

Pre-Raphaelitism in the Nineteenth-Century Press: A Bibliography by Thomas J. Tobin. Victoria, B.C.: English Literary Studies, 2002. 231 pp. ISBN 0-920604-81-1. \$25.00.

This bibliography substantiates the belief long professed by scholars of Victorian periodical literature that no aspect of the period can be fully understood without a close examination of contemporary newspapers and periodicals. Thomas J. Tobin begins his preface by comparing Timothy Hilton's *The Pre-Raphaelites* (1970) with William F. Fredeman's *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* (1965). According to Tobin, Hilton based his view that Victorian critics reacted negatively to the movement on twenty sources from only twelve periodicals. Fredeman's bibliography, in contrast, cited nearly five hundred periodical articles published from 1848 to 1900.

The sheer volume of Victorian periodical literature makes tracing a subject through it a daunting task. Tobin is to be commended for locating 2400 articles on Pre-Raphaelitism, all of which he has examined in their original form. Access to such a wealth of material, much of it previously undocumented, may well change our view of the impact of the Pre-Raphaelites on their contemporaries.

In his introduction Tobin divides the new works he has found into four major categories: "articles cited in other nineteenth-century literary texts, entries in languages other than English, entries from small-circulation periodicals, and brief mentions in articles on subjects other than Pre-Raphaelitism." While he does not elaborate on the first category, he states that the bibliography "significantly expands" the corpus of French-language articles about the Pre-Raphaelites. The only items specifically described, however, are a series arising from a Paris exhibition of British and continental painting in 1855 that ridicule the Pre-Raphaelite canvases displayed. A brief overview of the history of French commentary on the movement would have been welcome to enable users to assess the significance of this new body of criticism.

Tobin has included a "substantial number" of articles from small, limited-circulation periodicals, and these may be one of the bibliography's greatest contributions to Pre-Raphaelite scholarship. Such articles and, indeed, the periodicals themselves are often found only by happenstance. Tobin has cast his net more widely by examining the writings of the major Pre-Raphaelites for citations to reviews and criticism. He has also examined runs of such periodicals in the U.S. and Britain. As a result he has unearthed articles in such forgotten journals as *Clack! A Journal of Literary, Scientifick, and Artistick Talk for One and All in the Counties of Devon and Cornwall* and *The Light Green: A Superior and High-Class Periodical* (which published articles on "Rosina Christetti" and "Algernon Charles Sin-burne"). Tobin praises the value of local newspapers and periodicals in "gauging the extent and kind of

reception afforded the movement in different locales, often quite different from city to city.” The bibliography includes publications from, among other cities, Cardiff, Manchester, Liverpool, and Philadelphia, but, as with the French sources, some elaboration on local reactions and how they differed would have been helpful to users.

Tobin’s final category of new sources consists of “the brief mention of Pre-Raphaelitism in articles that deal primarily with other subjects.” He has located references to the movement in such unexpected places as *Economic Journal* (which reviewed *News from Nowhere*), *Open Court* (an American periodical best known for articles on Theosophy and Eastern religions), and *Scientific American*. These entries provide fascinating glimpses of the widespread influence of Pre-Raphaelitism, but the articles cited may not always be important to scholars.

The detailed index is helpful for locating articles by author, subject (if mentioned in the title), and periodical. One can, for example, find citations to reviews of Rossetti’s paintings and poems under his name and then by title. Users wishing to trace Pre-Raphaelitism’s reception in individual periodicals will find a list of all relevant entry numbers under each journal’s title.

Unfortunately, the bibliography entirely lacks annotations. Each entry gives enough information to locate the article but provides no indication of its significance. The title often reveals little about an article’s content (the article in *Scientific American*, for example, is called “What a Great Thing an Army Is”). Since Tobin has examined every source himself, it would not have been difficult to add a few words about each article’s scope and relative importance. Such comments would have greatly benefited other scholars, especially those at smaller institutions whose access to many Victorian periodicals is limited to research trips and interlibrary loans. As it is, the bibliography’s user faces an overwhelming array of possibilities with no guidance other than the basic information in the citations.

Tobin’s accomplishment is, nonetheless, significant. While it is never possible to assert that every article on a subject has been identified, it can be said that he has probably located those that can be found with the research tools currently available. His bibliography opens a rich field for further investigation that may well influence the course of Pre-Raphaelite studies for some time to come.