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## *Pre-Raphaelitism Revisited;* or, Dr. Frankenstein Reprograms the Monster

Despite the extensiveness of the Pre-Raphaelite bibliography, research on the Pre-Raphaelites is greatly impeded by the lack of standard tools—editions, letters, biographies, iconographies, collections of reproductions, objective criticism. Because Pre-Raphaelitism, as a movement within the Victorian period, has only in relatively recent years begun to be *seriously* re-examined, much basic scholarship remains to be done. And it must be done if the movement is ever to be properly considered in the critical and historical perspective of its age and balanced against the aesthetic values of our own.

With that paragraph, I concluded the introduction to *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* in 1965. At the time of writing, when interest in the art and poetry of the movement was at its lowest ebb, and when Pre-Raphaelite scholarship had little future and certainly no agenda, I could never have envisioned the scope or depth of attention that the subject would attract over the next two decades. The publication of the bibliocritical study prompted little response. Hardly advertised, it went virtually unreviewed: *Victorian Studies* noticed it along with two or three other unrelated volumes; one notice complained that at \$10 it was grossly overpriced; and the Pre-Raphaelite who wrote the 400-word anonymous description in the *TLS* questioned its authority on the basis of a single typo (Shelley without the second "e") she had spotted in the index. The Harvard Press remaindered the book within three years at a price sufficiently low to allow wholesalers to pass it on at the Christmas book sales for a mere dollar. While my faith in the volume and the subject has over the years been ironically vindicated by its widespread

unavailability to successive generations of interested students, and I have been flattered that later scholars have often described the work as indispensable, having now embarked seriously on a supplement, for which this paper is intended as a prologomenon, I share the mixed emotions I imagine Victor Frankenstein must have had when he decided to create a bride for his original monster.

Several forces have conspired to elevate Pre-Raphaelitism to respectability and to validate Pre-Raphaelite poetry and art as a serious subject for study. Among these, probably the most important has been the recovery or discovery of numerous primary manuscript sources. Next in importance is the proliferation of exhibitions of Pre-Raphaelite art held in England, the United States, Canada, France, Germany, and Italy, and, more recently and surprisingly, in Japan and Hong Kong. Of particular significance in establishing the scholarly credibility of the movement has been the publication of thousands of books and articles exploring all aspects of the lives, poetry, and painting of the Pre-Raphaelites: a veritable flood of biographies, literary and art histories, critical studies, editions of works and letters, catalogues raisonné, anthologies of poetry and critical essays, reference books, collections of reproductions, and reprints. While the major artists and poets dominate these studies, the lesser affiliates and associates have not been totally ignored.

It is neither possible nor desirable in this short survey to discuss even a small fraction of the more than 2000 publications on the Pre-Raphaelites issued in the last two decades; and, in any event, I have been at some