

T.C.
İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
KARŞILAŞTIRMALI EDEBİYAT
ANABİLİM DALI

DOKTORA TEZİ

**IMAGES OF WOMAN IN PRE-RAPHAELITE
VISUAL AND TEXTUAL NARRATIVES**

Tülay DAĞOĞLU

2520160138

TEZ DANIŞMANI

DOÇ. DR. Yıldız KILIÇ

İSTANBUL - 2022

ABSTRACT

IMAGES OF WOMAN IN PRE-RAPHAELITE VISUAL AND TEXTUAL NARRATIVES

TÜLAY DAĞOĞLU

Nineteenth century England going through a process of social transformation under the reign of Queen Victoria witnessed a countercultural art movement, namely Pre-Raphaelitism, which brought together rebellion, beauty, subtlety, creative splendour in the pot of symbolic reality. The term Pre-Raphaelite originated in relation to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (1848), a group of rebellious young painters, poet, and critic formed with the aim of creating a new British school of art by defying all conventions of art, mainly instructed by the British Royal Academy. Foregrounding the interconnections between literature and painting, which all resulted in images rife with photographic realism, their doctrine advocated the uncomplicated and faithful depiction of everything and every figure, typical of Italian painting, for, as their self-given title states, they felt that art had declined with the mid-renaissance painter Raphael, so they gave value to all that preceded him. With the belief of reform in art, they championed the ideology of seeking the real, not the ideal, as a subject matter for their paintings and reflecting it on their canvasses. This reality encompasses not only material but also spiritual purposes; thus, they lay claim to the moral authority of the epoch. Besides, at the same time, they believed that the first step to discovering the pure state of reality was observing nature. With these rigorous observational studies, the Pre-Raphaelites were not only enlightened about the source nature offered them, but they also had an idea about human nature, notably *woman*. In this sense, aiming to promote resurgence and rejuvenation of simplicity in Pre-Raphael art and medieval mysticism, female figure, for their canvas, became requisite. When *women*, the important concept of the nineteenth century, is taken into consideration, the Pre-Raphaelites' approach was different from that of their period. Committed to picturing likeness of real *women* on the grounds of different approach and treatment, the Pre-

Raphaelite artists departed from the entrenched notion of ideal woman, prevalent in Victorian art. From this standpoint, this present inter-disciplinary study aims to analyse *images of woman* not only depicted in literature from which the Pre-Raphaelites drew inspiration but also created by them for their visual and textual narratives on the basis of their own definition and traditional Victorian stereotypes within the framework of feminist readings in order to find out a) what impact did Victorian ideas/stereotypes of women have on the Pre-Raphaelites' treatment of the female subject; b) did they herald the birth of a modern woman or actually perpetuate gender norms?

Key Words: Pre-Raphaelites, Woman in the nineteenth century, Pre-Raphaelite Women, Feminist Critique, Feminist Readings

ÖZ

ÖN-RAFFAELLOCULAR'IN GÖRSEL VE YAZINSAL ANLATILARINDA KADIN TASVİRLERİ

TÜLAY DAĞOĞLU

Kraliçe Victoria döneminde bir toplumsal dönüşüm sürecinden geçen on dokuzuncu yüzyıl İngiltere'si, isyanı, güzelliği, inceliği, yaratıcı ihtişamı sembolik gerçeklik potasında bir araya getiren bir karşı-kültürel sanat akımına, yani Ön-Raffaelloclu akıma tanık oldu. Ön-Raffaellocluluk terimi, başta İngiliz Royal Akademi olmak üzere, tüm sanat geleneklerine meydan okuyarak yeni bir İngiliz sanat okulu yaratmak amacıyla oluşturulmuş bir grup asi genç ressam, şair ve eleştirmen olan Ön-Raffaellocular adlı topluluk (1848) ile ilişkili olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Fotoğrafik gerçekçilikle dolu tasvirlerle sonuçlanan edebiyat ve resim arasındaki karşılıklı bağlantıları ön plana çıkaran doktrinleri, İtalyan resmine özgü, karmaşık olmayan ve sadık doğa tasvirini savunmaktır. Bunun nedeni ise, kendilerine verdikleri isimde de belirtildiği gibi, orta rönesans ressamı Raphael ile birlikte sanatın azaldığını hissetmeleri ve Rafael'den önce yaratılan sanata değer vermeleriydi. Sanatta reform inancıyla, resimlerine konu olarak ideali değil gerçeği arama ve tuvallerine onu yansıtma ideolojisini savundular. Bu gerçeklik, sadece maddi değil, manevi amaçları da kapsar; böylece, çağın ahlaki otoritesine de sahip çıkarlar. Bunların yanı sıra, aynı zamanda, gerçekliğin saf halini keşfetmenin ilk adımının doğayı gözlemlemek olduğuna inanıyorlardı. Bu titiz gözlemsel çalışmalarla Ön-Raffaellocular sadece doğanın kendilerine sunduğu kaynak konusunda aydınlanmadılar, aynı zamanda da insan doğası, özellikle *kadın* hakkında fikir sahibi oldular. Bu anlamda, Raphael öncesi sanatta ve orta çağ mistisizminde sadeliğin yeniden canlanmasını ve iyileştirilmesini sağlamayı amaçlayan *kadın* figürü, tuvaleri için vazgeçilmez hale geldi. Ondokuzuncu yüzyılın önemli kavramı olan *kadın* dikkate alındığında, Ön-Raffaellocuların yaklaşımı kendi dönemlerinden farklı olmuştur. Farklı yaklaşım ve değerlendirme temeline dayanarak, kendilerini, gerçek hayattaki kadınların

benzerliğini resmetmeye adanmış olan Ön-Raffaellocu sanatçılar, Viktorya sanatında yaygın olan yerleşik ideal kadın kavramından ayrıldılar. Bu noktadan hareketle, bu disiplinler arası çalışma, feminist bakış açısı çerçevesinde a) Viktorya dönemi kadın kavramı konusunda fikirlerinin/basmakalıp yargılarının, Ön-Raffaellocuların kadını ele alışı üzerinde ne gibi bir etkisi olduğunu; b) modern bir kadının doğuşunu mu müjdelediklerini yoksa toplumsal cinsiyet normlarını devam mı ettirdiklerini anlamak amacıyla, hem kendi üsluplarından hem de Viktoryan geleneklerinden yola çıkarak, sadece Ön-Raffaellocuların ilham aldığı edebiyat eserlerinde tasvir edilen değil aynı zamanda onların görsel ve metinsel olarak yorumladıkları *kadın* imgelerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ön-Raffaellocular, On Dokuzuncu Yüzyılda Kadın, Ön-Raffaellocu'ların kadınları, Feminist Eleştiri, Feminist Okumalar

PREFACE

If poem delights us, painting does not fall short, and the pleasure we receive derives from our wonder at the achievement of their goal of both “delighting and instructing”. In this Ph.D. dissertation is considered the interdisciplinary nature of Pre-Raphaelite art providing a narrative interaction between key textual and visual narratives. This study casts a new light on these narratives and their significance within the social and cultural climate of nineteenth-century Britain through intricate analysis and insightful interpretation.

The process of earning a well-deserved Doctorate is a long-winded and arduous journey, and it is beyond a singlehanded endeavour. First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Yıldız Kılıç for the many months of unwavering support, advice, and insight throughout this study. Her close and careful readings have immensely contributed to my efforts in writing this dissertation. Her wealth of knowledge on English literature and studies is invaluable and admirable, also igniting a constant inspiration.

Besides, my sincere thanks extend to the members of my thesis committee, Assoc. Prof. F. Zeynep Bilge, Asst. Prof. Özlem Karadağ for their insightful comments and suggestions. Their feedback and advice have been influential throughout the writing process.

I would also like to thank my family for instilling the value of education and the power of knowledge in me.

TÜLAY DAĞOĞLU
İSTANBUL-2022

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ÖZ	iv
PREFACE	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
1. Feminist Critique in Visual and Verbal Texts	2
2. Feminist Reading Strategies	7
3. The Pre-Raphaelites: The Formation, Rise, and Fall of the Brotherhood	
3.1. The Inception of the Movement: Influences, Features and Themes	21
3.2. Associates in Art, Prose and Poetry & Successors	32
3.3. Reception and Criticism	36

CHAPTER ONE

A SYMBOL OF FEMALE EXCELLENCE

1.1. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Quadruple Work of <i>The Girlhood of Mary Virgin</i> & <i>Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)</i> & <i>Mary's Girlhood (For a Picture)</i> Sonnets I - II	40
---	----

CHAPTER TWO

WOMAN IN SHADOW

2.1. Tennyson's Mariana By John Everett Millais	64
2.2. Tennyson's The Lady of Shalott By William Holman Hunt	90

CHAPTER THREE

MADWOMAN

3.1. John Keats's Isabella, or The Pot of Basil By William Holman Hunt	113
3.2. William Shakespeare's Ophelia By John Everett Millais	136

CHAPTER FOUR

FALLEN WOMAN

4.1. Jenny and A Trilogy for Jenny By Dante Gabriel Rossetti	163
4.2. Double Work of Found/Found By Dante Gabriel Rossetti	189

CHAPTER FIVE

FEMME FATALE

5.1. John Keats's La Belle Dame Sans Merci By John William Waterhouse....	199
5.2. Lady Lilith and Body's Beauty By Dante Gabriel Rossetti	223

CONCLUSION	235
------------------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY	243
--------------------	-----

APPENDICES.....	270
-----------------	-----

ÖZGEÇMİŞ	282
----------------	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate 1: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, <i>The Girlhood of Mary Virgin</i> (1848-49).....	270
Plate 2: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, <i>Ecce Ancilla Domini! (Annunciation)</i> (1850)..	271
Plate 3: John Everett Millais, <i>Mariana</i> (1851)	272
Plate 4: William Holman Hunt, <i>The Lady of Shalott</i> (1886-1905).....	273
Plate 5: William Holman Hunt, <i>Isabella and the Pot of Basil</i> (1868)	274
Plate 6: John Everett Millais, <i>Ophelia</i> (1851-52)	275
Plate 7: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, <i>Bocca Baciata</i> (1859)	276
Plate 8: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, <i>Fazio's Mistress (Aurelia)</i> (1863;1873)	277
Plate 9: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, <i>The Blue Bower</i> (1865)	278
Plate 10: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, <i>Found</i> (1854-55;1859-81).....	279
Plate 11: John William Waterhouse, <i>La Belle Dame Sans Merci</i> (1893)	280
Plate 12: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, <i>Lady Lilith</i> (1866-68;1872-73)	281

INTRODUCTION

The Pre-Raphaelite movement in nineteenth-century England, invoking an interdisciplinary lens, leads scholars to explore paintings and their associated works of literature as their source material. The Pre-Raphaelites and their followers predominantly grounded their paintings on works of literature. It specified then broadening an idea in a text or expanding the scope of their canvasses in a way that mirrors sometimes those details which do not only rely on description in a text but also its fascinatingly imaginative extensions, and sometimes on effective reinventions of text images. Through a series of fascinating paintings of scenes from literary sources, the Pre-Raphaelites applied specifically a convention of female representation, epitomising feminine identity, which was examined in the earlier works as part of various theoretical debates. However, in its emphasis on feminist critical practice, the difference between this research and others lies in its employment of feminist interdisciplinary study of the male-produced images of women in art and in their related textual narratives. In this sense, the images of women in the literature that the Pre-Raphaelites drew inspiration from and rendered as subjects of discourses in visual texts allow us to interpret them with feminist reading strategies instead of a simply feminist critique of the texts. With this emphasis on respective readings, this study examines a) the interaction between the artwork and its associated text in terms of their ideology on the concept of *woman*, and b) the analogy between the artist's and writer's ideology and that of nineteenth century cultural canon regarding their outlook on *women*, instead of divorcing it from its producer and culture and bestowing an autonomy claimed for it by formalism and also structuralism which posits that an artwork is free of its historical and cultural milieu. The following sections of the Introduction first lays the foundation on the development of 'feminist critique' in literature and art studies in which feminists have launched reading and viewing strategies in respective disciplines, and then trace the development of the convergences between feminism and other theories through feminist reading strategies. From this trajectory, this interdisciplinary study scrutinizes the *images of women* in Pre-Raphaelite paintings and their related texts created by their 'immortals', particularly

poems, with reference to feminist schemata that offer deconstruction of these texts to uncover their ideologies.

1. Feminist Critique in Visual and Textual Narratives

“No representations in the written and visual media are gender-neutral”
(Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, 1987, p. 101)

There are two distinguishing features characterizing feminism in England; first, it has emerged through an incessant interaction with other concurrent radical and political but disparate discourses, specifically that of Marxism; second, its main preoccupation has been underscoring the determining effects of culture and ideology on women’s experience (Ballaster, 2009:81). Growing directly out of the women’s movement and escalating feminist media in the 1960s, feminist methodologies and critiques appeared in feminist anthologies and subsequently gave way to feminist literary criticism and then theory for their first encounter with women’s studies. Undeniably, the pioneering texts of canonical authors in the circle of contemporary feminism have radically re-assessed the accepted view of male-produced literary history. Becoming conscious of and criticising the power of (mis) representation of women, women have matured into ‘feminists’ as a reference to the convergence of women’s movement- tantamount to second-wave feminism- and feminist criticism, which have evolved concurrently. However, feminist literary criticism has not fully surfaced out of this movement, instead, said Plain and Sellers, “its eventual self-conscious expression was the culmination of centuries of women’s writing, of women writing about women writing, and of women – and men – writing about women’s minds, bodies, art, and ideas” (2007:2). Feminist literary criticism operates on a significant trajectory to accomplish missions of “understanding the ways in which we acquire a gender through language, and to perceive the role played by language in creating our subjectivities and our oppressions” (Humm, 2013:3). More precisely, feminist literary theory, as a critical form of knowledge, examines the grounds of literary study and practises along with the discourses of the theory. It aims to analyse

the roles they play and question whether they perpetuate or challenge the dichotomy and hierarchy of gender, sexuality, class, and race.

Feminist interventions challenge the gender dichotomy by highlighting patriarchal power and the role of dominant ideology's cultural representations in social constructions. In both literature and the visual arts, the first feminist interventions into images of women, produced by male artists and writers, has fashioned 'feminist critique' as "a radical rereading of canonical and popular texts which exposed their sexism, misogyny, and pornography, frequently laid explicit blame on their authors/producers" (Pearce, 1991:3). Feminist approaches to literature have produced ground-breaking texts including Mary Ellmann's **Thinking About Women** (1968), Eva Figes's **Patriarchal Attitudes** (1970), and best-known Kate Millet's **Sexual Politics** (1970) addressing and illuminating the images of women in male-produced literature which eschews reflecting female 'experience' but would rather examine marginalisation and sexist representations of women.

One of the first works of feminist literary criticism attempting to deconstruct the female stereotyping that shored up in the realm of literature was Mary Ellmann's diatribe: **Thinking About Women** (1968). Subtly and wittily writing against all stereotypes, she offered an exemplary interdisciplinary study which unveiled an agenda of gendered image-making in the works of Matthew Arnold, Sigmund Freud, and James Joyce, who attributed the images of formlessness, passivity, instability, materiality, and spirituality to women. Eva Figes's **Patriarchal Attitudes** (1970) stylistically and philosophically examined issues of identity to explain the root causes of women's oppression by men. To depict the widespread fear of women permeating Western society, the discussion from her pen marched through the canon of Western civilization's most renowned philosophers such as Moses, Giovanni Boccaccio, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sigmund Freud. Undoubtedly influential in uncloaking patriarchy as a controlling political institution, Kate Millett's **Sexual Politics** (1969) is recognised as one of the most perceptive works in the analyses of images of women. Millett's text spearheaded the field of feminist literary criticism through an in-depth examination of the patriarchal bias underlying literary texts of connoisseurs including Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, and D. H. Lawrence. Her polemic based on the notion of "literary

reflection” is a junction where these canonical authors’ male characters meet, manifesting the violent misogyny:

...Misogynist literature, the primary vehicle of masculine hostility, is both a hortatory and comic genre. Of all artistic forms in patriarchy, it is the most frankly propagandistic. Its aim is to reinforce both sexual factions in their status...

...Since the abatement of censorship, masculine hostility (psychological or physical) in specifically sexual contexts has become far more apparent. Yet as masculine hostility has been fairly continuous, one deals here probably less with a matter of increase than with a new frankness in expressing hostility in specifically sexual contexts. It is a matter of release and freedom to express what was once forbidden expression outside of pornography or other “underground” productions, such as those of De Sade. As one recalls both the euphemism and the idealism of descriptions of coitus in the Romantic poets (Keats’s *Eve of St. Agnes*), or the Victorian novelists (Hardy, for example) and contrasts it with Miller or William Burroughs, one has an idea of how contemporary literature has absorbed not only the truthful explicitness of pornography, but its anti-social character as well. Since this tendency to hurt or insult has been given free expression, it has become far easier to assess sexual antagonism in the male (Millet, 1970: 45)

What makes Millett’s text instrumental is her hawkish selection of excerpts from popular texts illustrating the negative representations of female figures, which subsequently galvanized the spirit of “feminist critique”. These three books, as Juliet Mitchell commented, are “the ‘totalizing’ studies of the oppression of women” (1974-1975: 300–1). They played an important role in the emergence of second-wave feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Alongside Millet, Figs, and Ellmann, Germaine Greer’s controversial book **The Female Eunuch** (1970), in an avant-garde style, is universal in remarkably presenting insights into an array of literary sources that have a long provenance, with quotes from Blake, Aristotle, and Wollstonecraft. Regarded as canonical, all these texts display similarities with overarching manifestos that critique the patriarchal language and literature and expose the marginalisation of femininity.

As radical literary critiques of the masculine portrayal of women, Figs, Ellmann, and Millett’s works are in tandem with John Berger’s **Ways of Seeing** (1972), Linda Nochlin’s and Thomas B. Hess’s **Woman as Sex Object** (1972) in art critic. They all run parallel with their identifications and narratives as to how European

paintings of women and imagery have objectified them. In his argument, Berger pushes the presence of the female nudes to the fore, which entails a deeper engagement with their historical context, and he focuses on the male gaze that objectifies the woman body. This passive position associated with women has been invariably mirrored in Western art throughout history and hence conditioned the way she sees herself, depriving her of social movement and rights. Upon such representations, referring to Memling's painting *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* (1485) Berger states that:

You painted a naked woman because you enjoyed looking at her, you put a mirror in her hand and you called the painting *Vanity*, thus morally condemning the woman whose nakedness you had depicted for your own pleasure (1972:51).

In his study of female nude images, he asserts that it is the male desire which legitimately eroticizes models to be stared at. Worse, male artists and viewers incriminate women for the gaze, evading the guilt of gratification. Paintings of women in famous historical works of art are reflections of the male artists' personal thoughts and desires manoeuvred by his fantasies to control and eroticise *her* through *his* artistic [*alleged*] supremacy. As Peterson averred, "art is a language and an artist's beliefs, and desires are inherent in every visual element of the composition" (2011:3).

Linda Nochlin's emergent thesis in **Women as Sex Object** acquaints us with the sexual suppressions of the germane age and male-produced images of *her* who is the manifestation of *his* personal visions of the ideal woman or the fallen woman. She appears to suggest that the only role they can adopt to challenge and change the canon of images of women in art is being a creator. Nochlin points to the term "erotic", conventionally meaning "erotic-for-men", and adds that "The imagery of sexual delight or provocation has always been created about women for men's enjoyment, by men" (1972: 15). It should be noted that Nochlin's argument simply calls for women to be creators rather than advising them how to interpret the male-produced images of women. Akin to Nochlin's exploration of sexual objectification of women, Lisa Vogel provides her insights into the article "Fine Arts and Feminism" (1974):

The other major way the image of woman is used in art is as a “stand-in” -women become the vehicles through which artists express their and society’s attitudes and ideas on a variety of issues. A virtual army of these female images could be mustered, representing various virtues, vices, topical issues, crude jokes, didactic slogans, inspirational themes, specific fears, whatever. In these cases, women are not usually stripped of their sexuality; rather they acquire a kind of social as well as sexual objectification (1974:28).

In a society or social structure that encourages a patriarchal hegemonic system, our views are unavoidably shaped accordingly. This leads us to Nochlin’s remarks about the necessity of veiling power relations to make the rationale of patriarchal ideology natural and eternally true. These power relations stipulate that woman recognize and internalize these restrictions as norms which explain the root cause of the construction of women in specific ways focusing on “patriarchal needs, the patriarchal unconscious,” (Kaplan, 1983:36) in the visual arts. As Nochlin asserts:

the ways in which representations of women in art are founded upon and serve to reproduce indisputably accepted assumptions held by society in general, artists in particular, and some artists more than others, about men’s power over, superiority to, difference from, and necessary control of women, assumptions which are manifested in the visual structures as well as the thematic choices of the pictures in question. Ideology manifests itself as much by what is unspoken – unthinkable, unrepresentable – as by what is articulated in a work of art. (2018:1).

Before proceeding to the next part, it is significant to add that notably feminists in literature, art, and film studies align with other theories concerned here and contributed to the emergence of feminist reading strategies that deconstruct images of women and unveil a subtext lurking beneath the surface of literary and pictorial texts.

2. Feminist Reading Strategies

“The delight and the value of feminist literary criticism is its multiplicity”.

(Gill Plain, Susan Sellers, A History of Feminist Literary Criticism, 2007, p. 213)

Annette Kolodny's argument in “Dancing Through the Minefield: some observations on the theory, practice, and politics of a feminist literary criticism” (1980), which proposes a pluralistic approach alongside feminist theory rather than adopting and deploying a single methodology or theory, has inspired and served as a model for many authors, critics, and activists to find different interpretive paradigms to evaluate and analyse the literary works. Being one of them, bell hooks in **Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre** (1984) brought up the major problem with feminist discourse: “inability to either arrive at a consensus of opinion about what feminism is or accept definition(s) that could serve as points of unification” (17). Feminism has turned to other schools of thought and alternative theories for reading and viewing strategies that have resonated in feminist criticism and penetrated the circle, whether by necessity or because of its inherently vague definition. Ultimately, feminist criticism has evolved over the years to move across and between disciplines, including Marxism, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, semiotics, modernism. There are now more sophisticated feminist reading strategies for analysing works of literature by men or women, as well as a wide range of feminist literary theories. Among all liaisons with foresaid analytic fields, psychoanalysis and poststructuralism provide the most useful venues for reading Pre-Raphaelite women, epitomising latent female identities.

Seeking new ways of articulating women's subjectivity and exploring the meanings of femininity and women, feminism, despite its initial hostile attitude, has embraced considerable insights from psychoanalysis, which has offered common premises regarding text, psyche, and culture. In terms of their intentions and scope, feminism and psychoanalysis have more in common as Sally Alexander suggested: “What is central to both feminism and psychoanalysis is the discovery of a subjective history through image, symbol, and language” (1991:128). Feminist engagements with psychoanalysis inaugurated with post-1970 feminism; for instance, Juliet Mitchell's **Psychoanalysis and Feminism** (1974) is the first feminist text in the recovery and

acceptance of psychoanalysis in the feminist circle. It also presents an erudite apologia for Freud's theories with her revolutionary suggestion of understanding his writings as an analysis of women's experience, subjectivity, and position in patriarchal societies, undeniably justifying the influence of psychoanalytic criticism on feminist literary theory. Quintessential to Mitchell's argument is an exhortation of a framework affording feminists to inquire about how patriarchy is unconsciously (re)constructed and opening "the way into understanding ideology and sexuality" (1974-75: xx). Often coinciding and colliding in productive ways, each of these has contributed to one another lending an overview of a challenging set of engagements; first was launched with Freud's analyses of female hysterics (*Studies on Hysteria* -1895/1986) in the 1890s and extended to the 1920s via the first wave of feminist encounter with him (Sprengnether, 2007:235). There is no doubt a vast *oeuvre* of Anglo-American theorists offers an account of texts claiming to have drawn inspiration from the French Lacanian approach to psychoanalysis. Among these are **The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis** (1984) by Jane Gallop, **Sexuality in the Field of Vision** (1986) by Jacqueline Rose, **Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction** (1990) by Elizabeth Grosz, **The Interpretation of the Flesh: Freud and Femininity** (1992) by Teresa Brennan, establishing their theses by invigorating psychoanalysis for feminist thought and redeeming Freud's central analyses for feminist causes, like their predecessor Juliet Mitchell.

Furnishing feminist theory with insights and resources about subjectivity and sexuality, Freud, in 'fathering' psychoanalysis, concentrated on issues such as the formation of masculine and feminine identity at the level of the unconscious, centrally linked to the study of female sexuality, which is "repressed or erupting into neurotic symptoms" expounded Mulvey (2012:190). When we narrow the angle to lay the ground for the debate of "sexuality" in Victorian social and political practice, Michel Foucault expounds on it in a different context with his seminal work **The History of Sexuality** (1978). He suggests instead that sexuality is beyond being a biological imperative and phenomena as opposed to the Freudian theories defining it as a libidinal force in human behaviour. He further explains that it is constructed by discourse as

Andrew Miller and James Eli Adams wrote in **Sexualities in Victorian Britain** (1996):

Foucault's work is most widely and influentially associated with the view that sexuality is best understood as a construction of regulatory systems, rather than an elemental force subject to repression [. . .]. Sexuality thus understood is not a biological imperative, but an intricately articulated array of political identities constructed out of imperatives to believe, to feel, to act (4).

Foucault's perusal of the history of sexuality militates in favour of the nineteenth century period in terms of the development of a system of 'power-knowledge' through which "a productive body and a subjected body" could be set into a social motion (Davis, 1993:4). Davis defines the productive body as the virginal one subjugated to the dominant discourse on sexuality in his **Virginal Sexuality and Textuality in Victorian Literature** (1993). Thus, this productivity is signified through binary oppositions such as Madonna/whore, lily/rose, and monster/angel dichotomies. To scrutinize the notion of dichotomy, J.B. Bullen discusses in **The Pre-Raphaelite Body: Fear and Desire in Painting, Poetry and Criticism** (1998):

Whether the prostitute was seen as an economic, medical, or anthropological threat to the prevailing norms, or was seen as a figure who tested the limits of orthodoxy, she also acted as an enabling vehicle through which the norms could reassert themselves (55).

Therefore, the representations of the fallen woman and virginal figure germinate from the theory of binary opposition between propriety and immorality that epitomizes the agitations and duality during the Victorian era. Even though in disagreement with Freudian analysis, Foucault approaches sexuality and unconscious, both fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis, by considering all vestiges of science, and his examination of sexuality serves an agenda to trace discourses about sex in the context of Pre-Raphaelite women: Madonna, a paragon of propriety - and whore, fallen from grace.

Feminist art and film critics, namely Laura Mulvey, Elizabeth Cowie, and Griselda Pollock, drawing on insights from Freudian psychoanalysis, based their scope on the construction of woman as a sign, that is, as a product of sign systems. This

configuration is evoked through the modes of representations in film, literature, and art. It serves as a psychoanalytic inquiry investigating how desire/fantasy and fear influence the construction of gender and subjectivity. Due to Freud's insistence on a split between appearance and the meaning behind it, Mulvey elaborates on the role and projection of male fear and fantasies in representations of women and their interpretations:

In positing an unconscious, the workings of which could not find direct conscious expression, resulting as they did from initial repression, Freud showed how, psychoanalytically, things can seldom be what they seem. Thus, the image of woman in patriarchal representation refers more readily to its connotations within the male unconscious, to its fears and fantasies... (Mulvey, 2012:190).

Almost all of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's visual and textual works depicting women may be interpreted to contain a blend of fear and desire; for example, his *Lady Lilith* (1868), symbolizing a powerful feminist heroine, emerges as an image created by male fantasy expressing both fascination and anxieties about femininity. The psychoanalytical approach exposes the way through which the conventions of construction of images of women in texts, whether it be art, literature, or film, are tailored to the dominant masculine desire and fantasy. In this vein, Laura Mulvey's argument on narrative cinema that "voyeuristic pleasure is built into the way a spectator reads a film" dissolves the veneer of text images and art within the feminist intellectual landscape. Central to theorising visual media, Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) is interpreted as a manifest of the awareness of the sexual difference at the heart of *visual pleasure* ensuring that woman is always rendered as an object of the male gaze in the evocation of desire.

Griselda Pollock, proffering that the relationship between psychoanalysis and art is as old as psychoanalysis itself, also argues that a close reading of the specific cultural texts and practices is what psychoanalysis and the image afford. She, therefore, clarifies our understanding of the cultural earmarks of textual and visual delivery. By doing so, she has turned to psychoanalysis to seek a key to explain a body of works, specifically created by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, with questions for the feminist

theorization of “images of women” and the gaze. In her essay “Woman as Sign: Psychoanalytic Readings” in **Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art** (1988), Pollock admonishes the reader against the fallacy of “overprivileging the individual artist and looking for explanations in his psyche to expose structural formations” (1988:176). She clearly suggests that the reader should focus on “the historical and social structures which function at the level of the unconscious” (ibid.) leading to the (re)definitions of femininity and sexuality within a discourse of gender relations.

Pollock navigates her argument through a sophisticated network of psychoanalytic infrastructure within the writings of Freud and Lacan on gaze, fetishism, and looking, with a theoretical approach deconstructing beauty and pleasures ingeniously crafted on canvas. Pollock maintains the “pleasure factor”, a problematic concept for feminists, a central scope of which is body and sexuality. The concept is claimed to haunt the visual representations of women predominantly produced by and for male pleasure, testifying to his motivation and act of objectification of women. Thus, it evinces two sorts of concern: one, investigating the role of sexuality in the domain of critical feminist practice, and two, its meaning for women. Numerous debates have discussed the social implications of sexuality and the relationship between repression and governing social organization, including Pollock and Cherry’s discussion of how the Pre-Raphaelites regulated and defined female sexuality in their paintings and literary works.

In Pre-Raphaelite texts, the concept of sexuality introduces a central figure: the femme-fatale, a female identity expressed in a pigeonholed role as an over-sexualised and seductive woman and often defined to be the embodiment of evil, masquerading beneath her charms. The imbrication of construal of sexuality has crucial implications regarding the representations in various discourses such as literature, art, cinema, and psychoanalysis. The apocalypse of the intention of *her* actions is in accordance with the epistemological diagnosis corresponding to the psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious. As Mary Ann Doane argues in her book **Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis** (1991), the power associated with the femme fatale is an act of fear linked to the “uncontrollable drives, the fading of subjectivity, and the

loss of conscious agency”, all of which are budding theories of psychoanalysis (2). Donne’s erudite assertion is that the femme fatale is not a phenomenon of feminism, but rather a “symptom of male fears about feminism” (3). Feminist theorists emphasized that under her gorgeous surface, the fatal woman has lingered as an uncanny figure in male fantasy expressing both a fascination for her seductive charms and fear about her destructive power. In his essay on castration anxiety, Freud elaborately investigated and explained this fear which he relates intimately to the idea of sexual difference. It is part of a constellation of concepts in which he tried to explain that masculine sexuality is viewed as the norm and that the perception of deviant female sexuality is troubled by the lack of male genitals.

The femme fatale archetype has embodied variations depending upon the socio-political climate of the period. Throughout the nineteenth century, as Hedgecock explained, writers portrayed diverse features of the femme fatale “showing that she is paradigmatic, dangerous, yet vulnerable, inciting fear, yet driven into action by fear” (2008:6). The femme fatale, with her supernatural powers akin to an enchantress and seductress, haunted romantic poets, significantly Coleridge (**Christabel**) and Keats (**La Belle Dame Sans Merci**), who were frequently referenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, before she emerged as an expression of changing roles of women in nineteenth-century literature, poetry, and art. Occupying a pivotal place in Pre-Raphaelites literature and art, Jan Marsh contended in **The Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood** (1985) that the Brotherhood “gazed, fascinated but repelled, at women of a curious frigidity, cold but sensual, erotic but invulnerable” and was fuelled with the fear of the malice of a woman; thus, they were characteristically externalized into the image of a single symbolic figure of the femme fatale. In these representations, “women are rendered decorative, depersonalized; they become passive figures rather than characters in a story or drama... women are reduced to an aesthetic arrangement of sexual parts, for male fantasies” (144). To understand the mystique of the nineteenth-century femme fatale, one needs to embrace her frequent appearances in literary and visual narratives that accommodate her as a figure reflecting social landscapes, cultural ideologies, and anxieties.

Other feminist concerns are “mourning”, “melancholia”, and “madness”, establishing their theoretical edifice on the terrain of psychoanalytic theory. With “madness” first, the association between the representations of women and images of the madwoman have forayed into the history of Western thought, culture, literature, and Pre-Raphaelite art. Emerging from critical interest in the figure of the madwoman, the critical madness discourse, as a branch of feminist theory, is one of the contributing features demarcating the advent of feminist literary criticism and the canon of women’s madness. Embracing studies of the madwoman in literature, feminist critique of hysteria and psychoanalysis together with cultural histories of madness, the critical madness discourse comprises a “theoretically and disciplinarily heterogeneous body of works that emphasize the construction of femininity as madness and simultaneously appropriate the madwoman as a figure of denaturalisation” (Deane, 2017:7). The realm of texts on female madness, created by the male literary and artistic imagination, include important figures such as Shakespeare’s Ophelia in **Hamlet** (1603), one of the texts of this study, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s untitled narrator in **The Yellow Wallpaper** (1892), Charlotte Brontë’s Bertha Rochester in **Jane Eyre** (1847), Emily Brontë’s Catherine in **Wuthering Heights** (1847) as people of interest have been investigated by a party of scholars of the critical madness discourse. In particular, the paradigmatic character Ophelia, a melancholic and love-struck young woman, has enjoyed pivotal attention in British art and literature. These iconic figures serve as literary progenitors of the feminist critique of madness attributed to major male psychoanalytic thinkers who have created and associated it with the female body. The feminisation of madness has been assumed a historical and cultural phenomenon ensuing from the hierarchal dichotomy between male and female in the context of western systems of language and representation, which, thus, draws on poststructuralism as well.

The madness in feminist literary inquiry can be grouped into two distinct strands: hysteria and melancholia. This allows a standpoint for the feminist critic to decode, explicate, and deconstruct her “madness” adjunctly to the socio-cultural framework in which female madness has been produced. It would be fruitful to elaborate upon melancholia and mourning, from which melancholia borrows some features, as they

are prevalent descriptive hallmarks attributed to the Pre-Raphaelite women on canvas representing real women in the guise of ancient, medieval, Shakespearean, and Romantic poets' heroines. One of John Keats's iconic title characters namely in **Isabella, or The Pot of Basil** presents symptoms of both mourning and melancholia which develop into madness. Melancholia, as defined by Freud, is "the abrogation of the interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feeling to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches... and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment" (1914-16:244). In mourning, what predominantly shows up is a belief in a poor and lost world, whereas a melancholic enacts a lost ego (Ibid.: 246). Key texts on women's mental and behavioural disorders and in feminist critique have incorporated feminist critical theory to navigate psychoanalysis in its scheme of madness through the lens of the critical madness discourse and its emphasis on the significant role of history and culture in the construction of madness.

Recognizing the effect of the dominant factors in the historical overrepresentations of women mentally disordered, feminists have acknowledged that writing on and about women's madness and melancholia has emerged as both impasse and resistance in female produced literature as a consequence of social victimization. On the other hand, their male counterparts have been building a canon of texts advocating a natural relation between the two. Thus, madness, hysteria, melancholia, and also mourning have shown the politics in culture through the medium of literature highlighting the bond between itself and psychoanalysis. Characterising hysteria as a symbolically female illness, linked to female sexuality, Freud referred to case studies in literary texts and configured his theories which are hortatory in applying psychoanalysis to literary deconstruction and interpretation of women's madness questioning its gender identification. Jane Kromm noted in one of the workshops themed as "Reading Women and Madness in Medical, Dramatic, and Visual Texts" (Nelly, 1994:113) that stereotypical typologies of the madwoman externalize her disorder into a conventional spectacle of sexualized and self-harming of a ruined beauty. This is embodied in the representations of Ophelia and Jailer's Daughter who are associated with water, grieving, and eroticized self-destructiveness (114). The

female dominant constructions of madness as an umbrella term for the aforementioned strands have started to hold the field in visual representations since the late eighteenth century. This has facilitated the analysis to untangle the proffered gendered features attributed to the figure of the madwoman.

The previous part weighs and problematizes the concept of woman along with her sexuality and subjectivity across psychological and cultural ground of gender identification. Feminist questions about language and the notion of subjectivity are on the agenda of a range of complementary theoretical schools of thought from post-structuralism to psychoanalysis catering to an increased hybridity of feminist literary criticism and its intersection with adjunct discourses. While psychoanalysis focuses on the construction of gender identity, post-structuralism investigates the role of language within the margins of individual and social formation. Just as feminist literary critics use of psychoanalytic methods to explore the identification of gender and sexist assumptions in male-produced texts, they also draw on elements of and engaged with insights from post-structuralist theory. Ultimately, these three forms of theory, feminism, psychoanalysis, and post-structuralism, have built upon a scope which contains overlapping ideas. That they share the desire to attack universal values, and explore different discourses is joint for feminism/feminist literary theory and post-structuralism; thus, they both examine literary and socially constructed texts by exploring their narratives and secrets to when they were written.

In Britain, the first feminist encounter with post-structuralism was inaugurated through film studies which was an intersection for critics Laura Mulvey, Elizabeth Cowie, and Griselda Pollock who had set their eyes on the ways of construction and treatment of women as signs in film, literature, and art since the 1970s. This intersection allowed theorising the ideological definition and construction of women under patriarchal hegemony, endorsing the deployment of different tools, *qua* theories, which also undoubtedly broadened the notion of text itself in order to understand how the gender system operates through the portrayal of women.

Very appealing to feminist critics are Michel Foucault's post-structuralist formulations which comprehensively examined how the languages (discourses) of criminology, sexuality, and medicine control, limit, and portray women and men through the power of authority which established discourses. Post-structuralist theorising of subjectivity has been particularly attractive to feminist criticism. Whereas scholars have suggested that Foucault's poststructuralist *oeuvre* covers the most eminent theme: "the problem of the subject" (Robinow, 1984:12), for Foucault and other poststructuralist scholars, the subject:

is no simple, unitary, or stagnant concept. The subject cannot be understood -- indeed does not exist -- outside the complicated and the shifting relations among knowledge, discursive formations, and, perhaps most importantly for those with a range of feminist concerns, power (Rupp and Thomsen, 2016:898).

One can unquestionably tease out convergences between post-structuralism and the second-wave feminism in the aspect of their outset, both dating from 1960 to 1977, and their shared techniques. Spearheading with his **A Theory of Literary Production** (1966) Pierre Macherey was followed by Michel Foucault's **The Order of Things** and Jacques Lacan's *Ecrit* in the same year. In 1967, Jacques Derrida joined by publishing **Of Grammatology**; then Roland Barthes reverberated by converting his theories to poststructuralism of *S/Z* (1970), which denotes where and how different codes of meaning function. It was an inauguration of dismantling a panoply of rigid and formulaic assumptions and an invitation to speculate the widespread notion that the literature exactly explains itself. Derrida shone by emphasizing that the *sine quo non* features of all languages are the deferral of meaning by texts, and the absence or marginalities in texts; and that the marginalization and absence of women in texts prevailed and were pervasively attacked by feminist post-structuralists.

Pierre Macherey, with his stunning theoretical proposal, which generated inimical criticism and was intimately associated with those of Derrida, Barthes, and Lacan, undoubtedly deserves mention as his work gravely bears on this study. His seminal book **A Theory of Literary Production** (1978) has proved to be part of the birth of a whole new branch of post-structuralist theory with revolutionary

implications for literary studies and occupied a pivotal position in contemporary Marxist critical debates since its first French publication in 1966. Macherey's proposal of a radical feminist reading strategy which is defined as "symptomatic reading" and based on the text's "gaps" and "absences" was an immense achievement that drew from Marx's work. Beneath the explicit and intended theme of the text, Macherey proposes that there is the speech delivered from a certain silence and on the condition of the presence of a *certain absence*, the text can be labelled self-sufficient (1978:85). The work tacitly implies the meaning, and it is the silence to be investigated because the speech is enveloped in what the text does not say rather than what it says. In his **A Theory of Literary Production**, commenting on literary works' ideologies, he specifies:

What is important in the work is what it does not say. This is not the same as the careless notation 'what it refuses to say', although that would in itself be interesting: a method might be built on it, with the task of measuring silences, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. But rather than this, what the work cannot say is important, because there the elaboration of the utterance is acted out, in a sort of journey to silence (1978:87).

Analysing and deciphering the meaning in gaps rather than looking at the self-evident expressions of the ideological statements emphasize Macherey's idea of silent "margins". His theoretical model proposes that the meaning is not simply adhered to the text. It is attained instead from the negotiation between text and context depending upon how much the dialogue between "ideology in the real world" and "ideology in the text" relates. Proposing this way, Macherey prescribes that only if the individual text is placed into the social whole, will it be unchained and off the limitations of internal criticism. Within this context, a text is in tandem with artwork since their realities are not merely the projection of their own particular self; on the contrary, they are part of their own broader history.

Understanding the relationship between literature and society, as text and context, channels us to the cracked/broken mirror, another particular concept Macherey uses. On its function, the theorist suggests that a literary text is both related to and different from economic, social, and political executions; hence one can

interpret this proposal that it cannot merely project the sheer reality of the epoch. If unable to give a precise reflection and expression of its history, a mirror, literally a text, only functions to reflect fragmented images in its own specific way. Rather than simply aligning ideology, as it appears in the text, with its reflection in real life, Macherey, substituting his virtuoso model, a mirror image, for text, writes:

In effect, the relationship between the mirror and what it reflects (the historical reality) is partial: the mirror selects, it does not reflect everything. The selection itself is not fortuitous, it is symptomatic; it can tell us about the nature of the mirror.... Thus, the image of history in the mirror will not be a reflection in the precise sense of a reproduction or facsimile. Indeed, we know that such a reproduction is impossible (1978:120-121).

Regarding the partiality of the image in the mirror, the ideology lurks behind the text and paves the way for the concept of *fragmentation* indicating how the mirror does not capture a fragmented image or reality like in Tennyson's **The Lady of Shalott**; it in fact reflects a fragmented image in the mirror, presenting real discontinuities. The need to further refine certain aspects of the argument proves that criticism should study these images piecewise, like a puzzle work, relying on its discontinuity in lieu of exploring its totality. That is to say, in place of simplistic processes tracking overt expressions through literary and art works, a form of explication should be designed to expound on the history that is enshrouded in the text. In the course of feminist reading, Macherey's silent margin and cracked mirror models are suggestive devices steering the feminist readers towards the ways of deconstructing the text.

Sharing his profound observations regarding the loose and unattached relationship between an author and his/her text, Macherey posits a sophisticated explanation ventilating that the ideological meaning a text harbours is beyond the control of its author. His observations, in the same vein, apply to the writers and artists whose works are analysed in this study; the underlying reason of the feasibility to read Tennyson and Rossetti opposed to what has been practiced so far manifests itself to show that they did not control the ideological content of their work. By the same token, their naiveté in reflecting the ideologies of their era was not intended. Rather their works, representing hallmark discourses of their day, illustrate a web-like complexity

of social and political factors conspiring to impede any unvarying notion of Victorian ideology (Pearce, 1991:11).

Much can be learned from critical works of such authors through an examination into Victorian culture predicated on such a model. Amongst these are Rod Edmond (**Affairs of the Hearth**- 1988) and Lynda Nead (**Myths of Sexuality**- 1988), both of whom established their reading strategy on Michel Foucault's discourse theory, nourishing the Machereyan notion that ideological essence of a work lies in its gaps and margins, and how the crucial ideological discourses of an epoch, such as madness or sexuality, do not evince a model of authoritative state repression. On the contrary, they are the offspring of a complex power relationship. Deploying the Foucaultian notion of discourse to accentuate the variance of Victorian culture on sexuality, Edmond highlighted that there can be no single frame of mind through his salient readings of Victorian narrative poetry. He disregarded the Victorian's conventional and clichéd view on sexuality and family life, and combined Raymond William's schema of "competing ideologies" and Foucault's "the generative discourse", arguing that "there can be no representative voice, nor can there be a single frame of mind":

One must insist on voices, on debate and argument, on the questioning of normative values, even as a lack of consensus as to what was normative. The explanatory model used by many literary and art-history commentators assumes that writers and painters simply express or reflect the dominant values of their period. Such a model is incapable of explaining the complex process of cultural production (Edmond, 1988:9).

By saying so, Edmond is admonishing the reader for having a fundamentalist judgement on any text's content, illustrating that a text proffers a variable contribution to the meaning production.

Akin to Edmond's paradigm, Lynda Nead principally harnesses Foucault's model, highlighting the multiplicity of discourses whereby women and sexuality were narrated in the nineteenth century:

No discourse, therefore, can be looked at in isolation. This book sets out to establish the inter-relations between official discourses on sexuality; to locate

visual culture within this distribution and to examine the specific role and effectiveness of visual forms (Nead, 1988: 3-4).

That is to say, Nead's examination of the depiction of the prostitute in nineteenth-century art goes beyond the literary texts and also consists of the circulating non-literary texts on the subject including those by sexologists, scientists, journalists. However, more significantly, she also treats the ideology and politics of visual representation to expose the meaning beneath the painted image beyond a simple reflection of ideology and its paradoxes.

Nead's theories of discourse in breaking the ideologies of visual texts serve as an example of the treatment of texts because Nead, like Edmond and Macherey, dissolves the surface meaning of the visual art's image to detect the cracks that will unveil the inconsistencies and contradictions prevalent in contemporary discourses.

Given this theoretical foundation for this study, the following part focuses on the formation of the Pre-Raphaelites, their associates in art, prose, and poetry, and the major points of contemporary criticism attacking their technique, colour, composition, and narrative.

3. The Pre-Raphaelites: The Formation, Rise, and Fall of the Brotherhood

3.1. The Inception of the Movement: Influences, Features and Themes

"I regret it, first, because the mere labour bestowed on those works, and their fidelity to a certain order of truth (labour and fidelity which are altogether indisputable) ought at once to have placed them above the level of mere contempt; and, secondly, because I believe these young artists to be at a most critical period of their career—at a turning point, from which they may either sink into nothingness or rise to very real greatness; and I believe also, that whether they choose the upward or downward path may in no small degree depend upon the character of the criticism which their works have to sustain".

(J. Ruskin, *The Times*, 1851, May)

Despite the potpourri of accounts regarding the origin of the epithet *The Pre-Raphaelites*, its chief source of inspiration for the founding members, a group of exuberant young artists, is incontestable. Their inspiration derives from the admiration for the art of late medieval and before the High-Renaissance (pre-Raphael), executing direct and uncomplicated depiction, engendered a new temper in Victorian painting. Having been emulated by art connoisseurs in the nineteenth century, and particularly by artists under the instruction and discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first president of the Royal Academy of Arts, the art of the Renaissance period signified and championed a range of idealized, moral subjects, and conventional beauty nourished by Reynolds: "How much the great style exacts from its professors to conceive and represent their subjects in a poetical manner, not confined to mere matter of fact, may be seen in the cartoons of Raffaele" (Reynolds, 1831:26). However, three young students at the Academy were increasingly dissatisfied with unnaturalness and artificial treatment of art in the form of a tableau vivant, which presented moral lessons. Pinned down by uncompromising mindsets and hedged with tasteless preference of clientele, nineteenth century painting, in the eyes of three students, was mawkish and in the doldrums. What they wanted was "turn the minds of men to good reflection" (Cars, 200:23), as Millais used to say, with paintings that would elevate art. Their philosophy was concretized and consolidated in the formation of a *Brotherhood*

which was banded by the vanguards Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), John Everest Millais (1829-1896), and then granted membership to four more rebellious and idealistic artists, respectively James Collinson (1825-1881), Thomas Woolner (1825-1892), Frederic George Stephens (1828-1907), William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919). The group of seven, also strengthened by the alliance of painters William Dyce and Ford Madox Brown, heralded the secretive band of *The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (1848).

Dissenting from the Royal Academy's prescriptive and idealistic approach to art, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as the name suggests, harkened back to early Renaissance and late medieval art, which is awash with flat surfaces and bright colours swimming against the tide of their times as a reaction to the stultifying art teaching of the day. They revered and emulated Botticelli, Fra Angelico, Van Eyck, Hans Memling, Andrea Mantegna, Giotto (Roe, 2014: n.p). They deeply admired the simplicity and truth on the canvasses of early Renaissance art; thus, their ambition was to revive English art to exhibit "truth to nature". Amongst their doctrines was an inclination "to study nature attentively so as to know how to express them," advocating the tradition of *en plein air* painting. This doctrine hints at their intention of embracing *nature* for aesthetic inspiration and offers a setting for their narratives and figures, especially women.

The Pre-Raphaelite movement is characterized by its heterogeneity in their themes and styles. Their most renowned images are medieval damsels, figures of Greek and Roman mythology, and sensual femme fatales, but their works are generally admired for the realism of their landscapes and absorbing scenes. Unlike the governing utilitarian ethos of the century, they paved the way for the notion of "art for art's sake"; and above all, they espoused Naturalism as observed in their detailed study of nature. When they took the risk of exhibiting ugliness, they were faithful to its appearance. What they offered was an antidote to the people of the period encompassing industrial designs launched by the Revolution.

Understanding the Brotherhood's doctrines and their emphasis on natural scenes and materials entails an approach to several principals resulting in reactions, one of which was to industrialization. The nineteenth century was a period when the

Industrial Revolution was sweeping the nation; for some, it offered an improved standard of living, but it also resulted in visual squalor and social injustice. It was an outcome of the Age of Reason, which offered the hope of a new world in which science and technology would establish a well-ordered society, and where man would cherish equality and justice. Science and rationalism pledged a Golden Age for Britain. However, it could not go beyond a dream. As Industrialization threatened to swamp individual freedom and imagination, there followed among artists and other creative individuals an anti-scientific movement which was already championed in the Romantic ideology and the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Having believed that science and virtue were uncompromising, Rousseau revered the beauty and sublimity of unspoilt nature: both the natural world and the nature of man. He believed that man is naturally good, what impairs man, and his quality, is institutions. He argued that the depravity of virtue, morality, and the corrupted soul resulted from the advent of the sciences and the mechanical arts towards perfection. In his book, **The Social Contract and The First and The Second Discourses** (1762/2002), he argues the corruption of morality science contributed to:

But if the advancement of the sciences and the arts has contributed nothing to our true happiness, if it has corrupted morality, and if the corruption of morality has adulterated purity of taste, what shall we think of that throng of facile authors who removed from the entrance to the Temple of the Muses the obstacles that nature had placed there as a test of strength for those who might be tempted to seek knowledge? (65)

In order to ameliorate nature in these aspects, Rousseau is thought to have advocated for man's return to nature and emphasized a more natural way of life which established new institutions in harmony with nature, far from embellished salons. As the harbinger of the Romantic Movement, it was the nature's supremacy over man and his sciences that dominated the Romantics and their arts. The massive societal changes led the Romantics to stand out against the large-scale pollution of the coal-burning industry and the ensuing problems. The Industrial Revolution was harnessed to create an art movement that began to foil that dominant force and then grew. Some of the leading artists including Pierre-Paul Prud'hon, Theodore Gericault, Eugene Delacroix,

Francois Gerard, William Dyce, William Blake, John Constable, and Joseph Mallord William Turner turned a critical eye toward the society they lived and confronted the destruction of the natural world due to the industry's boom. Gothic depictions of the industry are seen in William Blake's **Jerusalem** published first in his **Milton** (1808). Blake, in a castigating tone, characterizes industrial mills as "dark Satanic Mills" sully the "England's green and pleasant land" (Blake, 1977: 514). Romantic Movement can be seen as a message and call to go back to nature defying the Enlightenment rationalism and the swelling volume of industrialization. Given that art history is a network of criss-crossing beliefs and styles, the Pre-Raphaelites were drawn to unspoiled nature and medievalism like the Romantic poets. They were inspired and motivated to express topics such as love, death, history, myth, legend, religion, morality, and psychological drama through art, poetry, politics, and literature that appealed to ordinary people in an effort to veer from the idealized contemporary art scene. It was a resistance to the rise of the Industrial Revolution and the aggravating effects on the traditional lives of the population.

The industrial regime's effects resounded throughout the nineteenth century in a burst of confusion. The Pre-Raphaelites, akin to some contemporary artists and architects cultivated by their period, advocated a return to the Gothic style and medieval era which they regarded as the antithesis of the industrial age. While the Gothic style was mostly associated with architecture, it also found a permanent place in literature in the eighteenth century when the novel was growing as an established literary form, in which many novelists turned to older and medieval Romantic conventions. It is defined by a set of elements and devices that awaken terror and horror through ruined castles and abbeys, dungeons, gloomy tyrants, mad monks, imperilled maidens, secret passages, ghosts, mysterious portraits (Keech, 1974:130). As Schneider noted in "Monstrosity in the English Gothic Novel" (2015), the monster in English Gothic Novel incarnates social fears and problems (2015:2). As the Industrial Revolution was gaining momentum, much worry and uncertainty swelled with every new scientific discovery reshaping Europe and Britain. Unequally sweeping across England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Gothic Revival in fiction and architecture manifested these anxieties regarding the natural sciences in its

portrayal of characters and themes in a plot. The radical changes caused by revolution spurred novelists and artists to question social problems and the morality of science laying the foundation for great Gothic novels such as **The Castle of Otranto** (1764) by Horace Walpole, **Vathek** (1786) by William Beckford, **The Mysteries of Udolpho: A Romance** (1794) by Ann Radcliffe, and **Frankenstein** (1881) by Mary Shelley. Gothic fiction was a means of communication for the themes of degeneration, bodily deformity (Tibbetts, 2011:28), the doppelgänger, in which Rossetti showed an interest, corruption and fear caused by scientific progress. As Ruskin stated in “The Nature of Gothic” (1853), a chapter in **The Stones of Venice** (1851), there are mental characters which form the soul of the Gothic: Savageness, Changefulness, Naturalism, Grotesqueness, Rigidity, and Redundance (Ruskin & et. al, 1853/1892: 5-6). By “savageness” he touched upon the sense of being untamed and criticized the excessive Victorian refinement arising from the exploitation of people and nature. More clearly, there lies the notion of Simplicity, Morality, and Truth at the centre of the Gothic style.

Apart from the media of the Gothic novel, emerging from and also responding to the signs of the doom that man was subject to fall prey to the inevitable conquest of the industrialization, a rampant longing for the return to a pre-industrial period resonated with a perfect source for many other generic forms, including cartoon, statues, poetry, and painting. In visual art, English romanticism bifurcated into a revival of medieval art and legend, and hence harnessed the theme of nature. Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) is a fitting representative in the pantheon of history’s finest landscape painters for his profound reverence for the grandeur of the natural world and veneration, which inspired his unparalleled ability of painting. J. M. W. Turner is seen as a forerunner of the Pre-Raphaelites. His paintings reflect the dynamics and elements of nature, the relative puny being of man and even his structures to the sublime forces of nature are visible in his paintings, as “the seeming majestic grandeur of the man-made edifice seen to be slowly overcome by the irrepressible forces of nature, as tendrils of ivy curl tenaciously around decaying walls and branches invasively shoot out of seemingly impenetrable walls...” (Kılıç, 2014:10-11). Their preference and advocacy to return to the Gothic style and the medieval period, as a stylistic model, and to nature, as a reverberated landscape in

which man transcends interaction, also shows part of their reaction to the negative impact of industrialization. Like their predecessor Turner, this interaction and contemplation emerged from exalted personal moments in nature and were reflected in their paintings as bravura of the individual experience and the pursuit of an individualistic mindset,

What marks the paintings as particularly Pre-Raphaelite is the meticulously studied details of the works and their utmost attention to nature and it is viewed that devotion to the natural world is the heart of Pre-Raphaelite thought and technique. The viewer finds himself closely scrutinizing the work, gaining a visual experience and partaking in an intellectual exercise. Through this intellectual activity, the viewer and the artist exchange their thoughts and feelings, and more importantly, meaning. Leonard stated that the concept of “meaning”, in spite of its vagueness, is commonly exercised by the Pre-Raphaelites (2009:4). Also, John Ruskin, the art critic and Pre-Raphaelite patron, who supported, encouraged and had a great influence on artists, penned extensively on the idea of meaning in art which, as an ideology, was inspirational to and embraced by the Pre-Raphaelites. One of the important methods the Pre-Raphaelites explored meaning was more often than not through their depiction of nature. These artists were largely influenced by their Romantic predecessors, found nature and its dwellers such as plants, trees, flowers potentially laden with meaning. On their canvasses nature and plant life offered multi-layered meanings in communicating their thoughts, beliefs, and messages to the nineteenth-century viewer. As a city-dweller might have different ideas of nature from a countryman, any member of fauna or plant life might invoke different memories for individuals of two separate periods. In this sense, the understandings of nature also played different roles in the nineteenth century.

They had always believed in and searched for a new, true-to-life style which culminated in an abundance of closely studied and minutely depicted details. This was why the Pre-Raphaelites abandoned traditional Royal Academy School practices that created idealized forms; instead, they used predominantly female friends and family members as models, depicting them as they were. Avoiding the “slosh” style they

associated with Sir Joshua Reynolds, they painted with careful exactitude, using bright colours and worked on a white background to add brilliance to their paintings.

The greatest technique with which the Pre-Raphaelites rendered their art was their advocacy of realism, which is observed in their accurate depiction of historical settings, the botanical details of flowers and fauna, and the particular and individualistic qualities of their models. The earmark of the Realists is that they dismissed the romanticized portrayal of historical events and strove to mirror the world as it really is, showing common situations in ordinary people's lives like running their daily errands. Unlike the "one-to-one" realism of Impressionistic depiction, the Pre-Raphaelites pictured the world in all its naturalness. The Impressionist style holds the idea of generating the feeling of impression as the eye catches the city's fleeting moments exhibiting streets, buildings, stations, and parks with scenes of the dwellers engaged with leisurely activities like brunches, boat trips, dances and other pastimes. The impressionistic is a biological realism, while the Pre-Raphaelites' is an intellectual realism. Chris Brooks claimed that this realism operates through the creation of meaning in art: The Pre-Raphaelites' purpose is to depict the world and people as they were, and also to interpret reality through that depiction. Brooks proposed that "the technique of Pre-Raphaelite painting is thus not only the means whereby the world is represented but also the primary vehicle for carrying the meaning of the world so depicted" because they offer an intellectual argument (1984: 123).

Unlike Turner, their forefather and greatest influencer, who preferred producing "a creative response to the motif rather than merely recording it" (Smiles, 2004:30) and converted "what the eye actually saw into an *imaginative response*" (Kılıç, 2014:28), the Pre-Raphaelites chose to communicate what the eye rationalized as existing. Kenneth Clarke distinguished between the notions of "rationalistic" and "expressionistic" rendition in art when he said that "artists have found it necessary to formulise what they cannot accurately describe," (1960:47). The former one renders an appearance of the object in all its qualities from a calculated perspective regardless of perceptual variation; the latter represents the object from a determined perspective deriving from the observer's position.

Literature had always been as inspiring and significant as fine art to the Pre-Raphaelites. Their themes and especially figures depicted on their canvasses were drawn from the powerful lines of writers, poets, and canonical works such as the Bible, medieval romances, Arthurian legends, Chaucer, and Shakespeare. However, it should be noted that their avant-garde spirit unequivocally emerged from their relationship to contemporary poetry. These inspiring names of Homer, Dante, and Boccaccio, listed under the title of “Immortals” by Rossetti and Hunt in 1848, were not only the greatest old masters, but were also eminent contemporaries namely Byron, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Thackeray, and Browning. The Romantic poets, like the Pre-Raphaelites, absorbed with rich symbolism, mystery, lavish detail, primitive forms of art, and outcasts of society. Keats, for example, was one of the Pre-Raphaelites’ favourites. His poem **Isabella, or the Pot of Basil** (1820) derived from a story in Boccaccio’s **Decameron** (1353) offered a medieval source for the artists to be depicted on their canvasses. Millais’s painting **Isabella** (1848–1849) encapsulates the entire narrative with an array of symbolism. Not only Millais but also Hunt depicted Isabella in his **Isabella and the Pot of Basil** (1868), shown embracing the pot and weeping through her hair. Another Keats poem **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** (1819) epitomizes the Pre-Raphaelite’s obsession with the theme of the femme fatale: a beautiful woman with destructive powers to seduce and harm a man’s life. Numerous Pre-Raphaelite painters who depicted Keats’s iconic poem are Henry Meynell Rheam, Frank Cadogan Cowper, John William Waterhouse, Walter Crane and Arthur Hughes (Bublíková, 2013: 46). It was appealing to the Pre-Raphaelites because the poem’s origin is a medieval romance narrating how an unfortunate knight is seduced by a charming woman.

Among those Victorian poets who inspired the Brotherhood was Alfred, Lord Tennyson and his poems **Mariana** (1832), and **The Lady of Shalott** (1833). What appears to cover the essence of the poet laureate’s poems is the thematic fecundity concerned with female isolation, loneliness, escape, aesthetic detachment, social and political questions, quest, appearance and reality, balance, and the Everlasting Yea (Panakal, 1963:3). The latter poem presents a feast of medieval English setting, galvanizing Pre-Raphaelites’ imagination, and was depicted on canvasses several

times. The poem **Mariana** also narrates the story of a woman suffering from the pangs of love; she was rejected by her lover because her dowry was lost in a shipwreck and she awaits his return. Personally and impersonally detached from the rest of the world, the iconic ladies watch life from their ivory-towers built by Tennyson, more precisely social and cultural ideology. Landow notes that both Tennyson's poetry and the Pre-Raphaelites' artwork frequently depicted "single figures of women within an enclosed space or room which embodies their psychological and moral condition" (qtd. in Igra, 2002:237).

The essential aspect of Pre-Raphaelite art is the theme of woman. Behind the images of women are male counterparts, a husband, a lover or seducer, who are the source of their income, the cause of their fall or the victim of their enchantment, but all subjects are from everyday life. This also indicates that specific female subjects taken from Shakespeare, Keats, and Tennyson. In their confined spaces gazing at you in a web of symbolic details, these women were depicted in a context which was both underpinned by the stanzas and the contemporary culture. Far from idealizing just one standard, they presented different types of women as a source of inspiration with different shapes, sizes, and contexts. Women were depicted in different contexts; Rossetti's women possessing powerful bodies with strong, long necks engulf you; Millais's poetical muses evocatively hunt; Hunt's tender expressiveness in major figures on literary themes mesmerize. Pre-Raphaelite stunners who posed for the artists were presented in different roles that reflected their nature in the paintings. To illustrate, despite her fine posture with red-head and lovely eyes, Rossetti's muse Elizabeth Siddall appears pale in **Beata Beatrix** (1864-70) and **St George and Princess Sabra** (1862) when compared to the dark-browed Jane Morris in **Proserpine** (1882). In each canvas, their expressions mirror enigma, distance, macabre, or poignancy attracting the viewer and leaving him to decode the meaning and understand her nature. Their voices are heard through their looks, postures, and dresses resonating with a subliminal message; oppressed, elevated or freed? Their treatment of the female figure displays a difference in style even though the artists' territories, in some aspects, overlap and the reality of signifier and the signified in their paintings thematizing women, are emphasized. Hunt's **The Lady of Shallott** (1905) "is demure and modest;

her downcast, half-hidden facial expression combines agitation and shame” (Udall, 1990:34) but to Moyle, she is distinct as “a woman at the moment she gives in to her sexual desire, liberated from gravity, her hair floating upwards as if she were underwater, her gown billowing, her body turning and the threads from her loom snaking through the air in cinematic slow motion” (2012: n.p.). Despite controversy among critics, Millais’s most celebrated works on women explore sexual sub-text, including the repressed, unconscious desire or illicit sexual delights and the tragic ramification of her sensuality, like the downfall of *Ophelia* (1852), embracing or haunting their inner thoughts. There is an ongoing argument as to whether Ophelia is rippled with the implication of fragility and delicateness or evokes an erotic expression through her open mouth: Siddall’s open mouth, which suggests the singing cited in Shakespeare’s text, invites an erotic reading (Rhodes, 2017:97). On the other hand, Codell expresses that the flowers Ophelia releases then floats on the river “emphasize the conception of *fragility* that they generally represent” (2001:136). Albeit an array of controversial views on Ophelia figure, there is one thing indisputable; female suicide, a popular theme in Victorian literature and art. Codell’s expression of the “fragility” Ophelia embodies is the commonly held reason for a woman’s inclination towards suicide.

With regards to the representations of women, do these sublimated cults of beauties insinuate the view of a *femme fragile* or *femme fatale*? It is undeniable that both were associated with sexual nervousness that somehow disturbed Victorian sexual morality. Søndergaard expounds that “both the *femme fragile* and the *femme fatale* are attempts to master this sexual anxiety by way of specifically male aesthetic constructions of femininity” (2018:119-120). In mastering the anxiety, the *femme fatale* goes against the rigid moral norms, posing a threat, whereas the *femme fragile* goes along with moral sensitivity, seen as the expression of full repression.

Fragile or *fatale*, *angelic* or *fallen*, the Pre-Raphaelites sought to convey the meanings embedded in the female figure’s poetic cocoon, namely the figure, waiting to be decoded. Characterized by “an element of unfulfilled desire or denial of the true sweetness of romantic love” the themes of Medieval romance were the source to shape the Pre-Raphaelite concept of women. Their women were often destroyed and

victimized by various forms of love, whether unrequited, adulterous, or tragic. They highlighted her mental destruction, shed light on her sexual frustration and punishment, believed to stem from her deviant behaviour. They reshaped and refashioned this theme to create paintings on the awareness of social injustices. Their rendition of the female figure should be treated as a story's characters which are far beyond being decorative; on the contrary, they all present a discourse on the thematic concept. The discourse upon the subject of the paintings denotes the didactic social agenda in Genre or Narrative painting inherent to the nineteenth century, which is one of the portrayed attitudes of the Brotherhood. As Kılıç stated:

Genre or Narrative painting is another nineteenth-century representational art form associated with anecdotal expression. Genre painting is a visual rationalisation of religious or civil dogma, a portrayal of attitudes and socially advocated modes of behaviour that functions by lending the arbitrary concept a paradigmatic material reality (2014:1-2)

The sudden increase in this particular branch of narrative genre painting in the 1850s and 1860s and the genesis of the Brotherhood were congruent. As a matter of fact, it was substantially elevated by the Pre-Raphaelite creed. Presenting strong moral messages, these paintings require the viewer to construct the story beyond the scene rendered on the canvas through the symbolic and emblematic significance of the details.

Religiousness, rampant in their practice, is another theme of Pre-Raphaelitism which can be investigated on the basis of two main tendencies: the first one is aspiring to make biblical scenes “real” infusing them with ordinary objects, settings, and characters, as visible in many of Millais's and Rossetti's paintings. The second practice is a rendition of biblical events in authentic settings but historicizing them, as observed in Hunt's late paintings (Zasempa, 2008:21). Yet a third scope can be exploited in ***The Blessed Damozel*** (1871-78) in which Rossetti concentrated on the spiritual and conceptual meaning.

The spectrum of these artists' religious work runs the gamut from literal representations, such as ***Christ in the House of His Parents*** (1849-50) by Millais or

The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple (1854-60) by Hunt, to those accommodating spiritual thematic consideration like in Hunt's *The Light of the World* (1853-54). This diverse range is a testimony of the Pre-Raphaelites' venture into the realization of transcendental truths and metaphorical reflections on them lingering on canvasses. Regarding the methods, a variety of symbolic devices is immanently indiscreet in their treatment, specifically pivoting around the use of biblical symbolism reinforced by decorative emblems. A purely aesthetic approach is especially distinctive to Rossetti since he combined the prevailing impression and inspiration he drew from the biblical realm with his application of myth, the Middle Ages or literary tradition. His subversive use of religious emblems is due to his personal and universal approach to religion and not that he is devoid of devoutness, allowing him to have his own "alibi" in his own readings and in de-mystifying the realm. *The Blessed Damozel* and *Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)* are his bravura that divulges the marriage of the earthly with the heavenly and revealing the affinity of the domains and the attainability of sanctity.

3.2. Associates in Art, Prose and Poetry & Successors

Not only were the Pre-Raphaelites influenced by great poets and writers, but they also affected many of their contemporaries. Their influence was not limited to the members of the Brotherhood, on the contrary, it stretched far beyond its lifespan and group members. Therefore, this movement relatively encompasses a much larger group of like-minded artists. Pre-Raphaelitism as a movement swept through the period despite its short lifespan and became one of the most dominant influences on other Victorian art and literary figures. Along with other artists who adopted their technique and painted under the influence of the Brotherhood, there were also poets, novelists, and designers who admired them and also produced works of art based on the movement's doctrines and beliefs. Their influence did not remain confined to painting, it also made itself felt in poetry. The qualities observed in their visual art also distinguished their poetry. There are two significant stages or forms delineating Pre-Raphaelite painting, first is the "hard-edge realism by combining it with typological

symbolism and at their most successful, they created symbolic realism” (Hunt, 1905:135-137), and second that emerged under the guidance of Rossetti is Aesthetic Pre-Raphaelitism which then initiated the Arts and Crafts Movement and then subsequently the Aesthetes and Decadents. Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) uplifted themes of “medievalized eroticism (or eroticized medievalism)” (Landow,2004: n.p.) and the moody atmosphere engendered with their majestic pictorial techniques. This second stage gave way and shaped Pre-Raphaelite poetry.

The movement’s poets embarked on a venture into the life of beauty and their creed glorified this beauty. Among those poets are Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the vanguard of this particular party, his great supporter William Morris, and other poets who had a connection with the Pre-Raphaelite circle are Algernon Charles Swinburne, Coventry Patmore, George Meredith, Christiana Rossetti. Pre-Raphaelitism in poetry also influenced poets and writers of Decadence such as Oscar Wilde, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and William Butler Yeats, who were profoundly influenced by Pre-Raphaelite visual art. Nonetheless, if another noteworthy poet is needed, one notices Robert Browning whose works run parallel with the artistic expression of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Browning’s works are always brought up with the Brotherhood because, as Landow stated, his poems “extend the boundaries of the subject and create a kind of abrasive realism, and like the work of the young painters, his also employ elaborate symbolism drawn from biblical types to carry the audience beyond the aesthetic surface, to which he, like the painters, aggressively draws attention” (2004: n.p).

The antecedents of Pre-Raphaelitism actually configured and distinguished the features of Pre-Raphaelite poetry. The members were impressed by the thirteenth-century Italian poets whose poems were marked by sensuousness, devotion to detail, realism, mysticism, and symbolism. Furthermore, the poetry of nineteenth-century English Romantic poets, particularly Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley’s features, merges into Pre-Raphaelite poetry as much as into visual art, as mentioned earlier. The prominent features of their poems, notably encapsulating medievalism, are that they break with tradition, dwell scrupulously on detail, and are concerned about sensuousness. Lionel Stevenson claimed in **The Pre-Raphaelite Poets** (1972) that the

movement's poets galvanized a revolt to shatter literary stagnation in the middle of the nineteenth century:

First of all, they served as the shock troops in the assault on bourgeois complacency. Carlyle, the unrepentant peasant, brandishing the weapons of romantic primitivism, had introduced from German the pejorative sense of the word "philistine," and had condemned every manifestation of middle-class prosperity, commercial vulgarity, materialistic greed. His earliest recruit was Ruskin, who transformed Carlyle's moral austerity into a cult of beauty; and later came Arnold to proclaim the need for disinterested detachment. To some degree, however, both Ruskin and Arnold were of philistine origins themselves, and their aestheticism was uncomfortably yoked with moralistic doctrines (3).

The Pre-Raphaelite poets walked over restrictions, transgressed the boundaries that resulted in no restraint in their artistic expression: Rossetti's stimulating theories and techniques and amalgamation of spiritual and sensuous aspects of love; his sister Christina's bifurcated personality, one part desired "to be pure, controlled, and godly", and other half represented "her passionate and real nature which made her curious about sex" (Becherer, 1988:23); as Stevenson observed "Morris, a fugitive from the middle class who dressed like a labourer and swore like a trooper; Swinburne, a renegade aristocrat proclaiming himself a Republican and a pagan; Meredith, a sardonic intellectual gadfly—to all these the keenest pleasure in life was *épater les bourgeois*" (1972:4). They transformed the accepted standards of the literary world into a picturesque landscape and achieved a literary eminence. Within the Pre-Raphaelite circle, another poet was Elizabeth Siddall, an artist/model, who posed extensively for her husband Dante G. Rossetti. The ardour she had to be the subject of the canvas, maybe more than being an object, disclosed her aptness in painting; thus, she produced a considerable number of paintings under the instruction of Rossetti and earned a name in the pantheon of painters. Because England in the 1850s was tight-laced towards women artists, it was undeniable that Siddall and her sister artists received significantly less recognition than their male counterparts; however, they are known to have contributed to the movement. Her artistic *oeuvre* is not limited to visual arts, she deserves to be accorded a paramount place in the visual and textual arts. Her

poems are often dark with romantic themes of lost or unattainable love, yet conveying poignancy.

Although the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood lapsed and came to its virtual dissolution by 1854, the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, and the school of Pre-Raphaelitism, as its two conjoint manifestations, were incorporated and expressed in paintings through the second half of the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly, being transformed and modified by the Aesthetic and Arts and Crafts Movements, or ossified in the treatment of some painters, it continued to exist in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Defined as a state of mind and an attitude of watching and contemplating the world, Pre-Raphaelitism reverberated through works of a huge number of poets and writers influenced by both paintings and doctrines of the Brotherhood, without being members. Inaugurated by Charles Allston Collins's *Berengaria* (1850), hardened by the weight of Ford Madox Brown's *Work* (1852-65), developed by Arthur Hughes's *The Long Engagement* (1859), Pre-Raphaelitism and its salutary influence has no end in sight, either in terms of number or distance.

Edward Burne Jones (1833-98), and William Morris (1834-96) were regarded as the two most significant successors inspired by the disintegrated Brotherhood and who elevated the second generation Pre-Raphaelitism because their goals, ideals, literary and artistic forms were closely linked to those of the original Brotherhood, aside from their close ties to Rossetti, John Ruskin, and Ford Madox Brown. The paths of Rossetti, Jones and Morris's intersected at a juncture and marked the fragmentation of the first phase, rejecting the "bright and factual style of the early years, the poetic intensity, the interest in modern subjects and the minute detail" (Treuhertz, 1980:101), and subsequently incarnated the second phase that placed the general idea of beauty over the specific stylistic dogma of the PRB: "In place of the overriding concern with nature and detailed symbolism, there was a new concern with aesthetic ideals" (Barne, 1998:99). The second generation initiated by the trio was distinguished by expressing spiritual truths through aesthetic beauty, thereby leading the PRB's ideological lineage into the Aesthetic Movement even if unable to eradicate the remaining traces of its progenitor. Accommodating the contemporary taste for the decorative style/design from the 1860s onwards, they aimed to incorporate their artworks with ornamental

design and romantic medievalism features, by idealizing the medieval with a view to preserving the spirit of the PRB's legacy.

3.3. Reception and Criticism:

From their treatment of paintings nourished by their aforementioned influences, despite the Pre-Raphaelites' reliance upon their contemporary poets, particularly their medieval subjects, an equal portion of their mission was to relay the message through their way of depiction of their subject matters including religion, sexuality, and the nature of labour. It was their colours, technical details and medieval techniques attracted critics' and media's attention of the nineteenth century at the outset. Later on, lurking behind the paintings were the social messages that attracted attention. The Athenaeum critic aimed at Rossetti, Millais, Hunt, Waterhouse, and Ford Madox Brown for their innovative but anti-Academic techniques, structure, colour, quaint medievalism, and the depictions of human body that were true to its nature and implied the treatment of carnality as part of their doctrine. In an Athenaeum review from 1 June 1850, the Pre-Raphaelites were attacked for their innovations in technique:

Abruptness, singularity, uncouthness, are the counters by which they play for fame. Their trick is, to defy the principles of beauty and the recognized axioms of taste. . . . [They] set at nought all the advanced principles of light and shade, colour and composition--these men, professing to look only to Nature in its truth and simplicity, are the slavish imitators of artistic inefficiency (590).

The Pre-Raphaelites' use of detail, nature, and bright color was again denounced by The Athenaeum in 1851:

The botanical predominates altogether over the artistical--and to a vicious [sic] and mistaken extreme. In nature there is air as well as earth--she masses and generalizes where these facsimile makers split hairs and particularize. They [the PRB] take a branch, a flower, a blade of grass, place it close before them and closely copy it, forgetting that these objects, at the distance imagined in the picture, could by no means be seen with such hortus siccus minuteness (582).

Even the initials “PRB” that all members of the Brotherhood signed their work with was lampooned. Taking seriously Rossetti’s joke, some critical media commented that they stood for “Please Ring Bell” (PRB Journal 23); whereas others suggested that it stood for “Penis Rather Better” (Hilton, 1970:15) questioning Rossetti’s masculinity.

In its 24 May 1851 issue, the Illustrated London News commented on “a Pre-Raphaelite folly, by Charles Collins” (463), *Convent Thoughts* (1851); and criticized Millais’s *Mariana* (1851) as being “conveyed extravagantly in the church-window fashion of the thirteenth century” (464). The concentration on the colours, technical details, and medievalist style of the PRB’s early paintings supported the shift from visibility to visuality but without any didactic considerations. When the chapter on the discussion of their medievalist techniques closed, their theme of human sexuality was criticized and heavily denounced.

The subsequent works relaying didactic messages were met by viewers at the Paris Exhibition of 1865 and “struck the French... as outstanding examples of general English qualities” (Bertram, 1951: 31). The Athenaeum gave place to a review in 1866 praising the didacticism accommodated in PRB’s paintings: “The Pre-Raphaelite intensity of observation, whatever it loses for the viewer in its dryness, leads one to discover therein an inner and more spiritual form” (qtd. in Bertram, 1951: 36), which steered the critics towards PRB’s didactic messages. Appalled by the amalgamation of the plebeian and saintly along with the sensuality in the combination of poetry and painting, Charles Dickens blasted Millais’s *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1849-50) and wrote a humourless diatribe in his magazine Household Words in June 1850:

a hideous, wry-necked, blubbering, red-haired boy in a nightgown, who appears to have received a poke playing in an adjacent gutter, and to be holding it up for the contemplation of a kneeling woman, so horrible in her ugliness that (supposing it were possible for any human creature to exist for a moment with that dislocated throat) she would stand out from the rest of the company as a monster in the vilest cabaret in France or in the lowest gin-shop in England (Leon, 2015:138).

His symptomatic remark exemplified the Victorian idea that holiness must be devoid of the hideous and mundane; otherwise, it was blasphemy. Another harsh criticism

came from Robert Buchanan in October 1872 who wrote “The Fleshly School of Poetry” in The Contemporary Review. He criticized their overuse of sensual images, focus on poetic “expression” rather than “thought”, and the “inference that body is greater than soul” (Buchanan, 1872:57), but particularly attacking Rossetti for his sexual content.

The attack the Pre-Raphaelites confronted overtly evinced that their unconventional approach to poetry and painting declared war on Victorian prudishness and an antediluvian attitude towards art. At the beginning of the movement’s existence, the Brotherhood was fighting alone defending their works; however, in its later stages, they were backed by John Ruskin and Walter Pater, the greatest artistic masterminds in the pantheon of the nineteenth century literature and art. Ruskin made an impassioned plea to understand the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood whose ideas and beliefs were closely aligned with his. More importantly, his defence of and contribution to the Pre-Raphaelites was evident in his essay “Pre-Raphaelitism” which reciprocated the Brotherhood’s doctrines with Turner’s aims in methods of painting: “the fusion of different kinds of reality, distinct levels of perception, separate modes of artistic style within the same picture” (Stein, 1975: 124). The immense artistic diversity of their works was the pivot which Ruskin appreciated most. Meanwhile, for Pater, the same quality and the innovative character of the school’s work was flagrantly pertinent to how he appreciated the Brotherhood as it communicated itself through his rhapsodies of Rossetti’s unprecedented combinations of the natural with the supernatural, prowess in “materializing the immaterial and his sincerity” (ibid.: 125). Despite the Brotherhood’s Ruskinian and Walterian credentials and support in this venture which affiliated them with artistic masterminds and viewers, the trend towards discussing the didacticism ascribed to the works of the Pre-Raphaelites continued throughout the turn-of-the-century.

* * *

Based upon the conspicuous features of Pre-Raphaelite visual and textual narratives, this study aims to make a critical and explorative approach to the prevalent theme of women in art and text mainly in the nineteenth century by referring to the intersection where feminism, psychoanalysis, and post-structuralism meet, and in

which the reading strategies will be exploited to cast light on the female subjects. The rationale for choosing visual and textual texts is determined by the recognition of conceptual image treatments and also defined by the changing perception of woman in Victorian culture: the symbol of female excellence as angelic, the woman in shadow as confined, the madwoman as insane, melancholic and hysteric, the fallen woman as prostitute, and the femme fatale as a destructive and seductive woman. A range of feminist reading strategies caters a prelude to this study to navigate the analysis in conjunction with both text and context so as to relate the discourses, on sexuality, gender, psychological and moral conditions, and romantic love that contributed to her image formation, to the cracks and gaps in the texts.

Reconstructing and setting literary sources in new contexts, namely painting, through their own interpretation of a highly individual and reader-oriented approach, the Pre-Raphaelites portrayed individual scenes from literature whose ruling tenant is the *woman*. The question posed is “was there a unified ideal”? To explore or reflect the social anxieties of their day, were the Pre-Raphaelite women given agency to represent the paragons of feminist virtue or epitome of new stereotypes arising from the ashes of the old? By analysing the images of women through associated visual and textual texts, the following chapters aim to find out whether they heralded the birth of the New woman or actually perpetuated gender norms. As the founding member of the Brotherhood, Rossetti has the privileged position of getting coverage in the very first and ending chapters. The order of the related paintings and sonnets/poems examined in each chapter is built upon the production year of each work within the analytical framework.

CHAPTER ONE

A SYMBOL OF FEMALE EXCELLENCE

1.1. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Quadruple Work of *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin & Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)* / *Mary's Girlhood (For a Picture)*- Sonnets I -II

"That picture of mine was a symbol of female excellence, the Virgin being taken as its highest type. It was not her Childhood but her Girlhood."
(Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1852)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's larger-than-life female portraits in his visual and textual narratives present the theme of woman in a diverse dialectic. A huge engrossment in a variety of differentiated women is an outcome of his reading mythologies and histories of women in Dante, Arthurian Legend, Edward Lane's **Arabian Nights** (1885), and Homer. He also had a copy of Thomas Heywoode's unique seventeenth-century publication **Gunaikeion, or, Nine Books of Various History Concerning Women** (Donnelly, 2004:8). Rossetti was also influenced by Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Goethe, and Browning; hence many of his narratives employed his interpretation and re-inscription of texts notably by aforementioned literary precursors and contemporaries. Combining the voices from literary and artistic precedents with his own literary ideologies, Rossetti was in a preeminent mode of self-definition and social understanding in his early phase. He also developed his personal style in both his writing and painting from the late 1840s and early 1850s in an intensive search for an idea of the world. His works during this period expose his attempts to explore his relation to his *self*, his art, and society. Since the protagonists of this study represent the images of woman, not surprisingly, the reader of these particular narratives during this time finds the figures enigmatic, all of whom provide an insight into the creator's gamut of depictions of chaotic, ambivalent femininity, suggesting a kaleidoscope of intricate patterns with different subheadings. His images of woman are phenomena communicating allusive meanings related to the artist's own experience, the understanding of life, and the psyche. Acknowledging that the narrative is not independent of its creator, we can extrapolate that not only the

Rossettian female figures, but also his very *self* was deeply ambivalent, a point of identification of reciprocity that resulted in hybrid gender and identity. The figure, as well as being herself, impersonates his *self*, the creator's; at the same time the creator identifies his *self* with her *self*, the figure's. Thus, a Rossettian female image is also essentially, in Bullen words, a female Rossettian image as "compliantly reciprocal," and his canvas reflects back "the feminized self of the creator" (1998:126-127), shaped by a ruling hegemonic era operated by a wheel of subversive contradictions and conflicts. Of all women in Rossettian canon, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* claims a prerogative over all that follow since it is the beginning of diverse images of Rossettian and Pre-Raphaelite women. What I seek to achieve in this part is to understand Rossetti's unique interpretations of Mary in his multiple narratives within a synchronic comparative analysis of the concept of 'female excellence', and to know whether his Mary contradicts or coincides with the Victorian preconception by reviewing his very early two paintings and their co-existing sonnets.

In 1849, Rossetti debuted his first painting *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, bearing the initials PRB, at the earlier Free Exhibition at the Hyde Park Corner Gallery, a display of his bravura in its nascent stage. Another painting of the Virgin Mary is *Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)* (1850) picturizing a scene of the announcement to the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Angel Gabriel that she would conceive a son, to be called Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. He wrote two sonnets to accompany his paintings which one finds at the bottom of the frame inscribed together, both titled **Mary's Girlhood (For a Picture)**. They are not only the artist's first paintings, they are also his most prototypical double work of art as implications of intertextuality. These paintings are a token of:

Rossetti at his most Pre-Raphaelite, his most medieval, his most idealist, his most spiritual. They are also Rossetti at his most Victorian, his most conventional, his most misogynist. For here we are at the Beginning: The Virgin, proclaimed Rossetti in an oft-quoted letter, 'was a symbol of female excellence... [to be taken] as its highest type' (Pearce, 1991:31).

Going against the grain, Rossetti adopted and adapted conventions on the theme and painted his own Mary by foreshadowing other narratives and deconstructing the

Victorian myth of female excellence. His Mary establishes an appropriate prelude to contradict prescribed generalizations thrust upon woman predicated on the ideal Mary. In one narration, his subversion was balanced in the accompanying one as a gauge for the criticism his feminized self was weary of. What is provocative about Rossetti's preoccupation with the labour of writing sonnet(s) for painting(s) to create meaning is the generation of another text, an intertext, as Catherine Golden described, that is unique to the "double-sided" nature of Pre-Raphaelite art in general (1988: 395). The presence of the written text on the frame helps the viewer comprehend the literal and symbolic implications of the subject through the joint venture of the visual and textual. These two sonnets, serving as an elucidation of dense symbolism of the paintings and characterizing his strategy to create "double works of art", are quite often decoded as didactic tools for the viewer to closely scrutinize the painting and to partake in an intellectual exercise. When these two sonnets are precisely perused, Brian Donnelly claims that "While Sonnet I provides a narrative of sorts for the scene depicted in the painting, Sonnet II addresses the symbols included in the design. Together the sonnets articulate the complex array of visual and verbal strategies Rossetti utilizes to construct meaning" on canvas for viewers (2010:478).

Of all The Virgin images, Rossetti stood out with his depiction of the theme of Mary's education whose *mise-en-scène* consists of symbolic props focusing specifically on traditional Christian iconography. Lamenting about other artists' inadequacies in representing *her* education, Rossetti characterized his own rendition as an improvement *vis-à-vis* the attempts of earlier artists in a letter written for his Godfather:

The subject. . .has been treated at various times by Murillo and other painters - but, as I cannot but think, in a very inadequate manner, since they have invariably represented her as reading from a book under the superintendence of her Mother, St. Anne, an occupation obviously incompatible with these times. . .In order, therefore, to attempt something more probable and at the same time less commonplace, I have represented the future Mother of Our Lord as occupied in embroidering a lily - always under the direction of St. Anne (qtd. in Henderson, 1973: 18).

Rossetti's *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* presents the education of Mary in a distinct variation showing her embroidering in a stylized domestic setting where the entire family resides, rather than learning to read at her mother's knee unlike that in a European painting which showed her reading under her mother's supervision, an activity inconsistent with the Victorian precept. Seemingly, Mary's image embroidering a lily placed on vast volumes of books but not made available to her is rife with meanings. The artist eschewed a Mary reading from a book representing an intellectual propensity "incompatible with his times", with biblical times. What Rossetti ostensibly aimed with his narration is realism by depicting Mary as a middle-class Victorian woman in a robe as an identifiable part of the tradition and also placing huge books in the middle of the room that are so large that no one could open and read. This connotes the reality of coerced education. That she is unable to lift any of these books provides insight as to how women were barred from formal education through her pursuit of embroidery rather than reading. The constellation of the books, child-angel, and the lily in a pot, which prefigures her predestined future, is essentially complementary to this imposition. The obvious reality of coercion is Mary's anxious figure environing the whole room. Despite his reverence to the Marian premise and ideal echoing throughout ages and the nineteenth century, Rossetti was also anxious and disturbed by the social injustice women were facing. It amounts to the fact that Rossetti's Mary was neither an absolute submission to nor rejection of the patriarchal status quo; hence he scrupulously formed his narration in lieu of evidently contradicting the Victorian ideal, which is only peculiar to his visual narration.

This infrastructure facilitates a prelude to peruse *Girlhood* acknowledging an angst prevailing in the painting. Mary's (involuntary) preoccupation with the nondiscretionary task manifests itself through her scant attention to the embroidery even though St. Anne watches her sewing the crimson cloth. St. Anne's vacant expression and Joachim's attendance to the vine add to Mary's indifference, communicating a family gathering but bereft of correspondence: "The Angel reaches out to touch the potted lily; Joachim tends to the vine; and Anne contemplates her folded hands...on the faces of all figures conveys a sense of foreboding rather than joyful anticipation of the Incarnation" (Ready, 2008:157). Closeted within the living

quarters, the Virgin presents herself as hermitic even though she is accompanied by St. Anne whose existence is a necessity to reveal the pervading impression of women's domain but nothing more than a part of emblematic background details. One notices that Mary's gaze is drawn to the lily being tended by a child-angel, which betokens that she is to fulfil her duty with the knowledge from the surrounding objects through divine osmosis, not her embroidery education. Naturally rooted in this particular situation and having an underlying allegorical significance, these objects such as the vine, the red cloth, the wooden trellis in the shape of the cross, the painting that is centred on, signify Rossetti's artistic practice in translating abstract notions into pictorial language devoid of any grounding in the situation itself (Krieger, 1981: 5). There are also items that resonate in Christian iconography (or Marian iconology) illustrated as a pile of books, a dove with a halo, an angel, and a lily. ***Girlhood*** operates through these symbolic details; however, each should be closely scrutinized to comprehend the narration within Rossetti's unconvinced support and rejection of the norms. When the symbolic elements imbued with connotative resonance are analysed in tandem with the image's narrative, they undoubtedly generate the effect of reality that Rossetti intended. As Bryson argues "the effect of the real" is confirmed by the connotative signs in a narration, and in this particular interaction, "the effect of the real" surfaces where "the connotation so confirms and substantiates denotation that the latter appears to rise to a level of truth" (1983:62). With their connotative significance, all these elements contribute to the interpretation of Mary herself and her divinity.

Our perusal begins with the embroidery which is an appropriately imposed occupation for any nineteenth century girl. Embroidering a lily or copying the plant from "still life" is decorative art and is equal to that of painting. One cannot help interpreting that Rossetti featured Mary's creativity and talent in this particular depiction. What symbolizes purity and innocence in the painting, but more pertinent to the context the unborn Christ, (Waldman, 2008: 138) is the lily on top of a large pile of books connoting the virtues of the soul – charity, faith, and hope. The lily's pot, as an emblem of the *vessel*, represents the womb suggesting procreation. The child-angel looking very out of place evokes the inseparable nature of Mary's "great reward" and "great sorrow". Other symbolic details disguised in mundane objects are the palm on

the floor, portending the Palm Sunday (Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem); the seven-thorned briar which crosses the palm and has a scroll inscribed *tot dolores tot gaudia* (so many sorrows, so many joys), portending her sorrow at the death of Christ; the red cloth, hung next to the wooden trellis, clearly suggesting Christ's passion; and the lamp evoking piety. The single pink rose standing unproportionately to the vine is Christ's consort and says "I am the True Vine / So now displayed before me as a rose / Of snow-white purity, the sacred might / I saw, whom with His blood Christ made his spouse" (qtd. in Kılıç, 2014: 70). However, the aim is to expand its meaning by placing the rose next the window, adding more strata to the definition of woman by implying freedom rather than merely attributing beauty and purity to her. In the exterior space, one sees the dove covered by a circle of light, the typical representation of the Holy Spirit, observing Mary till Annunciation. All the symbolic references alluded to the Virgin, including the vine, are a recurring theme in the Old Testament, presages the coming of Christ.

Separated from the countryside beyond, the two women are metaphors for immobilized and segregated dwellers of a private domain, whereas St. Joachim, the Virgin's father, is an occupant of the public domain. It is consolidated with the level of lightness of their settings; the light colours signify the activity of the outer life, whereas the dark background of the space where Mary resides exposes a sense of abstraction. Other than the physical separation, interpreted as man's and woman's domain, it also highlights the separation of the physical and spiritual realms for Mary's state of blessing, as explained by Cheney, "referring to the difference between the human realm and the spiritual realm" (1992:250). The point is that this separation subliminally portrays the sheer imprisonment of two women in their corner by male dominancy, defining the state of a lot of middle-class women. Beyond anything radical, the first painting presents Mary as a pious, diligent, humble, hardworking young girl - or a combination thereof- whose upright posture, though slightly stooped, grey dress, servile obedience, and engagement with the embroidery are testimonies to the narrative's Christian symbolism, but it is a sign of her submission to prescribed duties epitomizing latent femininity and an embodiment of Victorian 'female excellence'.

In Sonnet I, one notices its textual analogy to the accompanying visual text that verbally translates the iconographical details. This is the artist's implicit paradox lurking behind the narration of *Girlhood*. However, he associated a Mary with the period's ideals, directing the viewer's interpretation to their preconceptions and to avoid causing tension between what they see and what they know out of fear of coming clean and being stigmatized as iconoclasts. Hence, elaborating on Mary's virtues and excellence to achieve innocence, like a *lily*, in her conduct, the text reinforces this demarcation drawn for the Victorian woman.

Sonnet I and Sonnet II, both highly didactic, disprove the criticisms to *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* and also invite one to think about the exploitation of the 'purely symbolical' in this painting. Consisting of a dense symbolic nature, they illuminate the spatial stillness of the image while the reader deciphers the symbolic details. The sonnets bear interrelated narratives uniting them temporally in two different renditions of Mary's early life in the visuals, suggesting that reading and viewing inherently cannot be divorced from interpreting Rossetti's double works, as John Dixon Hunt elaborates that "the temporal movement of poetry joins the spatial stillness of painting" (1974:245). The temporal narrative, through a spatial image, was achieved through the structural composition of the sonnet itself with its style and diction, manifesting its crucial role in the act of reading and viewing. What Rossetti employed in both of his sonnets' form is the Petrarchan style evincing his perpetual interest in the practice of doubling, both in his visual and textual narratives. Divided into octave and sestet, inviting "a self-reflexive mode of representation, an opportunity to explore two sides of a single thought or emotion" (Donnelly, 2010:479), the Petrarchan allowed the painter-poet to manipulate the readers' expectations regarding the octave. He also employed a form of word play to show the stasis and movement exploited in the break of the awaited shift between the octave and sestet, revealing a narration of moment and its passing particularly with the words "until" and "till".

Sonnet I catches the attention with a declarative identification and role for Mary "This is that blessed Mary, pre-elect" (I,1); "this is" the girl in the picture and "that blessed Mary" the mother of Christ; and then the following part portrays her predestined faith and charity. Reading till line 11, "Till one dawn" (I,11) appears and

reveals the turn in the period and the moment when Mary awakes in her bed, she will weep at the arrival of the “fulness of the time” (I,14). It is “the time” where the fixed temporal status in the image is disrupted by the doubling of Mary: the mother of Christ as “that blessed Mary, pre-elect” (I,1) is impersonated by other Mary, beyond being “God’s Virgin” (I,2), she is the demure young girl in *Girlhood*. If Mary’s biblical representation is nothing more than conjecture, yet her being is divine and her figure is monumental, it would not be wrong to state that this figure is an empty vessel to be filled culturally and ideologically, and ultimately becomes a myth. Rossetti was aware that meaning and form cultivate each other, but the Victorian myth of the Marian ideal merely deceives the Virgin Mary’s form through which they justify their patriarchal ideology. In the visual narrative, deconstructing the social and cultural forms of the myth, he distilled Mary’s figure from the mould of archetype through the display of outlandish associative symbolic elements. While his visual narrative engages with the deconstruction of form, his sonnet testifies to the deconstruction of the myth’s meaning. In his visual and textual employment, Rossetti was well conscious of the different effects they expose to unsettle the conventional beliefs, and in terms of immediacy and significance of the impact, the text is relatively subordinate to the painting. However, this subordination does not nullify its power, it was intrinsically set to function as a directive to avert misinterpretations.

Apart from these entire artistic manifestos in the technical composition and semantic signification of the text, to negotiate the uneasy ground of his self-conscious artistic expression in *Girlhood*, Rossetti, a culturally conscious man, emphasized Mary’s image as an epitome of a proper Victorian middle-class girl, along with the exploitation of the Christian iconography. She is the “blessed Mary, pre-elect / God’s Virgin [...], and she / Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee” (I,1-2-3), her fate is predetermined, leaving no choice but to follow God’s will.

In “God’s Virgin” (2) there is a foreboding of her miraculous destiny and perpetuating her virginity, despite conceiving Christ, and exhibiting features associated with virginity such as timidity and silence or purity and piety. None the less the lines “Gone is a great while, and she / Was young in Nazareth of Galilee” (I,2-3) sabotage the Virgin’s perpetually reverent eminence which as Kılıç asserts “she is long

since dead, that the period of her girlhood is an ancient phenomenon, and her very existence a remote and foreign notion – “in Nazareth of Galilee” (I,3) (2014:80). These lines abstractly objectify Mary and also portray her in a limited historical landscape. Mary is a representative in this demarcated context. This demarcation is specified by the prevalent customary female characteristics of virginity and maternity in the epoch. In other words, Rossetti objectifies her by showing how the Virgin Mary has become an artificial social construct, combining while contradicting the concepts of the virginal and the maternal.

Mary of the sonnet embodies the quintessential myth of the domestic “angel” whose natural girlhood is as an epitome of ‘female excellence’ endorsed by nineteenth century middle class. Very often quoted to expound on the role designated for the Victorian middle-class woman is John Ruskin’s lecture **Of Queen’s Gardens** (Sesame and Lilies, 1865), promoting a fundamental Victorian pure womanhood paragon, characterizing women as goddesses in the domestic domain, which, for this reason, is described as a “honey-tongued defence of the subjection of women” (Marsh, 2002:157). This is her inactive girlhood life prior to her transformation into The Virgin Mary. Through the lines “Faithfull and hopeful; wise in charity; / in duty circumspect” (I,7-8), the poet insinuates “the proper role of a young girl in relation to the expected ‘feminine’ virtues such as patience, devotion, respectfulness towards her family members, discipline, selflessness, dutifulness and, primarily, “simpleness of intellect” (I,5) (Holdys, 2014: 36). The traditionalist mentality ubiquitous in the nineteenth century stipulated that girls should not cultivate mental skills and be the ‘moral educators’ of their households that seemingly conveys that Rossetti drew a model of Mary training in handiwork and conforming to social norms, not studying from a book, as Ruskin stated in his **Of Queen’s Gardens**:

But the woman’s power is for rule, not for battle, — and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision....

This is the true nature of home — it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it

is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in (1865/1902: 21-22).

As an articulation of the Victorian ideal of femininity which confined women in the private domain, Ruskin's societal views point to women's significant role in guiding households in an environment of comfort and safety, epitomizing that "men make houses women make homes". With this discourse in mind, it must be remembered that this painting with its biblical dimensions is for the gaze of the Victorian audience, who expected to see a work articulating the philosophy and the morals of the epoch's shared beliefs and supported the painter-poet's observations of female purity and duty embraced by Mary in the first painting. The sonnet Rossetti appended to the first painting tells them/us that she is Mary, Mother of Jesus, and she undeniably represents specific qualities we (as woman) should acquire and we (as men) should require in a woman, eliminating Macherey's "gaps and silences" (see Introduction, 20) for the nineteenth century viewers.

What we capture in her appearance is a female beauty idealizing femininity aside from personifying the docility and delicacy sanctioned by the social norms and blurring the parents' figures to focus on Mary. Setting all prescribed merits aside, is she not also beautiful despite being a paragon of virtue with the appropriate female behaviour and morality proverbially tied to beauty in the nineteenth century? The female beauty, quite literally, in art and in literature, has always been adhered to contemporary culture. Despite a dramatic change over time, idealized beauty of the body promoted different standards in the nineteenth century with the known images embodying frailty, weakness and subservience, high social status and moral values. The façade of these images was (and still is) believed to be germane to a woman's high fertility, defined by Wolf as "beauty myth: ... beautiful women are more reproductively successful. Women's beauty must correlate to their fertility..." (1991:12). In addition to the association between beauty and high fertility, it would be appropriate to mention the phrenology and physiognomy that were popular notions in Victorian culture which advocated the link between personality traits and physical appearance. These theories claimed that someone's character, moral standing, and

intellectual development parallels his physiognomy, his facial features and shape of the head. Given that a repercussion of beauty-stereotype and social advocacy of phrenology and physiognomy identifies and measures female beauty, Mary's anatomy, delicate facial features and long hair, are visually ravishing but not as voluminous and enchanting as *Lady Lilith's*, summoning a symbolic deconstruction. Her appearance is undeniably congenial with the Victorian taste. Her hair, a very peculiar feature of Rossettian female figures, even some as if outgrowing canvasses, is long and abundant, concomitantly augmenting a variety of rich and complex meanings. The Virgin, a quintessential version of the Victorian female propriety, is on the verge of becoming a woman whose long and golden hair gives her a virtuous demeanour as the artist's touch of sensuality. Expounding on the golden-haired women, Gitter states that "When she was saintly-a wife, nurse, mother, or victimized princess-the gold on her head was her aureole, her crown, the outward sign of her inner blessedness and innocent"; thus, Mary, as saintly, expresses moral virtue and innocence with her hair. Her hair further presents that it is loose and extending to her thighs, a Rapunzel-like model. This shows the contemporary hair fashions and codes in the Victorian imagination of hair; it consists of a dichotomous paradigm, Rapunzel and Medusa. In the ideological construction framework of female sexuality, Rapunzel symbolizes the idealized purity, whereas Medusa represents a seductress. Given that Mary is associated with Rapunzel, displaying disparity in Medusa's, a wicked wild hair, she is locked in a domestic sphere in conventional feminine roles while controlling female assertiveness, which will have to remain repressed as Victorian girl model and more significantly, as the immaculate mother of Jesus.

In Rossetti's painting, one notices a plethora of symbolic detail encumbering the viewer to examine the painting from one side to another, the details present a beacon for the viewer to decode the symbols as a mini-narrative. One viewing this painting for the first time may enjoy all the delights of its symbols and their representational meaning decoded with her background knowledge. E. H. Gombrich reflected on man's interpretation of pictorial representations saying that the individual's perception of anything is measured by cognition that what is seen depends on what we know about it and when we have a name for it. In his book **Art and**

Illusion, he argues that “even to describe a visible world in images we need a developed system of schemata” (1960: 76). It means that in order to name something as a *rose*, for example, we first acquire the concept of a *rose*. Elucidating on Gomrich’s reflection, Pearce maintained that the schemata to separate gold plates from halos is a “familiarity with conventions” in pedagogical terms; and symbols are profound subsets of our larger-scale “conventional” vocabulary. She also stated that almost every book written on Victorian art touches on the fact that a Victorian individual was *au fait* with religious symbolism to some degree unlike us, a twenty first century counterpart (Pearce, 1991:33). However, even if we are as knowledgeable as the Victorian audience to read the oil lamp as an emblem of wisdom and piety or St. Anne’s green mantle as immortality and divine love, there lurks more. Our understanding of prefigurative symbolism may be inadequate to understand Rossetti’s unconventional use of the objects, it will be necessary to know more, for example, that traditional Christian iconography is a starting point for the context within the composition establishing the location of the objects in the narrative and their proximity and relationship to Mary. As we comprehend Rossetti’s style, the symbols and their meanings *per se* will evaporate and be replaced by a larger and deeper narrative that continues in the second picture and fortifies the link between them. Let us first relish of viewing the first painting as a ‘biblical text’ extended from a web of cultural ideology.

Behind Mary, the small medieval organ on the floor is subject to a multi-layered interpretation. Doan mentions the traditional use of organs by artists “symbolizing the praise that the Church continually offers to God, as it was consecrated to the service of God by St. Cecilia” (1988:473). In Pre-Raphaelite paintings, the presence of the organ suggests that it is an allusion to the artists’ attraction and engrossment in medieval things, yet its close proximity to Mary and the initial “M” carved on its side introduce a link between Mary and the organ. Its presence prescribes that both Mary and the organ are the instruments of God’s will; thus, the organ bears the inscription on its side reading: “O sis Laus Deo” (“May you be for God” or “May you be for the praise of God”) (Ibid.: 476).

Juxtaposed with the angel, the pile of books occupies the middle of the room laden with iconographical significance due to their colours, number, and position. In respect of colour and number schema, the artist paints all three theological virtues; *Hope, Faith and Charity* along with three more books symbolizing the three cardinal virtues: *Fortitude, Temperance and Prudence*. The sonnets, read with ***Girlhood***, stress that Mary embodies all virtue, in which her fate has already been predetermined irreversibly relegating her girlhood into the distant past: “Gone is a great while, and she was young in Nazareth of Galilee (I, 2-3) / The books “(whose head / Is golden Charity, as Paul hath said) / Those virtues are wherein the soul is rich” (II, 4-6), designating her to represent of all those virtues. Calculatedly, but conspicuously, for reader *au fait* with the subject of the iconography, Doan maintains that the artist’s “two early works at once recuperate and disrupt that traditional Christian context” (1988:471), and judging from this, he leaves *Justice* out subsequently contravening the completion of the symbolic number *seven* associated with Mary’s seven joys and seven sorrows. Doan wonders “Does Rossetti suggest that there is no ‘justice’ when a task is thrust upon an unwilling, naive participant?” (Ibid.:471), leading to whether the artist directs the reader’s analysis to a point wherein Mary has not chosen this divine task, but has been chosen. She has been coerced to be the Mother of Christ, the greatest mission not every human could fulfil. The last line of Sonnet I “Because the fulness of the time was come.” (I,14) provides insight into the fact that she has been called to become the instrument of God’s purposes as Paul uses the words “...when the set time had fully come”¹ implying the imminent moment of Jesus’s birth. That religion is exercised as a male power over women signifies that she conceived without consent denoting the male sexual power reflected in the divine. Therefore, Mary’s conception beyond her consent is tantamount to the conspicuous absence of *Justice*, or, whether his artistic representation of Mary suggests that there is no justice in such a task mirroring women’s subordinate position in society to undress the Victorian feminine ideal of the Angel in the House. James M. Swafford opines that Rossetti aimed to lay emphasis on Mary’s charity rather than on justice as attested by his poems of the early 1840s, exposing an absence of trust in divine justice and the estrangement from God

¹ <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/GAL.4.4-5.NIV>, September 9 2021.

the Father on the issue of women. In this respect, Swafford argues that Rossetti's rendition of Mary illustrates her role of linking the human and the divine (1982:80). The absence of *Justice* as a virtue is also construed as imposed by the doctrine and illustrated through embroidery rather than reading a book. The inclusion of the huge theological books that even one Mary cannot lift insinuates that they serve as a stool for the potted lily in lieu of intellectual pursuit. Despite its constellation of symbols, ***The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*** paradoxically offers uneasy sobriety and esotericism; every detail is sublimely restful sitting in stillness even if the attendees are engaged in active works like embroidering and gardening. Mary's inattentive expression springing from her being contemplative and lost in the regard of the innate meaning of the upright lily and that the angel's aloofness is suggestive of passivity and a lack of motion in the painting. The frame is in an on-going narrative, but something is missing. It makes sense, but still inadequate and incomplete until it is juxtaposed with its consequent to accomplish the composition; ***Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)***. The intertext from these paintings and sonnets jointly establishes the entire meaning/message "in relation to one another" (Demoor, 2005: 8). Providing a sequential narrative relationship, the alignment of two paintings utterly unveil the intensified roles of both Mary and the angel and helps the reader recognize how Rossetti subverts conventional iconography.

Moving to the second painting, the reader recognizes that Rossetti shifted the narrative to a different time depicting how Mary has been chosen and has been prepared. Harboring far fewer symbolic details, this painting presents a narrative of an immediate impression of movement and dynamism when examined against the first painting's static condition. Here, the artist foregrounds the psychosexual dimension of Mary as a woman rather than embellishing the canvas with abundant symbolic details. Unlike those static elements, the fact that the Virgin brings dynamism to the painting, as one may imagine she will at any moment jump and scream in tears, highlights the painting's focalization. In this claustrophobic scene, Mary shrinks back against the wall recoiling from Gabriel, drawing the reader to witness her vulnerability in this emotionally charged encounter between her and the messenger. Aside from the pervading whiteness of the scene symbolizing Mary's purity and innocence, the reader

experiences this intensified sense of claustrophobia in the room's size and the mighty presence of Gabriel, leaving hardly any space and resulting in a subsequent proximity of the figures. The wall of the room conceals and contributes to the reader's interpretation as a barricade isolating her from the outer world. The two sides of the same coin can be a good metaphor to liken the roles expected from /given to Mary and this wall stands between these roles: on the one hand, "pre-elect/ God's Virgin" (I,1-2) and "an ordinary and vulnerable woman" oblivious to the pre-determined fate (Doan, 1988: 471). Seemingly, Mary's attempted withdrawal from the angel, her pressing against the wall spells out her fear and vulnerability, though Sonnet I declares the opposite: "She woke in her white bed, and had *no fear*" (I, 12, my italics). On the other hand, the wall Mary is crouching against represents her strength to perform this divine mission, the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ.

Regarding the depiction of woman in a vulnerable position, Linda Nochlin approaches the subject by suggesting an analogy between *Found* (1854)², Rossetti's unfinished visual and textual treatment of the fallen woman, and *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, both of which describe the "cowering female" and "towering male" (1978:152). Distressed and confused, Mary is positioned beneath and below the angel covering herself, forming what Mieke Bal suggests is the "elementary narrative syntagm of the fabula", meaning, subject-action-object, or man-approaches-woman, or appropriate for the formula, female-recoils-from-male (1991:208). With a raised left foot suggesting movement and a left hand placating as if to calm a frightened individual, the intruder's advancement causes tension and withdrawal eventually recounts the event to illustrate male dominance and female submission.

Admittedly, Gabriel's inclusion in the painting of *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* is presaged with the dwarf angel standing next to the books marking the painter-poet's doubling of images in sonnets and paintings (Barringer et.al., 2012: 43). The idea of doubling is so central to Rossetti's artistic manifesto inherent in both his textual but also visual forms which is avouched with the re-appearance of some details of the earlier work in the later ones. The visual connection between *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* and *Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)* is constructed with the

² The double work of *Found* / *Found* will be analyzed in chapter IV.

reappearance of the completed embroidery. It predicates the “fullness of the time” (I,14) which has ultimately arrived for the sacred impregnation and is corroborated by the reappearance of the holy dove as a harbinger of the moment of the Annunciation: “She soon shall have achieved / Her perfect purity: yea, God the Lord/ Shall soon vouchsafe His Son to be her Son” (II,12-4). The angel-watered lily Mary embroidered is also right back, yet this time held by the angel matured from child to male adult. In the previous image, the instrument of Mary’s occupation representing purity enters as the symbol of fertility; an instrument of impregnation whose stem points at her womb, whereas the head is up to the angel’s face. The lily which Mary’s gaze fixed on, replicating the previous image, accounts for the first painting’s dependence on the second one: “is one of antecedent to consequent” (Doan, 1988: 472). The fulfilment of Mary’s duty is predicated upon her transformation into a lily watered by the angel through the Annunciation and impregnated by the Holy Spirit.

What separates Rossetti’s painting from conventional ones preceding him? Despite being influenced by Fra Angelico’s *The Annunciation* (1438) and Botticelli’s *The Annunciation* (1490), Rossetti’s *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* manifests the first breakaway from his predecessors in the figures’ position in relation to one another. The nineteenth century art critic, Anna Jameson’s book, *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848), is believed to have inspired Rossetti’s *Annunciation* as indicated by Jerome McGann:

The idea for this unusual treatment of the Virgin may have come from DGR’s reading in Anna Jameson’s *Sacred and Legendary Art* where she refers to “a beautiful miniature” in the Bibliotheque Nationale: ‘The Virgin seated on the side of her bed sinks back alarmed, almost fainting; the angel in a robe of crimson, with a white tunic, stands before her, half turning away, and grasping his sceptre in his hand’ (qtd. in Kremer, 2013:77).

Jameson’s account of such scene suggests the materialization of the event: “instead of awe, dignity, and submission to God’s plan, they show fear, terror, girlish alarm” (Ibid.:77). Traditionally, the angel, is presented on a bended knee unlike Rossetti’s who is standing rigidly erect rendering a phallogentric image. The scene where the angel and Mary meet is generally depicted in the Virgin’s chamber. It is not the setting

then which departs from other Annunciation scenes, it is the position of the Virgin, who is more often than not assumed standing and only rarely is seated. Disturbed in her sleep, Rossetti's Virgin appears to have just been awakened by the angel and evidently trying to avoid immediate contact with him, thereby pushing herself into a corner of her bed. Conventional depictions of the scene are ubiquitously described as the "chosen vessel of redemption, and the personification of all female loveliness, all female excellence, all wisdom and all purity" (Jameson, 1879: 116). The recurrent Marian implication in some narratives pictures a Mary and her joyful acceptance of the heralded task unlike Rossetti's *Annunciation* which resulted in a hostile reception in Victorian discourse.

In the sestet of Sonnet I, Rossetti articulates the moment by anticipating Mary's reaction towards the message:

Till one dawn, at home,
She woke in her white bed, and had no fear
At all,—yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed;
Because the fullness of the time was come.
(Rossetti, I, 11-14)

In some paintings, one may notice a more direct corresponding illustration when aligned with their textual narration. Even though the first part of the sonnet bears affinity to its visual text, the line about Mary's weeping and feeling awed differs from its visual text. As mentioned in the Introduction, Pierre Macherey's reading method states that the greatest pleasure lies in the gaps between text and text. However, one may be mistaken if s/he looks for this pleasure only in the differences between the versions of narratives, believed to promulgate the ideological interests of their generators and the presence/absence of a governing cultural canon. One should remember that the differences also unveil contradictions and inconsistencies simultaneously, in which the producers' ideologies are exposed to deconstruction and reclamation. When two or sometimes more texts are juxtaposed with one another, their forms are unearthed unexpectedly.

While the sonnet declares no fear, but only awe, the visual counterpart unquestionably shows Mary fearful and sunk under the weight of the news, even to a

cursory examination. A quality unique to Rossetti is inviting us to examine his text and picture for an underlying meaning insistently advocating a readerly approach where meaning is interpreted through the visual detail that immerses the reader/viewer within the critical nature of what is written. If it is *awe*, why are we told she “yet wept till sunshine” (I,13)? This is Mary’s response to such an uncanny and unfathomable circumstance of virginity and imminent motherhood encrypted in “the fullness of the time” (I,14), presaged by the completed embroidery hung at the feet of her bed. Awe-inspired, overwhelmed and even threatened, the possibly adolescent Virgin reacts unconventionally, saying the least or the most. This particular scene steers us to decipher Rossetti’s radical refusal to delineate an idealized and traditional Mary. Considering the Victorian premise of male superiority, Rossetti utilizes the symbolism innate to the ‘vessel’, woman as vessel to man and to God, implicating the Virgin Mary and appropriating conventional attributes to her, while he also obviously diminishing the divine and featuring the human. It is incontestable that the Virgin is first a woman, and second, she is the embodiment of particular ideals in her painter-poet’s narratives, an interpretation which Rossetti would have hoped. The situation in the painting places Mary beyond divine exclusiveness, also described in the sestet of Sonnet I. Unlike her earlier versions, Mary is beyond a picture but a human breathing, feeling, and also thinking. Thinking what? She may think what Rossetti wants us to wish her to think.

That the painter-poet deftly asserted traditional feminine associations conforming to the Victorian doctrines in his sonnet was reversed with the same virtuosity in the painting. In the sonnet, Rossetti’s Virgin, who is “with devout respect” (I,4); “duty circumspect” (I,8) is in league with ***Girlhood***, but in contrast with the Mary who “had no fear” (I,12) and “wept till sunshine” (I,13) but shielding her body out of fear and apprehension in ***Ecce Ancilla***. This may be construed with poet’s identity which was expressed covertly in the sonnet **He and I** (1870) representing the inexplicable and “distressing physical encounter between the male poetic voice and masculine other” (Bristow, 2001: 365), which David G. Riede notes “just as emphatic in its representation of some sort of self-division and self-alienation” (1992:136). This self-division conspicuously generated a fear in his practice, observed through the phase of his artistic display. As ***The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*** and ***Ecce Ancilla Domini!***

(*The Annunciation*) are placed in the first phase, Rossetti's narratives might be read as the reflection of self-division; a Victorian young man representing "what society wanted to look at" versus a Victorian victim representing "what he believed" identified with dualism which caused polarity permeating his art and life. Jan Marsh elucidates *Girlhood*'s departure from *Ecce Ancilla* "while *Girlhood* reflected Victorian harmony, *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* resonated with Victorian doubts and fears" (1996:30). Analogous to Victorian dualism, there are two Rossettis, one is the 'subjugated individual' and the other one is 'his women', the material manifestations of his idealism. As Kılıç stated in her book **My World My Work My Woman All My Own: Reading Dante Gabriel Rossetti in His Visual and Textual Narratives** (2014):

The Rossettian *other*, the manifestation of his soul that subsequently materialized in his textual and visual narratives is ever the female entity. In a letter to a friend he refers to the manifestation of the self in the mediums of paintings and poetry as putting into action a complete *dramatis personae* of the soul: his objectification of himself as a dramatic/fictional character is matched by his objectification of woman as physical sanctified emblem of said *dramatis personae* (Int. xi).

The scene's setting in the second painting presents Rossetti's venture into gender politics; thus, it was interpreted on the grounds of lack of indecency and sexual implications by the Victorian viewer. Given that the annunciation marks the end of girlhood and the beginning of womanhood, it coincides with Mary's sexual awakening. One may easily conclude that the scene is set in a bedroom where Gabriel is standing semi-naked before awestruck Mary acknowledging that the fear begins with the entry of an intruder, and construing that it is due to sexual encounter. Charging the scene with a sexualized view through a preponderant masculine presence, this encounter suggests a way to understand the artist's rendering that turns out to be (in)advertently self-revealing through Mary's role in the History of Salvation or sexual awakening(?), and culminating in a cultural social criticism.

"Because the fullness of the time was come" (I,14) is the final line in Sonnet I is a precursor of Mary's womanhood / motherhood escorting us to Sonnet II in which

we observe a reference to the divine plan building towards the moment of annunciation through the symbols exclusively orchestrated in the former painting:

These are the symbols. On that cloth of red
I' the centre, is the Tripoint,—perfect each
Except the second of its points, to teach
That Christ is not yet born. (Rossetti, II, 1-4)

Taking the words harbouring symbolism in its broader sense, the artist may have intended to explore the manifestation of spiritualism in the immense details highlighted in the composition in *Girlhood*. In lieu of an idiosyncratic content review of *Girlhood* and Sonnet I; *Ecce Ancilla* and Sonnet II, the viewer is compelled to look from text one to picture one and two; and from text two to picture one and two and back again or vice versa, reinforcing the narrative link between not only the two paintings but four contexts granting me the liberty of defining this as a quadruple-work rather than a double-work. The first quatrain honing in on “that cloth of red” (II,1) namely Mary’s embroidered panel is a common denominator in both canvasses illustrating Rossetti’s expertise in inter-disciplinary art, as we have postulated here; “that red cloth” debuting in the first painting, establishes continuity with the second painting as mentioned in Sonnet II. The formation of the Tripoint embroidery Mary works on in *Girlhood* that she is inspired by a white lily in a pot narrates the Virgin’s identity construction. Considering the alignment between Christian and patriarchal establishment, what buttresses our argument is that the identity she weaves on the fabric is not self-defined rather given, diminishing her existence and exposing her vulnerability that is intensified by her engagement in needlework. Both exemplifies “the most powerful metaphor of feminine existence” and also “a potentially subversive feminine activity” (Zakreski, 2006: 16-25). Needlework is known to be a form of self-expression and covert communication of the confined middle-class Victorian woman, serving as a vehicle for woman to express their beliefs, sorrows, and desires through embroidery designs, suggesting the notion of a female artist equally expected to create and to be virtuous. The association between needlework/embroidery and femininity was also argued by Roszika Parker’s insightful book *The Subversive Stitch* (1984):

Historically, through the centuries, it has provided both a weapon of resistance for women and functioned as a source of constraint. It has promoted submission to the norms of feminine obedience and offered both psychological and practical means to independence. (xix)

An unorthodox approach whose relevance I have been alerted to is the doubling of embroidery is emblematic; a crack to creep into Rossetti's split identity, to surf over his ambivalent emotions; a desire to confess or to be muted epitomised in his tenant in the woven text: Virgin Mary. Could it not be the representation of Rossetti's part of divided self subliminally personified in weaving Mary, a Rossetti succumbing to the dominant male hegemony so as not to be ostracized, or a Rossetti showing a form of resistance to the Victorian patriarchal stipulation like observed in Mary's disregarding the coerced task, a sign of insinuated refusal to her predestination? They are all encapsulated in the conflict between a private testimony and public manifest which amounts to their acknowledgement of the self, but fearful of revealing it. Why? What lurks behind a masculine form is perhaps a fragile soul of femininity (?) Its resultant effect can be observed in the personification of his own self in his female figures possibly emerged from a feminine other.

The following part in tandem with the first painting reads as:

...The books (whose head
Is golden Charity, as Paul hath said)
Those virtues are wherein the soul is rich:
Therefore on them the lily standeth, which
Is Innocence, being interpreted.
The seven-thorned briar and the palm seven-leaved
Are her great sorrows and her great reward? (Rossetti, II, 1-10)

Standing on the books and representing virtues of the Virgin on the first canvas, the lily is the epitome of innocence and purity, but now in the second painting held by the holy spirit, it is the very moment of divine conception and Christ's birth; the lines "on them the lily standeth, which / is innocence, being interpreted" (II,7-8) evince a metamorphosis from signifier of the divine (in *Girlhood*) to a signifier of woman (in *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*). The supposition is that as though her virginal state has been

approved, which shows both Rossetti's social commentary through his labour of unveiling the issue of female objectification and his delineation of phallogentric ideology in his epoch. Through this, Rossetti gestures towards the reader/viewer's propensity for commentary, simultaneously implicating that he was neutral, neither corroborating nor endorsing the dogmatic assertion of female subjection.

As man with empathy for the feminine, Rossetti seemingly acknowledged Mary's doubts and fears concerning her fate as suggested in the sonnets with the dramatic turn through the use of "till" (I,13) in the first sonnet and "until" (II, 11) in the second. The climax of the second sonnet ends the virtuous girlhood of the Virgin while foregrounding expectations regarding her womanhood and heralding her motherhood for Christ:

Until the time be full, the Holy One
Abides without. She soon shall have achieved
Her perfect purity: yea, God the Lord
Shall soon vouchsafe His Son to be her Son (Rossetti, II, 11-4)

The sestet of Sonnet II reveals the climax that marks the Immaculate Conception presaging the birth of Jesus. "Until the time be full" (II,11) demonstrates the moment of impregnation and her role of being a vessel, woman as vessel to man and to God. The word "Until" calls for a twofold approach: the immediate comprehension of that word denotes the moment of conception by the Holy Spirit; the time has come. Other than the moment of impregnation, another interpretation would be Mary's perpetual virginity, non-physical or physical, that the word "until" suggests a state up to a point, but it does not mean that it terminates after that point. "Until" should be evaluated till the line "Her perfect purity:" (II,13) to understand its meaning. What is germane to the argument is the fact that why Mary is chosen is only known to God, but the general assumption is that she is a woman of faith, obedience, and chastity as well as courage, such qualities equipping her for God's purpose. Mary replies to God's call obediently as in "Abides without" (II,12), which would probably be followed by the word "objection"; she abides without objection. The observable traits are the symbols for her moral purity and non-physical -spiritual- virginity. Thus, "Until the time be full"

(II,11) Mary “soon shall have achieved/ Her perfect purity” (II,12-3) suggests that the Virgin’s divinely preordained destiny of holy motherhood will complete her purity as non-physical virginity, and will also perpetuate her physical virginity, but more importantly, she will fully achieve a ‘female excellence’ after reaching motherhood. In the sestet of Sonnet II, the Virgin is defined as a signifier of the divine exclusiveness, a transformation from the signifier of woman in the sestet of Sonnet I, which is emphasized with “the Holy one” (II,11). However, in the final line “...His Son to be her Son” (14), the use of “h” in “His” and “her” presents her as a non-divine human being.

Rossetti’s depictions of *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* and *Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)* incontestably deviate from the conventional perceptions in regard to several important ways titivating standard Marian iconography with vitality through sabotaging the norms and subverting expectations. This is, in particular, observed in the latter painting which emphasizes Mary’s human nature, unlike the first, and the viewer may forgo preconceived notions and be open-minded with the acceptance that Mary is vulnerable against a role thrust upon her even though ambiguity about her complex experience is not entirely eliminated. Rossetti goes beyond the ordinary, administering and portraying within the confines of a traditional religious reflection of scenes from Mary’s life, which becomes an effective dramatic subsequent narrative.

In conclusion, Rossetti’s nontypical artistic outcome is conducive to his images of woman that are remarkably unique and by no means uncommon. He saw his soul in the image of a woman representing his creativity, idealism, thoughts and suppressed feelings. One observes that his women may be the expression of his sexual ambiguity and the obfuscated identity evinced in the divided self and brought to light in the artist himself and his art. Within the women he treated on canvas and poems dwells his own aspirations and fears, and projects his feminized self; they represent his own vulnerability as Kılıç argued “images capable of awakening in him self-recognition, so that in painting them he metamorphosed onto canvas his own thoughts, needs and dejection” (2014:1).

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's finesse in artistic delineation suggests that he challenges social imperatives in his own way, but is fearful and unwilling to unravel himself. The amalgamation of his personal and artistic life is the signification of the fact that Rossetti is not an easy man to identify, which is contended to emanate from a search for self-definition. This laborious identification stems from two forces; the internal that *Rossetti is* which is instinctive; and the external that *Rossetti must be* which is external conditioning, culminating in a divided self not compromising but conflicting perpetually. Even a cursory review of his painting and poetry unveils his irreconcilable selves and array of characteristics in his artistic outcome unique in the nature of a sensual artist but unusual in the context of the period. He laboured to paint a world through his expressionistic brushstrokes shaped by the morsels of his soul and spirituality irrelevant to his Christian point of view despite the manifold of symbolism. The embodiment of devotion in his vision, as he associated with his mother and sister, is woman revealed in his two earliest paintings. For some, various features and epithets Rossetti imbued in his images and sonnets of Mary define a proper Victorian young girl, at least in the first painting, representing an inspiring example simultaneously envisioned as a role model for contemporary women. For some, they contravene Victorian central values and norms insinuating a temptation to be disembodied from the Victorian feminine ideal of "The Angel in the House", as observed in the second painting. His idea of 'female excellence', the theme of the first painting, is associated with motherhood namely St. Anne who is devout and dutiful, the quintessential role model for Mary to follow. ***The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*** is his most prototypical, most spiritual, and most Victorian painting as a symbol of 'female excellence', whereas ***Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)*** concentrating on female body rejects all conventional views by defamiliarizing the figure of Mary.

CHAPTER TWO

WOMAN IN SHADOW

2.1. Tennyson's *Mariana* by John Everett Millais

*"There, at the moated grange, resides this dejected Mariana."
(William Shakespeare, Measure for Measure, Act 3, Scene 1, 1604)
"And her cell-mate The Lady of Shalott"*

One notices the construction of legendary and mythical figures who have become archetypes in Pre-Raphaelite artists' narratives of the female image. It is also beyond serendipity that the legendary female figure is made inherent to the Victorian counterpart testifying for contemporary lives of saints, victims, and femme fatales. While Pre-Raphaelite female images portray real figures, their likenesses and roles appear in and emerge from poetry. Among female images portraying her as the victim of the society such as the madness of Millais's *Ophelia* (1851-52) and Hunt's *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* (1868), what was also rendered as a subject in John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt's visual narratives is "the imprisoned woman". They were inspired by Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poems *Mariana* (1832) and *The Lady of Shalott* (1833; 1842), both of which carry the theme of the female infertility. Having fallen victim to captivity inflicted directly and indirectly by Victorian social standards, both iconic women watch life from their towers. As embodiments of imposed opinions and attitudes, these two figures manifest much about the Victorian conception of woman that the characterization of both carries a rich array of symbolic interpretation for the painters. Considering the social context of the poems and paintings, the issue at hand calls for a twofold examination in the light of a time when social norms pivoted around society's predilection for perfection. The first part seeks to find out whether the women in the textual and visual narratives abide by the conventions of the era offending to feminist values; and the second part examines the poet and artists' intentions; did they intend to perpetuate gender norms?

In the essence of this particular inter-textual analysis, there lies a deeply rooted relationship existing between a poetic elaboration and a visual depiction, a key component of Pre-Raphaelite art. Of these two distinct forms Pre-Raphaelites

employed in their paintings, one is based upon an approach specifying and broadening an idea depicted with its fascinating imaginative extensions, while the other effectively reinvents the images in the relevant textual source(s). The intertextual nature of this study, surrounding a large corpus of Pre-Raphaelite art, is explored through the theoretical background of the relationship between the sister arts.

Densely occupied the doctrines of Pre-Raphaelite art is the theory *ut pictura poesis* literally meaning; “as is painting, so is poetry,” whose ancient roots derived from Aristotle’s **Poetics** (335 BC) and Horace’s **Ars Poetica** (18-19 BC). The ideologies behind their expositions on poetry have been eagerly applied to painting. *Ut pictura poesis* posits the essential kinship of the sister arts of poetry and painting with a view to stressing the descriptive capacity of painting to invoke clarity for poetic work and in the same vein the pictorial capacity of words. Their relationship lies in the imitation of nature in art widely known as Aristotle’s theory of mimesis inherently alike to mimetic theories of Plato. Both philosophers’ theories rely on the assumption that all representative arts are substantially the outcome of imitation of the artist that Aristotle pointed out in his **Poetics** “epic poetry and the making of tragedy, and also comedy and dithyrambic poetry, as well as most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all as a whole just exactly imitations” (335 BC/2006: 19). As Hagberg stated, Aristotle stresses the imitative essence of art (1984:365). Drawing from Aristotle’s theory, Sir Philip Sidney argues the same concept – imitation – in his writings of poetry, particularly in his **An Apology for Poetry, or Defence of Poesy** (1595) attributing to Aristotle’s definition:

Poesy is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth - to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture - with this end, to teach and to delight (Sidney/Maslen, 1595/2002: 86 - 17/20).

Sidney expands upon Aristotle’s definitions of poetry by defining it as a speaking-picture. On the basis of Aristotelian theory of *mimesis*, Sidney’s concept of poetry aligns with Aristotle’s on the idea that “poetic imitation goes beyond what we would call mere photographic representation” (Kishler, 1963: 63). More precisely, “Poetry

for him is an art of imitation as Aristotle had termed it in the word *mimesis*. It is a *figuring forth*, a producing of visible images” (Heninger, 1989; 401/ my italics). Stressing his argument about the definition of poetry, Sidney refers to Plutarch’s saying, one of the most celebrated and alluded definitions of poetry, “Painting is mute poetry, poetry a speaking picture,” as attributed to Simonides of Ceos (530 BC.) Thus, it is not excessive to say that a poet’s ability to compose a poem imitating from nature is on a par with an artist’s ability to paint from the same nature on canvas, connecting poetry to painting and perhaps announces the birth of the sister arts. That’s to say, while a poem is or should be like a picture, a painting also bears or should bear poetical properties; hence, drawing from Aristotle’s proposition on poetic imitation to be beyond photographic representation, *figuring forth* could also be applied to painting. With the relationship between sister arts based on imitation, *ut picture poesis* has been developed by artists and poets to convert the texts into pictures, or vice versa (also known as *ekphrasis* and *reverse-ekphrasis*). Furthermore, an artist, when striving to paint from a poem, can surpass the lines of a poem rather than imitating and converting each property into pictorial ones. It sometimes bears a near likeness, or sometimes employs unique touches and expands the narration with his mental landscape. Noticeably, Plutarch repeats this more often than not in **Moralia** (100 AD.): “Realize not only that poetry articulate painting and painting inarticulate poetry but learn that we are not only pleased with seeing a beautiful thing but also with seeing a *likenes*” (Maslen, 1595/2002:143 / my italics). Plutarch here seemingly brings up the likeness of the images in nature from which a poet and an artist write and paint. However, this likeness could be looked at and surveyed in an ekphrastic poem or a reverse-ekphrastic picture. The relativity of the above *likeness* is essentially articulated through the alignment of the two poems’ and their pictures’ interpretive implications. Opening a different dimension of textuality, Millais and Hunt’s visual illustrations embody a reconstruction of the literary **Mariana** and **The Lady of Shalott**. With this theoretical background in mind, we may return to our analysis we have adjourned.

Millais and Hunt’s significant thematic fascination of and pictorial response to a meticulously crafted myriad of visual details in **Mariana** and **The Lady of Shalott** simultaneously asserts the fact that both Pre-Raphaelite artists are defined as “poetical

painters” and Tennyson as one of the “word painters” of their time. However, in **Mariana**, the poet’s main emphasis is on his craft of poetic representation of three basic modes in the presentation of the mental disintegration of the character, namely, the visual, the generosity in the description of the deserted exterior and interior landscape; the auditory, the sound of the nature unveiling the silence of her surrounding; and the temporal, in which time intensifies vacancy, it moves but pauses Mariana’s life.

Through a fusion of the external with the internal, both poet and painter did not present an easy path to meaning, as we find while surveying the luxuriantly-detailed and seductively vibrant landscapes of the narratives. Candidly, the reader of the poem is enchanted by its tone which is significantly intensified by the hypnotic effect of the stanzas; hence the eyes of the reader enjoy as much as the ears do through the power of the descriptive words characterizing the poet’s visual mode. On an auditorial level, the reader is inclined to be cajoled by every particular sound as evidenced in “bats flitting”, “nightfowl crowin”, “doors creaking”, “leaves shaking”, “sparrow chirruping”, and “clocks ticking”; simultaneously making us intensely aware of the oppressive silence. As a result, Mariana’s attraction owes not merely to auditory images of silence, but also to visual images; as Pearce reminds that aural images “... also catch at the visual images spun within the sounds and rhythms. Apart from the ‘aural images’ of sound and silence, the text is punctuated by direct or implicit references to colour: images picked up and held by the casual reader in her overall apprehension of the poem’s surface” (1991:62), as illustrative details, albeit partially hidden by the artist. To illustrate, in the first stanza, “the flower-plots” (1) are embraced by the lush green of moss that in the gloom its deep tone appears as the “blackest moss” (1). While the “rusted nails” (3) conjures up sharp orange or red, the Poplar is defined as “silver-green” (42), and the climactic changes of tones of the sun as “...the thick-moted sunbeam” (78), and the darkest night as “..thickest dark” (18). Contributing to the dance of colours is the texture which is often intricate such as the moist “moss” (1) and the stony rigidity of the “gable-wall” (4); the free grounding, indeed over-powering rich fertility of the weeds which grows on the conversely dead and dry thatch roof of the grange: “Weeded and worn the ancient thatch” (7). Given

that the Pre-Raphaelite predilection of such visual intensity, Tennyson's the very sophisticated and convoluted description must surely have drawn Millais.

In temporal mode, journeying down the stanzas, one may notice the passing of time is crafted in the poem but, as Boyd and William assert, "only with the agonizing slowness of an hour hand, so that process and stasis seem equally palpable" (1983: 585). For instance, the world outside her grange is replacing the first stanza's day with night in the following: "thickest dark did trance the sky" (18), and which is then bleached with "the gray-eyed morn" (31) underscoring the routine cycle of the outer world and signifying the processes of life, death, and rebirth, which offers the likelihood of renewal, but Mariana's case is nothing more than monotony. Time passes without any meaning, in fact, it does not affect her at all, a complete unresponsiveness indicative of its grimness.

Adjourning the session of visual, aural, and temporal modes of employment, which are the paramount impression of this poem, we may take the liberty of perambulating the benign land of the context or discourse of the poem unlike the barren soil of Mariana's soul. Identifying the poem as context or discourse is inevitably deliberate since what the text bestows on the reader is a blatantly grandiose reality boldly decrying the reduced and pacified situation of the Victorian woman.

Marriage or death is what Millais's *Mariana* wishes for. Featuring in Shakespeare's play **Measure For Measure** (1623), Mariana is exiled to solitude in a moated grange by her fiancé, Angelo, after losing her dowry in a shipwreck. The forlorn lady apparently draws Tennyson and subsequently Millais into a rewarding process of versification and illustration while also adding their own touches from their mindscapes with the respect of definition and complexity of the notion of the woman figure fashioned by the zeitgeist of the nineteenth century. Its textual and visual intricacies point to the predicament of the Shakespearean 'Mariana' from the seventeenth century who is resurrected in the nineteenth century and vociferously interacts with the Victorian woman ostracized like her. Jan Marsh's explications lead us to inquire what Mariana represents for the era in which it was painted in: "It was produced within a culture with prescriptive ideas about relations between the sexes and, in particular, the dependency of women" (1987:66) on man. Longingly looking

through a window of a room, the incarcerated Mariana is (in)conspicuously narrating that her biding is not like a young maiden's for her lover, but a mature acknowledgment of her condition in society sans a husband and therefore shorn of any purpose. She is inundated with melancholy and grief as Tennyson explains via an amalgamation of the external and internal landscape.

Amid a desolate landscape, Mariana is surrounded with inner turmoil and melancholy drawing a parallel with her isolated existence in the physical environment. Having intended to describe merely and intensely the overall atmosphere, the poet evokes a feeling of stagnation with ample use of adjectives rather than verbs. That is the reason why the poet lays emphasis upon the description of the scene. The plot develops as a narrative, but it is about a character and her psychological and physical state lacking any specific action or event, apart from the possible arrival of her lover and her death. Thus, it is possible to say that the plot barely exists. The preponderant use of description and rarity of verbs, either forms of "to be" or observational ones like "look'd" (5), nullifying any activity and dynamism, justify the fact that there is no change; nothing, but the same thing happens eternally. The life outside is in a constant flow and an ever-changing cycle, but Mariana's life is revolving around only her needlework. Each element meticulously placed in external and internal settings is imbued with ennui. These setting elements stress the absence of action and at the same time lack of change. Despite many allusions to the notion of time with the "slow clock ticking" (74) and the cock singing "an hour ere light" (27), it is irrelevant and a cypher, elapsing yet there is a sheer stasis.

Dwelling on the external details as symbols of her psyche, one might well find how the world in which Mariana resides -the moated grange- is decaying. It reverberates in the "blackest moss" (1) crusting over "the flower plots" (1), "the rusted nails" (3), "the broken sheds" (5), "weeded and worn thatch" (7), "a sluice with blackened waters" (38), the creaking hinges of the doors in the dreamy house. However, it is her psychological decay devouring her soul day by day while yearning for her absent lover, which announces itself in every last quatrain. A plentiful reference to landscape is Tennyson's Romantic mood of intimacy with nature, poured out as representative symbols for the human soul and mood. Therefore, Bloom argues that

from the outset, his poems are more recognized than that of his contemporaries regarding his powerful and suggestive use of the landscape. Browning once described the difference between himself and the poet laureate by telling how each would depict the situation of an unfaithful medieval knight: “I should judge the conflict in the knight's soul the proper subject to describe: “Tennyson thinks he should describe the castle, and the effect of the moon on its towers, and anything *but* the soul” (Wise, 1933:134). **Mariana** in the first volume, **Oenone** (1829), **Mariana in the South** (1830), and **Fatima** (1833) in his second volume owe their beauty to its pervading details. They are not only about the images of women, but also their all-dominating moods and passions “each of which is symbolized through the figure of a woman portrayed against a sympathetic background of nature” (Bloom, 2010:147-8).

Tennyson’s description of Mariana’s state of consciousness through pathetic fallacy seems to be developing from the external to internal space, but upon closer reading, one notices that they are in tandem. In the first stanza, the emphasis is on the description of the abandoned grange, where Mariana among the neglected sheds and thatch stands. The general idea about Mariana’s psychological state is expressed through the “unlifted clinking latch” (6), serving primarily as a context that it is her life unlifted in its nature, and sounding that never will be, establishing the sense that it is Mariana who has been neglected. This phrase also endorses the idea that the absence of action is built on the transformation of verbs into adjectives: “lifted” as a verb is changed into the adjective “unlifted” (6) to eliminate the timeline. The endlessly monotonous and depressing nature of Mariana’s existence is conveyed in a four-line refrain that recurs in the last lines of each of the stanzas which on many levels give the impression of both stasis and enclosure. It always rhymes with “dreary/ said/ weary/ dead” repeatedly taking the reader to the same vicious cycle. Furthermore, the rhyming words “dreary” and “weary” has the sensation of a lifeless and stretched sound which is further stressed by the extra unstressed syllable in the iambic line in “I am weary, weary”. All reflect Mariana’s state of misery, presumably ends at last. How? Will it end in death or marriage?

Implicit in **Mariana** is Tennyson’s representation of the reveries of an imprisoned woman which is a form of melancholy as theorized by Adorno:

“Inwardness is the historical prison of primordial human nature. The emotion of the trapped is melancholy” (1989:60). Contextual evidence existing in imagery, diction, and syntax, affords the deduction that Tennyson created an atmosphere reflective of melancholy (Jakse, 2014: iii). Tennyson’s labour of portraying the sensibilities of women, more precisely abandoned women, to represent the melancholy expands the Victorian gender ideology which painted an image of emotional lability for women. This ideology entrapped them in the domestic domain in restricted roles defined by social structure. Tennyson also outlined these roles for women and men generated by patriarchal social values in his **The Princess** (1847) “Man with the head, and woman with the heart: man to command, and woman to obey; all else is confusion” (1872:125). The melancholy in **Mariana** is an illustration of how women are more vulnerable than men because they are believed to be sentimental beings rather than intellectual. As it unfolds in the following stanzas, Mariana’s imprisonment is not a physical trap in the grange, but a psychological one as David G. Riede asserts, “As an objectified image of the poet’s ‘imaginary’, she is segregated from the faculty of will and is not trapped in the grange, but in her own brooding passivity, by her own melancholy” (2005:50). Based on Freud’s definition of melancholia (see Introduction, 17) it goes without saying that she is self-destructively sunken in her loss culminating in inhibition of all activity and ultimate punishment. In the canon of feminist critiques, showing the relationship between women’s psychological states and social identities within the Victorian social structure, Mariana’s melancholy is a consequence of social victimization as Schiesari defines a “gendered ethos” rather than a natural relation between the feminine sex and the disorder proposed by male culture. Mariana’s victimization reverberates in the congruity of a fallen woman and setting. Regarding the congruity of these fallen images, John Stuart Mill states that **Mariana** is one of the best poems representing Tennyson’s “power of *creating* scenery, in keeping with some state of human feeling; so fitted to it as to be the embodied symbol of it, and to summon up the feeling itself, with a power not to be surpassed by anything but reality” (1824/1981/2010:329). What Mill suggests is that Tennyson’s virtuosity lies in a structure that directs the reader to understand the protagonist’s invisible state of feeling

through the visible scenery. James Richardson's scrutiny of the poem enables us to discover more about how Tennyson depicts melancholy through the setting:

[R]eading "With blackest moss the flower-plots were thickly crusted," one thinks of Keats's "To bend with apples the *moss'd* cottage- trees" -- in both lines, moss is not just an object, but something that *happens*. Similarly, the nails are "rusted," not "rusty," and the thatch is in an ambiguous disarray because "weeded," a word that usually means "cleared of weeds," is forced to mean "weedy" as well. Things have happened to helpless objects, and there is a sense of causeless effect. Not "no one lifted the latch," but "unlifted was the clinking latch," which refuses even to imagine a being capable of working a latch. Its silent clinking, therefore, becomes a ghostly attack. Similarly, nails work loose often enough but having them fall emphasizes the unpredictability of a Tennysonian world in which the stabilizing forces of friction and process often fail (1988:45).

Richardson points out that the poem reveals the feeling of melancholy through the setting that is in a progressive mode of decay; the decomposition of the grange symbolizes the ephemeral nature of all things human.

The words "moated grange" (8) in the first stanza, impregnated with the feelings of the supposed inmate, now move us to the second stanza, where her grief is revealed by "her tears" (13-4). The unbreakable tie between the interior and exterior nature(s) – Mariana's psychosocial state and physical space - is in a reciprocal mood. Tennyson achieves this by projecting the sense of helplessness onto her as she projects onto the natural elements. The tie evaporates and the exterior nature intertwines within the interior one: "Her tears fell with the dews at even / Her tears fell ere the dews were dried" (13-4). As a masculine symbol, the sky is instinctively associated with her lover; thus, it is not incidental that she cannot look at the bright vault of heaven: "She could not look on the sweet heaven / Either at morn or eventide" (15-6). Wallowing in her grief, she could not even seek comfort in the cycle of the sun's journey beginning with the dawn in the east and ending with dusk in the west every single day. Well and widely known tenants of the night are bats that have been thought to be the spirits of the dead (Ferber, 2007:19). Drawing her "casement-curtain by" (19), she lets the "thickets dark" (18)- ness in her chamber which trances her mind instead and accentuating that Mariana is in a state of stupor with her glance towards "the glooming flats" (20) obsessively fixated on one thought: death. Like in all the stanzas, the preface "she only

said" (21) is equivocal. One may construe she does not want to say much or even if she says something, it will have no consequence for her. The poet's intention of prefacing each last quatrain with this utterance is to invest a stronger effect in the poem by making her anguished voice echo in the silence of her surroundings. This effect doubles with the recurrence of the verb "said" which gives the impression that the epicenters of the stanzas consist of such words in this very short dialogue in the closure, and that should be heard from her with the subject "I" rather than from the narrator with "she". Many critics have agreed that Tennyson's prosodic virtuosity lies in the poem's refrain as the verse slows down with especially the words "dreary...awearry, awarey"; the long vowels add further the sense of stagnation and the epizeuxis induces frustration. As Riede maintains "Tennyson's masterful orchestration of vowels, diphthongs, and impeding consonant clusters, the sound of the verse effectively sounds Mariana's depths." (2005:51). Most obviously, the recurrent unvarying refrain, except from one or two words at the end of every stanza, engenders the frustration of going back to where we started.

With Tennyson's hypnotic power of language, the reader sees what the poet wants her/him to see through the protagonist's eyes; we see a sunken woman trapped in the poem's cyclical language bespeaking the loss of the power of will and particularly, desire. Through the poem's stasis and lack of will, the discreteness of the details reveals that the poet fundamentally wrote about a Mariana who personifies the female passivity, sensibility, and melancholy (Campbell, 1893:71-85).

Tennyson opens his third stanza in the middle of the night when "the night-fowl crow" (26) wakes Mariana up, moving us to dawn with the cock's song, and then to "the gray-eyed morn" (31) in the second quatrain of the stanza. A veneer of symbolism lurking behind the dwellers of nature in Mariana's fen is attached to articulate the near future of her potential tragic end. Prevalently believed and used as a sign of death and evil especially in myths of Western tradition, the crow reveals itself as a harbinger of the forlorn lady's death. It is believed to smell death even through the walls of a house. Flying into or perching on the roof of a house, the crow is said to betoken someone living there will soon die. Upon hearing the crow, "the cock sung out" (27) before light, perhaps instinctively sensed an impending doom. Inherited by

the ancient Christians from pagan ties, a cock is known to symbolize light which represents Christ and the Resurrection and also it is believed to be “night watches” at night; at around midnight, one or two hours before dawn in order to dismiss evil spirits. Another animal making itself heard with its “low” but saying more about Mariana’s life of darkness is an ox. As a castrated bull, an ox provokes the question as to whether it says something about Mariana’s deprivation of the sexual act. Considering that Victorian moralism forbid and condemned sexual activity before marriage, Mariana’s unmarried status is tantamount to banishment, thus depriving her of sexual activity. Inhabiting a dreamy in-between state, she has no “hope of change” leading to the perpetual growth of decay, and with every passing day the likelihood of marriage dissipates castrating her future life. Deprivation of will and energy is the resultant effect of her repressed sexuality and ultimately creating a “female eunuch” (Greer, 1970:9).

With “the gray-eyed morn” (31) comes the ability to see the “lonely moated grange” (32) in daylight. The first four lines of the fourth stanza as a continuation of the previous two stanzas return us to the mosses of the first stanza, but this time creeping closer as though to invade the whole moated grange. The symbiotic decomposition of the two worlds is described as the regression to the earth observed in the “clustering marish-mosses” (40) and Mariana’s frustration. She gets frustrated in two ways: socially and sexually, the latter of which is metaphorized in the poplar tree, perhaps one of the most important symbols in the poem: “Hard by a poplar shook away, / All silver-green with gnarled bark” (41-2). “... the poem’s general atmosphere of frustration is accentuated by the image of this poplar tree” says the critic G.O. Gunter prefiguring the writings of Jung and Freud (1971:65-6). Different from other vegetation and obtruding itself into the flat terrain: “For leagues no other tree did mark” (43), the poplar is observed as the most obvious of the masculine life symbol which opposes this world of decay and retrogression (Ibid.:65), suggesting a phallic symbol. It is implicitly associated with Mariana’s libido blocked by frustration with her life. On another level, the poplar is a mythological image in Ovid’s **Metamorphoses** (8 AD) where the deserted Oenone describes how Paris carved his love on poplar as a promise not to abandon her: “The beeches still conserve my name carved on them by you, and I am read there OENONE, characterized by your blade; and

the more the trunks, the greater grows my name” (8 AD/2004:5;23-24), the poplar has grown but the love has not, breaking the promise. Having been abandoned by her lover, Oenone, like Mariana, likely suffered from frustration. In Ancient Greece, the poplar is associated with Herakles (Hercules). According to the legend given in **Dictionary of Symbols** (Chevalier et al., 2007) the poplar appears with this entry:

A commentator on Theocritus says that Heracles made a crown for himself after bringing Cerberus up from the underworld. Servius ties this tale to the abduction of Leuce, and explains the two colors as the dark of the underworld and the silvery white bleached by Hercules’ sweat (160).

Seemingly linked to the underworld, to pain and grief, the poplar tree also symbolizes the regressive powers of nature, memories, and times past. With this menacing implication, the reader then witnesses the signs of hopelessness and pain obviously revealed by the utterance of “He will not come” (82) separating her from the contact of the world and burying her alive. Mariana is unwilling to connect with the world, which is described as a function of her own will to solipsism making her too happy in her unhappiness (Bloom, 1976:152). Due to her *refusal* to connect with the world, or *inability* of perception of the world, Mariana is unable to “look on the sweet heaven” (15) in daylight, but only on “the rounding gray” (44), combined with “level waste” (44) suggesting “the image of monochrome sameness in this landscape” (Peltason, 1983: 345).

Meanwhile, Mariana’s social frustration is drawn from ideas in the Victorian period pivoting around the roles and the perception of women. Middle-class women’s place was at home, taking care of their family and relying on their husbands to support them as coerced by rigid social stipulation. Lynn Abrams mentions in “Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain” that “Domesticity and motherhood were considered by society at large to be a sufficient emotional fulfillment for females” (2001, n.p.). However, Mariana is apparently unable to fulfil the expected role of a socially successful woman, lacking a husband renders her no one who is confined to incremental despair and destruction.

The invocation of Mariana's sexuality begins with the poplar in the fourth stanza and is intensified on the fifth. The line "And ever when the moon was low" (49) reminds of the universal association between fertility and the moon. In contrast to the fact that it is in reality as distant a possibility as ever for her, the moon is presented as low and therefore "appearing" to be close to Mariana, it is indeed a suggestion of sexual fulfilment. The moon also foregrounds the poet's emphasis on the theme of virginity, reiterating Mariana's static virgin state. Suggestive of Mariana's chastity, the moon sets the stage perfectly for the poplar's shadow audaciously swaying in her bedroom. Another life symbol defined as a "fecundating force" by Jung is the wind shaking the poplar and the curtain up and away with a seeming restlessness: "And the shrill winds were up and away / In the white curtain, to and fro" (50-1). As an implication of Mariana's intense sexual frustration, the wild wind abates and lets through the phallic image in her bedroom: "But when the moon was very low / And wild winds bound within their cell" (53-4). As the lone life force, the poplar tree stands against the melting darkness and intrudes into the chamber, disrupting the grey landscape with its colour. Described in the day in the fifth stanza, it now appears at night taking us into the lady's chamber with its shadow falling "Upon her bed, across her brow" (56). When it falls on her bed, "she is much disturbed at night when the moon casts its shadow across her bed" implying distressing sexual hunger, maintains Gunter (1971:65).

In the following stanza, we move from Mariana's mind to her life in her bedroom through the shadow of the poplar. Implicit in the poem is how the narrator identifies himself with Mariana's experience with explicit distinctions between his and her perceptions of the world. The response to who calls "sweet heaven" (15) in the second stanza illustrates the explicit distinction of the narrators; it is not Mariana, but the narrator. The narrator's identification is accomplished to a greater extent with temporal and aural echoes in this stanza with creaking doors, singing blue fly threading footsteps, shrieking mouse. One of **Mariana's** chief allures has undeniably been aural "a verbal sensuousness which compares well with the painterly surfaces so admired in Millais's painting" suggests Pearce (1991:60) possibly providing an insight into what Andres said of the treatment: "Mariana concentrates on auditory images that

underscore and intensify her inconsolable loneliness” (2005:62). Preceding temporal and auditory images, “All day within the *dreamy* house” (61) sets the stage with the word “dreamy” prompting the question as to whether all these footsteps and voices are hallucinatory. The repetition of the word “old” in the second quatrain suggests that her mind is haunted and disturbed by the past when it was an earlier and happier time serving as a response to our question:

Old faces glimmer’d thro’ the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without. (Tennyson, 1832:66-8)

Shifting the auditory mode of the poem to the temporal via the spatial, the recurrent word “old” means “past” connoting that Mariana is “no longer young”. The disembodied faces, footsteps, and voices are suggestive of the victimized women like Mariana who suffered from the long duration of the nature of female suppression. The moment she starts to hallucinate and hear their voices reiterates her in-between state of illusion and reality.

Throughout the poem, the motif of silence prevails as a destructive force corresponding to Mariana’s mental state. Apart from the last quatrain of each stanza, Mariana acknowledges her despondency and never exhibits any emotions metamorphosing her into a “catatonic wraith” (Osińska, 2019: 81). The poet exaggerates even the slightest sound; rusted nails that fall, the clinking latch, shrieking of mice, birds singing quietly and ticking clocks, even the flutter of the flies’ wings (Boyd & Williams, 1983:592) intensifying her loneliness and surrounding stillness. Amid this ubiquitous silence, she is confounded by triple auditory images “sparrow’s chirrup” (73), “slow ticking clock” (74), and “wooing wind” (75), serving as a setting for a sort of climax despite its lack of action or progression:

The sparrow’s chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; (Tennyson, 1832:73-7)

The natural sounds slowly drive her insane through the theme of time inevitably destroying the grange and her, thereby enacting the very confounding of the sense. At this point, it shifts again to the early evening that Mariana most “loathed” (77) once more expressing the alternating hope and disappointment which she experiences with Angelo’s nonarrival. What is exposed is the image of dust in the sunlight “when the thick-moated sunbeam lay /Athwart the chambers” (78-9), and “the day / Was sloping toward his western bower” (79-80) causes exhaustion with the implications of an imminent death. Particularly emphasizing the slowing down of her life, the words “thick” and “lay” (78) evoke the oppressive and sullen atmosphere. Its accompaniment with the word sun suggests the masculine symbol and the powerful life force. Hence, the moment the sun moves away evokes the most frustration in her because, from a Jungian viewpoint, this is the time when Osiris, the sun god, is embracing Isis, the Great Mother (1976:90-100-21-22). The descending sun suggests the harmonic union between masculine and feminine elements, evidently explaining the reason why Mariana is disturbed most at this hour (Ibid.:240).

As Bloom puts it, Mariana is the poetess of her own poem with her mood-piece refrain repeating seven times with signification but variation in this last stanza. The line “I am very dreary” (81) confesses her hopelessness which has so far cemented itself within her mind, nullifying all the pathetic fallacies reverberated throughout in its dreariness. The utterance “then” places the time in the future, revealing the fact that she has finally acknowledged the likelihood that “he will not come” (82), which is a peremptory acquiescence and helplessness, she thereby calls for God for the first time, some power independent of the self.

Mariana and her long waiting reflect a larger reality representing the psychological situation of other women trapped by the demarcations in social contexts. Mediating upon the poems about woman in Tennyson’s *oeuvre*, we find the poet’s particular interest in the ‘characteristics of women’ with his recognition of how a male perspective perceives a woman’s nature, roles, and mission. His poems are beyond young maiden fantasies which, as Peterson maintains, “soon to disappear with ‘the access of judgment,’ nor are they primarily vehicles for expressing artistic anxiety in a post-Romantic climate (though they may be both)”, adding that his images of women

explore the Victorian stipulation of women's social roles and their contributions to being subservient to the dictates of society (2009:26). As a sign of patriarchal indoctrination, the imposition of social roles in the nineteenth century ostracized women who were neither wives nor mothers. Elaine Showalter's insightful remarks on this issue are that the Victorians scorned women who did not conform to society's predilection of ideals of family Bliss, stigmatizing them as "redundant," "old," and more vulnerable to mental disorders (1985:61). Diaries and novels written in the nineteenth century testify to the fact that women were constrained by repressive family and social ties, depriving them of the opportunities outside the household; hence they felt only valuable with a limited range of occupations such as managing the house and children. In their absence, the frequent occurrence is frustration and inertia leading to mental imbalance. Indeed, those who were often subject to mental disintegration suffered most certainly from the deprivation of social roles, relationships, and purposeful tasks defining one's identity and more importantly their worth. Mariana is deprived of them all. Tennyson allows the reader to witness her mental disintegration with incremental grief; however, does the same reader see what the poet describes on Millais's canvas?

What particularly attracts a painter's eyes in a text unequivocally is the colour and aspects that would translate readily to the visual mode. By his own account, Millais enables the viewer to enjoy with a fusion of hues in his interpretation of Tennyson's **Mariana** in a different setting. Starting with Mariana's pose from a possible late-afternoon weariness, apart from the presence of very few common details such as the "thick-moated sunbeam" (78) and the mouse behind "the mouldering wainscoat" (64) in both narratives, but the absence of golden wallpaper, stained-glass window, embroidery and many more in painting has proved that both texts should be worked on in their own right.

Millais's illustration of **Mariana** (1850-51) debuted in the exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1851 accompanied with a caption of the poem's refrain surely capturing the mood of the piece:

She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,'
I would that I were dead!' (Tennyson, 1832: 9-12, 45-48, 69-72)

which we encounter in the first, fourth, and sixth stanzas echoing Mariana's psychological condition in a self-enclosed claustrophobic room.

In Mariana's room, we conduct a thorough surveillance with an allusion to the lens of Gaston Bachelard's **The Poetics of Space** (1964), as a fertile ground evinced in his excavation of spatial imagery. The subject of his initial formation is meant to lead to revelations of 'simple images of felicitous space' which are not merely positive images, with all its partiality associated with imagination. His chapters on the "topography of our intimate being" -- of nests, drawers, shells, corners, wardrobes, miniatures, forests, and above all the house, are an excursion to the domain of a systematic study, or "topoanalysis," of the "space we love", all of which bear a psychological coalescence, and is an epitome of his specific absorption in the psychodynamics of the literary image:

With the house image, we are in a possession of a veritable principle of psychological integration. Descriptive psychology, depth psychology, psychoanalysis, and phenomenology could constitute, with the house, the corpus of doctrines that I have designated by the name of topo-analysis. On whatever theoretical horizon we examine it, the house image would appear to have become the topography of our intimate being (1964: xxxvi Introduction).

Bachelard maintains his argument alluding to C. C. Jung's **Contributions to Analytical Psychology** (1928) which conspicuously analyses a building whose storeys and other spaces were erected or reconstructed at different periods with a 'picture of our mental structure':

But from the very fact, it may be so easily developed, there is ground for taking the house as a tool for analysis of the human soul....Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are "housed". Our soul is an abode. And by remembering "houses" and "rooms", we learn to abide within ourselves (qtd. in Bachelard, 1964: xxxvii introduction).

Explicit in Pre-Raphaelite art is a prevalence of narratives imbued with women figures confined in spaces revealing that the artists succumbed to the gendering of interior space explicitly associated with their subjects' social and psychological situations. The female subject fixed in a domestic space with different stories is seen in Rossetti's *Veronica Veronese* (1872), cut-off from the outer world, and Hunt's cursed *The Lady of Shalott* (1833), which is further investigated in the oncoming part, and our weary *Mariana*. Taylor's assertion "the domestic setting becomes an integral extension of the feminine psyche" (2006: np.) tells us that Mariana's room exposes an array of symbols of narrative regarding her soul. Contrary to Bachelard's meditation on the positive evocation of the term 'space', the interior space in *Mariana* is associated with a quasi-imprisonment, an intrinsic link to the interior realms of her broken mind and soul. Yet, the habitual association of interior space with security, privacy, and happiness encourages the viewer, and reader, to get the positive feeling of Mariana's chamber drawing from Bachelard's metaphors as a point of reference. Even though the room the lady is placed evokes claustrophobia and oppression, it also provides protection and comfort for her. Oppressed and rejected, she secludes herself for security making the room a 'felicitous space' in Bachelard's sense of the term.

The oppressive moment occurring "when the thick-mote sunbeam lay/athwart" (78-9) Mariana's chamber in Tennyson's poem is not translated as a light beam seeping through the window in the painting but configured into the stained-glass window. Clearly, Mariana is standing against the stained-glass window, on whose panes the Angel Gabriel and Virgin Mary are painted. While she rivets her gaze on Angel Gabriel, she seems to eschew facing Virgin Mary by averting her eyes away. This reveals the contrast between the Virgin's fulfilment and Mariana's frustration, explaining Mariana's evasion. As Sussman points out, Millais's rendition of the Annunciation on the stained-glass window conveying Christian iconography, which is absent in the poem, suggests that "through the reversal of sacred meaning, Mariana is imprisoned by the idea of female chastity (1980:49). Also, Malcolm Warner opines that "the fulfilment the archangel brings the Virgin emphasizes, by contrast, Mariana's deep frustration" (1984:89), reminding her of a woman's expected role in her society. In this context, apart from the symbolism behind it, the stained-glass window is also

perused as a shield preventing Mariana from seeing the outside world and substantially impeding the admission of light into the room, accentuating the tenant's imprisonment. Our attendance to the right of the window encounters with the motto "*in caelo quies*," "in Heaven there is rest" implying the only place where Mariana finds comfort; underneath it a snowdrop accompanies it, meaning "hope, rebirth, purity and consolation" in the Victorian language of flowers. It is also associated with Candlemas commemorating the ritual purification of Mary forty days after the birth of her son Jesus. Besides, it is also the birthday flower for 20 January, St Agnes' Eve, the night on which, as Robert Burton wrote in **The Anatomy of Melancholy**, maidens "only desire if it may be done by art, to see their husband's picture in a glass" (1880:183). Seemingly, Millais was influenced by these beliefs peculiar to maidens, thereby rendered a heroine seeing the image of her future husband, Angelo, in a glass window, in addition to a likely reference to Keat's poem **The Eve of St Agnes** (1820)-concerned with the theme of yearning.

Above the snowdrop is a shield making the flower appear the emblem of an armorial device suggesting Millais's profound study and knowledge on armour and heraldry¹. The configuration of a closed helmet above which is a mailed arm with a warriorlike fist firmly holding a lance shows a virginal flower as if cringing away from a menacing phallic figure. It is noticeable that the downward thrust of the lance aims towards the Virgin's head, suggesting that the presence of a male symbol is a threat for "her floral emblem of purity, the snowdrop, and her maidenhead" (Leng, 1988:66). Implicit in the narrative is that Tennyson's anthropomorphic tree masquerades under the guise of this menacing armoured figure. Mary and Mariana share a common vulnerability against the male threat, but only Mary embodies an image of perfect, fulfilled womanhood, unlike Mariana. If we return to the symbolic drooping snowdrop, it may simply represent the destitute Mariana herself, trapped behind her window as a rejected woman. Naturally, this extends to her fate as an unmarried woman tantamount to banishment and death in society. Marsh notes, "In art, death by drowning or decline

¹ This is assured by Mark Girouard's statement: "in 1844-45 Millais had put together a manuscript book, *Sketches of Armour*, elaborately illustrated with drawings made in the Tower of London armory" (1981:158).

were appropriate endings for rejected women” (1987:139). Desperate in her grief, Mariana is depicted as a figure who is resigned to the fact that Angelo does not come, thereby wishing death as an appropriate ending.

The pronounced sensuality of the poem, delivered through the words -- wind, poplar, and Mariana’s bed-- find parallel expression via the use of colour from its stained-glass windows, Mariana’s dress, the stool, and the tapestry; the yellow ochre wallpaper, the dark background hidden in the shadows, to the autumn leaves sprinkled around, and to the embroidery in a decorative context. Yet, in the centre of all this pleasure resides Mariana with an irreducible particularity of stance-- an unorthodox pose where Millais’s most unconventional touch lies. Could it be the culminative moment of the impact of aching back or a sexual frustration? Echoed in the refrain “I would that I were dead” is Mariana’s desire, a viable alternative and a decry of her slim chance of marriage, all of which are embodied in her pose. Millais renders her seductive in her tightly fitting and sensual rich blue velvet dress invoking speculation on the erotic quality in the painting. Pearce notes that “Mariana is presenting her body for inspection, while she gazes desirously into the eyes of the Archangel Gabriel represented in the stained glass” (1991:66), and Emily J. Orlando adds that “Millais has chosen to position his Mariana in a rather provocative pose, accentuating her curves and the arch of her spine” (2009:637). A closer look is requisite.

Mariana’s stretching pose provides many insights into its ambiguity. Her arched-back stance is suggesting either a break from her task or a search for a distraction from her work meant to efface her suffering from longing for Angelo (Bevis, 2013: 5). Her longing may be bifurcated into sentimental and sexual. Her luxurious velvet dress of a rich deep blue hue, with small ruffles of a lace collar at her neck, but rather conjuring simplicity, completes and intensifies her pose. This simplicity seemingly follows contemporary Victorian fashion that imposed the prescribed doctrine but there is more than that. As a medieval style, the skirts of her dress draping closely to her legs and shoes, and her adornment, low-slung belt embracing her belly, make her curves apparent. Widely known fact is that a corset is a key part of female attire in the Victorian era; it both adds to the femininity, and also represents virginity and pureness. The ironic association is that while it symbolizes

virginity, it is also said to cause infertility as Davies argues that “the corset and, in particular, the practice of tight lacing, adversely affected middle-class fertility from at least the mid-1840s or early 1850s” (1982:616). No doubt that Mariana, wearing a corset, confirms the state of virginity and also the threat to her fertility, intensified with her marital status. Contrary to the Victorian voyeuristic fascination and taste, the Pre-Raphaelites often portrayed women in their works in a less controlled apparel that gave them greater mobility than Victorian fashions which were particularly excessive in the early 1850’s². Her hands meet in the smallness of her waist; then upon a closer look one may notice the ring on her left ring-finger, perhaps all that is remaining of the engagement, a sign of her hope/lessness. Her hair is parted down in the middle, a very orthodox style, but the back seems slightly dishevelled testifying to her weary hours of waiting. Unequivocal beauty is adhered to her pose, promoted by the painter’s meticulous rendering, but when it comes to her face, it looks natural which generates the idea that her face is not idealized by the artist adhering to the doctrine of “truth to nature” in order to bestow the figures with human features³. A pale lingering shadow sits below her jaw and her neck highlighting the bone of her brow and protruding nose, but more importantly giving her eyes an expression of boredom. Millais’s *Mariana* stands on its own as it deviates from its source despite its shared title, and the unconventional posture is an epitome of the length to which the Pre-Raphaelites would go. Ascribing some idealization in a novel way that the Victorians were not accustomed to, the artist subtly constructed the shape of her body to adhere to a realistic spectrum, but her pose goes beyond an idealized graceful stance making it obviously foreign to the pervasive decorum that Victorian standards stipulate. Her body conforms to Victorian taste but rejects the decorum, creating a naturalistic expression of sexuality. Manifestly decrying a “subliminal code of fashion” (Kılıç, 2012: 15), Millais’s message is deliberately enclosed in Mariana’s posture in a medieval interior, an implication of the Victorian women’s confinement upon their sexuality.

² Millais illustrated female figures who conformed with the concept of the New Woman and would really come into its own in the fashions of the Edwardian era.

³ Pre-Raphaelites used ordinary people who were acquainted with them, on a personal or professional level. For *Mariana*, Millais asked Jane Morris to be his model.

Other than Mariana's pose, what lies at the heart of the painting is the embroidery. Millais imbued her floral embroidery and its place with layered meanings. Neither Shakespeare nor Tennyson mentions Mariana stitching embroidery. It is one of the major household crafts, defined by the age, which an accomplished and properly feminine Victorian woman is expected to be occupied with, thereby demonstrating beauty, creativity, and femininity. The period's fixed definition of roles is seen in Ruskin's response to the figure, "The picture has always been a precious memory to me, but if the painter had painted Mariana at work in an unmoated grange instead of idle in a moated one it had been more to the purpose—whether of art or life" (Ruskin, 1903:496). As one of the earliest theorists of realism, Ruskin believes art should present the mimetic reality and faithful study of nature rather than idealizing them. The point being made by Ruskin is that Millais depicted Mariana doing nothing and standing in front of her painted window idly in her ivory tower. However, if he had painted an actively working woman in an actual farm, it would have reflected a certain kind of life from the epoch. Millais's depiction of the setting is established through a particular narrative of natural ornamentation in an interior space. It is noticeable that Mariana's needlework is illuminated with a bright light creeping in from the window. Her floral embroidery composed of dominating bright green and ochre foliage and blooming pale blue, bright red, and red-violet flowers suggests that Mariana is copying from the natural world defined as Millais's bestowal of his own artistic craftsmanship upon her. Rendering from the natural world is emphasized by the actual fluttered autumn leaves on the fabric and into the chamber offering a link between the natural source and Mariana's creativity. A further scrutiny into this link surfaces with two interpretations: on the one hand, it represents the painter's inspiration he drew from nature, as one of the Pre-Raphaelite doctrines, and its reflection is the rendition of originality and attention to minute detail; on the other hand, it gives the feeling that the seasonal cycle simultaneously destroys nature and Mariana which is made explicit through the invasion of the interior by the exterior. Prettejohn refers to the intrusion of nature: "We seem to see back in time into a historic house, one that may be in decay as a mouse scuttles across the floor and the Autumn leaves blow in" (2000:11). The

intrusion of nature into the room and a scurrying mouse evoke the movement in the painting's stagnant mood, but also signify the defiant passage of time.

The image of a woman embroidering in a medieval room dominates the gorgeous context in which rests an association between the resurrection of medieval embroidery and the feminine quality of the craft. C. H. Hartshorne's **English Medieval Embroidery** (1848) served as a codification for the medieval divisions of labor with men toiling and women stitching. The notion for the medieval noblewoman embroidering prescribes:

Shut up in her lofty chamber. With massive walls of a castle or immured in the restricted walls of a convent, the needle alone supplied an unceasing source of amusement; with this she might enliven her tedious hours, and depicting the heroic deeds of her absent lord, as it were visibly hastening his return; or on the other hand, softened by the influence of pious contemplation, she might use this pliant instrument to bring vividly before her mind the mysteries of that faith to which she clung (2-3).

Explicit in this prescription is that Hartshorne drew a "highly romanticized portrait of the medieval woman" (Ibid.:41) expected to be devoutly religious in her confinement in the absence of her hero, precisely explaining the expectations for the Victorian woman. It was essentially incumbent on a woman to occupy herself with embroidery as a solace and time passing while waiting for her lord dutifully and faithfully. However, it is more than time passing. Here lies the artist's implicit belief that a woman's needlework is a way of expression of her creativity and dexterity; a medium of manifestation of her feelings and opinions; and an indicative of her class and position.

The viewer's eyes turn from Mariana and her workspace to scrutinize the orchestrated details of the setting. Unlike Tennyson's description of a decaying grange, Millais constructed a rather intact Gothic room as it was not falling apart, and notably filled with medieval objects. A closer examination reveals medieval elements such as a small triptych altarpiece, a small crucifix, silver vessels holding flowers, a hanging candle votive possibly signifying a recent moment of praying as a glimmer of hope implying her devoutness to God. This Christian stipulation is not portrayed in the

poem. Having a Catholic resonance, they all seem inherent in medieval times but archaic to the Victorians. The Victorians delighted in the medieval and interweaved them with Biblical history (Udall, 1990:34). This also found expression in Millais's paintings evoking his unique commentary. As a member of the Brotherhood, who harked back the era of simplicity and rejected idealized narrative, Millais's narrative pivots around the medieval style, characterized as depicting Christian iconography, reflecting simplicity of line, pattern, and decoration with rich colours, and representative of un-idealized figures. Setting Tennyson's poem into the fashion of medievalism, he completed his narrative with the inclusion of Victorian elements to the décor of the room such as the orange velvet stool and the wallpaper motif recalling the precursors of the Arts and Crafts movement. In its own right, the veneer of the golden wall presents fecundity with its flora and fauna. However, considering the lush and rich nature lying outside Mariana's window, one notices that in this narrative of sexual frustration, the artist portrays a contrast with the flatness of the wallpaper knowing the fact that it bears a symbolic narrative (O'Neill, 2015: n.p). Millais's narrative signifies that the wallpaper, void of colour assortment, represents Mariana's infertility and bareness *vis-à-vis* the fecund nature. Apart from who Mariana is, along with the wallpaper, the luxurious surfaces composed of the embroidery, stool, wallpaper, *etc.* do not function as a decorative ornament, but resonate with the symbolic embodiment of her imprisonment. Mariana acts as an extension of this symbolism.

Mariana is presented within the convention of the cloistered woman which is described as a particular code of Victorian literary and visual medievalism, recalling "the mood of cloister" as coined by Walter Pater. Bringing a new dimension to medievalism, he asserted that "the idolatry of cloistered" emerges from the suppressed female sexuality" and claims that "it transformed the whole religion of the middle age into a beautiful disease of disorder of the senses" (Sussman, 1980:46-47). It is this medieval world where Millais's Mariana dwells. The emphasis of the context is on female longing and sexuality clenched with her solitude in the Gothic interior, all of which lead to psychological damage. Sussman characterizes the mental state that links Romantic isolation with the Gothic cloister saying "the mind in extreme states that

move beyond the edge of rationality” (Ibid.:47). Mariana’s fixed wish of death is an expression of the extreme state of her mind and conceivably may result in an irrational act such as suicide. The motto on the stained-glass “In heaven there is rest” may articulate that Mariana is on the verge of going mad from this everlasting conundrum and thinks of taking her own life to attain rest.

The conscious reader of Tennyson’s **Mariana** acknowledges that she is representative of “the enclosed and shuttered lives of [Victorian] middle-class women” as Marion Shaw described:

Yet the source of Mariana’s power is essentially domestic and familiar; the “broken sheds”, the buzzing fly, the “sparrow’s chirrup”, the poplar tree, these are the appurtenance of everyday life, particularly the enclosed and shuttered lives of middle-class women: “I am like Mariana in the moated grange”, wrote Elizabeth Barrett in 1845, voicing what many women must have felt, “and sit listening too often to the mouse in the wainscoat” (1988:105).

In a particular context, an unmarried and middle-class woman, but when examined in a wider and more importantly cultural context, Mariana suffers from spinsterhood. It is not explicitly communicated that she is a spinster, but through an exploration in the contextualization of Tennysonian and Shakespearean sources, and the condition of an unmarried woman in Victorian society hints that she is imprisoned by her unmarried status.

Tennyson’s **Mariana** inundated with frustration is an epitome of the cloistered Victorian woman; she performs her dull day-to-day activity within the private domain; she has no intellectual pursuit or vocation outside her house; she is literally imprisoned in her moated grange, reflecting social expectations and norms. Through minutely description of psychological state of a middle-class woman’s inner world with a nuanced implication that social demands are the underlying causative factor, Tennyson’s narrative advocates the subjugated female while highlighting the iniquitous severity of coercion and challenging the norms. Even though the poet is a strong supporter of gender roles, his poem, through its elements, appears to suggest that the place where Mariana is confined evinces this unfair austerity tragically condemning her to perpetual social isolation and impeding her progress in time and

society. Her unfair entrapment contributes to the grieving state of forlorn and causes her psychological discomfort exposed as unattended exterior setting. When we turn to Millais's narrative, his portrayal of lady-like adherence to her socially allotted life and tangible devoutness to God reflects an idealized medieval woman who conforms to her designated place but fails to fulfil the roles the very core of Victorian ideals stipulates. Unlike Tennyson's verbal text, his visual narrative does not challenge the norms even through subtle implications but willingly questions the hitherto limitations of their own narrative form through his own radical delineation. An artistic balance resides in his composition; Mariana's unorthodox posing is softened with her needlework performed interminably before the Christian symbolism depicting her conformity to the religious and societal roles. Mariana seems to acknowledge her interminable efforts by ceasing to embroider and posing incongruously, more elegantly elaborated by Ruskin with the distinction between "Annunciate Maria bowing herself" and "Newsless Mariana stretching herself" (1834-1885/2018:178). In Rossetti's Mary, her bowing is knowingly terminable, as is her embroidery and meant to be completed as a precursor of her fulfilment, whereas Millais's Mariana has abandoned her perpetual loop, which is ever-lasting like her barrenness. Similar to Shaw's formulation we saw earlier, Ruskin identified Mariana as "the representative picture of its generation" which is "the best symbol of the mud-moated Nineteenth-century.... imprisoned therein...younger sister craving for any manner of News, and getting none... (Ibid.:178). It can be said that Millais particularly sought to illustrate a representative Mariana in an unaccustomed way speaking of her cloister in the shadows of the domestic sphere because of her fate as an unmarried woman, confining her in the status the Virgin forever.

2.2. Tennyson's **The Lady of Shalott** by William Holman Hunt

The Lady of Shalott, Tennyson's other highly-praised poem representing the immured woman, revives the oppressive effect of Mariana's grange in the Lady of Shalott's island. It is known that **The Lady of Shalott** (1833;1842) is based on an Arthurian legend telling the tragic story of **Elaine of Astolat**, a young noblewoman confined in a tower up the river from Camelot, and a fourteenth -century Italian novella entitled as **La Damigella di Scalot**. Albeit bearing similar elements like the high-born lady of Shalott living on a remote island, Tennyson's **The Lady of Shalott** was built on different characters and events. Tennyson wrote two versions of the poem: the earlier one was published in 1833, and consisted of 20 stanzas. However, since he was acutely conscious of his readers and the critics, he rewrote the poem with regard to Victorian gender norms and female suicide. When the two poems are compared, it is noticed that Tennyson mostly revised the stanzas which focus on the Lady rather than the ones presenting Sir Lancelot. The poet's revision reveals that the poem's mood is intended to make the Lady's mysteriousness more dramatic. The drastic difference was made in the conclusion; while the original version ends with the Lady's last words, the 1842 version, consisted of 19 stanzas, replaces it with Lancelot's. The lyrical ballad pivots around the Lady's isolation in the tower and her decision to turn to the outside world for a sight of Lancelot. Her mysterious seclusion readily suggests symbols for the ideological oppression of the nineteenth-century woman, but on a closer look, the juxtaposition of seclusion and decision-making lays itself open to paradoxical meaning: empowering and disempowering. Isolation presents her freedom through which she can attain power and agency, but at the same time deprives her of them since, apart from marking her vulnerable, this is coerced rather than self-inflicted. The dichotomy of empowering and disempowering is just illusory after all the Lady is already under a mysterious spell which follows her wherever she goes, consequently revealing how she never gains full agency or power. This approach can be defined as a point of departure for the poet to write **The Lady of Shalott**, appropriately tailored for the reader of his time.

The title of the poem immediately highlights the importance of the Lady, markedly hinting at the point that this is really her story. Seemingly alone and removed from life in her tower, the Lady weaves the world framed in her mirror. Tennyson's depiction of a cloistered woman in a grey tower where only "Shadows of the world appear" (48) highlights the setting which reveals the Lady's mysteriousness rather than the Lady herself. She is not physically embodied except for her "white robes" and "lovely face". It goes without saying that this is the point where **Mariana** and **The Lady of Shalott** are connected. Her physical surrounding mirrors the Lady's isolation by contrasting Camelot's dynamic world outside to the "four gray walls and four gray towers" (15) trapping her. The setting of the poem is conducive to being read as a text centrally concerned with the concept of the Victorian woman. Careful attention to the text's symbolism enables us to examine whether or not Tennyson and Hunt's cloistered women in the world of shadows represent this concept, if they do, then the narratives afford us to look at the issues of gender, sexuality, and the institution of marriage, resonating with the anxieties of the unmarried Victorian woman.

The line "Who is this? And What is here?" (163) captures the reader as it unravels Lancelot's nonchalant response to the Lady's love, intensifying her tragic story. Unlike Lancelot's indifference, the question, "Who is the Lady and why did she choose death?" begs to be asked. The poem consists of four parts, Part I and Part IV narrate the outside world, whereas Part II and Part III present how the lady sees the world from her ivory tower. In Part I, Tennyson provides a visual overview of Shalott, an island in the river, with the imagery of nature, of freedom, and movement in dire contrast to the colourless walls of Camelot's towers. The opening stanza introduces the important setting of "many tower'd Camelot" (5) with its roads, lush in natural beauty, showing the flow of people passing, up and down. There resides "The island of Shalott" (9) and its Lady in the shadows, cut off from the rest of Camelot. Tennyson's use of the visual impression in the opening stanza engenders a "metaphoric landscape in which the Lady becomes continuous with her surroundings" (Colley, 1985:369-370), conveying the mood of the poem. The sense of deep gloom is the mood, revealed through the personification of nature, and when nature surrenders to autumn, it perishes the Lady simultaneously.

The second stanza strengthens the correlation between the metaphoric landscape and mood with the imagery becoming gloomier. The poet sets a tone foregrounding the contrast between the two places, Shalott and Camelot, which is initially hinted at in the first stanza. Overlooking the flowers of Camelot, the Lady's gray tower on the lifeless island evokes a 'haunted' image of the Lady's "gray tower" (15) when "aspens quiver" (10) and "breezes dusk and shiver" (11), turning the first stanza's pleasant summertime picture into one of oppression and melancholy.

Tennyson's construction of the poem reveals that the landscape in **The Lady of Shalott** is established on dichotomies and divisions, between the whole and the part, and this is unveiled at the outset: "On *either side* the river lie / Long fields of barley and of rye" (1-2) (my italics). The division initiated with the river then deepens with the contrast between Camelot and Shalott, inciting an opposition between fantasy and reality, which is central to the poem. When the narrator presents the realities of Camelot, he confines the presence of fantasies to the Island of Shalott. As an edifice isolated from the active life of Camelot, Shalott seems like an illusionary place formed of "gray walls" (15) and situated on a "silent isle" (17), revealing the opposition between "the region of shadows [and] that of realities" (Tennyson, 1897: 1,117). When the reader is moved to the interior of the Lady's tower, the latter opposition – the outer life - turns into illusion through its reflection on the Lady's mirror.

As mentioned earlier, Tennyson's vivid use of language is so powerful that the reader cannot help conjuring the story up in mind, scene by scene. In the third stanza, the impression is such that it could be called, as Falchi defines, a "'cinemascope view' of a pleasant panorama" (2012:385). It is as though the camera lens frames the busy road where people gaze at the lilies blowing around Camelot, and then a medium shot emphasizes the island of Shalott while still displaying some parts of the surrounding environment. This stanza is dominated by the scenery of willows covering the banks of the river where "slow horses unhail'd" (21), busy with "heavy barges" (20), and "shallop flitteth silken sail'd" (22) down the river to Camelot. Within this frame, Tennyson establishes a close shot and reveals that the tower holds the Lady of Shalott, but at the same time he makes the reader wonder who the Lady of Shalott is by throwing out questions:

But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott? (Tennyson, 1842:24-27)

The rhetorical questions intend to start the discourse on the basis of mystery. This is achieved through the poet's virtuosity in visual and auditory imageries in the first, second, and third stanzas corresponding to mood, situation, and emotion.

The reader already acknowledges that the Lady is divorced from life, then learns that only her singing voice is heard, and this changes the imagery of sight and touch to the sense of sound in the fourth stanza. The reapers who only hear the echoes of her singing describe her as a fairy of Shalott reinforcing the notion of fantasy, just as the mirror reflects and suggests that the Lady does not exist in reality. As Isobel Armstrong argues, Tennyson constructed his poem upon many dichotomies – male/female, the Island of Shalott/ Camelot, imprisonment/freedom, solitude/society, peasants/aristocrats, and, at a metaphorical level, art/life, illusion/reality. They are not presented as just opposites, they also “appear” as mirror images reflecting each other (1989:107). Aside from the relation of reality and fantasy discussed earlier, the Lady in Shalott and the reapers in Camelot represent the gender difference. Jennifer Gribble notes “Tennyson’s lady is sealed off from the outside world with all the authority of fairy-tale, but her imprisonment is no more inexplicable or irrevocable than that of many other Victorian lad[ies]” (1983:1). This projects the Victorian context with the general sense of a progressive era but dominated by dichotomies, pervasively gender dichotomies. It would appear that the description of **The Lady of Shalott** denotes the disposition of social space, as Chadwick implies, that the gender conventions prescribed the Victorian society (1986:17) throughout the poem. On the one hand, reapers and more representatively Sir Lancelot, dwell in the public realm of Camelot, whereas, on the other hand, the Lady is confined to the private domain of the “Four gray walls, and four gray towers” (15), identifying the private and public spaces respectively as feminine and masculine. Therefore, Tennyson’s setting up such a scene in which peasants reap and listen to the Lady’s song in their fields reveals the seclusion of women - physically in their homes and socially in a subordinate role.

In Part II, the reader understands that images appear and disappear as the shadows of the outside world are reflected onto the Lady's mirror. Tennyson himself introduced the symbolic details in the Lady's setting, particularly in terms of like mirror, web, and curse as an allegory pivoting around the individual consciousness in its relationship with society (Gribble, 1983: 2). As the poem's central symbol, the mirror both cuts her off from the world and also makes her dependent on the same world. Watching the reflections of the "shadows of the world" (48) on the mirror rather than her own reflection deprives her of independent existence. Understanding the relationship between the Lady and the mirror highlights a significant concept "Allegory of the Cave" Plato devised in which he likens people to prisoners who are chained in a cave and unable to turn their heads. What they see is only the wall of the cave blocking their sight from seeing real people passing by on a parapet; thus, the prisoners, facing the wall, can only hear echoes and see shadows. The Lady can be compared to a prisoner in a cave, who sees the reflections and hears the people's voices outside. Another important point Chadwick expounds on about the reflections of a woman into a looking-glass and pool is that her reflection is "her own object of desire and thus achieves a kind of sexual self-sufficiency" (1986:18). What he suggests here is that, in particular contexts, if feminine autonomy is attained through the reflection of her image on a mirror or water, then Tennyson's rendition of a female figure who lacks an image should be interpreted as the absence of autonomous subjectivity.

Tennyson assigned the Lady with this purposeful task in her ostracization since it is incumbent on a woman to carry out her prescribed tasks dutifully even in the absence of patriarchal control to remain devoted while confined, which is felt to be a predicament, like Mariana's. Weaving and spinning go back to antiquity and all evidence indicate that they are attributed to both mortal and immortal women. What is germane to the argument is an allusion to Odysseus's wife, Penelope, who weaves while her husband is away, and other myths of weaving woman in Homeric poems. The two goddesses, Circe and Calypso engage in the activity of weaving as well, which furnishes them with a way to express their emotions through the symbolic images they depict, shaped by the painful experiences, such as uncertainties about their marriages, threats to their domestic order, or death. The Lady of Shalott is not different from the

female characters who weave and spin in Homeric poems. Sitting at her loom, the Lady designs her tapestry from the images reflected in the mirror rather than copying from a pattern. Upon hearing Lancelot's voice, she crosses the border-line by turning from mirror to life and pays the price with her death. As Pearce explains "While her tapestry reflects life at one remove, she remains derivative and thus within the bounds of woman's art. But when she seeks a direct experience of the world, she incurs death" (1991:76). The situation where the Lady weaves the reflections on the mirror illustrates the fact that her identity is defined by outside world, knowing that weaving is a way of forming woman's own identity. This dependence on a mirror which provides the material for her art is also read as a symbolic demarcation of the ideological imposition confining her to isolation. Instead of granting independence and autonomy, the isolation makes her subservient to the outside and another's life, and without them, she becomes almost worthless and as shadowy as the images in the mirror. Void of an independent individuality, she exists with the public outside her tower: the surly village-churl, market girls, a troop of damsels, an about, a curly shepherd-lad, the page, the knights, a funeral and attendees, the newly wed lovers, upon whom she is compellingly dependent since they generate the composition of her purposeful task.

Till she sees newly-wed lovers, she weaves monotonously, and "still delights" (64) in doing it "For often thro' the silent nights" (66) which articulates her acquiescence to the confinement and compliance to the whispered threat: "A curse is on her if she stay / To look down to Camelot" (40-1). The continuity of the work is construed as the effect of her artistic fecundity but also the construction and maintenance of her femininity. Her femininity is characterized by her imprisonment within the walls and towers of her "silent isle" (17), namely, the private realm, through her accomplishments as a Victorian woman. The reapers in barley fields, the busy road, the river flowing down to Camelot, and even the social activities of the outer life which are reflected in the mirror serve as elements signifying her situation in the society. While all others are engaged with social activities, the Lady, embowered by a stagnant and unchanging life, is cut off from a social and as well as a sexual life: "She hath no loyal knight and true" (62), making her insubstantial and even ethereal to the active world outside.

Whereas bereft of any sign of concern about the funeral, the Lady confides her half-sickness upon seeing the newlyweds: “Came two young lovers lately wed” (70). The poem suggests that the lady recognizes that marriage is integral to the completion of women’s destinies within Victorian society (Plasa, 1992:252); hence she laments about her loneliness and subsequently asserts her identity by declaring “I am half sick of shadows” (71), for she is away from the perils of life and suffers from demarcated existence. Hallam Tennyson alleged that the last four lines of this stanza fashion “the key to this tale of ‘magic symbolism’” (Memoir, 1:116), thereby translating the Lady’s cry – “I am half sick of shadows” – into an implicit confession of desire to be in the lived reality of marital love.

Designing her tapestry and the self-conscious recognition of marriage from the mirror renders it not a reality but rather a perspective through which she sees not ‘Reality’ *per se*, but her own intrinsic reality. Despite her discontent with the conditions that she “is half sick of” (71), she is trapped in her tower and the perspective the mirror provides and also limits, conditioning both her perception and imperception of reality. Rather didactic is Morse Peckham’s argument on romantic perspectivism which “looked at itself from right angles; saw itself creating a world-view” telling “the mind nothing about the world, but merely something about the mind”. This perspectivism was “not a simple assertion that we cannot know the world”, but rather, “it realized that we cannot know whether we know it or not” because “we are always inside a metaphysical system; we can get outside of one system only by gliding, whether we are aware of it or not, into another” (1965:15-6). This romantic perspectivism becomes recognizable when Sir Lancelot appears in the mirror.

In Part II, the reader finds many references to different types of inhabitants of Camelot including “The knights come riding two and two” (61), whereas Part III entirely concentrates on one knight: Sir Lancelot. Devoted, upstanding, and one of King Arthur’s finest knights, Sir Lancelot appears in the Lady’s mirror like an arrow fired from outside of her chamber. Contrary to the Lady’s barely represented appearance, Tennyson astutely described Lancelot, blending his bold look in “brazen greaves” (76), “blazon’d baldric” (87) with courteous and chivalrous attitude of kneeling before “a lady in his shield” (79). The “blue unclouded weather” (91) allows

the sunlight flames on his shiny armour suggesting how an impressive sight he was “As he rode down to Camelot” (95). All these descriptions certainly present an image of a great warrior, thereby projecting an attractive impression that Lancelot is a man who has an aura luring woman. However, known to be passionate, Lancelot is reputedly an imperfect knight, infamized by his adulterous relationship with Queen Guinevere. Tennyson’s strong impression of his image could be referring to how he seems like a vision to the Lady, not a real knight. He also justifies his superficial and nonchalant character as witnessed in the scene when he sees the Lady lying in the river.

The intricate description suggests that the reflection of the sight of Lancelot on the Lady’s mirror is inevitable as his shining armour seems to be illuminating everywhere he goes. The “shadows” (48) in the mirror the Lady referred to earlier disappear once “He flashed into the crystal mirror” (106). Within romantic perspectivism, as mentioned earlier, he enters the Lady’s spectrum “from the bank and from the river” (105) making two Lancelots appear: one is an image “from the bank”; the other, an inverse reflection “from the river” (Martin, 1973: 255). The fragmented reflection of the knight arouses a sense of awe showing her eagerness to abandon all perspectives and look directly at Lancelot. The Lady sees a Lancelot of her own image in the mirror she created in her mind, as an ideal love upon hearing his singing “Tirra lira” (107), Tennyson borrowed from **The Winter’s Tale** (1611), which provokes her to look out. The song is sung by a Shakespearean character named Autolycus in Act 4, Scene 3 entitled “When Daffodils Begin to Peer”. The full stanza where the chant passes reads as follows:

The lark, that tirra-lyra chants,
With heigh! with heigh! the thrush and the jay,
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,
While we lie tumbling in the hay (Shakespeare, 1611: Act 4, Scene 3).

The word “aunts” meaning prostitutes and the overall nature of the stanza allow us to present that Autolycus is singing about how he chases after the girls. The chants “tirra-lirra” (107) are perfect soundtracks when he and his ladies are engaged in sexual acts. Tennyson’s allusion to the chant can be related to Lancelot’s lechery. The erotic chant

serves not only as a literary resonance but also a syntactic mirror image. The doubling of “Tirra lirra,” is paired with “by the river” leading us to a deduction that Lancelot’s reflection is also doubled in the context of mirroring; the river is itself a mirror; thus, “the sound and light mirror each other” (Hollander, 1975:686). Lancelot lures the Lady twice, through the melody of “tirra-lirra” and his tantalizingly attractive reflection in the river.

Although Tennyson allocated a whole part for a powerful description of Lancelot, ironically, the Lady never actually sees what the reader sees, she only catches sight of his helmet and the feather upon it: “She saw the helmet and the plume” (112). It would be possible to draw the conclusion that Lancelot may not be what she imagined at all, just a man of the mirror, but enough to distress her and fire her sexual drive. He may be presented as a fragmented reality, the Lady’s man of her imagination matching Tennyson’s description, and the other is a man like Autolycus, in reality, known for his traits of trickery. However, for Pierre Macherey, drawing from his concept of *fragmentation*; the mirror does not only catch a fragmented reality but also “the very image in the mirror is itself fragmented” (1978:122). This is represented by Lancelot’s duplicated reflection in the mirror as it flashes into the mirror “From the bank and from the river” (105). The doubling of reflection into the mirror brings forth the mythological character Narcissus, best known from book three of Ovid’s **Metamorphoses** (8 AD). Narcissus is said to have been one of the most handsome figures of all mortals, whose beauty attracted many admirers, including a nymph, Echo. Having been cursed by Hera, Echo is known to be voiceless but able to repeat the voices she hears. When she first sees Narcissus hunting, she falls in love with him, but it is unreciprocated since Narcissus is incapable of loving anyone but himself. He rejects Echo, tearing her apart and ultimately turning her into a recluse. Upon the goddess Nemesis’s hearing this, she punishes Narcissus by falling in love with his own reflection and staring at it till he dies. The character of Narcissus constitutes a source for the origin of narcissism: a personality disorder marked by excessive fixation on and admiration for oneself. Meanwhile, Lancelot, a libertine who is engaged in adulterous activities, with his nonchalant attitude towards the Lady’s body in the last stanza, could be associated with Narcissus, and the Lady with Echo. The duplicated

reflection into the mirror, the argument invites a twofold decoding. On the one hand, Lancelot's reflection in the mirror is interpreted as the Lady's expression of a lover in her imagination; on the other hand, his reflection is seen first in the river, then in the mirror, which is the perception and signification of the reflection by the Lady imposed by society, as a cultural product, her being and her dreams, the Lady dreams of a chivalrous man to come and save her, both of which boil down to a distorted reality. Riding side by side on the bank and river, both realities are merged and "flash'd into the crystal mirror" (106). In Isabel Maccaffrey's words, her mirror images are versatile, "which is either self-revealing or self-deceiving, or both at once" (1976:284). In this context, Lancelot's reflections in the mirror are perceptual trickery, the Lady is both revealing her motives or innermost emotions and deceiving herself with the mirror's illusions.

Once the enticing shadow falls upon the Lady's mirror and the song tempts her subversive sexual drive, she yields to temptation and fearlessly pursues her wish to see him. She abandons the repetitious craft of weaving and wilfully violates the curse when "she look'd down to Camelot" (113) inducing a rush of mystical occurrences: the tapestry entangles and the mirror cracks "from side to side" (115). Trapped within a male construct, she is confined to the "distorting mirrors of patriarchy" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979:284). Within the frame of a psychological approach, a mirror is a metaphor for life reflecting it faithfully, whereas, when cracked, functions to reflect fragmented images. Assuming that her life and her mirror are analogous, as a symbol of the Lady's sense of self, the broken mirror can be compared to her destroyed social position – metaphorically becoming the self-alienated and fallen woman when "The curse is come upon" (116) her.

Part IV, as the denouement of the poem, reminds us of Tennyson's use of metaphoric landscape in the first part. However, as James L. Hill noted, the use of landscape in the first part mirrors the vitality and activity of life rather than imbued with personality; the last section steers the vitality from the general and objective to the specific and subjective (1968:423). Associated with her inner world, the natural phenomena serve as a mirror and also a harbinger of her coming grief. The foliage and fecundity of the previous section is replaced "by pale yellow woods" (119), whereas

the sunny scented sky gives way to “stormy east-wind” (118) and rain. A storm creeps and rain pours over the towered Camelot causing the river to rise along with the Lady’s swollen frustration which begs to be unchained to enter into a new realm. The Lady leaves her abode “at the closing of the day” (132) and loosens the chain of the boat on whose bow she carves “*The Lady of Shalott*” (126). Transgressing the margins of her life and right after seeing Sir Lancelot’s shadow in her room, the Lady yearns not only for fulfilment in the outside world, she also ventures out to attain a status and experience by integrating in society. Prior to her stepping outside in the world, she is completely dependent on the reflections of others in the mirror, she even has no image of herself. Void of an autonomy in her confinement, she also lacks an identity. A woman’s status and identity were completely dependent on and determined by her marital status, and by her husband in the Victorian era. Thus, the sight of “two young lovers lately wed” (70), first leads to her awakening and stimulates her desire, then the reflection of Lancelot compels her wish to find a marital love and a status in society, but most of all a self. Her quest to accomplish a self is achieved through the interaction with and recognition of others, particularly of Lancelot, that being the case she writes her name “round about the prow” (125) of the boat to introduce herself to society and Sir Lancelot whom she hopes to find in Camelot. In the 1833 version, Tennyson wanted to attract attention to his Lady’s existence stressing the “I” to enunciate her identity:

The web was woven curiously,
The charm is broken utterly,
Draw near and fear not, -- this is I,
The Lady of Shalott (Tennyson, 1842:177-80).

The subject “I” calls attention to the aspect that it is literally a pivotal item in discourse providing the role of a subject in its metaphorical meaning. This is what the Lady claims with her use of “I”, she claims a place in the social life. Tennyson deleted this part in his 1842 version and reconfigured it as less assertive way by naming a boat, rather than a woman, as a result depriving her of a place in the social context.

The mirror she saw Camelot in now is likened to her “glassy countenance” (130), suggesting that she has become the mirror itself, but broken. In Elizabeth Lenk’s phrases, it is a “living mirror of woman in which she loses herself in order to find herself again” (1985:57). The Lady is already a social product, as opposed to being a social component – she is a “living mirror” of patriarchal doctrine. However, it is a fact that she is a person in her own right, despite societal denial, driven and instinctively motivated. Realizing these needs in herself, she challenges the said patriarchal doctrine, takes action by ‘burning her bridges’, finally she abandons all decorum and acceptable behaviour for a ‘lady’ and seeks out Lancelot. In doing this, she loses social acceptance and metaphorically dies in the eyes of society, in other words she “loses herself in order to find herself”. She metamorphoses into a “self-reflecting woman” from “reflection of the prisoner woman”. Considering the mirror, Gubar and Gilbert’s suggestion is that woman is bestowed with the power of reaching the woman, namely her own image, trapped on the other side of the mirror to gain freedom. It is no accident that the Lady of Shalott realizes that she has that power and courage to reach herself through the mirror by climbing out. Her floating down to Camelot “Lying, robed in snowy white” (136) dress goes beyond the symbolic feminine vulnerability and suggests an image of the madwoman or suicidal Victorian woman. In many cultures, the colour white, apart from its conventional symbolic meanings of purity and innocence, the pervading image of woman in white dress is also associated so readily with mourning, insanity, and madness, with regard to this context. The reapers, referenced as “they” (143), hear her singing arising from “echoes” (30). It is no coincidence that after she has entered the realm of realities from “shadows” (48), her song, once echoes, evolves into something more meaningful “carol, mournful, holy, / Chanted loudly” (145-6).

It is without a doubt that the Lady is recognized, but with her “dead-pale” (157) and “gleaming” (156) body bringing the poem to a climax with its emotional effect through the lines:

A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot. (Tennyson, 1842:156-8)

That the Lady embraces death in the rain and in a body of water suggests that Tennyson's poem negotiates with the stigma adhered to the fallen, or the "imprisoned woman". Whereas one of Jane Kromm's workshops focuses on the association of water with self-harming and self-destructive madwoman typology (See introduction, pg.14), Richard Broad positions woman near the water which suggests a location for suicide (2011:14)⁴. Victorian literature and art adhered to different associations of water such as purification, rebirth, or contamination and death. There can be no argument that Tennyson was well aware of the emergence of iconography and symbolism related to water in Victorian art and literature; thus, he picked the river as a place of death. The river provides the Lady of Shalott with a journey into the freedom she longed for, even though it is death.

It is tragic that her soul reaches Sir Lancelot, who thinks for "a little space" (168), has the final words in the text saying "She has a lovely face" (169) dispassionately, and adding "God in his mercy lend her grace" (170), evoking the common benediction that is said over a belated stranger. Sir Lancelot's position, looking at the lifeless body of the Lady, signifies the female submission or passivity and male dominance. While Lancelot is standing upright in his armour with his horse, serving as a symbolic element of virility, the Lady is, in its literal and metaphorical sense, resigned to the patriarchal world, which intensifies the effects of female victimization in its fullest sense.

Tennyson's poem reveals far beyond the tale of a woman. **The Lady of Shalott** illustrates an ideological notion of the Victorian woman cloistered in an interior world and the shadows of society. While the Lady's subversive engagement in the domestic task of weaving reinforces the prescribed conception of the ideal woman, her actively pursuing love cracks open the system and subverts the apportioned gender role to women. That the patriarchal norms and values confined women to marriage, prostitution, or spinsterhood steers us to construe the text as a portrayal of a female protagonist whose depiction conveys a didactic message, cautioning Victorian women to remain within their sphere, otherwise, the punishment for their defiance is

⁴ The association of the fallen woman and water will be further explored in the following chapter.

unavoidable. Abandoned and having “no loyal knight and true” (62), the Lady obviously falls into the dreaded spinsterhood, stigmatized as “redundant” which may cause mental disintegration, lead to tragic acts and ends. This is what Tennyson seemingly wanted to depict with his Lady; he, like many intellectuals of the period, was concerned about the anxieties most, Victorian women, especially unmarried felt, due to the lack of emotional and sexual fulfilment. However, William Holman Hunt obviously relished imagining a Lady struggling to free herself from the threads of the tapestry entangling her rather than composing a narrative with a tragic end but hinting about it through his symbolic details. Despite knowingly planning her tragic end, the Lady of Shalott makes an effort to protect her consciousness, through her female authority, to avoid succumbing to mental malady, which can be achieved when she frees herself from the prescriptive selflessness and enter the masculine domain; yet even though her textual self succeeds in freeing her body from the thread, her real self fails to untangle her femininity from the rigid canon of the era. Did William Holman Hunt intend to convey this?

“Out flew the web and floated wide / The mirror crack'd from side to side / The curse is come upon me, cried The Lady of Shalott” (Tennyson, 1842:114-7) is one of the two parts where the reader hears from the Lady herself, particularly when the cursed Lady haunted Hunt; thus, he concentrated his interpretation of *The Lady of Shalott* (1905) on this moment. Entangling the threads of the tapestry and venting up the Lady's hair, the curse is allegorical for the not conforming to the restrictive social norms. The fact that Victorian values drew from Christian beliefs leads to the identification of the curse as a sinful act. Despite Tennyson's disapproval of this illustration due to the inconsistencies with its source text, Hunt insisted on keeping it:

Tennyson: Why is the Lady's “hair wildly tossed about as if by a tornado?” and why does the web “wind round and round her like the threads of a cocoon?”

Hunt: “I had wished to convey the idea of the threatened fatality by reversing the ordinary peace of the room and of the lady herself.”

Tennyson: “The illustrator should always adhere to the words of the poet!” (Hunt,1905:124).

According to Marsh Tennyson was disturbed by the idea that an image of a defiant Lady would be remembered forever as a figure of passive rebellious (1987:25). However, Hunt persistently kept the part Tennyson found weird and irrelevant. He wanted to create his own social commentary which is enclosed in his employment of the fragments of significant moments suggesting the Lady's realization of the suppressed self and sexuality. The transition from verse to the visual allows the painter to exercise his own translations of the poems, and Hunt undoubtedly added his own interpretations based on the poem's innate statement. The famous art critic and strong supporter of the Brotherhood John Ruskin always endorsed the idea that; "Good pictures never can be illustrations; they are always another poem subordinate but wholly different from the poet's conception and serve chiefly to show the reader how variously the same verses may affect various minds" (qtd. in Nelson, 1985:15). Tennyson intentionally avoided describing the Lady, who is expected to be a representative female – a conceptual idea ringing true and specific to every individual reader; hence many painters stereotyped and portrayed their own conceit of the Lady in different compositions. Whereas Rossetti preferred the poem's ending, Waterhouse, depicting two illustrations, captured the Lady in a moment of reclining in her chair for a break from her weaving in one study, and he depicted the Lady dying while slowly floating down the river in the other one. Hunt was inspired by the climactic moment of the poem when curse falls upon her and portrayed his own conceit of the Lady despite Tennyson's strong belief that an artist "should not take such liberties in adjusting an author's work" (Layard, 1894:2;125). Ruskin's statement "How variously same verses may affect various minds" testifies to the kinship established between a poem and its visual narration and consequently to the multiple versions of illustrations by different painters. In Hunt's interpretation of Tennyson's Lady, he focused on the Lady's sexual awakening and understood exactly what she must do upon realizing the tragic outcome that will befall her. The Lady of Shalott's frustration upon seeing "two young lovers lately wed" (Tennyson, 1833: 70) in Tennyson's poem finds expression in the Lady's body, rushing out, flying hair, and disarrayed tapestry in Hunt's painting. All these combined display signs of arousal, like the textual Lady's distress, and is

why Tennyson explained why Hunt should not have been given such liberty in re-articulating an author's work.

Hunt's painting of *The Lady of Shalott* suggests a "muffled but powerful explosion" (Udall, 1990:36) with her magnificent flying hair, filling and dominating the painting. The Pre-Raphaelites were highly interested in picturing long, loose, and flaming red hair which has been construed as a symbol of strength and sensuality. Their preoccupation with the hair is parallel to the Victorian's obsession with it. On the literary tradition of hair in Victorian literature and art, Elisabeth G. Gitter stated that while the powerful woman of the Victorian imagination was associated with an angel, her shining hair was defined as her aureole or bower; when demonic, then her hair was snare and web; and most prevalent was the silent, who used her hair "to weave her discourse"; when she was passive, her hair became her shield to protect or her noose to strangle her lover (1984:936). Weaving and combing hair are considered to be sister arts both evoking sexual and female power, and the abundant hair signifies the potency of the sexual invitation. Berg and Ellis agreed that literary and psychoanalytic traditions reflect that the luxuriance of the hair is an index of vigorous sexuality (1951:26-30; 1920:194). Victorian painters and writers were profoundly intrigued by the symbolic complexities and the multiple meanings ascribed to woman's hair. Whether it defines the woman as a 'femme fatale' or 'femme fragile' is ambiguous. Albeit its ambiguity, what is beyond doubt is the vigour of independent feminine energy is released through the Lady's magic hair on Hunt's canvas.

Hunt's Lady is fully upright rather than leaning over her work since it is inherently more indicative of her exasperation. Swirling in the middle of her golden circular loom as in "Out flew the web and floated wide;" (Tennyson, 1842: 114), the Lady exhibits an impulse of disengagement from work revealed through her gestures of struggle with the threads to release herself from entanglement, namely, to unleash her own desires. Intensifying her female desire and freedom is the three painted serpentine reliefs on the loom with a Medusa head as a motif and trapping the Lady in the middle. The prescribed duty is expressed with Medusa as sorceress, suggesting why the thread got entangled; the suppressed sexual authority bursts from her cocoon and weakens the foundation of the feminine passivity. Based upon this perusal, rather

than adjustments and additions, Tennyson might have been troubled more by Hunt's moral transgression in his painting's typological symbolism, specifically typified by sexual energy (Bolen, 2004:38). Her dress, serving as an archetype for the Pre-Raphaelite dress, carries a particular portion of symbolism with three different colours: the least of all is blue symbolizing servitude corresponding to the Lady's refusal to abide by it. However, the blue part on her top close to her neck and genital contradicts her demure and downcast face suggestive of the uncertainty in her choice, creating another ambiguous point. The other colour covering the middle part of her top and coinciding with the abdominal region is green associated with fertility, justifying her youth, health, and sexual maturity. Pink or also known as pale red is the most used colour which symbolizes femininity, and when aligned with white, like the Lady's gown, it represents chastity. The combination of these colours is an epitome of her [repressed] sexuality that she cannot fulfil. The undressed parts of her body contribute to the interpretation of the colours of her attire. Drawing from Kılıç's statement "the hypocritical incongruity of Victorian sanctimony going hand in hand with a voyeuristic fascination for the female nude" (2012:15), one concludes that the naked forearms, the bare feet, and the unveiled gown, endorse the Victorian voyeurism relishing the Lady's libidinal stir. Demonstrating the Lady's hidden gown or other parts of the body is a sexual gratification for the male gaze which is interpreted by Freud as: "curiosity seeks to complete the sexual object by revealing its hidden parts" (1905/1977:156-57). The Lady's seeming gown as underclothing leads to Smith's words "It is not important that what is revealed is the woman's underclothing rather than her sex, for the underwear is a surrogate for the woman's intimate parts" (2004:238); and in Freud's argument, it "crystallizes the moment of undressing" (1905/1977:354). The Lady's bare feet and gown invite the conclusion that it is a painting of the temptation of sexuality. Not resisting anymore but negotiating the female sexuality upon seeing Lancelot who "flash'd into the crystal mirror" (Tennyson, 1833: 106), the Lady strives to free her emotions masqueraded as an escape from the tower, which is also foreshadowed with the discarded sandals. If we lay the sandals open to further perusal, it would be appropriate to interpret their representation

as a place attachment, but being discarded signals the Lady's wishful departure to start a journey.

Upon turning right, one sees a merciless Sphinx form at the foot of the tea table, a samovar⁵, some reads it as a candelabra, with owls on its top and a silver lamp in its front devoid of light. As a whole, the collection stands as the palest object with its colour grey indicative of nonconformity. Its perusal as a candelabra reveals that its light has already died suggesting the Lady's relinquishment of her duties. Intuitive knowledge and wisdom are emblematically associated with an owl, and the traditional meaning, more appropriate for the Lady's fate, is the announcer of death. Regarding the former representation, its analysis is expanded to Medusa and it suggests a connection between the woman's wisdom and her monstrous sexual strength. Hence, it is not accident that Hunt painstakingly included the Medusa and Sphinx to depict the woman's mysterious dark side and frightening femininity. Gilbert and Gubar describe her as a monstrous woman, alluring but "terrible sorceress-goddesses [such] as the Sphinx, Medusa, Circe, Kali, Delilah, and Salome, all of whom possess duplicitous arts that allow them both seduce and to steal male generative energy" (1979:34). Hunt's Lady simultaneously embodies these ambiguous feelings through the allusive references to the Medusa. The entangled threads are well appropriate to be read as her chain from which she strives to free herself to chase Sir Lancelot, as she "loosed the chain" (Tennyson, 1842:133) of the boat in the poem.

The Lady's wild hair and the ruined weaving, by the power of the curse, startle the doves away that had been clearly accompanying her. Birds had always been portrayed to accompany women placed in an interior space or garden surrounded by walls in nineteenth-century visual art. Elaine Shefer's assertion congruously describes Hunt's depiction of the Lady with the birds:

The intimate relationship between the two represents the idea that a bird will love its owner, submit to its cage, and accept its food if it is treated well—that is, if it is petted and kissed. The caged bird, happily receiving the attention of its owner,

⁵ Hunt had always had a particular interest in the East since his youth; the sale of *The Light of the World* (1853-54) afforded him to travel to Egypt, Syria, and Palestine (Daly, 1989:105); thus, samovar may have been inspired from one of his visits to these Middle Eastern countries.

is thus symbolic of the woman's acceptance of her position: a pet that is nourished and adored. (1990:84-5)

The Lady's birds comparatively reveal their owner's actions and fate, or more significantly, personify her as metaphorically captive like them. Two of them near the loom signify the panicked situation revealing the Lady's choice; the third one placed above the Lady's head flying out of the window represents her imminent escape; the one nestling on the Hercules frame suggests what the Lady is expected to be, a docile woman fulfilling domestic duties as dictated by the Victorian doctrine. However, she chooses to protest against the proper function she is imposed to fulfil. A breakdown of order in her tapestry, evincing chaos and confusion, is the result of her choice suggesting manifestly that Hunt's perception of Tennyson's poem as a text on woman's 'dereliction of duty' and the abandonment of her quintessential gendered role for her pursuit of desires.

Unlike Tennyson's poem, Hunt's painting also conveys religious interpretations with the relief of the Virgin and features mythology through the image of Hercules in the garden of Hesperides. The inclusion of the religious symbols is an illustration of the demarcation dictated by the moral values trapping the Lady. Hunt portrayed his Lady as devout to the extent she concedes to the social dictates. On the right side of the mirror is Hercules with a halo whose victorious performance in his Eleventh Labor of stealing apples of the Hesperides, protected by a serpent named Ladon and Atlas's daughter the nymph Hesperides prefiguring him as Christ who sacrifices for humankind. On the other side of the mirror, the Virgin Mary, as the quintessential epitome of 'the female excellence', praying over the Christ child, suggests a pious female figure to fulfil domestic tasks with an unyielding dedication. In apocryphal accounts, well acknowledged by the Victorians, is told a handmaiden, known as young Mary, was in the service of the Temple embroidering the sacred Veil: "chosen by lot to spin the fine purple of the Temple, to weave and embroider it" (qtd. in Inglis & O'Brien, 2014: n.p.). Hunt's religious allusions to the legends lurking behind Mary and Hercules figures expose the contrast with the Lady who succumbed

to temptation and abandoned her duty. Neuringer's interpretation of the image of Hercules considering the theme of neglected duty reads as:

reminds [The Lady] of the consequences of neglecting her duty since he was able to steal the golden apples and complete his labor only because the guardian daughters of Erebus neglected their duty and fell asleep (1985: 64).

Standing quietly compared to the noise of the activity in the rest of the painting, the Virgin and Hercules are concluded to represent the devoted paragons of duty endorsing the moral idealism of the period, but also posing a contrariety made explicit with the Lady's misconduct. Both exemplars blatantly denounce the Lady's impropriety. Hercules stealing the apple, introduced above, also features the Fall enacting the Lady's punishment, which is implied by the Lady's position facing Hercules relief implicitly articulating her inclination to the Fall by turning her back to the Virgin and refusing a celibate life. Unlike the unconscious nymphs leaning against the tree, the defeated serpent motif extends out of Hercules's heroic tale and nestles at the top centre of the frame. The conception of the image of the serpent in a protective position on the frame is equivocal; its existence outside of the Hercules composition typifies its defeat against Hercules thereby showing the celebration of his triumph by holding the apple. Thus, this may be construed as the Lady's impending defeat if she abandons her duties thereby denoting a dissuasion. However, on the other hand, it symbolizes the temptation that Eve yielded to by eating the forbidden apple portraying the Fall from the Garden of Eden. The particularization of the reliefs and their place hint at the choice she made: the Hercules relief covers a larger space exhibiting its entirety as a composition in the painting, but a small space is allocated for The Virgin frame as if it was squeezed in the painting, leaving the left part of the composition out of the main narrative, and the right side is hidden behind the Lady's flying hair and the gesture of the arm. Given that the image of Hercules suggests the Lady's imminent Fall, it would be convenient to refer to Bourke's expositions on the repercussions of Hunt's conservative views on the narrative:

... given Hunt's conservative views toward women, he more likely portrayed the thread and the hair in such wild manners to emphasize her wantonness. An educated and religious man, Hunt was certainly familiar with John Milton's description of Eve's hair in *Paradise Lost*: "Her unadorned golden tresses [she] wore / Disheveled, but in wanton ringlets waved" (4:305-6). Women with bad reputations seem to sport sloppy hairdos (1996:39).

Hunt's portrayal of the hair in a dishevelled manner that extends to the thread, or vice versa, caters a junction where the Christian and Victorian impositions meet: if she neglects her prescribed tasks and abandons the religious duties, she will *fall* from grace. The contradictory canons of moral and sexual identities such as being devoted, leading a virgin life, and pursuing her romantic love and fulfilling her sexuality, create chaos as represented by the hair and the thread.

The relief of the "Fall and the nativity" (Pearce, 1991:79) highlights the cracked mirror where Sir Lancelot's reflection catches the viewer's eye. The alignment of the three frames provides a prelude to the Lady's tragic story when viewed from left to right: her unyielding abidance is symbolized with The Virgin prior to a glimpse of Sir Lancelot on the mirror which subsequently cracks when her story reaches a climax, and the crack is construed as a metaphor for Eve's tasting the forbidden apple. The broken mirror is followed by Hercules's stealing the apple as a precursor of the Lady's Fall, serving as correspondence for her death in its textual source.

The narrative does not allow an easy scrutiny, claustrophobically filled with an immense number of invented details; rather the viewer "is forced to search out every detail, as one would read a miniature. This 'intenseness of vision' was much commented on during Hunt's lifetime, as his painting became more detailed than that of the rest of the Brotherhood" (Wagstaff, 1962: 19-20). The chaos in the painting's foreground created with the composition of the flower petals, a pair of discarded sandals⁶, flying birds, the carpet with animal designs, and the spiralling threads of coloured yarns, intrude upon the upper frames of The Virgin and Hercules. If we read the Hercules image as the Fall, then we conclude that the Lady has a symbolic divided

⁶ Along with the concept of the mirror, the sandals are also known to have been borrowed from *The Marriage of Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami* (Jan Van Eyck, 1434), which carried common artistic ambitions the Brotherhood had.

and contradictory self, as mentioned above: an in-between Celibacy and Fall. These two 'contradictory discourses' are the foundation on which the moral message of the painting is based, disguising itself in the graphic symbols. The frieze of cherubs above the Lady's head is a part of this symbolic catalogue painted on a blue background which is considered sacred and associated with The Virgin. The twisting angelic bodies or figures are meticulously positioned but a scrutiny shows that two of them on both sides stepping forth; the figure above The Virgin symbolizes her humility with the posture; the one on the right standing in the middle appears to be stepping on the serpent's head signifying the resistance to temptation. When the frieze is analysed as a whole, it is concluded that the angelic figures endow the painting with the moral philosophy of the epoch and the painter; the Lady's tower, identified with her state [of virginity] and her duty, becomes a sanctuary where she is devotedly fulfilling her duty in her cloister as instructed. However, that life is now on the verge of being history described via the painter's design of the constellation of cherubs, The Virgin, and Hercules in the background, but sparing the foreground for the Lady's sinful dereliction of duty and the sacred. Considering the distinction between the two discourses, the cherubs belong to Christian Celibacy, stipulating either women marry or remain invisible but pious.

As a reader, navigating the slippery surfaces of the encoded narratives, we strive to discover the producer's sentiment of the predominant ideology and its resonance on the work of art and also locate the juncture of the producer's intended message and our interpretation. As argued in the Introduction part, the main theoretical vision of the domain of post-structuralism is the examination of literary and social texts exploring what they implicitly and explicitly narrate about their own ideologies. Within this framework, it is appropriate to recognize that the artistic delineations of both poet and painter serve as their manifestos for the construction of the female gender. When the two narratives are juxtaposed, their deconstruction reveals two different Ladies albeit bearing similarities starting with the same pseudonym. Both Ladies are entangled by the same thread defined as a web woven by the patriarchal authority, which is a causal effect of the abandonment of the duty. The glimpse of Lancelot is elucidated as the moment of insurrection followed by impulsive attempts

of breaking free. The most powerful force underlying the Lady's refusal to fulfil the role is her repressed sexual desire aroused by a male's presence; otherwise, she would/might be relishing her constant weaving within the domestic confines. In both narratives, the female figures epitomize the condition of women undeniably luring the feminist readers as victims of the ideologies. Tennyson's narrative of the Lady invites the definition of a more courageous female figure *vis-à-vis* the social impositions, as she faces her tragic demise outside her tower when compared to Hunt's particularization of the moment of entanglement of the thread in a private domain. Even though Tennyson's Lady is aware of a pending tragic end, she valiantly ventures into the masculine domain, which is prohibited to her, as a sign of a wishful hankering to substantiate her identity or proclaim her existence by carving her name on her boat albeit it goes unfulfilled. However, Hunt's Lady, pictured in an interior space, depicts a female figure seemingly experiencing a frequent frustration due to duties and the isolation leading her to abandon *or* resume her work. Suggestive of the servile Victorian woman, she represents her creator being as much a product, and the rebel in her society. The painting shows the repercussion of the tension between the artistic ambitions and social responsibilities, a peculiar reality of the Pre-Raphaelites, building a polarized self in Hunt and in his Lady.

CHAPTER THREE

MADWOMAN

3.1. John Keats's *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil* by William Holman Hunt

*"Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moisten'd it with the tears unto the core"*
(John Keats, *Isabella, or The Pot of Basil*, 1818)

Known as "the most romantic of all the romantics", John Keats was highly favoured by the Pre-Raphaelites and was part of the Pre-Raphaelite creed as they declared themselves in their list of immortals¹. In his memoir **Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood** (1905), William Holman Hunt shared how he introduced the romantic poet to Millais in his studio, and how the same enthusiasm for the poet galvanized their artistic ambitions and subsequently played a major role in the very formation of the Brotherhood:

...Thus, chatting and dilating on these quattrocento epochal masterpieces and their fascinating merits gave us subject for a few minutes' talk; but our common enthusiasm for Keats brought us / into intimate relations (Hunt, 1905:107).

What fuelled Keats's popularity among these young artists may be understood by his use of 'simplicity' and 'realism' while reflecting the beauty, notably in nature, with its pure existence in the Brotherhood's early practices. Keats's profound interest in art must have inspired his pen and cajoled him to imbibe this fascination into his poems. His illustrators recognized the fact that his poetry is lush in visual words identifying him as a painterly poet. The repeated reference to the poet is not merely the simple and realistic details or words embellished with visual richness, but also his powerful employment of penta senses drawing the reader into a full story, a historical narrative with a beginning, middle, and an end as in **Isabella or Pot of Basil** (1820),

¹ William Holman Hunt included this list of Immortals in his **Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**, 2 vols., 1905, vol. 1, p. 159.

La Belle Dame Sans Merci (1819), and **The Eve of Saint Agnes** (1820). These poems offered the Pre-Raphaelites a structure of medieval resonances with its knights, maidens, dark forests or dungeons, yet notwithstanding their characters, setting, and details, what the painters relished most was the colours and textures which they translated onto canvas. William Holman Hunt's *Isabella and Pot of Basil* (1868) is one of the paintings depicting a scene from Keats's **Isabella, or the Pot of Basil** epitomizing the artists' emphasis on sensuality, rich colours, and flamboyant decorative objects.

Another name added to the list of immortals and tremendously influenced the Pre-Raphaelites is William Shakespeare whose works and women they revived through their visual narratives to present them to the Victorian audience. Along with his powerful use of imagery employing the five senses to vividly describe scenes and reflect themes, much of the greatness of Shakespeare's plays relies on the constructions of female characters. Some, on the one hand, quintessentially advocate the archetypal stereotypes of their roles and responsibilities, pious, and obedient; on the other hand, some challenge the Elizabethan shaping of gender roles through the characterization of strong, self-confident, and resourceful women. This bifurcated construction and representation of female figures generated the Pre-Raphaelites' interest more than the use of language, finding an expression in their images of women, defined as the repercussions of the polarization between their artistic desires and social demands. Given that the Pre-Raphaelites were inspired by female characters in Shakespeare's texts, they suggest different interpretations of the conditions of woman, sometimes conforming to the social codes, but sometimes challenging them. The Victorians perhaps most delighted in viewing and depicting Ophelia, a significant protagonist in **Hamlet** (1603). The iconic character has been a subject of many canvasses; however, none have perhaps been as memorable and quintessentially representative of Victorian imagination of vulnerable woman and landscape as John Everett Millais's *Ophelia* (1851-52). His grandiose portrayal of her poetic drowning in a river is intensified with its landscape and flowers, all of which are pregnant with symbolic meaning, conforming to Shakespeare's description.

Isabella and Ophelia are conducive to interpretation as the representations of the typology of a mentally destroyed woman by different forms of love caused by the similar injustices of patriarchal society. That the visual impression of the characters left on the painters is unequivocally obvious must be accepted without question; however, these illustrations from a Keatsian and Shakespearean source, further demonstrate Hunt and Millais's, and therefore the Brotherhood's, employment of the female malady and madness from unfulfilled desires of romantic love and victimization by tragic love. Focusing on the representation of female madness, mourning, and melancholia, this part explores the mental instability and its tragic end in textual and visual narratives at hand with a view to discovering their creators' outlook on woman, and whether they correspond to the canon of the contemporary culture and their progenitors or if they diverge in views from their source materials.

Adapted from Boccaccio's story in Novel V from day 4 of the **Decameron** (composed between 1349-53, published in English in 1620), John Keats entitled his poem **Isabella** and added a subtitle **or Pot of Basil**, a love story of a woman and her tragic fate. In the first stanza, the reader discerns that poetic narration hints at Isabella's sufferings in the line "Fair Isabel, poor simple Isabel!" (1), suggesting a sort of distress has befallen her, inferentially due to two conflicting causes in the contrasting epithets: "Fair" and "poor". The answers lie in the following lines treating romantic love in an unconventional way in which the lovers are presented as residents in "the self-same mansion" and "beneath the same roof" but separated (3-7). Implicit in the repeated lines starting with "They could not..." (3-5-7) is that the lovers are plagued by being parted and frustrated at "forbidden love" which is suggested by "It soothed each to be the other by", "But to each other to dream, and nightly weep" (6-8). A speechless passion invading their souls is the result generated by the inhibition and grows tender exponentially "With every morn..." and "With every eve..." (9-10). The depth of passion is analogous to nature personified in "And his continual voice was pleasanter / To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill" (13-14), implying that only an impeccable and sublime creation can be matched with their unequalled love. The pursuit of art on "Her lute-string" as a medium of reflecting feelings is read as their everlasting love, even after death, and suggested by the word "echo" (15) as if tuning Lorenzo's name.

The word “echo” also leads to the interpretation that Isabella possibly sings for Lorenzo, in his absence, signifying the intensity of love, and in the case of separation, the psychological disorders are inevitable. The following stanza reciprocates the maiden’s obsessive yearning with Lorenzo’s imagination of her secret visit and his “sick longing” (23) leading to his fixated spying on his lover through her “chamber-window” (19) during her prayers at night and her steps on the stairs in the morning. Clandestine watches and furtive glances under the same roof portend imminent tragedy and danger, regarding why they are forbidden for each other, as revealed by the term of address articulated by Lorenzo “my lady” (28) in stanza IV. The realities of the class system and social ties are read as an expression of the brutal ideology keeping Isabella and Lorenzo from each other.

The lovers’ painful longing is compared to the passing seasons; from spring to summer as read in “A whole long month of May in this sad plight / Made their cheeks paler by the break of June” (25-26), demonstrating the growing despair consuming their very selves. Void of any form of interaction or romantic discussion, both can only whisper their suppressed feelings in the pillows leaving them hopeless in their distance from each other. Albeit the depth of the feelings, neither can proceed or act; each is expected to comply with the social codes of class and gender, the issues more closely related to our point. Keats’s view of women is ambivalent whether it is an appreciation or anxiety, but he seems more certain with his depiction of them as victims of society evinced by characterizing Isabella who is obligated to conform to the rules. Is she?

The following stanza reveals that she has maintained her purity insinuated in “untouch’d cheek” (33) and followed by the rose, appropriately symbolizing sensuality, passion, and commonly romance stressing that love is nurturing but when unfulfilled, it is exhausting: “Fell sick within the rose’s just domain” (34). It sounds odd but at the same time illuminating to find the comparison between the love she has is analogous with a mother’s love for her child “Fell thin as a young mother’s, who doth seek / By every lull to cool her infant’s pain” (35-36) as it is undoubtedly the purest and most powerful form of love on earth. The comparison is twofold; the first one suggests Isabella’s sexual maturity and the second one reveals the denial of union with the loved one, and its causative distress. While meditating on the lovers’ “sad

plight” (25), we are confronted with Lorenzo’s metaphoric expression of “I will drink her tears” (39), foreshadowing his fate that his head will be literally nurtured by her tears in a pot. Even though their behaviour and manners are governed by the arbitrary rules of the “love-laws” for now, in the end, the reader is satisfied or shocked to see that Isabella yields to the desire of a union fuelled by emotional trauma despite the forbidden boundaries of the norms. That Keats’s belief was that women were responsible for their tragic fate shows Isabella’s disobedience to norms. It is concluded that the didacticism of the poem sheds light on the implied instructions for her to eschew disobedience. However, she succumbs to desire; hence has not avoided disobedience and upon Lorenzo’s confession of his love by his facial expressions where words fail as in “To every symbol on his forehead high / She saw it waxing very pale and dead”, Isabella challenges the rules and acts unexpectedly by breaking her silence when yelling his name “Lorenzo! here she ceas’d her timid quest” (55) in stanza VII. The presentation of Isabella as the first to speak is read as her projection as brave and forthright which emanates from her resilience and unceasing devotion to Lorenzo. Isabella’s taking it upon herself to speak first is a reference to their class difference. His “stifled voice” (45) is an indication of admittance of his lowly social status inherently stipulating that a servant would not dare to declare love for a noble lady, but to wait for her to make the first move.

After hearing his name from Isabella, Lorenzo utters the sweet love words as it is manly despite his lower class, portraying the illiteracy and insufficiency of women in poesy or expression of feelings:

O Isabella, I can half perceive
That I may speak my grief into thine ear;
If thou didst ever any thing believe,
Believe how I love thee, believe how near
My soul is to its doom: I would not grieve
Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live
Another night, and not my passion thrive (Keats, 1820:57-64)

Comparing the sublimity of love to nature as a symbolic reference continues in stanza IX but this time it evokes the Romantic perspective of nature. Nature was

observed to indicate God's perfect work suggesting a harmonious ideal order of God, a way of worship through observing the grandeur of nature. Keats's words in his letter to his love Fanny "Love is my religion" explains well Lorenzo's metaphorizing his warm feelings as worship-like love which Isabella embraces in "wintry cold" and "summer clime" (65-66). His sexual desires erupt in his words "And I must taste the blossoms that unfold / In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time" (67-8) signalling the start of a sexual relationship. Isabella is defined as "lusty flower in June's caress" (72) evoking an erotic scene matched by June when the blooms are lavish.

The confession of love floods their body and replenishes their souls with euphoria but shadowed again with the implication of the mythological God zephyr suggestive of their fate, which will separate them. Zephyr, known as the Greek God of the west wind in mythology and the harbinger of spring, gently separates the lovers for the time being "only to meet again more close" (75) to break a taboo that will imperil them. Not only the division of sexes, but also the distinction between the social status of class clouding a happy ending reveals the taboos. Irresistibly amplifying, the unleashed love brings the lovers together to consummate the sexual act "before the dusk" (81).

Until stanza XIV, the conditions keeping the star-crossed lovers asunder are hinted at, namely the complications generated by the gendered and status differentials. The latter one surfaces more upon reading stanzas XIV and XV revealing the villains of the story, Isabella's brothers. "In blood from stinging whip; —with hollow eyes" (110) and "That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel" (120) demonize the brothers connoting their ill-treatment to thousands of men labouring under them; many of whose "weary hands did swelt" (107) in dark mines, factories, rivers for ores, Ceylon divers fall victim "to the hungry shark" (114) in deep seas for pearl fishing, and many "in troubles wide and dark" (118) on the cold ice for seals. The precise details present the wicked brothers' power and limitless exploitation not merely on land and men but more cruelly upon their own kin, Isabella. The recurrent refrain by Keats, "Why were they proud?" (121) is often interpreted as his harsh criticism of the brother's gratuitously brutal acts illustrating the ugly face of exploitation. In the following stanza, their amoral and greedy gains are more precisely described through cutting

down of trees to build ships for their trade and financial cheatings as hinted in “old-lies”, “cats-paws” (134-5) to do their dirty business all over “Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay” (136) lands. However, it also suggests that the poet is implicating the brothers as being capable of doing evil of all sorts.

The allusion to the Bible about “Egypt’s pest” (140) which is one of the ten plagues inflicted on Egypt by the God of Israel to compel the Pharaoh to release Israelites from slavery, further metaphorizes the torturous brothers’ cruel acts. Spying on Isabella and Lorenzo, the brothers lay bare the secret love between them but leads the poet to adjourn the narration and asks Boccaccio for forgiveness as he digresses from the fundamentals of love stories as in “And of thy roses amorous of the moon / And of thy lilies, that do paler grow” (158-9) and he realizes the ferocious style in his telling. After apologizing to the progenitor, Keats resumes his tale, in his own way, with the brothers’ finding out their sister’s relationship with a servant, an unthinkable union in a period when social status is rigid, and scheming to murder and bury Lorenzo. “Serpent’s whine” (190) cajoles Lorenzo to atone for the crime with his life in stanzas XXIII and XXIV. In stanza XXV, the moment of bidding farewell is disguised by Lorenzo’s rhapsodizing on Isabella’s beauty, foreshadowing the tragedy that is soon to follow.

Keats’s reference to the voice and dynamics of nature with “stream gurgles” (209-10) and “dancing bulrush” (210-11-12) before Lorenzo’s fate in “a forest quiet” (216) intensifies the event of his death as he harkens to nature’s beauty for the last time. The Gothic horror built on the medieval elements is first revealed with “There was Lorenzo slain and buried in” (217), not reported as dead but “did his great love cease” (218) by the narrator suggesting that his corporeal presence existed with the love for Isabella; in other words, he was the embodiment of love but nothing else where lurks Keats’s declaration: “I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart’s affections and the truth of the Imagination” (qtd. in Ryan, 1973: 259). Now Keats introduces the onset of the emotional and psychological trauma that Isabella experiences in stanza XXIX that indicates the mourning process for the loss of the loved one with the line “Poor Girl! put on thy stifling widow’s weed” (229) and her slow plunge into melancholia through stanzas XXX, XXXI, and XXXII. Germane to

the argument, Freud compares the two processes of mourning and melancholia and reaches the conclusion that they share similar symptoms as read in his “Mourning and Melancholia” (1914-16):

Profound mourning, the reaction to the loss of someone who is loved, contains the same (*melancholia*) painful frame of mind, the same loss of interest in the outside world- in so far as it does not recall him- the same loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love (which would mean replacing him) and the same turning away from any activity that is not connected with thoughts of him. It is easy to see that this inhibition and circumscription of the ego is the expression of an exclusive devotion to mourning which leaves over for other purposes or other interests (244, italic is mine).

Albeit their similarities, they also bear differences; whereas mourning is defined as a normal process to restore psychological health without seeking medical treatment, melancholia is accepted as abnormal and requires medical attention. Freud explains the struggles that a patient, suffering from melancholia, exhibits which makes it different from mourning as it may be caused by a real loss of the object such as death. While the patient is struggling to get over the object, hate and love fight with each other; “the one seeks to detach the libido from the object, the other to maintain this position of the libido against assault” (ibid.:256). Many of these formulations seem to apply to Isabella as she begins to manifest these symptoms, observed as a loss leading to mourning and an inconsolable melancholia impeding her recovery. Her constant weeping “for pleasures not to be” (233) and distress by “feverish unrest” (244) is a libidinal cathexis of the love-object which is lost forever. The conflict between libidinal passion, which is “a richer zest” (246) than love and “not to be subdued”, and “sorrow for her love” (247-48) is consuming her gradually which is revealed through the use of pathetic fallacy of the cyclical seasonal change:

In the mid days of autumn, on their eves
The breath of Winter comes from far away,
And the sick west continually bereaves
Of some gold tinge, ...(Keats, 1820: 249-52)

“The breath of Winter” (250) simultaneously prophesies where Lorenzo rests or *unrests*, and unfolds the physiological symptoms that Isabella shows; the decay of the beauty represents her mental and physical suffering “Because Lorenzo came not” (257). As Rachel Schulkins puts it Isabella’s “longings for his [Lorenzo] return force her into hysterical fits and melancholia” (Schulkins, 2016:81). In Foucault’s observation of the concept of hysteria, it is linked to the womb moving inside the woman’s body (2006:283) and leads to mental disorders due to menstruation and eventually damaging the brain (ibid.:284). Thus, it can be concluded from Victorian male-dominated hypotheses that reproductive organs cause female madness like that Isabella’s, engendered by her unfulfilled lust for Lorenzo.

An unbearable misery draws the melancholic character into a state of trance coming “like a fierce potion” (267) and brings her murdered lover’s specter “at her couch’s foot / In the drowsy gloom, / The dull of midnight” (273-74) in stanza XXXV. Stanzas XXXVI and XXXVII create a Gothic scene where the weeping Lorenzo speaks out to her bothers’ “murderous spite” (293) and asks her to find his body with a sepulchral tone like a “ghostly under-song” (287) intensifying the horror. Keats’s employment of gothic elements in his poem(s) serves as evidence for the period’s tendency towards medievalism as a reaction to the Age of Reason and Neoclassicism, forcing the writers’ musings towards a rigid adherence to rationalism. The horrifying atmosphere created through gothic elements is strengthened by Isabella’s mental deterioration upon discovering Lorenzo’s body.

Merged with nature as “its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright” (289), Lorenzo describes his resting place where “Red whortle-berries droop above” (298) his head:

And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;
Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat
(Keats, 1820:299-301)

suggesting his misery and tragic end, far from being discovered and doomed to be forgotten without a proper grave. The union of Isabella and Lorenzo was a dream when

he was in “human-nature dwelling” (306), but now, despite his sheer loneliness strengthened by his painful slaying, he holds on to Isabella’s paleness insinuating her soon-to-happen death and their ultimate union after life: “To be my spouse: thy paleness makes me glad” (318). Lorenzo’s ghost bids his “Adieu!” (321) but leaves Isabella with an odd expression “Ha! Ha!” (329) representing laughter. Very appropriate to read it as a symptom of shock before it leads her to a poignant and gradual decline into madness. Isabella sets off with the “aged nurse” (343) who is essential for the reader to see Isabella’s deteriorating situation through her eyes:

—What feverous hectic flame
Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,
That thou should'st smile again? (Keats, 1820:348-50)

Their discovery of Lorenzo’s resting place evokes Shakespeare’s **Venus and Adonis** (1593) myth. Both poems depict this particular scene in which Venus and Isabella search for the place where their lovers lie dead. It is, as an illustration of Isabella’s obsession with her murdered lover, further emphasized by her fervent digging of the grave. Keats’s allusion to the flower of Adonis “purple phantasies” (370), parallel to Shakespeare’s description, further expresses the poet’s admiration for Shakespeare’s pursuit of artistic beauty in the depiction of love, in which he is not unfazed by the unfathomable nature of the concept but delights in its universal ambiguity. Conjuring up autumn and decay along with the association of wealth and creativity, “purple phantasies” (370), further marks a significant erotic reference and are now expressed through the gloves where their hands clasp. Putting “the soiled glove” “in her bosom” (369-372) suggests a sort of solace for her pain akin to a toy given to a baby in order to stop it from crying. As observed, people who have become mad exhibit attitudes and behaviours similar to infants’, both of whom are unaware of their acts or their environment, completely relying on the presence of a caregiver. Excavating Lorenzo’s tomb appears as ceremonial act to re-join the lovers introduced in “her veiling hair” (376), which is beyond a conscious behaviour, akin to the symptomatic act of hysteria, a result of psychological trauma. The state of trance inflicted by the shocking dream-like vision of Lorenzo captures Isabella, consequently, she is void of normal behaviour

and expression of emotion. As Charles William Hagelman describes Isabella's mind, it is "forced beyond the limits of its endurance" (1956: 263). She exhibits inappropriate behaviours due to having endured an unbearable traumatic experience.

Stanza L introduces the most shocking scene of the poem hinting at Isabella's impending mental breakdown through her exhuming Lorenzo and decapitating him, which, for the narrator, is less glorious than Perseus', one of the legendary heroes in Greek mythology, renowned for beheading the Gorgon Medusa, and the rescuer of Andromeda from a sea monster. Simply, Isabella is unable to abandon him, in other words, quit obsessing over him, as Stillenger puts it "love-sickness becomes genuine sickness" (1968:603-4). Even though her Lorenzo died, their love is not "dethroned" (400) and therefore continues to live to justify her cutting the head off as in stanza LI. The obsessive love now manifests itself like the worship of a religious relic indicated by horrifying details of Isabella's combing the decapitated head's hair and cleaning the "smeared loam" (405) with her tears, revealing the most significant Gothic scene in the story. Isabella's bringing Lorenzo's head home is expressed in attachment theory developed by John Bowlby with his trilogy **Attachment and Loss** (1969). He postulates that "attachment" is an emotional bond between the caregiver and the child (1: 177), and in the absence of the caregiver, in other words, the attached figure, the child, suffers from "separation distress" and seeks for the caregiver's presence again based on the object-relations theory. As the intensity of Isabella's attachment to Lorenzo has been compared to and explained by a mother's relation to a child, Bowlby's theory can be referenced to examine Isabella's loss of Lorenzo as an attached figure. Bowlby notes that the loss of the attachment figure generates the need for physical proximity to the person lost, fuelled by a sort of distress, and defined as a "protest phase" (1:45). The profound effect of Lorenzo's death signifies Isabella's dreadful way to maintain their bond.

"What will make you smile again?" asked the aged nurse previously upon Lorenzo's tomb anticipating Isabella's fear; now the reader concludes that apparently nothing worldly matters to her. Having brought Lorenzo's head home, she buries it in a plant-pot to nurture the bond, "o'er it set / Sweet Basil / which her tears kept ever wet" (415-6) foreshadowing her decaying presence, her deteriorating mental state and

slow demise. Bowlby maintains that following the protest stage, the person losing the attached figure plunges into the “despair phase”, upon realizing that the loss will not resurrect and the beloved has gone permanently. In this phase, as in the words of Bowlby, “He is withdrawn and inactive, makes no demands on people in the environment, and appears to be in a state of deep mourning” (1:45). The intensity of the symptoms, described as melancholia by Freud, and deep mourning by Bowlby, results in Isabella’s indifference to her environment, expressed through the reflection of her forgetting “the stars, the moon and sun,” “the blue above the trees,” “the dells where waters run,” (417-18-19). It is further intensified with the progress from the phase of disinterest of the outer world to her carnal being as appears in “she forgot the chilly autumn breeze” (420). The more she sheds a tear, the thinner she gets; the more she sheds a tear, the thicker the basil grows, consuming her and sucking her physical strength. The pot of basil sheltering the skull is now defined as a “jewel” (431), thereby emphasizing its significance and value for Isabella.

In stanza LVI, by expressing Isabella’s melancholy explicitly, the narrator hints at Isabella’s tragic end with “simple Isabel is soon to be / Among the dead: She withers, like a palm / Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm” (446-7-8). All and “the continual shower / From her dead eyes” (452-3) are engendered by “her brethren” (452) who tragically disregard their sister’s sorrow and decay but are acutely curious of the basil. Abandoning or reducing the frequency of her regular activities, and becoming numb, Isabella’s rapid deterioration from anxiety over Lorenzo’s long absence develops into melancholy and then madness. Isabella simply forgets herself. Freud’s analogy between mourning and melancholy on the “diminution in self-regard” here provides insight into Isabella’s state:

This picture of a delusion of (mainly moral) inferiority is completed by sleeplessness and refusal to take nourishment, and – what is psychologically very remarkable – by an overcoming of the instinct which compels every living thing to cling to life (1914-16:246).

“And seldom felt she any hunger-pain” (468) evinces the scholar’s elucidation on physical symptoms from her mental suffering. Whereas in some cultures the basil

symbolizes a key opening the gates of heaven or ensures a safe journey to God, for Isabella, it may be associated with her own lifetime since basil is an annual plant completing its life cycle and then dies. As a symbol, it foreshadows Isabella's imminent end analogous to the basil's. Pivoting around the pot and basil, not herself, Isabella's mere cause is compared to a hen protecting her eggs "as swift / As bird on wing to breast its eggs again" (469-70), portraying the basil like her child, which contributes to the comparison of Isabella's love for Lorenzo to a mother's as mentioned earlier, then emphasized by the gloves Isabella puts to her chest to "still an infant's cries" (374). Donald C. Goellnicht observes that:

...in the image of Lorenzo's head, over which Isabella broods like a mother hen, the motifs of a skull, seed, and egg, so commonly associated in botany and anatomy, coalesce to enhance Keats's theme of new growth out of death that is symbolized by the luxurious basil (1984:115).

Isabella's fixation on Lorenzo suggested by her ceaseless weeping to nourish the basil reverberates in the brothers' obsessive evil deeds now illustrated by their stealing the Basil-pot. The fear that their felony would be revealed and they would be hung makes them paranoid, thereby driving them out of Florence. While consoling herself with the pot of basil that disguises the skull, Isabella is now bereft of Lorenzo once more as her brethren "have ta'en away her Basil sweet" (488). Drawing from Bowlby's attachment theory, the loss of the attached figure for once may leave the person in despair; though the lost figure may be regained, the damage, whether it be psychological or physiological, would be enduring. The repetition of the loss would result in a more detrimental effect such as in Isabella's: "sweet Isabel, will die / Will die a death too lone and incomplete" (486-87), signifying their love commitment and physical union. Since Lorenzo's dead body/head are treated by Isabella with a mother's care, this indicates that they complete one another on many levels. Isabella's aching soul frantically asks for her basil which Freud explains:

The most remarkable characteristic of melancholia, and the one in most need of explanation, is its tendency to change round into mania – a state which is the opposite of it in its symptoms (1914-16:253).

For Freud, not every melancholia may undergo the same states, in some cases, during “periodic relapses”, the mania may be absent; or may be slight, but some manic phases lead to “the hypothesis of a circular insanity” (Ibid.), depicting Isabella’s last days. As Lorenzo is described as the love-object the libidinal cathexis is fixated on in Freud’s words, Isabella falls into mourning in the absence of her love. Similarly, her ‘amorous’ search for the stolen pot is conducive to the internalization of the libidinal object/person and subsequently its association with the ego itself. The ego is examined as an object, and with the loss of the loved person/object, it is shattered, because the libidinal cathexis is now directed to one’s own ego. These shed light on Isabella’s frantic search for the pot. She dies forlorn, imploring for her basil ardently, still resonating “O cruelty / To steal my Basil-pot away from me!” (503-4).

Isabella plunges into a state of madness born out of melancholia and mourning for Lorenzo. The case of melancholia in Freud’s analysis is a “painful dejection, cessation of interest” (1914-16:244) in the outside world, which impedes all activity due to a sudden loss of person or object of intense love. Isabella’s melancholia progresses into mania revealed as an outburst of a cry for the lost pot of basil because of the termination of the libidinal fixation. Freud’s libidinal detachment directly takes us to the general attitudes of Victorian psychiatrists and indirectly cultural canon towards insanity interpreted as a female malady and engendered by female sexuality. The association of madness with woman originates from the term “hysteria” which, like madness, has been labelled as feminine by patriarchal societies, as noted by Foucault in his **History of Madness** (2006). In his historical account, the pervading highlight lies in the exposition of “hysteria” as inherently female in patriarchal societies, suggesting that the female malady is believed to be born out of the “evil influence of the womb”, an epidemic of a “disease in which women invent, exaggerate and repeat all the various absurdities of which a disordered imagination is capable” (279), and maintaining with the rampant implication in the domain of historical social

discourse asserting woman's natural propensity to madness for having a uterus. In this vein, Elaine Showalter writes:

The regulation of Women's Cycles in Victorian psychiatry often seems like an effort to postpone or extirpate female sexuality. Dr Edward Tilt argued menstruation was so destructive to the female brain that it should not be hastened but rather be retarded as long as possible and he advised mothers to prevent menarche by ensuring that their teenage daughter's remained in the nursery, took cold shower baths, avoided feather beds and novels, eliminated meat from their diets and wore drawers. Delayed menstruation he insisted was "the principal cause of the pre-eminence of English women, in vigour of constitution, soundness of judgement, and rectitude of moral principle (1985: 75).

The rigorous effort is that, as mental instability is considered to be a woman's illness, the control of the bodies helps manage the woman's mind. The construction of gender leads to the conclusion that the feminization of madness is a product of the subjugation of women, body, and soul, and then to the feminist remark of how nature changes into the culture. The pervading view of madness in the realm of cultural construction is gender. Seen as liable to psychological and physical problems more than their male counterparts, the woman has to abide by the confinement stipulated by the rigid gender segregation; otherwise, her tragic end for her would be inevitable. Phyllis Chesler notes in **Women and Madness** (1972) that "What we consider 'madness,' whether it appears in women or men, is either the acting out of the devalued female role, or the total or partial rejection of one's sex-role stereotype" (93). Drawing on Chesler's assertion, we may read Isabella as a woman who fails to fulfil her role and abide by the rules eventually ruining Lorenzo's and her life. When the poem is viewed as a work of psychological insight via the prism of cultural portrayal of female insanity, Keat's Isabella represents a madwoman epitomizing the victimization of gendered identity and differences in ideological mandate. Her madness, as victimization stemming from the demarcation of the space and roles, is also an expectant result of her resistance to patriarchal oppression and hegemony through seclusion and madness, like her female Victorian counterparts in **The Madwoman in the Attic** (1979:341). As a love-struck, "primarily self-abusing" maiden (Kromm, 1994:507), Isabella is confined to her poetic pot of basil, finding a poetic value in William Holman Hunt's canvas.

William Holman Hunt's *Isabella, and the Pot of Basil* (1868) contextually describes stanza LIII and LIV narrating how Isabella pines for Lorenzo embracing her Basil: "Hung over her sweet Basil evermore / And so she ever fed it with thin tears / Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew" (Keats, 1820: 423,425-6). To address the particular symbolic scene Hunt rendered, like other painters, a dialogue with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's book **Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry** (1766) is insightful here. Theorizing the proper subjects for painting and poetry, Lessing highlights that since a painting portrays a specific scene or a single moment, it must capture "the one which is most suggestive and from which the preceding and succeeding actions are most easily comprehensible" (78). An intriguing perspective on the depiction of a specific moment being pursued here is to examine Hunt's selection of the particular context offering a fecund textual narrative for us to read the figure of Isabella through the lens of feminist readings.

Hunt's selection of this specific moment allows us to explore the painting to see whether a feminine form of madness generated by gender differences and stereotypes is lurking behind the elements of symbolism. The cursory perusal of the setting in Hunt's painting invites the suggestion that when Isabella becomes mad in Keats's ballad, she confines herself, but a closer look insinuates the analogy between the madwoman's confinement to the madhouse in Victorian culture. Her confinement in her private sphere is *entendre*; both physical restraint and inhibition of free speech. A sheer deprivation would please the Victorian audience. The first impression of Isabella is of a maiden withdrawn from life only to caress her sweet basil by leaning over the pot of basil but actually concealing an embrace for her deceased love Lorenzo. Painting her in an interior space, inferentially her bedroom with an unmade bed from which she has just got out, renders the painter to attire her with a white semi-transparent nightgown in lieu of conventional apparel suggesting her confinement also an implicit demarcation of space between the masculine and feminine since a presence in that gown would be improper before other households' members. However, this demarcation is inextricably linked to the separation of the healthy and the insane. Even though Keats does not make any reference to Isabella's attire, Hunt considers a white gown appropriate for his figure, which again invites a cultural influence and decoding.

A close reading of the white bed gown, emphasizing her curves and partially manifesting her voluptuous body, generates the common image of a grieving madwoman in white, validated by the prevalent illustration of the prototypical portrayal of Ophelia in a long white dress, which is examined in the following part. As the dominant hue of the painting, the white bed gown reveals much about Isabella, thus, more focus is prerequisite. It channels us to the coded symbolism of fashion well discoursed in Roland Barthes's theory of fashion in his **The Fashion System** (1967). Originating from the field of semiotics, the symbolic meaning and representation of fashion is profoundly explored by Barthes through the methodical analysis of dress and what it communicates. Barthes's focus of research is that the ideas and ideologies are conveyed through clothing. This way of making and transmitting meaning is related to the use of codes, may also be coupled with specific noises, words humans use, or body language to express emotions. Referring to Alison Lurie's **The Language of Clothes** (1981), the role of colour is highlighted as one of the most significant signs to transmit any kind of message having the most immediate effect on the viewer (182). Drawing from Barthes and Lurie's insightful analyses, we may return to Isabella's non-verbal sign, white nightgown, identified by her very self in the pot of culturally constructed and accepted codes. Across cultures, the colour white, is associated with purity and innocence in some, mourning and death in others, or in Lurie's words it prevalently connotes "delicacy, and even physical infirmity or weakness, especially when the material is fragile" (185). Particularly pivoting around nineteenth-century Europe, predominantly England, John Harvey points out the customary meanings of the colour white in female dress as virginity, respectability, melancholy, solemnity, mourning, death, ghostliness, and insanity (1995:205-206). By that century, the literary stereotype, as Sarah Wise quotes from Richard Brinsley Sheridan's cliché in his 1779 play **The Rivals**, "going mad in white satin" (2012:182) and a pervading image of 'a woman in white' closely linked to ghostliness had been rampant. Evidence of this pervading social stigma finds its place in Victorian culture and appears in Hunt's Isabella representing a madwoman in a white satin gown. It is not accidental that the choice of white for Isabella's gown corresponds to her mourning, ghostliness, and insanity.

Utilizing Barthes's theory of signs and sign systems helps us structure a frame circumscribing Isabella's posture. Speechless and staring wide-eyed at a point on the floor, she is enfolding the pot gently in her arms; her right hand, with her handkerchief, understandably for her tears, is feeling the side surface of the pot apparently, but implicating a touch on Lorenzo's buried face indicative of affection. Isabella's delicate embrace of the pot is a repercussion of her bizarre treatment of Lorenzo's head as in Keats's line "she calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb" (Keats, 1820: 403), and implying her motherly duty she is expected to carry out after her sexual experience. But she fails. Her manic possessiveness of the pot invites a scene of a mother nurturing her new-born baby, as a reference to Isabella's obsession in Keats's ballad. All boils down to the fact that the titles of the poem and the painting are not randomly complementary but confirm the intricate link between Isabella and the pot of basil, or Isabella and her tragedy. Wrapping a part of her body, the blue bedspread signifies that she spends most of her time in bed and will return soon to her bed unchanged, which is evidenced by the unmade bed in the dimly lit background, and suggestive of her withdrawal from life as expressed in the ballad "she forgot the chilly autumn breeze" (Keats, 1820: 420). Her face and dark hair suggest an image of an exotic Mediterranean woman. Keats espoused a lyric-narrative focusing on a passionate saga without revealing anything about Isabella's appearance, apart from 'sweet, poor Isabella', featuring her fragility and tragic fate evidenced by her gradual collapse. Unlike his friend Millais, whose Isabella is as naïve and Florentine as Keats's, Hunt's maiden looks lustier than the archetypical frail and pale looking women ubiquitously found in Victorian art and in Judith Bronkhurst's words, she looks "healthy, in contrast to Keats's heroine, who is wasting away" (1984:217). One of the critics of the 1868 **Fortnightly Review** noted that Holman Hunt's Isabella is a "commonplace, violent-tempered Italian girl, with a vicious eye and a muddy brow" (Codell, 1995:361). Hunt explained that he wanted her to look as if she was actually capable of cutting off a head. Injecting reality into the figure is the artist's choice of model; Fanny Waugh, his pregnant wife, who modelled for the painting, seemingly lending significance to the selection of the near-transparent attire and intimacy of the scene. The painter's interpretation is well incorporated into the painting, with Isabella leaning over the pot

and knowing there lies Lorenzo's head as its primary theme. For Hunt, and other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the depiction of facial features and stance held considerable importance. They eagerly probed phrenology, a scientific discipline during the first half of the nineteenth century considered to tell someone's personality (and perhaps morality) from physical characteristics, to portray the true essence of a person through physical appearance, namely from physiognomy (Cole, 1990: 360). It simply frees the narrative from being purely visual but also attributes a deeper meaning. In their rendition of the head and representation of the expressions of the face, the Pre-Raphaelites were inspired by Sir Charles Bell's overarching analysis of body language in his **The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression** (1806). Hunt's delineation of Isabella's face is an epitome of the shared practice of Pre-Raphaelite regarding how the individual's outward appearance reflects their inner reality.

Adhering to Keats's gothic style is Isabella's hair as a repercussion of the lines: "hung over her sweet Basil evermore, /and moistened it with tears unto the core" (Keats, 1820: 423-24). Her dishevelled abundant hair draping over the pot and around the flourishing plant gives a sense of violent and destructive tendencies, apart from being a codified sign of sensuality, speaking for the madness of gender politics: a picture of dishevelled hair, squalor face, and improper dressing are a stereotypical testament to feminine madness. Her exposed bare feet, like The Lady of Shalott's, suggests an erotic implication at first glance, and while she is gazing at an uncertain point, the viewer is gazing at her curvy body, naked feet, and the shoes at the door on the far left. Predicating the barefoot state on Hunt's remark about his Lady of Shalott, implying "her chamber is a sacred place, and she creates her art as a holy endeavour" (Neuringer, 1983: 64), we may unanimously deduce the significance of her room. Obviously, she does not create her art; perhaps she fantasizes a consummation of her marriage with Lorenzo before God as validated in Bourke's words "barefootedness symbolizes the sanctity of the wedding chamber" (1996:40). All aside, more appropriate is that Hunt illustrated a symptom of her mania implying that she has forgotten and cut herself off from the world and worldly things, like in Keats's words: "And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun / She had no knowledge when the day

was done / And the new morn she saw no / And seldom felt she any hunger-pain” (Keats, 1820: 417-21-22-69).

Isabella’s “safely casketed” (Keats, 1820: 431) severed head in the text finds expression in Hunt’s image of a carved skull into the pot she chose as a tomb resembling an urn. Attention to the treatment of the pot with the skull image standing on a prie-dieu, covered with an elaborately coloured embroidery with roses and passionflowers—the emblems of love and faith², evokes a shrine and corresponds well to Isabella’s mourning and prayer for the dead, providing the emotion found in the poem. The painter’s inclusion of the prie-dieu, the painstakingly stitched embroidery, the richly designed tile floor, and the chandelier above testify to the painter’s fascination with the exotic and also his adherence to the Pre-Raphaelite roots. The inclusion of the sculpted pillar placed behind Isabella and the rugs on the wall, a small part of which is captured inside the frame, and her bed with curtains surrounding it add a medieval tone to the narrative, also testifying to the painter’s fusion of the ancient with the contemporary³. A surrounding atmosphere of quietness is at odds with the shocking theme.

Having a preponderant effect through its colour, after the highlighted aspect of Isabella’s white satin bed gown, is the basil which “Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread” (Keats, 1820: 432), all flourished by her tears and touch. The tactfully-rendered plant with its lush leaves contradicts Isabella’s nonlife posture intensified by her gown’s colour. It suggests that she turns into an empty ‘vessel’ consuming herself to keep the basil alive. The very existence of the richly-greened basil is illustrative of Keats’s vivid description of nature. The colour green in the poem appears four times: two of them to describe decomposition (the “green church-yard” of line 353 and Lorenzo’s face “vile with green and livid spot” in line 475), and the other two to express just the otherwise, to depict scented life (the basil growing “green, and beautiful” in line 426 and in line 458). Hunt’s basil achieves the same aromatic sense

² Mandy Kirkby, Vanessa Diffenbaugh, **A Victorian Flower Dictionary: The Language of Flowers Companion**, New York, Random House Inc., 2011. p. 14.

³ Medievalism attracted both Keats and the Pre-Raphaelites as they were all reactionary towards the Industrial Revolution in general. What they strongly believed was that industrialization engendered several political and social disorders, that’s why they defined these as worthy subjects for their artistic practice.

through its size as Keats emphasizes in the lines “Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew / So that it smelt more balmy than its peers” (Keats, 1820: 426-7).

The porcelain watering pot standing in the very front, pointedly coloured and placed, takes away from Keats’s description of Isabella watering the basil with her “thin tears” (Keats, 1820: 425), signifying its value for the narrative, but none more so than for Isabella to keep her basil, representatively Lorenzo, alive. The resultant effect of Isabella’s obsession with the pot is a coalescence with Lorenzo’s head, which is evident; however, a closer perusal and contemplation engenders an interpretation of a separation generated by the use of the colours and the composition of the details. The dimly lit background where Isabella’s bed is placed belongs to her, whereas the pot of basil occupying the sumptuously illuminated foreground is Lorenzo’s, implying Isabella’s ghostliness and insinuating her pending death. Placing the pot in the foreground of the painting is twofold: Isabella places Lorenzo ahead, namely her love which destroyed her; or the constellation of light, bright colours, and lush green basil is indicative of the serenity in heaven that Lorenzo’s soul relishes, or that he is already peaceful near Isabella. This separation can also be interpreted as the confinement of the madwoman, illustrating both cause and effect of the enclosure of the woman in her domestic domain.

The striking congruence of the theme of the madwoman and the imagery of confinement is prevalently encountered throughout centuries in the portrayals of all genres. The oft-cited Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s **The Madwoman in the Attic** (1979) examines women writers’ female characters who appear either angelic or monstrous created by the male authors’ classification of a pure and devout, or rebellious and insane. Popularly depicting the madwoman in confinement is Charlotte Perkins’s **The Yellow Wall-paper** (1890), and Charlotte Brontë’s famous novel **Jane Eyre** (1847). Of all the strategies to cope with the mad in the nineteenth century is the confinement hiding her from view, literally burying the individual alive, to cut her off from the rest of the society since her mental disorder shames the family, and as suggested by Foucault, “It seems that the honour of a family requires the disappearance from society of the individual who by vile and abject habits shames his relatives” (1965:67). It is indeed tough to ignore that the common place of the figure of a

madwoman in literature also appears in the visual narratives. In “The Feminization of Madness in Visual Representation” (1994), art historian Jane E. Kromm explores the definition of insanity through centuries focusing on a time when infirmity derived from lovesickness, as also seen in Ophelia. Supposedly acknowledged well by Hunt, Isabella is portrayed as an image of lovesick which leads to madness and eventually her confinement in her abode.

Countless artists from different periods to the nineteenth century have been under the sway of a desire to depict the erotic and aesthetic of the beautiful madwoman. Sexualisation of the mentally ill woman was featured in the Romantic era as read in sonnets like George Dyer’s **Written in Bedlam: On Seeing a Beautiful Young Female Maniac** (1801). It invites us to the tempting facets of female madness, along with novels, poems, and melodramas about the fictional “Crazy Jane”—who went mad when abandoned by her lover—were all rife in the Romantic era (Showalter, 1985:10-14). In visual representations of sexualized madwoman figure reads well in Kromm’s words:

Customary dishevelment and seminudity of these two figures, conceived as effects of the ceaseless movement thought to characterize their condition, give the madman a gloss of uncivilized animality but set up the female figure as a site for sexual display (1994:508).

Even though Kromm’s argument covers both genders, her stipulation is that both generic representations of madness are indicative of masculine gaze and viewing: “the two constructions offer distinctive responses to male concerns for domination and survival” (Ibid.:508), but a sexually aggressive woman is seen as a threat to the male viewer’s desire for sexual domination. Thus, since it challenged the male hegemony before the nineteenth century, the depiction of the madwoman underwent a transition as noted by Kromm, “transposed from a primarily poetic visual and literary field to an increasingly contemporary, politicized position...to control or contain women’s sexuality and to constrain or thwart their public ambitions” (Ibid.:531). Isabella’s nightgown adds to the image of a sexually provocative mentally ill and lovesick woman.

The quintessential botanical symbolism, as famously featured in Ophelia, in an image of the madwoman provides an interpretation for the vermilion flowers scattered down on the floor of Isabella's room. Anne Williams's descriptive stipulation reads:

In nature, flowers are sexual; in culture they are symbols of feminine purity, fragility, and mortality. According to Bram Dijkstra, the dead or mad woman surrounded by flowers was a favourite icon in nineteenth-century painting; apparently the female as natural victim, "a cut flower among the flowers," was peculiarly popular (1995:129).

Being surrounded with flowers, thus, both make the image of Isabella as aesthetic and conventional cliché, a natural victim of the culture.

The studies at hand demonstrate female-neurosis ensued by lovesickness in a surface reading, but caused by impeded sexuality and maternity in a subtext reading. Not of her own making, Isabella's enclosure derives from falling for a servant of low status, incongruous with the rigid social norms countenancing her brothers' intention of marrying her off to "some high noble and his olive trees" (Keats, 1820: 168). Her life also terminates when she decapitated the head, depriving her of a healthy mind and soul to lead a normal life without her basil pot. Different from Keats's main theme of a love story between Isabella and Lorenzo, and also their tragic deaths, Hunt centres Isabella herself in the narrative. However, both narratives are akin to the personification of feminine madness. Keats's Isabella finds expression in Hunt's narrative with elaborate details describing how death becomes a form of life due to mental disorder. Isabella is unable to achieve her personalization and individualization without a man's presence; she coexists with her brothers (no mention of her parents), then the realization of the self passes on Lorenzo. Through love and sexual pleasures resulting in unfulfillment of the roles, her cracking the system aligns with the absence of the attached figure, then her madness and death become inevitable. Coerced into abiding by the rules, fated to be decapitated, the woman is both driven into madness and is iniquitously expected to justify the feminization of madness.

4.2. William Shakespeare's Ophelia by John Everett Millais

Another iconic madwoman figure who has most frequently become a subject for writers, critics, and has been re-articulated in painters' canvasses is Shakespeare's Ophelia. Her romantic suicide offers various interpolations to this enigmatic character whose identification has been given predominance in all forms of art. Ophelia, a heroine in **The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark** (1603), has always been defined as a minor character by critics such as Linda Welshimer Wagner who believes that "Shakespeare intended her to be a minor character, using her sparingly and almost forgetfully throughout the plot" (1963:94). Lee Edwards, a critic, confirms Shakespeare's enactment of the characterization with his interpretation "we can imagine Hamlet's story without Ophelia, but Ophelia literally has no story without Hamlet" (1979: 36) which is advocated by Jacques Lacan's commentary saying that Ophelia only exists because "she is linked forever, for centuries, to the figure of Hamlet" (1958-59:276). Though her presence through her role on stage is trivialized compared to Hamlet, Ophelia and her madness offer layers behind her shadowy appearance on stage in the feminist climate. If Shakespeare were resurrected in the twenty first century, he would be amazed viewing her on stage with increasing popularity. Central to this part is Ophelia's characterization to explore her as a stereotyped image of the madwoman, illustrating how the ideas about female oppression and sexuality are inextricably linked to her psychology.

Of all Shakespeare's plays, Ophelia is one of the widely known female characters in the Western canon. Every picture of a female (also male) figure in canonical texts is considered to be a repercussion of the societal structures that shape the characterization. Thus, the Elizabethan age defined its poet-dramatist Shakespeare, which also surely shaped his craft of character creation as well as the roles he was casting. Just seen in reality, he attributed both strengths and weaknesses to his female characters on the basis of binary oppositions. Despite the variation in female characterizations, he struggled with the period's restrictions on women performing on stage, which made him create his female characters for men to portray, completely shaping all of his characterizations. Explicit is that due to these restrictions of the

period, Shakespeare was unable to devise any significant female characters that were as fully developed as their male counterpart. In the light of these limitations, Ophelia is examined through the lens of feminist discourse to understand whether she is the epitome of a woman who descended into madness due to the oppression of society.

The scene where Ophelia appears first perhaps is very conducive to be interpreted as one of the moments of the subjection to male control in her life; what she should or should not do as dictated by her brother Laertes:

Fear it, Ophelia; fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon (Shakespeare, 1603:1.3.37-41)

Bereft of any defiant actions, she fully obeys to her brother's decisions for her implying a woman's compliance to the system for protection. She is seen to be void of any moral choices and also experiences as in Laertes's use of innuendo "It fits your wisdom so far to believe" Hamlet (1.3.29), whose actions towards Ophelia, for Laertes, are ephemeral, suggesting her lack of judgment, thereby justifying his brother's making decision for her. Laertes's first edification on her lack of agency and faculty to comprehend Hamlet's words of affection is: "As the temple waxes,/ The inward service of the mind and soul / Grows wide withal" (1.3.15-17). He is adamant about preserving his sister's chaste and virginity and instructs her to eschew premarital sexual relationship while upholding his duties to the patriarchal institution stipulating, "your chaste treasure open / To his unmastered importunity" (1.3.35-36). Referring to the imagery of nature to emphasize Ophelia's virginity such as in "The canker galls the infants of the spring / Too oft before their buttons be disclosed" (1.3.44), Laertes foreshadows the scene which depicts the metaphorical use of flowers symbolizing her feelings when she descends into madness as well as her demise in nature. As a sign of assurance, he reiterates his instruction to ensure his sister's abidance before he leaves for college: "Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well / What I have said to you" (1.3.90-91). Objectifying Ophelia validates her submission to her brother without questioning "Tis in my memory locked / And you yourself shall keep the key of it", (1.3.92-93)

projecting her as the embodiment of silenced and deprived woman, lacking in public rights, as well as being the quintessential feminine with her acquiescence in the patriarchal society.

Upon Laertes's departure, Polonius fuels to the feminist claim of how Ophelia is oppressed by male domination. Considering the power structure between the figures of father and brother, the degree of oppression that Polonius practises over his daughter is far more immense, seen in his conduct of it, than Laertes's, thereby making her more submissive to her father. As acknowledging the notion of gender distinctions, Polonius admonishes her not to believe Hamlet in a more aggressive and didactic way; otherwise, her unwise action would have inevitable moral ramifications. Because of her youth, Polonius defines her as a "green girl", adding that "You do not understand yourself so clearly" (1.3.105), to govern her thoughts by dictating what is right or wrong according to the ideological decree. Despite her attempt to explain that Hamlet "hath, my lord, of late made many tenders / Of his affection to" her (1.3.109-108, Polonius degrades her ability to fathom Hamlet's real intentions as she is too gullible. Her naiveté, and lack of understanding, are further accentuated lucidly when she responds to her father's demeaning question "Do you believe his "tenders," as you call them?" (1.3.112) saying "I do not know, my lord, what I should think" (1.3.113). Obviously, Ophelia is subject to blind acquiescence to patriarchal impositions on woman. She succumbs to being controlled as noted by Olivas "For Ophelia, it is better to portray that state of being most readily associated with females of her time: chaste, silent, obedient" (2015:30). Being what she is expected to be makes Polonius's advice her how to protect her virtue while condescending her mentality despite her age "Marry, I will teach you. Think yourself a baby" (1.3.114), which implicates that she is naive. His patriarchal power reinforces his misogynistic views, or vice versa, then gives way to his statement of "set your entreatments at a higher rate" (1.3.131), suggesting the objectification of his daughter and a reminder to adhere to the social dictates. As her father edicts, she has to acknowledge that and must remain chaste vis-à-vis Hamlet's wooing, who has the liberty of enjoying the sexual affairs as he does not have the same restrictions as Ophelia:

For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you (Shakespeare, 1603:1.3.132-35).

His edification is followed by his firm order that Ophelia should not believe Hamlet's false vows as he is only out for her maidenhead. He categorically commands Ophelia not to see and talk to Hamlet again:

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
Have you so slander any moment leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to 't, I charge you. Come your ways (Shakespeare, 1603:1.3.48-141-44).

Ophelia unquestionably accepts her father's order "I shall obey, my lord" (1.3.49) portraying an obedient personality, accommodating her very self to male expectations to satisfy his very self. Her acquiescence, combined with an inviting youth, beauty, and purity, cherished femininity in the dramatist's age, suggests that:

Ophelia was either the fair Ophelia, chaste treasure, or ministering angel, having all the qualities appropriate for an ideal, innocent, young virgin, because of her madness, she was described as a physically, psychologically, and morally weak young woman that again classified her as typically feminine (Tekler, 2006:113).

This description corresponds well to Ophelia's situation when seen through the lens of the feminist reader. In portraying the maiden as overtly feminine and frail, we are likely to associate her feminine depiction with a tragic end plagued with madness, lurking for her.

In Act 2, scene 1, frightened by Hamlet's bizarre and sneaky appearance in her room while she is sewing, Ophelia runs to her father and explains plainly what has happened between her and Hamlet. Her eloquent descriptive narration of the incident contravenes her understanding. She still exhibits passivity, saying she does not know whether Hamlet is mad for her love or not when asked by her father. Drawing on Kieffer's account of Ophelia's fragility, beauty, and vulnerable femininity resonating with sexual innocence and sexual appeal (2001:12), we may suggest that this sensual

intimacy between them is due to her sexual innocence and frail look. Despite her detailed description of the scene, she does not articulate any comment on Hamlet's actions as she, by social account, lacks in faculty of reason. However, unlike her, Polonius shows an analytic approach towards what has transpired using expressions of "very ecstasy of love" how "any passions under heaven....afflict our natures" (2.1.114-117). All of a sudden, seemingly he halts to monitor what he is doing by stating "I am sorry" (2.1.118) realizing that he should abstain from speaking his thoughts of these issues since such a delicate issue should not be discussed by a father and daughter. Quite disturbing is that once he becomes aware of his tactlessness in what he has just said, he points the finger of blame to Ophelia asking "What, have you given him any hard words of late?" (2.1.119). Not surprisingly, it is the female first to be blamed of encouraging hope, not the male. However, fair Ophelia, rather adamant on her duty: "No, my good lord, but as you did command/ I did repel his letters and denied/ His access to me" (2.1.120-22), follows every instruction of his father who is as unyieldingly determined in the sense of patriarchal duty. Ironically, Polonius sounds remorseful in saying "I am sorry that with better heed and judgment/ I had not coted him" (2.1.124-25) because he has not witnessed it himself which suggests his lack of confidence in his daughter's judgment, impaired by her frailty and gullibility. The larger issue here is that Ophelia is seen as anything but a *sexual object* who must protect her chastity against Hamlet's tender at all costs no matter what she thinks and feels. Exposed to humiliation and degradation, obviously, fair Ophelia is expected to restrain her emotions and wishes considered as worthless. Unequivocally, due to these attitudes and manipulations, she is very likely to develop mental instability in which her fall into madness is caused by three male figures.

Another incident in which Ophelia's feelings are worthlessly and publicly marginalized is when her father reads Hamlet's poem written for Ophelia before King Claudius and Queen Gertrude, embarrassing his daughter: "the most beautified Ophelia'-/ That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase, 'beautified' is a vile/ phrase" (2.2.118-20). She has to endure her father's disgraceful manners as Polonius disparages Hamlet's words conveying deep feelings for her; denigrating them as they are for Ophelia. By criticizing Hamlet's letter which has undoubtedly no ill consequence to

him, Polonius is tarnishing Ophelia's reputation, in lieu of protecting it. In her situation, any young girl would think of vanishing or rather die due to public humiliation. It is undeniable that her embarrassment is a harbinger of her future death from madness. Following this public attack, Ophelia's grief can be expected to turn into madness after reading Polonius's political scheme offering his daughter as bait to help Hamlet to earn King's favour and perhaps to elevate his position. His instruction is:

That she should lock herself from [his] resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repell'd, a short tale to make,
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to [a] lightness, and by this declension,
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for (Shakespeare, 1603:2.2.152-160).

Commanding his daughter to do what he says, Polonius objectifies Ophelia which is further maintained by King Claudius's arrangement for her to probe Hamlet's madness "For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither, / That he, as 'twere by accident, may here / Affront Ophelia" (3.1.32-34), displaying her as a seducer. Queen Gertrude shares their scheme by approving Ophelia as a bait saying, "I do wish / That your good beauties be the happy cause / Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope your virtues / Will bring him to his wonted way again, / To both your honours" (3.1.42-46). Asking Ophelia to lure Hamlet characterizes her as a sexual object. Like Polonius, Gertrude, who married King Claudius after Hamlet's father died, is manipulating Ophelia, to relieve her guilt for her son whose, she thinks, melancholy is due to "His father's death and [her] o'er-hasty marriage" (2.2.60).

Polonius's control over Ophelia's life, turning her into a puppet completely dependent upon him, reminds us of Bowlby's attachment theory which accounts for Ophelia's situation well. She is constantly told what she has to think, what she has to say, and how she has to behave by her father, making her feeble and become strongly attached to the figure directing her, and eventually depriving her of a voice in and for

her very self. When Ophelia, faces the fact of being abandoned upon her father's death, mourning and melancholia become inevitable. The overwhelming oppression and absolute submission betoken that her madness is irrevocably pending.

Ophelia reads a book and pretends that she is entertaining her loneliness to fulfil her role as dictated by her father. This suggests that Ophelia's reading for pleasure rather than intellectual growth mirrors the fact that Elizabethan England established a culture in which women enjoyed reading books more than men did, but primarily for their own entertainment. This high proportion of female readers was one of the results of the heavy restrictions of the period barring women from attending school or university, only those from the aristocracy and the middle class were allowed to attend grammar schools, but not to proceed to a university. Epitomizing a real woman, Ophelia is told to act reading a book for pleasure; both acting and reading for pleasure amount to twice trivializing the activity she and her fellow sex are occupied with. Ophelia's reading to cherish her loneliness also bears witness to her lack of significance. We tend to conclude that actually there is nothing to nurture her loneliness; her very *self* is controlled by her father, her thoughts of Hamlet's honest affections towards her are disregarded, her dignity is harmed due to the revelation of Hamlet's love letters, rendering her no one.

Hamlet is the last male figure dishonouring Ophelia. His schemed appearance in her chamber is their first encounter. Uttering nothing, Hamlet is striving to communicate through his gestures and body language. Given his instability after having seen his father's ghost, Hamlet manifests himself as defenceless and vulnerable, possibly lamenting over being deceived and perhaps an attempt to seek Ophelia's affection. This moment of an intense sincerity and honesty testifies to Ophelia's thoughts of Hamlet's true feelings for her as in the words of Lacan, "Ophelia is after this episode completely null and dissolved as a love object" (1996:21). Lack of experience and comprehension exhibits a lack of subjectivity followed by inevitable lack of agency and a failure of response. She is bereft of any opportunities to develop an authentic self; "With her identity constructed always in reference to another, Ophelia is, in essence, nothing, an empty cipher waiting to be infused with...meaning" (Dane, 1998: 410). Their shared moment invites subsequent speculation that Hamlet's

feelings are reciprocated and suggesting that she may lack in faculty but not heart. Tragically, rather than cherish the requited love, Ophelia will suffer from it indicative of how women were more likely to be victims of the circumstance.

It is essential to contemplate Hamlet and Polonius's interchange wherein Hamlet exclaims "O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!" (2.2.427-8). As it is stated in Old Testament, Jephthah, who led the Israelites in a battle against Ammon and, in exchange for defeating the Ammonites, made a vow to sacrifice whatever would come out of the door of his house first. However, as his daughter was the first to come out of the house, he regretted the vow, but he kept it, and eventually sacrificed his daughter to God. Pondering upon Polonius's identification with Jephthah, one may interpret that the victimization of a woman is mediated through Hamlet's message encrypted in the allusion. Hamlet's words are perused as a warning to Polonius whose control over Ophelia will bring her end. Ironically, Hamlet is himself part of this destructive trio's effect, culminating in Ophelia's madness and demise.

In Act 3, scene 1, we first hear the on-stage conversation, referred to as *The Mousetrap Scene*, between Hamlet and Ophelia through her acceptance of Polonius's plotting. To return the love letters to Hamlet as Polonius instructed, she tells Hamlet "My lord, I have remembrances of yours / That I have longed long to redeliver / I pray you now receive them" (3.1.102-4). Ophelia's dutiful act is shamed by Hamlet's denial of giving her such letters, but even worse, her morality is condescendingly ridiculed "Ha, ha, are you honest? / Are you fair?" (3.1.113-5). Whether she is honest and fair is twofold, denoting being reliable first and also alludes to chastity and virginity. Hamlet's aversion to his mother is translated into his oppressive and cruel attitudes towards Ophelia when he preaches:

Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once (Shakespeare, 1603:3.1.121-5).

For Hamlet, beautiful Gertrude lost her integrity when she married King Claudius before the traditional year of mourning of her late husband to keep her title and the luxury that the monarchy provides her. Even though his words are aimed at his mother, his victim is Ophelia because of her pure nature having been cajoled with his sweet words. He is now fooling Ophelia and toying with her feelings saying, “I did love you once / I love you not” (3.1.125-9). Whether Hamlet loved Ophelia or not should be subordinated to the fact that Ophelia thought he did. He delivers his instructions to Ophelia “Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be / a breeder of sinners?” (3.1.131-2) which are akin to Laertes and Polonius’s dictates on how she should be. More profoundly, we tend to read this part as a humiliating moment as she is forced to cloister in a place referred to as a whorehouse in Elizabethan slang. Dishonouring her through the entendre of “nunnery”, he emphasizes her need to be confined, either in a whorehouse or an actual nunnery, due to her gendered infidelity. To some critics, the “nunnery” is read as a house of ill-fame rather than a holy place through Hamlet’s repetition of “nunnery”. Given that the antiquated meaning of “marriage” is “sexual union”, the critics point out Hamlet’s saying “I say, we will have no more marriages!...To a nunnery, go” (3.1.159-160,162) to Ophelia which is suggestive of measurement for her being a non-virgin. Hamlet sees her as a threat, thereby confining her in a nunnery would control her sexuality. Noticing that Polonius and Claudius are eavesdropping, he again commands, rather attacks: “If thou dost marry, I’ll give thee this plague / for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as / snow, thou shalt not escape calumny (3.1.146-8). His preach and command mirror his weakness. Given that his mother Gertrude disappointed him, describing Ophelia as “God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another” (3.1.155-6) is the outpouring of his negative thoughts of the feminine, seen as a deceiver and seducer ironically reflecting part of his nature which is stated in “We are arrant knaves, all;/ believe none of us” (3.1.139-140). Implicit in his words is that they are beguilers; yet their gender clears them of blame. In patriarchal society, when the woman disguises her true self, she is defined as a wanton creature wearing two faces in Hamlet’s words:

I have heard of your paintings too, well
enough. God hath given you one face, and you

make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and
you lisp; you nickname God's creatures and make
your wantonness your ignorance (Shakespeare, 1603:3.1.154-8).

Ophelia, more than the character designation would suggest, offers layers of the male maltreatment of women, which has been so far interpreted as being edified due to lack in apprehension, and this time more overtly degraded as a sexual object by Hamlet's innuendos "Lady, shall I lie in your lap? / I mean, my head upon your lap?" (3.2.119-21. Certainly, he is offensive while saying:

Hamlet: That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.
Ophelia: What is, my lord?
Hamlet: Nothing (Shakespeare, 1603: 3.2. 125-28)

Allowing a symbolization of femininity and feminine sexuality, Elaine Showalter remarks that "nothing" was used as slang for the female genitalia in the Elizabethan period (1985:n.p). What Hamlet implies here is that there lies "nothing" between maids' legs, in other words, women's sexual organs are "nothing". In the French psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray's critique, it is explained as "the horror of nothing to see" (1985:26) in relation to male visual desire. The gender-linked commentary to Hamlet's pun would be that Ophelia represents absence and lack. Ophelia, too innocent to understand Hamlet's twist of words, remains passive with her short responses to Hamlet's ongoing bawdy attack through sexual comments: "I could interpret between you and your love if I could see the puppets dallying / It would cost you a groaning to take off mine edge (3.2.270-73). Ophelia's inability to speak for herself leads us to Sandra K. Fischer's essay "Hearing Ophelia: Gender and Tragic Discourse in Hamlet" (1990) suggesting a feminist reading of Ophelia through textual politics: How Ophelia appears muted and silenced when "juxtaposed against Hamlet's noisy soul-wrenching soliloquie" (3).

Drawing upon Fischer's argument, it is very appropriate to describe Ophelia's speech as inaudible and unaudenced. Before her descent into madness, her speech consists of half-lines shortly versed compared to those of Laertes, Polonius, and Hamlet. Unlike Laertes and Polonius's long preaching, and Hamlet's deafening

soliloquies, Ophelia articulates few statements either to seek an answer, submit to male will, or revere their presence with praises “My lord”; all expressing weakness, dependence, and loyalty:

... the sound and sense of Ophelia’s speech dim in comparison, like the Cheshire cat, leaving only the trace of an impression. Typically, she echoes a statement put to her by rephrasing it into a question (but without Iago’s manipulative subtext); she expresses acquiescence, uncertainty, and obeisance; she utters half-lines; she mirrors her male interlocutors by naming their qualities (“You are as good as a chorus, my lord”); and she degenerates finally to the mad speeches of Act IV, “things in doubt / That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing ...” (Fischer,1990:2).

Her “acquiescence” and “obeisance” to accommodate her *self* to the male ego deprive her of self-expression and eventually destroys her. Given that the madness demands a style too, it first manifests itself in speech. Throughout the play, her uncertain and broken statements irrevocably deteriorate in Act 4, scene 5, then she completely loses the ability to articulate a self; her utterly distracted mind produces unconnected utterances. Her broken rational discourse is an unavoidable resultant effect of a muted self and unsaid thoughts. Castration of a self , voice, culminates in a mutated absence, at its lowest point, with Ophelia’s songs:

*How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staf
And his sandal shoon* (Shakespeare, 1603:4.5.28-31).

Remarkably her father’s demise and the changed nature of Hamlet’s love have made Ophelia a symbol of love melancholy. She has now released and is bursting with all of her suppressed emotions. This is her evisceration through song, which, as highlighted by F. Zeynep Bilge in her essay “Her Speech is Nothing: The Communicative Function of Songs in Ophelia’s Mad Scene” is “an alternate medium for communication as she is not heard or understood within the boundaries of spoken discourse” (2020:106). Now she is listened to by the court as her songs are louder but not fully understood and shrugged off: “Her speech is nothing, / Yet the unshaped use of it doth move / The

hearers to collection” (4.5.9-11). In the discourse on madness, Charneys remark that “Madness enables her to assert her being: she is no longer enforced to keep silent” and that madness helps her “suddenly make a forceful assertion of . . . being” (1977:459). Her assertion, despite Claudius’s understanding of her being “divided from herself and her fair judgment” (4.5.91-2), encapsulates the tragedies of the court; the murder of King Hamlet, Polonius, and King Claudius’s murderous schemes for Hamlet, communicating the truth which is observed well by Foucault “...madness had still other powers: the punishment it inflicts multiplies by nature insofar as, by punishing itself, it unveils the truth” (1965:30). He adds Shakespeare’s madmen and madwomen “remind each man of his truth” (Ibid.:14). Ophelia’s references unconventionally signify multiple meanings, through her songs, such as in “How should I your true love know/ From another one?” (4.5.28-9). This question both refers to Hamlet’s rejection of his love for her and also suggests his earlier lament over her deception and duplicity, reflecting his frustration with Gertrude. He continues with taking a jab at Gertrude, who has not mourned her husband, about her selfish decisions, stating, “Larded with sweet flowers / Which bewept to the grave did not go / With true-love showers” (4.3.43-5), but she is not understood by anyone. Her verses vanish into the thin air. Ophelia’s lack of comprehension is now translated into being incomprehensible.

The link between female insanity and female sexuality is sharply conventionalized. Ophelia’s sexual references reveal her obsession with Hamlet who is not requiting her love. In the clinical context, the Elizabethans would have diagnosed Ophelia as female love-melancholy, or erotomania, which was seen as inherent in a woman compared to man, whose melancholy was linked with intellectuality (Showalter, 1985:81). Predictably, Ophelia’s madness is the resultant phase of erotomania. As Charneys point out, the madness of women in Elizabethan drama is usually brought on by “the pangs of despised love” (1977:452, Hamlet, 3.1.30), we tend to find the traces of repressed sexuality as in her songs “Young men will do’t if they come to’t, / By Cock, / they are to blame” (4.5.65-6). Ophelia’s madness is a product of the female body and female nature as noted by Carol Thomas Neely, “the cause of Ophelia’s madness is sexual frustration, social helplessness, and enforced control over women’s bodies” (1991:325). Madness is commonly known as the loss

of rationality and frequently the production of childlike speech; however, other frequent associations of madness are music, lyrics, and bawdy ballads. It is endorsed in Showalter's argument:

Her speeches are marked by extravagant metaphors, lyrical free associations, and 'explosive sexual imagery.' She sings wistful and bawdy ballads" (1985: n.p.).

Ophelia's songs expressing sexual frustration are compounded by her sexual imagery captured in her dishevelled hair and white satin gown creating an improper decorum through an overtly sensual impression. DiGangi, in his essay "Women's Speech: Attacks and Defenses", offers explicit insights into the woman talking and her appearance: "excessive or public female speech could easily be perceived as disorderly; moreover, it was a common belief that a woman who was open with her mouth was likely to be open with her body as well" (2008:261). Following her songs and appearance, her femininity and sexuality are also conveyed through her flowers, each of which carries a specific message and suggests a female image.

In her most renowned scene, Ophelia gives away flowers to her brother Laertes, King, and Queen:

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,
love, remember: and there is pansies. That's for thoughts...
There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue
for you; and here's some for me: we may call it
herb-grace o' Sundays: O you must wear your rue with
a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you
some violets, but they withered all when my father
died: they say he made a good end. . . .(Shakespeare, 1603:4.5.199-201,204-9).

What is of interest to us is the symbolic meaning of each flower which mingles with each recipient. As in Act 1, scene 3, Laertes's identification of Ophelia with flowers reveals one of his edifications on her being wary of Hamlet: "a violet in the youth of primy nature" (1.3.8) and suggests Hamlet's whim. The language of her flowers tells more which can be translated as her sermon or response to those who have lectured her so far: Rosemary, given to Laertes, is laden with remembering his father's death and figuring out the murderer, as enveloped in "for remembrance". It is

also interpreted as her kept promise to remain dutiful and chaste in the corrupted court as instructed by her brother before he left for college given in “Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well/ What I have said to you” (1.3.90-1). Rosemary is also believed to be an emblem for a happy marriage and has had “a role at wedding ceremonies throughout the ages, specifically Greek and Roman couples wore wreaths of rosemary on their wedding days” (Field and Scoble, 2001: 46). However, it is also given out during funerals conjuring up the meaning of death. Given that there is no wedding in the play, the audience would steer towards pejorative sense of the word.

Next comes pansies which is derived from the French word *pensée* (thought). It connotes a warning for Laertes to think before taking any actions. A different interpretation based on its symbolic meaning is Ophelia’s sad expression and longing as she hints at her departure from this life and tells him to keep them for her love thoughts. The next flowers are fennel and columbines, which, like Rosemary and pansies, have multiple symbolic meanings: fennel has a reputation for flattery and faithlessness implications, whereas columbines are known to signify male adultery and unchastity as Lever states in his notes “...that to the Elizabethans columbines signified cuckoldry because of the horns on their nectaria” (1952:126). At this point, bearing in mind their meanings and the recipient, it suggests a jab and also abasement to the King.

“There is rue ..” (4.5.205) for Queen Gertrude and herself. Rue was used by the early Catholic Church as blessing by dipping its branches into Holy water and sprinkling it over the heads of the parishioners. This earned it a common name “herb of grace” or “Herb Grace o’ Sundays”. However, Ophelia insinuates that it serves another purpose for the Queen telling her she may wear it with a difference due to her incestuous marriage. Without doubt, it negates the meaning of blessing, but intends the punning allusion of regret, suggesting the other name of “the Herb of Repentance”. Ophelia’s flower invites Gertrude to repent for and turn from her sins. She spares some rue for herself saying that “and here’s some for me” (4.5.205), this time offering a symbol as proof of her regret that she is beguiled into losing her virginity through the empty promise of marriage. A third connotation would be to read rue as patience and endurance, meaning her unbending adherence to the patriarchal system until she is consumed by it and driven mad.

It would be wrong to claim that daisies are decorative in her speech despite there is no recipient for it. Daisy is an “unassuming commonplace of nature” in Wordsworth’s words (qtd. in Merrill, 1900:103); hence Ophelia finds no one in the court to associate it with due to its symbolic meaning. We conclude that she is implying that no one deserves the flower symbolizing innocence and simple virtue; instead, she keeps it to highlight how clearly it applies to her purity. Ophelia finalizes the ceremony with violets, allusively referring “I would give you some violets, they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end” (4.5.207-9). Violets signify many virtues and qualities such as modesty, honesty, faithfulness, and clarity of mind, which, through Ophelia’s lens, have evaporated with her father’s death; or was already non-existent and now surface blatantly. It also offers an interpretation of her lost faith that was damaged by immorality at the hands of social norms.

If Ophelia’s actions and words are perused to be pivoting around the notions of death and love, her songs are interpreted as the seals of these thoughts. Her mind is distorted by the interrelatedness of these thoughts. When Hamlet accidentally kills her father, the burden of death and love becomes unbearable and ruins her. Before she exits the stage, Ophelia sings her last song starting with “And will he not come again?” (4.5.213). The ‘he’ generates the impression of her divided mind between Polonius and Hamlet. Her last song is followed by “And of all Christians’ souls, I pray God. God be wi’ you” (4.5.223-4). The multiplicity of interpretations so far has allowed us to read Ophelia’s role from an array of perspectives, but now this last verse would offer a juncture for the critics as it signifies an overt farewell, followed by her immediate death.

Ophelia’s death is enacted off-stage through Gertrude’s poetic account layered with serene imagery of nature starting with “There is a willow grows aslant a brook” (4.7.190). This depiction of Ophelia portrays her demise as an illustration of beautiful feminine death surfacing the link between drowning and feminine. In the canon of female subordination, social and cultural conceptions identify the woman with nature and man with culture. Judging from this age-old symbolization, her death in the water is perhaps a return to nature. The prevalent poetic image of the drowned woman is well discussed by Gaston Bachelord who traced the structural and also symbolic association

between woman, water, and death and noted that water is “the true matter of a very feminine death”, focusing on the concepts of female fluidity and vulnerability (1942:81). Female fluidity is readily explained through physiological facts, pointing to her body which produces fluids during menstruation and pregnancy, whereas female vulnerability is believed to derive from her psychic nature and sentimentality, thereby producing more tears than men as asserted in “water is the profound organic symbol of woman who can only weep about her pain and whose eyes are easily ‘drowned in tears’” (Ibid.:82). Hamlet’s famous verse of “frailty, thy name is woman!” (1.2.150) endorses her vulnerability resonating with a characteristic of cultural construct, which is identified with water here. The association between woman and nature, woman and water are the starting point for John Everest Millais’s painting.

The description of her death is reminiscent of her mad scene of flower distribution. The particular arrangement of flowers, serving simply a role for the aestheticization of her death, perfectly represents her role before the tragic end. The first elaboration would be, rather than on the oddly diversified flowers, on the willow tree on whose “envious sliver” (4.7.198) she sat broke and let her sunk into death. A willow tree is “linked in Shakespeare and elsewhere in Elizabethan literature with unrequited love” (Camden, 1964:252) which affords us to interpret that her downfall was possibly caused by Hamlet. Wrapped in her “fantastic garland” (4.7.192) are respectively crow-flowers symbolizing naiveté; daisies are known to be the flowers of innocence and purity; then comes nettle which signifies pain and cruelty Ophelia suffered from in her short life. The last flower adorning the imagery of Ophelia’s body is long-purples, also known as male orchids and Dead Men’s Fingers. Considering the fact that the *Orchis*, originating from Greek, means testicle in the context of the language of flowers, it would not be wrong to suggest that this flower represents sexuality and death. Functioning as a botanical innuendo, it either speaks for Ophelia’s stolen subjectivity by her brother, father, and Hamlet or alludes to her wantonness bringing shame upon her chastity. Here is Ophelia’s handful of flowers that simply accommodate their holder’s ultimate end through their mingled aesthetic look.

Ophelia is a prototype of a madwoman figure in the discourse of feminist criticism. Throughout the play, because of the cultural construct and conception of

female sexuality, she, as a warning for the danger of losing chastity, is subdued to surrender her autonomy to patriarchal dictates that reduce her to an object without subjectivity. To Laertes she is a “ministering angel” (5.1.251), while to Polonius she is a “green girl” (1.3.110) he must train, and to audiences of the play, she is a quintessential paragon of innocence and a victim of patriarchal society. The dual perception of femininity and sexuality as the reasons for her immediate madness is evident, either she is vilified after she has lost her virginity on Hamlet’s false promise of marriage and rejection of love, or she is an innocent virgin whose sexuality is kept under control and a poor wretch manipulated perpetually by the power of men within social expectations. When emotional manipulation and abuse are compounded by the loss of her father and unrequited love, Ophelia goes mad at her most submissive and at her most neglected. Many critics agree that her sunk into madness and subsequent death problematizes the immediate reading of her ‘feminine passivity’ since her ‘feminine objectification’ is replaced with ‘feminine subjectivity’ which is implied with the timid steps in Laertes and Hamlet’ exchanges, although it is publicly earned in her madness. Howbeit, could it not matter more when she earned her feminine and sexual subjectivity at her most cognizant?

Through her dishevelled hair, white dress, wildflowers, the femininity of Ophelia’s madness transforms her into something tragically aesthetic which also corresponds to the eroticism in her plunge into a watery death; a floating sensual body surfaces her sexuality. With its fluidity and instability, water becomes a metaphor for feminine madness; it also represents a way to purify her. Perhaps through this effect of purification, Ophelia’s death in water is admirably considered as a divine sight by artists, perpetuating a kind of visual icon rather than a person.

Ophelia’s death is recited in Gertrude’s explanation who cannot have seen her drowning since Shakespeare intended to foreground its aesthetic side with reportage leading us to the interpretation that her off-stage death seen through our mind’s eye mythologizes her. This visually emblematic description of the poetic death essentially encapsulates her whole story and then finds expressions in many artists’ pictorial representations. Her “fantastic garlands...of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies and long purples” (4.7.192-3) and her “mermaid-like” (4.7.201) appearance is perhaps best

captured in nineteenth-century artist John Everett Millais's rendition of *Ophelia* (1851-2). The lush pictorial garland surrounding Ophelia might have cajoled Millais as an artist, but perhaps hearing her demise in water as an outcome of insanity might have touched him as a Victorian: "her garments, heavy with their drink, / Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay / To muddy death " (Hamlet, 4.7.206-8). His fascination with female death by drowning has been noted to represent "feminine passivity" (Boine, 2007:279). What stood out from his artwork when juxtaposed with other images of Ophelia is his departure from conventional depictions, rendered prior to the mid-nineteenth century and also in the mid-nineteenth century, and situating his *Ophelia* in the context of erotized representations, and more particularly blending a young maiden's death and a landscape scene. It will be a focus for discussion in the following part.

As much as we wish to read Millais's image of *Ophelia* as a representation of the madwoman, the constellation of feminine insanity, sexuality, and water surfaces with her floating body, her pose of open arms and upwards gaze, and the flora of the river. The reader is looking at an image that corresponds to Shakespeare's description of "muddy death" (Shakespeare, 1603: 4.7.208) and rearticulates her "textual death" (Peterson, 1998:8) consistent with Gertrude's framing. Ophelia's pose and position, polarized readings from feminine sexuality, decadence, to feminine perfection of purity. Kimberley Rhodes endorses this argument saying "Ophelia manifests conventions of middle-class femininity considered acceptable and admirable in nineteenth-century Britain, she displays those of the female transgressor as well" (2017:3). The iconography of the young maiden's death in Victorian art was not welcome since the image's open arms and mermaid-like spreading dress would set a bad example for a young girl and her chastity, a very minded theme to many Victorians. As much as fear, it meant an inexplicable fascination for the period since the body reveals a deadly eroticism in water. A critic from the **London Times** in 1852 publicly revealed that "there must be something strangely perverse in the imagination which souses Ophelia in a weedy ditch and robs the drowning struggle of that love-lorn maiden of all pathos and beauty while it studie[s] every petal of the darnel" (*Royal Academy*, qtd. in Rhodes, 2017:90). The recumbent position deepened by her pale

skin, half-closed eyes, and open mouth invites sexuality conjuring a moment of orgasm as Kramer endorses:

[D]ead and dying women were notoriously seductive for nineteenth century men. The bodies of such women, imaginary ones anyway, were felt to combine the pliancy of flesh with the perfection of a sculpture, making the death of women at once a form of art and form of sex (1997: 194).

The Victorians invested a plethora of erotic appeal in an image of a dying girl in the water. Thus, intertwining the sexuality, ascribed to the image, with the sublime aesthetic of nature, as untamed wilderness, and watery death explains the instability of the feminine mind with which Victorians characterized Ophelia. Her sexual evocation, defining her as a sensuous siren in some contexts, reminds also of the prevailing nineteenth-century stereotypical fallen madwoman image whose nature of death is aestheticized. This reference between feminine sexuality and female insanity forms a basis for the anesthetization and eroticism of female death in water, thereby proposing the metaphorical relevance of drowning with genderedness. The cultural configuration of this ubiquitous metaphor is added to the Victorian identification of water as a source of redemption which unequivocally directs us to an age-old notion that women should remain tied to nature rather than culture. Framing the drowned female as a fallen madwoman also suggests the purification and cleansing effect of water, thereby serving as a means to clean her of sins and frustration.

Her white dress and unkempt hair signify for untied passion and lend the interpretation of the subsequent fall into madness. The line “Her clothes spread wide” (Shakespeare, 1603:4.7.200) in Gertrude’s poetic narration is visually translated through the painter’s fidelity to the text; however, the lacey silver embroidery⁴ is part of conventions Millais established and part of his Victorian touches. The embroidery on her dress is also suggestive of mimicking the nettles that shoot up to near the root of the willow tree, as Nichols opines “Just as the nettles compress the base and suck the life out of the willow tree so too does Ophelia’s dress pull her feeble body to its

⁴ “To-day I have purchased a really splendid lady’s ancient dress- all flowered over in silver embroidery- and I am going to paint it for ‘Ophelia’...it cost me, old and dirty as it is, four pounds” J. E Millais. John Guille Millais, **The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais**, London, Methuen, 1899, p. 152.

untimely death” (2013:21). The unbound hair may have been devised through the imagery of the collective unconscious which is steered by archetypes of the madwoman. Delicately rendered in flashy tones, Ophelia’s floating flowers are complementary to her white dress and unbound hair in the frame of madness, but falling into both conventions of ideal femininity and sexuality, as Showalter noted:

Her flowers suggest the discordant double images of female sexuality as both innocent blossoming and whorish contamination; she is the “green girl” of pastoral, the virginal “Rose of May” and the sexually explicit madwoman who, in giving away her wild flowers and herbs, is symbolically deflowering herself. The “weedy trophies” and phallic “long purples” which she wears to her death intimate an improper and discordant sexuality that Gertrude’s lovely elegy cannot quite obscure (1985:81).

Some of the painstakingly-depicted botanical details meeting the eye are from Shakespeare’s narration, but some were added carefully by Millais as he had a personal interest in floriography or the ‘language of flowers’. The painting is taken one step further in landscape imagination through the Brotherhood’s doctrine of naturalism substantially recognized as a staple of the movement’s artistic practice. Through Showalter’s framing, the fact that image merges entirely with nature suggests a double association with landscape regarding the notions of femininity and sexuality. The mesmeric quality of nature corresponds to Ophelia’s feminine perfection the Victorians saw in her, while its mysticism, conjuring claustrophobic effect, and the irresistible grandeur and force engendered by the sublime, highlight the threat of female sexuality. As nature depicted in Millais’s canvas is uncontrolled, her appearance is more likely sensuous. The vastness and darkness in the sublime serve as an impact to read the nature’s indifference towards Ophelia’s purity and naiveté, even more it connotes her imminent subsuming.

To return to the painting’s flora and fauna, let us focus our gaze first on the flowers coalescing with the female body, each of which is laden with a symbol. The meanings of flora featured in the painting are decoded starting from those placed close to Ophelia’s head down to her dress, then around the banks. The pink roses, one is near her cheek and the other is on her dress, are interpreted as an allusion to Laertes’s epithet for her “rose of May” (Shakespeare, 1603 4.5.181) by some critics; however, it is more

layered signifying grace⁵. More associated with Ophelia's fate is a treatment for madness and a representation of youthful death⁶. It also articulates the Victorian identification of Ophelia as "wild rose" (Peterson, 1998:21). In the play, even though Ophelia says that there are no violets to give, she wears it as a necklace as Laertes hopes them grow in her grave: "And from her fair and unpolluted flesh / May violets spring!" (Shakespeare, 1603:5.1.249-50). Related to its symbology, its depiction is reflective of her faithfulness⁷. One of the flowers in the bunch in her right hand is asphodel whose Victorian meaning is "My regrets follow you to the grave"⁸. Its association with death and immortality in Greek mythology (Ruskin, 1869/2004: n.p) is the reason why the Greeks planted them "near tombs in the belief the roots would nourish the shades, spirits that had departed their deceased physical bodies" (Ward, 1999:49). Seemingly, the Victorians adopted the same belief and undoubtedly, it may have obliquely contributed to the iconic image's immortality, not through her story, but through visual representation.

Not very obvious but the other stem near her hand appears as daffodil which was abundantly found in England of both Shakespeare and Millais's time. The fact that daffodil was also significantly written about by Romantics like Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth, furnishes us with the elucidation for its inclusion in the painting and portrays the painter as a follower of their ideals as Pre-Raphaelites who highly cherished and appreciated their work. Even though there is an array of literal connotations, Ward states that it represents chivalry and regard⁹ and Seaton emphasizes its frequent use of deceitful hope¹⁰. When situated in a literal context, the reading of daffodil takes us to Tennyson's **Maud** (1855) where he associated it with death in a dark context. Through both critics' examination of the daffodil and Millais's possible influence of Tennyson's use of daffodil, we may reach the implication of

⁵ Mandy Kirkby, Vanessa Diffenbaugh, **A Victorian Flower Dictionary**, 2011, p. 176.

⁶ Henry Ellacombe, **The Plant-Lore and Garden-Craft of Shakespeare**, London, W. Satchell and Co., 1896, p. 264.

⁷ <http://www.avictorian.com/flowers/flowernames.html>, June 6 2021.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bobby J. A Ward, **Contemplation Upon Flowers: Garden Plants in Myth & Literature**, Portland, Oregon, Timber Press, 1999, p. 133

¹⁰ Beverly Seaton, "Considering the Lilies: Ruskin's 'Proserpina' and Other Victorian Flower Books," **Victorian Studies**, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1985, pp. 174-175.

Ophelia's lamentation over being disregarded by male autonomy and her being tricked and fooled by Hamlet's fake love. Her silenced self is heard when she has already sunk into madness but again shrugged off. The remaining flowers coloured as variegated pink, purple, and red, near the same hand and also seen near the bottom part of her dress, also features those belonging to the dianthus family. They appear as pink, red, and striped, three of which are interpreted as deep love or woman's love, "Alas! For my poor heart, and refusal or regret that love cannot be reciprocated"¹¹. This particular flower is not mentioned in Hamlet, yet it was customary in the Victorian culture and a pictorial trope in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Amongst its meanings, what accommodates well to Ophelia when considering her proclamation in the play calling herself "of [all] ladies most deject and wretched" (Shakespeare, 1603:3.1.169) is poor heart and refusal. Thus, she is defined as a model for the madwoman by nineteenth-century culture and literature whose wretchedness was caused by unrequited love, but also by patriarchal oppression from the perspective of a feminist reader and context.

In Ophelia's palm, presumably, a stem of purple hyacinth makes reference to Ophelia's being sorry and asking for forgiveness as she sang in her last song "God 'a mercy on his soul / And of all Christians' souls, I pray God. God be wi' / you (Shakespeare, 1603:4.5.222-4) communicating the given definition in floriography as "please forgive me"¹². Red poppy was significantly cultivated by the Pre-Raphaelites notably to represent death or deep sleep¹³. Hidden behind the red poppy is possibly white jasmine which typically symbolizes sensuality and amiability¹⁴. If we read Ophelia as a sensual image, it, obviously, points out the ground of discomfort created in the Victorian audience. Viewing her an amiable pure victim this time suggests their appeal of tragic heroine through the inclusion of this specific flower. What accompanies this bunch is a lone stem of marsh marigold signifying grief¹⁵ as illustrated in Shakespeare's **The Two Noble Kinsmen** (1634): "Marigolds on death-

¹¹ S. Theresa Dietz, **The Complete Language of Flowers**, London, Quarto Publishing plc., 2020, p. 75.

¹² Mandy Kirkby, Vanessa Diffenbaugh, **A Victorian Flower Dictionary**, 2011, p. 186.

¹³ Peter Brix Søndergaard, "'Something strangely perverse': Nature and Gender in J. E. Millais's Ophelia," **Journal for the Study of Romanticisms**, Volume 07, 2018, p. 117.

¹⁴ Beverly Seaton, "Considering the Lilies: Ruskin's 'Proserpina' and Other Victorian Flower Books," **Victorian Studies**, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1985, p. 180.

¹⁵ Mandy Kirkby, Vanessa Diffenbaugh, **A Victorian Flower Dictionary**, p. 172.

beds blowing” (1.1.3). It is also known to be associated with the Virgin Mary; drawing from this symbolical reference presents a clue to understand Ophelia’s sorrow. Daisies and their connotations of innocence and purity have been touched upon previously, but forget-me-nots join them in Millais’s narrative now. Besides holding on to this bunch, forget-me-nots are visible also on the banks with baby blooms, perhaps laying emphasis on its meaning of remembrance. The veneer of detail gains more significance and admiration upon realizing that the painter’s addition of another layer to the symbolic reading of the painting through the pairing of the flowers, each of which lend meaning to their pairs. The fact that the constellation of blooms is not random serves as a sequence of strata to reach the central theme of death of a young, innocent maiden from insanity.

The bouquet consisting of two different stems of flowers below Ophelia’s breast is unfortunately unidentifiable as there is not sufficient account for them. Down to Ophelia’s belly, there seems a pheasant’s eye known to stand for painful recollections¹⁶. Placing it near her genital area perhaps hints at the reason for her sorrowful memories supported by the nearby pansies. The pansies of Shakespeare’s Ophelia suggestive of thoughts are broadened in the Victorian language of flowers. The folk name of pansies as love-in-idleness adds to its meaning, love in vain while situating it near the pheasant’s eye particularizes it as cause and effect, the unrequited love and grief, respectively. Purple and yellow irises are placed on her dress disjointedly from each other, all alone. Debra N. Mancoff enlightens us on its use by the Pre-Raphaelites connoting “lost love and silent grief” maintaining that the mourning of Jesus turned yellow ones into purple according to French mythology (2012:34). In between irises, there is one little nemophila whose common name is baby blue eyes. Its Victorian symbology is not provided here due to lack of sources. Between the bottom part of her dress and water edge floats a bunch of fritillary symbolizing sorrow¹⁷. Not present in the painting is Shakespeare’s columbines but is presented with crowfoot in the foreground, and below Ophelia, resembling buttercups with their common meaning of ingratitude. Knowing that columbines are given to the

¹⁶ S. Theresa Dietz, **The Complete Language of Flowers**, p. 13.

¹⁷ Tim Barringer, **Reading the Pre-Raphaelites**, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012, p. 64.

King in the play, we are inclined to its other symbolic meaning of childishness better represents the image. By the banks, are purple loosestrife on the upper right-hand corner alluding to Gertrude's description of "long purples" (Shakespeare, 1603:4.7.193) and mentioned in Ophelia's drowning. Perhaps to Millais, it is known as "long purples" in England¹⁸. Referring to our previous reading of it as sexuality through its resemblance to a phallic form, Greenblatt's expands it with the meaning of fertility¹⁹ as a symbol of the motherhood Ophelia is deprived of. Since motherhood is every young woman's desire, the reader sees Ophelia's lifeless image as undeniable proof of sexual frustration due to unfulfilled womanhood and amorous passion which reflects Freud's pronouncements for female madness from sexual frustration. Abundantly branched out on the right side of the bank is wild roses interchangeably used with briar rose, a symbolic name commonly used in the folktale of **Sleeping Beauty** (Lee, 2016:11). Taking Millais's implied intention as a reference, we may offer that the profuseness of this flower in the painting renders Ophelia a sleeping beauty telling "a long period of quiescence" as theorized by Bruno Bettelheim (1975:230).

Though it is not known for sure why Millais did not depict Shakespeare's fennel, rosemary, and rue, the inclusion of pond sedge in the foreground and wild teasel in the background presage their roles. While pond sedge has no symbolic meaning, wild teasel is associated with benefit, jealousy, and misanthropy²⁰ indicating that their inclusion is not simply symbolic but rather his cling to the creed of "truthness to nature" with tenacity outstandingly spread into painting. A "...willow grows askant the brook" (Shakespeare, 1603:4.7.190) is captured by the viewer, a staple element in the scene of Ophelia's drowning, and it is dying amid a tangle of lush vegetation apparently corresponding to its meaning of forsaken love²¹ and melancholy²². In the upper-left corner, a red breasted robin overlooks Ophelia. The amalgamation of the

¹⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/08/18/arts/pros-and-cons-of-a-well-known-perennial.html>, June 13 2021.

¹⁹ Stephen Greenblatt, **Notes on Shakespeare, William. The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark**, New York, London, W.W. Norton, 2008, p. 1767.

²⁰ S. Theresa Dietz, **The Complete Language of Flowers**, p. 78

²¹ Ibid., p. 196.

²² Mandy Kirkby, Vanessa Diffenbaugh, **A Victorian Flower Dictionary**, p. 178.

iconographical use of the robin and Ophelia's last song in the play as "They say he made a good end. / For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy" (Shakespeare, 1603:4.5.209-10) presents us an allusion to death well known to Shakespeare and Millais. Shakespeare's robin is recreated on canvas identically, but his moss is replaced with crowfoot because, as Miller claims (2014:108), he acquired a reputation for covering the dead body with moss in the sixteenth century. As an extended re-articulation of the source text, Millais's carefully arranged natural elements are all in interaction with each other, with Ophelia, and with the viewer/reader. Referring to our earlier argument regarding Ophelia's sensationalistic death scene, if a Victorian viewer, through this interaction, chooses to understand the iconographical language as a fatal consequence of madness due to transgression, the image exposes itself as a warning for young women to abide by the traditional roles to not face the same grim end. However, if the same audience reads her as a victim who succumbed to naiveté, the organic fecundity unravels as a model of the feminine ideal.

Weaving our argument from the second viewer's mode of approach, as Ziegler puts it, she epitomized "the quintessential innocence and purity of young womanhood on the verge of sexual awakening, but unable to reach maturity because of her inability to live under the terms of the cold, hard world" (2001:41) for the Victorians. The image then is well suited to the definition of the *femme fragile* of the epoch: the embodiment of a childlike body and in the words of Friederike Emonds "morbid fragility and sickness, on the one hand, and decorative artificiality and sterile beauty, on the other" (1997:165). As a *femme fragile*, Ophelia's countenance evokes a final sigh uttering defeat and embracing the death which articulates a passivity:

Ophelia drifts with palms upturned, just breaking the surface of the water, offering herself to death. The face is that of a very young and innocent woman, with delicate ivory and rose skin, blue eyes, and blond brows and lashes. [...] The image is one of utter passivity (Daly, 1989: 41).

Thus, her death is more than passivity, it is the ultimate submission. A submission to the uncaring world of patriarchy controlling femininity by repressing her sexuality otherwise even thoughts of it cause insanity, with a confinement that again causes

insanity. What a Victorian reader attaches to the image of Ophelia inevitably expresses male construction of femininity where she is an ideal of profound submission or fallen from profane sensuality, both converging at the unvarying response of the image: madness.

Millais's romanticisation of death from lust or love addresses "the complexities and attractions of femininity in all its guises" (Rhodes, 2001:55) through encoded and varied iconographical flora. "The femininity in all its guises" lays itself open to an understanding of intertwined natures: the nature of the figure and the figure of nature. After having traversed in the rich symbolic meaning of both natures, through the lens of a postmodern feminist reader, *Ophelia*, the overall composition, portrays the subliminal sexual nervousness projected onto a young maiden by a patriarchal society's state of mind striving to control its own sexual anxiety, whether through her purity or sexual attractiveness. Her sexual nervousness is dominated by frustration and is expressed as escapism into melancholy or even worse into madness, and eventually death.

The textual and visual Ophelia[s] embodies the relinquished identification whose nervous breakdown results from the tension between her extreme acquiescence and unconscious resistance to moral pressure. Caught between tabooed femininity and sinful thoughts (acts) on the one hand, a romantic and parental heartbreak, on the other hand, the controlling consciousness breaks, and out of cracks creep depression, nervous breakdown, and mental illness. Ophelia on Millais's canvas is the embodiment of the whole story of Shakespeare's Ophelia and they intertwine at the juncture of ultimate regression to nature. The presentation of Ophelia in the play is less ambiguous than the image's visual narrative. Shakespeare presents a dutiful female victimized by the domination of an ego-strong male, and traumatized by the unclear love relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia, and the murder of her father. The ambiguity of love is also shadowed by death through its poetic recital presenting itself as a primary theme. Contradicting Gertrude's reportage, the death is depicted more simply and realistically, implicating that her death seems less important than the death itself since its description adds to objectification of her. This is well captured by the artist, but his depiction of death highlights actual femininity suggestive of innocence and bearing

profound sublimation through the powerful symbolism of natural elements. Also, Millais's theme of death serves as another stage from male objectification of the female body. Could it be the last stage of objectification of her by the male? Both Shakespeare's and Millais's Ophelia, whose death, unfortunately, fails to emancipate her from objectification, exposes a source to see the woman as a *graven image*, whether she is gone mad, or dead, she is perpetually imprisoned in male gaze.



CHAPTER FOUR

FALLEN WOMAN

4.1. Jenny and A Trilogy for Jenny By Dante Gabriel Rossetti

*“... O God! to-day
He only knows he holds her;—but what part
Can life now take? She cries in her locked heart,—
“Leave me—I do not know you—go away!”
(Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Found (For A Picture, 1881)*

The myth of the fallen woman could be related to Adam and Eve's fall from the Garden of Eden, literally the grace of God, due to the serpent's temptation of Eve. Thus, it is the woman who receives the blame, on which the rationale of subordination is predicated, and it is she who is the bearer of a tendency towards guilty disobedience that accounts for her weakness and deviance out of which the traditional form of gender discrimination arises. Gender apartheid, in which religious definitions played a fundamental role, brings out sexual categorization that is tightly embraced by the edifice of Victorian morality. This morality engineers codes of sexuality for both sexes; while a man's sexual drive is the natural result of healthy manhood, a woman's is unacceptable and perverse. Punitive conventions surrounding a woman's sexual drive generate another differentiation for feminine sexuality as the feminine ideal and the fallen woman. On close examination of the division of women into different types, we see how pervasively the myth of the 'Angel in the house' fashions the reverse model as deviated from the prescribed way, operating on a binary basis. A variety of identities are devised for the myth of the fallen woman such as demonic, dangerous, transgressor, adulteress, and prostitute through which she is destined to be ostracized, stigmatized, a clear example in the construction of gender and class. Ultimately, she has a non-endorsed identity, or she is not simply the vague negation of the female ideal. The fact she is deeply controlled by her instincts singularly moulds her as a femme fatal which insinuates that she is granted with a powerful identity. The implementation of this image inevitably proliferates in many forms of art in the light of religious and cultural views. The formation of these views is vital to this part as it

not only reveals shrewd observations about how textual and visual narratives manifest fallen woman, it also buttresses the understanding of how writers and artists, who rendered the image of the fallen woman during the Victorian period, harnessed its ideological definitions. In line with this argument, this chapter, therefore, aims to explore how the development of the discourse of the fallen woman in Victorian culture is expressed in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's works of art, respectively, his poem **Jenny** (1870), the paintings ***Bocca Baciata*** (1859), ***Fazio's Mistress (Aurelia)*** (1863-73), ***The Blue Bower*** (1865), and the sonnet **Found** (1881) and its accompanying painting bearing the same name ***Found*** (1854). Even though the paintings ***Bocca Baciata***, ***Fazio's Mistress***, and ***The Blue Bower*** were not especially rendered to accompany **Jenny**, the iconographic elements of the visual texts centred on the representation of the fallen woman supply enough evidence to make particular reference to the poem **Jenny**.

A dualism penetrated in Rossetti, consisting of unmediated selves which mutually contradict and negate one another, permeating his images of woman. His dualism is rooted in his divided *self* and also in his dual identity of painter-poet steering his art and life. His attempts of various depictions of contradicting images of woman are a constant in him, constituting a catalogue of either conforming to the tenets of the prescribed Victorian identity of a woman or subvert stereotypes, testifying to the paradox-laden era, thereby suggesting that Rossetti's own uncertainties and contradictions in his work are the repercussions of the cultural conflicts. The portrayal of the dichotomous female body is perpetuated in images of the fallen woman, in which he simultaneously degrades and empathizes with her, thus both adhering to and perforating the solid Victorian identity of the woman. On Rossetti's renderings of the fallen woman, Bullen maintains that "the fallen woman had a double and powerful hold on the mid-Victorian imagination, simultaneously repellent and exciting, engendering both pity and loathing [like Jenny]" (1998:58). Our analysis will explore Rossetti's bifurcated influences in the images of the fallen woman within the light of Victorian double imagination with regard to her.

Rossetti's dramatic monologue **Jenny** reveals his ambivalent attitudes towards the fallen woman, tempered by cultural indoctrination. His striving to contend with the

values, on a personal and social level, is gestated in three-decades, an early version was written in the late 1840s, but his acute dissatisfaction led him to rewrite it almost ten years later not knowing that he would bury this version with his late muse/love and wife Elizabeth Siddal. In 1869, he exhumed it to revise, then finally to publish it in 1870. This intensive study predictably suggests a conjecture of numerous engagements, as Slinn notes, “the commercial intent, artistic display, guilt, self-explanation, personal exoneration, perhaps public explanation of liberal sexual attitudes, and male sensitivity towards unfortunate young women” (2003:155). All these perceptions led to a monologic discourse, perhaps, because Rossetti could not come to terms with any. A monologue shields the poet’s moral crisis reflected onto the figure, his acute awareness of the audience, and the possible resultant critical reaction makes him incarcerate his thoughts in the interior monologue: “Suppose I were to think aloud, - / What if to her all this were said?” (156-7) marks his fear of unravelling himself. It seems reasonable to relate this treatment of the fallen woman to Art-Catholicism which he termed from an Anglo-Catholic creed to dub his art in depicting the relationship between the body and the soul. His images of woman painted in the light of Art-Catholicism symbolize the experience of the moment depicting the beauty of the physical body and the heavenly soul. Through this depiction, he aims to accommodate the image of a real woman with the idealized one, thereby representing the amalgamation of both damnation and salvation. His failure in distancing himself from moral codes rooted in his religious upbringing, ultimately led to his separation of the soul’s beauty from the body’s beauty.

The poem is beyond a stereotypical portrayal of the fallen woman image even though Jenny, an archetypical prostitute, undoubtedly epitomizes the female sexual deviance. The opening epigram to the poem vouches for the poet’s conflicting gestures towards her: “Vengeance of Jenny’s case!”. “Vengeance” implicitly mirrors her as both victim and sinner where Jenny can be interpreted as the subject of the vengeance by taking her revenge, or the object, being avenged by the sin itself. The first stanza contributes to this integration of disdain and pity suggesting the narrator’s sympathetic and condemning stances through imagery and allusion. She is portrayed as a sinner in “Lazy laughing languid Jenny, / Fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea, / Whose head

upon my knee to-night" (1-3) and followed by an image of a victim in "Poor flower left torn since yesterday / Poor shameful Jenny, full of grace" (14-8), which is also observed by Laurent:

...she becomes a Victorian sister of Mary Magdalene, the celebrated Biblical sinner, while at the same time she is saluted with the words the Archangel Gabriel addressed to the Virgin Mary: "Poor shameful Jenny, full of grace" (2006:17).

Along with the poet's ambivalence, the natural imagery evokes both Jenny's purity and victimization: while "blue skies" (10) and "Fresh flower" (12) highlight her chastity, "Poor flower left torn" (14) presents her as a commodity. The narrator's inconsistent presentation of Jenny, providing a basis in the first stanza and going on in the second, is defined with the poles of 'sensuality and rationality', more precisely, the tension between a heart and head dichotomy, utilized on two levels in Rodgers's insightful commentary:

the narrative level (that is, the inconstant point of view of the narrator), and the symbolic level (the controlling, central, and constant symbols of the poem). The narrative level is characterized by a fluctuation between the rational and the sensual, and this vacillation is manifest in the narrator's continually altering perception of Jenny. The symbolic level is manifest principally in the image of book (rationality) and flower (sensuality) and is independent of the narrator's own consciousness (1980:157).

Thus, the symbolic level features Jenny as an image of a flower whereas the narrator figures as a book in the second stanza: "This room of yours, my Jenny, looks / A change from mine so full of books" (22-3). Comparing Jenny's room with his, the book's image that Jenny lacks surfaces as an explicit line to the brain to degrade her intellectual capacity. The audience is alerted by a sense of judgmental stance from his inherently patriarchal lens and the hegemonic masculinity that accentuates Jenny's beauty on an aesthetic level rather than intellectual since she is a thoughtless figure in "the thoughtless queen" (7), evidenced by the absence of the books, but a beauty for the male gaze through the narrator's eyes as he watches her there saying "For all your wealth of loosened hair" (47) in stanza 4. The poem's very beginning whispers the Victorian mode of thinking on the downfall of woman unfolded in Jenny's position as

described, “Whose head upon my knee to-night” (3), a triple condescending manner but mildly delivered; her lower position illustrating woman’s place, slumbering on his knee suggesting passivity, and being a prostitute embodying the fallen woman. Jenny’s intellectual and moral inferiority compared to the narrator’s is abased with her “fond of a kiss”, “fond of a guinea” (2), and the pun on “purse” (20) in stanza 1. However, it is shadowed by an ostensibly compassionate move in the end of stanza 2, revealing that the narrator signals a positive atmosphere in her room keeping him, thus saying “I suppose ’twas hard to part, / For here I am” (34-5). In stanza 3, he ruminates on his past and present seemingly helping him unearth what draws him to Jenny’s world but remains inexplicable such that being with Jenny is “something I do not know again” (42). It reminds us of Rossetti’s fusion of material and spiritual, as to say, the body and the soul which sheds light on his contemplation of Jenny.

In stanza 4, the narrator’s meditation on Jenny is echoed further through the image of the “cloud” evoking her lure dimming his books, and beguiling him into her room with the conceivable corporeal beauty of her “wealth of loosened hair” (47) and “...silk ungirdled and unlac’d / And warm sweets open to the waist” (48-9), but he is chasing the inconceivable beauty and neglecting his work for bodily pleasures. Thus, while a part of Jenny is “Half-read by lightning in a dream!” (52), another part remains unreadable to the narrator making her thoughts impenetrable. The incomprehensible part negates Jenny’s moral inferiority and her only motivation of “kiss” and “guinea” (2), embarrassing the narrator for saying “Poor beauty, so well worth a kiss!” (55). Comparing Jenny to a book renders her wordless text dependent on a reader to be read or understood, as emphasized by Celia Marshik in “The Case of ‘Jenny’: Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Censorship Dialectic” (2005): “If Jenny is a book, she cannot speak for herself—her content only becomes apparent when a reader analyses her text and communicates a reading” (566). It is ironic that she becomes a book he reads to understand, an understanding through which Rossetti perhaps accesses the content of Jenny with the hopes of changing the audience’s approach towards the prostitution.

Wondering about Jenny’s thoughts is followed by his questioning whether she is dreaming or is thinking of him in stanza 5. This time Jenny can be likened to a mirror in which the narrator seeks himself out through Jenny’s thoughts: “If of myself you

think at all, / What is the thought? / fit ... with a lure?" (59-60,63). His description of her thoughts whether "conjectural" (60) or "on sorry matters" (61) recounts his struggle between the poles of unmediated insight and absolute vagueness. Jenny, acting as a mirror, drives him into dimness in which he muses on himself by postulating about his reflection in Jenny's mind. Eventually, his speculations on Jenny's conjectures about him become his conjectures about himself. This transition of conjecture through the metaphor of mirror can be explained with Jerome McGann's assertion in his introduction to **Rossetti's Collected Poetry and Prose** (2003): "a poem like 'Jenny' is a dangerous critical mirror that turns the reader's eyes back on themselves" (xxviii). One might judge from McGann's "reader" that it may stand for the narrator as a reader of Jenny or the actual reader of the poem. In both cases, Jenny, as a mirror, appears as a medium of self-interpretation through the narrator's interpretation. Then, do we think that the narrator is engulfed in Jenny, and does the reader? That is to say, there lurking behind the narrator's interpretation of Jenny is his interpretation of himself, and the reader's his own, as might be expected, the reader of the period when "Jenny" was created. If we see in him the poet himself, as many critics do, who is cleverly holding a mirror to the reader's hypocrisy, then the narrator's contradictions and ambivalences are likewise implicated in this mirror, and also clearly reflective of the poet. As a result of his self-judgment and self-indictment, the narrator ends his speculation with his own portrayal as a saviour in Jenny's unconscious mind, assuming that she is grateful that he, rather than "drunk" or "ruffianly" (65), allows her to sleep upon his knee. The poet's moral message is revealed in this implied role as Jenny's saviour, suggesting the male as the woman's protector and redeemer from her sinful life, and hoping for Jenny's redemption. Jenny, sinking into a quagmire of sin, demonstrates the general postulation of the fallen woman imagery of the nineteenth century, signifying that the only decent role for a young woman can be attained within the family as an honest daughter and wife. Linda Nochlin's corresponding assertion is that "Speaking figuratively, one might say that behind every crouched figure of a fallen woman there stands the eminently upright one of the angel" (1978:141). As such, perhaps the narrator intends to pull that upright one from the fallen world.

The theme of redemption is obviously intended with the image of saviour and further displays the narrator's compassionate meditations on Jenny's nature and her life as a prostitute in the following two stanzas. Reiterating Jenny's being glad through "You're thankful for a little rest,— / Glad from the crush to rest within" (68-9) reinforces his sympathy for her. Made obvious now is that the narrator is asking for the reader's compassion too through the description of her life which is probably full of "heart-sickness" and "din" (70). Here it would be congruous to refer to Rossetti's "inner-standing theory" in which he sympathizes with the "young and the thoughtful man of the world" as he defines (McGann, 2004: 176), and where he supposedly asks the reader to do the same both for the young man and also "the imaginative figure" (McGann, 2003: xxvi). But the contradictions of the narrator in the poem bar the reader from reaching a certain judgment, instead he is besieged by a sense of doubt. Knowing that she is mistreated in her day-to-day life as a prostitute, he thinks that other people "mocks" (72) her as illustrated in a "pale girl" who "rebuke[s]" (73) Jenny because the pale girl's "toil-worn look" (74) evidences her struggling to earn her life honourably unlike Jenny. The narrator's imagination of opprobrium extends to a schoolchild described as an "unchildish elf" (77) who points Jenny out to his friends as a "thing" (79). A clear sympathy surrounds him from which he judges the sleeping figure's rest would be escapism from malevolence or the realities of her life: "Yes, from the daily jeer and jar, / From shame and shame's outbraving too, / Is rest not sometimes sweet to you?" (80-2). However, it is sweeter against "the hatefulness of man" (83) since the pathos of that solitary fight for survival deepens with one of her clients' mistreatments, unlike the narrator who serves dishes and wine when he dines.

In the following stanza, a cloud of doubt shadows our thoughts regarding the narrator's sensitivity towards Jenny's desperation. In his thoughts, he wants Jenny to "sit up" (89) to stop his musings about Jenny's desperate life, apprehensive that he would be entangled with her shame: "And do not let me think of you, / Lest shame of yours suffice for two" (91-2). He is suffused with compassion leading him to sympathize with her pain but fails him from doing something, even though he lets Jenny rest upon his knee caringly, he, now seemingly, pursues his self-interest. Rodgers sums this up as follows:

Here, as the images of dining continue from the previous stanza (“I’ve filled our glasses, let us sup” [1. 90]), and the narrator continues to fulfill his own appetite, he attempts to keep Jenny from sleeping (“What, still so tired? Well, well then, keep/Your head there, so you do not sleep” [11. 93-94]), denying her the “little rest” that in the previous stanza he so sympathetically assumed she needed. Thus, though he is capable of feeling compassion (or believing that he feels compassion), he is incapable of acting on it, and equally incapable at this point of recognizing his own moral limitations (1980:160).

Moral restraints impede the individual decision to take action, hence he only displays a passive sensibility, akin to that of an artist with such consciousness and tenderness towards the object of art till it disappears from the artist’s sight. Therefore, one may rightfully question whether or not the narrator’s sympathy is genuine, perhaps it is, as long as he gazes at her. Since their relationship is built on a voyeuristic gaze, his sympathy is assumedly genuine throughout his presence in Jenny’s room, thereby suggesting that as a man of sentiment, he surrenders again to Jenny’s weariness, after wishing her to keep him company, and allowing her to rest as long as she does not sleep. Focusing on her “lazy lily hand”, which he defines as more “bless’d” (97) when bereft of any adornments than it is when the fingers are dressed in rings or the hand itself is with a glove, the narrator judges Jenny’s looks and compares her as an idealized image of feminine beauty. This reading is attained through the amalgamation of “lily” and “bless’d”, denoting the ideal feminine figure Mary. However, her appearance corresponds to an aesthetic figure rather than a demure one. The aestheticization, as observed in a modest figure, derives from her utterly passive position, presenting her through a “voyeuristic process of objectification” as he “voyeuristically watches Jenny there” (Bycroft, 2003: n.p), thereby asserting his control over her.

In stanza 8, the reader finds an allusion to the Bible: “Behold the lilies of the field, / They toil not neither do they spin; / (So doth the ancient text begin,-- Not of such rest as one of these / Can share)” (100-5). According to the New Testament, Jesus preached about the power of God, even watching the fields full of lilies would suffice to testify to God’s might; thus, they should not be concerned about material things since they will be sufficiently provided. The implication surrounding this allusion is

perhaps a warning not to go astray during trials and tribulations, leading us to Rossetti's highlighting Jenny's transgression, his presentment of a vivid unwomanly dishonour, insinuating that God has forsaken. The positive image of lilies turns into a sombre tone at the end of the stanza. The dark twist reveals that the lilies have died suggesting the relationship between the flower's symbolic meaning of innocence and Jenny's being a sinner; Jenny's innocence has withered away: "the lilies sickened unto death" (110). The image of lily is accompanied by another flower, a rose, in stanza 9; the former, representing innocence, is accompanied by the latter's symbolic meaning of purity and chaste. Grief overcomes the reader when the narrator implies that he futilely wishes Jenny's lilies are not dead, but they are, and he then questions whether or not her roses ¹ wilted away too: "But must your roses die, and those / their purpled buds that should uncloze?" (116-7). Despite the two different images of flowers, the poet conjoins them instilling the meaning of virginity, which is gone from Jenny.

Reading stanza 10, the reversal of perception of Jenny, pure or fallen, permeates in the poem resonating with the Victorian reaction through Rossetti's lens whose projection with the narrator is well described by Linda Peterson: "Dante Gabriel's speaker inserts [himself] into a social question" (2009:209). He undeniably creates the narrator's dilemma generated by her recorded history "Much older than any history" (128); thus, you cannot find it "in any book" (129), suggesting that he is unable to truly comprehend Jenny. Despite never truly understanding Jenny, the narrator here portrays her as innocent, out of his dilemma yet again. Aside from the connotative meaning of virginity, innocence refers to purity and honesty, and this stanza suggests that Jenny still retains it, a spiritual innocence rather than a corporeal one. Negating and reversing his previous description, he reflects that it is merely an assumption that the flowers perished: "Nay, nay, mere words. Here nothing warns / As yet of winter" (121-22) conveying that Jenny is still innocent, innocence in the face of the city's hostility. This time she is defined as the flower itself lying "in fields and look / Along the ground through the blown grass" (130-1) in "the old days" (127) when

¹ "Still red as from the broken heart" revealing that the color of roses, which symbolizes bashful shame, sensuality and passion according to Victorian Language of Flowers, suggests an assumed shame Jenny feels due to her sins.

Jenny was free as a child and told “where the city was” (132) replete with “broil and bale” (133). The fact that she was an innocent child before being prostituted by the pandemonium and cruelty of the city life reveals how the narrator appears as a critique of society. The real sinner is not her but the city itself.

The corrupt city image continues in the next stanza manifesting itself in its “cold lamps” (152), evoking “A fiery serpent in her heart” (153) in “market-night” (140). An innocent heart in the “Haymarket” (142), where goods are traded day and night, metamorphosing into a market of prostitution, highlighting the commodification of woman, well known to Jenny now (Danahay, 1998: 389). The “learned London children” (143), upon seeing her and cognizant of Jenny’s profession through her “lifted silken shirt” which “advertize[d] dainties through the dirt” (145-6), represent middle- or upper-class gentry frequently consorting with Jenny-like prostitutes. Through his inner standing point, Rossetti presents the myth of the fallen woman in an unconventional way, as if she is not fallen but made to fall, to estrange the Victorian readers from the commonplace typologies of the feminine, he then gestures toward conventional details through the outer standing point to expect them to reconstruct femininity with a new awareness. In Jenny’s case, Rossetti’s showcasing of conventional details such as the sex economy where the likes of Jenny are bought and sold and the spectatorship of the London children and their involvement in it mirrors the society’s hypocrisy and adumbrates its indirect support in the downfall of such a woman.

“Let the thoughts pass, an empty cloud!” (155) says the narrator in stanza 12, with a wish to banish these thoughts upon realizing the perturbing cruelty of the city. The narrator compares Jenny to a book in order to disguise his scepticism regarding Jenny’s comprehension as well as whether or not he should say his ideas aloud: “Why, as a volume seldom read / Being opened halfway shuts again” (158-9). Her brain is compared to a book’s parted pages, but not considered something worthy to read, later realizing that she is even incapable of the most basic activities of the brain owing to a “desecrated mind” (164). Because of her occupation, which has rendered her brain profane and severely damaged to the point that it is nearly useless, she is degraded below the status of being a human. Encapsulated in the relationship between her

“desecrated mind” and occupation is “the history of theorizing mental stultification”, as observed by Richard Adelman, which allows us to see the fact that:

the intellectual capacity of the laboring classes is very much at issue during the years in which Rossetti works on “Jenny,” 1848-70. It is at this historical moment that the desecration of the mind in accordance with the individual’s occupation is still something of a commonplace, in other words, the received wisdom of a political economy that holds a central position in public and political life (2017:13).

Desecration of the brain as an appalling consequence of her occupation ostracizes her far more than casting her out from society when associated with the “contagious” (165) rivers of the city. For Donnelly, Jenny’s “contaminated mind is likened to the river of forgetfulness in mythological underworld” (2015:145), thereof she will remember nothing even though admonished for being sinner:

Desecration and contagion have ravaged Jenny’s mind as well as her body; they whirl together in a river of forgetfulness and propose that death constitutes Jenny’s only possibility of release (2015:146).

“Dies not yet”, she seeks release and relief in sleep. It would not be a coincidence that Rossetti’s Jenny has finally fallen asleep just after the cruellest assumption of the narrator in stanza 13. Jenny is reduced to absolute passivity as a vulnerable figure both physically and perceptively, suggesting an emblem of a vessel to be filled in by the male gaze. Her fragility surfaces when asleep as in “Asleep, poor Jenny, hard and fast,— / So young and soft and tired; so fair” (172-3) associating her once again with natural elements like the nestling chin in her hair, blue eyelids, and some sky of dreams. In stanza 14, the analogy between Jenny’s sleep and another woman’s - “Just as another woman sleeps!” (177) - is beyond comparison but manifesting her as one of them because it focuses on a hidden self in each woman; that is to say, the prostitution is an identity lying in every demure woman or vice versa. Hinted at here is his most clear presentment of the fallen woman since she is not different from her “sister vessels” who are made “Of the same lump [of clay]” (182), either suggesting

sympathy for Jenny or a Victorian patriarchal attitude towards her same kind. The narrator frees us from this ambiguity of perception in the following stanza since we read a clearer indication of Jenny's kinship with the narrator's cousin Nell who exhibits a typical woman image as being fond of "fun", "dress", "change", and "praise" (185-6), rendering her appear to be a silly, mindless, and flirtatious maiden. This does not exonerate her from being fallen when her enforced eagerness to be married is considered with William Morris's famous point of view stating that "as long as women are compelled to marry for a livelihood real marriage is a rare exception and prostitution or a kind of legalized rape the rule" (Morris & Kelvin, 1987:404). The point of divergence between Jenny and the latter is that Nell is under the protection of a father, brother, and cousins, presumably a counter patriarchal figure. The line, given just prior to reference to Nell, "The potter's power over the clay" (181) shows that the patriarchal male watching over Nell could be presented as the hand of God. She is guarded well till handed to another man's protection. It suggests her as the quintessential figure in which the other Magdalene model of a woman is compared who simultaneously sizes up as a Madonna-like woman. What about Jenny? A woman whose life is full of hardship is decaying day by day, and this is the only distinction between Jenny and Nell, further emphasized in stanza 16 with a restatement of "the same lump" (183) despite leading an honourable or dishonourable life. Thus, the following stanza highlights the absurdity of comparing "a goblin", representing Jenny, to "the sun", (206) as Nell.

The transition from the above line to the first line of stanza 18 powerfully delivers the narrator's ambivalence. Apart from that, its onset is laden with a twofold interpretation: "So pure, —so fall'n!" (207) communicating first [a] Jenny who embodies both purity and impurity, then proposing a distinctness between images of Jenny who is fallen and Nell who is defined as pure. The subsequent rhetorical question "How dare to think / Of the first common kindred link?" (207-8) deviates from the first perusal, of Jenny's dual identity, and settles on Rossetti's direct contrast between them since the narrator conveys his wonderment of the two women's likenes. Through long contemplation, he reaches to a point; when considering the deep-seated definition of female sexuality, sharply deemed to be controlled and not to deviate from

the ideal, the possible outcome is that any woman may fall as in “all things take their turn” (210). This insinuates a perpetual fear in man regarding femininity and sexuality. The metaphor of the “tree” (211) reveals this anxiety that all women like or unlike Jenny may lead a similar life or have a reverse situation, daughters of others like Jenny may lead a decent life, briefly any man’s daughter may be subject to this mythical sexual classification:

And who shall say but this fair tree
 May need, in changes that may be,
 Your children’s children’s charity?
 Scorned then, no doubt, as you are scorn’d!
 Shall no man hold his pride forewarn’d
 Till in the end, the Day of Days,
 At Judgement, one of his own race,
 As frail and lost as you, shall rise,—
 His daughter, with his mother’s eyes? (Rossetti, 1870:211-19)

By assuming any man’s daughter’s fallibility, he questions man’s role in this sinful-or tragic- downfall by making reference to himself in stanza 19. Time is passing for both of them represented by Jenny’s ticking clock on the shelf, and it testifies to their spending, their “life-coins to one tune” (226) without knowing what their “blindfold” (227) fate will bring, for some man “this life be lost” (228) whose soul deserves to be prayed. Connecting himself to Jenny through the metaphors of the “clock” and the “money”, the narrator insinuates man’s harsh judgment of woman. Manifesting himself as part of this social construction, he implies that he and his fellow-creature and also the opposite sex only jettison Jenny-like women by being a mere spectator as time ticks against everyone, but none more so than against Jenny.

Challenging male decree on woman, the narrator now, in stanza 20, utilizes another way of judgment about “Man’s pitiless doom” (244) begetting Jenny’s “lifelong hell” (245). His foregrounding her physical beauty with “the gilded aureole” (230), “long throat” (234), and “pure wide curve” (236), sufficiently beautiful for a painter like Raphael or da Vinci to draw, determines the contradictions between her beauty as glory of God and her hell as a social construction. He passes his role as a judge here to a supreme power, to God, saying “What has man done here? How atone,

/ Great God, for this which man has done?" (241-2), an evident conviction of a man for creating Jenny's plight. He asks whether Jenny's shame is redeemable on earth through a second birth, but finds no answer, it is "All dark" (247). In stanza 21, the third time, the judgment is passed to a woman whose "heart might see" (250), wishing a pure woman's care to offer a hand, obviously futile since "that can never be" (252) as such woman will not condescend to contact a prostitute who, in contrast, is likely to be exposed to these women's sardonic attitudes.

Stating the nadir of hope for pure women's contact with Jenny in stanza 21, the narrator reiterates it in the following with the combination of most frequently employed metaphors of the flower as a rose and a book: "Like a rose shut in a book / In which pure women may not look," (253-4). In book/rose symbology, the book represents the man, while the rose the woman. The image of the rose tucked between a book is notably an insinuation for the patriarchal attitudes towards the woman and it undoubtedly leads him to conjecture that indeed a pure woman's refusal to communicate with Jenny reveals how she also spins the wheel of gender distinctions. The "foolish foulness" (262) watching Jenny's decay with "hard eyes" (263) indicates his indictment of male as begetter and also as judges decreeing her decay. Although this defines the narrator, he relentlessly struggles to distance himself to sympathize with her, but this also compels him to recognize the unlikelihood of disengaging himself from the tendencies of conventional images, after all his room is also full of books, and when she fades, her value is for the male gaze. However, Jenny's own gender, said to have a "pitiful heart" (272) loves her better "for its sake" (273). While looking at her in stanza 23, his musings on her as a pure victim make him turn Jenny into an object for man's "changeless sum / Of lust, past, present, and to come" (278-9), a mere symbol rather than a human. As Slinn puts it:

Prostitutes, for instance, had come to play an increasingly symbolic role within Victorian culture. In the same year that Rossetti was revising his poem, the historian William Lecky explained in his *History of European Morals* (1869) how "That unhappy being whose very name is shame to speak ... appears in every age as the perpetual symbol of degradation and sinfulness of man" (cited in Harrison 244). That is how prostitutes were represented within Victorian middle-class discourses, and Rossetti's "thoughtful man of the world" is produced by the same process (2003:144).

Without a doubt, the narrator suggests interpreting Jenny as a cipher of the female body speaking to power dynamics, because he frequently reflects on Jenny's body with her "desecrated mind" and focusing only on her body instead of her thoughts, thereby eschewing an awakened and conscious Jenny whose voice is also heard. That Jenny does not speak throughout the poem objectifies her in the words of Harris:

Jenny's unconsciousness renders her an object having a merely animal or natural existence; deprived of speech both by sleep and by generic function, she has, like the female culture she represents, 'no voice'; her bodily passivity precludes even the gestural language given to auditors in place of speech (1984: 203).

It can be concluded that Rosetti's artistic desire in the narrative manifests Jenny as an object; on the one hand, he highlights the soul's immeasurable beauty, on the other hand, he materializes the immeasurable value of the soul through its reflection on physical beauty, retaining his place in idealist artistic culture. Again, a dilemma or duality arises.

While vacillating between male dualism about women affecting the representations of Jenny as pure and corrupt, the simile of the "toad" trapped "within a stone" (282), associated with man's lust "within this world" (297), stops him in stanza 24, showing the everlasting nature of man's inevitable desire for sexuality which is not to be repressed. The toad, namely lust, exists "since the earth was curs'd / For Man's transgression the first time;" (284-5), committed by Adam and Eve. Reference to the original sin also possibly connotes that Mankind is prone to fall, but that there is an individual responsibility. A man's lust is a healthy process that is praised, whereas a woman's is cursed and considered a sexual deviancy. That is an inevitable fall.

Spending the night with a lengthy rumination about Jenny, in stanza 25, he acknowledges the futility of questioning man's corruption and his role in it, legitimized by his natural sexual desire that needs to be satisfied. Thinking of this, he realizes that he was in a dream-like state, thereby shaking himself to wake up: "Come, come, what use in thoughts like this?" (298). Unable to resolve the oscillation between his

dilemmas from dusk to dawn, in the following stanza, he returns to the real world by hearing voices other than his own. His seeing a wagon that is headed to the market and some sheep bleating with a barking dog draws him from the phantasm: “Another night that London knew; / And all as ghostlike as the lamps” (308-9), placing him in that the “old streets” (307) of daytime.

By the break of dawn, the day brings a shift of mood in Jenny’s room but more literally in the narrator’s whose “frolic” (311) of escapade “decamps” on “the wings of day” (310) since he is engrossed in his musings and postpones sexual desire. The literal dawning leads his reflections to switch to a different dimension in his meditations, moving from abstract to the concrete through the examination of signifiers revealed tangibly in the room such as Jenny’s bed, mirror, lamp and rose. As “Jenny” mulls about the “divided human nature” (Barr,1993:328), represented by the profane and the sacred imagery of Jenny, her lamp “like a wise virgin’s” (316) serves as a signifier related to her being “full of grace”. Her angelic reflection is supported by the “empty bed” (318), as a metaphor for the absence of sexual activities, which he consciously chose to forego to accommodate his ruminations. Jenny’s aesthetic construction in “fair face” (319) is reflected through the “pier-glass” (322) carrying traces from her married clients wearing diamond rings, proving that she only reflects “other people’s desires” (Michie, 1987: 61). The mirror scrawls are also designated as culture itself displaying the corrupted system on Jenny and the representative narrator, both of whom are glimpsed in the looking glass. The other signifier “rose” drooping “forlorn” (324) suggests a fading sensuality and sexuality associated with her ephemeral beauty, a token of her value as a prostitute who “dies not yet” (325), but soon.

Notable is that the narrator has gone through a path of discovery about woman, man, and culture, with the addition of self-indictment, supposedly gaining a new understanding. But he cannot fully, and the inability to act on his findings is signified by the breaking day heralded by the cries of the birds in stanza 28. The outer life coalesces with the life in Jenny’s room the moment Jenny’s pet is tempted by the sparrows outside: “clamour together suddenly” (329). The coalescence symbolizes that the narrator is woken up and reminded that he is part of the culture outside but

reflected inside. The remaining stanzas deal with this cultural awakening necessitating masculine power and value over Jenny and the formation of her identity as a commodity. The power dynamic finds a good expression in the sounds heard in the poem, the sounds of birds, and previously, of passing sheep on their way to slaughter, are substituted for Jenny's unheard voice. The jangling of the "golden coins" (342) which the narrator lays into Jenny's golden hair, makes his interior monologue heard and marks his presence.

Obviously, the narrator's much-debated act in stanza 29 is his laying "golden coins" in Jenny's "golden hair" (340). The golden coins act as a reminder that Jenny is a commodity reflecting his denigration of Jenny to a subordinate role by assuming that they are "perhaps the subject of [her] dreams" (341); it is the most powerful reference to male economic power and female passivity *vis-à-vis* male control illustrated by his penetrating Jenny's dreams. While mental penetration substitutes for sexual intercourse, ejaculation is the laying of coins as Harris notes: "money for sexual services not performed, his 'golden coins' substitute for the ejaculation he does not have" (1984:205). The laying coins after a long-lasting aesthetic contemplation also receives recognition for the perusal of the artist and his model relationship in whose context the narrator genders Jenny as an object of art of his unimpeded gaze and pays her for her posing in the form of sleep, also read a sexual undercurrent. Danahay argues that the narrator:

pays [Jenny] at the end of their encounter not for actual sex, but rather for displaced sexual gratification obtained by the opportunity to gaze on her face while she is sleeping. Since she is asleep, she cannot gaze back at him, and so the narrator enters into a sexual exchange in which the woman is constructed as an object of beauty to be gazed upon, but not as an actual sexual agent herself (1998:393).

The relationship between the artist and model is an illustration of Rossetti's complicated affinity with the prostitutes, of whom he was a regular patron. Beguiled by their sensuality, he solicited many to pose for his paintings, through which he developed intimate friendships with them. Perhaps many were friends or confidantes to Rossetti, but they were categorically objects of his art to be admired and condemned.

Perception of Jenny as an object of art allegorically corroborated by the images of Venus, Priapus, and Danaë, recurrently appeared in the pictorial world. The last part of the stanza:

...though in the discounted dark
Her functions there and here are one,
Beneath the lamps and in the sun
There reigns at least the acknowledged belle
Apparelled beyond parallel (Rossetti, 1870: 353-7)

can simply be understood as the dual imagery of Jenny; when the darkness of night reduces her to a prostitute, it suggests immoral connotations of classical divine images in Victorian culture, and when daylight reveals her pure beauty, it is agreeably due to the narrator's consistent oscillations in hermeneutical exercise established on a passive figure. The dual imagery of deities, with the conflict of erotic implications and beauty, indicates that the environment Jenny is in determines her value, a prostitute (in the image of Priapus) may appear as a "goddess" (367). But the narrator's inconsistency suggested in his elusive tone leads him to regret what he thinks of her unworthiness: "And must I mock you to the last, / Ashamed of my own shame ...?" (384-5). The final stanzas end with a gesture of newly acquired identification: "Well, of such thoughts so much I know / A dark path I can strive to clear" (388-391), which is first articulated in the beginning: "It was a careless life I led / When rooms like this were scarce so strange / Not long ago" (37-9), revealing an admittance of change; yet even though he has undergone a profound examination of the notion of fallen Jenny and her world, his self-acknowledgement is not fully-fledged but rather exhibits implicit complicity with the male-dominated system.

Rossetti's drawings redefine femininity and sexuality within the entangled web of discourse of social and gender relations, particularly in the 1850s, when he revised the poem. **Jenny** is an illustration of the narrator's entrapment amidst these cultural narratives of female sexuality rendering Jenny either a corrupted figure or an innocent beauty. His poetic identity draws Jenny to him as pure, frail, and beautiful femininity, whereas being a member of social construct creates a repugnance towards this image

of the whore because of a conventional Victorian-structured definition of her condition. We may speculate through the lens of Rossetti that the poem adds another layer to contemporary social issues on prostitution and its causes that presents a moral dilemma pivoting around the bifurcated image of prostitution, as Lynda Nead notes, “a figure of contagion, disease and death”, and “a suffering, tragic figure” (1988:106). Hence, the narrator’s rambling musings portray Jenny as a blank slate on which males manifest their own values; on the one hand, she is reduced to an image rather than a body, a voiceless figure of male lust, on the other hand, she triggers men’s inclination to be her saviour and redeemer. Given that Jenny represents different aspects of the two dominant images of a prostitute, the narrator struggles with these images and their implications and consequently finds himself entangled with them. He is entrapped by these implications and also social discourses towards them, all encoded in the narrative. Notwithstanding his radical assumptions on the issue, Rossetti’s representative narrator remains impotent in redeeming Jenny and himself in the established structure. It underpins the fact that the literal salvation of Jenny cannot be fully enacted because, in a society operating within gender discourse, when her commodification in Haymarket ends, it starts in the private sphere; she will always be expected to gratify man’s desire under his custody.

Rossetti did not render a parallel accompanying painting for the poem **Jenny** unlike that of the sonnet **Found**. However, his growing penchant towards the issues of love and sex in the 1850s, and especially his profound concentration on sensuality encompassing the woman as sexual object and mistress from 1859 onwards in his renderings testify to his trajectory of the image of the fallen woman in the Venetian style such as in *Bocca Baciata* (1859), *Fazio’s Mistress (Aurelia)* ² (1863-73), *The Blue Bower* (1865) ³. Seeking a merely specific reference for **Jenny** in only one of these paintings would fail the reader since none is sufficiently equivalent to the textual

² The subject is inspired by the poetry of Fazio degli Uberti (1326-1360), who is addressing his Lady, Agniola of Verona. Rossetti had included the work of Uberti in his *Early Italian Poets* in 1861. Rossetti’s translation of Fazio’s description of his mistress’s beauty accords well to Rossetti’s image, which he later attributed to his own mistress, Fanny Cornforth.

³ All three paintings were modelled by Fanny Cornforth who had worked as a prostitute when dire finances had rendered it necessary and was, therefore, a ‘fallen woman’; however, she had also in the early 1850’s worked as a housemaid for Rossetti.

narrative *per se*. Instead, the collective handling of the three visuals provides likeness to the fallen Jenny and sheds light on a constellation of Rossetti's personal concern and identifications that lead to particular signifiers for the image of the fallen woman.

Between 1859 and 1875, Rossetti's work functioned as a juncture in which he aimed to achieve the dialect of the "soul's beauty" and the "body's beauty". These pictures are defined as binary poles but serve to reflect the artist's idealized forms of beauty sourced from his imaginative desire. When these three paintings are juxtaposed, it feels like we are looking at the same woman in different attires in different rooms. One of the features they have in common and first meets the eye is the prominence of the masses of lascivious cascading hair. Finding parallel expression in **Jenny** "whose hair / Is countless gold incomparable:", (Rossetti, 1870: 10-11) that the narrator stresses "For all your wealth of loosened hair" (Rossetti, 1870:48), which is not golden, but reddish-blond this time, hair voluminously dominates the three portraits. In particular, this accentuates the conflicting views on and representations of the hair's role in the Victorian period. The hair in its characterization and identity construction is an important feminine property rife with symbolic meanings, it is a token conveying the moral and social position of the woman beyond aesthetic specification. As much as hairstyles like simple chignons, firmly pinned plaits, and rolls neatly bound up are considered to epitomize the ideally moral and modest woman, the free, long, and flowing hair is a sign for an unchaste and sexually deviant woman, as accentuated in these female subjects. From this point, the reader is next led to the abundant mass of reddish-blond hair to the fair faces of the mistresses reminiscent of Jenny's, reflected on the narrator's knee: "And yonder your fair face I see", "Rose at a poor fair face like this?" (Rossetti, 1870:319;387). The reader is drawn to the lips all of which exude sexuality through their saturated colour. The congruence and similarity in their appearance centred on their lips are revealed in the painting **Bocca Baciata**, whose title comes from the opening words of a sonnet by Boccaccio: "Bocca baciata non perde ventura, anzi rinnova come fa la luna" (The mouth that has been kissed loses not its freshness; still it renews itself even as does the moon). From the lips downwards, Rossetti's insistent presentation of the long and bare neck, perhaps the women's most distinctive quality and "stilled features" descrying as in "As Jenny's long throat droops

aside, ---" (Rossetti, 1870: 231-2), catches the eye. It is also important that they all portray thick, almost muscular necks, often referred to as "bovine"; so unlike the more typical image of a delicate neck referenced as a flower bloom on a fragile stalk. The configuration of the identity of the prostitute lays itself open in these bare necks, decoded as "the appropriation of the female body" which are "signifiers of passivity, of submissiveness, of availability" in the words of Donnelly (2004:88). On the one hand, Donnelly's elucidation is in accordance with the image of slumbering Jenny on the narrator's knee highlighting her passivity, submissiveness, and availability; on the other hand, it is incongruous with these women's demeanour on account of the necks being exposed in their entirety. The thick and almost muscular neck serving as a bridge coalesces sexual features such as the flesh of the décolletage, the face, and the hair and signifies strength. Almost complete unanimity on this issue that they exude power and self-confidence rather than 'passivity and submissiveness' even though conforming to the commentary of 'availability' to male customers pursuant to their position. Having an intense hold in the artist's imagination, the necks, as a powerful emblem of sexuality along with their strong chins and red lips, imply independent energy, congruous to be interpreted as a precursor for the image of the femme fatale, the artist's subsequent practice. An iconic example of femme fatale image, as a dangerous seductress whose sublime beauty seems fearful, is Rossetti's *Lady Lilith*⁴ who is posing with her mirror into which she gazes aloofly while poised in the act of combing her long, thick, lustrous hair. Her aura, through her voluptuous hair, perhaps echoes in three paintings but more powerfully in *Fazio's Mistress*, as both are toying with their hairs in front of a mirror. The presence of the mirror in *Lady Lilith* is translated as her power deriving from her self-awareness, which also corresponds to that in *Fazio's Mistress*. If the absence of a mirror is construed as the absence of awareness of the inherent power, then it finds a parallel expression in the painting *Bocca Baciata*, not *The Blue Bower*, since this absence is redressed with the subject's direct gaze at the viewer in *The Blue Bower*. The mirror in *Fazio's Mistress* does not grant her the same power Lady Lilith intrinsically possesses; Lilith enjoys her appearance in the mirror while contentedly

⁴ *Lady Lilith* is the subject of the next chapter, in which the figure and the composition are explored closely.

combing her hair; thus, “she displays her sexuality for herself, not for a male viewer”⁵ says Bycroft (2004: n.p.), unlike Fazio’s mistress. Bearing similar features of *Lady Lilith* with her loosely fitting gauzy attire, long and thick hair she is idly untying, *Fazio’s Mistress* invites the viewer to become engrossed in her overt sexuality through her exposed shoulder and neck, consistent with “silk ungirdled and unlac’d/ And warm sweets open to the waist,” in *Jenny*, exuding an erotic appeal (Rossetti, 1870:48-49) endorsed by Elizabeth Prettejohn’s reflection that the mistress’s demeanour is “sense of encounter with a sexualized human presence” (2000:218). She is entirely absorbed in her solemn self-contemplation, her pose and loosely fitting attire arouse the male viewer, thereby displaying her sexuality not for herself, but a male viewer. Through the deliberate act of disengaging eye contact, the mistress assures her attractiveness and engulfs the male gaze in the portrait, a gaze that Bullen remarks is representative of masculine desire (1999:332). Both serving as a cause and effect for the eroticization and objectification of the woman, the male gaze is underpinned by male control and possessiveness over the female body which is also implicated in the lady’s partially bound hair, unlike Lilith’s, additionally discovered in the possessive pronoun in the title. This reading suggests that she is neither entirely subordinated to the male and male gaze unlike Jenny, nor fully empowered and emancipated. She is making attempts. Her attempts tacitly reject the Victorian male dominance by challenging violation and subjugation wherein the male claims possession of her. These women portrayed in the Rossettian canon of the prostitute and fallen women signify an oscillation between a prostitute who shows potential for full freedom and a fallen woman, impotent and irretrievably trapped by trading her preeminent potential.

What is suggested in these fallen woman portraits is some sort of resilience, power, and the intense sexual liberty Rossetti instilled in the commodification of sumptuous beauty as a manifestation of male fantasy, proffering that the artist is covertly undermining masculine control. Behind these narratives is female power, allusively expressed through their aloofness corroborated by being cognizant of men’s lust to attain them. In *Bocca Baciata* and *Fazio’s Mistress*, it is configured through the subjects’ evading their eyes of the viewer, unlike the woman in *The Blue Bower*

⁵ <https://victorianweb.org/painting/dgr/paintings/bycroft4.html>, 26 Feb 2022.

who catches the viewer's eye by directly gazing at him out of the frame with her manipulative, scheming, and also challenging glance. Hence, what Rossetti fully exploited here is that all these women convey their pride and self-confidence through such an enormous power "so that they growingly revert to intimidating femme fatale" (Kılıç, 2014: 278).

The figures are identified with the signifiers, for whenever an eye scrutinizes any accessory they wear and symbol placed in the rooms, it relates them to the figures. Hence, the nexus between them and those signs forms the narratives' iconography. While all are adorned with exotic accoutrements, only the figure in *Bocca Baciata* carries flowers, a white rose in her hair and a single stem of marigold in her hand, and numerous repeated in the wallpaper of the background. These trappings are suggestive of engendering their identity, and the female's sexual objectification, and reaffirming male power which decorates or dresses the prostitute as he pleases, thereby diminishing her as a mere accessory to his ego. Could it not be that Rossetti demonstrates an appearance of the female designated by the male?

For sensual effect, Rossetti tended to fix upon certain body parts, and the hands being one. Frequently curled or tensed, hands with elongated fingers are symbolic in his work: they are deliberately foregrounded to serve as an expressive point for the psychological and emotional conditions of women and simultaneously highlight an object in the painting hands are busy with. In *Bocca Baciata*, the tranquillity evoked by her pose is complemented by how she holds her hands. They are clasping a lock of hair and a stem of marigold, a flower also abundantly featured in the background, "which in Rossetti's language of flowers symbolizes grief and regret" (Spencer-Longhurst, 2000:60). The hands, in Rossettian style, convey that the narrative is beyond the compositional motif, as Auerbach noted: "through it, realistic representations acquire the resonance of icons" (1982:48). Auerbach's observation is undeniable; however, considering it part of the composition would channel the reader to a connection that hands form with another part of the female body: the hair. The hands are a constituent part of the hair, both of which appear to be serpentine and twining in circular movements, emphasizing feminine power. Lurking behind the serpentine hair is the phallic association prefiguring Freud's reading of the power of

Medusa. Medusa's hair represents the male terror of the female genital which seems castrated, but genital hair functions to reduce the terror as it stands in for the penis. The qualities of serpentine hair as twining, strangling, and biting likened to twinning female hands add to femininity and female sexual power. The model's hands in *Fazio's Mistress* are caught in a similar way, acting as a gesture towards the alliance between the hands and hair, both at work. Her hands clasped the un-braided tresses, creating a combination of curly and wavy motifs. In the same vein, *The Blue Bower* features a subject whose hands are poised ready to play a Japanese koto, an exotic non-European instrument. The impression offers a reading centred on the position of the hands and their harmony with the instrument where the hands seem to be geared to the melody of the music. Throughout these paintings, Rossetti rendered female subjects in a way that illustrates the projection of feminine sexual power as in the serpentine motifs, serving as phallic imagery. The link between serpentine hair and the twining hand and phallic imagery are associated with the Victorian ambivalence of fear and desire towards a temptress with lustrous hair who is this time a prostitute, hinting at the threatening female sexual power of the Victorian imaginary. When we consider the fact that the artist could not come to terms with the cultural definition of the figure of the prostitute and fallen woman, emphasising the ongoing dialect between the condemnation and resurrection of the fallen woman emerging from the oscillation between a victim and sexual iniquitous, it offers that Rossetti demonstrably attributed the qualities of tainted souls in fleshly beauties to the fallen woman. The dichotomy of victim or transgressor, a blemished soul or appealing body is epitomized in Jenny's hands: "lazy lily hand" (Rossetti, 1870: 97), which is a reminiscence to the symbolic purity of the lily, also extending to Mary in the painting and sonnet *Ecce Ancilla Domini*. The implication is that Jenny's and these three female subjects' degradations are an abject anti-thesis to their body's beauty.

Walter Pater astutely observed that Rossetti's selection of his objects in the visual narratives allowed him to exercise his "descriptive power in dealing with the inanimate world" and draw attention to "what lies below the surface" of the narrative (1986:532-33). What lies below the *Bocca Baciata* is the theme of passion permeating the body of a prostitute insinuated with the very presence of the apple of desire on the

balustrade. First and foremost, it is reminiscent of the biblical legend of the fall of Adam and Eve, secondly, it symbolises lavish sexuality. It is expressed through the fact that her unbuttoned bodice, revealing her flesh, is aligned with the features of wavy, long hair and ruby lips, proving the artist's deliberate construction of the fantasy of a woman. With the artist's habit of cultivating ambiguity, this is surely contradicted by the white rose in her hair, symbolically emblematic of innocence, and the scattered marigolds, signifying grief, which initially shows the anguish caused by (un)requited love or an impossible union. Hence, it plainly presents the interpretation that she epitomizes the prostitute who is the much desired but totally unloved. The beautiful autumnal colours and marigolds create a dark background, suggesting that she is trapped in an enclosed space that appears to contain her. The confinement is imbricated with grief and invades her body and soul, which results in her very sombre expression.

Rossetti constantly places his female models in a restricted space which is supposedly a tacit indication that it encapsulates the relationship between their position and the artist/male viewer. The state of the models in *Fazio's Mistress* and *The Blue Bower* is not any different. In *Fazio's Mistress*, the lady's physical confinement is purposefully designed that surely perpetuates the social control of women. Integrated into the narrative by their function, the iconographic symbols are the comb, brush, and perfume bottle, as well as the ornate mirror which symbolize "the worldliness of the lady's beauty"⁶. The lady as an embodiment of a sensual figure in a private chamber disengages the viewer to control the male gaze, an act of compelling him to reach her, but posing in the form of an unattainable desire.

The attention to the inclusion of the instrument, viz. music, in *The Blue Bower* is significant in understanding the artist's aesthetic theory of temporality and the interaction between the artist and the viewer through decoding since his goal here is to express his conception of art as a process that "operates through temporal constructs and requires the participation of an audience for its completion" (Wood, 2013:533). In so doing, he supposedly points out that music functions as a catalyst for making meaning. Therefore, the painting reveals a subtext achieved through the harmonious combination of music, colour, and decorative pattern, all of which necessarily establish

⁶ <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s164.rap.html>, 17 April 2022.

the female subject's identity, as mistress or courtesan. She is in a bower which is largely decorated with a background of oriental blue tiles, exhibiting an opulence of passion flowers along with a single convolvulus bloom. Passion flowers suggest the sexual liberty of a character that has emerged from the fusion of the passionate and the bold, while, in Victorian floriography, convolvulus signifies worth sustained by a judicious tenderness and affection ⁷, but more relevant to the composition is the symbolic meaning of the coquette ⁸, undeniably adding to her role in the context. In the foreground, a posy of possibly pink cornflowers attracts the eye presumably hinting at the model's name, Fanny Cornforth, yet with its undoubtedly emblematic meaning of hope in love ⁹ perhaps depicting a moment of the nervous wait for a lover to arrive.

Rossetti's works challenge and disrupt the Victorian conception of the fallen woman in an oscillating attitude; in some, he seems convinced by the male degradation of the identity of the prostitute, whereas, in some other, he champions the freedom and strength she possesses; thus, perpetuating the preconceived notion of the position and liberates it at once. This upholds how Rossetti rendered two modes of the fallen woman: the first is where the fallen woman is the outcast and peripheral to society, the second is the prostitute as a sexualized and powerful woman. Presenting a fluctuating dialect in the representation of the fallen woman and prostitute, his delineation of women in a gendered space elucidates his break-away from the imposed ideal female image confined in domestic spheres where the marital or sexual male-female relationships, namely the hierarchy of the Victorian sexual power, is maintained in due form. This is subtly achieved through these paintings with two-dimensional modes. Male superiority is sustained in Jenny's case as she represents a weak character forced into prostitution and condemned for being a fallen figure by a patriarchal society, illustrating the perpetual degradation of women. However, that male authority is surely challenged by subverting the power balance through empowered female representations in the position of a prostitute in *Bocca Baciata*, *Fazio's Mistress (Aurelia)*, and perhaps more ostensibly visible in *The Blue Bower*, in which the model

⁷ <http://www.avictorian.com/flowers/flowernames.html>

⁸ S. Theresa Dietz, *The Complete Language of Flowers: A Definitive and Illustrated History*, London, Quarto Publishing plc., 2020, p.260.

⁹ Priscila Sosa Cruz, *The Language of Flowers Dictionary*, Xlibris Corporation, ebook, 2015, np.

looks directly into the eye of the viewer. The consistent attitude seen in **Jenny**, and these paintings, despite the painter-poet's inner conflict permeating his work, is his implicit attack against the male debasement of the female as a prostitute arising from the patriarchal prejudices. Albeit a construction impeding *her* mobility, the Rossettian prostitute's designated space is defined by the paradox prompting the artist's deliberation on the concepts of power and independence granted to these fallen women.

4.2. Double Work of Found / Found By Dante Gabriel Rossetti

The cultural metaphor of commodification of the female body resonates in the painting of **Found** (Rossetti begun in 1853 or 1859 but was occupied with it until his death in 1882). When the male figure of **Jenny** frequently attempts at discovering truths and self-understanding through his relentless endeavours to know *her*, his counterpart in the painting of **Found** knows very well who the woman is and why he is with her, which Rossetti himself describes in a letter to Holman Hunt in 1855, testifying that:

The picture represents a London street at dawn, with the lamps still lighted along a bridge which forms the distant background. A drover has left his cart standing in the middle of the road (in which, i. e. the cart, stands baa-ing a calf tied on its way to market), and has run a little way after a girl who has passed him, wandering in the streets. He had just come up with her and she, recognizing him, has sunk under her shame upon her knees, against the wall of a raised churchyard in the foreground, while he stands holding her hands as he seized them, half in bewilderment and half guarding her from doing herself a hurt. These are the chief things in the picture which is to be called "Found" and for which my sister Maria has found me a most lovely motto from Jeremiah: "I remember Thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals (Surtees, 1971:28).

Amidst a kaleidoscopic range of critical readings, we focus on the theme of prostitution as Hunt's granddaughter and biographer Diana Holman-Hunt wrote in which Rossetti believed he had this subject on mind: "He insisted that he had thought of this subject, the rescue of the fallen, years ago" (1969:144).

Rossetti's painting is marked by its overt departure from his other works of art such as **The Girlhood of Mary Virgin** (1849) or **The Blessed Damozel** (1875-78) as it

thematizes a contemporary subject as noted by Casteras that *Found* is “the artist’s modern-life equivalent to the magdalen theme” (1987:133). The setting of the painting is introduced with its accompanying sonnet also entitled *Found* (1881). Ironic is how the title of the poem of *Jenny* appears decorative as this is not merely Jenny’s story told by her, rather, it is the narrator’s version of her story told by him, which undeniably subordinates her to the narrator. However, the woman in the sonnet is the focus of the narrative as hinted by the title, she was *Found* thrown into the street. It begins with a quotation from Keats’s sonnet *To Homer* (1818): “There is a budding morrow in midnight / Dark breaks to dawn” (1-5), an evocation of hope prior to the following parts of the sonnet as if contrasting with the negative feeling of the “dawning” in *Jenny*. The very beginning of the sonnet seemingly evokes positive feelings and thinking to face the new day likely full of hardship. The lines in the first part of the octave “And here, as lamps across the bridge turn pale / In London’s smokeless resurrection-light” (3-4) describe the narrative from a background scene in the painting. If these lines offer a prelude to the painting’s narrative, then it is a positive subtext to the perusal of the composition beginning with the images in the foreground. Implicitly echoing this resurrecting light of the budding new day represents the male presence in a positive light deduced from the cursory examination of the contact between two figures. The immediate reading of the painting reveals that the drover literally grabs his former fiancée’s wrist and tries to elevate her from the gutter of harlotry. Further observation locks our gaze initially on the woman appearing in a flower-patterned dress, exposing her arms and rather out of place, cowering before a man standing over her. She is apparently in shame as she turns away while keeping her eyes closed. A scrutiny of the flashy dress helps us better understand how clothes are represented in cultural and visual discourse. The clothes as signifier for life and identity choice are intrinsically linked with social power as a symbol of class status as Thomas Carlyle proposes in his *Sartor Resartus* (1831/2012:np.). The central tropes, the ways the prostitute is presented as a literary and visual theme, express the cultural perception of the figure. The choice of attire on a prostitute serves as a kind of window into a broader contemporary understanding of the identity, leading to other signs in terms of content and context in which the meaning of prostitution and prostitute is

conveyed. The stereotypical cultural representation of the Victorian prostitute is often in a décolleté and sleeveless dress, which is mostly construed as a kind of uniform of “showy finery inappropriate to their class, and flowing hair” (2002:101), as Jackson-Houlston asserts. An explicit portrayal is read in Thomas Hardy’s poem, **The Ruined Maid** (1901):

— “O ‘Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!
Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?
And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?” —
“O didn’t you know I’d been ruined?” said she.
— “You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;
And now you’ve gay bracelets and bright feathers
three!” —
“Yes: that’s how we dress when we’re ruined,” said she. (Hardy, 1901:1-8)

The point of specific colours being peculiar to the prostitutes’ dress is not recorded explicitly. However, the little evidence is that bright colours such as yellow and red are commonly associated with prostitution based on the widespread social identifiers for the Victorians that take the form of signifiers. Other signifiers like her red hair communing with the wall and completed with a very pale skin adds to her surely being a prostitute. Her ghastly complexion evinces the sickness of the body or soul and explains well why she is placed next to a cemetery wall, which paradoxically suggests either her being a living dead compared to the stocky and stalwart drover or her pending death that will be possibly caused by contagious diseases or suicide. The positive light of a synchronic reading of both narratives turns into a sombre tone now as versed in “But o’er the deadly blight / Of love deflowered and sorrow of none avail / Which makes this man gasp and this woman quail” (5-8). It seems that the dawning positively versed in the beginning of the poem reveals other sorrows that the night conceals. The sun does not shine over them but discloses their identity as a commodity. The light of a new day likened to a blossoming flower is subverted with “blight” (5), like a plant disease or curse describing a woman’s shame, and the woman’s flowered gossamer dress is the taint of “deflowered” (6) love insinuating the loss of virginity. Thus, the woman’s reaction is interpreted through “sorrow of none avail” (6) which

means there is no way to restore the damaged relationship or compensate the harm done but to “quail” (8) and “gasp” (7) at their idyllic past in rural evinced through the drover’s smock and boots peculiar to countryman workers.

Apart from providing a detailed background, the symbolism of the drover’s clothes presents a prelude to the deep-seated moral integrity between man and woman; his upright position in the country smock and boots contrast the fallen woman. The impression is that he is a decent man earning his own living by farming, underpinned by the presence of a calf on his cart being taken to the market. The immediate assumption a Victorian viewer is channelled to is he is morally superior over the fallen woman. This discrimination is intensified by the dynamics of their position wherein one towers, the other covers; the pattern of their movement in which one pulls, while the other resists; the distinction between their space where one belongs to the road, and the other to the pavement.

Given that the composition is rendered in a moralistic style built upon the woman’s moral guilt, the artist allows us to explore the implications of redemption, and judgment, which are sufficient to see that male condemnation simply accompanies to the drover’s attempt. The drover’s sorrowful look wittingly triggers his willingness to save her, which is not, however, motivated or directed by the woman herself, but by Christian tradition indoctrinating that the male represents God’s image. She is already subservient to man by nature, then twice by position. Superior by nature and twice morally, the drover’s offer of redemption is responded to with tenacious resistance. It is her tenacious resistance that contrasts with Jenny’s passive slumbering, differentiating the prostitute in **Found** from Jenny where she is not entirely passive. The alignment of the man’s sorrow and woman’s obstinacy also suggests remorse, fuelling his willingness, due to, perhaps, being the causative subject of the fall, then they have most likely had sex; a hypocrite male who both redeems and damns, loves and distains all at once. Through the sonnet’s rhetorical question ending the octave “Can day from darkness ever again take flight?” (9), one can conclude that, to the drover’s nebulous good intents or purposes, there is no redemption for her only perpetual damnation. The deflecting nature of the male and the composition is encoded in the way how the drover holds her wrist, not her hands. A sort of force is implied

through the man's hold, he tethers her wrists suggesting power over her through his moral righteousness, analogous to a netted calf behind as a harbinger for her future position. This contact, as Prettejohn points out, indicates "the complex relationship between the two figures" (2000:211) rightly endorsing our argument. The complex relationship, the image of a captor of the fallen woman, is legitimized by the image of the netted calf which is absent in the sonnet. On a symbolic level, the commodification of woman is symbolized by the netted calf, restrained on the cart, both of whose lives are in the drover's hands, possibly driving them to the market, unfolding "troubling issues of economic exchange, the market for the 'flesh' of animals and women in the Haymarket, and masculine dominance" (Danahay, 1998:391). The woman's resistance is against a sort of ownership, represented by the calf, and suggesting the drover's complicity in the commodification of woman through an economic and sexual exchange. Upon the first encounter with his former lover, the drover acts on the visceral drives of sorrow, pity, and remorse with the aim of rescuing her. However, judging from his upright position, not even a gentle bowing, one may read his attempt of lifting her as an impotent desire disguising his complicity.

Turning our view behind the man, a bollard post in phallic shape catches our eye. The bollard is known to block access to the pedestrian paths or more relevantly restricted areas. In the immediate reading, it is symbolic of spatial division; the pavement is the woman's domain; thus, man intrudes into her space, enacting conflict and rejection. Rossetti's drover is aligned through the sturdy bollard whose construal as division extends to the drover through its position- their worlds are apart. A Bible quotation which Rossetti intended to affix on the frame states: "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals" (Jeremiah 2.2), portrays the man having a form of Godliness grieving for her erring, and simultaneously blaming the woman for breaking the vow. In the context of this allusion, according to Laurent, Rossetti may have intended to appropriate this biblical quotation for the drover speaking on behalf of God, which are in fact spoken to the people of Israel:

The biblical rhetoric frequently uses the metaphor of marriage to describe the relationship between God and his worshippers. The verse "I remember the love of thy youth" (Jeremiah 2.2) is included in the chapter entitled "Apostasia of

Israel” wherein the Lord laments the erring of the Israelite people from their initial faith. In this light, *Found* would seem to cast the man in the role of God, the girl in the guise of Ecclesia, and the breaking of vows as an allusion to the growing secularization movement, or the “national apostasia” as Cardinal Newman termed it: the falling-away from God and Christian doctrines on a national scale (2006: 21).

One may infer that such conjecture underpins the drover’s lamentation for his former sweetheart’s breaking the vow of their union and going astray, culminating in an irrevocable separation. We hear traces of promises with the heat of sexual intercourse in the sestet in which the poet latently tells the dramatic moment: “Ah! gave not these two hearts their mutual pledge, / Under one mantle sheltered ’neath the hedge / In gloaming courtship?” (10-12). Now the hope of salvation offered with the metaphor of daylight in the first line is powerfully weakened by the twilight when she indulges in forbidden experiences. The assumption of extramarital sex between the former lovers is a frequent outcome of such events for the woman as there is no ‘fallen man’, but such event also manifests that she is led astray perhaps instead of going astray; thus, the woman’s reaction is an act of noble defiance against her seducer.

Returning to the bollard, it knowingly represents the phallic image of potency. Its current position and shape, clearly tilted and inclined, add to the drover’s weakened potency caused by his former lover’s status, currently a prostitute. Noteworthy is that it is placed on the way to the cart insinuates for the limitations on their way and the absence of hope for her true salvation wherever the drover is taking her. All reverberate as his faint wish to rescue his former lover.

Every symbol in the narrative is underpinned by the reference to the fallen woman. The symbolism of the calf and its association with the prostitute extend to the blurry bridge in the background whose connection to the fallen woman was quite familiar to the Victorian viewers. The woman who has deviated from an honourable life has been prevalently portrayed in the streets as outcasts or by the bridges as potential suicider, “so explicit did the imaginative link seem between the ‘fallen’ woman and her possible literal ‘fall’ thereafter as she jumps into the water to commit suicide” (Reynolds, 2015-16:7), read as her “new ghastly baptism” since she, in

Victorian sense, has been washed clean of her sins (Ibid.:8)²³. The darkness of dawn in the background of the painting, contrasts with the daylight in the front, whose narrative is encoded in this contrast, portrays the bridge as immensely nightmarish presaging the fallen woman's tragic self-murder.

The woman's resistance parallels the climactic moment in the second half of the sestet that is resisting a moralistic ultimate reunion of the couple. Presumably, the narrator projects the ecstatic exclaim of God onto the drover saying: "And O God! to-day" (12) revealing his strong feelings for her motivated by the Victorian moral ideal of playing the saviour, the reclamer, the man to whom she will forever be beholden. However, he is encumbered with the same morality, thereby enacting his upright position. Inherent in the artist's narrative is the dichotomy of salvation or damnation of the fallen woman. Seemingly, the man has faith in the former manifested by his initial effort to lift her, drawing a model of a saviour attempting to redeem the fallen woman from the quagmire, but his faith is unsettled and negated by inhibitions of moral control through his clasped hands on the woman's wrists and his upright position. The implication of the paradox-laden action accompanied with the drover's question of "but what part / Can life now take?" (13-4) problematizes the promising defence that the artist's fallen woman is redeemable for a new start and which is better acknowledged by the woman as she adamantly cries "Leave me—I do not know you—go away!" (15). Regarding the trappings of the lost virtue unlike to the drover's moralistic disregard in his attempt, the woman unanimously is in a painful shame of being reminded of her earlier innocence, she, thus, unrelentingly rejects salvation with her tightly closed eyes since she sees no way out. Linda Nochlin's observations based on a postural analogy between the figures of the painting of *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* further stress the unattainable rescue:

In a sense, *Found* is finally seen as a sort of dark Annunciation, a perverse revision of *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* there also a cowering female is set in opposition to a towering male figure—but here, the fallen woman refuses to "know" the messenger and sends him away instead of receiving glad tidings (1978:152).

²³ One popular Victorian artwork depicting this association is George Frederic Watts's *Found Drowned* (1849-50) illustrating the body of a woman lying stretched out on the shores of the Thames, beneath Waterloo Bridge.

In the context of a comparative approach between *Found* and *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, the image of the “towering male and cowering female” can be interpreted as a questionable and unwanted masculine intrusion. However, in the sense of present narrative, the dominating impression is that prostitution is an irreversible position, as evidence of a deep-seated moral righteousness. The wall the woman is huddled against takes considerable focus in her defiance; she is well aware of her position dictated by society adding to her ‘tenacious resistance’. In the explicit narrative, it serves as an index of the separate lives of the fallen and the upright, as mentioned earlier, but, at the same time, it subliminally implicates the woman’s power suggested through the solidity of the wall. The image of a slumbering Jenny satisfying the gazes with her sheer depravity is contrasted by her powerfully resistant fallen sister who has found a sort of freedom in the periphery against confinement in society. The woman’s claim of freedom is also interpreted by Donnelly as “a point of collision between presumed male dominance and an assertion of female independence” (2010:484) from where uncertainty arises.

One may extrapolate that the drover has not *found* what he has lost, in other words, the woman’s lost part cannot be *found*, which is enveloped in the drover’s gasping and the woman’s resistance in both narratives. His sorrowful look in the painting is underpinned by the compassion and desire to rescue her in the sonnet, but when the perusal of the whole narratives is completed by the surrounding symbolic elements, it describes a reluctance in both figures due to the irrevocable situation in such an unquestionable social structure. The drover’s impotency in rescuing her derives surely from his moral righteousness as he acts on a responsibility to forgive, the very essence of Christianity, whereas the woman’s is twofold; on the one hand, she has already resigned to the principles of the social dictates knowing that there is no turning back now which makes her twice fallen: an acquiescence to patriarchal construct and of a fallen to patriarchal morality; on the other hand, she has gained a sort of independence, thus she defies to enter under male domination again, as highlighted by Sally Mitchell: she is “ungoverned by law. She stands alone, pure woman” (1981: xvi). The assertion of power and independence echoes the painter-

poet's apprehensive desire to endow the fallen woman with power. This desire is enveloped in **Jenny**, *Bocca Baciata*, *Fazio's Mistress (Aurelia)*, *The Blue Bower*, and the double work of **Found / Found** in a different sense. Representing the artist's view of contemporary social issues, the drover's rescue of his former sweetheart, which is not observed in **Jenny**, is the striking divergence from the young narrator's paradox-laden meditations. However, the sense of confusion is the convergence point of the narratives, the young narrator's vacillation from compassion, through the poet's other self, to damnation due to his middle-class attitude toward the fallen Jenny and the drover's impotent rescuing his former love, now a prostitute. In the sense of the fallen woman, Jenny urges her visitor's sympathy with her sheer passivity, dormant and unsounded all night, modelling an ultimate ideal of subversion. Her description suggests that there is innocence lingering in her, beyond her profession, through which she arouses his compassion and is perceived as a victim of the patriarchal society. The women in the painting *Bocca Baciata*, *Fazio's Mistress*, *The Blue Bower*, and the double work of **Found / Found** manifest a sort of power and autonomy that Jenny lacks, which is reflected in the way she is portrayed, from the elements of spatial context to their position and degree of passivity, all of which are united. The voice of the fallen woman in the double work is endowed to a degree by the public space she dwells in, contrasting the spaces in **Jenny** and three paintings, she wittingly resists male control of her own volition to not be dependent on him again. This also illustrates the poet-painter's modes of representation of the fallen woman with one more dimension to the notion of the identity of the prostitute, **Jenny** is the epitome of the fallen woman as passive and outcast, while the paintings *Bocca Baciata*, *Fazio's Mistress*, and *The Blue Bower* portray the sexually powerful prostitute, whereas the double work of **Found / Found** depicts the fallen woman as independent but, like Jenny, peripheral to society. To understand this difference of independence we need to consider the phases and the stages of the painter-poet's life in which he created these works. Perhaps strong ambivalence in his art is because of his personal insecurity as a young artist, though in his later years, he seems to have reconciled his divided self to some extent or has been influenced by the changing roles of women in the period. Thus, one may attribute freedom to the latter woman crying "Go away!", who perhaps

impersonates the poet and his feelings with this lamentation. But the ambivalence still lingers and the front of the canvas is imbued with a social conscience sufficiently explaining why Rossetti could not complete the painting of *Found*, it illustrates his divided self. His works suggest shunning to ravel his self, but his ambivalence, which hints at an unalterably divided artist and unalterably fallen woman cannot be rescued.



CHAPTER FIVE

FEMME FATALE

5.1. John Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* By John William Waterhouse

*"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!"*

(John Keats, La Belle Dame Sans Merci, 1819)

The femme fatale is the figure constructed many times in cultural texts as the imaginative reflections of socio-historical junctures. A sense of mystery permeates her recurrent presence, thus harbouring more than can be defined. Portrayed in a wide range of catalogue of personifications such as the Biblical and mythical figures notably Lilith, Delilah, Jezebel, Salome, Circe, Medea, and Medusa, the femme fatale archetype originated in the literary and artistic canon and ultimately pervaded various art forms throughout cultural history. The constellation of literary genre, culture, and the figure of the femme fatale reveal significant ways of understanding the ideologies of gender and sexuality. The femme fatale is defined as a symptom and symbol of male fears of the adamant, self-reliant and sexually self-aware woman, a woman that would be a menace to male-dominated status quo. As a recurring ideological construct of patriarchal imaginary, she has contradicted its power dynamics in every imaginable way, reflecting that this image is not the end result, the truth- it is the vehicle. This dominant representation of the femme fatale seeps into literature during the first stage of the Romantic period, then becomes a prevalent figure in the nineteenth century. Notwithstanding the femme fatale's manifestation might vary from culture to culture and from era to era as in the observations of Mario Praz "there is no established type of Fatal Woman" (1970:201), their incarnations contain overarching similarities. The myriad of the representations channels us to the fact that behind this image, as a patriarchal contrivance, lies an ongoing political debate -some supporting the strong woman, others terrified of her. As a central figure in the texts of Romantic and Victorian writers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's **Christabel** (1816), John Keats's

Lamia (1820) and **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** (1819, revised in 1820), Alfred Lord Tennyson's **Idylls of the King** (1867), and W. M. Thackeray's **Vanity Fair** (1847), the figure of the femme fatale is also a recurring motif in Pre-Raphaelite narratives like Dante Gabriel Rossetti's **Lady Lilith** (1866-68), John William Waterhouse's **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** (1893) (from Keats's poem). This part of the study requires tracing certain recurring features of the femme fatale through the canonical texts of Keats's **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** and its re-articulation by Waterhouse in his painting bearing the same name, Rossetti's double work of **Lady Lilith** and its accompanying sonnet **Body's Beauty** (1881) in the context of their periods with a view to examining whether the portrayed figures represent the New Woman, a warning proclaiming change, instability, and a call to a new world view.

The very title of Keats's literary ballad **La Belle Dame Sans Merci**¹ ("The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy") is imbricated with female sexual fascination and the male fear of it defining the essential characteristic of the lethal woman. She is an ambivalent figure, rather pretty and lurid at once, a nebulous seductress, both powerfully pulling us towards her. That is how the knight is lured by such 'a lady' that he tells so to the unidentified narrator of the poem. The poem starts with the encounter of the narrator and the lonely "loitering" (2) knight. The knight's solitary figure amidst the wilderness reminds us of the pervasive Romantic idea of individualism, the celebration of one's relationship with the inner self, isolated from the social body to revolt against the rigid values of rationalism championed by the Enlightenment literary period, as a result of which many writers and poets turned to and took refuge in nature. However, Romantic writers also permeated nature with supernatural and transcendent powers to reflect on the human essence. This association is perhaps a plausible point of departure that elucidates, on the one hand, the setting where the encounter between the knight and the Lady occurs, and on the other hand, the interconnections between women and nature. The first line begins with the narrator's exclamation of "O" (1) which suggests a lamentation fuelled with surprise. The line "what can ail thee, knight-at-arms / alone and palely loitering" (1-2) seeks to learn what can make an honourable

¹ There are two versions of **La Belle Dame Sans Merci**, the original version of 1819 and the revised version of 1820. The original version of 1819 is the focus of this chapter.

and chivalrous knight so anguished, contributing to the description of despair. At this point, the description of the landscape mirrors the knight's emotional state and condition. The natural cycle corresponds to the knight's individualized thoughts and emotions; the grass "has withered" (3) and birds have migrated marking the autumn that soon leaves its place to winter, with its blustery winds blowing the dangling pale leaves and bringing the death of winter. Hinted with the tokens of the desolate landscape, the strayed knight's deathly state is worsened with the repetition of line 1 in stanza 2 since this recurrence marks the narrator's worry about the knight's distress. The following lines after "So haggard and so woe-begone?" (6) suggest nature's repeating cycle as in "The squirrel's granary is full / And the harvest's done" (7-8), as it should because animals and people prepare for winter, but this is not the case for the knight as concluded from Ferber's notes "Though the annual cycle from autumn to autumn via the renewal of spring consoles us for our losses [...] nature also destroys life on longer and larger scales" (2012:90). Hence, it affirms that nature is both man's ally and enemy, which adds to the understanding of its destructive and demanding realities. The knight's haggard state places him in the eternally destructed side, and he is unable to recuperate. In stanza 3, the use of the subject pronoun "I" (9) enhances the narrator's concern about the knight. The poem's primary preoccupation with life and death are suggested with the "lily" (9) and the "rose" (11), other than the connotation of purity, the "lily" on his "brow" and "rose", also known for their symbolism of romantic love, and serving as a death warrant. "With anguish moist and fever-dew" (10) is the "lily" as the knight's sweat on his brow, whereas in "on thy cheeks a fading rose" (11), the "rose" represents the colour drained from his cheeks, and both symbolize the death and beauty of life, as Lawlor's reflections on Romantic poetry writing "flower imagery was closely associated with the poetry of consumption, its major function being to symbolize the poignancy of (early) death juxtaposed with beauty" (2007:132). The knight's pallor recalls the ideal man's control over his sexual urges and obedience to warnings of degeneration due to masturbation, nocturnal discharge, or visiting prostitutes, and which reflects on historical and cultural levels. It was defined as 'consumption' rather than being a medical condition prior to 1820. An indicator of manliness caused a paradox, making them weak and nervous and but

also potent that describe the knight's sexual ambiguity which heavily afflicted him. The inclusion of lily "with anguish moist and fever-dew" (10) and fading rose may also provide another reading by offering a comparative reference to Jenny and her "dead rose-leaf" (Rossetti, 1870:257) where Rossetti pointed out both moral and physical decay of a prostitute. With that reference in mind, Keats's flowers represent the spiritual as well as the physical flaw in this manly hero.

Stanza 4 marks the poet's perception of women as complex beings, difficult to pin down, neither pure nor evil but having an evasive nature. The ambiguity in the feminine is projected on to the knight's description of the Lady he "met [...] in the meads" (13) who is charming with her long hair and her light foot, like "a faery's child" (14), but is mysterious with her eyes' wild expression. The femme fatale motif is prevalently constructed as "liminal, situated between the real and imaginary spheres; as a result, the question whether they offer truth or illusion remains unanswered" (Łuczyńska-Hołodys, 2013:19). Indeed, women have almost always been stereotypically portrayed like their clear-cut roles in real life. Similarly, the femme fatale, whether real or imaginary, epitomizes an entity constructed and appropriated by the male perspective of the feminine. At this juncture, she is an end-product of the male consciousness inextricably arousing desire and fear, and as observed by Doane, the femme fatale "is not the subject of feminism but a symptom of male fears about feminism" (1991:2-3). Keats's female protagonist is presented with dainty features rendering her a slight and delicate female, her long hair and light foot, which refers to flimsiness or daintiness, conjures a figure who moves gracefully. However, the last line "And her eyes were wild" (16) evoking a seductive and destructive gaze as the most powerful element to charm the knight, both contradicts her gossamer fragility and hints at an implication of her being a passive 'vessel' readily open to male fantasy. D'Avanzo's description of the term "wild" as "an untamed energy of imagination" (1967:202) ostensibly reinforces this interpretation; thus, one may ask whether the Lady is real or imaginary, or more accurately, a figment of the male imagination.

The ambivalence characterizing the female figure conveys the poet's adoration and anxiety in the presence of women as extrapolated from his letters to Benjamin Bailey: "When I am among Women I have evil thoughts, malice spleen – I cannot

speak or be silent – I am full of Suspicion and therefore listen to no thing – I am in a hurry to be gone” (Keats, 1818/2002:128) and his Muse Fanny Brawne: “... I cannot exist without you – I am forgetful of every thing but seeing you again – my Life seems to stop there – I see no further [...] You have ravish’d me away by a Power I cannot resist...” (Ibid.: 311). Being “full of Suspicion” in the female company and at the same time “ravish’d” by her unbeknown “Power” communicate how *she* both intimidates and entrances Keats. In both feelings, Keats, as a Victorian intellectual and poet, epitomizes a masculine self whose autonomy is threatened and weakened by a powerful feminine self, both of whom are disguised in the personas of the knight and the Lady without mercy. The intensity of the poet’s love for his Muse cripples his reasoning, surrendering itself to the heart, in other words, to the feminine. Surely, this does not mean that the woman intentionally exercises her charm to entrance Keats, but that he is clearly receptive to the feminine. An overt suggestion would be that, out of his interest in the feminine, he is perhaps enthralled by his own insights into these women, considering that they are merely seen as objects without any significant purpose. Even though women are regarded as deprived of any internal motivation or purpose, men attribute meanings to them, to their femininity, threatens the patriarchal society, which, in the same vein, also affects the male feelings towards them. Thus, this is an outcome of the inherent weakness in the male against the female. Out of this reflection on the masculine pre-existing vulnerability, we may reconsider the particulars of the male protagonist; he is not enthralled by the bewitching Belle Dame, but by her reassurance of singing songs, feeding, kissing, and simply serving him. This undoubtedly suggests that she is not equipped with a supernatural power; on the one hand, she manifests the male imagination simultaneously enacting fear and desire, on the other hand, she does not need it as the knight is already weak despite his highest standing as a manly hero, and this weakness is reinforced when he is temperamentally attracted to the wantonness of the feminine charm. His fascination enacts his weakness, followed by his realizing the terrifying potential threat, thereby giving way to exerting power over her in order to control the repressed.

Now in stanza 5, we read how the knight displays masculine control overtly:

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan. (Keats, 1819:17-20)

The overt suggestion is that the knight appears to be giving tokens of his love for her, but in reality, they are emblems of ownership of and power over her. The knight grooms her to exhibit his manly gestures, a way of assuring his masculinity, spending his creative energy to appropriate and exploit her at the same time with “a garland for her head” (17) and “bracelets” (18), and a belt expressed with the “fragrant zone”. The common aspect in all of his practice is an expression of making an image, characterized by gender power since he shapes the malleable feminine figure, as gender theory defines, with a feeling of control and power over her. On a metaphorical level, the accessories he made for her head, wrist, and belly, are mediums of enslaving that proves her subjugation but also implies virtue. Bennett proposes an argument of contrast between “chastity of diction and action” when reading the Lady’s response of “sweet moan” (20):

We note the contrasting chastity-sensuality of the Knight's and the Lady's actions here and also recognize the symbolic effect of the garland bracelet and fragrant zone, all of which not only dress and decorate the Belle Dame, but also surround, enclose, or protect her; the Belle Dame, by contrast, is passive” (1990:81).

Reading “sweet moan” just after “she did love” (19), the reader first feels that it is charged with sexual current denoting that they not only flirt with one another but go on to consummate the relationship. Thus, the Lady’s “sweet moan” readily interpreted as the result of reaching orgasm unveils the Victorian woman’s sensuality; she takes pleasure in sex, like a male, therefore suggesting a powerful source of enthrallment inevitably arousing fear. Following their sexual union, the knight places her on his steed: “I set her on my pacing steed” (21); a steed, meaning stallion, famed for its reproductive performance while also giving its rider’s sexual prowess also a sense of authority. In this respect, it is indicative of the fact that the Lady is not only constructed as an object, but also led by a male authority. She sings “A faery’s song” (24) which is ostensibly hypnotic that the knight sees nothing else, locked in the Lady

and her mesmerizing movements. However, drawing on Łuczyńska-Hołdys's notes as to whether she is real or imaginary, it surely proves that the knight may either metamorphose the Lady into a femme fatale in his own mind, or she is the figment of his imagination as her behaviour is revealed only through the knight's speech. All in all, both add to his attribution of cryptic sounds and fairy's song, which renders her an enigmatic figure. Her ambiguity, according to Braun, is rooted in "her own lack of self-knowledge, self-awareness, or the extend of her powers" when viewed in the Romantic frame. When this figure is compared to that in the late nineteenth century, it is observed that she gains a certain degree of power (2012:4). Generating fear, this unknown is a result of consistent attempt aligning her with the sensual and the supernatural whose coalescence marks her independence and danger.

As mentioned earlier, the femme fatale's potent sexuality and seductiveness is the archetypal projection of men's fear of and desire for women. At its core, linked to that fear, she is traditionally revealed to destroy men, so that in mind, consummation appears not enough to satisfy the Lady; she wants more by hypnotizing the knight with her song and physical movements: "For sidelong would she bend" (23), then feeding him with intoxicating foods "honey wild and manna-dew" (26) in stanza 7. Allowing the knight to control their relationship, now the Lady takes charge by disrupting the conventional roles, well revealed through her music, exotic food, and inarticulate expression; all lend charms the knight succumbs. Here the repetition of the word "wild", which is one of the Lady's main features, now describes the "honey" that the knight is fed with. The knight is insinuated to be enthralled first by looking at the wild eyes, and by eating the wild food he lends finality to the force of her implied supernatural power. The word "wild" reflects the interconnectedness between women and nature, explaining the resemblance of the mysterious and awe-inspiring nature and the Lady's mystical personality. The qualities of the mystical appearance and movements, song, and also intoxicating food reveal her supernatural allure and mystical powers, proving an ethereal figure, found in conventional femme fatale narratives of the Romantic era. The foods, wild honey and "manna-dew" the Lady offers the knight are known to be from heaven, with healing properties but has also psychedelic, aphrodisiac, and hallucinogenic effects as recorded in most ancient

scriptures. Also known as ‘mad honey’, wild honey is used for its medicinal qualities and when taken in small doses, it gives you a ‘good high’. However, when consumed more than its recommended dose, it has toxic effects such as dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting in mild form, or life-threatening cardiac complications and death in severe form. Manna has also symbolic associations due to its nature and repetition in texts referring to religious mysticism. Considering manna in its historical view, it is believed to bear a supernatural origin according to Jewish and Christian authorities. To understand the variety of representations of manna in painting and texts, a quote from Dan Merkur’s **The Mystery of Manna: The Psychedelic Sacrament of the Bible** (2000) provides an enlightening observation:

[T]he biblical story of manna received its distinctive interpretation among Jewish and Christian exegetes who recognised the relevance of manna to the practice of visionary mysticism. More precisely, by stating that when the Israelites ate manna they envisioned the glory of God, the Bible plainly and openly claimed that manna was what we would today call ‘psychoactive’. Eating manna facilitated the occurrence of a vision, and many prominent Jewish and Christian religious authorities over the centuries have secretly shown that it did so (1-2).

It appears that these cultural and religious lines of associations and effects “honey wild” and “manna-dew” have appealed to Keats, explaining the immediate effects of the “honey wild, and manna-dew” on the knight, including delusion and the occurrence of a vision. Considering these features, one might hypothesize that the delusional knight who is also hallucinating, may be confusing either the lady is real or a figment of his imagination. This further explains that the lady is supernatural, if not actually divine supposing that the foods are from heaven. The knight allowing to be cared with foods also indicates his desire to be deluded or tragically beguiled, meaning, his desire is his vanity to be flattered. Yet, these all pivot around his anxiety. Even when the Lady says “I love thee true” (28), the knight’s reaction of “sure in language strange she said” (27) to the simple sentiments refers to his anxiety from his claim of a strange language she uses. Knowing that the term “sure” is pertinent to the manner in which one reports any sort of statement, it also, in the knight’s case, helps him better understand the Lady’s commitment, insinuated by the Lady’s expression of “I love

you in all honesty”, yet it is apparently unrequited, clarifying the knight’s lack of candour.

Acknowledging the male concept of woman taking control with feminine wiles, one may claim that the Lady strips the knight of sheer masculine efficiency and exercise. The problematized gender in narratives is raised by William Hazlitt in his essay of 1882 “Effeminacy and Character” where he shares his insights about Keats’s poetry. With his very first statement, he defines the notion of effeminate character which “arises from a prevalence of the sensibility over the will”, and then turns to Keats’s poetry declaring, “Mr. Keats’s poems were a deficiency in masculine energy of style. He had beauty, tenderness, delicacy, in an uncommon degree, but there was a want of strength and substance” (1821-22-1824/2017: n.p.). Drawing on this elucidation, we see flaws in the knight’s masculine energy in which he desires to surrender himself to the Lady’s captivity, but there also exists a want of strength in his acceptance of the Lady’s service. Taking him “to her Elfin grot” (29), which aligns with the “faery’s child” and “faery’s song”, the Lady fits in imaginary settings within Gothic ballads: “dark subterranean vaults, decaying abbeys, gloomy forest, jagged mountains” (Botting, 1996: 44). The Lady’s frustration due to the knight’s senseless reaction to her confession of love is punctuated by her tears: “she wept and sighed full sore” (30). The implied danger complemented by her tears is revealed by the double use of the term “wild” in stanza 8: “I shut her wild wild eyes” (31). It is plausible to read it as a reaction against her pledge-like statement, but it seems more plausible to take it as a reference to the suppression of the insubordinate expression of the faery’s eyes.

The femme fatale is identified with a sort of duplicity and/or ambiguity, disguised in her expressive sensuality, beneath lies a powerful weapon formed by the juxtaposition of femininity, sexuality, and tears. Too entranced by the Lady’s beauty and her vulnerable look, the knight apparently desires to continue love making and to appease her by kissing her eyes; in the same vein, he is cognizant of her frustration at his refusal to understand that this is not only about consummation as intimated earlier through his indifferent reception of her private confession. So far, one may reach the conclusion that an enchantingly beautiful and sensual woman is shedding tears, a

much-lamented female weapon with its disarming effect- her tokens of power- but as referred to earlier, the fact that she lacks self-knowledge portrays her to be unaware of this power. Her definition of the femme fatale derives from her potential power of sensuality as Doane draws attention to:

[Femme fatale's] power is of a peculiar sort insofar as it is usually not subject to her conscious will, hence appearing to blur the opposition between passivity and activity. She is an ambivalent figure because she is not the subject of power but its carrier [...]. Indeed, if the femme fatale overrepresents the body it is because she is attributed with a body which is itself given agency independently of consciousness. In a sense, she has power despite herself (1991:2).

and by the same token, as the knight is already vulnerable against her power, he simultaneously struggles between a threatening figure and an object of sexual desire as seen in his kissing the Lady's eyes. A further explanatory reference with respect to "kisses four" (32) is that it is perhaps much speculated due to the number "four". It is considered to be a harmonious even number rather than an odd one. Keats himself admitted by playfully explaining that "three would have made the kisses asymmetrical, whereas four would mean two kisses for each eye," surely he knew enough about the ballad content to recognize the implications of the number four" added Twitchell (1975:33). The other reason would be the rigors of the rhyme scheme since each stanza has an end rhyme of a,b,c,b "...kisses four" in the final line rhymes with "...full sore" in line 2.

The knight is shown to have fully resigned to the Lady's charm when she lulls him to sleep in stanza 9, which allows a sensuous expression of her dangerous power:

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dreamed, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill side. (Keats, 1819:33-36)

The liaison between them as being an affair, a fling, becomes foreboding nightmares. Surely, this is the frightening result of the deep-rooted concerns of the feminine threat to the male subject. The all-day lulling is literally actualized now just after the knight

kisses the Lady's eyes. From a general outlook on the realms of fairy tales, it may be suggested that even though there are far more intimate moments predictably the knight and the Lady are engaged in, a kiss is more powerful. Not surprisingly, the Lady hints at her primary purpose, which is commitment, lurking behind the beautiful female façade. The knight expands beyond an unconscious figure, but a rather weakened masculine identity: an emasculation completely reverses all the women images that have been discussed in this study so far; the prescribed excellence of Mary, the cloistered Mariana and the Lady of Shalott, the mad Isabella and Ophelia, and finally the fallen Jenny. Unwittingly representing the emasculated masculine discourse, he embodies the male orientated perspective of the feminine that leads to his spiritual entrapment when he is enthralled by the Lady's beauty and lulled by her wild eyes, snaring him for good. Clearly, he seems to have surrendered to his own definition of the Lady the moment he sees her; the fact that the deeper he wades into the Lady's control is the result of the appropriation of the male gaze upon her.

Resembling the image of the slumbering Jenny, the knight, set into a trance, subverts weak and passive female stereotypes, invoking the femme fatale's subversive power rooted in patriarchal fantasy. The knight being caught in the femme fatale's trap invites the question of inevitable destruction in a tragic sequence. The knight has at last surrendered to the encrypted message about the inherent quality of weakness that she projects for him. What seemingly happened is that a source power that nourished his sexual desires manipulated the male subject appropriating a seductive feminine body. She is more than simply a symptom of the patriarchy's ambivalent feeling, she perpetuates male self-delusion unconsciously articulating feminine desire.

What begins as the chivalry of a manly hero, representing patriarchy, becomes his own fall, thus flipping the dynamic. The reiterated reversal of power dynamic proves the status quo's stipulation that feminine should be suppressed within social codes. One may readily interpret that this patriarchal stipulation clearly explains the masculine insecurities presupposing his own feminization *vis-à-vis* the power of the feminine. Dreaming wildly "On the cold hill side" (36), the knight awakens to truth about the Lady and her identity in his sleep, a belated awakening in his dream traps him in the Lady's timelessness, and attested to by her former victims the knight sees

in his dream: “I saw pale kings and princes too, / Pale warriors, death-pale were they all” (37-8). The victims are the “kings”, “princes”, and the “warriors” of the highest standing who express the extent of her power presumably proved in the repetition of the word “pale” since it invites a suggestive double meaning: first it describes someone’s face or skin if it has less colour than usual, especially when the person is ill or frightened, congruous with the starved and terrified victims; second meaning is being inferior and weak, indicating their deeply disrupted regal stature. The density of the crowd testifies to the fact that the Lady has long been luring men and will continue holding many “in thrall” (40) in the future as long as patriarchal power *pales* the feminine into insignificance.

On Keats’s personal relationships with women, the poem invites the speculation that the knight’s tale possibly speaks to the poet’s ambivalent feelings towards women. His love for Fanny Brawne, despite having been requited, also reveals his frustration when the intensity of his love reached an excruciating level due to insurmountable obstacles. In one of his letters, Keats himself confided to Fanny admitting how the “moments thought of” her “would uncrystalize and dissolve” him, and that his feelings painfully held him captive (1819/2010:144). The state of starving victims in stanza 11, considering the poem’s context in the poet’s life, suggests that the term “starved” (44) is figurative, it is interpreted as starvation for the loved. According to the poet, the threat of losing control over her by desire, fuelled with the intensity of whether it be love or femininity, is the inevitable consequences in a relationship with any woman; thus, the “horrid warning” (45) made by the victims, or the poet, implicitly signifies not to give into her trappings, namely sexuality, or succumb to his own temperamental sexual fantasies. Sexual desire, an inherent quality in the male equals the femme fatale as an encoded figure in the patriarchy’s imagination and contributes to an understanding that the male subject is self-delusional. One may undoubtedly recognize this in the scene when the knight wakes up from where he fell asleep “On the cold hill’s side” (47), but with a subtle difference: now the coldness on the “hill side” spreads to the whole hill. That he recognizes he has been ensnared marks his self-delusion. Bewitched by the Lady, the knight is trapped somewhere between a dream world and real world where the cold will chase him

forever. The overt suggestion is that the knight being trapped between a dream and real world supports whether the Lady is an imaginary or real figure in the knight's mind screen; and the term "cold" chasing him forever would support the Lady's confinement to the mythic definition of the femme fatale as a dark, immoral lady, a monstrous and evil seductress.

In the final stanza, the knight repeats the narrator's description of himself with a slight alteration to the first stanza:

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing. (Keats, 1819:45-48)

which, at first reading, means that he emphasizes his despair caused by the fatal temptress, and the permanence of his "loitering" (2) which is inescapable. However, on the second reading, it unveils an enticing ambiguity offering the interpretation that the knight is perhaps all alone in nature is unveiled and the narrator and the Lady may be merely hallucinations and visions. That he awakes to the real world, as he says, abandoned by the Lady, means that she is seemingly an illusion. Indeed, this scene can also engender the exposition that there is no awakening for the knight since he has never fallen asleep, but was semi-conscious throughout his confinement as the Lady as Braun explains Keats's emphasis on "the overlaps between dreaming and waking life" (2012:29); thus, the poet provides a misguided sense of time and reality. The sexual exchange with this Lady is perhaps fantasy, but the frightening results of her sensuous charm may reflect a real-life experience.

Amongst many-faceted myths of the femme fatale, Keats's **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** embodies male performance anxiety centered upon intertwined feelings of fear and fascination, which are fuelled by the destructiveness of her sexuality and sensuality. The knight's encounter with the Lady in wilderness contributes to this understanding by channelling Edmund Burke's perception of nature as sublime and beautiful, which is central to the Romantics: the qualities of sublime, predicated upon terror, give us pleasure and pain at the same time conjuring the strongest passion and

paralyzing the faculty of reason. It is conceivable to mention the feelings, as pleasure from the beauty and pain from the sublime of nature, function in a manner that is identical to those led by any contact with a femme fatale, given the context in which the two are united and the Lady herself. For Burke, if the sublime in nature, is grounded on terror, then the fascination of the femme fatale derives from the knight's fear. This fear projects the ubiquitous masculine anxieties of the sexuality in the poet's culture as Gal asserts, "The juxtaposition of quiescent maternity and active female sexuality becomes [...] a source of extreme male anxiety" (2016:162), adding to the incomprehensible dark sides of femininity. The fear of the feminine is a construct stipulating woman to be submissive and obedient to masculine authority. It is challenged by the birth of a new definition of the feminine: the femme fatale, who deeply reverses clear-cut gender stereotypes, designated by social norms, with a view to offering a way out to her descendent to notice their inherent power.

Considered as early examples of the nineteenth-century femme fatale iconography, **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** became a popular subject for the Pre-Raphaelites and was delineated many times with the same fervour by both the members of the Brotherhood and also painters who exercised the Pre-Raphaelite style. Part of this penchant is seen in John William Waterhouse's namesake translation of the motifs from Keats's poem into his visual art with different reflections. Envisaging the scene as particularly unfaithful, Waterhouse's **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** (1893) still portrays a merciless lady with her cold gaze and expression. When decoding the narrative, the cursory perusal of the composition tells us that the painter's preference to re-articulate the verbal narrative centres on this stanza:

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful, a fairy's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild. (Keats, 1819:13-16)

which marks the scene of the encounter of the Lady and the knight. Even though the Lady's face is in profile, we read the impassivity in her catatonic expression unlike the entranced knight whose face is largely masked by the shadow of his helmet but still

full of temporal patterns of emotions. The Lady's red flattened lips are devoid of any motion contradicting the knight's slightly parted ones which suggest a strong desire while holding the gaze of the Lady or, more precisely, being held by her gaze. While the poetic narrative proves to be far from clear on this point, Waterhouse's image is supposedly on the knight's side, he really does look as if he has been mercilessly captured by this woman. Her long auburn hair wrapping around the knight's neck accentuates her femininity but more significantly highlights the moment when the Lady lures the love-struck knight to bring him close to her lips and enthrall him with her eyes. In depicting the eyes, Waterhouse does not remain true to Keats's description of "wild eyes" (Keats, 1819: 31); his Lady's eyes wear an ambiguous look, captivating and innocent at once, problematizing Keats's portrait of an enchantress. Her languid pose gives the impression that she is an earthly being rather than a Romantic concept of supernatural entity, implicated by her ethereal beauty. The sense of threat and the knight's inevitable ruin are suggested by the scene in which the knight is wrapped in her hair, but on a closer look, they are presaged by the dark colours and tones of the painting, accentuated through the portrayal of nature in autumn. Barefoot on the grass and the skirt of her dress on the ground reinforce the interpretation that she is intertwined with nature; the crimson leaves in the foreground and the dense row of trees' trunks in the background, which seem like prison bars evoking a claustrophobic atmosphere, adds to the impression of the knight's captivity. The chivalrous knight's sense of masculine control through his creative energy devoted to fashion the Lady with "garland" and "bracelets" (Keats, 1819: 18-9), for her and the Lady's reassurance of his control over her in the poem find parallel expression via their position in the painting. On his knees leaning towards the Lady for a kiss who is positioned at a lower level unequivocally illustrates male dominance and female submission on the surface level. Yet, looking closer, his position is rather wobbly instead of secure, precariously prone to being pulled in their direction, having nothing with which to keep his balance. On her knees and around, the white briar-roses bloom, also known as dog roses, symbolize pleasure and pain, and an immediate inference is that they are suggestive of images and appropriate metaphors for the Lady's "sweet moan" (Keats, 1819:21) in Keatsian language, for the word "moan" has multiple meanings: pleasure and pain.

Seen at first as a vulnerable and submissive maiden upon being for her pose and position, yet, on a deeper level, she reflects an ambiguous proclivity: she may suggest a figure getting pleasure from emasculating the knight with her destructive charm, but above all, her “moan” is subject to another interpretation. However, the implication above is satisfactorily enough to define her as an ambiguous figure which reinforces the ambivalence both in the perception of her existence and in the feeling towards her on the part of the male. This is not defined as a negative characteristic, but rather a sign of power of her unpredictability, which both fascinates and frightens. Certainly, this is the most significant constituent in situating her as dangerous causing perturbation due to her state of instability. Such notions of unpredictability, anxieties, and attractions are, admittedly, in accordance with the attribution of uncanny, not knowing what this mysterious woman is thinking or feeling, and it should already be obvious that this is the key that helps decode the painter’s narrative. In other words, her uncanny ambivalence carries the weight of the narrative of the painting and also sheds light on its own socio-historical aspect, related to the rendering of the *femme fatale* in the Victorian age.

An array of societal concerns about the powerful woman, echoing through the painter’s work, affects how we peruse the narrative. Most Victorian men and even middle-class women, due to their apprehensions of losing control and social power, feared the radical social changes and reversal or even the annihilation of roles and categorizations which were believed to be ignited by the *femme fatale* archetype. She was considered to be capable of unsettling the hegemonic power structure by breaking out of the male control over her suppressed sexuality, read as the outright denial of proper domestic roles. Jennifer Hedgecock noted that “Victorian perceptions of women shift from passive and meek domestic woman to a more assertive and demanding dominant role” with the emergence of the *femme fatale* (2008:12). She discloses much more by proposing that:

While nineteenth-century society generalizes and polarizes women as either virtuous or fallen, the *femme fatale* subverts these dichotomous categorizations. She imitates the domestic woman convincingly, but in fact she is neither a domestic nor a fallen woman. [...] In contrast, the *femme fatale* reinvents herself and immediately reintegrates into society, all the while concocting even higher

aspirations. In fact, she treats her own defiance of domesticity – what some might regard as her “fallenness” -- as a kind of victory, to show that social dogmas about women cannot defeat her (Ibid.:11).

In keeping with this periodical overview, we may enquire about whether Waterhouse’s femme fatale epitomizes a woman who claims liberation to have absolute power over her sexuality and life, a prototype of female empowerment that explains Victorian fears and anxieties. Is she a seductress but masquerading in a submissive role as in Hedgecock’s words “she imitates the domestic woman convincingly” only to manipulate the knight at will, who seems to be trapped in a sort of uncertainty? Albeit a plethora of manifestations of the femme fatale archetype in myths and narratives such as temptress, “castrating woman”² or “manly woman”³ as well as vampire or witch, they all share a basic set of characteristics and the core concept of understanding the archetype as ambiguous. The ethereality of the femme fatale emphasized by her supernatural characterization in the eighteenth century with Romantic or Gothic texts fades and the figure re-emerges as a human in the nineteenth century and onwards. Evidence of her character endowed with human qualities or attributes is Waterhouse’s rendering of the femme fatale; she does not appear like “a faery’s child” (Keats,1819:14) as Keats’s Lady. This constructs an acceptable image of the femme fatale for the Victorian period in order to “reintegrate into society” with her innocent appearance as well as her dress.

Clothes, part of Victorian women’s fashion, are a way of expression of woman’s identity in society; but varies among different social classes throughout the century. The Lady is dressed in a purple silk gown, rather appropriate to the period’s fashion, in which she both exudes and disguises her hideous acts. Madeleine C. Seys’s notes on **Lady Audley’s Secret**, a sensation novel by Mary Elizabeth Braddon published in 1862, (2017) provide an apt venue for a connection between the colour, texture of the Lady Audley’s dress and her acts:

² Bram Dijkstra, **Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin de Siècle Culture**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 374-375.

³ Reinhold Heller, **The Earthly Chimera and the Femme Fatale: Fear of Woman in Nineteenth Century Art**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981, pp. 11-12.

Instead of the angelic goodness and ethereality of her white muslin gown, this specially fashioned gown in dark and heavy silk is a sign of her artifice and deception. This gown is altered to fit her new identity as a *femme fatale*. Its richness evokes the Pre-Raphaelite image of the heroine as a “beautiful fiend” (126).

Adorning a narrative identity and gaining self-knowledge, these dresses exhibit self-conscious disguises. Looking at the dress closely, it readily reflects the features of clothing in the medieval era; exposing the back and predictably the chest, with a skirt that trails to the ground, also having designated fabric, texture, and colour. Simply reading it as a medieval gown would be superficial, a closer reading is indeed requisite. Significantly the style of the Lady’s gown seems in accordance with the figure and contemporary touches; it is quite diaphanous, perfectly fitting to a definition of the *femme fatale* as seductress. As Scott observed it is “ornamented with patterns reflecting the oriental influence of the Aesthetic movement” (1999:526), as Victorian designers drew inspiration from the East. The dress also illustrates the Pre-Raphaelite and the Aesthetic movement style, both of which rejected the contemporary dress, tight lacing corsets, and unnatural colours advocating instead the style with few embellishments and naturalness, as well as allowed more freedom of movement for women as they took up new past times at the turn of the century. As the style reveals, such dress, is an expression of how the Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic Movement artists were inspired by classical Greek, Medieval, and Renaissance clothing. Waterhouse blended the medieval styles with the contemporary departures and also with the appeal for oriental design and texture. The other signifier marking her sexuality and power is her long, loose, and abundant hair, equalled to loose sexuality and exclusive female power, contrasting with a tightly wrapped one, suggestive of repressed sexuality. Beautiful fair skin, lovely hands, and feet are certainly the most important features in the period distinguishing a woman’s health and social status. Verifying the imposed ideals of feminine beauty, Waterhouse’s woman is the visualization of these standards of woman anatomy based on established values. When juxtaposed with the quintessential beautiful female subjects who are young and pretty, her anatomical features conform to the prevailing ideals, rather than a sensuous bewitching siren. An innocent look is undeniably dominant, supported by the heart she has on her sleeve;

but also, it is an emblem of honesty which reminds one the colloquial phrase “wear one’s heart on one’s sleeve”, meaning to be honest about one’s feelings and to allow oneself to be vulnerable. Whereas Keats’s Lady’s honesty is revealed in “I love thee true” (Keats,1819: 28), Waterhouse’s lady wears it on her sleeve, so that she is candid in her intentions.

While the Lady works her femininity out through the loose hair and gown, her victim exudes his masculinity via the medieval knightly armour. Revealing the attention to his being in full armour, the overt suggestion would be that the knight is ready for battle, literally armed against everything and every infliction from his enemy, in this case, the female of the species. Singularly handling the helmet, delineated on the knight’s head, not held with his hand or placed aside, adds another layer to his state of trance on a metaphorical level: the helmet insinuates that the knight is armed to not fully come under the influence of the fairy enchantress; it shadows not only his face but also his reasoning as well as suffocating his spirit, justifying the unresponsive expression on her face: he struggles to hold the power which proves his insecure position. As with the particulars of his posture, kneeling towards the Lady, the representation of castration anxiety, described in Keats’s words as “haggard” and “woe-begone” (Keats,1819: 6), is further suggested by the absence of his horse, a symbol of masculinity, and also by how he lays the heraldic red flag on the ground, portraying him as weak to the seemingly submissive Lady to whom, reputedly, the manly hero is prey. Perhaps, the surrounding landscape should be associated with the knight rather than the Lady as stated earlier, as it may envelop a fitting emblem for his calamity, but most of all, a sign of the inherent male weakness, more precisely, a flawed masculinity. It becomes more obvious when compared to the Lady who is brightly lit unlike his appearance like a shadowed silhouette. Even though their outfit and their positions create the illusion that she is a soft and subjugated female, and he is a tough and subjugating male, the guard of the knight’s shield is almost down. Not completely! There are details that do not go unobserved when one looks at the knight’s hands; his banner is by his side, but his right hand is still holding it, whereas his left hand is seemingly holding his horse’s reins firmly, characteristically prominent features showing his struggle to hold the power. Whereas the Lady appears to make

effort to fully control him and the situation, unlike her literary counterpart, the knight does not completely relinquish as in the Keatsian version. Then, the reading of the helmet begs for another symbolic level here; it serves as a veil to conceal the knight's response to the Lady's luring. A sudden notice of the threat she may present easily redresses his stature by erecting his posture, a masculine thrust, eventuating in his departure, or an equal reading is her abandonment.

Keats's autumnal landscape without birds is translated as dark colours and tones detailed with red leaves in the foreground and silent trees in the background whose trunks take up more space in lieu of their branches or leaves. Nature, where they encounter, is first read as the visual hint to the Lady's true character but also the Victorian imagination of nature, after all both – woman and nature – were utterly tempered and dominated by social limitations and prejudices. Since this is the first narrative illustrating nature as a setting for the composition, it yields, indeed, a wider elaboration on the Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite imagination of nature than ever witnessed through this study.

The concept of nature was highly significant to the Victorian imagination. The inspiring model of nature popularized by the Romantics was abandoned by the Victorians. Due to the horrific progress of industry and development, the age witnessed a radical metamorphosis in the (artistic) representation of nature from benevolent to competitive and malignant. The treatment of nature as a sublime power and God's signature was replaced by the idea of a nature that was indifferent to human beings. It was now something to be defeated, tamed, and controlled. That different model can be read through poet Laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem **In Memoriam** (1837-38), which was an elegy written for his late friend Arthur Hallam. In particular, the lines "Nature, red in tooth and claw" conjures up a cruel image of nature. Another poet who explored the theme of uncertainty and hostility in nature is Matthew Arnold, whose poem **Dover Beach** (1851) reads: "For the world, / [...] / Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain (Arnold, 1897/2018: 7-9). It is often claimed that the harsh language Matthew and Tennyson used in their poems reflects Victorian pessimism towards nature. Charles Darwin's influential book **On the Origin of Species** (1859), soon after its publication, was iconoclastic and acted as

a catalyst for this pessimism unlike the Romantic view of nature. The Wordsworthian view of nature -- nurturing, nursing, guiding, and the guardian of his moral being -- advocated the idea that nature and man would cooperate, adapt to each other and “the day would come when the pleasurable natural knowledge found by the scientists ‘in solitude’ would be interpreted and propagated by poets and painters in the language of Nature herself” (Knoepflmacher & Tennyson, 1977: xviii). Therefore, John Ruskin drew the epigraph for his pivotal work **Modern Painters- Volume 1** (1843) from Wordsworth’s poetry:

Accuse me not
Of arrogance,...
If having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men,
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence. (Ruskin, Vol II., 1856:132)

This epigraph suggests that Ruskin, like Wordsworth, contemplated in nature, was guided by its “Truth” while executing drawings “that speak of a profound reverence for nature seen as God’s work” (Barringer, 2012:58); however, he dissented from Wordsworth’s opinion concerning subjectivity. Subjectivism was peculiar to Romantic poetry, but to Ruskin and the Victorian imagination, such subjectivity was to be eschewed and nature had to be objectified.

Nature was objectified, it was only the subject of scientific studies and insights, but also aesthetic symbols for poets and painters. And for the Pre-Raphaelites too. The Pre-Raphaelites’ wonderful renderings of nature were, indeed, exercised through Ruskin’s precepts towards “simpleness” emphasizing the creed of “truth to nature”, which were directly translated into effective settings as well symbols that highlight the surface of the canvasses and identify the iconography. Amongst the Brotherhood’s

early doctrines is the declaration “to study Nature attentively, so as to know how to express them” that they also fervently deployed in delineating the images of woman; they studied them attentively and expressed them as they were. More than just adhering to the simplicity of nature, Ruskin proffered a mystical concept of nature, impenetrable and threatening obscurity, a feature akin to the nineteenth-century woman. Ruskin’s conviction of the best insight goes beyond a close observation and meticulous description of nature; this scrutiny should be converged with imaginative power. The Pre-Raphaelites seem to have adopted this idea by adding a symbolic dimension to their narratives as a consequence of an imaginative reaction to nature; when it is a landscape painting, especially featuring a woman, it finds its most satisfactory actualization since nature and natural elements carried a particular symbolic alignment with the woman for Victorians.

Waterhouse reflects a unique passion for natural settings in his work whose compositions rely on a blend of vibrant colours of the Pre-Raphaelite style with gentle shades of Romantic sentimentality, both in league with their own conception of nature. In this particular painting, the painter seemingly eschewed a technique of bright careful coloration that is laid on a white ground reflecting the early movement. The painter’s technique in *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* constitutes part of his modernity and “that his images of mythic women connect him to the European Symbolists” (Silver, 2011:266), which is associated with the gothic elements of Romanticism. Behind the canvas is the combination of a coloration technique underpinned by gothic elements and a Victorian femme fatale, whose resultant effect is an occult dark side, but not as frightening as Keats’s, and a visible languid appearance. This integration lying in the heart of the painting’s iconography opens up new dimensions in interpreting the narrative, thereby allowing us to understand the painter’s exhibition of transformations in the status of women and also the affinity between women and nature in the year he rendered *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. This transformation is not revealed by an enchantress, rather a jail bait, as advocated by the definition of Anthony Hobson “jeune fille fatale” (1980:75), exposed with her position, pose, grace, and expression. She looks like a butterfly emerging out of her cocoon; hence the element of danger is in her youth and the pliability she represents. In the sense of danger, the setting where

the doomed encounter takes place is just as significant as the Lady herself. The point of departure is the cultural tendency to align women with nature. Looking at the association between women and nature, the insights point to the cultural imagination containing the context of a symbolic linkage in many ways. Cultural discourses elucidate this long-recognized link by foregrounding women and nature's ability to give life as well being the subject of destruction, domination, and management; thus, the emancipation of both is as connected as the question of the suppression. This deeply ingrained connection was taken on by both the poet and artist, placing women in a natural setting providing a context for gender and sexuality politics. Waterhouse's portrayal of nature is the translation of Keats's gloomy early autumnal landscape implied in "The sedge has withered from the lake, / And no birds sing." (Keats, 1819:3-4). The squirrel's granary is full, / And the harvest's done." (Keats, 1819:7-8). The rich autumnal colours and details like dense row of tall trees reminiscent of the bars of a cage, presumably serving as a snare, add to many wicked things nature supposedly withholds. The lady seems to commune with it through her long auburn hair and purple dress; hence indicative of a lens for the affinity between them since both are defined as uncontrollable, changeable, sometimes frightening, and possess indomitable powers.

Keats's **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** suggests a perspective for the (re)conceptualization of female agency problematizing the power relations in the social context of the early nineteenth century. The poet's supernatural imagery of the femme fatale as an enchantress with a power of evil seduction envelopes a warning for the male potency demanding nothing beyond ideal expectation. Keats renders the enchantress as omnipotent that it conjures fear while illustrating the knight – full of "anguish" (Keats, 1819:10) – as a victim that the reader obviously feels sympathy for, further supporting that female power, underpinned by her sexuality, should be controlled. Inextricably linked to the concept of evil, her power is claimed to manipulate man to bring his downfall, thereby subverting the established hierarchized sexes. The constant change of characteristics of the femme fatale archetype reflects shifting cultural attitudes toward the concept of femininity, female independence, and sexuality. In this respect, Keats's *La Belle* represents the woman as dangerous,

implying her potential sexual power which aims to annihilate the hegemonic patriarchal structure beyond challenging the gender roles. Her portrayal as a dangerous woman serves as a focal point for many male anxieties and fears towards her. When juxtaposed with Waterhouse's femme fatale, its visual progeny offers late nineteenth-century readers/artists' responses to the poem and suggests a perspective for how they articulated a rich array of ambiguities surrounding female agency presented in the text. Genre and ideology played significant roles representing the poem's specific details, though these representations were accommodated also by cultural transitions and cultural history. Considering the social context of the late nineteenth century when Waterhouse rendered *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, one may readily attain the knowledge of the cultural changes in the position of women. The women's rights movement, galvanized by "women's strivings to improve their status in and usefulness to society" (Cott, 1987:13), gained impetus more than ever, eventually leading to the emergence of the concept of the New Woman in the early 1880s. The New Woman put forward a daring challenge of full emancipation to abolish social restraints, demanding more than their predecessors who laid the foundation by gaining some independence and equality. By questioning the traditional spheres, steering the movement to education, the New Woman asserted her rights, full autonomy, and most of all, a true/new identity determined not by race and sex, but by intellectual and public involvement or achievements. Within this context, Waterhouse's view of Keats's femme fatale is shaped by these struggles and epitomizes the beginning of the representations of alterations in the standard balance of power, reflected in a femme fatale figure as if from real life. Even though her hair twined around the knight's neck and the trees evoke prison, the Lady does not predominate over the knight, nor does the knight fully lose control. Whereas the knight seeming uncertain about succumbing to the la belle's enthrallment or rescue her, whether to de-armour or hoist his lance up expresses ongoing anxieties of the destabilizing standard balance of power, she seems so innocent, young and pliable, unlike an enchantress, that one cannot read her as the embodiment of elements of danger. In this sense, she, as a La belle of social construction, represents the New Woman, but not a victimizer of male conventionality, rather a wistful woman of a new world view, which is construed as gender equality.

5.2. *Lady Lilith* and *Body's Beauty* By Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Ending this chapter, also this intertextual study, with a reading of a double work of *Lady Lilith* (1866–1868) and *Body's Beauty* (first entitled as *Lilith*, 1867–70) rendered by the same artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti is significant, for Rossetti opened a new dimension in the imagination of the femme fatale by treating her as an aesthetically decorative object to highlight feminine sexuality and sensuousness from which, in the Victorian context, her potential destructiveness springs. Differing from Waterhouse's almost fully dressed, demure-looking La Belle, Rossetti's Lilith represents an objectified and subordinated seductress by gaze and reflects the Victorian fearful response to the femme fatale through the New Woman who resorts to her inherent sensuousness and hypersexuality. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's femme fatale is better understood when one looks closely at his unconventionally striking and seductive portraits of women, which dominates his artistic *oeuvre* more than any other artist's in the nineteenth century. His representation of women and his personal relationships with them are deeply bound to each other, and with maturity comes a change in his female subjects, thereby presenting implications for our understanding of *Lady Lilith*.

As reported in the medieval text *Alphabet of Ben Sira* (c.800s to 900s), Lilith, regarded as being Adam's first wife, abandons him as a result of constant disagreements and much quarrelling between them⁴. Aware of their creation from the same dust, Lilith rebels against Adam and God by refusing to become subservient to Adam. Challenging the dominant sexual position and asserting the equality of the sexes is why she and Adam fight all the time until she leaves the Garden of Eden. Upon Adam's complaint, God sends three angels, Senoi, Sansenoi, and Sammangeloph to bring her back. They find her bearing children in a cave near the Red Sea, but she refuses to return to the Garden of Eden. Her refusal to come back to the garden is both an act of defiance against God's and Adam's authority upon her and an assertion of the right of self-independence. Then God punishes her by killing one hundred of her

⁴ According to Louis Ginzburg, the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, consisting of several extant versions, is believed to be written in the tenth century and originated in the Eastern Jewish communities during the Middle Ages.

children for her disobedience. Enraged by this punishment, Lilith, in revenge, is said to steal and kill newborn babies. While Lilith encounters Samael, chief of the fallen angels, and falls in love, Adam finds joy in his second wife, Eve who is created out of Adam's rib to remove the possibility of equality between the two sexes, thereby establishing woman's subordination to man. Overwhelmed by ambition and jealous of the new couple, namely Adam and Eve, Lilith and Samael plan to bring about their downfall resulting in their respective expulsion from grace. Hence, Christian tradition reveals that Lilith tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit under the guise of a serpent (Rudwin, 1930:516-17). In later legends, she is described as a succubus, a sexually wanton creature who seduces men with her enchanting beauty and sometimes bears demon children with them. Culminative personification of her is obtained from an array of depictions in different cultures such as the "Roman Lamia, the Greek hetara, and the Turkish vampire" (Ibid.:513). The mass of legends in Jewish and Christian mythology centres around her as a demonic personality who is believed to rob infants in the night and strangle them but sparing only those protected by an amulet with the names of three angels Senoi, Sansenoi, and Sanmangeloph. Lilith's persona is the embodiment of a child-killer, the mother of all evil, queen of hell, seductress of men, and the disobedient woman who first rebelled against masculine domination, all of which, thus, constitute a pernicious feminine power. The diversity inherent to her myth is well depicted in poetry and painting: one of the most noteworthy is seen in the sculptural decoration at the entrance of Notre Dame Cathedral, depicting Lilith as the serpent between Adam and Eve; then in the Renaissance, Michelangelo casts her again in the image of a serpent, thus portraying Lilith "as a half-woman, half-serpent, coiled around the Tree of Knowledge" (Gaines, 2001: n.p) in Sistine Chapel's ceiling in a painting called *The Temptation of Adam and Eve*. In the nineteenth century, it is Dante Gabriel Rossetti who might have been so captivated by the Lilith legends because he depicted her several times: as the serpent in his *Eden Bower*, and the femme fatale archetype in the painting *Lady Lilith* and its accompanying poem *Body's Beauty*.

In a correspondence to his mother on the 24th of August, Dante Gabriel Rossetti refers to the painting of Lilith: "I have been working chiefly at the Toilette

picture”, which he thought to be “his best picture hitherto” (Allen, 1984:290). The definition of the “Toilette picture” is perhaps a reference to Titian’s *Lady at Her Toilette* (1515); however, what lies behind his description of its being “his best picture” is a tendency in his treatment. The painting coincides with Rossetti imagining to merge the sexualized woman with his concept of the wife. As a young artist, he was captivated by a fantasy of marrying physical with sensuousness in feminine beauty to explore earthly and spiritual love for spiritual salvation by a female saviour. His quest to fulfil his fantasy led him to Elizabeth Siddall who embodied salvation for him. However, his inability to impose the fusion of the physical and spiritual aspects of woman onto her caused her death. Having lost his muse and wife, he abandoned the equation by separating two types of women personifying the benevolent and sinful, and eventually turned to themes such as the fallen woman and the femme fatale. Hence, the duality of body and soul appears in two separate paintings; while his *Sibylla Palmifera* signifies the beauty of the human soul with its accompanying sonnet *Soul’s Beauty*, its sister painting *Lady Lilith* represents the dark side of the human soul by illustrating the body with a sonnet. It had the same title as *Lady Lilith* but later it was altered to *Body’s Beauty* and inscribed around the frame of the picture. Unlike a range of renderings of Lilith portraying her as a diabolic figure and emphasizing her supernatural power, Rossetti confronts the viewer with an excessively sexual woman and signals to us to consider her in those ways through which the figure gained meaning in the Victorian context.

An initial encounter with the title of the painting which has a deliberate coding suggests that the artist wishes us to admire her womanhood since the title *Lady*, connoting respect for women, is used to describe her status (also class). The juxtaposition of the title *Lady* with *Lilith* presents the dichotomy of good and evil. Entitling her as *Lady*, the artist highlighted her supposedly marital status and as the “mistress of a household” implying her sexual maturity. As the title of the painting is a prelude to the visual narrative, one may infer that Rossetti presents an age-old tale of sexual politics: female sexuality and power, especially one of marriage and experience, which has long threatened masculinity. What is most relevant to the discussion thus far is that Rossetti called this work a “picture-sonnet” which

complements each other; that one should be read with the other. Notwithstanding the coupling of word and image, which is particular to this double work, is explained by the artist himself as “The painting ‘Lady Lilith’ would present a difficulty in print without paint to explain it” (Fredeman, 2004: 70-110). Therefore, one may argue that it is just the reverse. It is undeniable that the title hints at the painting’s narrative, yet, despite the artist’s account, the sonnet also provides many details to encode the painting and its title.

The subject of the narrative, *Lady Lilith*, dominating the composition, was reputedly modelled by Fanny Cornforth ⁵, known to be a mistress, a housekeeper but most of all an intimate friend to Rossetti. The lady’s striking features capture the viewer’s eye and glues it to her seductive charm. Luxuriating in her own boudoir, the figure seems so self-absorbed in her beauty as she is combing her abundantly flowing, long, bright-coloured hair as though she ‘fools the eye’ and looks alive. A recurring feature of the artist’s women is her loose and flowing hair which testifies to the fact that Rossetti had a particular passion for woman’s hair, which was expounded by Elizabeth Gaskell as “hair mad” (Waller, 1935: 153). The image of women’s hair as serpentine and ensnaring had a powerful hold over his artistic fervour, which responded to the Victorian imagination adhering symbolic significance to women’s hair. Elisabeth G. Gitter explores the ways in which hair, particularly golden hair, is defined as a text incorporating rich and complex meanings, with symbolic and magical powers (1984:936-943). In Western literature and painting, combing hair is widely considered analogous to weaving, also defined as her art, thus suggesting a form of expression to attain a poetic voice. However, the image of a woman combing hair is also associated with feminine sexual power since it is construed as a sexual invitation: she is silenced and frail, her hair can speak for and gives power to her. In this sense, the hair can be interpreted as her weapon in the fullest sense of the word that implies she beguiles man into his destruction. This element of weapon, in the image of Lady

⁵ Upon Rossetti’s patron Frederick Leyland’s wish, Rossetti altered the face of Lady Lilith to the features of Alexa Wilding, whose “heavy-lidded eyes and remote face” were believed to be “colder and more dangerous” than Fanny Cornforth’s sensuous feature. See Virginia Allen, “‘One Strangling Golden Hair’: Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s Lady Lilith,” *Art Bulletin*, LXVI (June 1984), pp. 285-294.

Lilith, is explicitly her golden hair, the “bright web” (7) that draws men and leaves “his straight neck bent” (12).

While the painting entrances the viewer with an aura of mystic power shrouding the lady’s locks of hair, as her most impressive feature, its accompanying sonnet warns us with an allusion to the myth of Lilith: “Of Adam’s first wife, Lilith, it is told / (The witch he loved before the gift of Eve’s,)” (1-2), a warning about the most dangerous epitome of the femme fatale by retelling an old story as in “it is told”. Within this context, the sonnet, simply a retelling of the myth, presents the figure’s association with the Victorian woman and feminine domination articulating both fascination and anxieties in male fantasy. Historical characterizations of Lilith the succubus facilitated the identification of female sexuality with animal imagery such as the snake with a sweet tongue and the spider weaving a web, all of which signify her ability to entrap through charm. Rossetti’s description of her as a “witch” is peculiarly at odds with her prettiness; however, it is not because of her appearance even if it implicitly encapsulates her terrible power, but her seductive allure as “her sweet tongue could deceive you” (3). Her most striking feature is her golden hair as it is “the first gold”, symbolizing her weapon of temptation, which reinforces the reason why it occupies and dominates the centre of the picture. Thus, **Body’s Beauty** provides a concrete explanation for why one should be prudent against this imposed notion of female sexual allure.

Revealing the brilliance of her skin, the lady’s loosely-fitting attire seems to lack the Victorian corset but looks as though “it is soon to be removed” (Marsh, 1985:235), suggesting her refusal of the encumbering prescriptions and rules. More than that, the combination of her clothes and posture engross the viewer’s thoughts with her sensuality, the overt sexuality of the female body. While the viewer’s gaze is wandering around her appearance, hers is focused on her beautiful reflection that she is studying in a hand mirror. She confidently invites us to look at her. Fully absorbed in brushing her hair, she delights in her own selfhood, elevated by the power of beauty and sexuality all at once. Her indifference to the male gaze seemingly emanates from her meditative appearance on a surface level, but on a deeper level, it illustrates Rossetti’s transformation of the mythical figure into a modern one, as he shared in

1870 that his image is divergent from earlier representations: “Lady [Lilith] . . . represents a Modern Lilith combing out her abundant golden hair and gazing on herself in the glass with that self-absorption by whose strange fascination such natures draw others within their own circle” (Rossetti, W. M., 1895: ii.850, D.G. Rossetti’s emphasis). Thus, *Lady Lilith* is a picture of a gaze within a gaze, in other words, a picture within a picture, showing a doubling – while the viewer is examining the lady, the lady’s gaze is fixated on her own reflection in the mirror. Whether or not the lady is cognizant of the male gaze is ambiguous, but there is an obvious nonchalance. Springing from her expression and posture, there is vanity and mystical power that permeates the atmosphere of her bedroom. The beauty and aloofness she is displaying, perhaps with a deliberate act, masquerade her evil intentions. That she is scrupulously combing her hair and displaying it for the viewer ensnares, a means of entrapment that “Draws men to watch” her “bright web she can weave” (7), very much a characteristic of the femme fatale. There is an implicit threat Rossetti exploits effectively: while the painting depicts her destructive power through her self-absorbed beauty, the sonnet gestures towards mythological codes of her characteristics: “still she sits, young while the earth is old” (5). Her full engagement in her own beauty suggests how she cunningly draws men through her self-contemplation, “subtly of herself contemplative,” (6): a narcissistic condition in which she generates an impression that she is in need of deep admiration and excessive attention through her vigorous sexuality, but behind this mask lies a dangerous femme fatale. In her **Fantasies of Femininity: Reframing the Boundaries of Sex**, Jane Ussher describes the lady’s self-delight in her gaze as:

She is sexual, dangerously seductive, and does not give the appearance of an acquiescent femininity which will be easily satisfied. . . Fear of and desire for ‘woman’ is incarnated in one painting. She is both sexual and selfish, gazing upon herself with satisfaction, symbolizing her rejection of ‘man.’ (1997:96)

It is evident that she arouses desire, but when it comes to fear, it is insinuated through this mysterious self-contemplation Rossetti added in a realistic context: a Victorian bedroom and its influence on the iconography of the painting. Diverging

from Waterhouse's *La Belle* who evokes fascination rather than fear, Rossetti's figure is much like Keats's, both of whom create frisson as well as desire. The lady's self-absorption by disregarding the male gaze is pervaded by languor and a sort of implicit refusal to submit to masculinity, which affords her an agency, unlike Lilith the child-killer, horrendously striking terror, and contributes to the artist's description of Lilith as modern and Victorian. Due to Victorian gender stereotypes, Rossetti's translation of these earlier images of Lilith is a prototype of an alluring woman in the painting, as the long-haired and ruby-lipped wanton, the menace is implicit in the visual narrative but explicit in the text. For this reason, the combination of both articulates Victorian fatal woman who enmeshes male "heart and body and life" (8).

Rossetti portrayed Lilith in a room which seems like the outside creeps into the inside through the object situated in the upper left corner; at first sight, it confuses the viewer, whether it serves as a mirror or window, but on a closer look, the reflection of the candles confirms the former. A mirror reflection from nature merely of lush trees with gorgeous twisting branches, dense and thick foliage leaving no space for the sky, any other figure, or element to cameo. It generates the perusal that it looks beyond the world of the viewer as suggested in the Rossetti Archive, it is as if "a memory of the Edenic garden which she fled"⁶, which perhaps hints at the mythical Lilith in her guise. When the nature in the mirror, alluding to the Edenic garden, is read with the extinguished candles facing it, it presents a fanciful suggestion. The candle is usually symbolic of the light of God or the light in the next world, but here, it is clearly recognizable that they are extinguished; thus, it may be construed as Lilith's loss of the light and Eden. The continuation of the mirror reflection of nature, that also gives the illusion that the Lady is outside, is the floral imagery congruent with her reputation as a *femme fatale*, unlike what William Michael Rossetti asserted: the "accessories" in the painting merely illustrate those of an "ordinary modern tiring-chamber" (1889:63). Occupying the right edge of the canvas, the lavish shrub rose, which abounds in white blooms, coalesces with Lilith, as though embracing her from behind. The white roses emblemize sensuous love and passion. Placed on the front right side of the canvas like an artist's signature, the single poppy in a glass vase represents her

⁶ <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s205.rap.html>, July 23 2021.

weapon, which signifies Lilith's power of lulling to kill through its association with sleep. It appears to be very fresh and in full bloom, corresponding to her voluptuous hair, but even more telling, its colour and form evoke the external female genitalia, suggestive of Lilith's sexual arousal. This deceptively beautiful flower which is known to be used in laudanum causes delusions, and an overdose may result in death; thus, any sexual union with her may eventuate in castration or even death. The traditional association of the colour red with passion and love as well as the poppy with poison contributes to the representation of Lilith as destructive female sexuality. A wreath of flowers resting on her lap seems like daisies. Considering its prevalent association with innocence, it likely suggests a disguise Lilith wears to look harmless, which is as tricky as her indifferent gaze. However, she is not wearing it, instead it is symbolically placed on her lap reminiscent of how she did not acquiesce to Adam. What lays on the bureau is recognized as a spray of foxglove, emblematic of insincerity in the Victorian language of flowers⁷. Fear and death pervading the painting is illustrated, apart from the poppy, through this poisonous flower. Despite the exotic blooms, offering wonderful sight, they seem deceptive, in accordance with their symbolic meaning and which accounts for their appearance in the painting. Its presence in the painting shows Lilith's most perilous characteristics which the accompanying sonnet treats as: "...her sweet tongue could deceive," (3). It has a spatial pertinence with the conspicuous vial, where she may assumedly keep some sort of poison or potion; and the colour match between the two assembled elements undoubtedly buttress to this observation. The final and only accessory Lilith wears is the red string on her wrist known as the Kabbalah bracelet. The Kabbalah refers to the form of Jewish mysticism and a school of thought explaining the mystical teachings of Jewish scriptures and the relationship between the spiritual and physical. Even though it is not certain that it is a religious practice, the Kabbalah devotees are known to wear this bracelet to ward off maladies and provide protection for the wearer, a plausible body of context which helps to decipher the original identity of Lilith. It is in particular the only and the most obvious element in the painting which encapsulates the sonnet that has been so far interpreted as a retelling of the ancient Lilith. One may not help but wonder why Rossetti wanted

⁷ Edith Appleton Standen, et. al., "Letters," *The Art Bulletin*, 67: 2, 1985, p. 319.

his Lilith to wear this bracelet - does it signify a warning for the male viewer or the Lady herself? Clearly, the socio-political reading brings about two different modes of interpretation. Firstly, it is a warning for the male viewer; the overt sexuality represents the Victorian woman seen as dangerous to the Victorian male identity. Secondly, it serves as a warning and protection for her and the woman against the male perspective seeing her as a monstrous evil behind the beautiful female façade.

The floral imagery in the painting manifests itself in the sonnet, “The rose and poppy are her flowers” (9), without any reference to the colour of the roses, and also excludes the other two, foxglove and daisies, clearly proposing the interpretation that the text adequately expresses the characterization of the figure. However, the careful inclusion of the elements and equally their hue function as narrative *per se* and add to visual Lilith’s. This particular elucidation may offer an insightful look at Rossetti’s exposition of the accompaniment between sonnet and picture suggesting that both narratives beg for a synchronic reading. Knowing that it was reprinted in the 1881 edition of *The House of Life* with the title **Body’s Beauty** confirms his assertion of its being a double work where it also insinuates that the titles demand a cross-reference: even a cursory perusal of Lilith in the painting evokes physical beauty inferentially **Body’s Beauty**, whereas the sonnet calls for **Lady Lilith**. The articulation of “golden hair”, “self-contemplative”, and “rose and poppy”, affirmation of symbolic cultural codes, justifies the title **Lady** since she is now a Victorian Lilith. Whether or not the artist intended this in his work is cryptic; however, in both texts, the rendition of Lilith, incarnates patriarchal fear and desire in the figure. Surrounding Lilith, the distinctive elements in both painting and sonnet develop the fatal woman who is put into a frame of cultural context.

Despite the paraphernalia in Lilith’s room, signified as a Victorian context, the dark background effectively displays a depthless space. The darkness underscores the etymological basis of the name Lilith: Lilith is a feminine derivate of the Hebrew name “lay’la” which was used as a general noun, rather than a proper name, representing “a daughter of the night” associated with any kind of monster appearing “in the form of a woman who exercised her power for evil during darkness” (Rudwin, 1930:514). Based on the word’s origin, one may suggest how it has influenced and helped to shape

the painting's background. It contrasts Lilith's pale skin, which attracts the viewer's attention, but there is more than that. Classic labelling of the colour black as death, sin, mystery, and dark magic may fuel the supposition that it is reminiscent of her soul and evil intentions, a symptom of male fantasy.

The visual narrative functions as an instrument to present cultural connotations and implications adhered to feminine beauty, whereas the textual one operates on an array of denotative meanings steered by the history behind the figure. Even though the sonnet bears connotations and also a symbolism from the cultural codes of the society such as "Subtly contemplative" in a Victorian bedroom and the floral imagery, it resonates with the mythical characterizations of Lilith. The very first line of the first stanza features the Judeo-Christian figure of Adam's first wife who embodies a demoness luring men with her sweet tongue and entrapping them with her golden hair. In the visual narrative, we only find a figure who personifies physical beauty and has been wandering on earth since she was created, suggesting that she holds an eternal youth "while the earth is old", like a fly in amber, apparently evinced by her distinctive pale skin. The penultimate tercet of the sonnet refers to the mythical Lilith's manifestations that include witchcraft that lulls her victims to sleep with intoxicating "scent" and "soft-shed kisses", and "snare" them. Apart from her "sweet tongue", the visual imagery of Lilith is at work in the first stanza, while the sensory ones are described in the second with a view to introducing the dimensional change occurring after her victims are beguiled. The victims' reverie springs from Lilith's sexual appeal captivating them with a trance-like fascination. The following lines continue presenting a portion of the history; when she challenged masculine supremacy by fighting Adam over who would be on top during sexual intercourse, she said: "We are equal to each other inasmuch as we were both created from the earth" (Baskin, 2002:59). The same lines even illustrate a representative victim whom she emasculates by spelling "through him, and" leaving "his straight neck bent / And round his heart one strangling golden hair" (13-14). The seductive beauty masqueraded and empowered by her sexuality surely reveals an image of a victorious fatal woman who beats a man through this disguise of sexual attraction equipped with a "net" (7), a "snare" (11) and "spell" (13). In many ways, the sonnet, exposes blatantly a female

triumph enveloped with iconography in the painting. The power is undeniably explicit in this textual female form, whose bewitching part is itemized. Her sexuality, in other words, sexual potency, is expressed through metaphors rather than visual description.

Through feminist readings, Lady Lilith is an archetype of an independent and self-confident woman which was clarified by the artist himself in a correspondence to the editor of the Athenaeum on November 18, 1869, that William Rossetti came across among his brother's papers: "Lilith, about whom you ask for information, was the first strong-minded woman and the original advocate of woman's rights" (Rossetti, 1903:483). Clearly, Rossetti developed an interest in the mythical Lilith, the child-killer and the succubus, yet the picture-sonnet personifies his own demoness; even though the overt references to the malignant Lilith mythology are present in the text, both correspond to the emergence of the concept of the New Woman in England. The clamorous "woman question" widely lampooned in articles generated social upheaval and possibly shaped the insights of the artist's creative mill. It is apparent that Rossetti's double work of art depicting Lady Lilith's demonization, through his own touches, signifies the femme fatale archetype which paves the way to the perception of her as a feminist icon. Lilith, and her overt sexuality displayed on the canvas as the most notable impression a viewer receives, is an example of the objectified female body showcased for the male gaze. Seen as an object of the male gaze, she appears to wipe out this label. Her power and triumph lie in her sexuality, alluring beauty, and luscious golden hair, adorned with emblematic flowers and decoration, and her mythological and traditional semantics, suggested by its title and the accompanying sonnet. In a Victorian context, self-absorbed Lady Lilith represents conventional physical beauty, but the symbolism surrounding her puzzles the viewer over the composition's interpretation. The accompanying sonnet warrants revisiting its sensuous surface underpinned by the meticulously painted semi-naked body and voluptuous hair, as a hinge for the femme fatale's power, with the purposes of clarification and expansion. The sonnet provides a perspective to look beyond the aestheticization of the figure hinting at who she really is; it serves as a warning for the viewer against the power of the Lady disguised in a nonchalant attitude. The sonnet undeniably turns the painting into a surface that projects the Lady's power, and the

Lady proves to represent the New Woman who incorporates the Victorian male's fear and desire in her evolving being.



CONCLUSION

In the light of feminist inter-disciplinary practice, a deconstructive approach through psychoanalytic and post-structuralist reading and viewing strategies has been widely used in the perusal of the images of women in this study. It is, indeed, the female subjects of the poems, recreated through the social and political views of the period by the Pre-Raphaelites, who emphasize these various reading strategies given in the Introduction. Considering these women as the symbolic representation of their historical context, the reader, through the lens of the feminist reading strategies, has reached a point that the ideological deconstruction of these texts would not only pivot around the examination of the female subjects but also demand a focus on the context they were depicted in; a context orchestrated by their creators' creed shaped into a social mould. This social mould often supplies the narrative context of a verbal text and plays a significant role in the re-articulation of the female subject and the formation of the iconography in a visual one. As the subject is integral to her context, specifically to her room, texts present a web of textual, social, and psychological factors having helped the reader adopt a post-structuralist textual analysis like Macheray's proposal of a literary activity where the reader has crept into the texts and exposed their "gaps" and "absences" in the framework of "symptomatic reading" strategy. As Macheray suggested, this symptomatic reading has helped the reader to uncover the ideological "gaps" in texts – in other words, silent margins, rather than overt statements, to reach meaning.

What these readings have revealed is that some texts are immensely solid against radical deconstruction, thus defying the reader's insertion, whereas some are welcoming and lay themselves open to analysis by presenting clues, either implicit or explicit when the female subjects are silent or silenced.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's paintings of *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin, Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)* and the sonnets *Mary's Girlhood (For a Picture)* nailed on the frames suggest a two-pronged approach to the texts, brought about by the artist's divided self. The Virgin, in the first visual narrative, confirms the ruling virtues and roles prescribed by the century where she is an exemplar figure for femininity. The elaborate use of symbols, as an index of her character and future and

despite its shocking effect on the Victorian viewer, contributes to the image of a middle-class Victorian girl. However, the second painting, in which Mary appears to be shocked and feared, insinuates a breach of Victorian values and norms. The slippery surface of the visual images distressed the Victorians; hence causing the Brotherhood's penchant for appending sonnets or descriptive texts on the frames to control the interpretation of visual images or negate the ambiguity. Rossetti's sonnets for his pictures are supremely resonant with the Virgin's purity; thus, they are described as the manifestations of his support of the patriarchal status quo. There is a gap between the first painting, along with the sonnets, and the second painting: the first painting and the sonnet depict duty and symbolize female excellence, viz who Mary must be, the latter portrays a vulnerable young girl, looking at you as if she is breathing, meaning who she really is, testifying to the artist's rejection of such utter conformity imposed on women. His unconvinced rejection or acceptance of the norms, adding to contradictions in his narratives, corresponds to the texts' solid resistance and ultimately limits the reader's decoding to discover the message/meaning or draw certain conclusions.

Tennyson's **Mariana**, which depicts a victim of Romantic love, clearly represents a socially imprisoned Victorian woman. The textual narrative, significantly the repeated refrain, offers a covert exemplification of sexual frustration, which Foucault defines as "a hysterization of women's bodies" (1978:104). Being a representative of the Victorian woman, Mariana as a text and as a woman illustrates the necessity of female subjugation but also implicitly calls the rigid norms into question by accentuating such austerity inflicted upon women through its critical tone but more importantly through the inclusion of the protagonist's voice, heard in refrains. Turning to Millais's **Mariana**, what is observed is that it does not assert that her circumstances are unfair, but typical or natural results of the prescriptive ideas about relations that stipulate an unmarried woman's exclusion from society. Perusing the surface of the text, the contextualization of Mariana's condition reveals that she conforms to societal and religious roles and stipulations. A closer look at the figure catches her unorthodox pose encapsulating the libidinal connotations and the feeling of entrapment in the poem's refrain but blatantly marks a radical delineation. Her pose

is considered as the representation of the paradox that both condemns female sexuality and accepts its existence all at once.

Unlike Mariana, who seems to abide by the system with her silence, the Lady of Shalott cracks the system by cracking the mirror. Mariana's faint lamentation (heard in her refrain) is hugely dominated by her utter conformity to the period's ideal, whereas the Lady of Shalott blatantly exposes the falsity of her imprisonment as she fails to suppress her sexual desire. Both Tennyson's poem and Millais's painting present themselves to the reader as representations of women's conditions, particularly, the crisis of subjectivity they suffered. They emphasize the isolated and cursed woman who resigns to death due to the sorrowful aspects of love. The Lady of Shalott's textual self is an epitome of a courageous woman ready to face her tragic demise outside the private domain, while her visual self exhibits her dereliction of duty out of frustration, offering a latent instability where she may break free from her thread and pursue her love, or she may resume it. The painting features a rich collection of domestic details which more explicitly highlights the ideological dynamics of the condition of the Lady when compared to the poem. Despite their rebellion against the art establishment, the principal values in Pre-Raphaelite images comply with the social and political beliefs of the period. Thus, the image invites a suggestion that it may encapsulate the tension between artistic ambitions and social responsibilities the artist experienced. Provocatively exposing her sexuality, Hunt's image focuses on sexual frustration, and it is reflected through the entangled thread which means that the clash between her desire and social responsibilities will lead to a tragic end.

The dangerous mistreatment of patriarchal power is in the centre of **Isabella, or Pot of Basil** by Keats and is exercised in Shakespeare's Ophelia. There is an element of pathetic frailty and beauty in their fate, leading to their madness. The tragedy each woman experiences emanates from their victimization, exposing the brutal exercise of power established on ideological contradictions revolving around gender in the concerned texts. On female madness, it is observed that both women's mental derangement is a consequence of their identity described to be liable to be suicidal and obsessive. Unlike the Lady of Shalott, resisting being a victim, Isabella and Ophelia invite the reader to witness their lamentation over the social and

psychological oppression that drives them into madness and makes the gross sexual politics of the narratives go unnoticed. In Keats's and Hunt's narratives, the 'politics' glimpses into the murder of Lorenzo and freezes Isabella's sorrow in her madness suggesting a macabre celebration of gender and class differences. Hunt's approach to Keats's Isabella and her madness is in line with his attitudes on social and political views in a characteristically Victorian manner through details, and specifically in a Pre-Raphaelite style manifested in the form of a single female figure.

Ophelia, like her sister Isabella, is driven to madness by traumatized love, surely in different ways and forms: Isabella's breakdown results from her brothers' brutal murder of her love, whereas Ophelia is mentally devastated by Hamlet's rejection of her love and murder of her father by the same man she loves. As weak and passive, she is always manipulated by three men in her life leaving her unprepared to come to terms with her losses, the loss of her father, and her love. Millais chose to juxtapose drowning Ophelia with the lush natural setting of richly varied flora whose symbolic meanings not only refers to Ophelia's death scene but also finds expression in the stages of her life. Unlike Millais's, less ambiguity surrounds Shakespeare's Ophelia; she is recognized as a gagged figure, an object of male desire, and a trauma victim. Albeit contradictory meanings, Millais's *Ophelia* clearly presents the interrelationship of gender and nature; both must be dominated and repressed as it continually threatens morality and reason. Millais's nature is controlled as is Ophelia; she is in her watery grave, floating in her madness, a reassuring and gradual descent due to the burden of being anchored to the stereotypes, casting her as a representative of the image of the femme fragile. Since the figure of the femme fragile is ambiguous, this ambiguity shows that Ophelia is caught between feeble passivity and sexual allure, which resigns her to being an object of the male projection and gaze.

Jenny, a dramatic monologue of a young man addressing a slumbering prostitute, *Bocca Baciata*, *Fazio's Mistress (Aurelia)*, *The Blue Bower*, and the double work of *Found / Found* are associated with the second phase of Rossetti's art. These narratives concentrate on the problems of sexuality represented by prostitution. The painter-poet's personal conflicts and ambivalent feelings about sex and religion manifested in his poems and paintings. The poet's ambivalence is revealed through the

narrator's oscillating perception of Jenny constructed on the dichotomy of the body and soul. On the one hand, she is appreciated as a beautiful and innocent soul and a victim of male construct, suggesting an inclination to redeem her; on the other hand, she is a corrupted body on the brink of decay in a hopeless state of depravity. His oscillation between compassion and disdain towards fallen Jenny marks his mindscape steered by the Victorian gender ideology. The narrator's parting gesture, laying gold coins in her hair, demonstrates that her soul's beauty has no ultimate value in a materialistic society which exterminates the possibility of salvation of the fallen woman and himself.

Rossetti did not paint an accompanying visual narrative for **Jenny**, yet he depicted the theme of the fallen woman in the paintings *Bocca Baciata*, *Fazio's Mistress (Aurelia)*, and *The Blue Bower*, all of which have been seen to present excellent parallel elements by providing a perfect complement to both **Jenny** and each other. With unbuttoned garments, a direct gaze at the viewer, and luscious full lips and voluminous hair, the gestures of these sensuous figures merely give expression to their sexual power underpinned by their strong demeanour and features. Unlike Jenny, a passive victim forced into prostitution by the Victorian male, these figures represent the empowered women as prostitute, giving the impression that they sought to escape the intentions and control of men gazing at them.

In the double work of *Found / Found*, the tension revolves around the drover's desire/act of rescuing his former sweetheart, now fallen. This directs us to the woman's response to the drover where she is suggestive of a powerful figure with her resistance to male ownership, analogous to the female subjects in three paintings, but unlike Jenny's sheer passivity. The drover's profound love for her, implied in the symbolism of the poem, is shadowed by sentiments of reason which insinuate the conventional condemning of the fallen woman. In the poem, the drover is caught between the hope of salvation and moral aversion, and when juxtaposed with the painting, his confusion surfaces and can be read from his position: he is towering over her with clasped hands, emphasizing that a moralistic reunion for them is impossible. What holds him back or creates such uncertainty is his social consciousness, also underpinning his upright position. To the drover's uncertainty, the fallen woman seems to be absolutely certain

about what she feels and wants, as suggested by her being adamant in her denial: it is shame and anger she feels, not salvation. Knowing that salvation would be a false wish, she resists, not the drover, the submission and subjection.

There is a transition towards the end of these readings of female subjects considering the escalating female-induced anxieties and cultural changes in the condition of women. Keats's **La Belle Dame Sans Merci** presents a La belle whose supernatural identity evoking fear and fascination is a patriarchal ideological construction marking the recurring figure of the femme fatale. The imagery of the femme fatale as an enchantress serves as a warning for the male hegemony since she challenges the established power relations. The more immediate threat La Belle presents to the "knight-at-arms" undoubtedly concerns his masculinity, which is in danger of being tainted by that female power, thereby enacting an attempt of continual control over the repressed. Since she reveals fear through her destructive sexuality and by subverting the stereotypically defined powers of the opposite sex, she should be controlled at all costs. The very embodiment of what the male both desire and fear, the Lady in Keats's text supports the reading of the figure as a projection of male anxiety onto the femininity.

In Keats's ballad, the supernatural imagery of the femme fatale with a power of evil seduction, a figure of male imagination and even fantasy, is portrayed differently in Waterhouse's retelling of **La Belle Dame Sans Merci**. The year when Waterhouse was working on his femme fatale witnessed cultural changes in women's position eventually spawning the concept of the New Woman. Waterhouse's La Belle was surely depicted as an enchantress, but it is the dressing up and languid appearance rather than the supernatural traits that disguise her feminine power and mystique. As with the particulars of her anatomy, although her hair is wrapped around the knight's neck, she does not reveal fear but fascination through her frail façade; her attire and pose can be perceived that she is soft and feminine. The whole politics of the visual representation lies in the arrangement of the figures, the woman titillates the knight without ever expressing an overt threat towards his manhood, the knight stands in an ambivalent relationship with the woman who seems fixated upon her dependency and call. Donning his helmet prudently while solidly grasping his lance and concealing his

motivation, he seems not to risk his position as a knight and a man, marking the point where he sustains control in this union. The relativity of their relationship to a social context denotes his embodiment of the anxieties caused by the destabilized balance of power, whereas she presents herself as a potential temptress and a victim with her pleading expression as if she needs his aid to be elevated. The elevation is enveloped in the demand for equal rights in all domains of society.

Rossetti's *Lady Lilith*, who has significant control over her male viewer, is the most powerful female subject in the study. A paradox-laden figure, she undeniably represents the prototypical Victorian femme fatale as she both lures the viewer with her excessive sexuality and entraps him using her magical power. When the painting and sonnet, are juxtaposed, they allow us to deconstruct not only the discourse in which the figure was rendered but also the text-image relationship. Its politics reveals that each seems to tell its own story *per se* even though they are considered to be complementary. The painting of *Lady Lilith* represents a modern woman in Victorian style boudoir, exhibiting her body in a semi-transparent attire by narcissistically studying her image. Her visual text seems to be an effectual construction of a deadly female sexuality but on a closer look, it also suggests a perspective to the Victorian notion of this mythical Lilith, which inevitably features her as an original type with her appearance, specifically her long neck and hair. It is a new version of the figure of the femme fatale as a product of male fantasy, more powerful, independent, and beautiful all at once. The accompanying sonnet, on the other hand, offers a symbolic dimension for the aestheticized figure rendered in a Pre-Raphaelite fashion. It presents a portion of history behind the image, serving as a primary clue to the potent power she possesses over the male viewer as it resonates with conventional associations of destructive femininity, shaped by the poet's sexual imagination. *Lady Lilith* presents herself as a catalyst of male anxieties, captivating everyone with her delicacy while perpetuating a reputation of temptress, as a Victorian femme fatale. She establishes a new woman form, both attractive and ambivalent, thus powerful. The perception of the character of Lilith as an empowered woman coincides with the drastic changes in the condition of women in the 1880s when the image of the New Woman emerged in

England. The unresolved tension between her characteristics metaphorically engenders her as the embodiment of the image of the New Woman.

The Pre-Raphaelites aimed to reform the aspects of British painting by defying the artistic tradition that glorified Raphael and by reviving the art from before the time of Raphael. Their reformist zeal engendered an artistic endeavour that reinterpreted the subjects in textual narratives. They were bold enough to incorporate contemporary and conventional elements of iconography into modern techniques. Their practice harbours more than that, thus entailing the reader to be more alert while perusing a Pre-Raphaelite painting. Reading these female subjects in the context of the Victorian era offers an implicit gateway to reach the point that their works serve as a representative of contradictions experienced on social/ideological and personal levels. Their manifesto is explicit, an expression of revolutionariness in art, attacking art associated with repressive regimes that operated on the firmly established hierarchy of genres, based upon sterility and far from the truth. However, the movement expresses an ambivalence in its politics which is observed in their works; they both walk with and against the contemporary culture. This paradoxical relationship is the primary finding of the readings, which presents that a Pre-Raphaelite painting profoundly adheres to the Victorian ideological statements apropos of men and women's role in society, class, and prostitution, whereas another painting goes against the same ideology by radically engaging with social realities, jarring the eye and sensibility. The female figures they painted are agents who have articulated the cultural codes and major debates of their period. Apart from Rossetti's own textual and visual images of women as a virgin and the fallen, the other female figures inspired by Keats, Tennyson, and Shakespeare are perfect female archetypes, as immured, mad, and the femme fatale, who conveyed their ideas while exploring contemporary subjects through seeking intense emotional expression. In these texts, both poems and paintings centred on female subjects, the principal activity goes beyond a straightforward feminist critique of patriarchal culture lurking beneath the canvas and between the lines, rather it is the ideology and discourse in a text that establishes her context. Her context, be it a textual or visual narrative, is produced by a male artist and consumed by a male reader/viewer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, Lynn: "Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain," BBC, 9 Aug. 2001,(Online)
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/trail/victorian_britain/women_home/ideals_womanhood/, 20 August 2020.
- Adelman, Richard: "The 'desecrated mind' and its alternatives: Dante Rossetti and political economy," **ELH, English Literary History**, Vol. 84, No:1, 2017, pp. 195-222.
- Adorno, W. Theodor: Kierkegaard: **Construction of the Aesthetic**, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
- Alexander, Sally: "Feminist History and Psychoanalysis", **History Workshop**, Vol: 32, No:1, 1991, pp. 128-133.
- Allen, Virginia M.: "'One Strangling Golden Hair': Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Lady Lilith," **The Art Bulletin**, Vol. 66, No:2, 1984, pp. 285-294, DOI: 10.1080/00043079.1984.10788161
- Andres, Sophia: **The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel: Narrative Challenges to Visual Gendered Boundaries**, Columbus, The Ohio State University Press, 2005.
- Aristotle: (335 BC) **Poetics**, trans. Joe Sachs, Newburyport, Focus Publishing, 2006.
- Armstrong, Isobel: "Tennyson's 'Lady of Shalott,'" **The Sun is God: Painting, Literature, and Mythology in the Nineteenth Century**, Ed. J.B. Bullen, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Arnold, Matthew: (1897) **Dover Beach and Other Poems**, Boston, Massachusetts, Squid Ink Classics, 2018, (Online)
<https://www.amazon.com/Dover-Beach-Other-Poems-Peer>, 22 May 2021.
- Auerbach, Nina: **Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth**, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Bachelard, Gaston: **The Poetics of Space**, Trans. Maria Jolas, New York, Orion Press, 1964.

- Bachelard, Gaston: **Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter**, trans. by Edith R. Farrell, Dallas, The Pegasus Foundation, 1942.
- Bal, Mieke: **Reading “Rembrandt”: Beyond the Word-Image Opposition**, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Ballaster, Ros: **“British Feminism”, Encyclopaedia of Feminist Literary Theory**, Ed. Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace, London, New York, Routledge, 2009.
- Barne, Rachel: **The Pre-Raphaelites and their World**, London, Tate Gallery Publishing Ltd., 1998.
- Barr, Alan P.: **“From Eden to the Haymarket: The Spoiled Garden in Rossetti’s ‘Jenny,’”** CLA Journal, Vol. 36, No. 3, 1993, pp. 327-338.
- Barringer, Tim, et. Al.: **Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde**, London, Tate Publishing, 2012.
- Barringer, Tim: **Reading the Pre-Raphaelites**, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012.
- Barthes, Roland: **The Fashion System**, New York, NY, Hill and Wang, 1967.
- Baskin, Judith Reesa: **Midrashic Women: Formations of the Feminine in Rabbinic Literature**, Hanover, London, Brandeis University Press, 2002.
- Becherer, Nadine L.: “The Bifurcated Personalities of Christina Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Reflected in their Sister Poems”, thesis, Denton, Texas, 1988, (Online) <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc500837/m1/2>, University of North Texas Libraries, Digital Library, <https://digital.library.unt.edu>, 12 June 2019.
- Bennett, Andrew J.: “Alone and Palely Loitering”: The Reader in Thrall in Keats’s “La Belle Dame sans Merci,” **Tel Aviv Poetics: Language and the Reader**, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1990, pp. 73-88, (Online) www.jstor.org/stable/42945830, 18 May 2021.
- Berger, John: **Ways of Seeing**, London, British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972.

- Bertram, Anthony: **A Century of British Painting: 1851-1951**, London, Studio Publications, 1951.
- Bettelheim, Bruno: **The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales**, New York, Random House, 1975.
- Bevis, Matthew: **The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Poetry**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Berg, Charles: **The Unconscious Significance of Hair**, London, Allen, 1951.
- Bilge, Zeynep F.: “‘Her Speech Is Nothing’: The Communicative Function of Songs in Ophelia’s Mad Scene,” **Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi**, No:39, 2020, pp. 105-116.
- Blake, William: Jerusalem, in **The Complete Poems**, London, Penguin Books, 1977.
- Bloom, Harold: **Alfred, Lord Tennyson**, New York, Infobase Publishing, 2010.
- _____: **Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens**, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1976.
- Boine, Albert: **Art in the Age of Civil Struggle, 1848-1871**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Bolen, A.E.: “From verse to visual: An analysis of Alfred Tennyson and William Holman Hunt’s The Lady of Shalott,” Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Ohio University, 2004.
- Botting, Fred: **Gothic**, London and New York, Routledge, 1996.
- Bourke, Allyson McMahon: “Tennyson’s Lady of Shalott in Pre-Raphaelite Art: Exonerated Artist or Fallen Woman,” Theses, and Masters Projects, College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences, 1996, (Online) <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-eybx-jm55>, 14 June 2020.
- Boyd, John D., Anne Williams: “Tennyson’s ‘Mariana’ and Lyric Perspective,” **Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900**, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1983, pp. 579 – 593.

- Bowlby, John: **Attachment and Loss**, Vol. 1, Attachment, London, Hogarth P, 1969.
- Braun, Heather L.: **The Rise and Fall of the Femme Fatale in British Literature, 1790-1910**, Maryland, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012.
- Bristow, J.: "He and I": Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Other Man," **Victorian Poetry**, Vol:39, No:3, 2001, pp. 365-388, (Online) www.jstor.org/stable/40002251, 23 April 2019.
- Broad, Richard: "Water and the Fallen Woman in Victorian Literature and Art," Dissertations from Proquest, Paper 0115203, University of London, 2011.
- Bronkhurst, Judith: **The Pre-Raphaelites**, London, Tate Gallery, 1984.
- Brooks, Chris: **Signs for the Times: Symbolic Realism in the Mid-Victorian World**, London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1984.
- Bryson, Norman: **Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze**, New Haven, Yale UP, 1983.
- Bublíková, Štěpánka: "Ut Pictura Poesis: Visual Poetics of Pre-Raphaelite Art", Theses and Dissertation, 2013, (Online) https://theses.cz/id/kaszj0/DIPLOMOVA_PRACE_Visual_Poetics_of_Pre-Raphaelite_Art_Bubl.pdf, 06 April 2019.
- Buchanan, Robert: **The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day**, London, Strahan & Co., Ludgate Hill, 1872.
- Bullen, B. J.: **The Pre-Raphaelite Body: Fear and Desire in Painting, Poetry, and Criticism**, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998.
- _____: "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Mirror of Masculine Desire," **Nineteenth-Century Contexts**, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1999, pp. 329-52.
- Burton, Robert: **The Anatomy of Melancholy: What it is**, New York, A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1880, (Online) https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=mfQPAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false, 30 June 2022.

- Byecroft, Breanna: "The Male Voyeur in D.G. Rossetti's 'Jenny,'" Brown University, **Victorian Web Home**, 2003, (Online)
www.victorianweb.org/authors/dgr/byecroft8.html, 12 June 2020.
- _____: "A Dialectic of Beauty in Rossetti's Lady Lilith," Brown University, 2004, **Victorian Web Home**, (Online)
<https://victorianweb.org/painting/dgr/paintings/byecroft4.html>, 26 Feb 2022.
- Camden, Carroll: "On Ophelia's Madness," **Shakespeare Quarterly**, Vol. 15 No. 2, 1964, pp. 247-255.
- Campbell; T. Edward: **A Study of the Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson**, Poet Laureate, USA, Macmillan, 1893.
- Carlyle, Thomas: **Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh**, 1831, ebook, 2012, (Online)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1051/1051-h/1051-h.htm>, 01 July 2022.
- Casteras, Susan P.: **Images of Victorian Womanhood in English Art**, Rutherford, NJ, Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1987.
- Chadwick, Joseph: "A Blessing and a Curse: The Poetics of Privacy in Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott,'" **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1986, pp. 13-30.
- Charney, Maurice, Hanna Charney: "The Language of Madwomen in Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists," **Signs**, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1977, pp. 451-460.
- Cheney, Liana De Girolami: "The Fair Lady and the Virgin in Pre-Raphaelite Art: The Evolution of a Societal Myth," **Pre-Raphaelitism and Medievalism in the Arts**, Ed. Liana De Girolami Cheney, Lewiston, Edwin Mellon Press, 1992, pp. 241-280.
- Chesler, Phyllis: **Women and madness**, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Chevalier, J., et. Al.: **A Dictionary of Symbols**, London, England, Penguin Books, 2007.
- Codell, Julie F.: "Empiricism, Naturalism and Science in Millais's Paintings," **John Everett Millais: Beyond the Pre-Raphaelite**

- Brotherhood**, Ed. Debra N. Mancoff. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001, pp. 119-147.
- _____: "Painting Keats: Pre-Raphaelite Artists Between Social Transgressions and Painterly Conventions," **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 33, No. 3-4, Word and Image, Autumn - Winter, 1995, pp. 341-370.
- Cole, Mark: "A Haunting Portrait by William Holman Hunt," **The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art**, Vol. 77, No. 10, 1990, pp. 354-365.
- Colley, C. Ann: "The Quest for the 'Nameless' in Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott,'" **Victorian Poetry**, Winter, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1985, pp. 369-378.
- Cott, N.F.: **The Grounding of Modern Feminism**, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1987.
- Cruz, Priscila Sosa: **The Language of Flowers Dictionary**, Xlibris Corporation, ebook, 2015, (Online)
https://books.google.com.tr/books/about/The_Language_of_Flowers_Dictionary.html?id=LgQvCgAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y, 05 June 2022.
- Daly, Gay: **Pre-Raphaelites in Love**, New York, Ticknor & Fields, 1989.
- Danahay, Martin A.: "Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Virtual Bodies," **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 36, No. 4, 1998, pp. 379-398.
- Dane, Gabrielle: "Reading Ophelia's Madness," **Exemplaria**, Vol. 10 No. 2, 1998, pp. 405-23.
- D'Avanzo, Mario L.: "A Poem about Poetry and Imagination: La Belle Dame Sans Merci," **John Keats: Narrative Poems**, Ed. John Spencer Hill, Basingstoke and London, Macmillan, 1967, pp. 199-208.
- Davies, Mel: "Corsets and Conception: Fashion and Demographic Trends in the Nineteenth Century," **Comparative Studies in Society and History**, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1982, pp. 611-641.
- Davis, Lloyd: **Virginal Sexuality and Textuality in Victorian Literature**, New York, State University of New York Press, 1993.

- Deane, Laura: **Gender, Madness, and Colonial Paranoia in Australian Literature: Australian Psychoses**, London, Lexington Books, 2017.
- Demoor, Marysa: "Art–Catholic Revisited: Dante Rossetti's Early Paintings and Northern Renaissance Art," **The Journal of Pre–Raphaelite Studies**, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2005, pp. 5–14.
- Dietz, Theresa S.: **The Complete Language of Flowers: A Definitive and Illustrated History**, London, Quarto Publishing plc., 2020.
- DiGangi, Mario: **"Women's Speech: Attacks and Defenses," The Winter's Tale: Texts and Contexts, By William Shakespeare**, Ed. Mario DiGangi, Boston and New York, Bedford /St. Martin's, 2008.
- Dijkstra, Bram: **Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin de Siècle Culture**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Doan, L. Laura: "Narrativity and Transformative Iconography in D. G. Rossetti's Earliest Paintings," **Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal**, vol. 71, no. 4, 1988, pp. 471–483.
- Doane, Mary Ann: **Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis**, New York, London, Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1991.
- Donnelly, Brian: "Rebuilding the House of Life: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Ekphrasis, and Victorian Sexuality", Theses and Dissertation, 2004, (Online)
<http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/9857/1/420262.pdf>, 22 Jan 2022
- _____: "Sonnet—Image—Intertext: Reading Rossetti's 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin' and 'Found'", **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 48, No. 4, 2010, pp. 475–88, (Online)
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41105672>, 13 March 2020.
- _____: **Reading Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Painter as Poet**, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015.
- Edmond, Rod: **Affairs of the Hearth: Victorian Poetry and Domestic Narrative**, London, Routledge, 1988.

- Edward, Lee: "The Labors of Psyche: Toward a Theory of Female Heroism," **Critical Inquiry**, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1979, pp. 33–49.
- Ellacombe, Henry: **The Plant-Lore and Garden-Craft of Shakespeare**, London, W. Satchell and Co., 1896.
- Ellis, Havelock: **Erotic Symbolism, Vol. 5 of His Studies in the Psychology of Sex**, Philadelphia, Davis, 1920.
- Emonds, Friederike B.: "Femme Fragile," **The Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature**, Eds. Friederike Eigler and Susanne Kord, Westport, Greenwood P, 1997, pp. 165-166.
- Falchi, Simonetta: "The Lady of Shalott in Pre-Raphaelite Painting," **Figures in the Carpet: studi di letteratura e cultura vittoriana**, Pescara, Tracce, 2012, pp.383-393.
- Ferber, Michael: **A Dictionary of Literary Symbols**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Ferber, Michael: **The Cambridge Introduction to British Romantic Poetry**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Field, A., G. Scoble: **The Meaning of Herbs: Myth, Language & Lore**, San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 2001.
- "Fine Arts: Royal Academy" **Athenaeum** 1282, (22 May 1852), 581-583, (Online)
http://www.engl.duq.edu/servus/PR_Critic/A22may52.html,
 22 December 2020.
- Fischer, Sandra K.: "Hearing Ophelia: Gender and Tragic Discourse in 'Hamlet,'" **Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme**, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1990, pp. 1-10.
- Foucault, Michel: **The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction**, New York, Vintage, 1978.
- _____: **Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason**, New York, Pantheon Books, 1965.
- _____: **History of Madness**, London and New York, Routledge, 2006.
- Fredeman, William E.: **The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Chelsea Years, Volume IV, 1868-70**, Cambridge, Brewer, 2004.

- Freud, Sigmund: "Mourning and Melancholia," **The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud**, Ed. James Strachey, London, Hogarth Press, 1914-16.
- _____: (1905) **On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works**, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1977.
- Gaines, Janet Howe: "Lilith. Seductress, Heroine or Murderer?" **Bible Review** 17, No. 5, 2001, pp. 12-20, 43-44, (Online)
<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/lilith>, 30 May 30, 2021.
- Gal, Ana G.: "Performative Femininity and Female Invalidism in John Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and S.T. Coleridge's Christabel," **Gender in the Vampire Narrative**, Eds. Amanda Hobson and U. Melissa Anyiwo, Rotterdam, Boston, Taipei, 2016, pp. 161-171.
- Gilbert, Sandra, M., Susan Gubar: **The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination**, New Haven, Yale UP, 1979.
- Girouard, Mark: **The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman**, New Haven, Yale UP, 1981.
- Gitter, Elisabeth G.: "The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination," **PMLA**, Vol. 99, No. 5, 1984, pp. 936-954.
- Goellnicht, Donald C.: **The Poet-Physician: Keats and Medical Science**, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984.
- Golden, Catherine: "Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Two-Sided Art", **Victorian poetry**, Vol. 26, No. 4, 1988, pp. 395-402.
- Gombrich, E. H.: **Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation**, London, Phaidan, 1960.
- Greenblatt, Stephen: **Notes on Shakespeare, William: The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark**, Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, New York, London, W.W. Norton, 2008.
- Greer, Germaine: **The Female Eunuch**, London, MacGibbon & Kee, 1970.
- Gribble, Jennifer: **The Lady of Shalott in the Victorian Novel**, London and Basingstoke, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983.

- Gunter, O.G.: "Life and Death Symbols in Tennyson's 'Mariana,'" **South Atlantic Bulletin**, Vol. 36, No. 3, 1971, pp. 64-67.
- Hagberg, Garry: "Aristotle's 'Mimesis' and Abstract Art," **Philosophy**, Vol. 59, No. 229, 1984, pp. 365-371.
- Hagelman, C. W.: "Keats and the medical Profession," Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The University of Texas, 1956.
- Harris, Daniel A: "D. G. Rossetti's 'Jenny': Sex, Money, and the Interior Monologue," **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 22, No. 2, The Dramatic "I" Poem, 1984, West Virginia University Press, pp. 197- 215.
- Hartshorne, H. C.: **English Medieval Embroidery**, London, J. H. Parker, 1848.
- Harvey, John: **Men in Black**, Chicago, IL, The University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Hazlitt, William: "Effeminacy and Character," **Table Talk, or Essays on Men and Manners, (1821-22,1824)**, Produced by Christopher Hapka, and David Widger, Project Gutenberg, 2017, (Online) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3020/3020-h/3020-h.htm>, 18 May 2021.
- Hedgecock, Jennifer: **The Femme Fatale in Victorian Literature: The Danger and the Sexual Threat**, New York, Amherst, Cambria Press, 2008.
- Heller, Reinhold: **The Earthly Chimera and the Femme Fatale: Fear of Woman in Nineteenth Century Art**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Henderson, Marina: **Dante Gabriel Rossetti**, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1973.
- Heninger, S. K. Jr.: "Sidney's Speaking Pictures and the Theatre," **Style**, Vol. 23, No. 03, 1989, pp. 395-404.
- Hess, Thomas B., Linda Nochlin: **Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art, 1730–1970**, New York, Newsweek, 1972.
- Hill, James L.: "Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott': The Ambiguity of Commitment," **The Centennial Review**, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1968, pp. 415-429.
- Hilton, Timothy: **The Pre-Raphaelites**, London, Thames and Hudson, 1970.

- Hobson, Anthony: **The Art and Life of J. W. Waterhouse, RA 1849-1917**, New York, Rizzoli, 1980.
- Holdys, Malgorzata: "She "felt no fear at all"?: The Virgin Mary and the feminist voice in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "The girlhood of Mary Virgin" and "Ecce Ancilla Domini," **Acta philologica**, 3434917, No. 45, 2014, pp. 36- 42.
- Hollander, John: "Tennyson's Melody," **The Georgia Review**, Vol. 29, No. 3, 1975, pp. 676-703.
- Holman-Hunt, Diana: **My Grandfather, His Wives and Loves**, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1969.
- hooks, bell: **Feminist Theory: From margin to Center**, Boston, South End Press, 1984.
- Hunt, W. Holman: **Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**, New York, London, The Macmillan Company, Macmillan & Co., 1905.
- Hunt, Dixon Hunt: "A Moment's Monument: Reflections on Pre-Raphaelite Vision in Poetry and Painting," **Pre-Raphaelitism: A Collection of Critical Essays**, Ed. James Sambrook, Chicago, London, University of Chicago Press, 1974. pp. 243-264.
- Igra, Caroline: "William Holman Hunt's Portrait of Fanny: Inspiration for the Artist in the Late 1860s", **Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte**, Vol. 65 No. 2, 2002, p. 232-241, (Online)
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4150685>, 11 June 2019.
- Inglis, Alison, O'Brien Cecilia: "'The Breaking of the Web': William Holman Hunt's two early versions of The Lady of Shalott," **Art Bulletin of Victoria** 32, No. 18 June 2014.
- Irigaray, L.: **Speculum of the Other Woman**, Trans. by Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Jackson-Houlston, C. M.: "The burial-place of the fashions: The representation of the dress of the poor in illustrated serial prose by Dickens and Hardy," **Textile History**, Vol. 33 No. 1, 2002, pp. 98-111.

- Jakse, Vanessa: “The Black Blood of the Tennysons: Rhetoric of Melancholy and the Imagination in Tennyson’s Poetry,” thesis, Cleveland State University, 2014, (Online)
<https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/etdarchive/839>, 22 November 2021.
- _____: **Legends of the Madonna**, London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1879.
- Jung, Carl: **Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of the Prelude to A Case of Schizophrenia**, USA, Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Kaplan, Ann: **“Is the gaze male?”**, **Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera**, London, Methuen, 1983.
- Keats, John: **Selected Poems and Letters of Keats**, 1818, Ed. Robert Gittings, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Keech, J.: “The Survival of the Gothic Response,” **Studies in the Novel**, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1974, pp. 130-144, (Online)
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/29531653>, 24 September 2021.
- Kenneth Clarke: **Looking at Pictures**, Holt Rinehart and Winston, New York 1960.
- Kılıç, Yıldız: “To See Clearly is Poetry”: The Visual Narratives of J. M. W. Turner, **Dergi park**, Vol. 0, No. 23, 2014, p. 23.68, (Online)
<http://dergipark.org.tr/iusty/issue/16996/177594>, 10 June 2019.
- _____: **My World My Work My Woman Al My Own: Reading Dante Gabriel Rossetti in His Visual and Textual Narratives**, UK, Bloomington, AuthorHouse, 2014.
- _____: “The Subliminal Code of Fashion Cracked: The Self-Possessed Pre-Raphaelite ‘Stunner,’” **Fashion**, Ed. B. Brownie, L. Petican, J. Reponen, Oxford, Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2012, pp.15-24.
- Kiefer, Carol S., et. Al.: **The Myth and Madness of Ophelia**, Amherst, MA, Mead Art Museum Press, 2001.

- Kirkby, Mandy, Vanessa Diffenbaugh: **A Victorian Flower Dictionary: The Language of Flowers Companion**, New York, Random House Inc., 2011.
- Kishler, Thomas C.: "Aristotle and Sidney on Imitation," **The Classical Journal**, Vol. 59, No. 02, 1963, pp. 63-64.
- Knoepfmacher U.C, G. B. Tennyson: **Nature and Victorian Imagination**, USA, University of California Press, 1977.
- Kramer, Lawrence: **After the Love death: Sexual Violence and the Making of Culture**, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997.
- Kremer, Aleksandra: "Between Centrality and Marginality: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Images of the Virgin Mary," **The Central and the Peripheral: Studies in Literature and Culture**, Eds. Paweł Schreiber, Joanna Malicka, Jakub Lipski, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, pp. 71-88, (Online)
<https://books.google.com.tr/books? Id, 18 April 2020>.
- Krieger, Murray: "A Waking Dream: The Symbolic Alternative to Allegory," **Allegory, Myth and Symbol**, Ed. Morton B. Bloomfield, Cambridge, MA, London, Harvard University Press, 1981, pp. 1-22.
- Kromm, Jane: "The Feminization of Madness in Visual Representation," **Feminist Studies**, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1994, pp. 507-535.
- Lacan, Jacques: **The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Desire and Its Interpretation**, Book VI, 1958-59, (Online)
<http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/THE-SEMINAR-OF-JACQUES-LACAN-VI.pdf>, 05 January 2021.
- _____: "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet," **A Practical Reader in Contemporary Literary Theory**, Eds. Peter Brooker and Peter Widdowson, London, Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1996, pp. 16-29.
- Landow, George P.: "Aesthetic Pre-Raphaelitism", Brown University, **The Victorian Web**, 2004, (Online)
<https://victorianweb.org/painting/prb/3.html>, 09 April 2019.

- _____: "Pre-Raphaelitism in Poetry", Brown University, The Victorian Web, 2004, (Online)
<https://victorianweb.org/painting/prb/4.html>, 29 June 2022.
- Laurent, Béatrice: "Hidden Iconography in Found by Dante Gabriel Rossetti," **The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies**, No. 15, 2006, pp. 15-26.
- Lawlor, Clark: **Consumption and Literature: The Making of the Romantic Disease**, New York and Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Layard, George Somes: **Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators**, Boston, Copeland and Day, 1894.
- Lee, Seungyeon: "Enchanted or endangered by Sleep? Modern interpretation of the heroine's consciousness in Tales of Sleeping Beauty (Transformations by Anne Sexton and Beginning with O by Olga Broumas)," **Interdisciplinary Humanities**, No. 33, 2016, pp. 11-20.
- Leng, Andrew: "Millais's 'Mariana': Literary Painting, the Pre-Raphaelite Gothic, and the Iconology of the Marian Artist," **Journal of Pre-Raphaelite**, Vol. 1, No. 1, Part 2, 1988, pp. 63-72.
- Lenk, Elizabeth: "The Self-Reflecting Woman," **Feminist Aesthetics**, Ed. Gisela Ecker, London, Women's Press, 1985, pp. 51-58.
- Leon, Derrick: **Ruskin: The Great Victorian**, New York, Routledge, 2015.
- Leonard, S. M. Mead: "The Bower of the Pre-Raphaelites: Plant Life and the Search for Meaning in the Art of Millais, Rossetti, and Morris", Theses and Dissertation, Middletown, Connecticut, 2009, (Online)
https://wescholar.wesleyan.edu/etd_hon_theses/346,17
March 2019.
- Lessing, Gotthold E.: **Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry**, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins UP, 1984.
- Lever, J. W.: "Three Notes on Shakespeare's Plants," **The Review of English Studies**, Vol. 3, No. 10, 1952, pp. 117-129.

- Lionel, Stevenson: **The Pre-Raphaelite Poets**, USA, The University of North Caroline Press, 1972.
- Lurie, Alison: **The Language of Clothes**, New York, NY, Random House, 1981.
- Łuczyńska-Hołdys, Małgorzata: **Soft-Shed Kisses: Re-visioning the Femme Fatale in English Poetry of the 19th Century**, New Castle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.
- Maccaffrey, Isabel G.: **Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination**, Princeton, NJ, Princeton UP, 1976.
- Macherey, Pierre: **A Theory of Literary Production**, trans. by Geoffrey Wall, London: Routledge, 1978.
- Mancoff, Debra N.: **The Pre-Raphaelite Language of Flowers**, Munich, London, New York, 2012.
- Marsh, Jan: **The Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood**, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1985.
- _____: **The Pre-Raphaelites: Their Lives in Letters and Diaries**, London, Collin & Brown, 1996.
- _____: **Pre-Raphaelite Women: Images of Femininity**, London, Orion Publishing Co., 1987.
- _____: "Of Sesame and Lilies: Education in a Humane Society," **Sesame and Lilies John Ruskin**, Ed. Deborah Epstein Nord, USA, Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 142-164.
- Marshik, Celia: "The Case of 'Jenny': Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Censorship Dialectic," **Victorian Literature and Culture**, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2005, pp. 557–584.
- Martin, M. David: "Romantic Perspectivism in Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott,'" **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1973, pp. 255-256.

- McGann, Jerome: **Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Collected Poetry and Prose**, New York, Yale University Press, 2003.
- _____: “DG Rossetti and the Art of Inner Standing-Point,” **Outsiders Looking in: The Rossettis Then and Now**, Eds. David Clifford, Laurence Roussillon, London, Anthem Press, 2004, pp. 171-188.
- Merkur, D.: **The Mystery of Manna: The Psychedelic Sacrament of the Bible**, Rochester, Vermont, Park Street Press, 2000.
- Merrill, Katharine: “Wordsworth’s Realism,” **Modern Language Notes**, Vol. 15, No. 4, 1900, pp. 102-108.
- Michie, Helena: **The Flesh Made Word: Female Figures and Women’s Bodies**, New York, Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Mill, S. John: (1981) **The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume I - Autobiography and Literary Essays [1824]**, Eds. John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2010, (Online) <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/242>, 29 August 2019.
- Millais, John Guille: **The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais**, London, Methuen, 1899, (Online) <https://archive.org/details/lifelettersofsir01milliala/page/n11/mode/2up>, 03 April 2021.
- Miller, Andre H., James Eli Adams: **Sexualities in Victorian Britain**, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1996.
- Miller, Dean: **Man, Myth, and Magic: Animals and Animal Symbols in World Culture**, New York, Cavendish Square Publishing, 2014.
- Millet, Kate: **Sexual Politics**, New York, Colombia University Press, 1970.

- Mitchell, Juliet: **Psychoanalysis and Feminism**, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974-1975.
- Mitchell, Sally: **The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class, and Women's Reading, 1835-1880**, Ohio, Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981.
- Morris, William, Norman Kelvin: **The Collected Letters of William Morris, Volume II, Part B, 1885-1888**, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Moyle, Franny: "The Pre-Raphaelites: Sanctity, sex and death in high definition": The bold strokes of the Pre-Raphaelites explored repressed desires long before Surrealism, **The telegraph**, 2012, (Online) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/9544662/The-Pre-Raphaelites-Sanctity-sex-and-death-in-high-definition.html>, 25 February 2021.
- Mulvey, Laura: "Feminism, Film and the 'Avant-garde'", **Women Writing and Writing about Women**, Ed. Mary Jacobus, New York, Routledge, 2012, pp. 177-196
- Nead, Lynda: **Myths of Sexuality**, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- Neely, Carol Thomas: "'Documents in Madness': Reading Madness and Gender in Shakespeare's Tragedies and Early Modern Culture," **Shakespeare Quarterly**, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1991, pp. 315-338.
- _____: "Reading Women and Madness in Medical, Dramatic, and Visual Texts", **Attending to Women in Early Modern England**, Ed. Betty S. Travitsky and Adele F. Seeff, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1994, pp. 113-115.
- Nelson, Elizabeth: "Tennyson and the Ladies of Shalott," **Ladies of Shalott: A Victorian Masterpiece and its Contexts**, Providence, Rhode Island, An Exhibition By the Department of Art, Brown University, 1985, pp. 4-16.

- Neuringer, Miriam: "The Burden of Meaning: Hunt's *Lady of Shalott*," **Ladies of Shalott: A Victorian Masterpiece and Its Contexts**, Providence, Rhode Island, An Exhibition By the Department of Art, Brown University, 1985, pp. 61-70.
- Nichols, Frances Drennen: "The Language of the Landscape: Landscape in the Work of John Everett Millais and its Influence on Later Pre-Raphaelite Artists and Victorian Social Realism," Dissertation, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, 2013, (Online)
<https://eclass.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/MEDIA262/landscapes.pdf>
 19 March 2020.
- Nochlin, Linda, Thomas B. Hess: **Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art 1730-1979**, Art News Annual, New York, 1972.
- Nochlin, Linda: "Lost and Found: Once More the Fallen Woman," **The Art Bulletin**, Vol. 60, No. 1, 1978, pp. 139-153.
- _____: **Women, Art, And Power and Other Essays**, New York, Routledge, 2018.
- Olivas, Tynelle Ann: "Who is Ophelia? An examination of the Objectification and Subjectivity of Shakespeare's Ophelia," UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones, 2015.
- O'Neill, Morna: "Arts and Crafts Painting: The Political Agency of Things," **British Art Studies**, No. 1, 2015, (Online)
<https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-01/moneill>,
 04 Sept 2020.
- Orlando, J. Emily: "That I May Not Faint, or Die, or Swoon: Reviving Pre-Raphaelite Women," **Women's Studies**, Vol. 38, No. 6, 2009, pp. 611-646, (Online)
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00497870903021505>, 27 June 2020.

- Osińska, Dorota: "Then Thickest Dark Did Trance the Sky": A Representation of Psychological Decay in Alfred, Lord Tennyson's 'Mariana,'" **New Horizons in English Studies**, No. 1, 2019, pp. 74-89.
- Ovid, 43 B. C-17 A. D. or 18 A. D.: **Ovid Metamorphoses**, Ed. R. J. Tarrant, London, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Panakal, Anthony Elsie: "The Major Themes of Tennyson", Loyola University Chicago, Dissertations, Paper 708, 1963, (Online) https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/708, 10 June 2019.
- Parker, Rozsika: **The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and Making of the Feminine**, London, Woman's Press, 1984.
- Pater, Walter: "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," **Walter Pater: Three Major Texts (The Renaissance, Appreciations, and Imaginary Portraits)**, Ed. with intro. William E. Buckler, New York, New York University Press, 1986, pp. 532-533.
- Pearce, Lynne: **Woman/Image/Text: Readings in Pre-Raphaelite Art and Literature**, Toronto and Buffalo University of Toronto Press, 1991.
- Peckham, Morse: **Romanticism: The Culture of the Nineteenth Century**, New York, G. Braziller, 1965.
- Peltason, Timothy: "The Embowered Self: 'Mariana' and 'Recollections of the Arabian Nights,'" **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 21, No. 4 1983, pp. 335-350.
- Peterson, Gary R.: **The Intellectual Handyman on Art: A Compilation of Essays**, IUniverse, Inc, Bloomington, 2011.
- Peterson, Kaara: "Framing Ophelia: Representation and the Pictorial Tradition," **Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal**, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1998, pp. 1-24.
- Peterson, Linda H.: "Tennyson and the Ladies," **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 47, No. 1, 2009, pp. 25-43.

- Plain, Gill, Susan Sellers: **A History of Feminist Literary Criticism**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Plasa, Carl: "Cracked from Side to Side": Sexual Politics in "The Lady of Shalott," **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 30, No. 3/4, 1992, pp. 247-26.
- Pollock, Griselda: **Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art**, London, New York, Routledge, 1988.
- Poole, Adrian: **Lamb, Hazlitt, Keats: Great Shakespeareans, Volume IV**, London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2010.
- Praz, Mario: **The Romantic Agony**, London and New York, Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Prettejohn, Elizabeth: **The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites**, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Rabinow, P.: **The Foucault Reader**, New York, Pantheon Books, 1984.
- Ready, Kathryn: "Reading Mary as Reader: The Marian Art of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti", *Victorian Poetry*, 46:2, 2008, pp. 151–174, (Online) www.jstor.org/stable/40347416, 21 Mar. 2020.
- Reynolds, Margaret: **The Fallen Woman: Fallen Women and the Great Social Evil in Victorian Literature and Culture**, London, The Foundling Museum, 2015-16.
- Reynolds, Sir Joshua: **Discourses Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy**, London, Richard Taylor, 1831.
- Rhodes, Kimberly: **Ophelia and Victorian Visual Culture: Representing Body Politics in the Nineteenth Century**, New York, Routledge, 2017.
- _____: "Degenerate Detail: John Everett Millais and Ophelia's 'Muddy Death,'" **John Everett Millais: Beyond the Pre-**

- Raphaelite Brotherhood**, Ed. Debra N. Mancoff, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001, pp. 40-65.
- Richardson, James: **Vanishing Lives: Style and Self in Tennyson, D. G. Rossetti, Swinburne, and Yeats**, Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1988.
- Riede, G. David: **Dante Gabriel Rossetti Revisited**, New York, Twayne, 1992.
- _____: **Allegories of One's Own Mind: Melancholy in Victorian Poetry**, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2005.
- Rodgers, Lise: "The Book and the Flower: Rationality and Sensuality in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'Jenny,'" **The Journal of Narrative Technique**, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1980, pp. 156-169.
- Roe, Dinah: "The Pre-Raphaelites", *Discovering Literature: Romantics & Victorians*, (Online) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-pre-raphaelites>, 28 March 2019.
- Rossetti, William Michael: **Rossetti Papers 1862-1870**, London, 1903, (Online) <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/2-1867.s205.raw.html>, 20 June, 2021.
- _____: **Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer**, Cassell, London, 1889.
- _____: **Dante Gabriel Rossetti, His Family Letters with a Memoir**, London, 1895.
- Rousseau, J-J: (1762) **The Social Contract: And, the First and Second Discourses**, Ed. Susan Dunn, New Haven, London, Yale University Press, 2002.
- "Royal Academy Exhibition (Third Notice)": **The Illustrated London News 24 May 1851**, pp. 462-464.

- Rudwin, Maximilian: "The Legend of Lilith," **The Open Court**, Vol. 44, No. 9:892, 1930, pp. 513-521.
- Rupp, J. Leila, Carly Thomsen: "What is Sexuality? Social Constructionist and Poststructuralist Perspectives", **The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory**, Ed. Lisa Jane Disch, M. E. Hawkesworth, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Ruskin, John, et. Al.: **The Nature of Gothic: A Chapter of the Stones of Venice**, Hammersmith, printed by William Morris at the Kelmscott Press and published by George Allen, London, 1892.
- Ruskin, John: (1865) **Of Queen's Gardens**, London, Ballantyne Press, University of California Libraries, 1902.
- _____: "Notes on Millais," **The Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin**, Eds. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols., London, George Allen, 1903–12, pp. xiv-496.
- _____: **On The Old Road, 1834-1885: A Collection of Miscellaneous Essays and Articles on Art and Literature**, Volumes I-II, Frankfurt am Main, 2018.
- _____: 1869) *The Queen of the Air: Being a Study of the Greek Myths of Cloud and Storm*, *The Works of John Ruskin*, The Project Gutenberg eBook, 2004, (Online) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/12641/12641-h/12641-h.htm>, 21 May 2021.
- _____: (1865) **Modern Painters: Volume II**, London, Spottiswoode and Co. (Online) https://books.google.li/books?id=3V4VAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=de&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&ad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false, May 18, 2021.
- Ryan, Robert M: "Keats and the Truth of Imagination," **The Wordsworth Circle**, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1973, pp. 259–266.

- Schneider, Christina: "Monstrosity in the English Gothic Novel," **Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg**, Vol. 3, No.1, 2015, pp. 2-11.
- Schulkins, R.: **Keats, Modesty and Masturbation**, London, Routledge, 2016.
- Scott, Grant F.: "Language Strange: A Visual History of Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci,'" **Studies in Romanticism**, Vol. 38, No. 4, 1999, pp. 503–35.
- Seaton, Beverly: "Considering the Lilies: Ruskin's 'Proserpina' and Other Victorian Flower Books," **Victorian Studies**, Vol. 28 No. 2, 1985, pp. 255-82.
- Seys, Madeleine C: **Fashion and Narrative in Victorian Popular Literature: Double Threads**, New York, Routledge, 2017.
- Shaw, Marion: **Alfred Lord Tennyson**, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1988.
- Shakespeare, William: (1603) **The Tragedy of Hamlet, The Prince of Denmark**, Ed. Dr. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Simon & Schuster, 2012.
- Showalter, Elaine: **The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980**, New York, Pantheon Books, 1985.
- _____: "Representing Ophelia: women, madness, and the responsibilities of feminist criticism," **Shakespeare and the Question of Theory**, Eds. Geoffrey H. Hartman, Patricia Parker, New York and London, Methuen, 1985, pp. 77-94.
- Shefer, Elaine: **Birds, Cages and Women in Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite Art**, New York, Peter Lang, 1990.

- Sidney, Sir Philip: (1595) **An Apology for Poetry, or, The Defence of Poesy**, Ed. R. W. Maslen, Manchester, New York, Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Silver, Carole G.: “Waterhouse Revisited,” **Victorian Literature and Culture**, Vol. 39, No.1, 2011, pp. 263-269.
- Slinn, E. Warwick: **Victorian Poetry as Cultural Critique: The Politics of Performative Language**, Charlottesville, London, University of Virginia Press, 2003.
- Smiles, Sam: (2000) **British Artists: J.M.W. Turner**, Tate Publishing, London, 2004.
- Smith, G.: “The Subway Grate Scene in The Seven Year Itch: ‘The Staging of an Appearance-As-Disappearance,’” **Cinémas**, Vol. 14, No. 2-3, 2004, pp. 213–244.
- Søndergaard, Peter Brix: “‘Something strangely perverse’: Nature and Gender in J. E. Millais’s Ophelia,” **Journal for the Study of Romanticisms**, Vol. 07, No. 1, 2018, pp. 115-126. (Online)
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329613687>, 11 June 2019.
- Spencer-Longhurst, Paul: **The Blue Bower: Rossetti in the 1860s**, London, Scala Publishers Ltd, 2000.
- Sprengnether, Madelon: “Feminist Criticism and Psychoanalysis,” **A History of Feminist Literary Criticism**, Eds. Gill Plain and Susan Sellers, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 235-262.
- Standen, Edith Appleton, et. Al.: “Letters,” **The Art Bulletin**, Vol. 67, No. 2, 1985, pp. 317-24.
- Stein, Richard L.: **The Ritual of Interpretation**, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1975.

- Stevenson, Lionel: **The Pre-Raphaelite Poets**, USA, The University of North Carolina Press, 1972.
- Stillinger, Jack: “Keats and Romance,” **Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900**, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1968, pp. 593–605.
- Surtees, Virginia: **The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)**, A Catalogue Raisonne, 2 vols., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Sussman, Herbert: “The Pre-Raphaelites and the ‘Mood of the Cloister,’” **Browning Institute Studies**, Vol. 8, 1980, pg. 45-55, (Online)
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25057684/>, 04 Sept 2020.
- Swafford, James: “‘The Fullness of the Time’: The Early Marian Poems of D. G. Rossetti,” **Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies**, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1982, pp. 78–91.
- Taylor, Maya: “Domestic Interiors as Extensions of the Feminine Soul,” Brown University, **The Victorian Web**, 2006, (Online)
<http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/prb/taylor2.html>, 26 June 2020.
- Teker, G. Sayın: “Empowered by Madness: Ophelia in the Films of Kozintev, Zeffirelli, and Branagh,” **Literature Film Quarterly**, Vol. 34, No. 2, 2006, pp. 113-119.
- Tennyson, Alfred L.: **The Works of Tennyson: In Five Volumes, Vol III: The Princes and Other Poems**, London, Strahan & Co. Publishers, 1872, (Online)
<https://books.google.com.tr/books?id>, 11 August 2020.
- Tennyson, Hallam
Tennyson: **Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son**, London, The Macmillan Co., 1897.
- “The Royal Academy”: **The Athenæum 1 Jun. 1850**, pp. 590-591.

- Tibbetts, John C.: **The Gothic Imagination, Conversations on Fantasy, Horror, and Science Fiction in the Media**, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2011.
- Treuerherz, Julian: **Pre-Raphaelite Paintings from the Manchester City Art Gallery**, London, Lund Humphries, 1980.
- Twitchell, James: "La Belle Dame as Vampire," **CEA Critic, Special Issue: Women in Literature and Criticism**, Vol. 37, No. 4, 1975, pp. 31-33.
- Udall, Sharyn R.: "Between Dream and Shadow: William Holman Hunt's 'Lady of Shalott,'" **Woman's Art Journal**, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1990, p. 34-38, (Online) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1358385>, 11 June 2019.
- Ussher, Jane M.: **Fantasies of Femininity: Reframing the Boundaries of Sex**, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1997.
- Vogel, L.: "Fine Arts and Feminism: The Awakening Consciousness," **Feminist Studies**, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1974, pp. 3-37.
- Wagner, Linda
Welshimer: "Ophelia: Shakespeare's Pathetic Plot Device," **Shakespeare Quarterly**, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1963, pp. 94-97.
- Wagstaff, Samuel J: "Some notes on Holman Hunt and the Lady of Shalott," **Wadsworth Atheneum Bulletin**, Vol. 1, No. 21, 1962, pp. 1-21.
- Waldman, Suzanne M.: **The Demon and the Damozel: Dynamics of Desire in the Works of Christina Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti**, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2008.
- Waller, Ross D.: "Letters Addressed to Mrs. Gaskell by Celebrated Contemporaries," **Bulletin of the John Rylands Library**, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1935, pp. 102-169, (Online) <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Manchester~25~25~961~196857>, 29 June 2020.

- Ward, Bobby J. A: **Contemplation Upon Flowers: Garden Plants in Myth & Literature**, Portland, Oregon, Timber Press, 1999.
- Warner, Malcolm: **The Pre-Raphaelites**, Ed. Leslie Parris, London, The Tate Gallery in association with Allen Lane and Penguin, 1984.
- Williams, Anne: **Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic**, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Wise, T. J.: **Letters of Robert Browning**, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1933.
- Weedon, Chris: **Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory**, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1987.
- Wise, Sarah: **Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England**, London, The Bodley Head, 2012.
- Wolf, Naomi: **The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used against Women**, New York, W. Morrow, 1991.
- Wood, Lorraine: "Filling in the Blanks: Music and Performance in Dante Gabriel Rossetti," **Victorian Poetry**, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 2013, pp. 533-560.
- Zakreski, Patricia: **Representing Female Artistic Labour, 1848-1890: Refining Work for the Middle-class Woman**, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006, (Online) https://books.google.com.tr/books/about/Representing_Female_Artistic_Labour_1848.html?id=xT0FAQAIAAJ&redir_esc=y, 11 April 2020.
- Zasempa, Marek: "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: Painting versus Poetry," thesis, University of Silesia, Katowice, 2008, (Online) https://rebus.us.edu.pl/bitstream/20.500.12128/5148/1/Zasempa_The_Pre_Raphaelite_Brotherhood.pdf, 9 March 2019.

APPENDICES



Plate 1- Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-88): *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848-9.

Oil on canvas, 83,2 × 65,4 cm, frame: 1080 × 905 × 75 m



Plate 2- Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-88): *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (*Annunciation*), 1850.

Oil on canvas, 73 cm × 41.9 cm (29 in × 16.5 in)



Plate 3 - John Everett Millais (1829-96): *Mariana*, 1851.

Oil on Panel, 59.7 x 49.5 cm



Plate 4 - William Holman Hunt (1827- 1910): *The Lady of Shalott*, 1886-1905.

Oil on Canvas, 44.4 x 34.1 cm

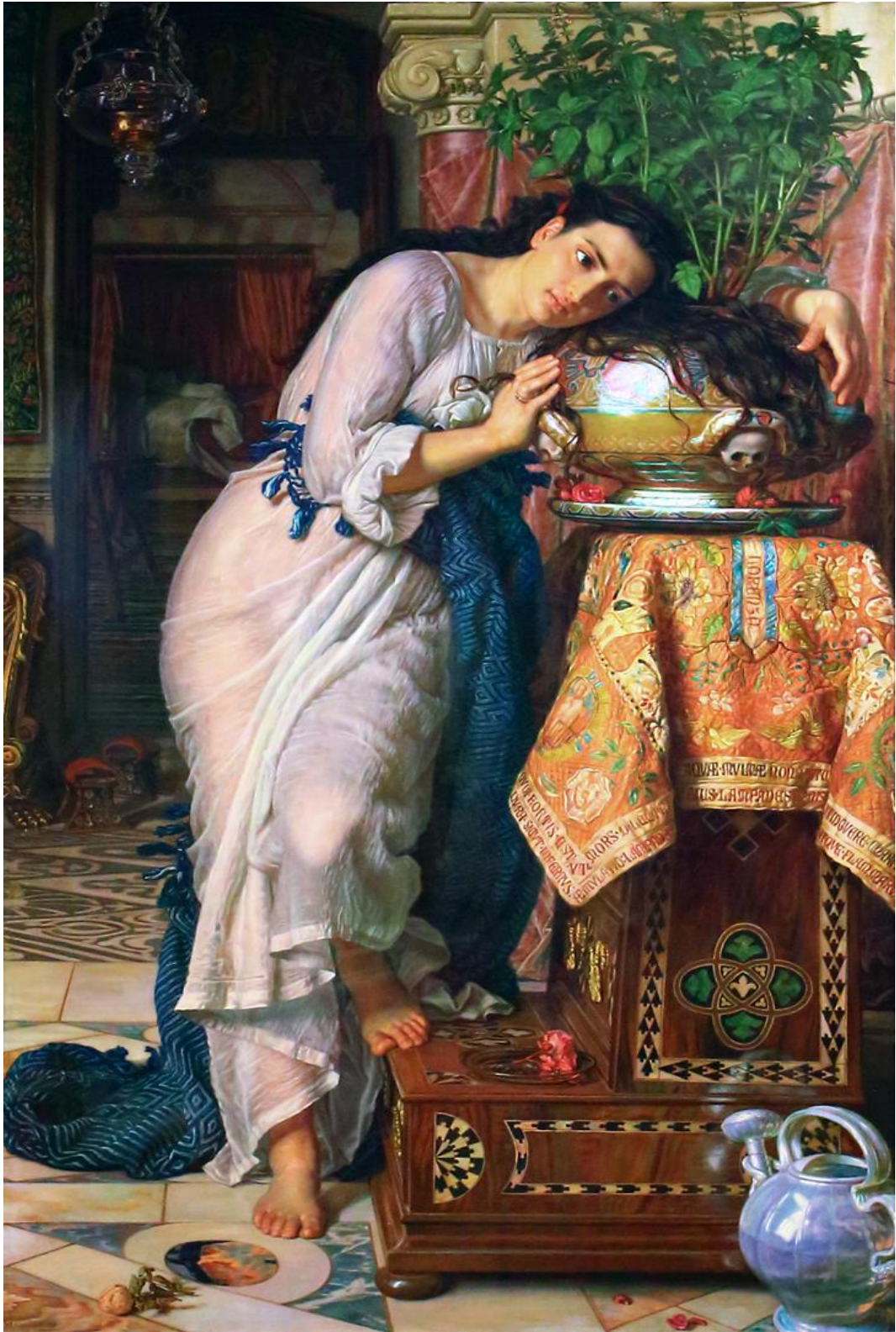


Plate 5 - William Holman Hunt (1827- 1910): *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*, 1868.

Oil on Canvas, 187 × 116 cm (74 in × 46 in)



Plate 6 – John Everett Millais (1829- 96): *Ophelia*, 1851-52.

Oil on Canvas, 76.2 cm × 111.8 cm (30.0 in × 44.0 in)



Plate 7 – Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828- 82): *Bocca Baciata*, 1859.

Oil on Panel, 32.1 x 27 cm (12 5/8 x 10 5/8 in.)



Plate 8 – Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828- 82): *Fazio's Mistress (Aurelia)*, 1863; 1873.

Oil paint on mahogany, 43.2 cm (17 in); 36.8 cm (14.4 in)



Plate 9 – Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828- 82): *The Blue Bower*, 1865.

Oil on Canvas, 84 cm (33 in); 70.9 cm (27.9 in)



Plate 10 – Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828- 82): *Found*, 1854–55; 1859–81.

Oil on Canvas, 91.4 cm × 80 cm (36.0 in × 31 in)



Plate 11 – John William Waterhouse (1849-1917): *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, 1893.

Oil on Canvas, 112 x 81 cms | 44 x 31 3/4 ins



Plate 12 – Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828- 82): *Lady Lilith*, 1866–68, 1872–73.

Oil on Canvas, 96.5 cm × 85.1 cm (38.0 in × 33.5 in)

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Ayvalık Süper Lisesi'nden 2003 yılında mezun olduktan sonra 2003-2008 yılları arasında Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi, Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Bölümü, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı'nda lisans öğrenimi gördü. 2009-2012 yılları arasında İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde Yüksek Lisans eğitimi aldı. 2016 yılında İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Karşılaştırmalı Edebiyat Anabilim Dalı, Karşılaştırmalı Edebiyat Bilim Dalı'nda başladığı doktora çalışmalarına 2022 yılında tamamladı. 2008-2022 yılları arasında İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu, İngilizce Hazırlık Okulunda Öğretim Görevlisi olarak çalıştı. 2022 yılının ikinci yarısından itibaren aynı üniversitenin İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümünde Doktor Öğretim Üyesi olarak görev yapmakta ve akademik çalışmalarını sürdürmektedir.