substitute for unrequited sexual love in these stories and that it often provides the catalyst for a happy resolution to a love affair. Thus the accident which befalls the male protagonist in "Malachi's Cove" and his dramatic rescue by the wild and unearthly Mally Trenglos, enables Anthony Trollope to insist upon the latent maternal instincts of his female protagonist, and thus to effect an acceptable closure (that is, marriage) to the story.

With the inclusion of several short stories by lesser-known writers such as Lucy Clifford, Ernest Dowson and Charlotte Mew, the biographical notes appended to the volume are indispensable. However, some clarification in the notes as to whether the publication dates roughly coincided with the actual conception of the stories might have been more helpful. Publication dates are useful parameters for our understanding of the various literary and intellectual trends of the day, but they can be quite misleading if, for example, a story was written two decades before it was published. A quick glance over the biographical entries, arranged as they are in accordance with the order of the stories in the anthology, also underlines what could be seen as the major weakness of this otherwise illuminating and entertaining volume: the failure on the part of the editor to justify the arrangement of the stories. With Flint's emphasis upon the interplay of genre and subject-matter, either a chronological or thematic arrangement, for example, might have better enabled the reader to chart the evolution of the short story genre and to map the shifting status of romantic love and marriage as the century progressed.

Amanda Collins

***Christina Rossetti Revisited*, by Sharon Smulders. Twayne's English Author Series No. 517. New York: Twayne; London: Prentice Hall, 1996.**

In the Preface to *Christina Rossetti Revisited*, Smulders presents her project in terms which suggest both the work's strengths and weaknesses, writing that "this study, in accordance with the objectives of the series, provides a critical introduction to the life and works of Christina Rossetti." Situating itself as an introductory text, one of the advantages of the series' prescriptions is that Smulders's analysis takes Rossetti's complete *oeuvre* into account. Smulders is correct in asserting that "a better understanding of Rossetti's achievement depends on a familiarity with the entire scope of her writing." Given that Rossetti's prose has not yet been accorded the same editorial attention as her poetry (most of it remains unpublished since the nineteenth century) Smulders's analyses of *Commonplace and Other Short Stories* (1870) and *Speaking Likenesses* (1874) provide useful introductions to these works, especially for the Australasian scholar whose access to such texts is likely to be especially limited. Thus we learn that in the tales which make up *Commonplace* Rossetti experiments "with a range of realistic, fantastic, and didactic forms," returning "time and again to the same motifs—birth and death, loss and gain—that distinguish her verse." However, if this itself sounds commonplace, Smulders's readings of the prose fictions predominantly

suggest the ways in which these texts, like many of Rossetti's poems, explore the possibilities for female self-determination and self-expression, privileging as Smulders argues, "unique and obscure points of view."

Interesting as these observations are, we do Smulders's argument a disservice by merely mining her work for comparisons between the poetry and prose. One of the most satisfying aspects of Smulders's text is the way in which it revises the most common interpretative trajectory of Rossetti's writing life. Smulders is appreciative of the recent boom in Rossetti scholarship and criticism, largely facilitated by Crump's variorum edition of Rossetti's poetry (1979-1990). The chief function of her endnotes is to draw the reader's attention to interpretations offered by other critics. However, the vast majority of this critical appraisal concentrates on Rossetti's earliest commercially published works, especially *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862) and in particular that volume's title poem. The often unwritten implication is that her early work is the most original and most satisfying and that later work fails to live up to twentieth-century critical (especially feminist) expectations. Smulders challenges these assumptions not only by establishing continuities between the early poetry and subsequent fiction but by finding in the latter "a culmination [of] the experiments in form and genre that Rossetti conducted at the height of her career."

This interpretative move is in accordance with Smulders's determination to focus on Rossetti as a committed and productive author, in dialogue with the literary culture of her day. This focus is evident throughout *Christina Rossetti Revisited.* At the most basic level, the critical text takes its structure from Rossetti's history as a published author, rather than from primarily generic or thematic concerns. If this initially seems pedestrian, it is appropriate to the introductory function of the work and, moreover, yields a number of valuable insights. Not the least of these attributes Rossetti's decision to omit certain poems from the 1875 collection, *Goblin Market, The Prince's Progress, and Other Poems*, to contemporary critical response rather than simply to growing moral scruples. Although, as Smulders writes, "Rossetti's ethical sympathies . . . apparently as objectionable to the ethically refined as the morally righteous among her audience, lend a toughness to her work that requires no apology even if she felt compelled to effect a retraction," Smulder's analysis of the dynamics implicit in Rossetti's choice render her more an agent, less the victim. A similar effect is achieved by Smulders's reading of Rossetti's response to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (for example, her argument that Laura's infertile "kernel-stone" represents a "savage parable of the PRB's *Germ*—the seed that failed after four numbers," through which Rossetti "turns her brother's advice to abandon her own poetic '"dreamings"' for 'any rendering either of narrative or sentiment from real abundant Nature' . . . into an indictment of the rootlessness of Pre-Raphaelite principle." In addition, Smulders's concern with Rossetti as a critical consumer of and respondent to nineteenth-century literary culture manifests itself in a number of references to correspondent texts, knowledge of which enables readings to focus on a text's productive powers rather than essentialising that same text as symptomatic of the processes of the poet's mind.

Smulders's theoretical approach is obviously indebted to feminist and New Historicist principles and techniques. These two influences come together in Smulders's frequent references to Rossetti's interaction with other nineteenth-century women. Until very recently Rossetti's work has been contextualised within the terms of predominantly male movements such as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood or Tractarianism. Work of this kind is important, partly because it allows us to appreciate Rossetti's work in new ways and partly because to include the work of women in our analyses of such political and cultural phenomena is, in effect, to reinterpret and redefine them. Feminist analyses of Rossetti's poetry, following the influential work of Ellen Moers's *Literary Women* (1976) and *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, have emphasised the way in which it reflects and responds to the restrictions inherent in Victorian women's lives. This, it is true, is also contextualisation of a kind but the breadth of the picture drawn often results in an emphasis on structural disenfranchisement at the expense of more agentive cultural transactions. Moreover, critical works in this vein tend to invoke Emily Dickinson as the obvious point of comparison. While Rossetti and Dickinson certainly experienced some similar circumstances, this approach tends either to pathologise both women and their works or to conclude that the American is the better, because more radical, poet. In contrast, Smulders details Rossetti's personal and professional relationships with women as diverse as Mary Howitt, Katherine Tynan, Alice Meynell, Dora Greenwell, Jean Ingelow, Barbara Bodichon and other women of the Langham Place circle. Frances Thomas and Jan Marsh have introduced this material in their recent biographies of Rossetti (1992; 1994) but it is important to integrate such narratives into the analyses of Rossettian texts as Smulders does.

To provide an introduction to the life and works of an author as prolific, diverse and relatively unknown as Rossetti is a difficult task and perhaps the result is unlikely to please all its potential readers all of the time. Smulders has done an admirable job of the biographical chapter, which, although succinct, avoids either oversimplifying or stereotyping its subject in the ways of some of the earlier, longer, "lives." As I have indicated, her readings of individual texts, poetry and prose, are detailed and often original. In both of these facets *Christina Rossetti Revisited* should prove a useful text for readers new to Rossetti studies while the attention paid to the prose fiction is valuable to the already committed scholar whose knowledge is predominantly of the poetry. At the same time, I would have liked to see more attention paid to Rossetti's devotional prose. Smulders uses the devotional texts, as do most critics, essentially to provide a commentary upon Rossetti's poems. While this approach supplies interesting references for poetry readers it runs the risk of reinscribing the twentieth-century wish to avoid that staple of Victorian women's lives, religion. Not that Smulders has elided religious discussion; her final chapter examines "the impetus to devotion in the sonnets" and argues that Rossetti's later poetry seeks (and finds) in religion "a universalised conception of self," one in which the difference of gender is transcended. Once again, Smulders produces detailed, persuasive readings. However, her argument sidesteps the complexities whereby religion itself was frequently gendered feminine in the nineteenth

century, although men were the ones deputised to preach it. Joel Westerholm (1993), Colleen Hobbs (1994), Lynda Palazzo (1997) and Robert Kachur (1997) have written significant articles on the feminine and feminist aspects of Rossetti's theology in the devotional texts. It strikes me that juxtaposing these interpretations with a reading of Rossetti's later poems might have found in the latter more evidence of continuing struggle than of a "circumvent[ion of] questions of gender and genre to address the inward preoccupations of the truly representative self."

But it is perhaps churlish to wish for more in a study of this size and with these specifications. *Christina Rossetti Revisited* is published in Twayne's English Author Series and the fact that a feminist critic has been commissioned to position her subject on this roll is perhaps indicative of a new phase in Rossetti's critical reputation. Certainly Smulders's concluding claim seems valid: "even though the voice of the past is always, to some extent, inaccessible to the present, Rossetti has begun to emerge not merely as a regret but as a tradition." Smulders's own work will contribute to this development.

Kelly Stephens

Dickens's 'Young Men': George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates and the World of Victorian Journalism, by P. D. Edwards. Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 1997.

When they reached old age and wrote their memoirs, the great Victorian journalists reminisced nostalgically, and often through a haze of brandy-fumes, about a convivial world of clubs and dinners, good talk and good cigars, amateur theatricals and jaunts to Paris. But the day-to-day reality of life in mid-nineteenth-century Grub Street was, as P.D. Edwards reveals, a good deal less snug. Existence for professional writers was frequently nasty and brutish, sometimes short, and the groupings that formed and re-formed around editors and magazines have the appearance of mutual benefit societies, sharing out the juiciest assignments and uniting to snipe at the opposition. Allegiances often divided along class lines: Thackeray's protégés (Oxbridge and clamorously genteel) sneered at Dickens's acolytes (streetwise and socially a bit iffy); Sala's manners were never dependable enough to secure him a seat at the *Punch* table. Resentments flickered in the pars of the gossip columns and sometimes erupted into open warfare, as in the famous unpleasantness at the Garrick Club in 1858, when Yates (predominantly a Dickens man) got summarily expelled for penning a snide profile of Thackeray.

Even writers who managed to negotiate their way between these armed camps of loyalty and patronage were not assured of survival. Magazines and newspapers came and went in bewildering profusion (sometimes lasting hardly longer than their inaugural dinners) and aspirant contributors were well advised to hedge their bets by writing for several at once. That in turn meant being prepared to try your hand at anything, from war reportage to comic verse, from society gossip to serial fiction. The ceaseless struggle to stave off creditors by