

Still more of the 1890s in a major twentieth-century text is assessed in Richard Brown's "More Sherlockholmesing in Joyce's *Ulysses*" (*N&Q* 253, no. 1: 66-68). Although some of Joyce's adaptations from Doyle are on record, Brown persuasively argues that Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter" lurks in the background of the "Sirens" episode in Joyce's novel, thus adding another piece to the mosaic that is *Ulysses*.

Several other brief critiques must not be overlooked. Rodney Stennings Edgecombe gives us another type of influence study in "'A Sketch by Boz' and the 'Nightmare Aria' in Gilbert's *Iolanthe*" (*N&Q* 253, no. 4: 480-481), revealing how the dramatist borrowed techniques of dream sequence and its conclusion—shattering of the nightmare by a witty juvenile as night transforms into day—from Dickens' sketch, "Early Coaches," in *Sketches by Boz*. Edgecombe's article implicitly reveals that Dickens' novels were not his only writings that lingered in the memory. Earlier in the century, of course, Poe had championed Dickens' short fiction in preference to his novels.

The 1890s would not be the 1890s without Oscar Wilde, and Keats's impact on Wilde elicits a considered reading by Ian Ross, who sensibly evaluates the kindred strain of Grecian themes in the two poets: Keats chiefly in *Endymion*, *Lamia*, and "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and Wilde (at times inverting Keats's themes) in *Charmides and The Sphinx*—"Charmides and The Sphinx: Wilde's Engagement with Keats" (*VP* 46: 451-465). Ross amplifies our awareness of Wilde's Hellenism, and his opinions may implicitly illuminate aspects of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Oliver Tearle raises an interesting point in "Dorian Gray's Schoolbooks" (*N&Q* 253, no. 4: 463-465). Encountering the anomaly of how/why these books were not mentioned late in the novel when others were, Tearle allows that this omission may have been a lapse on Wilde's part, given that these books were listed among those on the shelves in the attic where the mysterious portrait was housed. More likely, however, is the hypothesis that the evil portrait destroyed the schoolbooks because they reflected childhood and innocence—what had vanished from Dorian's existence. That the picture could have achieved such destruction is consistent with Wilde's aesthetic in "The Critic as Artist" (1891), a piece contemporary with the novel, where Wilde states that great works of art live, "are, in fact, the only things that live" (p. 465). A lengthier assessment of influence or, perhaps more accurately, affinities appears in Marianne Van Remoortel's "Metaphor and Maternity: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *House of Life* and Augusta Webster's *Mother and Daughter*" (*VP* 46, no. 2: 467-486). Webster as poet was one of Rossetti's literary "daughters," as others have made clear. Submitting that previous scholars have, however, neglected the mother-daughter relationship in Webster's posthumous poem (because they seem more inclined to dwell on Rossetti's poem and on other kinds of relationships), Remoortel posits that Webster highlights maternal love as superior to heterosexual love. Doubtless

this critique will be provocative in several senses of that term.

Cheryl Wilson's "Politicizing Dance in Late-Victorian Women's Poetry" (*VP* 46, no. 2: 191-204), with its self-explanatory title, reminds us of the overlappings in the arts of the 1890s. Wilson's comment that although New Woman fiction has recently been well served by publishers and critics the poetry relating to the New woman has not. She seeks to rectify that lacuna, and her analyses of poems by Mary Robinson, Amy Levy, and others in the era well serve that purpose. Wilson bolsters her argument with references to dance and conduct manuals from the era.

Several Housman items (all in *HSJ* 34) also deserve attention. First Freda Hughes, also a poet, echoes AEH's *The Name and Nature of Poetry* in championing emotionalism as a keynote of genuine poetry, as well as subjectivity being essential to poem and reader. She also draws convincingly on examples of later poems, not by AEH, in "The Housman Lecture" to bolster her thoughts. (pp. 7-18). She exhorts anybody who wants to know poetry to read many poems, thus echoing another figure in the AEH carpet, Matthew Arnold. Complementary to Hughes, Daniel Gillespie claims, in "Housman and Modernism" (pp. 112-122) that AEH's Romanticism, as expressed in *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, constituted an essential springboard for poets like Pound and Eliot, who in many ways shared the older poet's aesthetic, and, underlying that aesthetic, an intellectualism that emanates from eighteenth-century views of poetry. These articles make excellent follow-up reading to B. J. Leggett's books on AEH.

I thank Philip Hartnell-Mottram, Liverpool, for sharing his expertise in Classical mythology with me.

The Pre-Raphaelites

FLORENCE S. BOOS

The current year has brought a number of new interpretive works, but fewer biographies, historical discoveries, reference works, and collections of letters.

In *Second Sight: The Visionary Imagination in Late Victorian Literature* (Manchester Univ. Press), Catherine Maxwell explores "the visionary strangeness of the Romantic imagination" (p. 3) in the work of Dante Rossetti, Walter Pater, Theodore Watts-Dunton, Eugene Lee-Hamilton, and Thomas Hardy, with particular attention to the "iconic aesthetic image of the human face and form mediated through shadows, spirits, ghosts, body substitutes, paintings, sculptures, or cultural fragments" (p. 7).

In her chapter devoted to "'An aching pulse of melodies': Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poetic magnetism," Maxwell traces Rossetti's debts to Coleridge and

Shelley as well as his preoccupations with mesmerism, narcissism, and feminine alter egos, and attends to views of Rossetti in later life expressed by Thomas Hake, George Hake, Henry Treffry Dunn, Theodore Watts-Dunton, and the posthumously contrite Robert Buchanan. In her extended interpretations of poems such as "Threefold Homage," "Song and Music," and "For Ruggiero and Angelica by Ingres" as well as sonnets from "The House of Life," she also examines in some detail a "circle of narcissistic mourning and self-consolation" which some have found "oddly hypnotic" (p. 40), and a "visionary unseen image which becomes precious in proportion to the extent that it is held back, kept private, not given to our view" (p. 67).

In *The Demon and the Damozel: The Dynamics of Desire in the Works of Christina Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Ohio Univ. Press), Susanne Waldman rejects "polarization of] the gender politics of these writers' works" (p. 7), and offers in its place a psychoanalytic interpretation of the "integral duality" (p. 1) she finds in "Christina's quest for Christian transcendence . . . permeated by an imaginary desire for companionship[,] and . . . Dante Gabriel's expressions of narcissism in *The House of Life* . . . elevated through invocations of the sacred."

In "The Transcendental Tendency in Christina Rossetti's Poetry of Love and Devotion," for example, Waldman explores Rossetti's lyrics of sublimity and sublimation, and contrasts the "desperate" candor of her sonnet sequence "Monna Innominata" with "Later Life"'s "innovation of linguistic strategies," which alternates rational discourse with a Lacanian "imaginary." She also finds parallels between Lacan's views on gender and Rossetti's belief "that gender is an arbitrary and contingent element of human society" (p. 35), and argues that Rossetti "set herself the challenge of expanding . . . the uses of symbolic discourses to characterize her emotional and libidinal struggles and to pursue the sublime projects of the self" (p. 37).

In "The Superegoic Demon in Christina Rossetti's Gothic and Fantasy Writings," Waldman identifies "two archetypes of . . . authority figure—the avenging angel and the restrictive vampire" (p. 40) and argues that Rossetti overcame "her darkest appetites by becoming a writer who is master of her demonology" (p. 43). Tracing a progression from "narcissistic forms of self-persecution" in *Maud* to "exalting faith" (p. 50) in Rossetti's gothic poems of 1855-56 and the so-called fantasy writings such as "My Dream" and "Goblin Market," Waldman finds "a pattern that is similar to that expressed in a psychoanalytical treatment, whereby even though the author does not banish demons by writing about them, she attains a means of reckoning with them" (p. 67).

In "Imaginary Oscillation in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Illustrations of Dante," Waldman finds an evolutionary pattern of suppression of narcissism and entrance into the temporal symbolic order in "Beatrice Meeting Dante

at a Marriage Feast" (1851) and "The Salutation of Beatrice" (1859), and adduces other illustrations of scenes from the *Divine Comedy* to argue that Rossetti "never recovered his earlier power to represent the spontaneous, life-giving charge of interpersonal desire, instead becoming absorbed within the symbolic process of anticipating and reflecting his own age's symbolic needs and fetishes" (p. 91).

In "The Symbolic Perfection of the Imaginary in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'The House of Life,'" she examines the sonnets of *The House of Life* in chronological order of composition, and finds that in the 1860s, Rossetti "develops a far more nimble and sophisticated account of the imaginary condition" (p. 97). In other subsections, she observes his growing belief in "the persistence of the poetical drive beyond the presence of the beloved" (p. 115), and finds in "The One Hope"—which she interprets as the beloved's name—a consoling sign that "the gleanings of love are available to the modern individual to help him cover over the gap in him left by the default of more-traditional sources of meaning" (p. 117).

In "Hysterical Desire in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Narrative Poems and Portraiture," the book's final chapter, Waldman defines "hysteria" in orthodox Lacanian terms as a need to "sustain the desire of the father," and finds in "Jenny," "The Blessed Damozel" and other narrative poems a "hysterical male who is burdened by a sense of inadequacy and highly concerned with a Phallic Other beyond the scene whose favor [he is] either driven to, or barred from, attracting" (p. 123). Early paintings such as "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" and "Ecce Ancilla Domini!" in Waldman's view reveal "the same ruthless nature of the Other that can be seen in such Art Catholic poems as "The Blessed Damozel," in which "the man is damned while his woman remains bathed in the divine light" (p. 142), and she evokes in her conclusion the possibility of a kind of sibling rivalry with Christina, "a virginal 'damozel' [who] found the heavens conditionally open to her, while Dante Gabriel experienced the humiliation of a spiritually diminished scope, even while he pitched his eyes aloft[, in a] mid-Victorian conjunction of ascendant femininity and obstructed masculinity" (p. 163).

In "Reading Mary as Reader: The Marian Art of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti," (VP 46, no. 2), Kathryn Ready argues that the figure of Mary in these poems bore "witness to the ultimate failure of the nineteenth-century bid to elevate Mary to the same position of influence she enjoyed in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance" (p. 170), Christina through her representation of Mary not as a mediatrix to divinity but as a model of Christian virtues, and Dante through his refusal to replicate earlier iconography representing Mary as the interpreter of divine secrets. Sibling rivalry (re)appears in Ready's suggestion that Rossetti's painting of his sister in "Mary Virgin" embroidering a lily before a stack of closed books reflected "a desire to contain the threat

which his sister posed to him as an artist" (p. 167).

In "The Wind Blows Cold Out of the Inner Shrine of Fear: Rossetti's Romantic Keats" (in *Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era*, ed. Andrew Radford and Mark Sandy), Sarah Wootton traces Rossetti's lifelong preoccupation with Keats as a "pure" poetic precursor and source of unfinished drawings and paintings.

The essay's title derives from a comment on Keats' verse by Arthur Benson, and Wootton finds that Keats' example provided Rossetti with a "mode of exchange, a commodity to invest in, and a literary ideal through which canonicity [could] be attained" (p. 59). In the rebuffed knightly suitor of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," Wootton finds an allegory of Rossetti's "contradictory impulses of desire and inhibition when attempting to interact creatively with Keats" (p. 63), and argues that "Rossetti remain[ed] creatively redundant while Keats retain[ed] his desirability as a subject and regulate[ed] the pretensions of this newcomer" (p. 66).

In "A 'Desert in Solitude & an Eden in Beauty': Rossetti at Kelmscott," (*JWMS* 18, no. 1), Peter Faulkner mines letters from the newly published edition edited by William Fredeman and his successors to examine the effect of Kelmscott and its environs on Rossetti's poetry and mental state during his three years at Kelmscott Manor (1871-74). Rossetti wrote "Down Stream," "Sunset Wings," "A Death Parting," "Chimes," and several sonnets while he was there, and painted "Water Willow," a portrait of Jane Morris against a background of the manor, its boathouse, and Kelmscott Church. He also wrote chatty letters to his mother and others which ignored his affair with Jane Morris and dwelled at some length on his walks, his pets, the rainy weather, and the manor's tranquil natural setting. In his conclusion, Faulkner observes that the natural imagery of the poems written during Rossetti's tenure at Kelmscott—however painful his presence became for his erstwhile and longsuffering friend Top—was "suggestive of unfulfilled possibilities in his work" (p. 62).

In "What Remains?: Intertextual Itinerary and Palimpsestic Melancholia in Christina Rossetti's 'Monna Innominata'" (*Double Vision: Literary Palimpsests of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Darby Lewes), Erin Menut traces out two lines of thought which may offer new insights into Rossetti's sonnet sequence. The first posits that the sonnets' relationships to their Petrarchan and Dantean epigraphs is not one of simple veneration or resistance, but of ambivalent interest in ways in which the sequence's antecedents contradicted each other and presaged "the failings of the courtly love tradition" (p. 117).

The second uses Judith Butler's account of Freud's definitions of melancholia and mourning to explore the sonnets' transition from anxiety at separation from her lover to assertion of an alleged identity with him, followed by "strange and hostile" responses to her abandonment, and "introjective" ac-

ceptance of her loss. Menut's approach enables her to account for the Monna's erratic responses, her less-than-convincing metaphors of transcendence, and the subtlety of her final silence: "Rossetti's unnamed lady learns how to make the most of courtly love's possibilities and, when necessary, . . . leave them behind" (p. 143).

In "Christina Rossetti, John Keble and the Divine Gaze" (*VP* 46, no. 2), Esther T. Hu considers some of Rossetti's departures from the examples of her Tractarian predecessors. Keble's poems on St. Peter had insisted on his apostolic authority, for example, but Rossetti's counterparts celebrated his humility, his repentance, and his gratitude for the forgiveness of Christ. In keeping with the pervasive visual imagery of Rossetti's poems, Hu argues that Rossetti's speaker seeks a mutual "gaze" with Christ, and concludes that Rossetti's idiosyncratic blend of Tractarian repentance and humility permits a new "devotional and poetic ethos," an egalitarianism which brought together "High Church, Broad Church, Catholic, Anglican, Evangelical distinction [. . . in] a vision of spiritual renewal of the heart" (p. 186).

In "Christina Rossetti's 'My Dream' and Apocalypse" (*N&Q* 55, no. 1), Simon Humphries draws on apocalyptic texts and Spenser's "Visions of the Worlds Vanitie" to interpret "My Dream" as a political allegory in which "Babylon" "represent[ed] every worldly power which will, eventually, end" (p. 57). In "Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market' and Spenser's Malbecco" (*N&Q* 55, no. 1), Humphries finds a number of suggestive similarities between "Goblin Market"'s description of fruits and woods and *The Fairie Queene's* catalogue of trees in Book I, and Laura's fate and the ill-effects of Malbecco's diet of toads and frogs in Book III. In "Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market' and Bunyan's Orchard of Beelzebub" (also *N&Q* 55, no. 1), finally, Humphries argues—persuasively, I think—that "the [poem's] . . . most important direct source" is the scene in *Pilgrim's Progress* in which one of Christiana's sons eats the fruit of "the enemy"'s trees and is cured by a distillate of "the tears of repentance" (p. 50). Bunyan's purge, Humphries notes, was "sweeter than honey," but Rossetti's was "bitter as wormwood."

In *The Epic: Britain's Heroic Muse, 1790-1910* (Oxford Univ. Press), Herbert Tucker offers a seven-hundred-thirty-six-page synthesis of nineteenth-century poetic narration which recalls the erudition and stylistic grace of Douglas Bush's *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* (1937). Carefully assessing Morris' oblique detachment from widely held Victorian values, for example, Tucker finds in *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867) a "lightly mediated, abstracted, abstraction-proof diction" which provided "a belated simulacrum of the conditions of naive epic" (p. 427), and in *The Pilgrims of Hope* (1888) "class agon" which "is recapitulated more than once by storied inserts within the poem, as if to make of each battle a whole chapter in the human story while stressing that no battle is the last" (p. 511).

Focusing his most extended observations on *The Earthly Paradise* and *Sigurd the Volsung*, Tucker finds in the former a counter-hierarchical “narrative balance of powers [in which] each of twenty-four tales checks its monthly partner” (p. 429), and observes that “the . . . twinned finales [of “Bellerophon in Lycia” and “The Hill of Venus”], . . . revers[e] Atalanta’s fall in I.1 and the King’s resolution in I.2, [and] . . . rewind Morris’s modal clock of tales for a fresh go-round” (p. 432). Of the work’s delicate balance of energy and regret he remarks that “the . . . proliferation of surviving narratives in this poem . . . constituted a myth of myth: a promise of cultural resilience transcending the undertow of decline that a given myth’s . . . unfulfillment might impart” (p. 431).

The self-referential cyclicality of *Sigurd the Volsung*’s plot evokes another apt observation: that “the more fully epic such figures prove, the less force attaches to the distinction between past and present: the deed they did once upon a time bonds with the perennially current event that their legend, if it is to live, must become” (p. 514).

A rare critic who is willing to consider seriously *Sigurd*’s metrics, Tucker also finds that Morris’s heroic measure “bespeaks the poet’s ambition to recoup through print mediation an endangered communal performativity” (p. 512), and offers a whimsical gloss of the work’s fatalism as a kind of narratological orrery in which “deeds survive . . . which demand to be told, because they fit most aptly into the instantaneously emerging sequence of the plot” (p. 317).

Tucker’s elegant *bons mots* are sometimes arch, as in his reduction of *The Earthly Paradise*’s narrative frame to a “neverland sharing of fiction among alienated elders who don’t believe a word of what they nonetheless can’t live without” (p. 434), for example. But there is something deep as well as apt in his remark that certain nineteenth-century epics’ “resonance came from their very resistance to contemporary narrative norms . . . [and] contrarian poetic manners. . . . To a public entranced by unsustainable fantasies of progress towards uniform civilization, these dissident epics . . . showed how bad the new faith looked when it was turned inside out” (p. 533).

In “The Art of Printing and ‘The Land of Lies’: *The Story of the Glittering Plain*” (*JWMS* 18, no. 1), Terrence Hoagwood interprets Morris’ first non-political late romance as a consistent development of “the theme of the ‘sham’ which Morris . . . articulat[ed] in his polemical lectures and essays” (p. 10) and adduces in support of his interpretation the inconsistency between Morris’ ideals of hand-crafted art and his use of electrotype for smaller initials in the Kelmscott Press edition of 1894.

Jeffrey Petts offers a rationale for Morris’ eclectic choices (and perhaps his acceptance of the “force engines” in *News from Nowhere*) in “Good Work and Aesthetic Education: William Morris, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and Beyond” (*Journal of Aesthetic Education* 42, no. 1). For Petts, Morris’s view of art

was developmental rather than contemplative, concerned primarily with artistic autonomy, decent working conditions and wide-ranging qualities of mind, and inclusive “regarding materials, methods and styles” in ways which might have been endorsed by modernist such as Herbert Read or Roger Fry.

In “William Morris, Print Culture and the Politics of Aestheticism” (*Modernism/modernity* 15, no.3), Elizabeth Miller contrasts the views of early and mid-nineteenth century reformists who believed wider diffusion of print publications would bring enlightenment, with those of late-century intellectuals who sensed that mass publications might readily be suborned to serve the capitalist status quo. Miller may be the first to examine lesser-known works of poetry in *Commonweal*, and she argues that Morris’ avowedly utopian response was embodied in part by his stewardship of a publication whose art, poetry, and political essays offered glimpses of an alternative future, and in part by his work at the Kelmscott Press, where “he skipped over historical process . . . to make books ‘in the future already.’” She also outlines some of the complexities of Morris’ interactions with contemporary Aestheticists (p. 496), and argues that the disparities which emerged “reveall[ed] the significant late-nineteenth-century tension between revolutionary and reformist politics that inform[ed] them both” (p. 497).

In “William Morris at Kelmscott” (*JWMS* 18, no. 2), a companion piece to “Rossetti at Kelmscott,” reviewed above, Peter Faulkner defends Morris against charges that he was ignorant of the nature of late-nineteenth-century country life. Serious readers of *News from Nowhere*, for example, will recall the passage in which Guest recalls nineteenth-century peasants “who . . . wore down the soil of this land with their heavy hopeless feet, from day to day, and season to season, and year to year” (*News*, chap. 30). In his own research, Faulkner has probed more deeply into this *prima facie* refutation into what is known of Morris’ many small acts of friendship and personal charity and his efforts to encourage Oxfordshire rural laborers to organize. His near-direct acquaintance with the numbing conditions of rural labor reinforced his hostility to capitalism, and Faulkner argues that it is “our own sentimentalizing of the rural . . . past [which] prevents us from recognizing that a strong-minded thinker like Morris could sustain a double vision, in which the aesthetically pleasing and the economically real were simultaneously recognized and given their due weight” (p. 27).

In “The Defence of Iseult: Swinburne’s *Queen Iseult* and Morris” (*JWMS* 18, no. 1), Richard Frith examines the literary after-effects and reflection of Algernon Swinburne’s early friendship with William Morris. Shortly after Swinburne met Morris, for example, he drafted six cantos of an uncompleted Arthurian poem patterned in part Morris’ “Defence of Guenevere,” and Morris’ oil painting of *La Belle Iseult* may have been inspired by Swinburne’s poem. Frith observes that “both [men] were strongly drawn to the profound

eroticism which they found in what they would have seen as the greatest literature of the Middle Ages,” and concludes that their shared belief in the importance of art “for life’s sake” was “much more important to both of them than anything which later drew them apart” (p. 93).

In “William Morris and the Greening of Science” (*JPRS*, 17, no. 2), Jed Meyer offers valuable insights into Morris’s interactions with the science of his day. Drawing on Pre-Raphaelite ideals of the “natural,” he compares Morris’s views of an interdependent nature with critiques of late-nineteenth century laboratory science by Ruskin, Edward Carpenter, assorted anti-vivisectionists and Ernst Haeckel, the father of modern ecology in his *Art Forms in Nature* (1905). Meyer also finds echoes in Morris’s essays of Peter Kropotkin’s analysis of “mutual aid,” and aptly interprets some of Morris’s wallpaper and textile designs as visual allegories of mutual dependence—“Trellis,” for example, as an “image of natural cooperation drawn from the familiar, domesticated environment of the garden” (p. 68), and “Strawberry Thief” as an observation that “the birds [who] feed off the strawberries . . . are also the means by which the plant propagates its seeds.” I find new and engaging Meyer’s recognition of the extension of “Morris’ ethos of ‘fellowship’ into the non-human world, emphasizing mutual aid over competitive struggle” (p. 70).

Next year, I will probably review (among other things) an edition of Christina Rossetti’s poems, and the final volume of Dante Rossetti’s letters. In the years to come—before I lay down my mouse—I hope to receive for review more synoptic inquiries into all the Pre-Raphaelites’ aspirations and undertakings—early and late, obscure and familiar, “lesser” and “greater,” literary and artistic. As a group, they formed a sisterhood as well as a Brotherhood, and there was something “epic” about their collective ideals and individual accomplishments.

Swinburne

YISRAEL LEVIN

Algernon Charles Swinburne died on April 10, 1909 at the age of seventy-two. For Swinburneans and lovers of Victorian poetry, then, 2009 is a special year as it marks the poet’s centennial. Next year I will review the special publications celebrating this event. Judging by the works reviewed below, one can notice that a century after his death, the focus of Swinburne scholars seems to have shifted toward questions of aesthetics and poetic treatment of myth. This should not come as a surprise considering the neo-formalist strand in Victorian studies and literary scholars’ growing interest in questions of religion and spirituality. It is tempting to think of Swinburne studies, therefore, as a critical *zeitgeist*. But whether this is indeed the case

or not, it is still wonderful to know that a hundred years after he was laid to rest, Swinburne remains as relevant as ever.

Swinburne is a central figure in Margot K. Louis’s study on late-Victorian and early-Modernist literary treatment of Persephone (*Persephone Rises, 1860-1927* [Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2009]). Swinburne’s allusion to the Greek goddess in his poems serves him, Louis writes, as a means by which he can express his anti-Christian sentiments and spiritual nihilism. “In the high Victorian era,” Louis notes, “as Christianity grew ever more embattled, the prospect of immortality became one of the most emotionally powerful weapons in every Christian’s arsenal.” Thus to “an atheist like Algernon Swinburne . . . it was important to undermine the yearning for immortality” (p. 56). And indeed, in poems such as “Et Eleusis,” “Hymn to Proserpine,” and “The Garden of Proserpine,” Swinburne “tried to do just that—not by explicitly criticizing the wish for life after death, as many freethinkers did, but in a more radical and disturbing way, by substituting a different desire: the yearning for death” (pp. 56-57). As Louis then adds, when examined in detail, Swinburne’s Proserpine poems “repudiate not only the transcendent but also the deeper, more widespread assumption that life *per se* has value—an assumption that is the very basis of the yearning for immortality” (p. 57). As such, Louis observes, “Swinburne’s Proserpine poems . . . are closer to Schopenhauer than to Sade.” That is, while the fictional universe of the Marquis de Sade is “bumptiously evil, crammed with extravagant pain and exuberant torturers, and the greatest of these is God,” the universe of Schopenhauer—as are Swinburne’s Proserpine poems—“is godless, [and] its torment [is] a weary weight sustained by the blind will to live, which we must learn to deny” (p. 58). In this respect, then, Persephone’s figure represents a shift from Swinburne’s juvenile fascination with Sade to the existential pessimism that characterized Swinburne’s work during the late 1860s.

Jerome McGann’s “Swinburne, ‘Hertha,’ and the Voice of Language” (*Victorian Literature and Culture* 3, no. 2 [2008]: 283-297) provides an original take on one of Swinburne’s most challenging and beautiful poems. Published in *Songs before Sunrise* (1871), “Hertha” has been traditionally perceived as a platform for Swinburne’s republican politics. Yet, as McGann argues, apart from being concerned with constructing “a polemical argument for human freedom” (p. 284), “Hertha” also seeks to engage with contemporary mythographical and philological debates. Swinburne’s interest in Hindu myth and philosophy, and his familiarity with Max Müller’s writings found their way into the poem. “Hertha,” writes McGann, presents “a whole network of apparent contradictions,” which draws on the style of argumentation found in Hindu philosophical texts (p. 288). But at the same time, as McGann notes, the imagery in the poem “is not Oriental, it is . . . drawn from the mythic world of the goddess Hertha—that is, from Northern Europe, not from India” (p. 287). The