

Arnold Bennett *by* Margaret Drabble



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Reviews of the *Arnold Bennett* *by* Margaret Drabble

Mash

It's a superb biography by a writer at the top of her game. Everything you need to know to understand Bennett.

Coiriel

Excellent writing about an excellent writer.

Broadraven

Forgive the dud pun in my title, but I couldn't resist.

Margaret Drabble loves Arnold Bennett and all his works--not just his major novels, like *THE OLD WIVES' TALE*, but everything he published, including his now antiquated "self-help" books. With a biographer like this, how can a reader expect even a modicum of objectivity about the biographee?

I admit I think it's charming that a groupie gets to write a full-dress biography, though I'm amazed the publisher thought it would sell more than a few hundred copies, which apparently was the case

(my copy is clearly remaindered).

Drabble also wrote a bio of Angus Wilson, a much more important novelist than Bennett, IMHO, but the problem there is that Wilson led a much quieter, not to say duller, life than Bennett. His works, not his life, are what matter, but Drabble's is not a "critical" biography.

I admit I don't like Drabble's novels very much; they run a weak second to those of A.S. Byatt, her sister, and they're not as good as Anita Brookner's or Barbara Pym's, who write the same sort of yarn, generally speaking.

I suppose I'd say Drabble the biographer is enjoyably superfluous.

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