in Part II, which is structured around case studies of each mural. In chapters 3, 4, and 5, Trodd tackles the murals individually in the chronological order of their subjects. The detailed visual analyses in these chapters are a major strength and contribution of Trodd's book; though the murals have received serious critical attention in the past, Trodd has taken the time to consider each image as part of a larger conceptual whole. His attentive readings reveal the coherent structure of the series and lend credence to his

overarching argument that the murals have been largely misunderstood.

Central to the book's argument is Trodd's call to reevaluate the way in which we understand Brown's theory of history. According to Trodd, Brown's aim in the murals was to "redirect debate about History Painting by aligning it with many of the matters [he] encountered in daily life." For a seemingly narrow topic, Trodd has done an exemplary job of articulating the stakes of his assertion in relation to larger concerns about British painting, Pre-Raphaelite conceptions of history, and the fraught relationship between Victorian art and dominant conceptions of modernism. Ultimately, he makes a convincing case that scholars should understand the Manchester murals as examples of Brown's unique and significant contribution to late Victorian history-painting. Throughout *Manchester Murals*, Trodd argues that the writings of Thomas Carlyle had an exceptionally important influence on Brown. For Trodd, Carlyle's concept of the "Eye of History" is the most productive way to understand Brown's gravitation towards peculiar, idiosyncratic, and prosaic moments in his subjects for the Manchester murals. Trodd maintains that we should consider Brown's images as a new type of history painting largely inspired by Carlyle:

The first point to acknowledge about Brown's programme is its unusual treatment of history as a combination of public events, routines of daily living and practical human activities. Brown's matter-of-fact world is charged with energy. These are Carlylean characteristics, for Brown starts from the assumption that it is the present that makes historical experience.

The last two decades have witnessed a notable uptick in scholarly interest in Brown, including two significant exhibitions at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (2008) and the Manchester Art Gallery (2011) as well as the publication of a *catalogue raisonné* by Mary Bennett in 2010. These recent efforts signal an evolving reconsideration of Brown's place in the history of Pre-Raphaelitism and Victorian painting. *Manchester Murals* contributes to this trend, but Trodd is careful to acknowledge the varying perspectives on Brown's work, which he classifies broadly as ideological and cultural:

For some commentators, Brown's contributions to the art world were shaped or determined by impersonal and largely negative forces. For the most part, proponents of this model, which I will call ideological, have postulated that these works converged with many of the general practices of industrial society. Conversely, proponents of another type of thought, which I will call cultural, are inclined to distance Brown from the theories associated with mainstream Victorian cultural life.

The stakes in this distinction extend beyond Brown's legacy to a larger concern about the unfavourable critical comparison of Victorian art and French modernism. For those who adhere to the centre-periphery model of modernism, artists like Brown too often serve as proof positive of the inferiority of Victorian art – a belief that Trodd works actively to dispel.

Trodd offers a detailed rebuttal of the “ideological” interpretation of Brown's work, particularly as represented in the scholarship of Albert Boime. Trodd takes issue with Boime's 1981 interpretation of the Manchester murals as a muddled critique of bourgeois industrialism. While his analysis of Boime's earlier writings is convincing, Trodd makes no mention of Boime's more recent evaluation of Brown's work in *Art in the Age of Civil Struggle* (2008). In this volume, Boime delves deeply into the political connections and philosophies of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He includes an extended analysis of Brown's *Work* (1863), and though critical at times, it shares some important points in common with Trodd. In particular, Boime's description of Brown's attempts to subvert typical expectations of history painting as well as the influence of Carlyle on the conception and critical reception of Brown's painting seem relevant to Trodd's interpretation in *Manchester Murals*.

Tim Barringer's *Men at Work* (2005), a formative text in the reappraisal of Victorian art and modernism in the last two decades, would also fall within Trodd's “ideological” category of critical analysis. In *Men at Work*, Brown's *Work* serves as a central case study in Barringer's broader exploration of Victorian conceptions of masculinity and labour. Like Boime's later scholarship on Brown, Barringer's contribution is conspicuously absent in *Manchester Murals* (though Trodd does mention Barringer's text in a lengthy footnote containing all the previous literature that ignores the Manchester murals).

The “cultural” camp, in which Trodd includes himself, builds upon the scholarship of Julie Codell, Kenneth Bendiner, Julian Trueherz, and, indispensably, Paul Barlow. Codell was among the first scholars to examine the Manchester murals in a sympathetic light by situating them within Brown's career and the wider context of Victorian art and art writing. She too first articulated the notable influence of Carlyle on Brown's conception of history. Bendiner's *The Art of Ford Madox Brown* (1998) aimed to bolster Brown's reputation as a significant figure within Pre-Raphaelitism and Victorian art by articulating a coherent narrative of Brown's career. For Bendiner, “humour” provided the common thread throughout Brown's work, and he offered a compelling reading of the Manchester murals through this interpretive lens. Similarly, Trueherz's *Ford Madox Brown: A Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer* (2011), an edited volume that accompanied an exhibition of the same name at the Manchester Art Gallery, worked towards a synthesized understanding of

Brown's entire career, pushing back against the "ideological" tendency to view Brown's career through specific moments and artworks. Without a doubt, though, Trodd owes his greatest debt to Paul Barlow, whose late-career scholarship provided the groundwork for Trodd's methodology and orientation towards the Manchester murals. Barlow made significant strides in situating Pre-Raphaelitism within a broader history of British art, and his intellectual legacy is a constant, and eagerly acknowledged, presence throughout *Manchester Murals*.

Trodd extends these established "cultural" interpretations of Brown's work by examining the Manchester murals not as products of larger economic, political, and social forces (though he accounts for these in great detail) but instead as individualized expressions of Brown's imagination and particular approach to representing history. Trodd describes his own critical methodology as "multi-dimensional," by which he means that his interpretation of the Manchester murals explores simultaneous channels of inspiration and meaning instead of pursuing a single interpretation or cultural construct for the works. In a sense, Trodd's rhetorical style mirrors the very quality that he identifies as distinctive and significant in Brown's approach to representing history. *Manchester Murals* continues a theme in Trodd's earlier scholarship of articulating connections among artists that are not typically understood as part of a common lineage. Specifically, Trodd further explores the legacy of William Hogarth and William Blake on Brown. Building upon Bendiner's earlier interpretation, Trodd proposes that Hogarth and Blake offered to Brown the unique mix of quotidian detail and Romantic imagination that would come to characterize the Manchester murals. Trodd's reading has the dual benefit of enriching our understanding of Brown's artistic motives and expanding our conception of how late Victorian painting contributed to the history of British art.

Trodd's book fits nicely into an existing and increasingly exciting conversation about Brown's work. Those well-versed in the intricacies of this conversation will immediately see the value of Trodd's contribution and follow along easily with his detailed analyses. However, those less familiar with the scholarship on Brown might face a challenge in meeting Trodd's high expectations of presumed prior knowledge on the part of the reader. Without a doubt, Trodd's interpretation of the murals is the most sustained and detailed to date, but each reading moves at a fast pace; at times, the reader might be left wondering about some of the basic facts pertaining to the subjects represented. While the subject matter of selected murals has been explained in detail by previous authors, Trodd's book is the first to examine Brown's project in its entirety. For this reason, it seems like a missed opportunity not to lay a foundation of basic information about each work;

such an approach would have better positioned Trodd's text as the definitive source on the subject.

Ultimately, Trodd's interpretation of Brown's project advances our understanding of the Pre-Raphaelite engagement with history painting. Just as significantly, Trodd presents a conceptual model for grappling with the late-career works of a well-known artist. It is common practice among art historians to dismiss or ignore the early and late works in an artist's *oeuvre*. Too often, such works are just a scholarly afterthought, doomed to languish in obscurity. Trodd has very successfully argued that the Manchester murals should be viewed as a culmination of Brown's aesthetic practice and theoretical engagement with history, not as a peculiar adjunct to his otherwise successful career.

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The Matrilineal Heritage of Louisa May Alcott and Christina Rossetti by Azelina Flint. New York: Routledge, 2022. 240 pp. ISBN 9780 367514402. \$170; paperback \$48.95.

Azelina Flint's *The Matrilineal Heritage of Louisa May Alcott and Christina Rossetti* is a comparative study that places Christina Rossetti alongside the American nineteenth-century writer Louisa May Alcott in terms of their religious beliefs. Flint is particularly invested in Rossetti's and Alcott's approaches to female literary creativity through the lens of their separate religious communities, especially in relation to their forging of a "spiritual authority" based on what she terms their matrilineal heritage, or the direct theological influence of their mothers and sisters. The book argues that both writers began their writing careers by identifying with patrilineal influences but moved increasingly towards affiliating with their female heritage. The book focusses especially on the influence of devotional practices and life writing and argues that both helped to shape a specifically female mysticism as a counterpoint to patriarchy. This approach owes much to important scholarship on Christina Rossetti's devotional praxis and female community, especially studies by Mary Arseneau, Elizabeth Ludlow, and Dinah Roe. Flint, however, claims a difference from previous critics, through uncovering Rossetti's "theology of renunciation" in relation both to "the feminist potential of the Trinity" and the "theology of renunciation" as "an act of resistance," which Flint throws into sharp contrast with what she terms the insistent individualism that characterizes both Pre-Raphaelitism and Transcendentalism. The juxtaposition of the two women writers is a striking and interesting choice, because Flint contends that, although they wrote in different genres and had different religious, aesthetic, and publication contexts, both Alcott and Rossetti blended female communities with mysticism to create a feminist devotional praxis.

Flint also offers her own feminist praxis as a lens through which the writers are analysed. The Introduction frames the methodology in terms of Flint's personal faith, blending her own lived experience as a scholar whose personal Christian devotion directly inflects the argument, especially about female religious community and mysticism. The author then proceeds to present the method as well as the topic in terms of the art of the Christian iconographer, who works through specific devotional stages in the act of making as the material and spiritual are blended. "I will connect each aspect of this scholarship to a stage in the icon-painting process," says Flint, and "thus, like the pilgrim's meditation before the icon, my study is the devotional witness of these matrilineal communities, my own matrilineal inheritance." Acknowledging the risks inherent to such an approach, Flint adds: "Instead

of striving to unearth the myriad possibilities for interpretation within a text, I instead attempt to foreground the authors' mystical experiences through the lens of my own." Flint then proceeds to make a specific connection between stages of icon-making, the women's texts, and her scholarly methodology: preparing the wood (or renunciation practices as cleansing, offering unity with the divine), preparing the gesso (or negotiating with relics of the dead, by which she means archival material and reconstructing lives, especially unpublished autobiographical material), painting the icon (representing saints, or recovering matrilineal heritages through the writers' statements on theology), and finally gilding the icon (or transforming art into the divine, and the critic into a sacred dialogue with the writer). The Introduction ends with Flint's personal anecdote about her revelatory experience in Walpole, Massachusetts, where Alcott briefly lived, where Flint tells of a mystical encounter "across time and space" with Alcott.

It is hard not to be moved by the vivacity of Flint's prose, and her overtly personal and theological engagement with the writers. This hybrid methodology, provocatively merging scholarly traditions with the autobiographical critical voice into a blended devotional study, in which the act of scholarship is itself a spiritual practice, is inventive as well as challenging. This is a courageous methodology, although perhaps straining somewhat uncomfortably at the conventional limits of an academic monograph. *The Matrilineal Heritage of Louisa May Alcott and Christina Rossetti* is bold and audacious.

The study contains discussion that will appeal to readers specifically interested in Rossetti and Pre-Raphaelitism, especially theological and theoretical connections to Transcendentalism, and discussion of a variety of unpublished life-writing in relation to Rossetti's poetry (such as Frances Rossetti's *Commonplace Book*, from which two excerpts are transcribed in the appendix). The monograph is divided into two main sections, each with chapters on Rossetti and Alcott: renunciation in women's life-writing as forging a "left-handed society," and sisterhoods as a powerful expression of Christian values. These two sections are prefaced by an initial chapter that outlines ways in which Rossetti and Alcott resisted male authority through a variety of texts, including correspondence with their male relatives. Here Flint briefly examines Rossetti's epistolary negotiations with Dante Rossetti over her first volume where she argues that what looks like Christina Rossetti's weakness, in yielding to her brother's editorial interventions, is in fact a strategic expression of independence.

The sections most interesting for Pre-Raphaelite studies are on Rossetti's contributions to *The Germ* in chapter 1, which Flint addresses in terms of a reworking of the movement's treatment of dead women in order to "subvert

the Pre-Raphaelite preoccupation with dead women to expose the Brotherhood's objectification of the female muse" by presenting the dead woman as "unobtainable" but also "self-contained and free of men's interference." Tracing some intertextual allusions in Rossetti's *Germ* poems to other Pre-Raphaelite works by men (especially Dante Rossetti and Thomas Woolner), Flint concludes that Christina Rossetti's muse might experience "frustration" but ultimately "can find fulfilment in their relationship with God." The chapter then turns to the 1850 (but posthumously published) dramatic monologue "A Year Afterwards," pointing to its engagement with "The Blessed Damozel." Flint sees Christina Rossetti's poem as an assertion that the male artist is responsible for his own salvation, while the woman finds "fulfilment through heavenly redemption, rather than romantic or erotic unions with the male artist." This interpretation might not surprise Rossetti scholars, but the juxtaposition of "A Year Afterwards" with Rossetti's *Germ* poems is illuminating. The second half the of the chapter considers Alcott's autobiographical fiction, as well as her first novel to be published, *Moods*, to argue for strong similarities in both writers' critiques of the male artist's individualism. Alcott only later turns to a full articulation of matrilineal community and spiritual renunciation, Flint contends, but the beginnings are traced in this fiction, to be fully developed in both women's later work.

There is also valuable discussion in chapter 3 of the relationship between Rossetti's devotional poetry and prose and her mother's theology, as gleaned from her Commonplace Book and hymns in "Hodge-Podge" (the Rossetti family magazine). Flint focusses especially on Rossetti's Valentine's Day poems, when she wrote one love poem each year for her mother from 1876, a practice that, Flint argues, "realizes the aspiration towards mystical communion established in Frances's earlier life-writing." Rossetti's treatment of love in this poetry is, Flint proposes, the completion of her mother's beliefs, and forges a "Trinitarian poetics" through this matrilineal community whereby Rossetti's understanding of the Trinity derives from her experience of receiving maternal love: "Like the Alcott women, Christina perceives the maternal bond as altering the way the individual experiences the world, facilitating their eternal salvation." Flint here fruitfully attends to poetics, arguing that Rossetti's inspiration from her mother's writing and beliefs lead to innovations in poetic form as opposed to Frances's more conventional approach to writing. This chapter offers a welcome approach to treating seriously Frances's writing, theology, and devotional practices, and gives important context for Rossetti's own poetics and beliefs through her positioning of her mother as a powerful redemptive force. This chapter concludes with discussion of Maria Rossetti's function "as a spiritual role-model and literary

precursor” for Rossetti, especially in *Time Flies: A Reading Diary* and *Goblin Market*.

Following this chapter, Flint devotes an extended analysis to *Maude*, arguing for its status as a “radical text” because “it presents not one but *two* alternatives to married life for women, while upholding universal sisterhood as the means by which women are able to form independent identities and discern their callings.” *Maude* allows Flint to return to her foundational argument that pitched a masculinist Pre-Raphaelite emphasis on individuality and originality against the feminist and mystical values of a shared female community, and although this argument necessitates travelling backwards in Rossetti’s historical writing career to address these juvenilia, it is also effective at reminding us of the importance of *Maude* to Rossetti’s sense of her authorship within a shared familial and devotional context. Overall, *The Matrilineal Heritage of Louisa May Alcott and Christina Rossetti* provides welcome comparisons between the two authors, and some valuable analysis of Rossetti’s devotional poetics that adds to the ongoing scholarly conversation about her approach to renunciation and a female familial and literary heritage.

Alison Chapman

Evelyn & William De Morgan: A Marriage of Arts & Crafts edited by Margaretta S. Frederick. New Haven: Yale UP, 2022. 176 pp. + 99 colour + b/w illus. ISBN 0-300-25968-1. \$50.00.

The Poems of Evelyn Pickering De Morgan edited by Serena Trowbridge. Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2022. 142 pp. + 5 b/w illus. ISBN 1-906469-73-3. \$14.00.

Two books on the technically accomplished but in many ways puzzling late Victorian painter Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, until relatively recently understudied, have arrived in the same year. Each book is announced by a full-colour cover reproduction of one of her more characteristic pictures (she produced over a hundred oil paintings across nearly four decades of professional life). Seen individually, as they are here, they are striking: richly coloured, finely detailed, Italianate in style, symbolical rather than realistic in subject matter, they strongly recall the Burne-Jones of *Chant d'Amour* (1868-77) and *The Mill* (1870-82) and perhaps the late allegorical paintings of George Frederic Watts (though most of De Morgan's pictures stick to Burne-Jones's hard edges, not Watts's softer focus). "Burne-Jonesian ... and even Wattsian Pre-Raphaelitism," Jan Marsh calls the style in her swift-moving, skillful, and comprehensive essay in *A Marriage of Arts & Crafts*. Burne-Jones, it must be said, pronounced Evelyn's work "an eclectic mixture of Mr Watts and me and old Florentine work. They look like some undiscovered bad 15th-century painting of Florence, if such a thing were possible." He went on to say – sounding a bit like Ruskin lecturing Christina Rossetti on her supposed failure to master prosody – that she ought not to try figure painting at all but stick to "pretty views, flowers and every beautiful thing in nature." Such are the put-downs to which women are subject. But Burne-Jones, like Ruskin with Christina Rossetti, underestimated not only the skills but the persistence of the woman whose work he so readily dismissed, as these volumes testify.

The Angel of Death (1880), on the cover of the slim paperback that collects De Morgan's early writing, shows a dark angel, winged and scythe-bearing, gently embracing a still-young person of indeterminate gender seated on a rock overlooking a valley somewhere in Renaissance Italy. *Night and Sleep* (1878), the cover of the beautifully produced Yale collection, depicts two androgynous figures flying over a mountainous twilit landscape, one unfurling a dark cloak while the other scatters scarlet poppies. The figures are elegant of line, their colours glowing and balanced, the artist evidently alive to both possibilities for an always decorative art. The two pictures might have been among those that Burne-Jones saw when he visited De Morgan's studio.

The books whose covers they grace, however, address subjects of apparently different importance. The writings, mostly from De Morgan's childhood and teens, are in many ways both slight and derivative; they include poetry (in various ballad and song measures) and prose (the beginning of a fairy tale, two unfinished plays, an incomplete short story) and are preoccupied with death, recalling early poems of Christina Rossetti (or of her gently satirized pious character, Maude, in Rossetti's eponymous early poetry-and-prose composition published posthumously by her brother William Michael Rossetti). The thirteen essays in *A Marriage of Arts & Crafts*, on the other hand, discuss the art, the ideas, and the material circumstances at the centre of De Morgan's life as a professional artist. The collection was published to accompany an exhibition of the work of both Evelyn and her husband, William De Morgan (designer of stained glass and then of lustreware pots and tiles, some for William Morris; scientist-inventor of new techniques and materials; and at the end of his life, a popular novelist of some success). The exhibition was co-curated by Frederick, formerly curator of the Bancroft Collection of Pre-Raphaelite Art at the Delaware Art Museum and more recently Chief Curator of that museum, and by Sarah Hardy from the De Morgan Foundation, owner of a number of the works discussed in the collected essays (and of both pieces of cover art). Opening last fall at the Delaware Museum, the exhibition continues at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California, from mid-September 2023 to early January 2024 and then at the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida, from January to May 2024.

That both books choose paintings from early in De Morgan's career (before, in fact, she met William in 1883 and he became, in 1887, her husband and partner), or that a collection of her teen-age writing should be published at all, is not perhaps so surprising. Part of the puzzle of Evelyn's work has always been that it seems to show so little stylistic development from the high technical accomplishment of her earliest pictures. Serena Trowbridge, in her informative introduction to Evelyn's surviving early writing, argues that its concerns remain those of her pictures and thus should be accorded more serious attention than juvenilia might otherwise merit. The essays on Evelyn's art collected in *A Marriage of Arts & Crafts*, however, argue that while the pictures may seem visually frozen in an earlier moment (early Renaissance Italy refracted through 1860s Pre-Raphaelitism and aestheticism), their symbolic content shifts to reflect the De Morgans', especially Evelyn's, changing concerns. When, for example, in the 1890s she and William developed a serious spiritualist practice, her figures and compositions began to employ a vocabulary shaped by their ideas, as put forward in their jointly authored, anonymously published report on that practice, *The Result of an Experiment* (1909). Evelyn's pictures, suggests Emma Merklings, follow a sort of "sym-

bolic logic,” visualizing almost algebraically conceived relationships among figures standing for such spiritual entities as Life, Death, Wisdom, Folly, Truth, Peace, War, or Mercy that she and William had worked out from those spiritualist experiments. Lucy Ellen Rose and Richenda Roberts argue in their essays that by the early twentieth century, Evelyn’s figures are instead, or also, vehicles for her contemporary feminist and pacifist concerns, responding to a succession of suffrage campaigns (involving many De Morgan family and friends in feminist networks ably traced by Rose) and to the carnage and disillusion of the Boer and First World Wars (Roberts has written elsewhere on war art in general and De Morgan’s in particular). Evelyn, Roberts claims, was in her own way a “modernist” painter – drawing attention to the historical disjunction between the older world conjured by her style and a modern world of death and destruction confronted in her symbolically expressed subject matter. The comparison with T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (both 1922) that Roberts offers, however, does not really seem to take account of style’s role in creating (or not) a reader’s sense of violent displacement, of the shock of the modern. The writers’ deliberate, wrenching modernizing of literary form have no real parallel in De Morgan’s work.

The premise of the exhibition and the essay collection is a good one: it focusses our attention not simply on the visual character and quality of the two artists’ work, studied separately, but rather on the ways they supported and responded to one another (as long emphasized in the various exhibition spaces operated by the De Morgan Foundation) and to their world. Though some of the strongest essays – including Jan Marsh’s essay on Evelyn’s paintings, Sarah Hardy’s on William’s ceramics, and William Waters’s and Alastair Carew-Cox’s on William’s designs for stained glass – pay important attention to the visual characteristics of the art, other essays focus as much on the historical and cultural contexts that separately shaped each career or (in Frederick’s introduction and the fine essay by Judy Oberhausen and Nic Peters) on the unexpected forms of partnership made possible through their marriage.

As that essay reminds us, Evelyn early determined to have a professional career as a painter and set about it using every resource she could muster, from family connections (John Roddam Spencer Stanhope was her uncle) to the financial support her upper-class family was able to provide for her study, first at South Kensington, then at the Slade, where she excelled and further cultivated important connections. She spent summers studying Italian Renaissance art firsthand while staying at Spencer-Stanhope’s villa outside Florence. Viola Paget, who as Vernon Lee wrote art and aesthetic criticism, novels, and short stories, was based in Florence and became a friend. (There is no suggestion that they were lovers – Lee had many – but they certainly had

many interests in common, including leading independent lives in art.) Later, an inheritance enabled Evelyn to hire her own (and William's) studio. Evelyn was, by all accounts, a strong-minded woman – one who knew what she wanted and pursued it systematically and successfully. She chose to abandon the proprieties of her upper-class childhood to live as an artist, surrounded by a circle of like-minded others. Extant photographs show her wearing painting smocks and appearing somewhat disheveled, her large eyes fixed intently elsewhere. She should have been a subject for Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs (no costumes needed).

William, on the other hand, was the delicate, retiring son of a British mathematician and his severe-looking, equally strong-minded wife, a well-known spiritualist medium. (Both William's early self-portrait, c.1855, and Evelyn's late portrait of him, 1909, capture an almost child-like, elfin quality, preserved into old age.) He did not come from money or high social position. He was happiest when exploring materials and studying, inventing, or improving devices and processes, as Sarah Hardy's convincing and confident essay, "'Not a Potter': William De Morgan as an Inventor," makes clear. He was apparently happy to allow Evelyn to look after the financial and networking aspects of a professional arts career. Though he was sixteen years older than she, their marriage seems to have been, in Frederick's words, "a rare period partnership." They had no children, but many shared interests. In fact, one might say that both approached their arts as craft, as skills to be learned, materials and processes to be mastered. While they worked sometimes separately and sometimes alongside one another, they also found important shared interests in a way of life that included regular winters in Italy (for his health and her art) and their joint investigations of the spirit world.

Most of the essays collected in *A Marriage of Arts & Crafts*, however, consider one or other of the two artists separately, with seven essays devoted to the lesser-known Evelyn, five to the long-recognized William. The collection is suitably spread among essays by older scholars with a broader view and younger scholars sharing more focussed research. In addition to those already mentioned, Frederick herself, in a separate essay, makes the best of a very sketchy record to reconstruct patronage patterns for Evelyn, while Christopher Jordan writes on William and his market. Oliver Watson puts William's design sources in eastern and especially middle-eastern ceramics and their Renaissance Italian descendants in knowledgeable perspective. Diana Maltz contributes an unexpected essay on William's apparent caricaturing of the Pre-Raphaelite and aesthetic circles of his youth in his novel, *Joseph Vane*, and Sally Woodcock, working from her extensive study of the existing records of the artists' supply house Charles Roberson & Co, notes that Evelyn, like other married women artists, folded what had been her own

account into that of William, thus becoming “invisible” to future researchers.

But Evelyn De Morgan left plenty of other traces, including the notebook, kept apparently *c.* 1869-70 when she was fifteen, into which she copied many of the pieces collected in the volume from *Victorian Secrets*. (Indeed, they were, in a sense, secret, but are no longer.) The poems especially show Evelyn learning to write in a number of then-popular forms. They also show an imagination saturated with the imagery and atmosphere of a wild (and Gothic) natural world. Perhaps even more than Rossetti, some of these poems recall Emily Brontë (as well as ballads from Sir Walter Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*), including a shared fondness for participles that plunge the reader into the midst of ongoing actions and lend themselves to song-like rhythms with alternating masculine and feminine rhymes:

See the snow so thickly falling
Shrouds the earth in white array
Nature waits with dread forboding
Twilight of the fatal day.

Onward, like a torrent rushing
Springs the monster at its prey
And the foaming orb devouring
Thus begins the deadly fray.

(De Morgan, “See the Snow So Thickly Falling” 1-4; 9-12)

Trowbridge has done a service to students of De Morgan’s paintings by making these early poems available. The brief biography she includes in her introduction (drawing on work by Oberhausen, among others), together with her quick survey of comparable juvenilia from other nineteenth-century writers, a short account of poetry written for children in the same period, and her own discussion of selected poems, gives readers tools with which to read the poems on their own or as an introduction to the themes of the paintings. The paintings are, to be sure, considerably calmer, the tumultuous action stilled, the figures and landscapes stylized into lovelier (if no less strange) lines and colours. They show De Morgan’s imagination channelled into more systematic beliefs about relations in the spiritual and the actual world. Explicitly and implicitly, both these publications argue for giving more attention to the other De Morgan, if not (for some at least) always for the aesthetic merits of her pictures or her poems then surely for the strength and persistence of her determination to live her own life as an artist. She was fortunate in her husband and partner – but so was he.

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Scented Visions: Smell in Art, 1850–1914 by Christina Bradstreet. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2022. vii, 278 pp. + 74 illus. ISBN 978-0-271-09251-5. \$119.95.

From the full, fragrant roses in John William Waterhouse's *The Soul of the Rose* (1908) to the trail of smoke escaping Pandora's box in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Pandora* (1879) and the lush, floral fields in Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale's *The Lover's World* (1905) seeping lilac, gray, and pink fumes, Pre-Raphaelite artworks are often rich with visual depictions of the olfactory. Christina Bradstreet's *Scented Visions: Smell in Art, 1850–1914* reveals the abundant cultural and visual history of the olfactory in artworks created between 1850 and 1914 and demonstrates that the study of the senses in visual works, and in particular the sense of smell, is an important but overlooked approach to art history. While the text examines a range of artistic works in different styles, it repeatedly considers the work of Pre-Raphaelite artists, especially Rossetti, demonstrating how influential this group was when it came to depicting the olfactory during the late nineteenth century. The book highlights the work of other Pre-Raphaelite artists like Simeon Solomon, John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, and Edward Burne-Jones, amongst others.

Bradstreet demonstrates how visual works featuring the olfactory were rooted in evolving Victorian discourses on the body, senses, hygiene, science, pathology, death, spirituality, and religion. As she describes, the Victorians were hardly the first to visualize scent and smelling in art. Efforts to represent visually both these elements are found in work from the earliest civilizations; however, it was during the mid-nineteenth century that the olfactory became a phenomenon in Britain. What began as widespread fear of miasma in the 1850s evolved over the course of sixty years into a public appetite for depictions of "scented visions."

The first chapter is focussed on olfactory metaphors and moral symbolism in art as well as gendered perceptions of smells. The section opens with a discussion of George Frederic Watts's *Portrait of Dame Ellen Terry* ("*Choosing*") (c. 1864), which depicts his then 17-year-old bride, Shakespearean actor Ellen Terry, choosing between violets – a sweet flower with a humble appearance – and camellias – an ostentatious flower with little scent. Although Terry seems to be deeply inhaling the scentless flower, she has already plucked a handful of violets and has them safely resting in her left hand. Watts used the two types of flowers to represent Terry's choice between a virtuous life, as his wife, or the life of an actor, which was understood to be a troubled life for women during the Victorian period. With her keen interest in gendered depictions of women, flowers, and smelling, Bradstreet revisits "*Choosing*" periodically to discuss the different ways that Watts's painting

exemplifies the Victorians' conflicted understanding of both femininity and the sense of smell.

The comprehension of smell changed significantly over the course of the nineteenth century. During the 1840s and 1850s, the public was inundated with fears and disgust of stench and filth. In the second chapter, Bradstreet investigates the role of stench, cleanliness, and anxieties of miasma in the artistic imagination of the mid-nineteenth century. Despite many Western cities being saturated with coal dust and sulfur, the perceived fear and disgust associated with stench and filth were likely why so many artists avoided representing these subjects. However, Bradstreet notes that the Pre-Raphaelite artists, with their focus on "unflinching realism, scrutiny of working-class physiognomy, and controversial illumination of the contemporary social and moral issues," were a group unafraid to bring suggestion of powerful odours into their artworks.

As the desire to "see" smell continued to grow through the end of the nineteenth century, artists of the Symbolist and Art Nouveau movements further accentuated the olfactory. In chapter three, Bradstreet identifies the techniques created and employed by artists to highlight the presence of scent and smell. These techniques include stylized fragrance trails, which typically appear as outlines of imagined paths of scents to assist the viewer in imagining a scent radiating throughout the artwork. Bradstreet notes that this strategy was particularly popular in Art Nouveau designs for product advertisements. Another tactic that was used to highlight the presences of scents was a colour theory related to them. Specifically, she indicates that certain colours were associated with particular scents – which in turn were associated with settings or people – and that artists could tap into these colours to convey scents. For instance, the colours blue, green, and purple were associated with scents identified with women, whereas red was considered an industrial colour, associated with odours found in places like garages and railway stations. Bradstreet includes here a discussion of how some artists used supernatural elements, like fairies, to embody scent.

Chapters four and five take up the relationship between memory and scent, and are particularly interested in experiences of visual language triggering remembered sensorial experiences. Chapter four explores the concept of olfactory hallucination as a gendered experience predominately affecting women. Bradstreet recounts a handful of historic instances of women experiencing synesthetic visions incited by art and analyzes the representation of parosmia in such literary works as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892).

In chapter five, Bradstreet offers a particularly compelling analysis of Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* (1864-70) as a work that pays homage to his

deceased wife Elizabeth Siddal. Beatrice is depicted with Siddal's features in a state of altered consciousness with eyes closed, while a dove delivers a poppy, from which the opiate on which Siddal overdosed is derived. Bradstreet notes how the hazy quality of the artwork "suggests a drug-addled haze and an atmosphere pregnant with the scent of laudanum – the taste of which was so bitter in the 1850s it was flavoured with cloves, cinnamon, and saffron." Because opium was widely prescribed as a cure-all treatment for many ailments during the nineteenth century, the scent of opium became associated with the sick room and with dying. Chapter six analyzes the role of scents in relation to spiritualism and Christianity from the late nineteenth century, as well as the visual treatment of smell in relation to Victorian ideas of heaven and hell. Pre-Raphaelite artworks discussed in this chapter include Millais's *The Blind Girl* (1854-56), Simeon Solomon's *Two Acolytes Censing, Pentecost* (1863), and Fortescue-Brickdale's *The Lover's World* (1905).

Chapters seven and eight are focussed on gendered depictions of women interacting with scents, ranging from innocent interactions to overwhelming incapacitation. As Bradstreet explains, "by the 1860s, images of women smelling flowers were by far the most popular mode of representing scent in art and visual culture." By the end of the nineteenth century, flowers had become the most popular symbol of femininity, with these representations ranging from innocent appreciation to "unrefined sensuality." Chapter seven offers a model of measurement for investigating images of women interacting with flowers by considering four key elements in their analysis: the type of flower, the stage of its bloom, the manner of sniffing, and the type of woman who is attracted to smell the flower. The chapter demonstrates this four-part model through a collection of art styles including photography, painting, woodcut, and tapestry. The final chapter considers the recurring representation of women as incapacitated by scent, and Bradstreet claims that this portrayal tapped into a growing appetite for visual depictions of women who were lethargic, sleeping, dying, or dead while covered in or surrounded by flowers. The author claims that these images were reassuring to a male viewership at a time when "Western women were challenging passivity."

Overall, Bradstreet's gendered critique of scent and smelling in Victorian art is an important and much-needed study for the field of art history. However, since the text is so focussed on the relationship between women and the olfactory, it would have been helpful to see more examples of "scented visions" produced by women artists of the nineteenth century and how they interpreted Victorian ideas of scent and smell. Evelyn De Morgan's *Night and Sleep* (1878) is a work that could be given more attention. Though Bradstreet references the painting in chapter two, she limits her discussion to how it drew inspiration from Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (c.1485). De Morgan's

painting depicts Night as a male figure floating through the sky in red robes, holding an armful of poppies to his chest with his left hand while scattering the flowers to the ground with his right. Night glides through the sky with Sleep, their bodies linked by Sleep's hand on Night's forearm. Both figures appear to have their eyes closed as if they were experiencing the effects of the opium poppy held by Night. On the right side of the painting following Sleep and Night as they float through the air, De Morgan has employed the same hazy colour treatment to signal the odour of opium found in Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* to mark where the poppies have landed on the ground. However, while Rossetti's work visualizes the deadly experiences of opium-use for one individual, *Night and Sleep* recognizes that opium-use was a widespread issue, as suggested by Night spreading the poppies generously below their flight.

The text is a part of the "Perspectives on Sensory History" series published by Penn State University Press, a series which examines the roles of seeing, smelling, tasting, feeling, and hearing across a range of social, political, geographical, technological, and cultural contexts. Bradstreet's study joins a collection of scholarship that includes Catherine Maxwell's *Scents and Sensibility: Perfume in Victorian Literary Culture* (2017) (reviewed by Lesley Higgins in the Spring 2019 issue of *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*); Debra N. Mancoff's *The Pre-Raphaelite Language of Flowers* (2012); and *Art, History and the Senses*, a collection of essays edited by Patrizia Di Bello and Gabriel Koureas (2010). Bradstreet's work stands out for its well-informed analysis of an extensive collection of artworks.

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