

THE LOOKING-GLASS WORLD

Mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite Painting, 1850-1915

TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines the role of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite painting as a significant motif that ultimately contributes to the on-going discussion surrounding the problematic PRB label. With varying stylistic objectives that often appear contradictory, as well as the disbandment of the original Brotherhood a few short years after it formed, defining 'Pre-Raphaelite' as a style remains an intriguing puzzle. In spite of recurring frequently in the works of the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly in those by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt, the mirror has not been thoroughly investigated before. Instead, the use of the mirror is typically mentioned briefly within the larger structure of analysis and most often referred to as a quotation of Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) or as a symbol of vanity without giving further thought to the connotations of the mirror as a distinguishing mark of the movement.

I argue for an analysis of the mirror both within the context of iconographic exchange between the original leaders and their later associates and followers, and also that of nineteenth-century glass production. The Pre-Raphaelite use of the mirror establishes a complex iconography that effectively remythologises an industrial object, conflates contradictory elements of past and present, spiritual and physical, and contributes to a specific artistic dialogue between the disparate strands of the movement that anchors the problematic PRB label within a context of iconographic exchange. Considering the mirror as a stand-alone entity in their works, it not only gives a modern, contemporary relevancy to their images regardless of the subject matter depicted, it also functions as a metaphor for their specific approach to realism mediated through visions in glass.

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72. J.E. Millais, *Three ladies having breakfast, one of them veiled like a bride* (1862). Wood engraving by Dalziel. Illustration for Dinah Mulock's 'Mistress and Maid. A Household Story,' *Good Words* (September, 1862), 609. Print in The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
73. J.E. Millais, *The Fair Jacobite* (1862). Wood engraving by Joseph Swain. Illustration for *Once a Week* (February 22, 1862), 239. Print in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
74. Frederick Daniel Hardy, *The Young Photographers* (1862). Oil on panel, 30.1 x 45.6 cm. Tunbridge Wells Museum, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
75. Alfred Elmore, *The Invention of the Combing Machine* (1862). Oil on canvas, 100.2 x 141 cm. Cartwright Hall, Bradford
76. George Adolphus Storey, *A Duet* (1862). Oil on canvas, 106 x 89 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
77. Clementina, Lady Hawarden, *Clementina Maud, 5 Princes Gardens* (1862-1863). Sepia photograph mounted on green card, 23.1 x 20.3 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
78. Clementina, Lady Hawarden, *Clementina Maud, 5 Princes Gardens* (1862-1863). Sepia photograph mounted on green card, 21.6 x 23.2 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
79. Simeon Solomon, *Dante's First Meeting with Beatrice* (1859-1863). Ink, watercolour and gouache on paper, 19. x 22.9 cm. Tate Britain, London
80. D.G. Rossetti, *Fazio's Mistress* (1863). Oil on panel, 43.2 x 36.8 cm. Tate Britain, London
81. D.G. Rossetti and W. & D. Downey, *Photograph of Fanny Cornforth* (1863). Collodion print, 15.3 x 13.3 cm. Delaware Art Museum, Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Archives, Delaware

82. D.G. Rossetti, *Sketch of Venus Surrounded by Mirrors Reflecting her in Different Views* (1863-1866). Pen and ink on handmade paper, 9.7 x 18 cm. See William E. Fredeman, *A Rossetti Cabinet*, 4
83. P.H. Calderon, *The Lady's Chamber, Tower of London* (1863). *The Illustrated London News*, 42 (April 25, 1863), 456
84. John Calcott Horsley, *St. Valentine's Day* (1863). Oil on canvas, 59.5 x 71.5 cm. Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton
85. Charles Hunt, *My 'Macbeth'* (1863). Oil on canvas, 51 x 66 cm. The Geffrye Museum, London
86. Frederick Daniel Hardy, *Children Playing at Doctors* (1863). Oil on canvas, 44 x 61 cm. Victoria & Albert Collection, Museum of Childhood, London
87. John R. Spencer Stanhope, *Juliet and her Nurse* (1863). Oil on canvas, 109 x 127 cm. Private Collection
88. William Powell Frith, *The Rejected Poet, Alexander Pope and the Lady Mary Wortley* (1863). Oil on canvas, 91.5 x 71 cm. Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton
89. John Tenniel, *The Haunted Lady, or The Ghost in the Looking Glass* (1863). Illustration for *Punch*, 45 (July 4, 1863), 5
90. J.E. Millais, 'Why On Earth, On Sunday?' (1863). Wood engraving by Dalziel. Illustration for Anthony Trollope's 'The Small House at Allington,' *The Cornhill Magazine* (December, 1863), facing page 641. Print in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
91. James Tissot, *Young Lady in a Red Jacket* (1864). Oil on canvas, 124 x 100 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris
92. Frederick Sandys, *Portrait of Mrs Jane Lewis* (1864). Oil on panel, 64.77 x 55.88 cm. Private Collection
93. D.G. Rossetti, *Woman Combing her Hair* (1864). Watercolour on paper, 34.3 x 31.1 cm. Private Collection
94. D.G. Rossetti, *Morning Music* (1864). Watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 30.5 x 27.3 cm. The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
95. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Mother and Child* (1864). Watercolour on paper, 19.05 x 26 cm. Private Collection
96. Anon. 'The Breakfast Room' (1864). Illustration, 'Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields,' *Illustrated London News* (June 23, 1864), 617
97. Attributed to Henry Treffry Dunn, *Portrait of the Lady of Shalott* (c.1864). Watercolour on card, 25.4 x 17.8 cm. Private Collection
98. J.M. Whistler, *Symphony in White No.2: The Little White Girl* (1864-186). Oil on canvas, 76.5 x 51.1 cm. Tate Britain, London
99. Jerry Barrett, *Reflection* (1865). Oil on canvas (dimensions unknown), Private Collection

100. Frederick Sandys, *The Pearl* (c.1865). Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 cm. Private Collection
101. Anon. *Jane Morris Holding May Morris* (1865). Photograph, William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest
102. Alfred Elmore, *On the Brink* (1865). Oil on canvas on panel, 113.7 x 83.7 cm. The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
103. D.G. Rossetti, *Sketch for Risen at Dawn: Gretchen Discovering the Jewels* (c.1865). Brush drawing in purplish ink with traces of pencil. 31.75 x 29.84 cm. Private Collection
104. D.G. Rossetti, *Sketch for Washing Hands* (1865). Pencil on paper, 45.72 x 34.92 cm. The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
105. D.G. Rossetti, *Washing Hands* (1865). Watercolour with pencil heightened with bodycolour and gum arabic on paper, 44.5 x 37.5 cm. Private Collection
106. G.F. Watts, *Study for Britomart ad the Magic mirror* (1865). Oil on canvas, 56 x 38 cm. Watts Gallery, Guildford
107. Thomas George Webster, *The Gypsy* (1865). Oil on canvas, 55.8 x 73.2 cm, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, West Yorkshire
108. J.M. Whistler, *The Artist in his Studio* (1865-1866). Oil on paper mounted on panel, 62.9 x 46.4 cm. Art Institute of Chicago
109. Holman Hunt, *Il Dolce Far Niente* (1859, 1860, 1865-66). Oil on canvas, 99 x 82.5 cm. Forbes Collection, New York
110. Homan Hunt, *Morning Prayer* (1866). Oil on panel, 25.5 x 18.5 cm. Private Collection
111. Augustus Egg, *Young Lady at her Toilet* (1866). Oil on canvas, 59.7 x 49.5 cm. Private Collection
112. William Shakespeare Burton, *Sleeping Woman* (1866). Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 22.22 x 19.68 cm. Private Collection
113. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Borrowed Plumes* (1866). Watercolour and bodycolour, 18.5 x 13.5 cm. Private Collection
114. George Winchester, *A Quiet Read* (1866). Oil on canvas, 40.64 x 30.48. The Maas Gallery, London
115. George du Maurier, *A Legend of Camelot, Part 3* (1866). Illustration for *Punch* (March 17, 1866), 109
116. Holman Hunt, *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt* (1866-1867). Oil on canvas, 104 x 73 cm. Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio
117. D.G. Rossetti, *Morning Music* (1867). Watercolour, 41.27 x 34.29 cm. Birmingham Art Gallery and Museum, Birmingham
118. D.G. Rossetti, *Lady Lilith* (1867). Oil on canvas, 97.8 x 85.1 cm. Delaware Art Museum, Samuel and Mary Bancroft Memorial, Delaware

119. D.G. Rossetti and Henry Treffry Dunn, *Lady Lilith* (1867). Watercolour and gouache on paper, 51.3 x 44 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
120. D.G. Rossetti, *The Return of Tibullus to Delia* (1867-1868). Watercolour and bodycolour, 48.26 x 59 cm. Private Collection
121. James Tissot, *L'Armoire* (1867). Oil on canvas, 114. x 64.8 cm. Peter Nahum at the Leicester Galleries
122. Emma Sandys, *Preparing for the Ball* (1867). Oil on canvas, 61.6 x 43.8 cm. Private Collection
123. D.G. Rossetti, Sketch for *La Pia de' Tolomei* (1867). Pencil and pen, 21.90 x 19.05 cm. Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina
124. D.G. Rossetti, Sketch for *La Pia de' Tolomei* (1868). Pen and brown ink on handmade lined notepaper with undated watermark, 22 x 18.2 cm, sketch 5.5 cm square. See William E. Fredeman *A Rossetti Cabinet*, 3
125. D.G. Rossetti, *Risen at Dawn: Gretchen Discovering the Jewels* (1868). Coloured chalks, 94.29 x 69.21 cm. Tullie House, Carlisle Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle
126. Charles Hunt, *The Soldier's Departure* (1868). Oil on canvas, 40.6 x 60.9 cm. Private Collection
127. Edward Poynter, *Portrait of Louise A Baldwin* (1868). Watercolour on paper, 37 x 37 cm. Peter Nahum at the Leicester Galleries, London
128. Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *The Mirror* (1868). Oil on panel, 35.6 x 23.9 cm. Private Collection
129. J.E. Millais, 'May I Give Him Your Love?' (c.1868). Wood engraving by Joseph Swain. Illustration to Chapter 30 of "Phineas Finn," Saint Paul's Magazine, 'Mr Kennedy's Luck,' print in The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
130. Henry Tanworth Wells, *Portrait of Emma and Frederica Bankes of Soughton Hall* (1869). Oil on canvas, 145.5 x 122 cm. Private Collection
131. Henry Tonks, *The Toilet* (1869). Oil on canvas, 67.3 x 92.7 cm. York Museums Trust, York
132. Julia Margaret Cameron, *Portrait of May Prinsep Holding Mirror and Flower* (1870). Albumen print, 37 x 27 cm. Dimbola Lodge Museum, Isle of Wight
133. Attributed to Charles Mercier, *Charles Reade* (c.1870). Oil on canvas, 109.9 x 140.3 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London
134. Emma Sandys, *Viola* (c.1865-1870). Oil on canvas, 53 x 40.2 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
135. Henry David Friston, *Scene in a Domestic Interior with Children Watching as a Woman is Treated Using an Electro-therapeutic Machine* (c.1865-1870). Oil on canvas, 64.5 x 88.3 cm. The Geffrye Museum, London
136. Simeon Solomon, *A Youth Relating Tales to Ladies* (1870). Oil on canvas, 35.5 x 53.4 cm.

Tate Britain, London

137. Lawrence Alma-Tadema and Laura Epps Alma-Tadema, *Portrait of the Epps Family* (1870-1871). Oil on canvas on wood frame, with wallpaper and decoupage (unfinished), 183.3 x 472.2 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
138. E.M. Ward, *Dr. Goldsmith and the Apothecary* (1871). Oil on canvas, 89 x 101.6 cm, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
139. William Maw Egley, *Scene from Molière's 'La Malade Imaginaire'* (1871). Oil on millboard, 15.8 x 19.4 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
140. D.G. Rossetti, *Lucrezia Borgia* (1871). Watercolour and gouache with heavy gum varnish on cream wove paper, 64.2 x 39.2 cm, Harvard Art Museums, Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts. This is a larger replica of the 1860 watercolour after he repainted it in 1867.
141. Lucy Madox Brown, *The Fair Geraldine, or The Magic Mirror, Cornelius Agrippa showing the Fair Geraldine in a Magic Mirror to the Earl of Surrey* (1871). Watercolour, 73.6 x 63.5 cm. Private Collection
142. Edward Burne-Jones, *Dorigen of Bretagne longing for the safe return of her husband* (1871). Bodycolour, 26.7 x 37.4 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
143. Walter Crane, *At Home, a Portrait* (1871). Tempera on wood, 71.1 x 40.6 cm. Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds
144. John Tenniel, *Alice Entering the Looking Glass* and *Alice Arriving at the World on the Other Side of the Mirror* (1871). Wood engraving by Dalziel. Illustration for Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871)
145. George Sheridan Knowles, *A Treat* (1871). Watercolour and bodycolour, 33.5 x 26 cm. Private Collection
146. Frederick Daniel Hardy. *After the Party* (1871). Oil on canvas, 69.2 x 108.9 cm. Private Collection
147. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Piano Lesson* (1871). Watercolour, 34.5 x 28 cm. Private Collection
148. Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *The Artist's Wife* (1871). Oil on panel, 26 x 10.8 cm. Museum Mesdag, The Hague
149. Laura Tadema-Epps, *The Mirror (Still Life with Self-Portrait)* (1872). Oil on canvas, 61.2 x 30.5 cm. Museum Mesdag, The Hague
150. James Tissot, *Miss Sydney Milner-Gibson* (1872). Oil on canvas, 130 x 94 cm. Bury St Edmunds Museum Service, West Suffolk
151. William Powell Frith, *The Duke's Blessing* (1872). Oil on canvas, 37 x 47.5 cm. Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, West Yorkshire
152. Alexander Mark Rossi, *The Card Game* (1873). Oil on canvas, 71.1 x 91.4 cm. Private Collection

153. John Frederick Lewis, *Indoor Gossip, Cairo* (1874). Oil on canvas, 30.4 x 20.2 cm. Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, Manchester
154. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Mother's Little Helper* (1874). Oil on canvas, 53.5 x 43.3 cm. Private Collection
155. D.G. Rossetti, *La Bella Mano* (1875). Oil on canvas, 157.48 x 106.68 cm. Bancroft Collection, Wilmington Society of Fine Arts, Delaware
156. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Poor Relations* (1875). Oil on canvas, 76.67 x 106.9 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
157. George Elgar Hicks, *The Barbershop* (1875). Oil on canvas, 45.8 x 70.8 cm. Private Collection
158. James Tissot, *Hush!* (1875). Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 112.2 cm. Manchester City Galleries. Manchester
159. Edwin Long, *The Babylonia Marriage Market* (1875). Oil on canvas, 172.6 x 304.6 cm. Royal Holloway, University of London, London
160. John Frederick Lewis, *The Cairo Market: The Dellál* (1875). Pencil, watercolour, bodycolour and gum Arabic on paper, 67.5 x 51 cm. Private Collection
161. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Interior with Mother and Daughter Playing* (1875-1876). Oil on canvas, 56 x 43.5 cm. Private Collection
162. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Perseus Series: The Call of Perseus* (1876). Bodycolour, 152.5 x 127 cm. Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton
163. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Taking Tea* (1876). Watercolour, 25.5 x 36 cm. Private Collection
164. H.G. Glindoni, *The Musician* (1876). Oil panel, 45.8 x 35.8 cm. Royal Holloway, University of London
165. James Tissot, *Hide and Seek* (c.1877). Oil on panel, 734 x 539 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
166. Ralph Headley, *The Old China Shop* (1877). Oil on canvas, 62. x 50.5 cm. Private Collection
167. John H. Williams, *The Ancestor on the Tapestry* (1877). Oil on canvas, 42 x 71.5 cm. Private Collection
168. Frederick Daniel Hardy, *A Misdeal* (1877). Oil on canvas, 76 x 101.5 cm. Bantock House Museum and Park, Wolverhampton
169. Edwin Long, *An Ancient Custom* (1877). Oil on canvas, 72.5 x 96.5 cm. Private Collection
170. George du Maurier, *Female Clubs versus Matrimony* (1878). Illustration for *Punch*, (December 14, 1878)
171. James Tissot, *Kathleen Newton in an Armchair* (1878). Oil on panel, 30.5 x 43.2 cm, Private Collection

172. John Atkinson Grimshaw, *In the Artist's House* (1878). Oil on canvas, 83.3 x 127.7 cm. Private Collection
173. G.F. Watts, *Britomart and her Nurse Before the Magic Mirror* (1878). Oil on canvas, 160.9 x 122cm. Birmingham City Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham
174. John Atkinson Grimshaw, *The Cradle Song* (1878). Oil on canvas, 82.6 x 121.9 cm. Private Collection
175. Edward Burne-Jones, *Pygmalion and the Image – The Soul Attains* (1875-1878). Oil on canvas, 99 x 76.2 cm. Birmingham Museums and Gallery, Birmingham
176. William Q. Orchardson, *A Social Eddy (Left by the Tide)* (1878). Oil on canvas, 81 x 117 cm. Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum
177. Henry Jamyn Brooks, *The Corporation of Abingdon* (1878). Oil on canvas, 180 x 228 cm. Abingdon Guildhall
178. Alexander Mark Rossi, *Pleasant Memories After the Ball* ((1878). Oil on canvas, 89 x 69 cm. Private Collection
179. George du Maurier, *Nincompoopia* (1879). Illustration for *Punch* (December 20, 1879), 282
180. William Q. Orchardson, *Hard Hit* (1879). Oil on canvas, 84 x 122 cm. Private Collection
181. Alexander Mark Rossi, *Golden Moments* (1879). Pencil, watercolour and gouache heightened with white, 43.5 x 57 cm. Private Collection
182. Linley Sambourne, *An Interior* (c.1880). Pencil drawing on paper, 17.8 x 26.6 cm. Stafford Terrace Museum Collection, London
183. George Dunlop Leslie, *Roses* (1880). Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 61 cm. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg
184. Frederick Leighton, *Light of the Harem* (1880). Oil on canvas, 152.4 x 83.8 cm. Private Collection
185. Henry Tanworth Wells, *Victoria Regina* (1880). Oil on canvas, 245.1 x 191.8 cm. Tate Britain, London
186. Walter Dendy Sadler, *A Rare Vintage* (1880). Oil on canvas, 21.5 x 27 cm. Private Collection
187. H.G. Glindoni, *Untitled (Lady Looking in a Mirror)* (c.1880s). Oil on wood panel, 26.67 x 21.59 cm. Private Collection
188. D.G. Rossetti, *Desdemona's Death Song* (c.1878-1881). Pencil with traces of red chalk on grey paper, 104.14 x 74.93 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
189. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon* (1881-1898). Oil on canvas, 279 x 650 cm, Ponce Museum of Art, Ponce, Puerto Rico
190. Frederick Daniel Hardy, *The Piano Tuner* (1881). Oil on canvas, 49.5 x 62.9 cm. Private



Collection

191. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Hearts are Trumps* (c.1881). Oil on canvas, 102 x 177 cm. Private Collection
192. George du Maurier, *Masculine Inconsistency* (1881). Illustration for *Punch* (April 2, 1881)
193. Henry Marriott Paget, *Lady of Shalott* (1881). Illustration for *The Works of Alfred Tennyson* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1881)
194. Walter Crane, *My Lady's Chamber (Frontispiece to 'The House Beautiful')* (1881). Colour lithograph. Private Collection
195. E.J. Gregory, *Last Touches* (1881). Watercolour on paper, 58.4 x 43.8 cm. Private Collection
196. E.J. Gregory, *The Pose* (c.1881). Oil on canvas, 41.3 x 30.8 cm. Private Collection
197. Henry Treffry Dunn, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Theodore Watts-Dunton in the Sitting Room at Tudor House, Cheyne Walk* (1882). Watercolour on paper, 54 x 82.6 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London
198. Henry Treffry Dunn, *Rossetti's Drawing Room at Cheyne Walk* (1882). Watercolour on paper, 68.6 x 94 cm. Private Collection
199. Henry Treffry Dunn, *Rossetti's Bedroom at Tudor House, Cheyne Walk* (1882). Watercolour on paper, 3.5 cm diameter. Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton
200. Thomas Benjamin Kennington, *Ace of Hearts* (1882). Oil on canvas, 128 x 103 cm. Private Collection
201. Thomas Benjamin Kennington, *Ace of Hearts* (c.1882), alternate version
202. H.G. Glindoni, *Adjusted to Perfection* (1882). Pencil and watercolour, 20.9 x 53.2 cm. Private Collection
203. Edith Hipkins, *'With Thy Sweet Fingers'* (1882). Oil on canvas, 34 x 42.5 cm. Royal Academy of Music, London
204. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Perseus Cycle: The Finding of Medusa* (c.1882). Oil on canvas, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart
205. Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *Portrait of Professor Giovanna Battista Amendola* (1882). Oil on canvas, 72.3 x 52.1 cm. Private Collection
206. William Q. Orchardson, *Le Mariage de Convenance* (1883). Oil on canvas, 104.8 x 154.3 cm. Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow
207. E.J. Gregory, *A Rehearsal* (1884). Oil on canvas (dimensions unknown), University of Toronto
208. Anna Alma-Tadema, *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's Library in Townshend House* (1884). Watercolour, gouache pen and ink, graphite on white paper, 33 x 45 cm. Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York

209. Anna Alma-Tadema, *The Drawing Room at Townshend House* (1885). Watercolour on pencil and pen, ink on card, 27.2 x 18.7 cm. Royal Academy of Arts, London
210. H.G. Glindoni, *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1885). Oil on canvas, 129.5 x 180 cm. The New Art Gallery, Walsall, West Midlands
211. H.G. Glindoni, *Fortune in a Tea Cup* (1880s). Oil on panel, signed, 43.2 x 55.9 cm. Private Collection
212. Henry Stacy Marks, *A Treatise on Parrots* (1885). Oil on canvas, 108.2 x 76.5 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
213. Alexander Mark Rossi, *Interior Scene with Mother and Baby* (1885). Oil on canvas, 64 x 99 cm. Geffrye Museum, London
214. William Q. Orchardson, *After (Mariage de Convenance)* (1886). Oil on canvas, 113 x 169.4 cm. Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, Aberdeen
215. Walter Sickert, *The Acting Manager or Rehearsal: The End of the Act* (c.1885-1886). Oil on canvas, 60 x 50.8 cm. Private Collection
216. Edward Burne-Jones, *Margaret Burne-Jones* (1885-1886). Oil on canvas, 96.52 x 71.12 cm. Private Collection
217. William Q. Orchardson, *The First Cloud* (1887). Oil on canvas, 83.2 x 121.3 cm. Tate Britain, London
218. Frederick Daniel Hardy, *A Fog* (1887). Oil on canvas, 61 x 82.5 cm. Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton
219. Robert Barrett Browning, *Before the Mirror* (1887). Oil on canvas, 209.5 x 129 cm. Private Collection
220. Edward Poynter, *An Evening at Home* (1888). Watercolour on paper, 59.7 x 59 cm. Bourne Gallery, Reigate, Surrey
221. Alexander M. Rossi, *Playtime* (1888). Oil on canvas, 71.75 x 104.75 cm. Private Collection
222. J.W. Waterhouse, *At Capri, or The Toilet* (1889-1890). Oil on canvas, 47 x 84 cm. Private Collection
223. Walter Sickert, *Little Dot Hetherington at the Bedford Music Hall* (c.1888-1889). Oil on canvas. Private Collection
224. Walter Sickert, *The Music Hall or the P.S. Wings in the O.P. Mirror* (1889). Oil on canvas, 61 x 51 cm. Musée des Beaux Arts, Rouen
225. Walter Sickert, *The Old Bedford: Cupid in the Gallery* (c.1890). Oil on canvas, 126.5 x 77.5 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
226. Walter Sickert, *Vesta Victoria at the Old Bedford* (1890). Oil on panel, 37 x 23.5 cm. Private Collection
227. Nancy S. Pasley, *A Game of Cards* (1890). Oil painting, 19.2 x 29.5 cm. Geffrye Museum,

London

228. Laura Epps Alma-Tadema, *Satisfaction* (c.1890-99). Oil on wood, 65 x 44.5 cm. Private Collection
229. Charles Hunt, *A Fine Attire* (1890). Oil on canvas, 66 x 92 cm. Private Collection
230. John H. Williams, *Interior: Binding A Shoe* (1890). Oil on canvas, 92 x 135 cm. Private Collection
231. John Byam Liston Shaw, *Behind the Scenes* (1891). Oil on canvas, 102 x 76 cm. Private Collection
232. Charles Haigh-Wood, *The Song* (1891). Oil on canvas, 54 x 41 cm. Private Collection
233. J.W. Waterhouse, *Circe Offering the Cup to Ulysses* (1891). Oil on canvas, 92 x 149 cm, Gallery Oldham, Oldham, Greater Manchester
234. 234.1 *Sketch for Circe*, Pencil on wove paper, bound in canvas boards, 15.2 x 23.5 cm. *JW Waterhouse sketchbook*, E.1110-1963 (59-60), p.57. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- 234.2 *Sketch for Circe*, Pencil on wove paper, bound in canvas boards, 15.2 x 23.5 cm. *JW Waterhouse sketchbook*, E.1110-1963 (59-60), p.58. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- 234.3 *Sketch for Circe*. Pencil on wove paper, bound in canvas boards, 15.2 x 23.5 cm. *JW Waterhouse sketchbook*, E.1110-1963 (59-60), p.59. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- 234.4. *Sketch for Circe*. Pencil on wove paper, bound in canvas boards, 15.2 x 23.5 cm. *JW Waterhouse sketchbook*, E.1110-1963 (59-60), p.60. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
235. Charles Haigh-Wood, *The Patient Competitors* (1892). Oil on canvas, 76 x 107 cm. Private Collection
236. Thomas Matthew Rooke, *Interior with Musicians* (1891-1892). Watercolour on paper, 41 x 46cm. Geffrye Museum, London
237. Walter Dendy Sadler, *Sweethearts* (1892). Oil on canvas, 86 x 66 cm. Guildhall Art Gallery, London
238. Henry Tonks, *The Hat Shop* (1892). Oil on canvas, 67.7 x 92.7 cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham
239. Henry Tonks, *A Girl with a Parrot* (c.1893). Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 31.1 cm. Tate Britain, London
240. Engraving after St. George Hare, *Pleasing Reflections* (1893). Illustration for *The Graphic*

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241. Philip Wilson Steer, *Model Seated Before a Mirror* (1894). Oil on canvas, 91.8 x 50.8 cm. Tate Britain, London
242. J.W. Waterhouse, Studies for *The Lady of Shalott* (1894). *J.W. Waterhouse Sketchbook* E.1110 – 1963 (8-12). Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- 242.1 Pencil on paper, 22.8 x 14.6 cm., p.8  
242.2. Pencil on paper, 22.8 x 14.6 cm, p.9  
242.3. Pencil on paper, 22.8 x 14.6 cm, p.11  
242.4. Pencil on paper, 22.8 x 14.6 cm, p.12
243. J.W. Waterhouse, *Study for The Lady of Shalott* (1894). Oil on canvas, 68.5 x 119 cm. Falmouth Art Gallery, Falmouth, Cornwall
244. J.W. Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalott* (1894). Oil on canvas, 86 x 142 cm, Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds
245. Frank Dicksee, *Paolo and Francesca* (1894). Oil on canvas, 130 x 130 cm. Private Collection
246. Roger Fry, *Edward Carpenter* (1894). Oil on canvas, 74.9 x 43.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London
247. Margaret Isabell Dicksee, *The First Audience: Oliver Goldsmith reading She stoops to conquer to Little Comedy and the Jessamy Bride* (1894). Oil on canvas, 92.1 x 123 cm. Private Collection
248. Walter Dendy Sadler, *For Fifty Years* (c.1894). Oil on canvas, Private Collection
249. William Q. Orchardson, *Reflections* (1894). Oil on canvas, 87.7 x 67.4 cm. Private Collection
250. H.G. Glindoni, *The Knave of Hearts* (1894). Oil on panel, 33 x 48.3 cm. Private Collection
251. Walter Sickert, *The Old Bedford* (1894-1895). Oil on canvas, 54.9 x 38.1 cm. The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
252. Walter Sickert, *The Old Bedford* (1894-95). Oil on canvas, 76.3 x 60.5 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
253. Ralph Headley, *Self-Portrait* (1895). Oil on canvas, 43.2 x 50.8 cm. Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle
254. Frederick Daniel Hardy, *The Reading Lesson* (1895). Oil on panel, 20 x 27.7 cm. Private Collection
255. Charles Haigh-Wood, *A Cup of Tea* (1896). Oil on canvas, 30 .5 x 20.5 cm. Private Collection
256. Charles Haigh-Wood, *The Finishing Touch* (1896). Oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm. Private Collection
257. Henry Tonks, *The Toilet* (1896). Oil on canvas, 67.3 x 92.7 cm. York Museums Trust,

York

258. George du Maurier, *Drawing-Room Inanities* (1896). Illustration for *Punch* (February 1, 1896)
259. Florence M. Rutland, *The Lady of Shalott* (1896). Illustration for *The Yellow Book: An Illustrated Quarterly* (April, 1896), 55
260. Kate Elizabeth Bunce, *Melody (Musica)* (1895-1897). Oil on canvas, 51 x 76.3 cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham
261. John Byam Liston Shaw, *Jezebel* (1896). Oil on canvas, 148.5 x 81 cm. Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth
262. Frank Dicksee, *The Mirror* (1896). Oil on canvas, 95.3 x 118.1 cm. Private Collection
263. Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Family Group* (1896). Oil on panel, 30.5 x 27.9 cm, Royal Academy of Arts Collection, London
264. Helena Darmesteter, *Reflection in a Mirror* (1896). Oil on canvas, 90 x 60 cm. Ben Rui Gallery & Museum, London
265. John Gilbert, *Rembrandt's Studio* (1896). Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 152.5 cm. York Museums Trust, York
266. Laura Epps Alma-Tadema, *A Knock on the Door* (1897). Oil on panel, 63.82 x 44.77 cm. Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire
267. Margaret Cooksley, *The Gambler's Wife* (1897). Oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm. Towneley Hall Art Gallery and Museum, Burnley, Lancashire
268. Joseph Edward Southall, *Sigismonda Drinking the Poison* (1897). Tempera on linen, 58.5 x 43 cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham
269. Charles Haigh-Wood, *Fair Deceivers* (1897). Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 104.5 cm. Private Collection
270. J.W. Waterhouse, *Study for Mariana in the South* (1897). Oil on canvas, 134.5 x 86.3 cm. Leighton House Museum, the Cecil French Bequest, London
271. J.W. Waterhouse, *Mariana in the South* (1897). Oil on canvas, 114 x 74 cm. Private Collection
272. Charles Shannon, *Les Marmitons* (1897). Oil on canvas on board, 39 x 36.6 cm. Tate Britain, London
273. George Sheridan Knowles, *At the Ball* (1897). Oil on panel, 45.6 x 25.5 cm. Private Collection
274. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Wizard* (1891-1898). Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 54 cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham
275. Frederick Daniel Hardy, *My Studio* (1898). Oil on board, laid down on panel, 25.4 x 39.1 cm. Private Collection

276. Charles Haigh-Wood, *'May the Fates Prove Kind!'* (1898). Oil on canvas, 76 x 106 cm. Private Collection
277. Charles Martin Hardie. *The Studio Mirror* (1898). Oil on canvas, 72.5 x 59.5 cm. Private Collection
278. J.W. Godward, *Ione* (1896-1898). Oil on canvas, 127.5 x 89.4 cm. Private Collection
279. Evelyn de Morgan, *Helen of Troy* (1898). Oil on canvas, 98.4 x 22.2 cm. De Morgan Foundation, Wandsworth Museum, London
280. Evelyn de Morgan, *Mercy and Truth Have Met Together, Righteousness and Peace Have Kissed Each Other* (1898). De Morgan Foundation, Wandsworth Museum, London
281. J.W. Godward, *The Mirror* (1899). Oil on canvas, 80.6 x 37.5 cm. Private Collection
282. Charles Shannon, *Rose and Blanche (Les Marmitons)* (1899). Oil on canvas, 107.4 x 98.2 cm. Private Collection
283. J.W. Godward, *The Jewel Casket* (1899). Oil on canvas, 80.5 x 60.5 cm. Private Collection
284. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Master of the House* (1899). Pencil and watercolour on paper, 43.2 x 31.8 cm. Private Collection
285. J.W. Waterhouse, *Destiny* (1900), Oil on canvas, 55 x 68.5 cm. The Towneley Hall Art Gallery and Museums, Burnley
286. Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale, *'I Have Married a Wife and Therefore I Cannot Come'* (1900). Watercolour, published in *The Studio*, vol. 23 (1901), 197
287. Charles Shannon, *Tibullus in the House of Delia* (c.1900). Oil on canvas, 57 x 57 cm, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol
288. William Orpen, *The Mirror* (1900). Oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm. Tate Britain, London
289. William Orpen, *A Bitter Curacao* (1900). Oil on board, 37.3 x 51.9 cm. Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
290. Herbert Cole, *The Sphinx* (1900). Ink, pencil and watercolour laid on board, 20.3 x 19 cm. Private Collection
291. Albert Chevalier Tayler, *Silks and Satins* (1900). Oil on canvas, 77.5 x 102 cm. Private Collection
292. Herbert Cole, *The Critic* (c.1900). Ink, pencil and watercolour laid on board, 20.3 x 19 cm. Peter Nahum at the Leicester Galleries, London
293. George Sheridan Knowles, *The Proposal* (1900). Oil on canvas, 67 x 97.5 cm, Private Collection
294. Philip Wilson Steer, *The Mirror* (1901). Oil on canvas, 40.9 x 55.2 cm. Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums, Aberdeen
295. William Orpen, *A Mere Fracture* (1901). Oil on canvas, 99.1 x 93.8 cm. Private

Collection

296. William Orpen, *Group Portrait of the Family of George Swinton* (1901). Oil on canvas, 109.8 x 148.5 cm. Private Collection
297. John Collier, *The Prodigal Daughter* (1903). Oil on canvas, 166 x 217 cm. Usher Gallery, Lincoln, Lincolnshire
298. H.G. Glindoni, *Her Debut* (1903). Watercolour, 84.5 x 119.5 cm. Private Collection
299. Edmund Blair Leighton, *Courtship* (1903). Oil on canvas, 59 x 38 cm, Private Collection
300. Samuel Melton Fisher, *The Chess Players* (1903). Oil on canvas, 132.7 x 101.7 cm. National Museums, Liverpool
301. George Henry, *The Tortoiseshell Mirror* (1903). Oil on canvas, 80 x 60 cm. Paisley Art Institute Collection, Paisley, Renfrewshire
302. Charles Shannon, *The Toilet* (1903). Oil on canvas, 85 x 76.4 cm. The Watts Gallery, Guildford
303. John Byam Liston Shaw, *My Wife, my Bairns and my Wee Dog John* (1903). Pastel, no dimensions given. Ferens Art Gallery, Hull
304. Charles Shannon, *The Bath of Venus* (1898-1904). Oil on canvas, 146 x 97.8 cm. Tate Britain, London
305. Thomas Matthews Rooke, *Interior View of The Grange, North End Road (Edward Burne-Jones's Family Home in Fulham, 1867-1898)* (1904). Watercolour on paper and panel, 52 x 36.8 cm. Bateman's, The Rudyard Kipling Collection (The National Trust), Burwash, East Sussex
306. Thomas Benjamin Kennington, *The Glory of Womanhood* (c.1904). Oil on canvas, 153 x 100.45 cm. Private Collection
307. Holman Hunt and Edward Robert Hughes, *The Lady of Shalott* (1886-1905). Oil on canvas, 188 x 146.1 cm. The Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Connecticut
308. Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott* (1886-1905). Oil on panel, 44.4 x 34.1 cm. Manchester City Galleries, Manchester
309. George Sheridan Knowles, *Signing the Marriage Contract* (1905). Oil on canvas, 61 x 101.6 cm. Private Collection
310. Walter Dendy Sadler, *His Wedding Morn* (1905). Etching, engraved by W. H. Boucher, 43 x 33 cm. Private Collection
311. Welford Graham Robertson, *The Sisters of Cinderella* (1905). Oil on canvas, 104 x 103 cm. Sewerby Hall Museum and Gallery, Sewerby, Yorkshire
312. Charles Shannon, *Tibullus in the House of Delia* (1900-1905). Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 76.2 cm. Nottingham Castle Museum, Nottingham City Museums and Galleries, Nottingham
313. Walter Sickert, *Mrs Barrett* (c.1905). Pastel on board, 54 x 71.1 cm. Tate Britain, London

314. Henry Tonks, *The Crystal Gazers* (1905-06). Oil on canvas, 78.1 x 64.9 cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Galley, Birmingham
315. William Orpen, *The Eastern Gown* (1906). Oil on canvas, 89 x 73.5 cm. Atkinson Art Gallery, Southport, Lancashire
316. Walter Sickert, *La Hollandaise* (c.1906). Oil on canvas, 51.1 x 40.6 cm. Tate Britain, London
317. William Orpen, *The Reflection* (c.1906). Oil on canvas, 91.8 x 71.7 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
318. Edmund Blair Leighton, *The Proposal* (1906). Oil on panel, 35.6 x 24.8 cm. Private Collection
319. Frank Cadogan Cowper, *Mariana in the South* (1906). Pencil and watercolour heightened with bodycolour on card, 50.2 x 33 cm. Private Collection
320. Leonard Campbell Taylor, *Battledore* (1906). Oil on panel, 25.6 x 35.3 cm. Manchester City Galleries, Manchester
321. Frank Cadogan Cowper, *Vanity* (1907). Oil on panel, 57.1 x 38.1 cm. Royal Academy of Arts, London
322. William Orpen, *Night (no.2)* (1907). Oil on canvas, 76.5 x 64 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, Melbourne
323. William Orpen, *A Bloomsbury Family* (1907). Oil on canvas, 88.9 x 92.71 cm. Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh
324. William Orpen, *The Interior, The Artist's Studio, Chelsea* (1907-1908). Pen and ink wash drawing, 22 x 21 cm. Private Collection
325. Charles Shannon, *Mrs Patrick Campbell* (1907). Oil on canvas, 122.6 x 108.6 cm. Tate Britain, London
326. Charles Shannon, *Portrait of Kathleen Bruce, Lady Scott* (1907). Oil on canvas, 1.15 x 1.113. Musée d'Orsay, Paris
327. Charles Shannon, *Study for A Sculptress, Miss Bruce* (c.1907). Oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris
328. Charles Shannon, *Lillah McCarthy as 'Donna Anna' (from Mozart's Don Giovanni)* (1907). Oil on canvas, 175.5 x 119 cm. Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham
329. Henry Tonks, *The Birdcage* (1907). Oil on canvas, 140 x 112 cm. The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
330. Walter Sickert *The Painter in his Studio* (1907). Oil on canvas, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ohio
331. Walter Sickert, *Girl at a Looking-Glass, Little Rachel* (1907). Oil on canvas, 51.5 x 41 cm. The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge



332. Walter Sickert, *Nude Before a Mirror* (1907). Oil on canvas, 51 x 41 cm. Private Collection
333. Herbert Cole, *Study for The Sphinx* (1908). Ink and watercolour, 19 x 15 cm. Private Collection
334. Arthur Hughes, *A Passing Cloud* (1908). Oil on canvas, 98 x 62 cm. Private Collection
335. Charles Shannon, *The Bath* (1908). Oil on canvas, 111.8 x 88.6 cm. Private Collection
336. H.G. Glindoni, *Fan Flirtation* (1908). Oil on canvas, 86.2 x 111.5 cm. Private Collection
337. J.W. Waterhouse, *Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May* (1908). Oil on canvas, 24.3 x 18 cm. Private Collection
338. Spencer Frederick Gore, *The Green Dress* (1908-1909). Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 35.5 cm. The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
339. William Orpen, *Lewis R. Tomalin* (1909). Oil on canvas, 91.44 x 81.28 cm. Private Collection
340. George Frederick Harris, *Self-Portrait* (1909). Oil on board, 37.3 x 27.3 cm. Cyfarthfa Castle Museum & Art Gallery, Methyr Tydfil, Wales
341. Lionel Percy Smythe, *Adoration* (c.1909). Watercolour, 22 x 115 cm. Private Collection
342. John Arthur Lomax, *Dawn* (c.1890-1910). Oil on panel, 40.6 x 30.4 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
343. Algernon Talmage, *The Mackerel Shawl* (1910). Oil on canvas, 125.7 x 78.7 cm. Bristol Museum and Gallery, Bristol
344. Leonard Campbell Taylor, *An Interior* (1910). Oil on canvas, 58.3 x 48.3 cm. Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham
345. William Orpen, *Self-Portrait or Leading the Life in the West* (c.1910). Oil on canvas, 101.9 x 84.1 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
346. William Orpen, *Myself and Venus* (1910). Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 86.68 cm. Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh
347. William Orpen, *William Orpen* (1910). Pencil and wash, 33 cm diameter. National Portrait Gallery, London
348. J.W. Waterhouse, *Vanity* (1910). Oil on canvas, 66 x 68.6 cm. Private Collection
349. J.W. Waterhouse, *Vanity* (1910). Oil on canvas, 66 x 68.6cm. Peter Nahum at the Leicester Galleries, London
350. Leonard Campbell Taylor, *The Lady of the Castle* (1910). Oil on canvas, 109.2 x 94 cm. Private Collection
351. Frank Cadogan Cowper, *The Love Letter* (1911). No object information, Private Collection

352. Arthur John Elsley, *This Little Pig Went to Market* (1911). Oil on canvas, 94.6 x 69.2 cm. Private Collection
353. Ambrose McEvoy, *The Ear-ring* (1911). Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 63.5. Tate Britain, London
354. Anne J. Pertz, *Lady of Shalott* (c.1880-1911). Oil on canvas, 80 x 64 cm. Private Collection
355. Gilbert Pownall, *Lady of Shalott* (c.1910). Illuminated Manuscript, Cardiff Rare Books Collection, Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales
356. Harold Gilman, *Madeleine Knox* (1910-911). Oil on canvas, 60.8 x 45.4 cm, Tate Britain, London
357. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Family Lawyer* (c.1912). Oil on canvas, 61 x 92 cm. Private Collection
358. Sir Gerald Kelly, *The Vicar in his Study* (1912). Oil on canvas, 116.5 x 96.5 cm. Tate Britain, London
359. Charles Shannon, *Portrait of Baroness Toinon von Essen* (1912). Oil on canvas, 99.1 x 106.7 cm. Private Collection
360. William Orpen, *Self-Portrait* (1912). Oil and collage on wood, 61 x 49.6 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio
361. William Orpen, *The Café Royal, London* (1912). Oil on canvas, 137.5 x 113.5 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris
362. Howard Someverville, *The Artist and Model* (c.1912). Oil on canvas, 74.6 x 61.9 cm. The Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate, North Yorkshire
363. Anna Alma-Tadema, *Self-Portrait* (c.1900-1912, my estimate). Oil on panel, 27 x 22 cm. Private Collection
364. Sidney Harold Meteyard, *I Am Half-Sick of Shadows* (1913). Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 114.3 cm. Private Collection
365. Richard Jack, *The Toast* (1913). Oil on canvas, 153.1 x 213.3 cm. Private Collection
366. Edmund Blair Leighton, *Straying Thoughts* (1913). Oil on panel, 25.5 x 33.5 cm, Private Collection
367. Leonard Campbell Taylor, *Reminiscences* (1913). Oil on panel, 31.8 x 22.9 cm. Private Collection
368. Walter Sickert, *Interior with a Nude* (1914). Oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.8 cm. Manchester city Art Gallery, Manchester
369. Walter Sickert, *Army and Navy* (1914). Oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm. Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol
370. Arthur John Elsley, *Good Night* (1914). Oil on canvas, 109.22 x 76.2 cm. Private Collection

371. George Sheridan Knowles, *A Nocturne* (1914). Watercolour heightened with body colour, 36.83 x 53.34 cm. Private Collection
372. Max Beerbohm, *Bravura: Sir William Orpen* (1914). Graphite and watercolour on paper, 39.4 x 28.3 cm. Tate Britain, London
373. Henry Tonks, *The Toilet* (1914). Pastel on paper, 33 x 44.1 cm. Tate Britain, London
374. Stanhope Forbes, *Through the Looking Glass* (1914). Oil on canvas, 78 x 63 cm. Private Collection
375. Walter Sickert, *The Blue Hat* (1911-1915). Oil on canvas, 50.7 x 40.6 cm. Manchester City Galleries, Manchester
376. George Sheridan Knowles, *'If Music be the Food of Love . . .'* (1915). Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 69.9 cm. Private Collection
377. Ambrose McEvoy, *Madame* (1915). Oil on canvas, 1.425 x 1.125. Musée D'Orsay, Paris
378. J.W. Waterhouse, Studies for *'I am Half-Sick of Shadows'* (1916). *J.W. Waterhouse Sketchbook*, E.2 – 1949, volume size 17.46 x 25 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- 378.1 Coloured pencil on paper, *J.W. Waterhouse Sketchbook*, E.2 – 1949, p.23
- 378.2 Coloured pencil and watercolour on paper, *J.W. Waterhouse Sketchbook*, E.2 – 1949, p.35
- 378.3 Pencil on paper, *J.W. Waterhouse Sketchbook*, E.2 – 1949, p.37
379. J.W. Waterhouse, *'I am Half-Sick of Shadows' said The Lady of Shalott* (1916). Oil on canvas, 74 x 100 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
380. J.E. Millais, *A Young Girl Combing her Hair*. Oil on canvas. Private Collection
381. Charles West Cope, *Young Woman at her Toilet (After Titian)*. Oil on canvas, 95.2 x 78.7 cm, York Museums Trust, York
382. Alexander Mark Rossi, *The Private View*. Oil on board, 35.5 x 52.2 cm. Private Collection
383. Alexander Mark Rossi, *Interior Scene with Figures, Possibly Relating to the Music Hall Strike of 1907*. Oil on canvas, 122 x 171 cm. Private Collection
384. Walter Dendy Sadler, *Home Sweet Home*. Oil on canvas. Private Collection
385. Sophie Anderson, *Here's the Gobbler!* Oil on canvas, 112 x 84 cm. Private Collection
386. William Helmsley, *Baking Day*. Oil on canvas, 31 x 25.5 cm, Private Collection
387. Frederik Walker, *The Love Token*. Watercolour with bodycolour, 35.5 x 26.4 cm. The Maas Gallery, London
388. Laura Epps Alma-Tadema, *Im Reich der Traume*. Oil on canvas, 46 x 31 cm. Private Collection

389. Alexander Mark Rossi, *Dressing Up*. Oil on canvas, 93 x 63.5 cm, Private Collection
390. Charles Hunt, *Dressed to Impress*. Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 71.1 cm. Private Collection
391. Walter Dendy Sadler, *An Attentive Visitor*. Oil on canvas, 86.4 x 121.9 cm. Private Collection
392. Walter Dendy Sadler, *Nuts and Wine*. Oil on canvas, 21.5 x 27 cm. Private Collection
393. Philip Richard Morris, *A Flaw in the Will*. Oil on canvas, 92.5 x 139.5 cm. Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton
394. May Lancaster Lucas, *Miss Florence Etlinger*. Oil on canvas, 162 x 114 cm. Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro
395. William Nicholson, *The Black Mirror*. Oil on canvas, 191.8 x 143.5 cm. City of Edinburgh Council
396. John Callcott Horsley, *Lady Regarding Herself in a Pier Mirror*. Oil on board, 29 x 21 cm. Private Collection
397. George Goodwin Kilburne, *La Toilette: Telling a Story*. Watercolour on paper, 16.5 x 23 cm. Private Collection
398. George Goodwin Kilburne, *A Game of Chess*. Oil on canvas, Private Collection
399. George Goodwin Kilburne, *A Huntsman Reciting a Tale*. Watercolour on paper, 37.4 x 59 cm. Private Collection
400. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Reading a Letter*. Oil on panel. Private Collection
401. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The New Spinet*. Pencil, watercolour and gouache on paper, 43 x 52.5 cm. Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, Lancashire
402. Charles West Cope, *Spirit of the Well*. Oil on canvas, 119.38 x 96.52 cm. Private Collection
403. John H. Williams, *The Miniature*. Oil on canvas, 67.5 x 89.5 cm. Darlington Borough Art Collection, County Durham
404. John Arthur Lomas, *Check*. Oil on panel, 30 x 40 cm. Private Collection
405. Frederick Daniel Hardy, *The Necklace*. Oil on canvas, 67.5 x 52.5cm. Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton
406. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Morning News*. Oil on canvas, 51 x 76 cm. Private Collection
407. John H. Williams, *The Introduction*. Oil on canvas, 92 x 153 cm. Private Collection
408. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Piano Practice*. Watercolour, 35.5 x 52 cm. Private Collection
409. George Goodwin Kilburne, *In Contemplative Pose*. Pencil and watercolour, 16.5 x 21.6 cm. Private Collection

410. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Preparing for Christmas*. Oil on canvas. Private Collection
411. Charles Haigh-Wood, *Two Strings to her Bow*. Oil on canvas, 122.9 x 150.2 cm. Private Collection
412. Charles Haigh-Wood, *Anxious Moments*. Oil on canvas, 86.3 x 116.8 cm. Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead, Merseyside
413. Charles Haigh-Wood, *The Engagement*. Oil on canvas, 79.3 x 97.2 cm. Private Collection
414. Samuel Melton Fisher, *Reflections*. Oil on canvas, 79.3 x 97.2 cm. Private Collection
415. William Q. Orchardson, *In the Picture Gallery*. Oil on canvas, 72.4 x 54.6 cm. City Art Centre, Edinburgh
416. Samuel Melton Fisher, *Dreams, E dolce dormire*. Oil on canvas, 143 x 107.5 cm. Gallery Oldham, Greater Manchester
417. Robert James Gordon, *A Musical Duet*. Oil on canvas, 102 x 85 cm. Private Collection
418. Val Prinsep, *Study of a Girl Reading*. Oil on panel, 88.3 x 46.9 cm. Private Collection
419. Walter Sickert, *Camden Town Interior – The Looking-Glass*. Oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm. Private Collection
420. H.G. Glindoni, *A Proposal*. Oil on canvas, 80 x 110.5 cm. Private Collection
421. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Delivery of the Picture*. Watercolour, 37 x 51.5 cm. Private Collection
422. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Wedding Dress*. Oil on canvas. Private Collection
423. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Family Lawyer*. Oil on canvas, 61 x 92 cm. Private Collection
424. George Goodwin Kilburne, *'As Cold Waters To A Thirsty Soul . . .'* Watercolour, 46 x 67 cm. Private Collection
425. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Recital*. Oil on panel, 24 x 16.5 cm. Private Collection
426. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Finishing Touch*. Watercolour, 26 x 36 cm. Private Collection
427. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Morning of the Hunt*. Watercolour, 36 x 36 cm. Private Collection
428. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Home from Hunting*. Watercolour heightened with scratching out, 25 x 34.5 cm. Private Collection
429. George Goodwin Kilburne, *D'Ye Ken John Peel*. Pencil and watercolour heightened with touches of white. Private Collection
430. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Admiring the New Hat*. Pencil and watercolour with scratching out, 26.7 x 20.3 cm. Private Collection

431. George Goodwin Kilburne, *One Too Many*. Watercolour heightened with white, 36.5 x 52 cm. Private Collection
432. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Duet*. Watercolour, 36.5 x 52 cm. Private Collection
433. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Placing the Guests on Christmas Eve*. Watercolour on paper, 54.6 x 90.1 cm. Private Collection
434. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Tea Time*. Pencil and watercolour heightened with bodycolour. 35.5 x 52 cm. Private Collection
435. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Connoisseur*. Watercolour and gouache, 35.5 x 52 cm. Private Collection
436. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Delivery of the Picture*. Watercolour on paper, 37 x 51.1 cm. Private Collection
437. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Music Lesson*. Watercolour, pencil, and bodycolour. 36 x 46 cm. Private Collection
438. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Welcome*. Watercolour heightened with white, 35 x 52 cm. Private Collection
439. George Goodwin Kilburne, *The Doctor's Visit*. Watercolour, 36.8 x 53.3 cm. Private Collection
440. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Piano*. Oil on canvas, 40.5 x 61 cm. Private Collection
441. George Goodwin Kilburne, *Legal Advice*. Watercolour and pencil, 35.6 x 52.1 cm. Private Collection
442. Charles Shannon, *Lady in a Black Shawl*. Oil on canvas, 92 x 83 cm. Paisley Art Institute, Renfrewshire, Scotland
443. H.G. Glindoni, *The Poem*. Oil on panel, 33 x 23 cm. Private Collection
444. H.G. Glindoni, *The Portrait Sitting*. Oil on canvas, 71 x 91.5 cm. Private Collection
445. H.G. Glindoni, *A Proposal*. Oil on canvas, 80 x 100.5. Private Collection
446. William Orpen, *Portrait Interior: Louisa Caroline Elizabeth Hamilton*. Oil on canvas, 67 x 51 cm. Private Collection
447. William Muckley, *Youthful Vanity*. Oil on canvas. Private Collection
448. Talbot Hughes, *The New Dress*. Oil on canvas, 57.2 x 41.3 cm. Private Collection
449. George Sheridan Knowles, *Mother's Birthday*. Oil on canvas, 56 x 38 cm. Private Collection
450. George Sheridan Knowles, *Lunch After the Hunt*. Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 60.9 cm. Private Collection
451. Charles Robinson, *The Lady of Shalott*. Oil on panel, no dimensions given. Fine Art Society, London

452. Percy Tarrant, *The Mirror*. Oil on board, 21 x 14 cm. Private Collection
453. William A. Breakspeare, *At the Spinet*. Oil on panel, 20.3 x 17.8 cm. Private Collection
454. William A. Breakspeare, *The Connoisseurs*. Oil on canvas, 92 x 71 cm. Private Collection
455. William A. Breakspeare, *The Reluctant Pianist*. Oil on canvas, 61 x 102 cm. Private Collection
456. William A. Breakspeare, *All for One and One for All*. Oil on canvas, 44.5 x 34 cm. Milntown House, Ramsey, Isle of Man
457. William A. Breakspeare. *Blue Eyes*, Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 40.6 cm. Private Collection
458. William A. Breakspeare. *The Musician*. Oil on panel, 22.8 x 13.9 cm. Private Collection
459. William A. Breakspeare, *Portrait of a Young Girl in a Cream Dress*. Oil on canvas, 40 x 28 cm. Private Collection
460. William A. Breakspeare, *The Letter*. Oil on canvas, Private Collection

#### **OTHER**

1. D.G. Rossetti, *Dante's Vision of Rachel and Leah* (1855). Watercolour on paper, 35.2 x 31.4 cm. Tate Britain, London
2. D.G. Rossetti, *How They Met Themselves* (1860-1864). Watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 33.9 x 27.3 cm. The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
3. Augustus Egg, *Travelling Companions* (1862). Oil on canvas, 65.3 x 78.7 cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham
4. Edward Burne-Jones, *Astrologia* (1863). Pastel on paper, 33.02 x 27.94 cm. The Maas Gallery, London
5. Edward Burne-Jones, *Astrologia*. Gouache, 57.5 x 46.5 cm. Private Collection
6. D.G. Rossetti, sketch for *Aspecta Medusa* (c.1867). Pencil, reproduced in H.C. Marillier, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An Illustrated Memorial*, 109. Location unknown
7. D.G. Rossetti, *Madonna Pietra* (1874). Pastel, 90.80 x 64.77 cm. Koriyama City Museum of Art, Koriyama, Japan
8. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Days of Creation: The Sixth Day* (1875-1876). Watercolour, gouache, shell gold and platinum paint on linen-covered panel, 102.3 x 36 cm each. Harvard Art Museums, Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts
9. Edward Poynter, *The Fortune Teller* (1877). Oil on canvas, 64.2 x 76.5 cm. Royal Academy of Arts, London
10. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Baleful Head* (1866-1867). Oil on canvas, 155 x 130 cm. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

11. Thomas Benjamin Kennington, *The Crystal Ball* (1890). Oil on canvas, 75 x 50 cm. Private Collection
12. Evelyn de Morgan, *The Garden of Opportunity* (1892). Oil on canvas, 90.8 x 166. The De Morgan Foundation, London
13. Frank Dicksee, *The Magic Crystal* (1894). Oil on canvas, 168.5 x 102 cm. Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool
14. Edward Burne-Jones, *Rose of Heaven* (1883-1898). Watercolour and gouache illustration for *The Flower Book* (1905)
15. Edward Burne-Jones, *False Mercury* (1882-1898). Watercolour and gouache illustration for *The Flower Book* (1905)
16. Edward Burne-Jones, *Portrait of Baronne Madeleine Deslandes* (1896). Oil on canvas, 115.5 x 58.5 cm. Private Collection
17. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Mirror of Venus* (1898). Oil on canvas, 120.65 x 200 cm. Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
18. Robert Anning Bell, *The Crystal Ball* (1900). Oil on board. Private Collection
19. Joseph Southall, *The Crystal* (c.1900) Tempera on silk, 65 x 44.5 cm. Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Nottingham
20. Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale, *Today for Me* (1901). Watercolour heightened with bodycolour, 51 x 35 cm. Private Collection
21. J.W. Waterhouse, *The Crystal Ball* (1902). Oil on canvas, 120.7 x 87.7 cm. Private Collection
22. J.W. Waterhouse, *Echo and Narcissus* (1903). Oil on canvas, 109.2 x 189.2 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool



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## **Declaration**

The following material has not been previously published or submitted for other forms of examination. It constitutes my own research and ideas and, unless noted in quotations or paraphrased remarks from published or unpublished sources that have been acknowledged in the text, the following dissertation represents my own original contribution.

## INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

*Mirror, mirror on the wall.* The memorable quotation from the Grimm Brothers' *Sneewitthen* ('Snow White') story is ingrained in our cultural consciousness and it is unlikely that anyone would not be able to complete the following rhyming verse in which the Queen asks the mirror to tell her who is the most beautiful in the land. What is taken for granted, perhaps through overfamiliarity with the tale, is that the mirror answers her with the requested information, both verbally and through visions in its glass surface. In a story full of glass surfaces that frame the female characters (window panes, the glass coffin, the mirror),<sup>1</sup> the magic mirror stands out as a critical component, a dynamic character with a voice that influences the narrative.<sup>2</sup> The mirror as a magical conduit of insight and hidden knowledge through visions of the past, present, or future appears so frequently in literature that its fantastical associations are unquestionably part of our collective cultural mythology. For instance, besides *Snow White*, notable magic mirrors are present in *Beauty and the Beast*, Hans Christian Anderson's *The Snow Queen*, Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott*, Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, stories by E.T.A. Hoffman and George MacDonald and poetry by Dante Gabriel Rossetti,<sup>3</sup> Arthurian romances such as Spenser's *The Faerie Queene, Book III* in which Britomart sees visions of the knight Artegall, the medieval *Roman de la Rose*, 'The Squire's Tale' from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, and even older myths such as Medusa and Narcissus (the latter uses the oldest mirror of all, reflection in still water). More recently, the Mirror of Erised in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and the Mirror of Galadriel in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy reveal hidden desires and visions of the future, respectively.

Through the different variations and occurrences of the mirror from the ancient Greek mythology of Ovid to twentieth-century literature, the mirror is consistently present as an independent object that propels the story forward through its interactions with the characters; many of the above narratives hinge on the role of the mirror and the response of the heroes and villains to its revealing visions. While this dissertation is not an exploration of the role of the mirror in the western literary tradition, although such an in-depth assessment is warranted, its persistent appearance and function in these stories is what first alerted me to the significance of

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<sup>1</sup> See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's feminist analysis of the Snow White story with regard to

<sup>2</sup> Originally published in 1812, the first volume of the Grimm's *Kinder -und Hausmarchen* ('Children's and Household Tales') included the story of Snow White amongst other well-known tales such as 'Beauty and the Beast' and 'Cinderella.' See Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, and Jack Zipes (ed. and transl.) *The Complete First Edition: The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brother Grimm* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> See E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'The Story of the lost Reflection' (1815), George MacDonald 'The Woman in the Mirror' (1858), D.G. Rossetti, *Rose Mary* (1871, 1881).

the mirror both as a cultural, material object and in terms of its corresponding representations on the page or in the visual arts. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar observe ‘Myths and fairy tales often both state and enforce culture’s sentences with greater accuracy than more sophisticated literary texts.’<sup>4</sup> What then, could be gathered from the mirror’s multiple appearances and its influence on narrative outcome in myth and how does this correspond to its representation in the visual arts?

The mirror itself has a long history as an object of mystery and its associations with the fantastical are as ancient as the art of scrying, the practice of reading visions of the past, present, or future in a reflective surface. Throughout the history of the development of the mirror as an object, there is a linear trajectory of increasing quality and size of glass through standardised methods of production. From murky, dark reflections in polished stone and the distortion of early mirrors in the Middle Ages, to the gleaming expanse of clear reflections in the nineteenth century, the representations of these mirrors in contemporary painting reveal the changing size and clarity of glass, contextualise the setting, and comment on the social implications of ownership. However, regardless of how advanced and industrialised its manufacture becomes, especially over the course of the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries, the mirror retains its underlying cultural and iconographic associations. In spite of increasingly scientific methods of production and mass availability, the mirror still manages to operate on both sides of the real and the uncanny, between an ordinary household decorative good and a fantastical object that mediates between the past and present.

Late in the post-industrial revolution nineteenth century, at a time of unprecedented mirror clarity, affordability, and decorative presence in public and private spaces, an article in *All the year round* references a number of well-known fairy tales and myths that feature the magic mirror and notes,

While [. . .] mirror and crystal-reading is one of the most ancient of occult practices, we have also seen that it is practised in our own country even at this day. Moreover, it is said that there is in England a wholesale manufacture of magic mirrors as a regular industry [. . .]<sup>5</sup>

Late nineteenth-century crystal-gazing and magic mirror use may constitute a specific niche in what Isobel Armstrong labels nineteenth-century ‘glass culture’<sup>6</sup> but its presence nonetheless signifies the continuing inherent associations with the mirror in spite of industrial progress that

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<sup>4</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, 36.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Through a Glass Darkly,’ *All the Year Round* 7:160 (January 23, 1892), 79-84; 84.

<sup>6</sup> Isobel Armstrong *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

we might assume would dispel such ancient superstition. While several quickly sketched overviews of the development of mirrors and their endlessly fascinating and often contradictory associations in Western art have been published in recent years (which I will address shortly), a more in-depth study of the material is warranted and particularly with regard to the explosion of mirror imagery in the nineteenth century. The attached appendix catalogue lists over four hundred paintings of mirrors in England between 1850 and 1915, an unprecedented amount that represents a cross-section of the types of mirrors available and how they were represented. Within this list, a specific approach to mirror imagery by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood stands apart as a consolidation of historic iconography with modern glass technology, medieval visions in glass translated to contemporary life.

This dissertation evaluates the use of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite paintings between 1850 – 1915 in terms of iconography as well as the mirror’s identity as a nineteenth-century material object and makes the case for the presence of a distinctive Pre-Raphaelite treatment of the mirror. In comparison with earlier mirror representations as well as those seen in the works of their contemporaries, the Pre-Raphaelite mirror signifies an interconnecting motif between the different artists of the movement and creates what I will refer to as ‘intermirrorality,’ a play on Julia Kristeva’s literary theory of intertextuality. I use the term intermirrorality and the allusion to Kristeva not for the purpose of adding to the existing surplus of academic jargon in formal literature, or even to suggest a faithful adherence to Kristeva’s concept, but because the word encapsulates the concept of visual interdependence, dialogue, and response I will argue is an underlying feature of Pre-Raphaelite painting.<sup>7</sup> I will demonstrate that the mirror ultimately constitutes a compelling factor in the on-going critical discussion around definitions of Pre-Raphaelitism, the stylistic division between Hunt and D.G. Rossetti, and the later nineteenth-century artists who slip in and out of the academic boundaries of the Pre-Raphaelite label.

Dating from the early days of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded in 1848 by William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Edward Millais with William Michael Rossetti, James Collinson, F.G. Stephens, and Thomas Woolner, mirrors appear in at least thirty works (comprising paintings and sketches) by the original members of the Brotherhood, not counting artists such as Edward Burne-Jones who are considered part of the ‘second wave’ of Pre-Raphaelitism, or pictures that employ other modes of reflection such Rossetti’s *Dante’s Vision of Rachel and Leah* (1855) or *Aspecta Medusa* (1867), both of which feature reflections in water.

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<sup>7</sup>Julia Kristeva coined intertextuality in the 1960s to describe her literary theory that texts always respond to one another to create an on-going conversation, a self-referencing network of texts; ‘any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations[. . .] and poetic language is read as at least *double*.’ See Kristeva, ‘Word, Dialogue and Novel’ in Toril Moi (ed.), *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 37. She also describes intertextuality as ‘a permutation of texts[. . .] in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another.’ See Kristeva, ‘The Bounded Text,’ in *Desire and Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, transl. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 36.

Within the overall scheme of paintings during the sixty-five year period under consideration, the thirty mirrors by the original P.R.B. are technically a small percentage of the four hundred and fifty mirrors I have documented in the attached catalogue.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the repetitive style of mirror, composition placement, and purposeful reflection seen in Pre-Raphaelite works delineate their use of mirror imagery as a distinctive motif that creates a visual dialogue between the original members of the movement and their successors. Taking into consideration the appearance of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite pictures between 1850 -1915, my assessment of mirror imagery and the role of reflections not only contributes a fresh reading of familiar works but also demonstrates that the mirror is relevant to evaluating the Pre-Raphaelites as an avant-garde movement. The specification of these dates derives from Pre-Raphaelite representations of Tennyson's poem 'The Lady of Shalott' (I use the Pre-Raphaelite label broadly here to denote J.W. Waterhouse's 1915 painting of the subject as well as William Holman Hunt's works from the 1850s) that feature a significant mirror, an approach that creates a necessary framework in order to concentrate on the period and artists in depth rather than resorting to a broad overview.

The mirror appears as a significant Pre-Raphaelite feature from the early 1850s with two drawings by Hunt and Rossetti that lay the groundwork for subsequent works that position the mirror as a main character, one that is capable of conflating time and space while simultaneously delivering a Shakespearean-like soliloquy to reveal critical narrative information to the viewer. Hunt's study for *The Lady of Shalott* (c.1850, fig.1) and Rossetti's sketch of a woman before a mirror (untitled, c.1850, fig.2) were both created during the crystallising time of the P.R.B. and constitute evidence that they were thinking about ideas for the mirror from the outset. Rossetti's sketch, which has not been previously analysed in academic literature,<sup>9</sup> inaugurates a lifelong exploration of mirror imagery in both poetry and painting and places him on equal footing with Hunt, challenging any assumption that Hunt's well-known *Lady of Shalott* drawing represents a prior claim on mirror representation. Both of these images will be analysed in greater depth in the following chapters but I introduce them at this point to identify the first of the Pre-Raphaelite mirrors as well as clarify the 1850 starting point for my mirror inquiry: the mirrors depicted not only anticipate the reflections in later works that draw the viewer into the world of the painting, they also challenge the implied medieval settings in both images, an anachronistic feature that is characteristic of Pre-Raphaelite mirrors.

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix A

<sup>9</sup> Information on the sketch is limited and comprised of brief notices by Virginia Surtees and Jerome McGann. Surtees lists the work in her catalogue raisonné, and McGann mentions it in the Rossetti Archive but neither analyse the work. See Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. I (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), 220 and 'Page from a Sketch Book,' Jerome McGann (ed.), *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Archive* (IATH, University of Virginia and Nines Consortium, 2008), <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s671.raw.html>.

This dissertation, structured primarily around the mirrors of Hunt and Rossetti and their influence on later artists, is nevertheless set against the contextual backdrop of historical and contemporary mirror production and corresponding art-historical imagery. Pre-Raphaelite mirrors are located within a broad, linear continuum of mirror representation and association that includes sacred, secular, moral, and financial underpinnings, and in order to access a more comprehensive reading of their works it is necessary to analyse the mirror as a material, cultural object. This introduction and the following chapters will investigate the nineteenth-century mirror as a post-Industrial Revolution middle-class artefact and, following a chronological narrative, will analyse the concurrent, developing mirrors of Hunt and Rossetti in two separate chapters before concluding with later nineteenth-century artists who demonstrate a visual response to Pre-Raphaelite mirrors in what I shall argue is a viable factor for weighing the scales of Pre-Raphaelite influence and association.

Although this project is very much grounded in the materiality of mirrors, there is a mirror-world of metaphorical potential and historical depths of both representation and iconography located beneath the glass surface. Scholarly art-historical literature on mirrors consistently references the latter, the psychoanalytical and metaphysical properties of the mirror while disregarding the materiality of the object, a component I will argue is just as significant and relevant to analysing representations of the mirror as the iconographic side. In light of this prevalent methodology for mirror consideration, I believe continuing in this vein as a point of departure would be redundant and as such this dissertation takes the materiality of the mirror as a starting point of inquiry rather than the prevailing popular methodology derived from Foucault or Lacan, early twentieth-century mirror readings established by interpretations of Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* and Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656) that continues to dominate mirror discussion and is due for a reconsideration.

As such, rather than beginning with the prevalent art-historical twentieth-century theories that I will outline below, I will start instead with the mirror at the visual and metaphorical centre of the pictorial web before progressing outwards to the world beyond the picture plane. My structure of critical inquiry into Pre-Raphaelite mirrors relates to what Rossetti describes as the 'inner standing-point,' the point or site of accessibility into the world of the artwork.<sup>10</sup> In this case, I suggest it is the mirror that facilitates entry to the work and can be read as the thread on which the imagined world of the picture hangs. The mirrors pictured in Pre-Raphaelite paintings are first and foremost representations of objects from the 'real' nineteenth-century world, not visual displays of critical theory that post-date them by a century. This approach adjusts the

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<sup>10</sup> D.G. Rossetti, 'The Stealthy School of Criticism,' *The Athenaeum*, 2303 (16 December, 1871), 792-794; 793. Rossetti writes of locating meaning within the internal structure of the artwork through the inner standing-point, a place of accessing the artwork that disregards the 'requirement of science' and rejects a 'treatment from without.'

starting point of investigation to within the picture instead of an outside-in approach, or as Rossetti refers to it, a ‘treatment from without.’<sup>11</sup> In *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830-1880* (2008), Isobel Armstrong describes the silvery barrier of the glass mirror as the place of ‘curiously finite inaccessibility,’ and notes that while objects may be reflected perfectly in the mirror world, they occupy a space ‘absolutely incapable of being entered. This optical bar on entry is a powerful scopic taboo’.<sup>12</sup> I suggest, however, that the opposite is true of the Pre-Raphaelite mirror; instead it is comparable to the mutable glass in Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) and, ignoring the ‘requirement of science,’ constitutes a unique point of entry into the work.

### **The Mirror and Art History**

In spite of mirrors recurring frequently in the works of the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly in those by Rossetti and Hunt, their repetitive appearances throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth century has not been thoroughly investigated before and this dissertation contends that the mirror is a critical component that warrants reconsideration as a distinguishing mark of the movement. The academic literature on mirrors and glass in general tends to categorise the mirror as either an industrial object (seen in chronological surveys of glass production or interior décor<sup>13</sup>) or as a psychoanalytical and metaphorical concept (the prevailing art-historical slant that emphasises iconography and the mimetic role of the mirror in theories of vision).<sup>14</sup> As mentioned above, the established scholarly model for thinking about the mirror through the lens of Foucault or Lacan (whose theories post-date any significant mirror developments) at the expense of other points of inquiry represents a glaring omission in art-historical and Pre-Raphaelite studies, particularly in light of the prolific mirror imagery that appears during the latter half of the nineteenth century. While these metaphorical, psychoanalytical readings of the mirror are absolutely relevant and contribute to the critical reading of specific works, they are ultimately one-sided and I suggest instead a strategy of inquiry that takes into account both sides of the mirror for a more substantial, comprehensive reading.

The prevailing trend in art-historical literature with regard to mirrors in general (not only those found in Pre-Raphaelite pictures) derives from the early twentieth-century writings of

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<sup>11</sup> Rossetti, 793.

<sup>12</sup> Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 285 + 287.

<sup>13</sup> For an example of mirrors in nineteenth-century décor, see Judith Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior: Liberalism and the British Home 1870-1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2008), 3. Neiswander contributes a reading of Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience* that identifies the mirror as a nineteenth-century decorative object but does not analyse the painting beyond its use as an illustration of a mid-century parlour.

<sup>14</sup> One exception to this is Herbert Grabes’s treatise *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance* (1982) that surveys the use of the textual use of the mirror. While Grabes’s study focuses on literary history, his analysis of its literary use contributes to the consideration of the mirror as both object and metaphor.



Foucault, Panofsky, and Lacan and is rooted in iconography, theories of vision, and metaphor. With regard to mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite painting more specifically, aside from characterising the circular or convex mirror as a quotation from Van Eyck or Titian<sup>15</sup> the academic literature primarily stays within these established references.<sup>16</sup> Illustrating this, a series of letters between art historians Robert Baldwin, Sara Phelps Smith, and Virginia M. Allen in the June 1985 publication of *The Art Bulletin* provides a snapshot of standard academic art-historical mirror readings. The editorial letters in question (at some points combative and somewhat entertaining to read as scholars politely but vehemently disagree with one another) amount to an academic debate about Rossetti's *Lady Lilith* (1866-68, 1872-73, fig.3), a work I will address in greater depth in the following chapter on Rossetti. The painting of Adam's mythological first wife before Eve is an ambiguous toilet scene and has a number of open-ended details, particularly the mirror that reflects a woodland scene instead of an interior; while the scholarly disagreements go back and forth in addressing the meaning of the work, the iconography, and the character of Lilith herself, references keep to the standard theoretical framework.

The letters began as a response to an earlier article by Allen,<sup>17</sup> and as such a detailed exploration of the picture is of course impossible in this context; what is notable, however, is that the mirrors are repeatedly referred to in terms of metaphor<sup>18</sup> and are categorised as symbolic accessories within the pictorial structure. Lilith's mirror is described as either a Petrarchan metaphor,<sup>19</sup> a quotation from Titian's *Woman with a Mirror* (1515),<sup>20</sup> or a symbol of female vanity.<sup>21</sup> Sara Phelps Smith does point out that the mirror shows the viewer a reflection of a lost Eden but this is also not an original observation and, like the others, constitutes a repetition of

<sup>15</sup> Titian's *Woman with a Mirror* (c.1513-15) 'echoes through all of Rossetti's toilette scenes'. Julian Treuherz, Elizabeth Prettejohn and Edwin Becker, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 2003), 188.

<sup>16</sup> For example see Jane Langley, 'Pre-Raphaelites or Anti-Dürerites?' *The Burlington Magazine*, 137:1109 (August, 1995), 501-508; 505. Samuel J. Wagstaff, 'Some Notes on Holman Hunt and the Lady of Shalott,' *Wadsworth Athenaeum Bulletin*, 11 (Summer 1962):1-21; 6. Judith Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol.1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2006), 272. For Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* see Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 77-78. Paul Spencer-Longhurst, *The Blue Bower: Rossetti in the 1860s* (exh cat, London: Scala Publishers in association with Barber Institute of Fine Arts, 2000), 96. Jerome McGann (ed.), *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Archive* (IATH, University of Virginia and Nines consortium, 2008), <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s124.raw.html>

<sup>17</sup> Virginia M. Allen, "'One Strangling Golden Hair': Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Lady Lilith*," *The College Art Bulletin*, 66:2 (June, 1984), 285-294.

<sup>18</sup> Allen's previous article also confines the mirror to metaphor: within the wider interpretation of Lilith as a contemporary, dangerous woman, she interprets the boudoir mirror with two candles on either side as an altar to 'Love, to Lilith, to Vanity, or even to Death'. Allen, "'One Strangling Golden Hair,'" 291.

<sup>19</sup> Edith Appleton Standen, Dianne Sachko MacLeod, Robert W. Baldwin, Sarah Phelps Smith and Virginia M. Allen, 'Letters,' *The Art Bulletin*, 67:2 (June, 1985), 317-324; Robert W. Baldwin, 318.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Baldwin and Sarah Phelps Smith, 'Letters,' *The Art Bulletin*, 318, entitled here by Baldwin as the Titians' Louvre *Woman at her Toilette*.

<sup>21</sup> 'Letters,' Sarah Phelps Smith, 318, and Virginia M. Allen, 322. Allen further develops the symbol of Vanity to suggest danger and entrapment; 'Here the attributes of a Vanity have altered from moral lesson into a snare for the viewer, an intensification of Lilith's danger to her admirers' (Allen, 322).

standard, accepted mirror interpretations.<sup>22</sup> More interesting and relevant to this thesis is Virginia M. Allen's one brief reference to the toilet mirror in which she identifies it as one of several contemporary Victorian decorative items. This observation and its implications are not analysed any further (for instance, how does she identify this as Victorian?), however, beyond Allen pointing out that the mirror, along with other details, contradicts Lilith's ambiguous clothing and underlines her timelessness.<sup>23</sup> These views of the mirror presented here are certainly valid and should be a part of any lengthy mirror study but they are also illustrative of the restrictive approach of scholarly iconographic readings that disregard the social and cultural implications of glass.

### **Velázquez's 'Las Meninas'**

Nowhere is this one-sided reading of the art-historical mirror exemplified so well as in the literature on Jan van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434, fig.4)<sup>24</sup> and Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656, fig.5).<sup>25</sup> The scholarly work on *The Arnolfini Portrait* (to be discussed in the next section) and *Las Meninas* initiated by Panofsky and Foucault, respectively, continues to inform interpretations of mirrors art. The minute, detailed reflection of a fifteenth-century interior in Van Eyck's convex mirror and the haunting presence of the king and queen of Spain seen in the background mirror of Velázquez's painting constitute two of the most acclaimed examples of the mirror in Western art and, while these mirrors differ in terms of style and context, what they do have in common as the subject of academic are critical theorists who predominantly analyse the source of reflection, the artist's use of perspective, and the intricacies of the viewer-artist-subject gazes. The mirror itself as a fifteenth-century or seventeenth-century object and how that might inform a reading of the work is consistently overlooked, an approach still upheld with the academic references to the Pre-Raphaelite mirrors.

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<sup>22</sup> 'Letters,' Sarah Phelps Smith, 319. See William Sharp, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1882), 210: 'In the large steel-clasped mirror standing on the oaken chest is reflected a pleasant glimpse of garden greenery [. . .] Is this reflection of outer nature meant as a hint of that primal paradise where Adam and Lilith loved [?].'

<sup>23</sup> 'Letters,' Allen, 322: 'Her chair, comb, hand mirror, boudoir mirror, and the chest on which it sits, with the table in the foreground, are all of demonstrably Victorian design.'

<sup>24</sup> See in particular Erwin Panofsky, 'Jan Van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait,' *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 64: 372 (March, 1934), 117-119 + 122-127. Jean Baptist Bedaux, 'The Reality of Symbols: The Question of Disguised Symbolism in Jan van Eyck's "Arnolfini Portrait,"' *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 16: 1 (1986), 5-28. Linda Seidel, "'Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait": Business as Usual?,' *Critical Enquiry*, 16: 1 (Autumn, 1989), 55-86.

<sup>25</sup> See the well-known first chapter of Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (first published in 1966). John R. Searle, "'Las Meninas" and the Paradoxes of Pictorial Representation,' *Critical Enquiry*, 6: 3 (Spring, 1980), 477-488. Joel Snyder and Ted Cohen, 'Reflexions on "Las Meninas": Paradox Lost,' *Critical Enquiry*, 7: 2 (Winter, 1980), 429-447. Svetlana Alpers, 'Interpretation without Representation, or, the Viewing of Las Meninas,' *Representations*, 1 (February, 1983), 30-142. Gary Shapiro, *Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 254-261. See also Jonathan Brown (ed.), *The Collected Writings on Velázquez* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

Foucault's well-known analysis of *Las Meninas* in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (1966), for example, emphasises the uncertainties of vision and representation that derive from the interconnected gazes of the viewer, artist, and reflection:

We are observing ourselves being observed by the painter, and made visible to his eyes by the same light that enables us to see him. And just as we are about to apprehend ourselves, transcribed by his hand as though in a mirror, we find that we can in fact apprehend nothing of that mirror but its lustreless back. The other side of a psyche.<sup>26</sup>

Foucault identifies the mirror as the mediator between the visible world of the canvas and the invisible world of the viewer where the king and queen reside, what Gary Shapiro summarises as Foucault's primary interest:

how the painting constructs or implies a position for its spectator, its model and its painter that are outside, beyond, and in front of its frame; this construction is not primarily an effect of the internal perspectival system of the picture but is rather established by an apparent convergence of looks and the mirror.<sup>27</sup>

That the reflection acts as the connection point between the visible and the invisible is indeed a critical function of the mirror in painting, and one that is emphasised by the Pre-Raphaelite treatment of the mirror, but Foucault (and Shapiro) do not interrogate the other (unmentioned) side of the Velázquez mirror, the material object itself made of expensive glass, encased in an ebony wood frame and likely a Venetian import. Foucault ultimately analyses the picture as a self-reflective meditation on the art of representation and subsequent essays on *Las Meninas* have a tendency to respond to his iconic reading.<sup>28</sup>

By working from within the Foucault framework rather than starting with the mirror itself, subsequent twentieth-century readings of Velázquez's mirror do little to widen this scope of

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<sup>26</sup> Michel Foucault, *Las Meninas, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1973), 5.

<sup>27</sup> Gary Shapiro, *Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 260.

<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Brown, 'The Meaning of *Las Meninas*,' *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). John R. Searle, 'Las Meninas and the Paradoxes of Pictorial Representation,' *Critical Inquiry*, 6 (Spring 1980), 477-88. Svetlana Alpers, 'Interpretation without Representation, or, the Viewing of *Las Meninas*,' *Representations*, 1 (Feb. 1983), 30-42. Joel Snyder, 'Las Meninas and the Mirror of the Prince,' *Critical Inquiry*, 11: 4 (June 1985), 539-572.

inquiry. For instance, Gregory Galligan's 1998 discussion of the *Las Meninas* mirror suggests a reading in which the reflection of the royal couple represents the

mind's eye concept of the entire painting – a sign for the psychology that informs the plane of the canvas itself, which is to be understood as standing in for a large mirror [. . .] not only does *Las Meninas* constitute a brilliant logos for the art of representation, it transcends mimesis to index not sight but insight [. . .] not mere perception (and a painter's simulation of it) but the inner workings of visual cognition.<sup>29</sup>

Galligan's reading echoes that of Foucault and illustrates the prevalence of applying philosophies of vision to readings of the mirror. Meanwhile, the interpretation of the reflection as a 'brilliant logos for the art of representation,' is a well-founded and informative reading but one that leaves room for further inquiry as it does not account for the mirror outside of this structure.

Exemplifying the persistence of this theoretical approach of mirror analysis applied to other later mirrors in painting, David Peters Corbett's reading of Walter Sickert's late nineteenth-century paintings of music halls considers the spatial ambiguity created by mirrors as a critique of the limits of surface representation to convey the modern experience. Corbett identifies this 'tension between visual appearance and interior essence'<sup>30</sup> that Sickert explores in his images, with the music hall works in particular constituting 'meditations on this dialectic between the representation of the material surface of experience and what lies beneath them.'<sup>31</sup> Paintings such as *Little Dot Hetherington at the Bedford Music Hall* (c.1888-1889), *The P.S. Wing in the O.P. Mirror* (c.1889), and *Vesta Victoria at the Old Bedford* (c.1890) depict stage performances seen reflected in large mirrors that have been incorporated in the work in such a way as to not be immediately apparent to the viewer; the odd angles and seemingly abrupt composition edges only begin to resolve when we realise that a large part of the scene in front of us is a reflection.<sup>32</sup> For instance, at first glance the performer in *The P.S. Wing in the O.P. Mirror* (fig.6) appears to have a horizontal line cutting through her legs (actually the joins of the glass mirror) while the audience seemingly looks in the wrong direction. The O.P. mirror of the title is the off-stage prompt mirror behind the audience for the use of the performers but in this case the performers, Sickert, and the viewer of the work use it. The presence of the gold mirror frame, when we

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<sup>29</sup> Gregory Galligan, 'The Self Pictured: Manet, the Mirror, and the Occupation of Realist Painting,' *The Art Bulletin*, 80:1 (March 1998), 138-171; 156-157.

<sup>30</sup> David Peters Corbett, *The World in Paint: Modern Art and Visuality in England, 1848-1914* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 179-180.

<sup>31</sup> David Peters Corbett, 'Seeing into Modernity: Walter Sickert's Music Hall Scenes, c.1887-1907, and English Modernism,' *Modernism/modernity*, 7:2 (April, 2000): 285-306; 295-296.

<sup>32</sup> Corbett, 296.

become aware of it, is the only visual cue that we are looking at a scene mediated several times over through Sickert's gaze, paint, and reflection.

Corbett's references to Sickert's mirrors are within the context of a larger investigation into the concept of modernity in late nineteenth-century English art, and specifically the problematic nature of surface representation. The Symbolist representation, he explains, 'is committed to an analysis and understanding of modern experience, but distrusts a surface account of the visual world as a means of achieving it',<sup>33</sup> an anxiety Corbett ascribes to Sickert's use of mirrors to deliberately disorientate the viewer. The mirrors in Sickert's music-hall images contribute to spatial confusion and, as Corbett observes, deliberately point our attention to 'to the instability of representation and appearance'.<sup>34</sup> Wendy Baron concedes the possibility that Sickert's unusual choice of reflection was based purely on direct observation of the large mirrors at the Bedford ('The great mirrors happened to be set in the right places and at the right angles to provide striking juxtapositions of stage and audience'), a brief reference to the mirrors as actual objects in the 'real' world, and also suggests the *Las Meninas* mirror as a source of inspiration for Sickert, a comparison that warrants further consideration.<sup>35</sup>

Corbett acknowledges Baron's *Las Meninas* suggestion in a footnote in *The World in Paint: Modern Art and Visuality in England, 1848-1914*<sup>36</sup> but does not explore this. Likewise, given his discussion of Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1853) and its significant mirror in the first chapter of *The World in Paint*, it is surprising that Corbett does not return to the idea of Pre-Raphaelite mirrors as a possible source of inspiration for Sickert, or indeed contribute a more in-depth analysis of Pre-Raphaelite mirrors as he does make a connection between the mirrors in Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* and Rossetti's later *Lady Lilith*. The point of comparison between these two Pre-Raphaelite mirrors is one I consider significant and will return to at length; Corbett does not delve into this beyond his observation that Rossetti cites Hunt's earlier mirror while infusing it with a different meaning.<sup>37</sup> Rather than stray beyond the Foucault framework, his mirror analysis is restricted to the problematic nature of visuality, its representation, and the viewer's gaze, a methodology not dissimilar to Galligan's 'logos for the art of representation,' Shapiro's observations of Velázquez's manipulation of the viewer's

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<sup>33</sup> Corbett, 291.

<sup>34</sup> Corbett, 296

<sup>35</sup> Wendy Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2006), 20. Baron notes 'the idea of painting a subject which is entirely contained within a reflection is in itself so unusual, even when divorced from the particular subtleties of Velázquez's approach, that *Las Meninas* was probably partly responsible for the conception of *Little Dot*.' (Baron, 20)

<sup>36</sup> Corbett, 290.

<sup>37</sup> Corbett, *The World in Paint*, 62-63. 'In *Lady Lilith*, Rossetti quotes this moralizing, spiritualizing mirror of Hunt's, placing his own version in the same segment of the composition but allowing it to carry a different charge' (Corbett, 63).

perception of space, a methodology that has its roots in Foucault's meditations on vision and representation.

Psychoanalytical readings of the mirror are prevalent in scholarly interpretations of mirrors and Shapiro and Foucault's references above to 'observing ourselves' and the 'other side of a psyche' correspond to Jacques Lacan's earlier psychoanalytical readings of the mirror and his theory of the mirror stage of development,<sup>38</sup> a theory that refers to the moment a child first recognises themselves as the Other reflected in the mirror. Lacan's mirror stage constitutes a persistent presence in mid-to-late twentieth-century mirror references in terms of the act of seeing the self as Other, the fragmentation of the self-seeing-the-self, and the process of integrating the internal self with the external self.<sup>39</sup> Although I have found this particularly useful for thinking about D.G. Rossetti's mirrors in his painting and poetry, a concept I will address in the chapter on Rossetti, Lacanian theory does not factor as a predominant methodological approach in this dissertation. Rossetti's mirrors represent one specific aspect of P.R.B. mirror imagery and while Lacanian theory contributes to a reading of these it does not necessarily prove adequate for other mirror representations (Hunt's, for instance). To take this as a critical key starting point for thinking about Pre-Raphaelite mirrors would be repetitive in light of the multiple pre-existing mirror readings and would continue what I believe to be a reductive method of analysis.

Several academic texts do stand out as noteworthy for investigating Velázquez's mirror *outside* of the dominant construct of accepted philosophical readings and are suggestive of the possibilities of considering other angles. Joel Snyder and Ted Cohen's 1980 article in *Critical Inquiry* constitutes just such an example and although they do not account for the mirror as a cultural object, a point that is fundamental to my thesis, their approach to viewing the artwork takes into consideration the spatial geometry of the room as well as how mirrors behave in the real world, a salient point for this dissertation in which I investigate the connection between the mirror both within and without the painting. Snyder and Cohen painstakingly reconstruct the room geometrically and analyse the mirror's angle in an effort to definitively locate the vanishing point (and thus the implied source of reflection),<sup>40</sup> coming to the conclusion that the mirror reflects Velázquez's canvas on which he is painting a formal portrait of the king and

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<sup>38</sup> Jacques Lacan and Bruce Fink (transl.), 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the *I* as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,' *Ecrits* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1966). Lacan first introduced his theory of the mirror stage in 1936 and expanded upon it in a 1949 conference paper given in Zurich.

<sup>39</sup> 'It is this moment that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge into being mediated by the other's desire, constitutes its objects in an abstract equivalence due to competition from other pieces, and turns the *I* into an apparatus to which every instinctual pressure constitutes a danger, even if it corresponds to a natural maturation process.' See Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the *I* as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,' *Ecrits*, 98.

<sup>40</sup> Joel Snyder and Ted Cohen, 'Reflexions on "Las Meninas": Paradox Lost,' *Critical Inquiry*, 7:2 (Winter 1980), 429-447.

queen. This analysis contradicts Foucault's underlying assumption that the scene is depicted from the view of the viewer/royal couple who are reflected in the mirror and instead Snyder and Cohen describe their reading of *Las Meninas* as a 'demythologising interpretation' compared to previous analyses such as John R. Searle's 1980 meditation on the painting as a self-referencing paradox<sup>41</sup> as well as Foucault's 'vision of pure unconditioned representation.'<sup>42</sup> Rather than a merely 'pedestrian,'<sup>43</sup> (their choice of word) approach, their method of inquiry suggests the range of possibilities beyond a Foucault-Lacan formula.<sup>44</sup>

A refreshing instance of a more recent scholarly work that pushes the boundaries of the redundant, established methodology is found in Byron Ellsworth Hamann's 2010 article 'The Mirrors of *Las Meninas*: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay'<sup>45</sup> in which he analyses *Las Meninas* through the lens of colonial studies and seventeenth-century Spanish commodities. He does not examine the mirror but his study of other artefacts in the picture (the red ceramic pitcher, red curtains reflected in the mirror, and the silver tray) highlights the wealth of overlooked social history in familiar works of art. Likewise, George and Linda Bauer's article 'Portrait Practice in *Las Meninas*' (2000) and Simon Altmann's 2013 article 'The Illusion of Mirrors: Velázquez's *Las Meninas*' stand out for rethinking the structure of investigation. Altmann in particular analyses the mirror's size and frame for the time period and compares it with mirrors listed in the contemporary inventories. Although I disagree with his conclusion that the mirror does not exist at all, the alternative hypothesis he reaches illustrates the mirror's potential to contribute to the discussion around a familiar work.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> John R. Searle, "'Las Meninas'" and the Paradoxes of Pictorial Representation,' *Critical Inquiry*, 6: 3 (Spring, 1980): 477-488. Searle concludes 'There is no way to answer the question What is the picture a picture of? that does not include reference to the picture. But that is simply a consequence of the fact that the picture is self-referential.' (488)

<sup>42</sup> Snyder and Cohen, 446.

<sup>43</sup> Snyder and Cohen, 446.

<sup>44</sup> 'Some pictures are very delicately balanced on a viewpoint and look distorted when seen from a position even slightly away from the geometrically sanctioned point. But most pictures do not behave this way, and we are free to wander in front of them without missing their significance. We do not approach paintings in the way that we approach problems in surveying, and our perceptual capacities are not, by themselves, typically equipped to inform us when we are at the right point of view. The error made by Searle and Foucault in seeing *Las Meninas* is an acute example of this.' (Snyder and Cohen, 446.)

<sup>45</sup> Byron Ellsworth Hamann, 'The Mirrors of *Las Meninas*: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay,' *The Art Bulletin*, 92: ½ (March- June 2010), 6-35.

<sup>46</sup> George Bauer and Linda Bauer, 'Portrait Practice in "Las Meninas,"' *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, 19:3 (2000), 37-42. The Bauers like Altmann conclude based on palace inventories that 'the mirror that plays so prominent a role in *Las Meninas* would appear to have been invented for that very purpose by the artist.' (39) See Simon Altmann, 'The Illusion of Mirrors: Velázquez's *Las Meninas*,' *European Review*, 2:1 (2013), 1-9. These conclusions are drawn from descriptions of mirrors located in the palace that do not match the inventory of Velázquez's studio where *Las Meninas* is set. Curiously, neither article considers the possibility that Velázquez's might have constructed the scene, taken artistic license with the dimensions of the mirror, or moved a mirror from another room the palace.

### *Van Eyck's 'The Arnolfini Portrait'*

Scholarly work on the other prominent mirror in art-historical literature, the convex glass in Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*, presents the other dominant approach to thinking about mirrors and one that informs my readings but which I find similarly restrictive if it is the only methodology applied. Comprised of metaphorical and iconographic readings of the mirror, the symbolic interpretations of Van Eyck's mirror bounce back and forth like a tennis match between art historians. Inaugurated by Erwin Panofsky's 1934 article that explores the meaning of the work derived mainly from his interpretations of iconography and although Panofsky does not address the mirror in his original article, successive interpretations of the Arnolfini mirror focus on its symbolic content.

Such explanations of the mirror's presence and its reflection of the two figures as well as two additional miniature figures seen in the doorway include the *speculum sine macula* (the spotless mirror associated with the Virgin Mary, a reading Panofsky put forward in his 1953 publication *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*<sup>47</sup>), the mirror as symbolic of the sacrament of marriage and the spiritual marriage between Christ and the church, the convex glass as representative of the 'eye of God,' evidence that Van Eyck was a witness to a marriage ceremony by way of the reflected figures, and indicative of the artist's presence, vision, and representation of the natural world.<sup>48</sup> Foucault and Lacanian theories emerge here as well, seen for instance in Wolfgang Zucker's observation that the mirror 'witnesses the actual presence of the witnessing painter'<sup>49</sup> and apparently the witnesses in the doorway, all of which are witnessed by the viewer: the mirror itself begins to disappear amongst this dizzying series of busy, simultaneous gazes bouncing around all at once. As I have stated previously, these readings should not be discounted but I believe they leave the door open for more inquiry.

Panofsky's explanation of the subject of *The Arnolfini Portrait* as a wedding ceremony has been rejected in the latter half of the twentieth century<sup>50</sup> and although he does not evaluate the

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<sup>47</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* vol. I (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press and New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 203.

<sup>48</sup> See Robert Baldwin, 'Marriage as a Sacramental Reflection of the Passion: The Mirror in Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Wedding*,' *Oud Holland*, 98 (1984), 57-75. David Carrier, 'Naturalism and Allegory in Flemish Painting,' *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 45:3 (Spring, 1987), 237-249. Jan Baptist Bedaux, 'The Reality of Symbols: The Question of Disguised Symbolism in Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*,' *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 16:1 (1986), 5-28. Wolfgang M. Zucker, 'Reflections on Reflections,' *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 20:3 (Spring, 1962), 239-250; esp. 241. Craig Harbison, 'Sexuality and Social Standing in Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Double Portrait*,' *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43:2 (Summer, 1990), 249-291. Meyer Schapiro calls the mirror 'the beautiful, luminous, polished eye': see Meyer Schapiro, 'Muscipula Diaboli,' *The Symbolism of the Merode Altarpiece*, *Late Antique, Early Christian and Mediaeval Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1979), 10.

<sup>49</sup> Wolfgang M. Zucker, 'Reflections on Reflections,' *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 20:3 (Spring, 1962), 239-250; 240. Zucker also supports the spiritualism suggested by Panofsky, for 'the mirror thus simultaneously to the purity of the bride, to the blessing of the holy matrimony by the mother of God, and to the true validity of the exchanged marriage vows.' Zucker, 240-241.

<sup>50</sup> For example, see Rachel Billinge and Lorne Campbell, 'The Infra-red Reflectograms of Jan van Eyck's Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife Giovanna Cenami,' *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*,



mirror in his original 1934 article he does introduce the concept of ‘disguised symbolism,’ a significantly constructive methodology when applied to Pre-Raphaelite paintings, mirrors included, as it takes into account both realism and symbolism. Panofsky’s theory of disguised symbolism aims to reconcile the realism of Northern Renaissance painting with its deeply religious connotations through recognising the symbolism hidden in everyday objects. This symbolism, purportedly so well integrated in the world of the picture that it is not readily apparent, ‘impresses the beholder with a kind of mystery and makes him inclined to suspect a hidden significance in all and every object.’<sup>51</sup>

The theory of disguised symbolism has been dismissed in more recent twentieth-century scholarship,<sup>52</sup> and seems to be considered downright unfashionable, but I suggest here a reconsideration of this in terms of looking at the Pre-Raphaelite mirror. Perhaps the real problem with Panofsky’s theory is one of semantics and, like the name ‘Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,’ could have been better titled. In Panofsky’s explanation of disguised symbolism, the viewer is not bombarded with a barrage of overt symbolic meanings, or ‘irritated by a mass of complicated hieroglyphs’<sup>53</sup> but is rather left to contemplate the picture, whose

attributes and symbols are chosen and placed in such a way that what is possibly meant to express an allegorical meaning, at the same time perfectly ‘fits’ into a landscape or an interior apparently taken from life.<sup>54</sup>

It is this use of symbolism, not so much ‘disguised’ as realistically incorporated into the overall schematic structure of the work, that we see repeated in the works of the Pre-Raphaelites.

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16 (1995), 47-60. Billinge and Campbell dismiss the symbolic significance of details such as the candle, oranges, chandelier and dog based on infrared technology that reveals these were added later rather than part of a planned symbolic construct. Also see Margaret L. Koster, ‘The Arnolfini Double Portrait: a Simple Solution,’ *Apollo*, 158: 499, (September, 2003), 3-14. Koster argues it is a memorial portrait based on Lorne Campbell’s archival research that Giovanni Arnolfini was not married until 1447 and his first wife died in 1426. See Lorne Campbell, *The Fifteenth-Century Netherlandish Paintings* (London: National Gallery, 1998), 201: Campbell argues this is a second wife. Edwin Hall suggests that a betrothal rather than a marriage ceremony is represented. See Edwin Hall, *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck’s Double Portrait* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1994), 31.

<sup>51</sup> Erwin Panofsky, ‘Jan Van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait,’ *The Burlington Magazine*, 64:372 (March 1934), 117-119 + 122-127; 126.

<sup>52</sup> For instance, Edwin Hall dismisses the notion of any significant symbolism whatsoever in the painting and argues that the twentieth-century interest in the mirror stems from photographic reproductions that enlarge its reflection; as for disguised symbolism, he attributes this to twentieth-century psychoanalytic theory. See Edwin Hall, *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck’s Double Portrait*, 117-118; 124. Jenny Graham points out that Panofsky’s theory of ‘disguised symbolism’ is no longer considered a credible method although it is often criticized out of context, the original context as a challenge to contemporary claims that the painting was a self-portrait of Van Eyck and his wife. See Jenny Graham, *Inventing Van Eyck: The Remaking of an Artist for the Modern Age* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 170.

<sup>53</sup> Panofsky, ‘Jan van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait,’ 126.

<sup>54</sup> Panofsky, 126-127.

The iconographic symbols in the *Arnolfini Portrait*, including the mirror, the lit candle, clogs, and the dog are not out of place in the fifteenth-century domestic setting and are rendered with the same style of realism that applies to both the technique and the authenticity of the interior. It is not farfetched to establish a similar reading of Hunt and Rossetti's works such as *The Awakening Conscience* (1853) or *La Bella Mano* (1875), images I will come back to as representative of both realistic cultural objects and of underlying symbolism. Writing about contemporary domestic paintings ('homeish themes'<sup>55</sup>), a critic in *The Art Journal* (1866) advised

The details, too, - the furniture, for example, in a room, - must have a meaning and even point a moral. Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress' was written upon walls and floors; every object had its tongue and spoke of folly. As for the execution, the more real the better; detail gives verisimilitude to the narrative, and local truth enables the mind to realise the situation.<sup>56</sup>

Whether considering details of fruit, furniture, candles or mirrors, the underlying construction of symbolism through an authentic contemporary depiction is the same, what Panofsky observes as

still-life accessories [. . .] invested with a symbolical meaning [. . .] The symbolical significance is neither abolished nor does it contradict the naturalistic tendencies; it is so completely absorbed by reality, that reality itself gives rise to a flow of preternatural associations.<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps this accounts for the lack of investigation thus far: the Pre-Raphaelite mirrors are integrated in the pictures in such a realistic way that we forget to interrogate such a familiar household object.

In terms of thinking about the iconography seen in both *The Arnolfini Portrait* as well as Pre-Raphaelite imagery, perhaps a better term than Panofsky's 'disguised symbolism' is Chris Brooks's expression 'symbolic realism.' In *Signs For the Times: Symbolic Realism in the Mid-Victorian World* (1984), Brooks designates symbolic realism to describe the merging of the literal with its intangible associations and interpretations, and explores this concept as a Victorian response to the anxiety and chaos of rapid changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. He describes this as 'a conflation of the immediate nature of direct experience with the mediate nature of our experience of symbolism, in which the sign mediates between

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<sup>55</sup> 'The Royal Academy,' *The Art Journal*, 54 (June 1866), 161-172; 166.

<sup>56</sup> 'The Royal Academy,' 166.

<sup>57</sup> Panofsky, 'Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait,' 127.

ourselves and the reality it signifies,<sup>58</sup> an applicable strategy to viewing both sides of the mirror to encompass its literal materiality as well as its iconographic associations. Although Brooks explores the concept of symbolic realism in Pre-Raphaelite painting, particularly Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*,<sup>59</sup> he does not delve into an analysis of the mirror. However, his argument that 'significance belongs to the object, not to the subject's perception of it. Meaning is a phenomenon of outer reality, not inner'<sup>60</sup> and, in his discussion of *The Awakening Conscience*, his observation that 'Detail functions semantically as well as mimetically [. . .] Our sense of each entity as a material reality is coincident with our reading of it as a symbol'<sup>61</sup> informs my structure of inquiry that begins with the object itself rather than a Foucault-Lacanian reading of it.

This project on mirrors advocates for the viewing the mirror as a physical object represented on canvas that simultaneously carries on a double life of symbolic associations and this double-sided consideration that should be brought to the forefront to inform a new reading of familiar works. While Brooks explores this concept of materialism merging with symbolism in a wider scheme of the arts, I believe the theory can apply to a more extensive reading of one item, in this case the nineteenth-century post-Industrial Revolution mirror as the mediator that functions both as symbol, physical artefact, and cultural commodity.

### **The Mirror in Cultural Studies**

As outlined above, previous discussions of the role of the mirror in painting have concentrated on psychoanalytical and iconographic readings derived from Panofsky's art-historical methodology, Lacanian theory, and Foucault's highly influential reading of *Las Meninas*, however my focus is not so much on the psychological implications but rather on the material presence of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. In an increasingly commodified Victorian culture, the mirror's contextual, narrative, and symbolic capacity within nineteenth-century imagery establishes a specifically modern point of entry to facilitate a reading of familiar images, a factor that cannot be critically evaluated if separated from the context of glass production. Therefore, in addition to acknowledging the realistic application of symbols in Pre-Raphaelite painting, I will consider the context of the mirror within the narrative of glass production and relative cultural associations. As we have seen, although there are references in the literature to the Arnolfini mirror as a fifteenth-century material object, they are limited within a broader analysis of the mirror's iconography instead of treated as a viable point of

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<sup>58</sup> Chris Brooks, *Signs for the Times: Symbolic Realism in the Mid-Victorian World* (London and Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 3.

<sup>59</sup> Brooks 138. 'The particular fusion of realism and symbolism found in Pre-Raphaelite painting is nowhere so clearly demonstrated as in Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*.'

<sup>60</sup> Brooks, 117.

<sup>61</sup> Brooks, 141.

investigation,<sup>62</sup> there are even less references to the *Las Meninas* as cultural commodity, and the same standards apply to Hunt's mirror in *The Awakening Conscience* or Rossetti's in *La Bella Mano*. Ultimately, the Pre-Raphaelite mirror corresponds to a contemporary cultural commodity and as such signifies a point of symbolic realism within their works that both establishes a modern context and also operates similarly Lewis Carroll's mercurial glass to draw in the viewer to the mirror world.

Exemplifying the prevalent elimination of this line of consideration in regard to the presence of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite painting, in their essay on Hunt's 1850 *The Lady of Shalott* Alison Inglis and Cecilia O'Brien describe the large convex mirror as 'old-fashioned. . . to evoke the quaintness of the Middle Ages.'<sup>63</sup> My contention, however, is that the mirror is neither old-fashioned nor does it recall the Middle Ages, a central argument in my dissertation and a contextual point that is never evaluated in the literature. The size and shape of the mirrors seen in works such as Hunt's versions of *The Lady of Shalott* as well as Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* (1860-61) or Waterhouse's *Circe Offering the Cup to Ulysses* (1891) identify them as products of the Industrial Revolution and as such they stand out as glaringly modern in the classical, medieval, and Renaissance settings. The literature on Hunt's *Lady of Shalott* images and Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* routinely and briefly mention the reflection of the viewer's space or reference the Van Eyck influence; that the mirrors are present to begin with are taken for granted and, it would seem, so is the size, shape, and clarity of reflection represented, all of which correspond to contextual considerations of glass history.

The social history of the mirror has recently received more attention and, regarding mirror imagery within a nineteenth-century glass context, notable publications on mirrors, mirror culture, and the social history of glass include Sabine Melchior-Bonnet's *The Mirror: A History* (1994, translated into English in 2001), Jonathan Miller's exhibition catalogue *On Reflection*

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<sup>62</sup> For example, within the scope of his analysis of the Arnolfini mirror as a religious symbol, Jean Baptist Bedaux observes that the convex mirror was most likely made in Bruges and mentions in a footnote that such a mirror would have been a customary, valuable wedding gift from a man to his bride. Bedaux, 'The Reality of Symbols: The Question of Disguised Symbolism in Jan van Eyck's "Arnolfini Portrait,"' *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 16:1 (1986), 5-28; 22. Linda Seidel ultimately returns to and confirms Panofsky's original concept of disguised symbolism but does consider the magical religious association of the medieval mirror with pilgrimage in her article "'Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait": Business as Usual?,' *Critical Enquiry*, 16: 1 (Autumn, 1989), 55-86; 81. Craig Harbison reiterates this observation of mirrors used on pilgrimage two years later and also points out that the expensive mirror hangs at an illogical level, suggesting the drawing room is contrived. Harbison, *Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), London: Reaktion Books (2012), 200 + 258. Edwin Hall argues for the mirror as simply a valuable fifteenth-century decorative object and locates its meaning in its economic bourgeois value alongside the oranges and chandelier. Hall, *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck's Double Portrait* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1994; 125-126.

<sup>63</sup> Alison Inglis and Cecilia O'Brien, "'The Breaking of the Web": William Holman Hunt's two early versions of the Lady of Shallot [sic]', The National Gallery of Victoria, *Art Journal*, 32 (1992), <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/the-breaking-of-the-web-william-holman-hunts-two-early-versions-of-the-lady-of-shallot/>

(1998), Miranda Anderson (ed.), *The Book of the Mirror: An Interdisciplinary Collection Exploring the Cultural Story of the Mirror* (2007), and Mark Pendergrast's *Mirror Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection* (2009). All five interdisciplinary studies present a wide-ranging exploration of historical, technological, and cultural reception of glass and mirrors, but lack an in-depth assessment of the mirror's role in any one specific art-historical tradition or the potential for the mirror to inform our interpretation of works within that tradition.

Melchior-Bonnet's *The Mirror* and Pendergrast's *Mirror Mirror* are particularly useful as general overviews of the history of glass production, mirrors, and their cultural significance. Both, however, cover such an exhaustive time period that includes ancient Egypt to medieval Europe and the present day that a barrage of anecdotal detail overrules the potential for a robust analysis of the mirror within a specific art-historical context. Melchior-Bonnet traces the chronological development of mirrors from antiquity to the present day and, in a narrative of bribery and espionage suitable to a Jason Bourne film, concentrates on the eighteenth-century French developments in glass-making that culminated in the Hall of the Mirrors at Versailles. Melchior-Bonnet does make use of more illustrative examples of mirrors in western art than Pendergrast but her (biased?) Franco-centred methodology results in a limited assessment of other significant European contributions to mirror development, conspicuously with regards to the British glass industry.

Jonathan Miller's *On Reflection* delivers a substantially more focused examination of mirrors in western art and utilises paintings to explore topics such as surface and reflection, changing styles of mirrors through the centuries, and the metaphorical implications of representation, the viewer's gaze and vanity. Miller details theories such as Lacan's mirror stage, the anxiety of the double, self-recognition, the complexity of the mirror's left-to-right reversal, and even briefly mentions (although does not delve into) the proliferation of mirrors in nineteenth-century painting:

I suspect that one of the reasons why mirrors played a relatively inconspicuous part in the composition of paintings until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is that such effort and ingenuity had gone into the elucidation of the geometrical principles whose use would guarantee a reliable representation of actual space that there was an understandable tendency to avoid pictorial enterprises which might confuse or confound the efficient exercise of perspective.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Jonathan Miller, *On Reflection* (London: National Gallery Publications Limited, 1998), 133.

Miller attributes the rise of mirrors in nineteenth-century painting to the artist's ability by that time to render reality so convincingly that mirrors and reflections would not disrupt the pictorial illusion. He does not, however, follow this through with an in-depth examination of nineteenth-century mirrors, and seems to momentarily forget the presence of mirrors in earlier realistic paintings (works by Titian, Van Eyck, Bellini, Memling, and Campin that appear in his catalogue)

Although Miller's publication contributes an examination of the historical and theoretical framework for mirror representation in art, it is similar to Melchior-Bonnet's *The Mirror* and Pendergrast's *Mirror Mirror* in the breadth of time periods, theories and cultural associations covered. For example, Miller's discussion of Van Eyck's Arnolfini mirror does not contribute anything new to the discussion, and instead reiterates that the mirror's convex shape is due to the limitations of the fifteenth-century glass industry and results in a wide-angle view of the room beyond the picture frame; a legitimate observation and the reference to glass-making from a specific time is usually left out of art-historical mirror references. However, an in-depth analysis of the Arnolfini mirror (or any other one for that matter) for its social history, its position within the narrative of glass production and representation, or how the glass material itself could inform an interpretation of the work in addition to symbolic associations is outside the scope of his project.<sup>65</sup>

To date, Isobel Armstrong's *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830-1880* (2008) is the only publication devoted in its entirety to the subject of the cultural reception and implications of Victorian glass in its many forms.<sup>66</sup> Armstrong's work is groundbreaking for its extensive analysis of nineteenth-century glass, and particularly relevant to

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<sup>65</sup> Miller, *On Reflection*, 107-108. Also see Carola Hicks's *Girl in a Green Gown: The History and Mystery of the Arnolfini Portrait* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2011). Hicks contributes an overview of the Arnolfini mirror; while it does not hypothesise new interpretations of the work, is it useful as a condensed summary that, unusually, accounts for both sides of the mirror world – the mirror as a commodity as well as symbol (pp.134-138).

<sup>66</sup> For example, Geoffrey Wills's earlier publication *Victorian Glass* (London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd, 1976) constitutes a specific examination of pressed glass. For historical and technical overviews of English mirror manufacture I have found the following particularly helpful: P. Marson, *English Glass and Glass Manufacture* (London: Pitman, 1918); Harry J Powell, *Glass-Making in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923); Geoffrey Wills, *English Looking-Glasses: A Study of Glass, Frames and Makers (1670-1820)* (London: Country Life Limited, 1965); Eleanor S. Godfrey, *The Development of English Glassmaking 1560-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); R.J. Charleston, *English Glass and the glass used in England, circa 400-1940* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984).

For general surveys of glass production and chronological developments see: A. Sauzay, *Marvels of Glass-Making in All Ages and Countries* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1870); Apsley Pellatt, *Curiosities of Glass Making: With Details of the Processes and Productions of Ancient and Modern Ornamental Glass Manufacture* (London: David Bogue, 1949); Bruno Schweig, *Mirrors: A Guide to the Manufacture of Mirrors and Reflecting Surfaces* (London: Pelham, 1973); Benjamin Goldberg, *The Mirror and Man* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1985); Richard Gregory, *Mirrors in Mind* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1997); Alan Macfarlane and Gerry Martin, *The Glass Bathyscaphe: How Glass Changed the World* (London: Profile books, 2002); Phillips, Ronald, *Reflections of the Past: Mirrors 1685-1815, A Major Selling Exhibition of Mirrors* (London: Ronald Phillips, Ltd., 2004).

my project is her introduction of the term ‘glassworld,’ coined to describe what she identifies as a specific culture of glass in the Victorian period. Armstrong correlates this nineteenth-century glassworld to how ‘reflection and translucency created a new order of perception in the everyday’ and examines the cultural response to and interaction with ‘real and imagined glassworlds over the century’,<sup>67</sup> during which time ‘the dominance of mirrors of in art and writing [. . .] discloses an acute awareness of a reflective world.’<sup>68</sup> Armstrong’s many-faceted examination constitutes a beautiful meditation on diverse uses of glass including windows, telescopes, arcades, cameras, production in glass factories, the effects of glass in public and private spaces, mirrors at The Great Exhibition of 1851, and those appearing in art, literature, and theatre.

Comprising the opposite end of the spectrum from previous work on mirrors that are either too broad in time frame or too narrow in their inquiry, as we have seen with *The Arnolfini Portrait* and *Las Meninas*, Armstrong’s exhaustive account of Victorian glass nevertheless does not delve into mirrors in nineteenth-century painting. For instance, I have identified over one hundred sixty-eight circular mirrors in the appendix catalogue, including those by Pre-Raphaelites as well as Victorian genre artists not usually associated with the P.R.B. tradition and although Armstrong acknowledges that the convex or concave mirrors create ‘another dimension of glass culture’,<sup>69</sup> she does not explore the intriguing persistence of these mirrors in paintings<sup>70</sup>; likewise, with the exception of Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience* that she analyses as a ‘mirror trauma’ due to its disorienting house of mirrors effect, she does not specifically address Pre-Raphaelite mirrors.<sup>71</sup>

I contend in this dissertation that the multiple appearances of the mirror in Pre-Raphaelite painting, convex or otherwise, signify a coherent visual language that warrants a rigorous analysis that includes the material presence of the mirror as well as its symbolic associations. In doing so, it is critical that we re-contextualise the mirror as a nineteenth-century glass product rather than confine it to philosophical or iconographic shorthand. This dissertation will show that the mirror, doubled and reflected through the disparate strands of the movement, not unlike the doppelgänger legends that fascinated Rossetti, creates a visual dialogue between the original members of the Brotherhood and their late nineteenth-century successors and ultimately affects the boundaries of the Pre-Raphaelite label and the influence of the movement.

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<sup>67</sup> Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination, 1830-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95.

<sup>68</sup> Armstrong, 96.

<sup>69</sup> Armstrong, 253.

<sup>70</sup> For clarification, Armstrong does refer to D.G Rossetti and Christina Rossetti’s use of glass and mirror metaphors in poetry; see for example pp.112-114.

<sup>71</sup> Armstrong, 105.

## Pre-Raphaelitism

Indeed the basic mistake of the pre-Raphaelites was in forming a Brotherhood at all. There were far too many divergent aims for such a close association, and the actual society began to split up almost as soon as it was formed.<sup>72</sup>

The individual aesthetic of no single Pre-Raphaelite can be taken as characteristic of the movement as a whole.<sup>73</sup>

An examination of the mirror's role in restructuring the boundaries that define Pre-Raphaelitism assumes a definition of the term 'Pre-Raphaelite' itself. Is it a method or a technique, a thematic subject or a set of dates? Does it refer strictly to the seven artists who banded together in 1848 to challenge the Academic establishment and signed their artworks with the 'P.R.B.' monogram, or does it include the variety of later artists who drew inspiration from them? What began as a movement in painting rapidly outgrew itself, its initial doctrines (vague and seemingly open to interpretation by everyone involved), and the original creators. According to Hunt's version of events, Pre-Raphaelitism as a movement had a concrete starting date and place (Gower Street, London, in 1848)<sup>74</sup> and regardless of the specifics of the founding mythology, the P.R.B. monogram appeared in 1849 exhibited works. Solidly positioned in space and time, Pre-Raphaelitism then seems to diffuse and fragment over the years, changing chimera-like into something intangible, more elusive and difficult to define and delineate. By the time the original Brotherhood had dispersed in the mid-1850s, the definition was even more ambiguous although the term continued to gain widespread public use.

What is Pre-Raphaelitism and is Hunt, Millais, or Rossetti the leading proponent?<sup>75</sup> In what terms do we identify artistic coherence and dialogue between the early P.R.B. members and their successors? By identifying a mirror motif that connects artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelite label and suggests a reconsideration of who demonstrates Pre-Raphaelite leanings, I am not

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<sup>72</sup> Graham Hough, *The Last Romantics* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961; originally published London: Gerald Duckwork & Co Ltd, 1947) 40-41.

<sup>73</sup> William E. Fredeman, *The Pre-Raphaelites and their Critics: A Tentative Approach Toward the Aesthetic of Pre-Raphaelitism* (DPhil Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1956), 132.

<https://shareok.org/pdfpreview/bitstream/handle/11244/168/0016971.PDF?sequence=1>

<sup>74</sup> John Guile Millais, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais*, vol. I (London: Methuen & Co., 1899), 51. J.G. Millais relates Hunt's version of events: 'The first meeting, at which terms of co-operation were seriously discussed, was held on a certain night in 1848, at Millais' home in Gower Street'.

<sup>75</sup> For a thorough examination of the controversy of the name 'Pre-Raphaelite' in early criticism and the context of nineteenth-century revivals, see Robyn Cooper's article 'The Relationship between the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Painters before Raphael in English Criticism of the Late 1840s and 1850s,' *Victorian Studies*, 24: 4 (Summer, 1981), 205-438. Cooper effectively summarizes, 'Hostile critics unsympathetic to their namesake condemned the Pre-Raphaelites for imitating the ascetic and defective art of a priest-ridden age; hostile critics sympathetic to their namesakes condemned the Pre-Raphaelites for perverting the pure art of the early master. Either way the Pre-Raphaelites lost out.' (Cooper, 242).



proposing that the mirror's presence or lack of thereof in a work be treated as a scientific classification scheme for defining Pre-Raphaelitism but rather as an additional factor to add to the discussion, a thread of consistency that unifies the conflicting styles that emerge from the original P.R.B. Rather than bolting on a stylistic association of a figural (or feminine) type such as those seen in works by Waterhouse or Rossetti, a specific brushwork or colour palette, I propose considering the mirror as a material object that gives weight to the elusive 'Pre-Raphaelite' designation.

The unresolved legacy or definition of Pre-Raphaelitism persists today with a vague, reductive awareness of the label in the public mind, much as it did for nineteenth-century contemporaries: in non-specialist parlance today 'Pre-Raphaelite' is an adjective used to describe a type of woman, tragically beautiful and languishing in misfortune, 'with serpentine hair and bee stung lips'.<sup>76</sup> For instance, one journalist characterises Nigella Lawson, the television chef and erstwhile wife of Charles Saatchi, as the 'pre-Raphaelite TV personality who has reshaped sin as a chocolate torte'<sup>77</sup> while another critic describes the dark-haired Australian ballerina Rachael Walsh in the role of Giselle as having 'a pre-Raphaelite face and an adagio to die for'.<sup>78</sup> In what must surely be an unconscious recall of Rossetti's pictures of Elizabeth Siddall or J.W. Waterhouse's *Lady of Shalott* (1888), an article in *The Telegraph* on Scottish fashion models remarks, 'Fashion would be bereft without the ethereal, pale-faced, lichen-eyed, Pre-Raphaelite ideal'.<sup>79</sup> Actresses Gemma Arterton and Saoirse Ronan are introduced as 'preternaturally pale with the long flowing hair of Pre-Raphaelite beauties' in a *New York Times* review of the movie *Byzantium*<sup>80</sup> and, perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, the Brazilian soccer player David Luiz is described as 'the preeminent pre-Raphaelite beauty of the global soccer scene' with his 'torrential curls and pouty lips'.<sup>81</sup>

In each case, the woman referred to is understood to be beautiful and tragic (David Luiz is not tragic but passionate with wild curls and full feminine lips); Nigella as well as Rachael Walsh in the role of Giselle are characterised as victims of cruel men, the characters in 'Byzantium' as doomed *femme fatales*. Nevertheless, the visual imagery remains at odds – the

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<sup>76</sup> 'Pre-Raphaelites: Avant-Garde or Kitsch?' *The White Cube Diaries*, (April 2, 2013):

<http://whitecubediaries.wordpress.com/2013/04/02/the-pre-raphaelites-avant-garde-or-kitsch/>.

<sup>77</sup> Michael Laws, 'Laws' Nigella's Dilemma – would we intervene?', *stuff.co.nz* (June 23, 2013): <http://www.stuff.co.nz/blogs/opinion/8825399/Laws-Nigellas-dilemma-would-we-intervene>

<sup>78</sup> Deborah Jones, 'Youthful Elegance Brings Giselle to Life,' *The Australian* (June 23, 2013): <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/youthful-elegance-brings-giselle-to-life/story-e6frg8n6-1226668397461>.

<sup>79</sup> Lisa Armstrong '9 Best Scottish Fashion Innovations,' *The Telegraph*, (September 12, 2014): <http://fashion.telegraph.co.uk/columns/lisa-armstrong/TMG11090795/9-best-Scottish-fashion-innovations.html>.

<sup>80</sup> Manohla Dargis, 'Drinking Blood in Broad Daylight: 'Byzantium' Draws on Caribbean Vampire Folklore,' *New York Times*, (June 27, 2013): [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/28/movies/byzantium-draws-on-caribbean-vampire-folklore.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/28/movies/byzantium-draws-on-caribbean-vampire-folklore.html?_r=0).

<sup>81</sup> Simon Doonan, 'The Hottest Players at the World Cup,' *Buenos Aires Herald* (June 26, 2014): <http://www.buenosairesherald.com/article/163049/the-hottest-players-at-the-world-cup>

Pre-Raphaelite woman compiled from these references is at once dark and passionate with a hint of scandal (sin and chocolate torte) while simultaneously ethereal, pale and red-haired; even a one-dimensional, simplistic definition of 'Pre-Raphaelite' is self-contradictory.

In a response to a 2013 poll result that revealed Waterhouse's 1888 *Lady of Shalott* to be the nation's favourite artwork, with Millais's *Ophelia* coming in second,<sup>82</sup> writer Joan Smith lamented the British public's love of 'Arthurian nonsense about knights, ladies and unrequited love' and pronounced the 'enduring love affair with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood' to be 'inexcusable in anyone who isn't a 14-year-old girl.'<sup>83</sup> Smith adheres to a long-standing negative view of Pre-Raphaelitism as a style of escapist art that is neither intellectually challenging nor relevant; kitsch 'nonsense' in fact. Never mind that Waterhouse was working decades after the original Brotherhood disbanded, Smith identifies him as a Pre-Raphaelite based on the flame-haired medieval heroine rather than any technical consideration of style, personal affiliation with the founding members, or even dates.

The use of the term in the above examples is indicative of what is associated with the Pre-Raphaelite label in current non-specialist parlance today, an adjective narrowed down to a specific female image derived from later Rossetti and Waterhouse figures. The complexity of Pre-Raphaelitism as a modern art movement continues to be explored in twenty-first century scholarship (for instance, the 2012 blockbuster exhibition at Tate Britain, *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*), but the persistently limited scope of the term refers to characterisations of the movement that date from the inception of the Brotherhood.<sup>84</sup> Joan Smith's generalisations aside, can Waterhouse categorically be considered a Pre-Raphaelite?

Were the original Pre-Raphaelites even 'Pre-Raphaelite' after the 1850s? The early exhibited works of Hunt, Millais and Rossetti display an underlying coherent aesthetic: the 1849 pictures, Millais's *Lorenzo and Isabella* (fig.7), Hunt's *Rienzi vowing to obtain justice for the death of his younger brother, slain in a skirmish between the Colonna and Orsini Factions* (fig.8), and Rossetti's *Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (fig.9) echo one another in terms of rich colours, spatial organisation, medieval inspiration, and Biblical or literary subject matter, but the stylistic

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<sup>82</sup> 'Art Everywhere: Lady of Shalott voted nation's favourite artwork', *The Independent* (23 April 2013): <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/art-everywhere-lady-of-shalott-voted-nations-favourite-artwork-8752503.html>

<sup>83</sup> Joan Smith, 'I'm suspicious of words like 'tradition' because they carry a dead weight of expectation,' *The Independent*, (August 11, 2013): <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/im-suspicious-of-words-like-tradition-precisely-because-they-carry-a-dead-weight-of-expectation-8755855.html>

<sup>84</sup> For example see Leslie Parris (ed.), *The Pre-Raphaelites* (exh cat, London: Tate Gallery Publications, repr 1994). Indicative of twentieth-century scholarly interpretation, Hunt, Millais and Rossetti are portrayed divided, 'Of the original Pre-Raphaelites, only Hunt tried to remain faithful to the Brotherhood's ideals.' (193). See also Carol Jacobi, 'William Holman Hunt (1827-1910),' Elizabeth Prettejohn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 118. Jacobi notes that while twenty-first century scholarship does continue to make progress with unravelling the complexities of Pre-Raphaelitism, it is following twentieth-century scholarly literature that largely upheld nineteenth-century characterisations.

divisions between the three noticeably increased from the 1850s to culminate in later pictures such as *Hearts are Trumps* (Millais, 1872), *The Shadow of Death* (Hunt, 1873) and *Proserpine* (Rossetti, 1874), images that contradict one another as well as the original P.R.B. medieval inspiration.

### ***The Pre-Raphaelite Styles: Hunt versus Rossetti***

Within this context of diversifying styles and subjects amongst the original trio, however, Hunt and Rossetti are consistently positioned against one another in both nineteenth and twentieth-century categorizations as Pre-Raphaelite combatants with vehemently opposed styles jousting for ownership of the term. This dissertation considers the traditional division between Rossetti and Hunt and argues for a repositioning of the two based on their consistent use of mirror imagery throughout their careers. Rather than a construct of Hunt/Millais versus Rossetti, I suggest instead an alternative structure: an underlying continuity that derives from the motif of the mirror in their works to create a visual dialogue, a web of interrelated images ('intermirrorality'). The works of Hunt and Rossetti react and respond to one another in spite of the apparent stylistic contradictions, their own personal and professional combative stances, and the critical interpretations that classify them as opponents in an effort to define Pre-Raphaelitism as either/or, a/b, this *or* that (the view that their artistic objectives are so antithetical, surely they cannot both be classified as Pre-Raphaelite).

The traditional separation between Hunt and Rossetti stems from nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century publications such as Hunt's own memoir (1905) in which he acknowledges Millais's stylistic change but repeatedly characterises himself and Millais as the true Pre-Raphaelites (he defends Millais's career as 'triumphant at all points'<sup>85</sup>). In Hunt's version of the P.R.B. origins, he portrays himself and Millais as the instigators and champions of the movement, quite unlike his characterisation of Rossetti who 'branched off,'<sup>86</sup> a position later endorsed by Millais's son who declared 'Holman Hunt and Millais were Pre-Raphaelites before Ruskin ever wrote a line on the subject'.<sup>87</sup> John G. Millais quotes his father on Rossetti's artistic intentions:

[his] aims and ideals in art were also widely different from ours [Millais and Hunt], and it was not long before he drifted away from us to follow his own

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<sup>85</sup> William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II (London: Macmillan & Co., 1905), 396.

<sup>86</sup> William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 363.

<sup>87</sup> John Guille Millais, *The Life and Letter of Sir John Everett Millais*, vol. I (London: Methuen & Co., 1899), 61.

peculiar fancies [. . .] It was Hunt – not Rossetti – whom I habitually consulted in case of doubt.<sup>88</sup>

The stylistic demarcation between Hunt and Rossetti, as well as the complexity of defining Pre-Raphaelitism, was propagated by contemporary writers and critics who alternately labelled either Rossetti or Hunt as the leader of the Pre-Raphaelite movement,<sup>89</sup> or branded them with abbreviated characteristics (Hunt was the ‘staunch Pre-Raphaelite’ while Rossetti was the ‘Pre-Raphaelite and idealist’<sup>90</sup>). Nineteenth-century critics labelled the Pre-Raphaelite followers based on which stylistic brand they adhered to (Hunt versus Rossetti), with Percy Bate in 1901 classifying these later artists as either part of the Rossetti Tradition I or the Rossetti Tradition II<sup>91</sup> an indication that the term ‘Pre-Raphaelite’ had by that time come to be primarily associated with Rossetti’s style, a designation J.G. Millais protests is a misuse of the label:

The great mistake that nearly all the critics make is confounding Rossetti’s later work, which is imaginative, sincere, and entirely of his own conception, with *his Pre-Raphaelite work, of which he really did very little*. They call his pictures such as ‘La bella mano’, ‘Prosperine,’ ‘Venus Verticordia’ ‘Dante and Beatrice,’ Pre-Raphaelite, which they are not in the very least. They belong to an entirely different school, which he himself founded, and which as since had such able exponents as Mr. Strudwick and Sir Edward Burne-Jones.<sup>92</sup>

Crossing artistic mediums from painting into literature, home décor, textiles and book illustration throughout the nineteenth century, ‘Pre-Raphaelitism’ in the public mind was condensed into a more specific association with Rossetti (what J.G. Millais asserts is ‘entirely of his own conception’) and those members of his artistic clique, designated the ‘second wave,’ in the late 1850s and 1860s including Burne-Jones, Morris and Swinburne.

In his 1956 doctoral dissertation and reiterated in his later 1965 comprehensive publication *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* William Fredeman proposed the most useful critical unpacking of the term Pre-Raphaelitism yet, an analysis that encompassed both the specific

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<sup>88</sup> J.E. Millais quoted in John G. Millais, 54-55.

<sup>89</sup> Edward T. Cook, *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery Including, by Special Permission, Notes collected from the Works of Mr. Ruskin* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1888), 536; George du Maurier to Ellen du Maurier, February 1962, in Daphne du Maurier (ed.), *The Young George du Maurier: A Selection of his Letters, 1960-67* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1952), 112.

<sup>90</sup> Percy Bate, *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters, Their Associates and Successors* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1901), 25, 39. Bate classified Millais as the ‘transitory Pre-Raphaelite’ (see p.31).

<sup>91</sup> Bate, 99 + 107.

<sup>92</sup> Millais, *The Life and Letter of Sir John Everett Millais*, vol. I, 60-61 (emphasis mine).

characteristics as well as the broader stylistic variations: rather than attempting a singular concise definition, Fredeman identifies three phases of the movement,<sup>93</sup> a triangle formed of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (the original Brotherhood comprised of seven artists and founded in 1848), the Pre-Raphaelite Movement (the original members and later followers), and Pre-Raphaelitism (a broad term that encompasses all the artists and writers between 1848 and 1882 who demonstrated a ‘romantic common denominator’ of Pre-Raphaelitism<sup>94</sup>). Nevertheless, Fredeman works from the premise of stylistic inconsistencies and establishes the ultimate weakness of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as ‘disunity in their aims and purpose,’<sup>95</sup> dismisses Millais’s later work with damning adjectives such as ‘apostasy’ (he describes his art as having ‘degenerated’<sup>96</sup>), and ultimately upholds the Hunt/Rossetti diametric.

Central to Fredeman’s analysis of the confusion over the Pre-Raphaelite label is the array of divergent, contradictory styles that stem from the original Brotherhood, aesthetic anomalies such as literary versus genre subjects, the contrast between a medieval, romantic subject and its visual realisation in minute, scientific detail, and crucially, the unreconciled contradiction between the mimetic ‘follow nature’ – and the expressive – ‘fidelity to inner experience’ theories of art.<sup>97</sup> Fredeman identifies the inconsistencies between Hunt and Rossetti as the product of different interpretations of the Pre-Raphaelite aim of painting truth to nature, the contradictory theories of art split between the emphasis on ‘mimetic’ and that of ‘expressive.’ He distinguishes between Hunt’s understanding of Pre-Raphaelitism (fidelity to nature) and Rossetti’s understanding of it (fidelity to the inner experience and personal interpretation of nature) that became a defining characteristic of the second wave of the movement.<sup>98</sup> In the following chapters on Hunt and Rossetti I will explore their versions of Pre-Raphaelitism through their use of mirrors, a motif I will argue resolves the mimetic versus expressive theories of emphasis.

### ***Pre-Raphaelite Realism***

Marcia Werner is enormously helpful for re-thinking the Hunt/Rossetti breakdown as well as the divisive aesthetic approaches that are all grouped together under the Pre-Raphaelite label and the concept of Pre-Raphaelite realism. Expanding upon Fredeman’s observations of opposing artistic methods that play out particularly in Hunt and Rossetti’s works, in *Pre-*

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<sup>93</sup> William E. Fredeman, *The Pre-Raphaelites and their Critics: A Tentative Approach Toward the Aesthetic of Pre-Raphaelitism* (DPhil Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1956), 1-2; <https://shareok.org/pdfpreview/bitstream/handle/11244/168/0016971.PDF?sequence=1>, and Fredeman, *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 1.

<sup>94</sup> Fredeman, *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study*, 1.

<sup>95</sup> Fredeman, *The Pre-Raphaelites and their Critics*, 100.

<sup>96</sup> Fredeman, 100.

<sup>97</sup> Fredeman, *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study*, 3.

<sup>98</sup> Fredeman, 3; *The Pre-Raphaelites and their Critics*, 123-124: ‘fidelity to inner experience, so vital to Rossetti’s personal aesthetic and to the core of the Pre-Raphaelite creed, became the main doctrine of the later movement.’

*Raphaelite Realism and Nineteenth-Century Modernity* (2005) Werner reconstructs an interpretation of Pre-Raphaelitism; she argues that although Hunt, Millais and Rossetti pursued divergent styles after the mid-1850s, they ultimately remained true to early Pre-Raphaelitism. Rather than accept that the ‘Pre-Raphaelite’ label is problematic or view Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti as proponents of contradictory styles, Werner insists that the differences between the artists ‘was one of emphasis, not theory’<sup>99</sup> and constructs a case for a specific Pre-Raphaelite Realism that informed their works over the course of their careers.

Werner proposes that this Pre-Raphaelite brand of realism is distinctive in that it conflates empirical observation with inner experience as well as the past with the present, spiritual and material, a concept that can be related to Brooks’s theory of symbolic realism and one which I will demonstrate is best actualised through their use of mirror imagery. Werner identifies the ‘inclination to conflate past, present, sacred and secular’ as ‘the heart of early Pre-Raphaelitism’<sup>100</sup> and from the early 1850s Hunt and Rossetti both visually realise this through the representation of mirrors and reflections that interact with the viewer and respond to one another as well as to the historical precedents of the Arnolfini and *Las Meninas* mirrors. Werner argues that Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti all subscribe to this unique brand of realism over the course of their artistic careers and that although Rossetti is more aligned with the ‘interior experience’, and Millais and Hunt with ‘visible reality,’ all three have parallel interests in both.<sup>101</sup> Citing works such as Millais’s *The Bridesmaid* (1851) and Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience*, Werner asserts that ‘observation of inner states is as much a part of early Pre-Raphaelite Realism as empiricism directed toward nature’<sup>102</sup> and points out that it is ‘surely indebted to the sort of “hidden symbolism” Panofsky ascribed to Jan van Eyck’s art where in passionate interest in visible reality is wed to an equally intense symbolic vision.’<sup>103</sup>

Werner’s discussion of Pre-Raphaelite Realism and visual language even takes into account that for some of the P.R.B. artists, and D.G. Rossetti in particular, ‘the custom of repeating objects in numerous pictures – some recur throughout his entire body of work – itself comprises a kind of narrative.’<sup>104</sup> She identifies repeating objects such as roses and musical instruments that provide this underlying thematic narrative in Rossetti’s work but curiously stop short of the mirror, a recurring object that was there from the beginning.

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<sup>99</sup> Marcia Werner, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

<sup>100</sup> Werner, 90

<sup>101</sup> Werner, 150 + 144.

<sup>102</sup> Werner, 155

<sup>103</sup> Werner, 12.

<sup>104</sup> Werner, 76. See also 175-177.

### *Florence Claxton's 'The Choice of Paris'*

This crowded little composition will afford much amusement to the artistic world and those are up in professional incidents and tradition. There are some follies which are better met by ridicule than argument, and Pre-Raphaelism [*sic*] is of them.<sup>105</sup>

Marcia Werner's assessment of Pre-Raphaelite Realism ties together nineteenth-century contemporary observations of both the incompatible characteristics of the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic and the public confusion over the name, and establishes a consistent Pre-Raphaelite theory that both responds to and subverts a contemporary artistic debate. The contemporary reception of this Pre-Raphaelite approach to realism was, however, as misunderstood as their P.R.B. name. Florence Claxton's satirical caricature *The Choice of Paris: An Idyll* (figs.10, 11)<sup>106</sup> provides a platform for exploring the mid-nineteenth-century public perception of the P.R.B. movement, as well as what was understood at the time to be their approach to realism. Claxton parodies the Pre-Raphaelite artistic theory of truth-to-nature with cringe-inducing details but what is particularly relevant to this project are her allusions to contemporary glass and its mediation of artistic vision. Whether fully aware of the significance or not, Claxton placed a mirror at the centre of her composition, and one that in terms of location and reflection marks an underlying association with Pre-Raphaelitism that stems from early days of the movement a decade earlier.

In the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* (1856), Ruskin writes that the artist should 'consider himself only as a sensitive and faithful reflector,' faithfully conveying what is before him so that the picture is 'as far as possible, the reflection of the place in a mirror'.<sup>107</sup> Ruskin's explanation of truth to nature, however, goes beyond the recording of visual facts on canvas and he follows this metaphor of the mirror with an exhortation that the painter should not record only the visual elements but convey 'the impression it made on his mind.'<sup>108</sup> Hunt explains this understanding of realism in his memoir and clarifies that he was interested in capturing the 'reflex of a living image in his own mind, and not the icy double of the facts themselves.'<sup>109</sup> This is perhaps the key to understanding Hunt's seemingly contradictory statement,

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<sup>105</sup> "'The Choice of Paris: An Idyll" by Miss Florence Claxton,' *Illustrated London News*, 36, (June 2, 1860), 541-542; 542.

<sup>106</sup> The original oil was printed in *The Illustrated London News* (June 2, 1860) and was accompanied by a supplemental textual commentary. 'The Choice of Paris: An Idyll by Miss Florence Claxton,' *Illustrated London News*, 36, (June 2, 1860), 541-542; 542.

<sup>107</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. IV (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1885, originally published 1856), 19.

<sup>108</sup> Ruskin, 19.

<sup>109</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I, 150.

It will be seen that we were never realists. I think art would have ceased to have the slightest interest for any of us had the object been only to make a representation ... of a fact in nature.<sup>110</sup>

In an 1852 article in *The British Quarterly Review*, David Masson explores the meaning of the doctrine ‘truth to nature’ and, acknowledging that the phrase is open to interpretation, suggests that although the Pre-Raphaelites were accused of ‘excessive realism,’<sup>111</sup> the public should understand this as scaffolding for the real objective of portraying the natural world. The natural world as each artist’s ‘character and genius prompted,’<sup>112</sup> that is, a method infused with ‘imagination and invention.’<sup>113</sup> Masson compares the minute realism of the Pre-Raphaelites to that found in Wordsworth’s poetry, observing

Richness in botanical allusion is perhaps the one peculiarity that pre-eminently distinguishes the English poets after, from the English poets before, Wordsworth. [ . . . ] And so it is, in a great measure, with the Pre-Raphaelites.<sup>114</sup>

Wordsworth, George Eliot and Pre-Raphaelites explored a realism that had at its core personal insight and imagination fused with a rigorous assessment of the contemporary, natural world. This understanding of realism theorised by Ruskin and observed by contemporary critics such as Masson was central to the Pre-Raphaelites from the beginning: it was the exploration of the living image with the intent to, as Saverio Tomaiuolo summarises, ‘reach a truth that went beyond the image’.<sup>115</sup>

Claxton’s visual critique in *The Choice of Paris*, however, pares down Pre-Raphaelite realism to a one-dimensional method of representation that is devoid of the imaginative, supernatural qualities that Masson’s perceptive reading pointed out to the public. Claxton’s superficial interpretation of the Pre-Raphaelites would not be out of place with some of the persistent public associations today as mentioned above: the image consists of a lurid collection of exaggerated Pre-Raphaelitisms, comprised of a pastiche of characters and details from well-

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<sup>110</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I, 150.

<sup>111</sup> David Masson, ‘Pre-Raphaelitism in Art and Literature,’ *The British Quarterly Review*, 16:31 (August, 1852), 197-220; 220.

<sup>112</sup> Masson, 202.

<sup>113</sup> Masson, 220.

<sup>114</sup> Masson, 205.

<sup>115</sup> Saverio Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley’s Shadow: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Victorian Literary Genres* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 147.



known P.R.B. paintings,<sup>116</sup> that forms a critique of the Pre-Raphaelite theory of truth to nature.<sup>117</sup> The Pre-Raphaelite artists, shown led by Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti and inspired by Ruskin, are depicted as ridiculous in their pursuit of a style of realism that celebrates the ugly and the commonplace rather than the Academic ideals of beauty and harmonious composition.

However, in addition to the references to modern glass products (one Pre-Raphaelite artist examines a woman's feet with a magnifying glass while another analyses the details of a brick wall with opera glasses), *The Choice of Paris* includes the mirror as a characteristic of Pre-Raphaelitism. An overmantel mirror is located in the central background of the composition and at first glance it appears to be a window rather than the reflection of one. The glass window reflected in the mirror that faces the viewer is a direct quotation from Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*, and although a church appears in the reflection suggesting a spiritual depth to the mirror's reflection (an abridged translation of Hunt's original?), Claxton's reflected scene is more playful than illuminating. Accompanied by flies buzzing around the curtains,<sup>118</sup> the reflection of the couple with their backs to the viewer is comically cartoonish with the top-hatted dandy brandishing a parasol (see fig. 12).

Perhaps Claxton here invents her own ending for the fallen woman in Hunt's original picture:<sup>119</sup> the waist-coated red-haired dandy is now grim-faced as watches the reflection of the woman (sporting the same shawl around her hips) escorted to church by another gentleman (one whose top hat and gloves are in their proper place). Aside from his reflection that produces a two-headed effect, the man by the mirror is alone with the exception of the wide-eyed cat (now missing his bird) and the sad-clown figure, the pale-faced man to the left of the mirror who drinks tea from his saucer and is 'intended to express the bitterest feelings of horror and jealousy at this to him unwelcome apparition.'<sup>120</sup> (fig. 13) Although the use of the term 'apparition' in the textual supplement is in line with the mocking tone of the writing and Claxton's picture, the word choice that suggests a vision, dream, or mystical appearance, perhaps alluding to the inescapable metaphysical possibilities of the mirror. The mirror-window creates a Pre-Raphaelite-esque distortion of 'real,' reflected and pictorial space, but rather than use the reflection to add to the narrative or symbolic content of the work as a whole, Claxton stops short of what I will define in this dissertation to be accurate for Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery; the viewer is left amused rather than enlightened.

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<sup>116</sup> For example, Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* and *The Scapegoat* (1854-56) and Millais's *Spring* (1858-59) and *The Vale of Rest* (1858-59) are all represented.

<sup>117</sup> For an in-depth consideration of Claxton's picture as a form of critique, see William E. Fredeman's 'Pre-Raphaelites in Caricature: "The Choice of Paris: An Idyll,"' *The Burlington Magazine*, 102: 693 (December 1960), 523-527 + 529.

<sup>118</sup> This is in the alternate version, see fig. 14.

<sup>119</sup> Fredeman acknowledges in a footnote this might be just what Claxton intends with the reflection. He does not analyse the reflection but points out that the room is a copy of Hunt's parlour in *The Awakening Conscience*, including the rug, flowers, mirror, and piano. See Fredeman, 525 and footnote 32.

<sup>120</sup> "'The Choice of Paris: An Idyll' by Miss Florence Claxton," *Illustrated London News*, 542.

Claxton does, however, touch upon the Pre-Raphaelite dedication to mirror-like representations of the natural world through the satirical depiction of the artists observing minute, commonplace details with a magnifying glass or opera glasses. There is also an underlying theme of reflections and doubles seen, for instance, in the onions reflected in the shine of wooden floorboards, the underside of the horse and rider's foot reflected in the stream, and the mountains on the horizon mirrored in the lake below. As though Rossetti's doppelgänger-themed *How They Met Themselves* (1851-64) has run amok, the repetition of figures in the work contributes to the impression of chaotic doubling. Raphael's Madonna appears in a painting on the wall as well as 'in person' in the foreground and the knight in golden armour appears to simultaneously lounge in the drawing-room on one side of the picture and ride on horseback with children in the other. Disconcertingly, the red-haired Pre-Raphaelite model seems to move across the picture space, grasping, eating and grinning fiendishly until she is lolling on the grass outside in a parody of Millais's *Spring, or Apple Blossoms* (1858-59).

Fredeman points out that the microscopic details (every blade of grass and pebble, each brick in the wall) represented in *The Choice of Paris* are 'a kind of broken vow with pictorial and visual truth, for things "seen" by the eye of the Pre-Raphaelite artist can actually be seen only with the aid of magnifying lenses, not with the human eye.'<sup>121</sup> Fredeman's observation can also apply to the concept that the Pre-Raphaelites represent the world through mediated vision and their own singular interpretation of realism. Likewise, as this dissertation will argue, the viewer can only see certain elements of Pre-Raphaelite painting with the aid of the mirror, the critical visual component that facilitates a more comprehensive reading. Caricatured by Claxton, and in spite of the entertaining satire, the mirror depicted in *The Choice of Paris* highlights a central Pre-Raphaelite motif and conveys something of their method of viewing the natural world through a looking-glass. The notion of vision and representation is central to understanding the Pre-Raphaelite use of the mirror as will be explored through the following chapters, and Claxton's use of reflections and contemporary glass products in her satire, unintentional though it may be, suggests the inseparable connection between Pre-Raphaelite realism and the context of nineteenth-century glass.

### **Context I: Glass Production**

A dissertation on looking-glasses! How extremely ridiculous! Pardon us, reader; a more serious or important subject can scarcely be imagined; for, on inquiry, we shall find, that the consenting opinion of all time [. . .] is

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<sup>121</sup> Fredeman, 'Pre-Raphaelites in Caricature: "The Choice of Paris: An Idyll" by Florence Claxton,' 523-527 + 529; 526.

decidedly in favour of the mirror, through all its varieties [ . . . ] let us hear no more of the insignificance of looking-glasses.<sup>122</sup>

This dissertation will demonstrate that within the context of mirror production the Pre-Raphaelite use of mirrors is unique in its consolidation historical iconography and sources of influence with a response to modern life. The mirrors represented in Hunt and Rossetti's 1850 drawings, *The Lady of Shalott* and the unnamed sketch, respectively, coincide with significant nineteenth-century developments in mirror production and, as a result, the new glass culture Isobel Armstrong describes as 'glassworlds.' To access a comprehensive reading of both sides of the Pre-Raphaelite mirror, its iconography and materiality, it is necessary to locate the mirror imagery within the context of glass production. By doing so, we can identify what sort of mirror is represented, how it contributes to the broader subject matter, in what way contemporary viewers would have interpreted it, the significance of the nineteenth-century glassworld, and what iconographic or historical references are present; in this frame of reference, intertextuality (intermirrorality) also applies for the Pre-Raphaelites were familiar with and respond to the historical precedent of mirror representation set by the likes of Van Eyck, Memling, Velazquez, and Titian. Identifying Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery within the context of mirror production and its corresponding representations ultimately facilitates a more extensive line of inquiry that opens the door for possibilities beyond the Foucault-Lacan theoretical framework.

Historically an exclusive luxury item due to the high cost of manufacture, the tenuousness of the materials, heavy taxes and strict regulations, the mirror was newly available to the middle classes during time the P.R.B. was in its formative years. Technological developments in the methods of glass production in England during the decades preceding the 1850s combined with the repeal of the glass tax in 1845 resulted in the unprecedented proliferation of mirrors in public and domestic spaces: large plate glass mirrors that produced flawless reflections became increasingly standard in middle-class drawing-rooms, bedrooms, bathrooms and boudoirs. Never before had such a large cross-section of the population encountered reflections of themselves in their private homes or in public spaces. As this dissertation will demonstrate, the Pre-Raphaelite mirror, positioned on an axis of historical associations and contemporary commodity culture is specific to the nineteenth-century glass industry and Victorian middle-class interiors.

The progress of mirror development in the nineteenth century occurred relatively quickly within the larger context of historical mirror production prior to the Industrial Revolution. From the shadowy, distorted reflections in the polished metal or small convex glass mirrors of the Middle Ages (see figs. 14-16) to large gilt overmantel mirrors in Victorian London, the development of mirror technology in place for over five hundred years accelerated at an

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<sup>122</sup> 'Looking-Glasses,' *Literary Speculum*, 1:2, (December 1821), 84.

exponential rate during the nineteenth century with the industrialisation of glass manufacture. The trajectory of increasing clarity, size, and availability is traceable through the representations of mirrors in Western art: works such as the *Marcia Painting Self-Portrait Using Mirror* from the illuminated manuscript of Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus* (1404, fig.14), Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*, Titian's *Woman with a Mirror* and Velázquez's *Las Meninas* contribute to the narrative of mirror production. Glass development through Venetian, French, and English industries reached an apex in the mid- to late nineteenth century with the achievement of public structures like the Crystal Palace in 1851 and large, clear, mirrors. Found in images such as Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* and his versions of *The Lady of Shalott* Victorian mirrors represent the success of the English glass production, a national achievement over an industry historically dominated by foreign imports.

### ***Venetian Glass***

The Venetians controlled the European mirror trade from the mid-fifteenth through the late seventeenth centuries, first with the invention of the clear, colourless *crystallo* glass around 1460, followed by a new foiling technique from 1507 that used a mixture of tin and mercury for a reflective coating instead of lead. During the Middle Ages mirrors had primarily been made of polished metal and while *crystallo* glass, filled with bubbles and imperfections, would be unacceptable by today's standards, at the time they far outranked the metal mirrors that had been in use from antiquity<sup>123</sup> as well as other previous attempts at glass mirrors that had resulted in flawed, uneven, fragile glass with an unflattering greenish tint.<sup>124</sup> The new backing of tin and mercury represented a significant step in mirror development as it produced a more brilliant reflection in comparison with the shadowy distorted reflections that had been commonly used prior to the Venetian foiling method.

Although the Venetians are credited with inventing and capitalising upon the superior foiling method, German glassmakers in the fifteenth century did experiment with coating blown glass spheres with a mixture of mercury and lead. As blown glass is inevitably wavy, these would have produced varying results, but the size and shape of their mirrors can be seen in pictures such as Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*, Robert Campin's *St John with a Donor* from the *Werl Triptych* (1438, fig.17), Petrus Christus's *A Goldsmith in His Shop, Possibly Saint Eligius* (c.1449, fig.18), Juan de Flandes's *The Birth and Naming of John the Baptist* (1496-1499, fig.19), and Quentin Massys's *The Moneylender and his Wife* (1514, fig.20). In each

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<sup>123</sup> That ancient mirrors were made of metal explains Plato's dismissal of them as poor reflections of the real image, at several removes from the ideal, and useless as tools of self-knowledge due to their inaccurate reflections.

<sup>124</sup> Surveying glass and mirror developments from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, it is important to keep in mind the context of contemporary effusive praise of brilliant clarity and perfect reflections: they are not describing mirrors as we know them today. The mirrors most like those of that we are familiar with were developed during the nineteenth century.

picture the mirror represented would have been recognised at the time as a luxurious commodity, the most overt demonstration of this being the awkward hang of the mirror in Juan de Flande's painting: it is in such a high position on the back of the bed that it defeats the purpose of seeing one's reflection, suggesting instead that it was there solely as a decorative status marker.<sup>125</sup> In reality the quality of the reflections may have been variable but the Netherlandish artists, quoting Van Eyck's original, angle their mirrors towards the viewer and insist we engage with the object that interacts with our space. Challenging the boundary of the pictorial field, these fifteenth and sixteenth-century mirrors reflect hidden depths of space in a specular arrangement that migrates from the Northern Renaissance artists to the Venetians much like the glassmaking developments.

With the patented reflective backing combined with the *cristallo* glass and an early sixteenth-century technique of rolling and flattening molten blown glass on to trays,<sup>126</sup> the Murano glassblowers kept secret the technique of creating that 'divinely beautiful, pure and incorruptible object, the mirror'<sup>127</sup> and held a monopoly on European mirrors until a successful operation of French espionage later in the seventeenth century. The glassblowing and mirror-making formulas were sequestered on the island of Murano, with security measures in place that included the death penalty for any glassblower leaving or selling trade secrets. Typically not larger than forty inches at most,<sup>128</sup> Venetian mirrors were exported across Europe as expensive, novelty items that were out of reach for all but the wealthiest clients. Although by the early sixteenth century glass mirrors had become so widespread that the terms 'mirror' and 'glass' were interchangeable,<sup>129</sup> the more affordable polished metal mirrors were widely used until the Industrial Revolution.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> There are other similar Netherlandish mirror arrangements in domestic spaces. For example see Joos van Cleve's *The Annunciation* (c.1525, figs.21, 22). The small mirror hangs in a position to render it impractical for personal grooming as to do so one would have to climb onto the bed and scramble to the back, standing up. While the circular object could be mistaken for a metal disk of the type seen in Rogier van der Weyden's *Annunciation* (c.1435), close inspection reveals surface reflection. See Maryan Wynn Ainsworth and Keith Christiansen (eds.), *From Van Eyck to Breugel: Early Netherlandish Painting in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, (exh cat., New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 364.

<sup>126</sup> The credit for the invention of polished flat glass for mirrors is debatable, with attributions given variously to French and Venetian glassmakers. See Bruno Schweig, *Mirrors: A Guide to the Manufacture of Mirrors and Reflecting Surfaces* (London: Pelham Books Ltd., 1973), 28.

<sup>127</sup> Vanucci Beringaccio (d.1539) quoted in Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 20.

<sup>128</sup> Melchior-Bonnet, 21: 'Venice produced the purest mirrors in the world, set in precious frames made of beveled glass borders and skillfully adjusted with metal screws[. . .] They hardly surpassed forty square inches in the eighteenth century since glass blowing techniques were incapable of creating larger surfaces.'

<sup>129</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary lists the first example of the two as interchangeable in 1526, giving the definition of 'looking-glass' to be 'A mirror, esp. one used for looking at oneself, typically made of glass with a reflective coating on one side.' 'looking-glass, n.' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2015), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/110141?redirectedFrom=looking-glass&>

<sup>130</sup> See for example W. Patrick McCray, *Glassmaking in Renaissance Venice: The Fragile Craft* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1999), 159. McCray points out that prior to around 1575 luxury glass was a rarity in English and Dutch homes: 'The domestic glass industry in England, for example,

### ***Historical Mirror Representation: Northern Renaissance, Venetian, and Spanish***

A comparative overview of works by Massys, Titian, and Velázquez provides a brief visual summary of the progress of mirror production during the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries and the corresponding representations of glass mirrors in painting. Demonstrating the relative size, clarity of reflection, and cultural associations with mirrors, the emphasis on the varying quality and reflective properties of the mirrors is a reminder to interrogate the materiality of the object and allow for the possibility of the artist's manipulation of the viewer's experience of the work. The Pre-Raphaelites were familiar with historical precedents set by Van Eyck and Velázquez as well as mirrors by Memling, Massys, and Titian whose works Hunt and Rossetti would have seen in Paris and Bruges during their 1849 trip. The following sample of historical mirrors contributes to situating Pre-Raphaelite mirrors within the canon of mirror production and representation, and also illustrates a precedent for mirror treatment that resurfaces in Pre-Raphaelite painting.

During the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries as the mirror changed and improved, artists increasingly used reflections to show multiple points of view, emphasise female beauty or the vice of vanity, and advertise the economic position of the depicted owner of the mirror. Mirrors during this time frame most often provide extended spatial depth and additional viewpoints of subjects in seemingly straightforward reflections. A notable exception to this is the Northern *vanitas* imagery that feature improbable, metaphorical reflections in heavy-handed moral warnings rather than strictly reproducing reality (see the works by Hans Furtenagel and Jan Sanders van Hemessen, figs.23, 24). Anthony F. Janson attributes the mystical associations with the mirror represented in *vanitas* reflections to the distortions produced by the convex glass 'which heighten the viewer's ambivalence toward visual – and visionary – reality'.<sup>131</sup> By contrast, Venetian representations of mirrors tend to emphasise female beauty without forewarnings of mortality and death, perhaps an indication of advancements in technology that resulted from the flat *cristallo* glass.

Brittle, murky, and often flawed with fractures and grey-green tints, early glass mirrors were nevertheless a vast improvement over the polished metal variety; due to the fragility of the material, however, it is virtually impossible to account for the exact quality of reflection in medieval and Renaissance mirrors or compare reflections from different glasshouses across Europe. As such, effusive descriptions of them with adjectives like 'clear' and 'brilliant' must be taken in context with what we know of contemporary glass production. Likewise, there is a

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prior to the mid-sixteenth century, largely produced simple utilitarian objects, such as basic and relatively crude vessel forms and window glass'.

<sup>131</sup> Anthony F. Janson, 'The Convex Mirror as Vanitas Symbol,' *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, 4: 2/3 (Winter/Spring 1985), 51-54; 51.

possibility that the representations of mirrors in works of art are not wholly factual transcriptions but are instead the product of artistic license within contrived pictorial arrangements. The convex mirror found in Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (fig.25) provides a remarkably clear reflection for a glass that predates the Venetian *crystallo* and foiling methods, and the mirror in his *Woman at her Toilet* (c.1434, fig.26) is startlingly large with a great bulging convex glass that projects into the figures' space. The size and clarity of Van Eyck's mirrors, especially when compared with other contemporary and later mirror representations, suggests the possibility that he may have somewhat exaggerated the characteristics of the Arnolfini mirror.<sup>132</sup>

A comparison of subsequent mirror images underscores the inconsistency of mirror representation and the artistic manipulation of the picture and the viewer's interaction with it. The convex glass in Christus's *A Goldsmith in His Shop*, painted in the decade following *The Arnolfini Portrait* provides a remarkably (suspiciously?) clear, precise reflection even though the artist has captured the realistic details of the cracks and bubbles in the glass (see fig.27). The figures in the reflection do not appear affected by the convex shape of the glass, although Christus does allow the buildings in the background to curve slightly. The mirrors by Van Eyck and Christus produce reflections that are just as bright and clear as that found in Parmigianino's convex glass of a century later in his *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1523-24, fig.29), a comparative factor that calls into question the veracity of the representation. Mirrors post-dating Van Eyck and Christus by only around half a century, such as Juan de Flande's glass in *The Marriage Feast at Cana* (c.1498-1500, fig.28), show a much more blurred and indistinct reflection. Produced fifty years after Christus's flawed but brilliantly clear mirror, and presumably the product of gradually improving technology which should render an improved reflection, De Flandes's mirror with its greenish tint and shadowy, unclear reflection of the viewer's space is possibly a more realistic representation of a northern mirror from the turn of the century. In terms of mirror manufacture, Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* (1647-51, figs.30, 31) should in that case, literally outshine the above examples with its flat glass and improved clarity of reflection. Not only is the reflection dim and blurred, if we take the angle of the glass within

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<sup>132</sup> It is entirely possible that the size of Van Eyck's mirror, while not representative of the size typically available, is nonetheless an accurate representation of an exceptional glass. I would still call into question the startling clarity of detail available in the reflection, and my suggestion that Van Eyck has embellished the mirror's properties would be consistent with the theory that the entire Arnolfini interior is somewhat contrived. See Craig Harbison, 'Religious Imagination and Art-Historical Method: A Reply to Barbara Lane's "Sacred Versus Profane,"' *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 19: 3 (1999), 198-205; 200: 'I see the composition of Van Eyck's work as so calculated and contrived that any concept of realism relevant here must be considered a highly charged, artistically and psychologically constructed one.' Also Harbison's *Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), 32 + 258, and Joel M. Upton, *Petrus Christus: His Place in Fifteenth-Century Flemish Painting* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), 37.

the context of pictorial space, it follows that the mirror also does not produce a logical reflection.<sup>133</sup>

In spite of the various illustrations of mirrors that may or may not exaggerate the size and reflective properties for the sake of the composition and narrative articulation, the progression of mirror manufacture is nonetheless observable in corresponding images that construct a coherent trajectory of increasing size, availability, and reflective capabilities. For instance, Titian's *Woman with a Mirror* (1512-15, fig.32), a toilet scene that depicts a woman dressing her hair with the help of a male attendant and two mirrors, features a convex glass that is considerably larger than a contemporaneous northern work by the Northern master Quentin Massys, *The Moneylender and His Wife* (detail, fig.33). At first glance, taking into account the strong lighting and the shallow space in Titian's picture, the mirror's reflection should ostensibly contain more than an indistinct view of the interior space, dim lighting from the window, and the woman's partially braided hair (fig.34). Given the Venetian technical advancements in mirror making, however, Titian's glass would have been at the forefront of new manufacture, a factor that reinforces my suggestion that in some cases the Northern masters (Petrus Christus, Van Eyck, Campin and Massys, for instance<sup>134</sup>) may have exaggerated either the clarity of reflection or the size of their mirrors. Rather than Titian's glass be categorised as an example of lower quality (which in any case does not fit with the extravagance conveyed by the blown-glass perfume jar, not one but two mirrors, and the male attendant<sup>135</sup>), or even the artist teasing the viewer with a purposefully coy, shadowy reflection, perhaps it is in fact an accurate representation of the mirror's capabilities in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. In either case, it is demonstrable that mirrors do not always behave as expected and representations of reflections are liable to shift and change, challenging the viewer's gaze and assumptions.

Around forty years later Titian's *Venus with a Mirror* (c.1555, fig.35) depicts the goddess of love and beauty admiring herself in a flat glass mirror held aloft by Cupid. The 1555 date corresponds to the prized flat glass mirrors made by rolling clear glass onto the new reflective

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<sup>133</sup> Velázquez's propensity to adjust and manipulate the mirror's reflection is at the heart of debate around the mirror in *The Rokeby Venus*. For more on this incongruous reflection see Jonathan Brown, *Velázquez, Painter and Courtier* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 182. Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 221- 222. Jonathan Miller, *On Reflection*, 162. Andreas Prater, *Venus at her Mirror: Velázquez and the Art of Nude Painting* (Munich, New York: Prestel, 2002), 120. R.L. Gregory, *Mirrors in Mind* (Oxford and New York: W.H. Freeman/Spektrum, 1997), 21. George Mather, *The Psychology of Visual Art: Eye, Brain, and Art* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 80-81. Mather provides a diagram of the viewer, Venus, and the mirror to argue that her head should be significantly smaller in the reflection.

<sup>134</sup> Petrus Christus, *A Goldsmith in His Shop, Possibly Saint Eligius* (c.1449), Robert Campin's *St. John the Baptist and the Donor, Heinrich von Werl* from the Werl Altarpiece (1438), Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* and the missing *Woman at Her Toilet*, and Massys's *The Moneylender and His Wife*.

<sup>135</sup> The mirrors, attentive male companion, perfume and unbound hair suggest the woman is a courtesan. For a discussion of mirrors associated with courtesans and Venus see Cathy Santore, 'The Tools of Venus,' *Renaissance Studies*, 11: 3 (September, 1997), 179-207.



backing of tin and mercury, and as such Titian's mirror is illustrative of the developments made by Venetian mirror-makers during the first half of the sixteenth century. Although Cupid partially (teasingly?) angles the glass away from the viewer, the reflections captures the glimmer of an earring and the sparkle in her eye looking back at us. The lush colours, sumptuous fabrics, pearls and furs signify the wealth of the courtesan-turned-Venus but the mirror in its gilt and ebony frame would have been the standout luxury commodity in the image.

A century later Velázquez uses a similar mirror in *Las Meninas* to engage the viewer through a reflection of figures otherwise invisible in the pictorial space, a Van-Eyckian visual arrangement that differs from the Venetian emphasis of female beauty seen from multiple viewpoints. Velázquez had experimented with the subject of the toilet of Venus in an earlier composition, *The Rokeby Venus*, but in *Las Meninas* he returns to the fifteenth-century Netherlandish configuration. *The Arnolfini Portrait* was in the Spanish royal collection by 1558 and Velázquez marries the earlier mirror function and placement with a contemporary seventeenth-century glass hung in an ebonised wood frame. Portrayed amidst old master paintings, the mirror could momentarily be mistaken as a framed formal double portrait of Philip IV and his wife Mariana. The reflection of the half-length figures of the royal couple and accompanying red drapery do resemble a portrait, (fig.36, detail) and gives rise to theories regarding the source of reflection.<sup>136</sup> I will not debate here *what* the mirror reflects (the real royal couple in the viewer's space or their likeness on canvas; if it is the latter, it exists only in the mirror world as no such double portrait is known to have been painted by Velázquez) but will consider instead *how* it reflects figures not visible to the viewer.

Taking into consideration the implied distance (estimated to be around twelve feet<sup>137</sup>), between the mirror in the background and its source of reflection in the foreground, whether it is the canvas or the viewer, the mirror appears to be quite large, signifying a marked achievement in the scale of glass plates over the past century. It is likely that the mirror is a Venetian import: the size and flat, bevelled glass are characteristic of Venetian mirrors<sup>138</sup> and the *Meninas* mirror is comparable to those in the Hall of Mirrors in the Alcázar Palace, Madrid, so called because from the 1640s it displayed several prized Venetian mirrors framed in gold and ebony.<sup>139</sup> Juan Carreño de Miranda's portraits set in the Hall of Mirrors, *Charles II of Spain* (c.1675, fig.37), *Charles II as Grandmaster of the Golden Fleece* (1677, fig.38) and *Portrait of Queen Mariana*

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<sup>136</sup> As mentioned, one of the theories of the mirror's reflection is that it shows a portrait of the royal couple on Velázquez's canvas rather than depicting the actual figures in the viewer's space. This is supported by the left-to-right reversal in the mirror, indicating it is their portraits reflected rather than the actual figures. See Joel Snyder and Ted Cohen, 'Reflexions on "Las Meninas": Paradox Lost,' 444.

<sup>137</sup> Snyder and Cohen, 441.

<sup>138</sup> Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, 21.

<sup>139</sup> Velázquez had overseen the decoration of The Hall of Mirrors, a reception space that functioned primarily a gallery for royal collection of paintings. The room acquired its name following the double-eagle mirror frames sculpted by Antonio de Herrera in 1643. See Jonathan Brown, *Painting in Spain: 1500-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 168 + 172.

of *Austria* (1678, fig.39) depict the mirrors of a similar size and shape. Comparable to the bevelled, framed glass of the *Meninas* mirror, albeit with the added sculptural detail of the winged eagles, the Carreño mirrors provide a useful point of reference in terms of scale and reflective properties (noticeably, none of the reflections in the glass provide brilliant, heightened reproductions of the interior).

The mirror's central position in *Las Meninas* and the reflection of the royal couple are indicative of the object's symbolic, economic, and physical weight within the structure of the picture. As noted, much has been written about the role of the gaze, the position of the viewer, the location of the royal couple, and the mirror as a metaphor of painting and vision, but what is typically overlooked in these discussions that I find remarkable is that given the mirror's size, shape and position, Velázquez makes an interesting decision *not* to paint what must surely have been reflected in the actual glass, an approach seen in the earlier *Rokeby Venus*. As a flat plane mirror it would not have had the wide-angle scope of Van Eyck's convex glass but, with the size and the improved accuracy of reflection available, we can assume that more of the interior space would have been seen in the reflection. Instead, the ghostly reflections of Philip IV and Mariana emerge from shadowy surroundings, the red drapery in the corner the only other detail included in what is otherwise complete darkness.

It is feasible of course that the murky reflection is an accurate representation of the quality of the seventeenth-century glass (again, we should not expect a seventeenth-century mirror to have a twentieth-century reflection) rather than a deliberate distortion, a factor that is never taken into consideration during scholarly discussion. For instance, the reflections in the Carreño paintings are shadowy and lack the bright, startling clarity of detail seen in the earlier Netherlandish works; the difference between the two, however, lies in the depiction of the reflected space. For what is more unusual than the hazy quality of reflection in the *Meninas* mirror is the zoom-in effect on the figures. The reflection seemingly cuts through the entire room, shadows, and depth of space to narrow in like a telescope on the royal couple bathed in light from the window. The mirror with its background placement and the implied depth of pictorial space should reveal more of the interior and the accompanying figures. The size of the couple in the mirror would work if it is indeed a reflection of Velázquez's canvas and the portrait is larger than life; otherwise, the figures should be much smaller and, in any case, not reflected as though pushed up against the mirror's surface due to the tilt of the canvas and spatial depth. The mirror's reflection here operates in the reverse of the side mirrors of automobiles today: objects in the mirror are *farther* away than they appear.

The reflection in *Las Meninas* exemplifies the potential for mirrors to coexist both in the interior structure of the picture as well as in an independent looking-glass world, an autonomous space subject to its own rules (a dichotomy explored two centuries later by Lewis Carroll in *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*). While the earlier Netherlandish

artists heightened the clarity and size of their mirrors and emphasised the reflection, Velázquez does the opposite: the seventeenth-century mirrors were presumably more capable of providing more clear and accurate reflections than the Northern fifteenth-century convex glasses but he thwarts the viewer's expectation of them, and in doing so compels us to look closer at the incongruent reflection. He thus sets up a dynamic response to Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*, one that can be traced to the Pre-Raphaelites two centuries later in which the mirror's reflection establishes its own reality and manipulates the viewer's interaction with the picture world.

While the inconsistency of the above mirror representations no doubt relates to the irregularity of glass manufacture during the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, I suggest there is also a persistent underlying preternatural association with the mirror in spite of the technological advances that improved the poor reflections of earlier metal mirrors and the distortions of the convex glass. The *Meninas* mirror, a seventeenth-century commodity that contributes a physical weight in the picture with its heavy frame and flash of red drapery, ultimately behaves like a magic mirror. Alluding to traditional associations of magic and visions, the shadowy, blurred reflection of the otherwise invisible royal couple renders the viewer a seer who participates in divining the murky depths of the reflective surface. We cannot see the 'real' Philip IV and Mariana within the picture's hierarchy of representation, and their reflection retains an otherworldly quality in comparison with the sharp definition of the Infanta and her maidservants: the ghostly figures, omnipresent in the magic mirror, appear to hover over their daughter. Foucault describes the reflection in *Las Meninas* as 'that last enchantment of the double,'<sup>140</sup> a reference perhaps to the inescapable lingering supernatural character of reflections that 'restores, as if by magic, what is lacking in every gaze. . . the function of that reflection is to draw into the interior of the picture what is ultimately foreign to it.'<sup>141</sup> The *Meninas* mirror behaves independently of the 'requirement of science'<sup>142</sup> and instead, like Rossetti's inner-standing point, pulls the outside world into the internal structure of the work, or as Foucault notes, restores the invisible 'as if by magic.' The following chapters determine that prevailing mystical associations with the mirror's reflection ultimately inform Pre-Raphaelite portrayals and, in turn, the mirror's symbolic and narrative power that establishes the viewer's point of access to the autonomous world of the painting.

In spite of the varying uses and quality of the reflection depicted, the representation of mirrors from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries illustrates the progression of mirror manufacture as well as highlight the fixed variable of cultural associations with wealth. The subjects above portrayed with mirrors are limited to royalty, wealthy merchants, courtesans, goddesses, and Biblical figures and, in each case, no more than two mirrors at most. While the

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<sup>140</sup> Foucault, 7.

<sup>141</sup> Foucault, 15.

<sup>142</sup> Rossetti, 'The Stealthy School of Criticism,' 793.

mirrors increased in quality, so did the cost of production and distribution and consequently mirrors remained an exclusive commodity until mechanised production in the nineteenth century. Regardless of persistent cultural associations with Venus, vanity, and traditional folklore, the mirror in reality constituted a fragile, luxury object and the mirror clientele of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries continued to be among the wealthiest of society.

A case in point, Catherine de Medici was known to have a room containing 119 Venetian mirrors in the Hôtel de la Reine in Paris, a staggering number and the first example of glass mirrors set into wall panels.<sup>143</sup> Indicative of the enormous cost of such a mirror collection, entirely out of the question for anyone less than royalty, a diary entry by Samuel Pepys a century later provides an example of the value of Venetian mirrors imported to England: in 1664 and again in 1669 he records that his wife purchased one small looking-glass for what would be the equivalent today of over five hundred pounds.<sup>144</sup> Given the price, we can assume Pepys's small, singular purchase would have been representative of a more 'affordable' mirror at the time. Bruno Schweig, in his classic work *Mirrors: A Guide to the Manufacture of Mirrors and Reflecting Surfaces*, cites the more extravagant example of a forty-six inch by twenty-six inch Venetian mirror owned by the French minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert: at the time of his death in 1683 it was valued to be worth more than a Raphael painting.<sup>145</sup>

### ***French Glass***

The Venetian method for foiling mirrors continued through to the Industrial Revolution but the French eventually overthrew their monopoly on European mirrors by the 1670s. In a fantastic tale of espionage, coercion and murder engineered by the minister Colbert, the owner of the mirror that outranked Raphael paintings, the French government successfully lured several of the closely guarded Murano glassmakers to Paris and employed them to train French glassmakers in the Venetian method. In addition to this, they succeeded in developing a new, more efficient system for casting glass plates. The casting process involved pouring molten glass onto large tables where, after it cooled, it was ground and polished, and resulted in record-breaking new sizes. The French were able to cast glass up to eighty-four inches in height<sup>146</sup> in comparison with the forty to forty-five inches exported by Venice that had been limited in size due to the nature of cutting and flattening the blown glass cylinders.

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<sup>143</sup> Kerrie-rue Michahelles, 'Catherine de Medici's 1589 Inventory at the Hôtel de la Reine in Paris,' *Furniture History*, 38 (2002), 1-39; 9 + 36.

<sup>144</sup> 'bought a looking-glasse by the Olde Exchange which costs me £5 5s[. . .] A very fair glasse.' (This would be £537 today). Quoted in Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vols. 4-6, reprint (London: George Bell, 1928), 288. See also Samuel Pepys, (ed. Robert Latham) *The Illustrated Pepys: Extracts from the Diary* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 206: 22 January 1669: 'and so home, where I had the looking-glass set up, cost me 6l 7s 6d' (equivalent to around £652 today).

<sup>145</sup> Schweig, 21. The unnamed painting by Raphael was valued at 3,000 livres compared to the 8,016 livres for the mirror.

<sup>146</sup> Benjamin Goldberg, *The Mirror and Man*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), 168.

The Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles, unveiled in 1684 with seventeen arched mirrors each composed of eighteen smaller squares of blown plate glass, represented the radical achievement of the French industry (fig.40). Placed directly opposite windows of the same size, the effect was one of a brilliant series of reflections that merged indoor and outdoor space, the reflected light doubled and enhanced by interspersed candelabras. Incorporating mirrors of such monumental scale as the dominant feature of a palatial space would have further magnified the mirror's significance in domestic use as a luxury associated with French royal style. The ensuing Rococo decorative style featured large gilded mirrors created by soldering together several pieces of cast glass, the joins cleverly concealed by the applied gilding work of exuberant shapes and swirls. Boucher's *Morning Coffee* (1739, fig.41) depicts such an interior, the background dominated by a large gilt overmantel accompanied by the elaborate clock. In front of such grandeur and expense is a domestic scene of a wealthy family who, dressed in silks and lace, are depicted partaking in the latest trend – coffee, the exotic substance poured served in a silver cafetière. Alexandre Sauzay reports of the French countess who, when asked how she managed to afford a particularly large looking-glass, replied that she had 'a troublesome estate (*une méchantre terre*), which only brought in corn. I have sold it, and bought this mirror with it. Have I not done wonders?'<sup>147</sup> Aside from superstitions of bad luck and the symbolism of lost virginity, the precious and fragile commodity of women visualised through costly glass, one can see why the small broken toilet mirror with its cracks and shards of glass in Greuze's *The Broken Mirror* (c.1762-63, fig.42) would warrant the tears and distress.

## **Context II: English Mirrors**

In terms of the materiality of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite painting, as we shall see they correspond to English nineteenth-century mirror developments just as the previous portrayals of Netherlandish, Venetian, and French glass. The mirrors in both Hunt and Rossetti's works from the beginning are very much of their time, contemporary objects that engage with modern life and respond to the specifically nineteenth-century glassworld, Isobel Armstrong's term for the transformation of both public and domestic space and the cultural awareness of and fascination with glass.

English glass production expanded slowly during the Restoration with the incorporation of the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers and Looking-Glass Makers in 1664 and the founding of the Vauxhall Glassworks by George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, in 1673. Yet in spite of production growth, English mirrors paled in comparison to rival French and Venetian products and, regardless of the efforts to bolster homegrown production with high import taxes and bribes to Murano glassmakers to relocate, foreign imports dominated the domestic market

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<sup>147</sup> A. Sauzay, *Marvels of Glass-Making in All Ages* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1870), 90.

through most of the eighteenth century. Writing in 1803, the English furniture designer Thomas Sheraton notes that glass imported from Holland, Germany, and France was estimated to account for half of English consumption and, due to import costs, the price of mirrors remained higher than necessary if domestic production was encouraged.<sup>148</sup> It was not until around 1773 that the British Cast Plate Glass Manufacturers were able to cast plates large enough to compete with the quality of French imports<sup>149</sup> but the prices remained high, persisting to eliminate all but the wealthiest clients.

Although mirrors were increasingly found in domestic interiors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries<sup>150</sup> they were still luxury products and symbols of status due to the eye-watering prices,<sup>151</sup> a state of affairs that continued until the mid-nineteenth century. For instance, an 1823 survey of items in the Duke of Somerset's house in Grosvenor Square, London notes that the most expensive object was 'not unusually, a pier-glass in carved and gilt frame, costing £45 [around £3,642 today]'<sup>152</sup> and the Old Bailey records, an unexpected and telling source for the value of mirrors, are replete with court cases and convictions for looking-glass theft.<sup>153</sup> *The Plate Glass Book*, published in 1784 by an anonymous 'Glass-House Clerk,' is a fantastic resource for the manufacture and prices of eighteenth-century mirrors. Intended to be an

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<sup>148</sup> Thomas Sheraton, *The Cabinet Dictionary*, vol. II (New York and London, Praeger Publishers, 1970, originally published 1803), 236. Sheraton lists 75 x 117 inches as the largest size of plate glass the British Factory at Blackfriars was able to cast as of 1803 (p.236).

<sup>149</sup> Goldberg, *The Mirror and Man*, 170 and Pendergrast, *Mirror Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection*, 156 +158. See also the discussion of plate glass in the American publication *Parley's Magazine*; 'How to Make Plate Glass,' *Parley's Magazine* (1 January 1842), 146-148; 147. The author acknowledges 'We are indebted to the ingenuity of the French for the art of casting plates of glass, but in England they are now cast in such perfection as to equal, in every respect, those that are made in France.'

<sup>150</sup> Lorna Weatherill has shown that between 1675 and 1725 ownership of mirrors rose from 58% to 80% in London middle-class homes (based on inventory samples, these reflect the acquisitions of the aristocratic and upper-middle classes). Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 30.

<sup>151</sup> In *The Mirror and Man*, Benjamin Goldberg cites £150 as an example of the price of a set of furniture comprised of a large pier glass and matching walnut stands in the eighteenth century. For the set in question, the mirror comprised £130 of the total cost (today the cost of the set would be £20,000). See Goldberg, 172, and Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, 'Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present,' MeasuringWorth, 2015, <http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>. Even more extravagant and indicative of the mirrors found in royal collections and palace interiors, one mirror in Hampton Court Palace was valued at 364l 4s 10d in 1718, a staggering £50,000 today. See William A. Shaw and F. H. Slingsby (eds.), 'Declared Accounts: Civil List,' *Calendar of Treasury Books*, Vol. 32: 1718 (1962): CLXXXVIII-CCXLI. British History Online. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=85485>. Inflation calculated with MeasuringWorth, 2015, <http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>.

<sup>152</sup> F.H.W. Sheppard (ed.), 'Grosvenor Square: Individual Houses built before 1926,' *Survey of London*, vol.40: *The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair, Part 2 (The Buildings)* (London: Athlone for the Greater London Council, 1980), 117-166. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42126>

<sup>153</sup> For example, a February 1808 trial convicted one John Botfield for the theft of 'three glass mirrors, value 11.4s and a broken mirror, value 7s, the property of James Petter and James Oakey in their dwelling house.' Botfield was sentenced to six months in jail (the value of the three glass mirrors would be around £850 today). See 'Trial of John Botfield (t18080217-10),' *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (February 1808). [www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org) (version 6.0, 11 April 2014).

informative guide for prospective buyers, it explains in detail how much one should expect to pay for a finished looking-glass ‘without being imposed upon and cheated’.<sup>154</sup> Consisting largely of detailed tables of figures, it breaks down the costs of casting, grinding, polishing, and silvering as illustrated in the sample table below.<sup>155</sup>

**Sample Table Selection, *The Plate Glass Book* (1784)**

Dimensions	Grinding	Polishing	Silvering	Diamond - Cutting	Total	Value Today
8 (8 x 8; 8 x 8 ½)	0l 0s 6d	0l 0s 6d	0l 0s 6d	0l 0s 6d	0l 2s 0d	£10
15 (8 x 22 1/2 25)	0l 1s 4d	0l 1s 4d	0l 1s 4d	0l 0s 11d	0l 4s 11d	£27
40	0l 4s 0d	0l 4s 0d	0l 4s 0d	0l 1s 9d	0l 13s 9d	£75
50	0l 12s 8d	0l 12s 8d	0l 12s 8d	0l 7s 6d	2l 5s 6d	£248
66	3l 12s 8d	3s 12s 8d	3l 12s 8d	1l 13s 0d	12l 11s 0d	£1,371
	7l 12s 8d	7l 12s 8d	7l 12s 8d	4l 1s 0d	26l 19s 0d	£2,945

The figures above do not include the cost of the rough glass plate, the retail mark-up, or the cost of framing and the total would have been even more by the time of purchase and hanging, factors that would add to the already considerable price of a larger mirror such as the sixty-six inch plate estimated to cost £26 19s.<sup>156</sup>

During the eighteenth century the English aristocracy, emulating the French fashion for lavish mirror decoration, gradually replaced tapestries and paintings with a range of increasingly opulent mirrors.<sup>157</sup> Instead of the rectangular glass in a simple wood frame seen in the previous century, eighteenth-century mirrors are characterised by intricate, gilt, architectural frames and the illusion of towering size created by soldering together two or more plates of glass into large overmantels and pier glasses (see figs.43, 44) that would have been made out of multiple pieces of glass). Opulent and lavishly expensive, these new mirrors were the articles *de rigueur* in aristocratic interiors and can be seen in growing numbers in eighteenth-century English

<sup>154</sup> Anonymous (‘A Glass-House Clerk’), *The Plate Glass Book*, new edition (London: W. Owen; J.F. & C. Rivington; T. and W. Lowndes; S. Bladon, G. Robinson, and R. Baldwin; J. Johnson and I. Taylor, 1784, originally published 1757), xv.

<sup>155</sup> *The Plate Glass Book*, 142-143. Figures calculated using MeasuringWorth, 2015, <http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>

<sup>156</sup> And what portion of this goes to the mirror-makers? The anonymous clerk writes that ‘The exceeding Brittleness of Plate-Glass as well as the many hazards it is always liable to in working, framing, packing, etc is so very considerable an affair that it has been usual, and is but reasonable, to allow the Workman [. . .] 5s or 6s in the Pound. But even this, in many cases, where things are very curious, is far from being sufficient.’ *The Plate Glass Book*, xxiii.

<sup>157</sup> Melchior-Bonnet, 81; Goldberg, 174.

paintings such as *The Marriage Settlement* and *The Toilette* from Hogarth's *Marriage à-la-Mode* series (c.1763, figs. 45-48) and Zoffany's *Queen Charlotte with her Two Eldest Sons* (c.1765, figs.49-50).

A marked difference in eighteenth-century depictions of mirrors in comparison to prior Northern Renaissance and Baroque images is the lack of reflection. A feature of the mirror emphasised in earlier works, the mystical, revelatory reflective depths of the mirror are often passed over: if a reflection is included at all, it adds little more than a profile view or a glimpse of another wall (both of these last examples can be seen in Zoffany's portrait of Queen Charlotte with her sons; an exception to this being the slightly odd profile view of the queen). Moral warnings, mysterious figures, and narrative potential are strikingly absent. Rather than manipulate the viewer's gaze or reflect invisible foreground space, the mirrors are integrated into the interior structure of the painting as a decorative accessory, a short-hand for vanity and luxury.

For example, Hogarth's mirrors in the *Marriage à-la-Mode* series are situated in an accurate representation of a contemporary aristocratic interior and would have conveyed the economic status of the figures depicted. However, they reflect little to nothing in spite of the improved size and clarity of looking-glasses by the mid-eighteenth century. In *The Marriage Settlement* the Earl's son is busy looking at himself in a French-style mirror and a costly silver toilette glass features in *The Toilette* scene but while the mirrors are employed to denote wealth and vanity, Hogarth does so without utilising the mirror's reflection. As with other objects in his modern moral pictures, Hogarth does make use of the mirror's iconographic and cultural associations but unlike Van Eyck or Velázquez, he does so without capitalising on the reflection. For instance, in his satirical diptych of seduction, *Before* (1730) and *After* (1730-31, figs.51-52), the toilet mirror is used as a metaphor for lost virginity. In the first scene, *Before*, the mirror slides towards the floor as the entire toilet table begins to topple over as the woman flails against her brazen suitor; in the following scene the table is on its side and the toilet glass is shattered. If we take into account the expense of such a mirror, even one such as this in a simple wooden frame, the broken shards of glass become even more poignant as a metaphor of lost virginity, a symbolic association alluded to by Greuze's *The Broken Mirror* as mentioned above. While there are persistent references to such moral iconography, the mirror in eighteenth-century painting figures predominantly as an article of luxurious décor rather than a source of revelation, morality, and insight.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the industrialisation of the mirror manufacturing process together with the revocation of the glass duty in 1845 brought about a significant turning point in the cost and availability of mirrors. Hailed as a great catalyst for English glass production, the repeal the glass tax (estimated to be two to three hundred per cent



the value of the glass<sup>158</sup>) under Prime Minister Robert Peel dramatically affected the British glass industry. The production output of plate glass rose from 7,000 feet per week in 1836 to 140,000 feet per week following the eradication of the glass duties,<sup>159</sup> for not only was glass significantly less expensive after 1845 (Armstrong notes that the price of glass between 1844 and 1865 fell from 1s 2d per foot to 2d per foot<sup>160</sup>), the elimination of the tax also removed a series of stifling bureaucratic regulations that had hindered glasshouse experimentation and production. The tax repeal is even alluded to in a humorous retelling of the Cinderella story in *Household Words*: the writer mentions in an aside comment that had the glass tax not been abolished, Cinderella would never have gone to the ball in glass slippers as they would have been impossible to create.<sup>161</sup>

Predicting new capitalist ventures and competitive trade following the tax revocation, a writer for the *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* imagines an unprecedented widespread availability of glass and an increased quality of craftsmanship across the spectrum of glass products such as conservatories, glass used in scientific laboratories, and domestic items. He concludes his article with a reference to mirrors:

Looking-glasses, the best of all ornaments to a room, and useful too for reflecting and retaining light entering from windows, will also be found in more habitations than at present.<sup>162</sup>

The 1845 article was to prove correct as glass structures and looking-glasses pervaded public and private spaces over the course of the nineteenth century as mirrors became more affordable due to the progress of industrial manufacture that resulted in increasingly cost-effective methods of production and distribution.

The size and clarity of mirror glass in the nineteenth century improved as well, an outcome of new techniques such as silvering via chemical processes of silver nitrate. Replacing the sixteenth-century foiling technique developed on Murano, the new silvering process created by Thomas Drayton of Brighton around 1850 eliminated the use of mercury, a significant development that resulted in more brilliant reflections as well as a healthier work environment for mirror-makers. Mirrors backed with the older mercury method often had a greyish tinge and the new chemical silvering created the clear, flawless reflections we are familiar with today, a

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<sup>158</sup> 'Glass,' *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 67: 12 (April, 1845), 231-233; 232.

<sup>159</sup> Henry Chance, 'On the Manufacture of Plate, Crown and Sheet Glass,' Samuel Timmins (ed.), *The Resources, Products, and Industrial History of Birmingham and the Midland Hardware District: a series of Reports collected by the Local Industries Committee of the British Association at Birmingham, in 1865* (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1866), 147.

<sup>160</sup> Armstrong, *Glassworlds*, 43.

<sup>161</sup> 'Frauds on the Fairies,' *Household Words*, 8:184, (October 1, 1853), 97-100; 99.

<sup>162</sup> 'Glass,' *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 233.

characteristic that was further enhanced by the introduction of Siemens ovens that provided steadier, higher temperatures and reduced the chance for flaws in the molten glass.<sup>163</sup> An 1850 article in the *Scientific American* praises the English silvering developments:

In one department, viz. silvering glass, the English glass have attained a superiority over every other nation [. . .] The silvering is indestructible in composition, and is coated over with glass [. . .] the vividness of whose colours, be they what they may, or however varied, are thus infinitely heightened [. . .] whereas the Venetian [mirrors] absorbed the light, and had to be held up to it before its softened beauties were revealed, the English silvered glass flashes back the light, and is seem best at night, or when surroundings objects are in comparative gloom.<sup>164</sup>

The improved mirrors and extraordinary, new affordability of glass products by the mid-nineteenth century resulted in a striking transformation of public and private spaces. For the first time, mirrors became widely available to the middle classes and featured in their drawing-rooms, bedrooms and bathrooms, changing the look and experience of the domestic interior. The American glass manufacturer Deming Jarves describes this phenomenon in 1854,

That which was once prized and displayed as the treasure and inheritance of the wealthy, and which, with sacred carefulness, was handed down as of precious value [. . .] is procured at a charge which makes the account of the former costliness of glass to partake almost of the character of the fabulous and visionary.<sup>165</sup>

Henry Mayhew illustrates the ‘fabulous and visionary’ associations of the newly available mirrors in an anecdote in *The London Labour and the London Poor* (1862), his compilation of observations of the London working classes. Mayhew relates a conversation with a prostitute named Ellen who describes arriving at a London brothel from the country: upon entering the drawing-room, ‘for the first time in my life I glanced at a looking-glass that hung on the wall,

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<sup>163</sup> Melchior-Bonnet, 65.

<sup>164</sup> ‘The Manufacture of Fine Glass in England,’ *Scientific American* 6:6 (26 October 1850), 45.

<sup>165</sup> Deming Jarves, *Reminiscences of Glass-Making*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1865. Originally published privately, 1854), 3.

they being things we never saw in the country, and I thought the gentleman had changed his place and was standing before me, we were so alike.’<sup>166</sup>

Ellen’s confusion and displacement at seeing herself reflected in a large mirror serves as a reminder that although mirrors spread through urban middle-class interiors at an unprecedented rate in the nineteenth century, this was not the case for lower-income households or rural areas. Unlike the increasing familiarity of the sight of overmantel mirrors in depictions of middle-class drawing rooms, paintings of rural cottage interiors from the mid-century reveal a noticeable absence of mirrors over the fireplace (for example see Frederick Daniel Hardy’s *The Volunteers* and *The Three Orphans*, figs.53-54). Instead of a mirror, the mantelpieces in Hardy’s pictures of rural life are decorated with simple, mismatched crockery and small family effects. The alternative would be a small mirror such as the one seen on the back wall of Joseph Noel Paton’s *Home (Return from the Crimea)*, c.1855-56, fig.55) or the fragmented glass in the wooden frame in William Helmsley’s *Baking Day* (undated, fig.56).

The experience of space transformed by glass also extended outside the home to the urban landscape with growing numbers glass arcades, rows of plate-glass windows, and mirrors in shops, theatres and cafés, a phenomenon explored at length by Walter Benjamin in *The Arcades Project*, his meditation on the nineteenth-century Parisian cityscape. Observing the spread of mirrors in public spaces, Benjamin describes the new sense of ‘open expanse’ by which the streets and the cafes are interconnected through reflections<sup>167</sup> and of the ‘magic worked by the alluring mirror-walls of the arcades, which invite us into seductive bazaars.’<sup>168</sup> Likewise, the new London shop-fronts constituted a significant change from the small glass panes at beginning of the century or earlier in the eighteenth century when tradesmen communicated with shoppers directly over their wares, pulling shutters closed at night.<sup>169</sup> Large glass shop windows afforded pedestrians a clear view of the tableaux of wares for sale inside while the reflective properties also created a fluidity of boundaries between potential clients and the objects for sale, interior and exterior. ‘There are few people who have not been struck with the magnificence of the London shop-fronts,’ *Chambers’s Edinburgh Magazine* proclaimed in 1864, ‘They form one of the most prominent indications of the grandeur and wealth of the metropolis. Enormous plate-

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<sup>166</sup> Henry Mayhew, *The London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Those That Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work*, vol. IV (London: Griffin, Bohn, and Company, 1862), 215.

<sup>167</sup> Walter Benjamin and Rolf Tiedermann and Herman Schweppenhäuser (eds.) and Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (transl.), *The Arcades Project* (London: The Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1999), 537.

<sup>168</sup> Benjamin, 541.

<sup>169</sup> Raymond McGrath and A.C. Frost, *Glass in Architecture and Decoration* (London: The Architectural Press, 1937), 136. See also Charles Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery, and Other Details*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1869), 20 +27. ‘The aim of every modern retailer being to expose his goods for sale behind a single sheet of plate glass’ (Eastlake, 20.)

glass windows. . expensive mirrors. . these are the necessary decorations of a fashionable London shop.’<sup>170</sup>

Culminating with expansive public structures such as the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of 1851, the nineteenth-century glass industry revolutionised the perception of space and the self within that space. Regarded as a mark of civilization, the rise of glass in architecture and interior décor had a transformative effect on the nature of seeing and being seen; Isobel Armstrong writes ‘For the first time in our culture, perhaps, self and world can be a mirage returned from the surfaces of the city landscape, great and small.’<sup>171</sup>

### ***The Crystal Palace (1851)***

The facility of its [glass] manipulation, combined with the beauty of the material, and the perfect applicability to the purposes for which it is designed, render this manufacture one of the most interesting, and probably ultimately among the most important, of this country. England possesses great facilities for the production of the best glass, on the largest scale and at the cheapest rate.<sup>172</sup>

Covering 1,851 acres, the Crystal Palace (fig.57) designed by Joseph Paxton for the Great Exhibition of 1851 was the largest glass structure in the world to date and represented the embodiment of British glass achievements. Having successfully underbid competitors for the building project, Paxton worked with the Chance Brothers factory in Birmingham to create 18,392 panes of blown sheet glass cut into dimensions of forty-nine inches by ten inches.<sup>173</sup> Sheet glass, developed by the Pilkington Brothers in 1841, was estimated to be one-fourth the cost of plate glass and although not perfect in terms of clarity it was stronger and more durable (more suitable for windows than mirrors); as such, sheet glass represented the latest in English manufacture and provided an economic solution to building an enormous conservatory.<sup>174</sup> Paxton’s proposal was not only the cheapest with regard to the construction materials, it maximized floor space for the exhibition, relied on natural light for the interior, and could be relatively quickly constructed and dismantled. Exclaiming over the economy of production in

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<sup>170</sup> ‘London Shop-Fronts,’ *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal of popular literature, science and arts*, 42: 15 (October, 1864), 670-672; 670.

<sup>171</sup> Armstrong, *Glassworlds*, 96.

<sup>172</sup> *The Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations* vol. II (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), 698.

<sup>173</sup> Raymond McGrath and A.C. Frost. *Glass in Architecture and Decoration*, 123. McGrath and Frost note on p.121 that by comparison the Building Committee submitted a design proposal that would have required 15,000,000 bricks.

<sup>174</sup> Walter Rosenhain, *Glass Manufacture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1919), 152-153.

*Household Words*, the writer notes, ‘If for nothing else, this tremendous pile of transparency is astounding – for its cheapness. It is actually less costly than an agricultural barn or an Irish cabin!’ and goes on to explain that if divided up by cubic feet, the Crystal Palace is ‘of little more than one half-penny [. . .] per cubic foot [. . .] The ordinary expense of a barn is more than twice as much.’<sup>175</sup>

A tangible product of modern industry, the size and comparatively low cost of the Crystal Palace signified the success of English glass manufacture and the introduction to the glass section in the exhibition catalogue notes that due to the 1845 abolition of glass duties, ‘The beautiful and valuable production [. . .] is beginning to assume an extraordinary degree of importance in the present day’.<sup>176</sup> A matter of national pride, English glass was a celebrated highlight of the Great Exhibition, particularly the size and quality of the mirrors on display,<sup>177</sup> one of which was the *Grand Boudoir Glass* (fig.58) created for the Duchess of Sutherland by William Potts of Birmingham. The cast bronze toilet mirror was displayed in the furniture section rather than categorized with glass, an indication perhaps of mirrors as prized objects of interior décor rather than functional articles deserving to be relegated amongst other lesser glass categories such as window-glass, bottle-glass or Table Vases.<sup>178</sup> Isobel Armstrong analyses the Potts mirror in *Victorian Glassworlds* as an intricate example of the relationship between the viewer and the reflective surface in which the act of seeing and being seen, watching and being watched, is mediated by the mirror that plays with the viewer’s gaze.<sup>179</sup> Two white porcelain nymphs perched on lily pads stand out against the cast metal and gaze into the still water/mirror like a pair of unmoving Narcissus figures. The mirror replicates the viewer and the watchful nymphs, creating a series of six faces in and before the glass, as ‘Our gaze is mediated by the nymphs, theirs by us, as we intervene between body and reflection.’<sup>180</sup>

Considering Potts’s mirror in light of historical shadowy reflections and cultural associations, not only would the reflection have been clear and brilliant due to nineteenth-century glass production but with the accompanying classical nymphs, the looking-glass continues to be associated with feminine beauty seeing and being seen. The reflections of the nymphs, present even when a viewer is not there as a witness, imply an autonomous mirror

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<sup>175</sup> ‘The Private history of the Palace of Glass,’ *Household Words*, 2: 43 (January 18, 1851), 385-391; 389.

<sup>176</sup> Robert Ellis (ed.), *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, 1851: Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, vol. II (London: Clowes and Sons, 1851), 697.

<sup>177</sup> ‘The number of large-sized mirrors displayed at the Crystal Palace was one of the noticeable features of that gigantic bizarre.’ *The London Journal*, 14: 367 (March 6, 1852), 420-421; 420.

<sup>178</sup> The subdivisions of the Glass section in the catalogue for the Great Exhibition do not list mirrors. See Ellis, 697.

<sup>179</sup> Armstrong, *Glassworlds*, 234-238. Also see Armstrong, ‘Languages of Glass,’ James Buzzard, Joseph W. Childers, and Eileen Gillooly (eds.), *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 72-74.

<sup>180</sup> Armstrong, *Glassworlds*, 236.

world that glides between the present (modern glass and the viewer's gaze) and the past (the classical nymphs and mythological associations).

The striking number of mirrors on display in the exhibition are alluded to in a humorous *Punch* illustration, 'The Looking-Glass Department of the Great Exhibition,' (1851, fig.59) which depicts a throng of women crowding into the exhibition space filled with elaborately decorated, oversized mirrors held up by cupids at every turn; vignettes include a toilet mirror in the centre of the picture is supported by no less than three of these cherubs and has at least eight women crowding around it to admire themselves, while in another area two dandies jockey for a better position in front of a cheval glass. Caricature aside, the number of mirrors in the Great Exhibition creating multiple reflections of people and products on display, all encased by 18,392 panes of glass, constituted a novel intersection of spectacle, industry, display, and the magic of glass, the material that manages to be both reflective and transparent.

The magic of nineteenth-century glass, however industrialised or lacking in mythical nymphs, persisted even in the panes of sheet glass used to construct the Crystal Palace, a structure that was described in contemporary publications as an enchanted palace, otherworldly, 'as if it had descended from a third heaven,'<sup>181</sup> and as 'a fairyland in crystal.'<sup>182</sup> Poetically described by Armstrong as a visible sign of the glassmaker's breath, the Crystal Palace hovered between the concretely modern and the magical:

It was literally an exhalation, of course, its 300,000 panes blown by means of the breaths of unknown artisans in the Chance factory, its transparency created in darkness and the furnace. Transparency itself was confounding as well as sensuously enthralling.<sup>183</sup>

Her description gives an otherworldly quality to the solidity of the thousands of glass panes created by ephemeral human breath while her use of the adjectives 'confounding' and 'enthralling' in her 2007 essay 'Languages of Glass' characterises the continuing fascination with glass.

The Crystal Palace signifies the complex tensions of meaning in mid-nineteenth century glass: although increasingly industrialized and available, it still retained underlying mystical associations that might otherwise be expected to vanish in the face of advanced technology and availability. Glass may have become democratised by the mid-century but with its translucent, ethereal qualities, its ability to be simultaneously reflective and transparent, and the new

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<sup>181</sup> 'Aladdin at the Crystal Palace; or, Science Versus Fairy-Land,' *The Leisure hour: a family journal of instruction and recreation*, 1: 17 (April 22, 1852), 261-262; 262.

<sup>182</sup> 'Fairyland in Fifty-Four,' *Household Words* 193 (December 3, 1853), 313-317; 313.

<sup>183</sup> Armstrong, 'Languages of Glass,' 58.

brilliance of reflections in large mirrors, it was not commonplace or uninteresting just yet. The public at the time were increasingly aware of how glass was made due to various educational publications on the subject as well as organized tours of glass factories but there nevertheless remained an underlying sense of the fantastical. An article in *Household Words* describes a visit to the ‘birthplace’ of the Crystal Palace (the Chance Brothers factory), as a venture into ‘fire caverns,’ ‘dim vaults,’ and ‘appalling handicraft’ from which came forth the chimera, ‘that light and graceful creation. . . to lie down on the grass in Hyde Park.’<sup>184</sup> The great glasshouse is characterised as a chimera of mythology in spite of industrial mechanization and an economical cost-benefit ratio; a manmade structure of modern, industrial materials created in iron and glass factories, the Crystal Palace nevertheless rose up out of Hyde Park with an otherworldly quality.

Just as we can follow the prior development of mirrors through the works of Van Eyck, Titian, and Velázquez, corresponding nineteenth-century pictures illustrate a modern glassworld with its large windows, looking-glasses, and clear reflections. Mirrors in the nineteenth century developed quickly in comparison with the preceding four centuries that still never managed to generate affordable mirrors, and within this context of the history of glass production the daily accessibility of glass products to the public at large was revolutionary. With cheaper, faster methods of production and more advanced manufacturing techniques that resulted in mirrors of unprecedented size and clarity, the Victorian home and cityscape were transformed with rows of plate glass windows, arcades, conservatories, and mirrors. Especially in comparison with earlier works that might feature one relatively small, solitary mirror (the notable exception of course being the aristocratic interiors of the eighteenth century), the number of mirrors seen in mid-to late nineteenth-century paintings multiplies as they became ubiquitous prerequisites in the middle-class home, an element of contemporary life seen repeatedly in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers.

### ***Mirrors and Nineteenth-Century Interiors: Tasteful Décor***

good taste is essentially a moral quality [. . .] Taste is not only a part and an index of morality; - it is the ONLY morality. The first, and last, and closest trail question to any living creature is, ‘What do you like?’ Tell me what you like, and I’ll tell you what you are.<sup>185</sup>

The numerous pier glasses and overmantel mirrors found in nineteenth-century pictures of interiors, and particularly in depictions of the drawing-room, attest to the their significance in the

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<sup>184</sup> ‘Birmingham Glass Works,’ *Household Words*, 5: 105 (March 27, 1852), 32-38; 33.

<sup>185</sup> John Ruskin, ‘Traffic,’ *The Works of John Ruskin*, vol. VI: *The Crown of Wild Olives* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co, 1873), 64. Originally a lecture given at the Town Hall, Bradford, 21 April 1864.

home and the persistent complexity of cultural associations. Within the context of the nineteenth-century glassworld, the representation of mirrors in the Victorian home signifies not only the increasing production and affordability of glass but also alludes to a moral discourse on nineteenth-century taste that was inseparable from the idealisation of both the middle-class home and the domestic role of women. Aside from middle-class disposable income that could be spent on interior decoration, a new understanding of the self emerged over the course of the nineteenth century that contributed to the concept of personality (and, consequently, morality and notions of taste) expressed through material possessions.<sup>186</sup> As one writer in *The Magazine of Art* noted, although the busy man of the house would not have time for the intricacies of interior décor (his work being outside of the domestic sphere),

The lady of the house might be within doors what the architect assumes to be – the director and controller of everything, selecting all furniture and fittings with a view to effect as well as fitness, combining all colours harmoniously, and seeing that all is executed with nicety and refinement [. . .] ladies, whose domain is the home, have every opportunity and many qualifications for the introduction of art into it.<sup>187</sup>

A new emphasis on the role of the middle-class woman as responsible for the home and, thus, the family's identity and public image, emerged during the mid-century and while images of women and the mirror have long made moral statements, in the nineteenth century they are inextricably bound to larger ideas of middle-class respectability expressed through the display and arrangement of commodities in the home.

Walter Benjamin declared that the notion of home should be understood 'in its most extreme form as a condition of nineteenth-century existence [. . .] The nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling.'<sup>188</sup> The concept of the home as an ideological space and the ensuing importance of tasteful décor and material culture was one response to the fluctuating boundaries of the rising the urban, professional middle class. Whereas aristocratic status was assured from birth (or by royal appointment) regardless of actual financial details, the position of those in the nineteenth-century middle class hinged on monetary (and thus, professional) success, an unreliable foundation at best. The upwardly-mobile middle class encompassed various professions and a range of annual incomes, and to a certain extent it comprised the

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<sup>186</sup> See Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* 124-127. 'This new confidence that possessions could communicate their owner's individuality made for a giddy period of acquisitive experimentation.' (Cohen, 127)

<sup>187</sup> Lewis F. Day, 'The Woman's Part in Domestic Decoration,' *The Magazine of Art*, 4 (January 1881), 457-463; 459.

<sup>188</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 220.



swathe of the population that did not fit into either the working class or the aristocracy. In her study of nineteenth-century images of the domestic interior, Andrea Kaston Tange sums up the significance of the middle-class ideology of the home,

middle-class respectability required an unassailable image of home that would ensure the pre-eminence of middle-class standards [. . .] the image of home served to consolidate the middle class around a stable ideological position despite the great instability that in fact characterised a class whose rapid expansion was based on the vagaries of a capitalist marketplace.<sup>189</sup>

The well-run, well-decorated home became a visible expression of middle-class respectability and, as Lynn Nead has pointed out, nineteenth-century paintings of the home contributed to circulating this domestic ideology of the family home as the bastion of moral stability in contrast to the modern city with its work stresses and the urban horrors of factories, workhouses, poverty, and all manner of vices.<sup>190</sup> One defining characteristic of middle-class status was that the income from a husband's profession was enough that his wife did not need to work and thus had the time and resources to create the ideal home.<sup>191</sup> The Victorian middle-class woman was responsible for managing all aspects of the home, a new role within the gendered separation of domestic and professional life and one which included the household décor, a factor that contributed to creating and upholding the ideal of the domestic space as a 'place of Peace [. . .] a sacred space, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth.'<sup>192</sup> Found at the centre of this sacred space, the mirror repeatedly positioned as a focal point amidst an excess of ornamentation, a critical component in the construction of self-respectability through material culture.

Thad Logan identifies that it is the 'accumulation and display of objects that sets Victorian interiors apart from those of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries,'<sup>193</sup> a commodity-driven

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<sup>189</sup> Andrea Kaston Tange, 'Envisioning Domesticity, Locating Identity, and Constructing the Victorian Middle Class Through Images of Home,' Charles A. Hill and Marguerite H. Helmers (eds.), *Defining Visual Rhetoric* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2004), 277.

<sup>190</sup> See Lynn Nead, 'The Magdalene in Modern Times: The Mythology of the Fallen Woman in Pre-Raphaelite Painting,' *Oxford Art Journal*, 7: 1 (1984), 26-37; 27.

<sup>191</sup> See John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>192</sup> John Ruskin, 'Of Queen's Gardens' in *Sesame and Lilies: Two Lectures* (London: John Wiley & Son, 1865), 91.

<sup>193</sup> Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7. Logan's detailed study of the Victorian parlour has been enormously helpful for positioning the mirror in a nineteenth-century domestic context. In addition to Logan, particularly helpful studies on the nineteenth-century interior include, Charlotte Gere's *Nineteenth-Century Decoration: The Art of the Interior* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1989), *The House Beautiful: Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior* (London: Lund Humphries in association with the Geffrye Museum, 2000), *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic Movement* (London: V&A Publications, 2010), Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British*

effort to nail down ephemeral class definitions. Nineteenth-century images of interiors contrast with the conversation pieces from a century earlier (see Zoffany's portraits, figs.60-62) that depict a move towards informal, if somewhat staged, family interactions within the home. Illustrating the formal arrangements of the eighteenth-century aristocratic interior, Zoffany's pictures portray figures interacting within their home environment but whether they are playing cards or taking tea, they are not upstaged by an abundance of furnishings and ornaments. Rather, the pre-industrial interiors are characterised by simplicity of detail with decorative schemes punctuated by Old Master paintings and the occasional gilt mirror (no emphasis on reflection);<sup>194</sup> the décor would have been comprised largely of smaller collections of inherited pieces (additional new goods would have been manmade and of great expense) rather than the overabundance of mass-produced, machine-made goods seen in the nineteenth century.

Works such as Millais's *James Wyatt and his Granddaughter Mary* (1849, fig.63), Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (fig.64), and Walter Crane's *My Lady's Chamber* (1881, fig.65) with their wallpapers, rugs, tiles, mirrors, and personal effects attest to the change in the decoration and representation of domestic interiors from the previous century, illustrating the new emphasis on the acquisition and tasteful arrangement of household furnishings. As a family's wealth increased, their status was proclaimed and solidified through the visible increase of material consumption, creating what we might think of today as the stereotypical Victorian interior with its excessive use of ornament, busy wallpaper, tasselled furniture, and an overload of drapery. These decorative details, however, would have constituted significant visual language of nineteenth-century middle-class respectability and taste overseen by the lady of the house.

The abundance of nineteenth-century interior design manuals and periodicals that defined and sanctioned good 'taste'<sup>195</sup> attest to the growing importance of interior décor as a marker of middle-class status respectability. Growing in number, especially during the 1860s and 1870s, these publications targeted middle and upper middle-class women with the message that taste was not the exclusive inheritance of the aristocracy; instead, taste could (and should) be

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*and Their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), Julia Prewitt Brown, *The* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), and Stefan Muthesius, *The Poetic Home: Designing the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Domestic Interior* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2009).

<sup>194</sup> Hogarth is an exception to this as his images capitalise on narrative and symbolic potential of details and he sets a precedent for thinking about the domestic interior for later artists such as Hunt. While there is certainly a difference in the intention between Zoffany's portraits of the landed gentry and Hogarth's social satire seen in *Marriage à-la-Mode*, there is a similarity of décor (as well as a lack of mirror emphasis).

<sup>195</sup> Publications such as the four-volume *Cassell's Book of the Household* (1869-71), Mary Eliza Haweis, *The Art of Beauty* (1878) and *The Art of Decoration* (1881), Lady Barker, *The Bedroom and Boudoir* (1878), Lucy Orrin Smith, *The Drawing Room* (1878), R.W. Edis, *Decoration and Furniture of the Town House* (1881) and *Healthy Furniture and Decoration* (1884), Dorothy Constance Peel, *The New Home: Treating of the Arrangement, Decoration and Furnishings of a House of Medium Size to be Maintained by a Moderate Income* (1898), H.J. Jennings, *Our Homes and How to Beautify Them* (1902), and the magazine *House Beautiful* (1896, still in publication).

cultivated and bought even with new money. Ruskin declared, ‘What we *like* determines what we *are*, and is the sign of what we are’,<sup>196</sup> and the ideology of taste was ultimately a way to confer exclusivity on the new middle class,

for if good household management could *only* be signified by impeccable taste in home décor and entertaining, and taste was the inherent visible marker of one’s birth and breeding, then a tasteful home would be the signifying marker of one’s rightful class position.<sup>197</sup>

Charles Eastlake writes of taste and the fluctuating yet exacting nature of it in the introduction to his best-selling and influential *Hints on Household Taste* (1868) and observes that ‘by degrees people are beginning to awaken to the fact that there is a right and a wrong notion of taste in upholstery, in jewellery – perhaps in millinery, too – and in many other fields’.<sup>198</sup> As a result of these growing notions of a ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ way to decorate, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ taste, Eastlake argues that should one not be born with the discernment culturally perceived to be the inherent province of the well-bred lady,<sup>199</sup> guides in such matters by acknowledged authorities were essential.<sup>200</sup>

‘Taste’ came in detailed specifications for the general public such as the recommendation in *Cassell’s Household Guide* (1869) that an overmantel mirror be taller than it is wide, and that the width of the mirror should equal that of the chimney-piece (see Tenniel’s 1871 illustration for Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*, fig.66). Warning that the overmantel mirror can determine whether a drawing-room looks ‘common or refined,’ they advise investing in a good one for at least £5 (£412 today), noting

it is better to sacrifice something else in the room, and expend the money on a good glass. One with a neat-patterned frame, gilt all round, with scrolls at the bottom of the two sides always looks well and appropriate; while glasses with

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<sup>196</sup> Ruskin, ‘Traffic,’ 97.

<sup>197</sup> Tange, ‘Envisioning Domesticity, Locating Identity, and Constructing the Victorian Middle Class Through Images of Home,’ 283.

<sup>198</sup> Charles Locke Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1869), 12.

<sup>199</sup> Eastlake, 7-8. ‘We may condemn a lady’s opinion on politics- criticise her handwriting – correct her pronunciation of Latin, and disparage her favourite author with a chance of escaping displeasure. But if we venture to question her taste – in the most ordinary sense of the word – we are sure to offend.’ (Eastlake, 8)

<sup>200</sup> Eastlake, 13.

a nondescript gilt ornament in the centre of the top, look pretentious and vulgar.<sup>201</sup>

Even the placement of scrollwork on mirrors was contentious and a misstep could convey that horror to be avoided by self-respecting middle-class housewives – the accusation of vulgar taste. Represented in contemporary paintings, these details are routinely overlooked today but the mirror’s frame and glass have the potential to communicate as much as the reflection. For example, Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience* features a large mirror with the acceptable ‘neat-patterned frame, gilt all round’ as described above but, metaphorical revelations of a spiritual awakening aside, when we look closer at the reflection the abundance of objectionable, tasteless gilt ornament in the room becomes apparent (see detail, fig.67), a significant detail I will analyse in the following chapter.

The specifications regarding the use of gilt scrollwork on mirror frames, whether used on the sides or the top or, indeed, at all is suggestive of the complexities of acceptable décor. Eastlake in *Hints on Household Taste*, for instance, condemns the application of machine-made scrollwork on mirrors (‘this trash is only lightly *glued* to the frame’<sup>202</sup>) and pronounces that it is ‘usually in the worst taste. . . We should be ashamed to place the latter on our mantle-pieces.’<sup>203</sup> He particularly rails against that ‘indescribable species of ornament,’ the gilt ornamentation that so often resembles ‘a conglomeration of capital G’s’,<sup>204</sup> we must assume he would object, for example, to the mirrors in Frederick Goodall’s *A Letter from Papa* (1855, fig.68) and Rebecca Solomon’s *The Love Letter* (1861, fig.69).

In 1879 the designer Christopher Dresser wrote,

Art can lend an apartment not only beauty, but such refinement as will cause it to have an elevating influence on those who live in it...For the decorations to be pure, the mind from which they flow must be pure also.<sup>205</sup>

By the 1860s and 1870s, the idea that morality can be influenced by and expressed through interior décor, what Deborah Cohen describes as ‘the moralization of possessions,’<sup>206</sup> figured most prominently in the curated design of the middle-class drawing room, the heart of the family home and the most important public reception room in the house. Functioning primarily as an

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<sup>201</sup> *Cassell’s Household Guide*, vol. I, (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1869), 126. Inflation calculated with Officer and Williamson, *Measuring Worth*, [www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/](http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/))

<sup>202</sup> Eastlake, 52-53.

<sup>203</sup> Eastlake, 166.

<sup>204</sup> Eastlake, 52.

<sup>205</sup> Christopher Dresser, *Studies in Design* (London: Gibbs Smith, 1874), 9.

<sup>206</sup> Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 19.

exhibition space for the family's acquisitions, intended to be seen by visitors, the drawing-room or parlour was, as Moira Donald identifies, 'one of the most consciously contrived creations' of nineteenth-century life, a room in which 'wealth and status were reflected in every aspect of its construction, furnishing and ornamentation'.<sup>207</sup>

Organised around a feature fireplace, the nineteenth-century drawing-room typically featured a mantelpiece with decorative ornaments that were reflected and multiplied in the pièce de résistance, the overmantel mirror (including those with machine-made scrollwork condemned by Eastlake as unfit for mantelpieces, the focal point of the interior).<sup>208</sup> . In her first published work Edith Wharton cautions that 'the effect of a fireplace depends much upon the good taste and appropriateness of its accessories,'<sup>209</sup> the emphasis again being on 'good' taste derived through appropriate décor; Lucy Orrinsmith writes in her bestselling *The Drawing-Room: Its Decoration and Furniture* (1878),

Every effort should be made to make the hearth the rallying spot of the home, to collect around it the richest rugs, the softest sofas, the cosiest chairs, the prettiest treasures. In this chilly climate a natural tendency when entering a room is to seek the hearth. The seats of honour and affection are on either side; all will allow that it is a spot chosen to be cherished, that every one should strive to render it as attractive as possible.<sup>210</sup>

Writing in the late 1870s, Orrinsmith recalls middle-class interiors of the 1850s and describes the 'inevitable' arrangement of the 'mirror, clock, vases' assembled on the mantelpiece<sup>211</sup> associated with them. As a proponent of the Aesthetic style that was fashionable in the 1860s and 1870s, Orrinsmith agrees with Eastlake and disparages the 'usual lofty mirror with gilded frame, twisted into fantastic ornaments, useless in its size and height', and instead encourages

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<sup>207</sup> See Moira Donald, 'Tranquil Havens? Critiquing the Idea of Home as the Middle-Class Sanctuary,' in Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd (eds.), *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 106.

<sup>208</sup> Thad Logan discusses the accumulation and display of *things* as integral to middle-class ideology and points out that the drawing-room mirror would have multiplied the appearance of commodities: 'in reproducing an image of the domestic interior, mirrors would also place possessions within the realm of representation and ornament. The mirror's surface is at once a site of proliferation and increase and a potentially disturbing scene of illusion, in which the appearance of things can slip away from their moorings in the real world; hence the imposing mirror can be deployed in art and literature as a sign of deception and illegitimate success, a well as to guarantee status.' Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 114-115

<sup>209</sup> Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, *The Decoration of Houses* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897), 84.

<sup>210</sup> Lucy Orrinsmith, *The Drawing-Room: Its Decoration and Furniture* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1878), 33-34.

<sup>211</sup> Orrinsmith, 32.

her readers to use smaller looking-glasses that reflect and multiply a more concentrated selection of strategically placed decorative accessories.<sup>212</sup>

Regardless of fluctuating stylistic preferences during the nineteenth century, Orrinsmith's adjectives 'inevitable' and 'usual' in reference to the overmantel signify the mirror's fixed, central, pervasive presence in middle-class homes. Indicative of its popularity with the middle-class decorator, this emphasis on the fireplace, mantelpiece, and mirror is seen repeatedly in paintings from the time such as Augustus Egg's *Past and Present, No.1* (1858, fig.70), Holman Hunt's *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt* (1866-67, fig.71), and George Goodwin Kilburne's *Poor Relations* (1875, fig.72), three of over fifty representations of the overmantel mirror in the appendix catalogue. This 'inevitable' arrangement of the hearth and mantelpiece still persists today as the drawing-room where guests are entertained is usually constructed around a fireplace that features a mantelshelf decorated with pictures, a clock, and a mirror. It is easy today to deride some of the Victorian decorative choices but in actuality perhaps our approach to home décor has not changed so very much from the nineteenth century in which the ideal concept of home, inextricably bound to the visual social signifiers of possessions,<sup>213</sup> was marketed, reproduced in images, and ultimately generated an industry of manufactured middle-class taste.

As such, the mirror both in the nineteenth-century domestic interior and in representations of it functions simultaneously as a modern commodity and a cultural signifier replete with complex, historical, and contemporary symbolism. An anchor of good taste (which really means class status and correct morals) in the drawing-room that had trickled down from aristocratic interiors, the overmantel mirror also signified the owner's financial state for although the cost of mirrors decreased during the mid-century, by and large overmantels and pier glasses remained too costly for the working classes. Writing in 1866, Henry Chance points out that the price of a plate glass mirror of fifty inches by forty inches in 1771 was around £60, (or £7,000 today), while the cost for a comparable mirror by 1865 was roughly £5 (£445 today).<sup>214</sup> Spectacularly less expensive for such a large glass with improved clarity of reflection, the nineteenth-century mirror nevertheless became as ingrained in the middle-class interior as it had been the province of the aristocracy in the preceding centuries. *Chambers's Journal* in 1854 declared,

What house does not possess a mirror? – from the large cheval mirror, with its gorgeous gilding, in which the high-born beauty arrays herself for the

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<sup>212</sup> Orrinsmith, 34-35.

<sup>213</sup> See Elizabeth Langland, 'Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel,' *PMLA*, 107: 2 (March, 1992), 290-304; 293 + 295.

<sup>214</sup> Chance, 'On the Manufacture of Plate, Crown and Sheet Glass,' 147. Figures calculated using a purchasing power calculator by Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, 'Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present,' MeasuringWorth, 2015.  
<http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>

ball [. . .] down to the little cracked disc, bound with red painted wood where the poor seamstress plies her task.<sup>215</sup>

While lower-income houses might possess a mirror of some sort, there would have been quite a difference between the glittering cheval mirrors in well-to-do homes versus the ‘cracked disc’ one might find in the house of a seamstress (see the detail small cracked mirror in Helmsley’s *Baking Day* mentioned above, fig.73).

A useful resource for examples of both middle-class spending power and the cost of mirrors in mid-century décor is J.H. Walsh’s *A Manual of Domestic Economy Suited to Families Spending from £100 to £1000 a Year* (1856). Marketed to the variety of household incomes that comprised the middle class, Walsh’s advice manual covers every aspect of running a household from servants’ wages to the cost of food, coffee and decorating. He categorises middle-class spending potential into four groups, beginning with the family whose annual household budget is £1,000 down to those whose annual budget is £100, and provides detailed outlines of projected expenditure. In particular, the detailed, anticipated cost of mirrors designated between the income categories illustrates the variations possible within the middle-class sphere of decorating and the financial nuances conveyed with mirrors in the domestic space:

**Middle-Class Overmantel Mirror Budget (Sample)<sup>216</sup>**

Household Budget (1856)	Drawing-Room Overmantel Mirror	Cost Today (2015)
£1,000	£25	£2,087
£500	£12	£1,000
£250	£3	£250
£100	--	--

Walsh suggests those in the first category budget around £25 for a carved and gilt overmantel while for the family whose yearly expenditure is only £100 there is no mention of a gilt overmantel at all – such an aspirational purchase is noticeably absent from their suggested budget.<sup>217</sup> Likewise, when it comes to pier-glasses, Walsh suggests the family in the first

<sup>215</sup> ‘The Truth of the Mirror,’ *Chambers’s Journal of popular literature, science and arts* (July 1, 1854), 11-12; 11.

<sup>216</sup>J.H. Walsh, *A Manual of Domestic Economy: Suited to Families Spending From £100 to £1000 a Year* (London: G. Routledge & Co., 1856), 203. See Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, ‘Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present,’ MeasuringWorth, 2015. [www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/](http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/). Table created from the figures Walsh discusses on p.203.

<sup>217</sup> J.H. Walsh, *A Manual of Domestic Economy: Suited to Families Spending From £100 to £1000 a Year* (London: G. Routledge & Co., 1856), 203. See Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, ‘Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present,’ MeasuringWorth, 2015. [www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/](http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/)

category should plan to spend £15 (£1,410) for one; the other families in the descending expenditure categories apparently should not concern themselves with buying one at all.<sup>218</sup>

Underscoring the persistent value of household mirrors, *Cassell's Household Guide* of 1869 advises that purchasing a good-quality mirror was an investment worth the expense for 'looking-glasses are rarely purchased more than once in a lifetime' and suggests that a person on a limited budget could at least acquire a small oval-shaped mirror instead of an article such as the more expensive cheval glass (seen in Clementina, Lady Hawarden's photographs, fig.74).<sup>219</sup>

The historic house museum of *Punch* cartoonist Linley Sambourne at 18 Stafford Terrace, London exemplifies nineteenth-century Aesthetic décor in a middle-class home and provides a cross-section of mirrors *in situ*. The Sambourne's interior, preserved intact, contains a total of forty-eight mirrors including those incorporated into items of furniture. The number of mirrors alone would stand out today as excessive, but when one takes into consideration that this is a narrow terrace house (not a grand mansion or country estate) in which the entire first floor consists mainly of one large drawing-room, the quantity is even more impressive. Ten of these forty-eight mirrors are convex and the dining room alone has three of them of up to 100 cm hanging on opposite walls, the glass shapes breaking up the surface pattern of the William Morris wallpaper and adding light and diversity to the decorative scheme of framed pictures and blue-and-white china (figs.75-77). The adjacent morning room where Marion Sambourne would have received callers and managed the household and the two other prominent public areas of the house, the entrance hall and the formal drawing-room feature twenty-one mirrors between them, including convex, pier glasses, overmantels and girandoles. In 1877, two years after they moved in, the Sambournes had an inventory of their home and the contents are illuminating for the detailed descriptions and valuations of the articles in each room: out of a total of £97 18s worth of mirrors in the home (£5,829 today), one large gilt and ebonised wood convex mirror in the dining room listed in the inventory is valued at £1 10s (£142 today) and, by way of comparison that indicates the different prices of mirrors at the time, the convex mirror listed in

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<sup>218</sup> Walsh, 203. The 1874 edition of Walsh's book differs slightly in the figures and, indicative of rising income and falling mirror costs, the highest category of household expense, estimated to be £1500, is advised to pay £15 (still £1,245 today) for a gilt chimney glass for the drawing-room. As of 1874, however, it appears that the family from the lowest budget category (£150 annual expenditure) can now afford an overmantel for their parlour for Walsh suggests planning to spend £2 4s (around £180 today) for a glass plate of thirty-six by twenty-four inches. See Walsh, *A Manual of Domestic Economy Suited to Families Spending from £150 to £1500 a Year* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1874), 201 + 205; Walsh makes an interesting distinction between the 'drawing-room' £1500 a year household and the 'parlour' of the family of £150 a year.

<sup>219</sup> Cassell's Household Guide, vol. I (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1869), 185.



the morning room was valued at £5 10s (£327 today)<sup>220</sup> while the three large Italian chimney glasses in the drawing-room are listed as worth a total of £20 (£2,034, see fig. 78).<sup>221</sup>

The expense of the mirrors and their prominent display in the public rooms of Stafford Terrace are representative of the décor in fashionable middle-class interiors by the 1860s (the Sambournes are estimated to have had an annual income of around £2,000, well above the middle-class average<sup>222</sup>), and mirrors found in corresponding nineteenth-century images of the home are part of this visual language of modern taste. In *Victorian Glassworlds* Armstrong describes the subconscious Other expression of a material object: ‘the public language of artefacts is also the site of the syntax of the dreamwork of the artefact, sometimes working with, sometimes against the schemata of public discourse.’<sup>223</sup> This ‘dreamwork’ of the object, the variety of underlying possible interpretations, directly relates to the mirror’s ‘public language,’ the symbolic representation and cultural associations with the object. Thus the mirror as a decorative, expressive object persisted throughout the nineteenth century and although transformed by modern industry and more commonly seen in public and private spaces, underlying historical associations with mysticism and revelation persisted and it is these that the Pre-Raphaelites bring to the forefront in their imagery.

### **English Mirror Imagery**

Victorian mirrors ultimately constitute a component within a much larger picture of nineteenth-century British glass, itself a fragment of the story of glass production from the Middle Ages. Different eras of mirror manufacture emphasise various corresponding characteristics or iconography of the mirror (medieval scrying or seventeenth-century *vanitas* moralising, for example), and this dissertation will demonstrate that within the context of western European mirror production the Pre-Raphaelite use of mirrors is unique in its fusion of historical iconography, sources of influence and modern life. Within the abundance of mirrors represented in nineteenth-century painting, Pre-Raphaelite mirrors are distinct from their counterparts and laden with an underlying significance that incorporates Greek mythology, medieval visions, Northern Renaissance imagery, and Victorian middle-class interiors intricately bound up in perceptions of domestic taste and morality. Repurposed through the language of modern glass and its flawless reflections, the mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite pictures constitute a culmination of the history of glass mirror production and representation.

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<sup>220</sup> *An Inventory of Household Furniture etc., the property of E. Linley Sambourne Esqu. 18 Stafford Terrace, Kensington* (December 1 1877), 93. The 18 Stafford Terrace Archive, Leighton House Museum, London.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 92 + 126.

<sup>222</sup> Shirley Nicholson, *A Victorian Household Based on the Diaries of Marion Sambourne* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988), 23.

<sup>223</sup> Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds*, 15.

From the time the P.R.B. was formed in 1848 with Hunt and Rossetti using mirrors in their works by 1850, the mirror itself was on a trajectory to become an object that signified middle-class taste and the success of the English glass industry over foreign imports. As we have seen, although they were newly available to the middle class and transformed public spaces as well as domestic interiors, the great gilded variations of pier glasses and overmantels were still too costly for working-class homes and consequently maintained an exclusive edge (middle-class now, though, instead of aristocratic). As a result, regardless of the historical inspiration I will address in forthcoming chapters, the post-Industrial Revolution glass plates that appear repeatedly in Pre-Raphaelite works are resolutely identifiable as English, modern, middle-class objects. This dissertation will ultimately argue that the Pre-Raphaelite mirror, operating on both physical and symbolic levels, constitutes a significant component in reading their works as engaging with and creating reflections of contemporary life. As evidenced by *The Lady of Shalott* drawing and Rossetti's sketch of the woman before the mirror, Hunt and Rossetti were thinking about mirrors during the early days of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and, indicative of the immediacy and modernity of Pre-Raphaelite vision, flat glass mirrors and flawless reflections pervade their works, as parodied in Florence Claxton's 1860 *The Choice of Paris*. Claxton's picture makes fun of the medievalising elements found in the P.R.B. but misses their engagement with modernity and the unique connection found in the dialectic of historic/modern glass and vision/representation.

Among the questions under consideration in the following chapters are those relating to mirror characteristics, the nature of reflection, the historical influences that together constitute a broader intermirrornality, the artist's manipulation of the viewer's gaze, and iconographic associations. The artist's inclusion of a reflective surface immediately multiplies the narrative space, creates a world beyond the frame, and raises a potential challenge to the viewer's expectations. Does the mirror truthfully reflect a transcription of visual data? Does it reveal a concealed aspect of the narrative? Does it distort or confuse our vision or perception of space? How does it affect our understanding of the painted image? What are the underlying implications of the mirror's presence? Perhaps the mirror is used as a metaphor for sight, memory, or the art of painting itself - for instance, the understanding of Pre-Raphaelite painting as a mirror that reflects nature in minute detail, a comparison referred to through satire in Claxton's *The Choice of Paris*.

Chapters One and Two will analyse Hunt and Rossetti's mirrors within the context of the Victorian glassworld (to use Armstrong's terminology), taking into consideration historical iconography and inspirations from Van Eyck to Titian, and will argue for the mirror as a significant motif that contributes to a rethinking of Pre-Raphaelitism. Chapter One looks at the course of Holman Hunt's mirror imagery beginning with his 1850 *The Lady of Shalott*, a critical image in terms of establishing a specifically Pre-Raphaelite approach to thinking about the

mirror. A consideration of the Lady of Shalott images over the course of the artist's lifetime contributes to a reading of Hunt's mirrors as an exploration of Victorian glass as well as signifying an engagement with the modern experience and the contemporary debate around realism in art. The chapter will argue that Hunt's mirrors act as a metaphor for his artistic practice in which precise renderings of the natural world clarify narrative content and interact with the viewer, an approach that aligns his mirrors with one strand of Pre-Raphaelitism that he vehemently advocates is the true style, as opposed to Rossetti's brand that influenced artists in the second wave of the movement. An analysis of his mirrors, however, reveals an underlying complexity that is more aligned with Rossetti than Hunt might acknowledge, and ultimately constitutes a unifying factor in their work that creates a visual dialogue between the two.

Chapter Two examines Rossetti's use of mirrors as a parallel development to Hunt's imagery, and one that is as influential as Hunt's in spite of the latter's iconic 1857 *Lady of Shalott*. While Hunt's mirrors correspond to the material world and emphasise the viewer's recognition and experience of that world, Rossetti's mirrors problematize the reflection and subvert the viewer's expectation of mirror behaviour. David Peters Corbett identifies that 'Sight in Hunt's picture operates as a form of knowledge,'<sup>224</sup> a method I will argue is complicated by Rossetti's self-referencing mirrors, an effect Corbett describes as 'Instead of a direct reference from the objects of the physical, material world to the meaning they signify, Rossetti's circuit [. . .] doubles back on itself to reaffirm its own inwardness.'<sup>225</sup> This inward redoubling precipitates identifying the mirror as the inner standing-point in both Rossetti's text and images, a critical point in reading the mirror world in Rossetti's works. Signifying a self-referencing visual language as well as a position within a continuum of nineteenth-century mirror images, Rossetti's mirror treatment contributes to a Pre-Raphaelite motif that responds to a contemporary object and collapses the boundary between the painted surface and the modern viewer.

Chapter Three analyses the Pre-Raphaelite mirror as a specific motif established by Hunt and Rossetti and used by artists from the second wave such as Edward Burne-Jones and Frederick Sandys as well as later artists including J.W. Waterhouse and those not necessarily immediately associated with Pre-Raphaelitism such as Charles Shannon and William Orpen. I will argue that the mirror imagery in these works is indicative of the Pre-Raphaelite scope of influence and forms the 'intermirrorality' between the original Brotherhood and later nineteenth-century artists. Moreover, the repetition of mirrors not only contributes to re-evaluating Pre-Raphaelitism as a movement but it makes a case for a motif-based methodology when considering a Pre-Raphaelite designation – can we not consider the repetition of a motif as a

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<sup>224</sup> David Peters Corbett, *The World in Paint: Modern Art and Visuality in England, 1848-1914* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 40.

<sup>225</sup> Corbett, 63.

significant factor in the discussion of Pre-Raphaelitism just as much as colour, brushwork, and subject matter? J.E. Millais's noticeable lack of mirrors will also be addressed, a factor that contributes to a consideration of Hunt and Rossetti as more artistically aligned in spite of their contrasting stylistic choices. Framed by images of the Lady of Shalott from 1850 to 1915 by Hunt and Waterhouse and utilising diverse historical and contemporary source material, the mirror in Pre-Raphaelite painting represents a distinctive way of seeing and representing the modern experience.

Nineteenth-century mirrors are overlooked today, perhaps because mirror imagery is as familiar a sight in the western art-historical tradition as it is in our own daily surroundings, and as such can become an imperceptible visual fragment that is taken for granted. As such, the mirror as an independent entity that exists outside of the painting within a historical context of glass technology, design and interior décor is routinely omitted as we have seen with the previous examples relating to Van Eyck and Velásquez. In order to maintain a framework based on a strong material component, as well as to prevent the project from becoming overly ambitious in scope, I will restrict the images under consideration to representations of actual glass mirrors in paintings and illustrations. I have chosen not to include other means of reflections or self-portraits for in spite of the obvious mirror implications. A consideration of the self-portrait-as-mirror moves away from evaluating the visual representation of the nineteenth-century mirror and instead makes assumptions regarding the artist's creative process. Instead, just as my primary literature addresses the mirror's materiality rather than restricting the inquiry to its metaphorical potential (for example, M.H. Abrams's significant *The Mirror and the Lamp* of 1971 is absent as the mirror in the title is a metaphor for literary mimetic theory and does not refer to a discussion of actual mirrors), only images that include the mirror as a physical object are considered.

Due to the solid materiality of the mirror as the starting point of inquiry and, for purposes of this project, access to the internal world of the painting, the catalogue of mirrors attached as an appendix represents significant empirical research that is fundamental for this project. While it is by no means exhaustive, it nevertheless captures a considerable cross-section of mirror images present during the 1850-1915 time frame and constitutes a visual survey of nineteenth-century mirror imagery. Over four hundred pictures encompass the dominant range of mirror categories – overmantel mirrors, pier glasses, swing-glasses on toilet tables, hand-held mirrors, cheval glasses, girandoles, and convex mirrors. In terms of organisation, I have listed the mirrors in chronological order to facilitate a coherent reading of the progression and repetition of mirrors used by artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement compared with their contemporaries. In the case of a significant delay between execution and public exhibition, a scenario seen most often in Rossetti's works, I have included a notation for considering this. The catalogue not only helps establish the context of mirror representation that the Pre-Raphaelites

and their followers would have been familiar with and were working within, it also illustrates the individuality of the Pre-Raphaelite mirror when compared with other contemporary representations.

For comparative purposes I have included in the appendix a list of ‘Other Reflections,’ those that occur outside of glass mirrors such as doppelgängers and reflections captured in water or glass windows. Whilst this project is restricted to glass mirrors, a picture such as J.W. Waterhouse’s *Echo and Narcissus* (1903) that represents a subject so embedded in the cultural mythology of vanity and reflection retains a place of secondary reference and comparison. Still water would have been the earliest form of the mirror, and the unfortunate Narcissus’s infatuation with his own reflection in this ancient mirror is the central plot twist and moral warning. By contrast, in a contemporary Victorian setting, James Tissot’s *The Bunch of Lilacs* (1875, fig.79) indirectly celebrates the mid-century effusion of glass and reflection. Possibly set in Tissot’s own conservatory, the picture is rendered luminous with the reflections of light and colour on the gleaming floor tiles set against the background of hothouse plants. Also included are images such as and Frank Dicksee’s *The Magic Crystal* (1894) and Waterhouse’s *The Crystal Ball* (1902) that feature a crystal ball in place of a mirror. Traditionally used in scrying practices, the crystal ball and the ‘magic’ mirror are interchangeable as reflective surfaces used in divining visions of the intangible past, present, and future; both objects are inextricably associated with the medieval woman of supernatural powers and the inherent mystery of reflective glass. One example in regard to this interchangeable quality is found in an 1871 letter from Rossetti to Ford Madox Brown. Referring to the ballad he was working on at the time, ‘Rose Mary,’ Rossetti mentions ‘I am writing a long ballad about a magic mirror [. . .] My mirror, however, is a crystal ball.’<sup>226</sup> The images in this category supplement our understanding of the prevalence of Victorian glass in visual images and provides a multi-faceted view of nineteenth-century reflections.

The following chapters, together with the appendix catalogue, will illustrate that the Pre-Raphaelite looking-glass hinges on a unique intersection of western art-historical iconography and nineteenth-century glass technology, and by depicting a modern-life object, the Pre-Raphaelites effectively neutralise the barrier between pictorial and ‘real’ space, past and present, material and spiritual, and establish a specific motif that appears throughout the late nineteenth century. One critic, writing in 1900 on Rossetti’s watercolour *Lucrezia Borgia* (1860), identifies the necessity of looking in the mirror to understand the picture:

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<sup>226</sup> D.G. Rossetti to Ford Madox Brown, August 12, 1871, quoted in Ford Madox Ford, *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life and Work* (London and New York: Longman’s Green, and Co., 1896), 269.

All the details have a voice of their own; the most trivial objects are part of the whole. You look and listen, by degrees you forget yourself in listening to these minute trifles. As an entomologist, hidden in the grass, examines the passing insects, and is lost in contemplation of the worlds that they reveal beneath us these microscopic details lead to the wildest thoughts, the minute leads to the infinite.<sup>227</sup>

The awareness that the microscopic details are the tip of the iceberg, that ‘the minute leads to the infinite’ can and should be applied to reading the mirrors of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, considering what is present as well as what might be absent, and with the attention of a scientist examining evidence through a microscope. The allusion to the microscope itself is a reference to modernity, as like the mirror, the scientific instrument’s management of vision depends upon the advances in glass technology and production. Isobel Armstrong notes the nineteenth-century interest in the microscope and the gaze through it that ‘gave access to a *hidden* world, it gave access to a *distinct* world. It allowed a hallucinatory, dreamlike visuality to coexist with precision.’<sup>228</sup> This dynamic unification of dreamlike vision, or spirituality, with truthful representations of modernity, utilising modern materials, underscores the Pre-Raphaelite circle and its distinctiveness as an *avant-garde* art movement, capable of challenging the developments in photography as well as the established precepts of the Academy.

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<sup>227</sup> ‘Subject in English Painting, from the French of M. De La Sizeranne,’ *Artist: an illustrated monthly record of arts, crafts and industries*, 27 (May 1900), 20-29; 25.

<sup>228</sup> Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds*, 319.

## Chapter I: William Holman Hunt

With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past.<sup>229</sup>

Previous scholarly literature has explored the language of Pre-Raphaelite realism<sup>230</sup> and what I am concerned with in this chapter is the concept of Hunt's realism seen through and furthered by the looking-glass. In other words, Hunt's use of mirrors can be read as a visual metaphor for his specific brand of P.R.B. realism, one that facilitates a reading of his works as a response to modern life. Hunt's underlying contemporaneity, demonstrated through the metaphor of the magic mirror, constitutes an intersection of historical mirror iconography with contemporary glass production and the original principles of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Beginning with his early *Lady of Shalott* images and the modern moral subject *The Awakening Conscience*, this chapter takes into account Hunt's use of mirrors throughout his *oeuvre*, and particularly with regard to his iconic mirror in *The Lady of Shalott* that influenced mirror imagery over the course of the nineteenth century. From the beginning, Hunt's mirrors set up a structure of Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery, one that represents a point of intersection between contemporary glass production and an amalgamation of historical mirror iconography stemming from diverse sources. Hunt's mirrors establish the case for a motif-based influence on later artists, traditionally associated with the Pre-Raphaelite canon or not, and signify a coherent thread of vision and representation between his early and late works as well as those of Rossetti's variety of Pre-Raphaelite realism.

The above opening sentence of George Eliot's novel *Adam Bede* (1859) alludes to the author's intention of literary realism from the outset, which she compares to an exotic divination ritual in which the reader sees visions in the reflections of her ink.<sup>231</sup> Before the first line has come to a full stop, Eliot's stance on realism is immediately thrown into question with her comparison to magical practices, an analogy that creates a place of tension between realism and the fantastical. While the metaphor is perhaps unfamiliar to most of us today, the practice of

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<sup>229</sup> Opening sentence from George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859).

<sup>230</sup> See John Murdoch, 'English Realism: George Eliot and the Pre-Raphaelites,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 37 (1974), 313-329; Lindsay Smith, 'The Elusive Depth of Field: Stereoscopia and the Pre-Raphaelites,' Marcia Pointon (ed.), *Pre-Raphaelites Re-Viewed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989); Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*; Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Allen Staley and Christopher Newall (eds.), *Pre-Raphaelite Vision: Truth to Nature*, exh. cat., (London: Tate, 2004); Marcia Werner, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>231</sup> Examples of contemporary descriptions of this practice can be found in 'The Magic Crystal,' *Household Words*, 2: 38 (December 14, 1850), 284-288; 285 and Edward William Lane's *An Account of Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* vol. I (London: Charles Knight & Co., 1871, originally published 1836), see 341- 347 for a lengthy description of this divination ritual that Lane ultimately derides as a hoax.

divining visions through ink (or other reflective surfaces) would have been known to Eliot's nineteenth-century readers who would have associated it with the exoticism of far-off places like Egypt. Eliot proceeds to unveil the vision of Jonathan Burge's workshop, a specific place in time that establishes the very ordinary real-ness of the English setting, but one that is mediated through the magic mirror of liquid ink. Eliot's metaphor of mystical divination that creates a reflection of the 'real' world, an ordinary English one, is comparable to the Pre-Raphaelite response to modern life, a tenuous re-presentation mediated through glass and found most overtly in the works of Hunt and Rossetti.

Hunt's brand of realism can be understood by considering his use of hard glass juxtaposed with effervescent reflections: the mirror-as-metaphor reconciles the contradictions of realism, symbolism, past, and present in his work. Within a nineteenth-century context of middle-class accumulation of manufactured goods and the new importance of interior décor, Hunt's use of the mirror was particular to his time and a natural extension of his specific iconographic development beginning with the 1850 *Lady of Shalott*. Richard Stang explains the concept of realism demonstrated by both Eliot and Ruskin, and one that likewise can be applied to Hunt:

anything but the literal following of external reality. The facts of experience were only the raw material of art to be transformed by the imagination, especially the sympathetic imagination. But in order for the imagination to soar, it must operate on a basis of hard realism.<sup>232</sup>

This use of the physical and the temporal to convey spiritual and eternal truths was fundamental to Pre-Raphaelite realism and one that Millais, Hunt and Rossetti continued to explore, albeit with differing aesthetic results over the years. Referring to Hunt's later work, the eerie *Triumph of the Innocents* (fig.80) in which the spirits of toddlers murdered by the Biblical king Herod are depicted alongside the Holy Family on their flight to Egypt, Elizabeth Pettejohn points out that 'the spirits of the dead babies, seen in a vision, appear more solid and brightly lit than the "real" figures of the Holy Family in the night-time landscape. But in Hunt's project there is no difference between natural and spiritual truth.'<sup>233</sup> I suggest that this concept of visual equality applied to physical and spiritual elements in Hunt's imagery directly relates to, and is exemplified by, his use of the mirror. The fusion of the material with the symbolic was potentially confusing, as the critic in *The Athenaeum* complained of *The Triumph of the Innocents* that the 'sharp definition in the spiritual sphere of dreams and visions [. . .] confuses the spectator' for 'We

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<sup>232</sup> Richard Stang, 'The Literary Criticism of George Eliot,' *PMLA*, 72: 5 (December, 1957), 952-961; 956.

<sup>233</sup> Pettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 113.



cannot see mundane and celestial things at the same time and on equal terms'.<sup>234</sup> It is exactly this reconciliation of the 'mundane' with the 'celestial,' however, that the Pre-Raphaelite mirror facilitates through a visual and metaphorical synthesis of the historical and contemporary, supernatural and scientific.

This chapter analyses Hunt's mirrors as modern products of the industrial revolution, objects with strong Victorian middle-class overtones that bridge nineteenth-century materialism with symbolism to create on canvas what Chris Brooks described as 'a world that is both symbolic and materially actual'<sup>235</sup> in which '*the pictures establish their own terms of reference*'.<sup>236</sup> Hunt's mirrors are central to establishing a visual framework of the symbolic realism defined by Brooks as

a conflation of the immediate nature of direct experience with the mediate nature of our experience of symbolism, in which the sign mediates between ourselves and the reality it signifies [. . .] a fundamental mode of the Victorian imagination.<sup>237</sup>

In this specific case, and in this chapter as well as the following on Rossetti, I will be interrogating the Pre-Raphaelite mirror as an modern object that establishes its own terms of self-reference within the context of the painting, an arrangement that contributes to what Prettejohn describes as 'the uncanny conflation of art with "reality"'<sup>238</sup> and significantly impacts the interpretation of both Hunt and Rossetti's works, from Hunt's modern-life *The Awakening Conscience* to Rossetti's mythological images of Lilith.

Comparable to Eliot's mirror of nature, Hunt's use of the mirror throughout his *oeuvre* captures the juxtaposition of the historic divining glass with a response to modernity that transposes contradictory associations on to a re-presentation of contemporary life. Like Eliot's visions of the past conjured up by sorcery at the tip of her pen, Hunt explores a particularly English style of realism and representation through the lens of the magic mirror, beginning with his 1850 study for *The Lady of Shalott*. The Pre-Raphaelite realism seen in Hunt, while in one respect does capture every strand of hair with mirror-like accuracy, it nevertheless incorporates something of the fantastic, the internal response of the artist. At its most basic is the observation that, in a picture like *The Lady of Shalott*, whether the original drawing or the final work in oil, technical realism has been employed to convey the imaginary: a made-up 'medieval' setting, a magic mirror that cracks on its own because of a curse, a knight in armour glimpsed through the

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<sup>234</sup> 'New Pictures', *The Athenaeum*, 2993 (March 7, 1885), 317-318.

<sup>235</sup> Chris Brooks, *Signs for the Times: Symbolic Realism in the Mid-Victorian World* (London and Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1894), 140.

<sup>236</sup> Brooks, 112 (emphasis mine).

<sup>237</sup> Brooks, 3.

<sup>238</sup> Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 205.

window-through-the-mirror and, in the 1857 and 1905 versions, the Lady's hair defies gravity in the most unbelievable way. Hunt's mirror, however, constitutes a very modern anchor in the 'real' world that subverts charges of sentimental escapism.

### ***The Lady of Shalott (1850. fig.1)***

bringing the Middle age forward to the Present one . . . [it is] a mirror of the nineteenth century.<sup>239</sup>

Is it feasible to position Hunt and Rossetti, with their images such as Rossetti's ambiguous *La Bella Mano* or Hunt's fantastical technicolour *Lady of Shalott* (c.1886-1905), as *avant-garde* rather than purveyors of sentimental escapism they have been accused of being, as modern artists rather than quaint and out of touch artistic anomalies? Similar to Roger Fry's accusation in 1934 that the Pre-Raphaelites 'could not think out their problems clearly; they fled from contemporary life instead of facing it,'<sup>240</sup> Andrew Marr blames the Pre-Raphaelites' 'luxurious Classical fantasies and dreamy Arthurian nonsense' for the French being credited as *avant-garde* leaders in the nineteenth century; the French had Cezanne (*real* realism?) while the British apparently had 'Arthurian nonsense'.<sup>241</sup> Carrying on this theme in 2009, following the release of the miniseries 'Desperate Romantics,' a soap-style account of the early days of the P.R.B., the feminist Germaine Greer wrote in *The Guardian* that Pre-Raphaelitism was 'inauthentic, meretricious and vulgar' and went on to lament that while the French were busy creating Impressionism, the English were occupied with the 'false sentiment, fancy dress and finicking pseudo-realism' of Pre-Raphaelite works.<sup>242</sup> Referenced in the previous chapter, Greer and Marr's pronouncements summarize one twentieth-century view of Pre-Raphaelitism, one that derides the movement as out of touch with modern life and inferior to the developments of French Impressionism.<sup>243</sup> Perhaps Greer and Marr have missed the point entirely and 'Arthurian nonsense' and 'finicking pseudo-

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<sup>239</sup> 'Tennyson,' *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 42: 249 (September, 1850), 245-255; 250.

<sup>240</sup> Roger Fry, *Reflections on British Painting* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1934), 108.

<sup>241</sup> Andrew Marr, 'Notebook,' *The Telegraph*, (February 4, 2004),

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3602226/Notebook.html>.

<sup>242</sup> Germaine Greer, 'Desperate Romantics? The only desperate thing about the pre-Raphaelites was their truly bad art,' *The Guardian* (August 16, 2009)

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/aug/16/pre-raphaelite-brotherhood-germaine-greer>.

<sup>243</sup> For recent scholarly critique of this traditional polarization that favours a Franco-centric view of modern art, see Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 65; Paul Barlow, 'Millais, Manet, Modernity,' in eds. David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry, *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001); David Peters Corbett, *The World in Paint: Modernity and Visuality in England, 1848-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004). As Prettejohn points out 'Pre-Raphaelite art may help us to diversify and reanimate the story of modern art, by demonstrating different possibilities for artistic originality.' (Prettejohn, 65)

realism' were in fact more relevant and self-reflexive than they suppose, a distinctive interpretation of modernity rather than a wholesale rejection of it.

Hunt's first known experiment with the mirror, *The Lady of Shalott*, is set in King Arthur's Camelot - a mythical medieval subject and setting that on the surface is far-removed from post-Industrial Revolution Britain. Rather than symptomatic of an escapist bent, the subject of the Lady of Shalott in the 'fancy dress' snickered at by Greer is in point of fact related to a contemporary revival of popular interest in the Arthurian legends. The legends in the nineteenth century provided a rich, comparative interplay between contemporary life and historic, and the Victorian interest in the shared cultural mythology of the King Arthur legends suggests an awareness of the tales as multi-layered, evolving constructs of national folklore in which vague medieval settings 'could allow freedom treatment less permissible in contemporary subject matter.'<sup>244</sup>

Nineteenth-century readers responded to Tennyson's versions of the tales with varying degrees of admiration ('the human soul, in its infinite variety of moods and trials, is his favourite haunt',<sup>245</sup> 'All that makes our life glowing, passionate, and real, has found expression'<sup>246</sup>) and frustration (regarding 'The Lady of Shalott,' 'we have a story so obscurely told that we would on no account take upon ourselves the responsibility of giving the briefest summary of it'<sup>247</sup>), but there is the intermittent critical recognition that Tennyson's Arthurian subjects did in fact concern modern life. For example, referring to Tennyson's medieval subjects, *Fraser's Magazine* articulates an interpretation that this 'ideal fairy-land' has been reached 'by the only true method - by bringing the Middle age forward to the Present one, and not ignoring the Present to fall back on a cold and galvanized Mediaevalism [*sic*];' instead it is

a mirror of the nineteenth century, possessed of its own new art and science, its own temptations and aspirations, and yet grounded on, and continually striving to reproduce, the forms and experiences of all past time.<sup>248</sup>

The acknowledgment that such a medieval setting constitutes a 'Middle age being brought forward to the Present one' is a significant reading if applied to Hunt as well, one he facilitates through glass representation.

Tennyson's tragic ballad was originally published in 1832 and again in 1842 following substantial rewrites and, like the origins of the legends,<sup>249</sup> retains sufficient ambiguity and

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<sup>244</sup>Christine Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail: Arthurian Legend in British Art, 1840-1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 196.

<sup>245</sup>'Art II - Poems by Tennyson,' *The Edinburgh Review*, 78: 156 (April, 1843), 373-391; 382.

<sup>246</sup>'Tennyson - Idylls of the King,' *Bentley's Quarterly Review*, 2: 3 (October, 1859), 159-194; 194.

<sup>247</sup>'Art II. Poems by Alfred Tennyson, 2 vols,' *The British Quarterly Review*, 2: 3 (August, 1845), 46-71; 62.

<sup>248</sup>'Tennyson,' *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 250.

mystery in the narrative to leave room for Hunt's lifelong exploration of the subject. Amidst the mysterious aspects of the tale, one certainty in Tennyson's 'Lady of Shalott,' and an element Hunt emphasises, is that the mirror is central to the construct of Tennyson's mythology and the tale hinges upon the heroine's interaction with and response to its reflections. Set in medieval Camelot, Tennyson's poem relates the tale of a nameless woman imprisoned on an island who is forbidden from any engagement with outside life apart from the reflections in her magic mirror. A disembodied whisper has cursed her to weave 'the mirror's magic sights' in isolation, a task she dedicates herself to 'night and day' until she sees Sir Lancelot riding past her window. Like Elaine of Astolat, the other Arthurian maiden of legend who dies of unrequited love for Lancelot, the Lady of Shalott leaves the tower and dies trying to reach Camelot by boat. Who the lady is and how she came to be imprisoned and cursed is never explained, nor is the exact nature of the curse or the purpose of her creative task.

Cobbled together from thirteenth-century French and Italian sources and Sir Thomas Malory's tale of Elaine of Astolat in *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485), Tennyson expands upon the story of the nameless girl from Escolatt who dies of love for Lancelot and is found floating into Camelot on her funeral barge. For the 'Lady of Shalott' Tennyson added the details of the mirror, the curse, and enforced isolation and weaving, fleshing out the Lady's character as an artist and prisoner of enchantment.<sup>250</sup> King Arthur is thought to have been a fifth or sixth-century Celtic chieftan<sup>251</sup> but rather than prioritising historical veracity with regard to the setting, Tennyson sets his Arthurian tales, including 'The Lady of Shalott,' in Malory's fifteenth century, creating continuity between *Le Morte d'Arthur* and his own reimagining.

There is a continuous thread of representation between Malory, Tennyson, and Hunt in which Camelot is pictured as the epitome of a chivalrous golden age replete with courtly love, shining armour, silken fabrics, cultivated landscape, and gothic arches, imagery that echoes a unified vision of Britain's cultural past. Tennyson's complaints of Hunt's later illustration for 'The Lady of Shalott' in the 1857 Moxon edition of Tennyson's *Poems* are well known (Tennyson disliked the Lady's wild hair 'tossed about as if by a tornado' as well as the tapestry coming apart and winding 'round and round her like the threads of a cocoon'<sup>252</sup>) but the irony is that his own work was inspired by at least three sources and reworked so that the 1842 version is a blurred reflection of his 1832 piece, itself a shimmering mirage of medieval romance.

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<sup>249</sup> See Christine Poulson, 1-2. Poulson points out that the lack of information about the 'real' Arthur gave nineteenth-century artists and writers an incredible amount of creative license.

<sup>250</sup> See L.S. Potwin, 'The Source of Tennyson's the Lady of Shalott,' *Modern Language Notes*, 17: 8 (December, 1902), 237-239. Also see Karen Hodder, 'The Lady of Shalott in Art and Literature' in Susan Mendes and Jane Rendall (eds.), *Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>251</sup> See Poulson, 1.

<sup>252</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1914), 95.

The crucial point in Tennyson's narrative that so captivated Hunt was the moment the Lady looks at Lancelot through the window and the mirror immediately cracks and unleashes its mysterious curse unleashed amidst the multiple reflections on glass, crystal, armour and water.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces through the room,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
    She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
'The curse has come upon me,' cried  
    The Lady of Shalott.<sup>253</sup>

Hunt's 1850 conception of *The Lady of Shalott* demonstrates a close reading of Tennyson's poem, as his pen-and-ink drawing creates a narrative summary through mirror reflections in the background. His interpretation of Tennyson's work would change over the course of the nineteenth century as he returned to it in 1857 and again in the 1880s, but the original Lady of 1850 is represented confined in her tower room in which the gothic architecture revealed in the mirror's reflection as well as her loose medieval style of dress place her within the context of medieval Arthurian fantasy rather than contemporary Britain. Having evidently just turned her back on the mirror to look at the passing Lancelot, she stands within the perimeters of her loom, caught in the unwinding tapestry threads. The crux of Tennyson's narrative is encapsulated in the reflection that faces the viewer, revealing Lancelot to be in our space and implicitly involving us in the narrative - witnesses to the event like the tiny figures haunting the doorway in Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*.

The Lady herself seems momentarily unaware of her fate, suspended in a pause before the cracked mirror, but Hunt uses the mirror and its accompanying roundels to conflate the poem's main narrative events, engaging the viewer who can read the Lady's past, present and future as though in a series of crystal balls. In what appears to be a gravity-defying array of mirrors with no apparent framing-and-hanging device, the eight smaller roundels or magic mirrors<sup>254</sup> derived

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<sup>253</sup> Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott' (1842), Part III, stanza V, verses 1-9.

<sup>254</sup> As a direct quotation from Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*, it is possible that these are not mirrors but pictorial roundels that are comparable to the decorative device around the Arnolfini mirror. However, if we follow the narrative clockwise the spheres become cracked after the appearance of Lancelot, tying together the smaller scenes with the central mirror image; the surface of the roundel cracking itself is indicative of the possibility it is made of glass. George Somes Layard, writing in 1894 on the Pre-Raphaelite illustrations of Tennyson, suggests these are mirrors, not roundels. See George Somes Layard, *Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators: A Book About a Book* (London: Elliot Stock, 1894), 39: 'In this first conception of the poem, he had sacrificed fidelity to the original for the sake of making the

from Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* (a point to which I will return shortly) surround the large central mirror and represent scenes of Camelot, the Lady at her loom, the approach of Lancelot, and the Lady's final funereal voyage. The roundels that in Van Eyck's original depict Christ's Passion and Resurrection in barely discernible microscopic detail are large enough in Hunt's piece to convey a different narrative of passion and sacrifice<sup>255</sup> as the Lady chooses Lancelot in spite of impending curse. The multiplicity of mirrors, reinforced as the large convex mirror can be seen repeated in two of the small scenes, creates a sensation of a mirrors-within-mirrors and, following the mirror cracking and the tapestry unwinding, the roundels also begin to display cracks as they work clockwise towards the Lady's death.

With regard to the cracked mirror and magical reflections, the idea of the magic mirror and crystal-gazing constituted an element of mid-to late nineteenth-century spiritualism and occult practices, an ancient ritual that experienced a revival of popularity during a time of industrial and scientific progress.<sup>256</sup> Eliot alludes to this in the opening lines of *Adam Bede* and, as I will demonstrate, Hunt's specific use of the magic mirror aligns his image with modern glass as well as contemporary interest in fashionable occult practice. In the text, Tennyson describes the mirror as 'clear' and also as made of crystal, as when Lancelot 'flash'd into the crystal mirror' and set off the destructive chain of events.<sup>257</sup> In terms of mirror production, and assuming this is the fifteenth century as established by Tennyson, the majority of mirrors in England up until this time were made of metal. As we have seen, the crystal mirror, or *cristallo* glass, refers to the sixteenth-century development by Venetian glassmakers and is unlikely to specify the Lady's mirror. The 'crystal' mirror then possibly relates to the medieval tradition of seeing the future in a reflective surface made of glass, crystal, or water. Traditionally, crystal divination used rock crystal, which was believed to have magical properties, but 'crystal' in this context for the nineteenth-century reader could mean either a mirror used for divination or a polished sphere of either rock crystal or glass used for crystal gazing.<sup>258</sup>

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design more comprehensive, and had drawn a series of small mirrors round the large one, in which the successive magic sights of Camelot were by an artistic license made to appear simultaneously.' Richard L. Stein also supports a reading of the accompanying roundels as individual magic mirrors. See Stein, 'The Pre-Raphaelite Tennyson,' *Victorian Studies*, 24: 3 (Spring, 1981), 278-301; 292. They remain ambiguous and open to interpretation as Hunt does not provide an explanation himself for the scenes.

<sup>255</sup> Coincidentally, while the mirror in the finished *Arnolfini Portrait* has ten roundels, infrared technology reveals that the original mirror was slightly larger and had eight roundels, the number Hunt includes here. See Rachel Billinge and Lorne Campbell, "The Infra-red Reflectograms of Jan van Eyck's Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife Giovanna Cenami (?)." *The National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, 16 (1995), 47-60; 49.

<sup>256</sup> See the images of crystal balls in the appendix, representative of the romantic, medieval associations with the practice.

<sup>257</sup> Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott,' Part III, Stanza IV, verse 7.

<sup>258</sup> 'Crystal, n. and adj.,' Oxford English Dictionary Online (Oxford University Press, December, 2013): <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/45386?rskey=kULBEZ&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed February 27, 2014).

The Oxford English Dictionary gives an eleventh-century definition of ‘crystal’ as ‘any transparent naturally occurring mineral substance or ornament made out of this’ while ‘crystal’ is first indicated as interchangeable with ‘glass’ in a fourteenth-century definition in which the term can be understood to mean ‘highly transparent and heavy glass.’<sup>259</sup> This does not necessarily denote a mirror, however, and the OED lists the first literary example of ‘crystal’ as the equivalent of looking-glass in 1792.<sup>260</sup> Armstrong suggests that the word ‘crystal’ is ‘the single defining term of glass culture and modernism [. . .] Crystal constitutes a living representation of the faceted multiplicity of convergent times and spaces’<sup>261</sup> Thus, Tennyson’s description of the Lady’s mirror leaves an ambiguous opening for interpretation that glides between a crystal/glass ball for divination, and a magic looking-glass, a relic of medieval scrying and a modern instrument of seeing what is otherwise invisible.

Assuming that Tennyson’s description of the mirror cracking ‘from side to side’ is indicative of a glass object rather than a dense rock crystal, as well as the fact that Lady turns to look at Lancelot passing by her window after seeing his clear reflection, the mirror is an ambiguous element from the outset: a medieval magical object that, through subtle references, possesses modern characteristics outside of its time. As covered in the previous chapter, the size and clarity of medieval mirrors would have made this clear reflection of Lancelot at a distance impossible. The nineteenth-century reader would in any case be familiar with the ancient tradition of catoptromancy (divination in a mirror)<sup>262</sup> or crystal-gazing, a potential layer of interpretation present in the unclear descriptions and mysterious narrative. In 1850, *Household Words* reported an upsurge in the popularity of magic mirrors and rock crystal balls, ‘this revival and its consequences is like a page out of a silly romance’<sup>263</sup> and ascribes it to ‘weak minded people.’<sup>264</sup> By 1892, however, *All The Year Round* reported that divination with mirrors and crystal-reading were being practised regularly (‘there is in England a wholesale manufacture of magic mirrors as a regular industry’);<sup>265</sup> and, in an 1897 article, *Chambers’s Journal* informed readers that a large number of crystal balls were being sold every year, ranging in prices from £30 for real crystal<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> OED Online, ‘crystal’.

<sup>260</sup> OED Online, ‘crystal’.

<sup>261</sup> Armstrong, 151.

<sup>262</sup> For example, see ‘Magic Crystals,’ *Reynold’s Miscellany*, 40:1024 (January 25, 1868), 86. Also see ‘Divination, Witchcraft, and Mesmerism,’ *The Dublin University Magazine* 38:228 (December 1851), 687-707 and ‘Crystals,’ *Household Words* 15:371 (May 2, 1857), 414-419; 418. The author of the *Dublin University Magazine* gives a thorough explanation of both catoptromancy and crystal gazing and the 1857 article in *Household Words* reiterates the belief that ‘moral purity’ is necessary for divination in a crystal.

<sup>263</sup> ‘The Magic Crystal,’ *Household Words*, vol.2: 38 (December 14, 1850), 284-288; 285.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>265</sup> ‘Through a Glass Darkly,’ *All The Year Round*, 7: 169 (January 23, 1892), 79-84; 84. The article provides an in-depth look at the various superstitions surrounding crystal gazing and magic mirror divination. The writer observes that while ‘mirror and crystal-reading is one of the most ancient occult practices, we have also seen that it is practised in our own country even at this day.’ (p.84)

<sup>266</sup> According to the Bank of England inflation calculator £30 in 1897 is equivalent to £3,302.06 as of 2012.

to fifteen shillings for one made of glass.<sup>267</sup> Writing in apparent disbelief himself, the journalist nevertheless points out that the magic crystal balls must have faithful believers among the wealthy given the price for a 'sphere of crystal the size of a lawn-tennis ball'.<sup>268</sup> The appendix of images at the end of this dissertation includes a section entitled 'Other' that is comprised largely of crystal balls, a large number of them notably by Edward Burne-Jones.

Like Eliot's Egyptian sorcerer, the Lady sees visions ('magic sights') in the mirror's depths, an allusion that carries through to her final journey by boat, as she is described looking towards Camelot 'like some bold seer in a trance, / Seeing all his own mischance - / With a glassy countenance.' The crystal mirror and the Lady described as a fairy and a seer emphasize the magical properties of both the mirror and the Lady; the Lady metaphorically becomes her own mirror as she looks at death with a 'glassy countenance' in the final section of the poem. Illuminated with reflections, Tennyson's poem concludes with the interchangeable reflective qualities of the Lady, mirror, and river as she floats into Camelot where she is identified only by her name written on the prow of her barge. Is the Lady the enchanted object or is it the mirror? Perhaps the mirror cracks because the Lady's moral purity is clouded by her pursuit of Lancelot, a factor that would render her unable to divine visions in her magic crystal.<sup>269</sup> Is she a medieval clairvoyant who can see supernatural visions in an ordinary material or does the mirror have a life of its own like the magic mirror in the Snow White tale? I will demonstrate Hunt's interpretation of this merges these possibilities with modern life and sets a precedent for Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery.

### ***Van Eyck's 'The Arnolfini Portrait'***

Hunt's representation of the large, convex mirror as central to the narrative as well as the pictorial structure transposes a modernity upon the scene not readily apparent to viewers today. In addition to the popularity of the Arthurian legends at the time, and the niche trend for occult crystal gazing, both factors that contribute to the modern relevancy of the painting, Hunt's mirror is a direct quotation from the well-known and admired Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*, in particular the shape, placement, and the surrounding narrative roundels. Hunt's use of Van Eyck's mirror during a defining time of the Brotherhood signifies a unique approach to merging the past with the present and a stylistic alignment with the Northern Renaissance master amidst a public discussion of realism. Hunt's modernising and reinterpretation of Van Eyck's mirror, an object packed with symbolic and narrative potential and the unique ability to communicate with the

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<sup>267</sup> 'Modern Magic and Astrology,' *Chambers's Journal of popular literature, science and arts*, 14: 725 (November 20, 1897), 742-744.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 743.

<sup>269</sup> See for example Max Dessoir, 'The Magic Mirror,' *The Monist, A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Philosophy of Science* 1:1 (October 1890), 87-117; especially p.96: Dessoir repeats the superstition that a 'chaste maiden' is needed for the crystal to reveal its visions.



viewer across boundaries of history, myth, and the material canvas itself, is both a metaphor and a conduit for his approach to Pre-Raphaelite realism. The assimilation of style and appropriation of the mirror creates a strong dialogue between the P.R.B. and Van Eyck, early Flemish ‘primitive’ art and a ‘modern’ reinterpretation that positioned itself as anti-establishment and created a new depiction of modern life that combined attributes of early Northern and Italian masters with contemporary cultural mythology and modern moral subjects.

Acquired by the National Gallery, London in 1842, the same year Tennyson’s revised ‘Lady of Shalott’ was published, *The Arnolfini Portrait* was displayed in 1843 to ensuing contradictory reactions from the public that either praised the brilliant colours and life-like accuracy or criticised the work for being too stiff and un-idealized, much like the criticism leveled at the early P.R.B. paintings several years later.<sup>270</sup> Indeed, Jane Langley suggests that *The Arnolfini Portrait* should be considered the National Gallery’s first Pre-Raphaelite painting and points out that its influence on the P.R.B. cannot be overstated for,

it was not the mirror alone that they assimilated, but the intricate detail of the work, its bright colours, its luminosity and its symbolic content [. . .] the *Arnolfini Portrait* is, of course, technically ‘pre-Raphaelite.’<sup>271</sup>

The early popularity of the *Arnolfini Portrait* among the Pre-Raphaelites is evident in their stylistic choices of rich, luminous colours and microscopic attention to detail as well as references to it such as F.G. Stephens’s short story, ‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’ (1856).<sup>272</sup> Far from being solely an early inspiration for the movement, the painting continued to be a favourite amongst the P.R.B. and their later followers, as Burne-Jones’s comment in later life indicates:

I have always longed [. . .] to do a picture like a Van Eyck, and I’ve never, never done it, and never shall. As a young man I have stood before that picture of the man and his wife, and made up my mind to try and do something as deep and rich in colour and as beautifully finished in painting<sup>273</sup>.

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<sup>270</sup> For a thorough discussion of the contemporary reception of the *Arnolfini Portrait* following the 1842 acquisition by the National Gallery, see Jenny Graham’s *Inventing van Eyck: The Remaking of an Artist for the Modern Age* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 157-168. See also Jane Langley’s exploration of contemporary nineteenth-century art criticism of the early Pre-Raphaelite movement. Langley, ‘Pre-Raphaelites or ante-Dürerites?’ *The Burlington Magazine*, 137:1109 (August, 1995), 501-508.

<sup>271</sup> Langley, 508.

<sup>272</sup> F.G. Stephens, ‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror,’ *The Crayon*, 3: 8 (August 1856), 236-239.

<sup>273</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, vol. II (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1904), 306.

Several decades after its initial hanging, one writer notes with appreciation the *Arnolfini Portrait*'s 'gem-like colours' of 'John Arnolfini, draper. . and his wife, Jeanne de Chenany, just as Jan van Eyck saw them in their bed-chamber...we see them now, but with that clear mirror-like precision which is one of the wonders of his art.'<sup>274</sup> The descriptive comparisons 'clear mirror-like precision' and 'gem-like' colours of Van Eyck's style also apply to the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and the miniature reflections seen the Arnolfini convex mirror are a metaphor for the initial P.R.B. style, a mirror held up unflinchingly to nature.

As previous scholarly literature has acknowledged,<sup>275</sup> Van Eyck's picture, and particularly the mirror, had an enduring influence on the Pre-Raphaelites with the spatial arrangement of the convex mirror in the centre background, use of symbolic elements and minute rendering of reflective details to encompass the unseen foreground space. Langley noted in 1995 that the 'Assimilation of this mirror, and stylistic references to the *Arnolfini Portrait* by the pre-Raphaelites and their circle is a subject that warrants closer examination'<sup>276</sup> but this has yet to be critically explored, a gap in the literature that this dissertation contributes to. Jenny Graham's account in *Inventing Van Eyck: The Remaking of an Artist for the Modern Age* (2007) of the popularity of the Arnolfini portrait and the mirror's recurrence in Pre-Raphaelite works, a 'recognisable motif that they made their own during the nineteenth century,'<sup>277</sup> provides the most in-depth consideration of the subject to date. What has not been studied previously is the origin of this motif, the reinterpretations of it, the concept of the mirror as a unifying visual language between paradoxical P.R.B. aesthetic theories, and a consideration of the underlying complexities of its source material, iconography, and modernity.

At the time *The Arnolfini Portrait* was painted, the Netherlands excelled in the production and distribution of convex mirrors, setting the standard for fifteenth-century European glass manufacture until the Italians developed the superior *crystal* glass in the sixteenth century. The Arnolfini mirror corresponds to the kind of expensive mirror that would have been seen in a well-to-do interior, the size and convex shape a necessity due to glassblowing techniques in which the glass would have been coated with molten lead or tin before being blown into a sphere by the glassblower and cut in half. As discussed in the previous chapter, the convex shape of the glass resulted in a wide-angle though distorted, compressed reflection and, due to the limitations of mirror technology at the time, the glass would have been small in size and not as clear as the mirrors we have today. Compared to other notable fifteenth-century Flemish mirror paintings such as the Memling *Diptych of Maarten Nieuwenhove* (fig.81), Robert Campin's *St. John the*

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<sup>274</sup> Cosmo Monkhouse, 'John Arnolfini of Lucca and his Wife,' *Magazine of Art* (Jan.1888), 71.

<sup>275</sup> See in particular Malcolm Warner, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and the National Gallery,' *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 55:1 (Winter, 1992), 1-11; 8. Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 215; Jane Langley, 'Pre-Raphaelites or ante-Dürerites?,' *The Burlington Magazine*, 137:1109 (August, 1995), 501-508.

<sup>276</sup> Langley, 505.

<sup>277</sup> Graham, 112.

*Baptist and the Donor*, *Heinrich von Werl* from the Werl Altarpiece (1438) or Petrus Christus's *Saint Eligius the Goldsmith* (1449), Van Eyck's mirror is relatively large for the time. As discussed in the previous chapter, the size and clarity of the glass are possibly an aesthetic manipulation on the part of the artist, a way of calling attention to its presence and allowing room for the decorative and reflective details.

Van Eyck's reflection, wherein the objects appear curved in a wide-angle view of the interior, takes in the room, the couple presumed to be the Italian silk merchant Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, and two miniscule figures standing in the doorway. A clever way of expanding the pictorial space to include the viewer in the image, Van Eyck portrays the viewer's 'space' in miniature and implicitly casts us in the role of the figures entering the room. The glass sphere reflecting the Arnolfini couple, the foreground, and the otherwise unseen viewer's space is encased in a painted wooden frame affixed to the central back wall of the room, and hanging directly below Van Eyck's inscription declaring his presence in the scene. One of the first paintings of this kind in which the mirror plays an important role of communication with the viewer, Van Eyck's use of the mirror distinguishes him from his contemporaries and followers in much the same way the later Pre-Raphaelite's use of the mirror sets them apart in the Victorian period. Following Van Eyck's prototype, the convex mirror maintains a strong presence in fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Netherlandish painting in its use to reflect narrative beyond the boundary of the picture plane, far more so than the limited number of pictures that include them in the Italian Renaissance tradition.

Van Eyck's *Arnolfini* mirror not only extends the spatial plane of the picture by including a reflection of the viewer's space, a visual device appropriated by Hunt for his *Lady of Shalott*, but the Van Eyck original also makes a point of revealing the present-but-unseen in both the earthly and spiritual understanding of such. The present-but-unseen here includes the red and blue figures in the doorway, located in the viewer's space in an unbroken continuation of the Flemish drawing-room: like a magician with a crystal ball or a seer divining a vision in a reflective surface, Van Eyck conjures up otherwise invisible beings in the reflective glass sphere. Revealing the unseen just enough to fascinate and suggest, the figures in the doorway remain just out of reach as material facts are withheld through microscopic, distorted and shadowy reflections. Likewise, the surrounding scenes of Christ's crucifixion and Resurrection overtly refer to a spiritual dimension, the Christian doctrine of the eternal presence of the spiritual in the everyday and the belief in redemption from sin through salvation in Christ. Van Eyck's mirror, a reference to contemporary glass, the Arnolfini's wealth, the spiritual world and unseen narrative details represents a unique consolidation of spiritual, material, and cultural elements in one object, a synthesis that Hunt reproduces first in his early *Lady of Shalott* drawing, but returns to throughout his career.

While a number of artists connected with Pre-Raphaelitism, however tenuously, feature the convex mirror motif (a point I will come back to in Chapter III), it is Hunt who establishes an approach for reinterpreting Van Eyck's original. Hunt uses the same convex shape with decorative roundels, placement, and the reflection of the viewer's space that contributes additional information. Hunt's mirror in the 1850 *Lady of Shalott* is dynamic, a character in its own right that conveys narrative elements of past, present and future and although the subject, clothing, and architecture indicate a romanticized medieval setting, the impossibly large modern mirror is a significantly modern anachronism and subverts escapism. Rather, it brings 'the Middle age forward to the Present one'.<sup>278</sup> As previously discussed, medieval convex mirrors made by glass blowers were comparatively small and even the one depicted in the *Arnolfini Portrait* is impressively large for its time. Mysterious curses and magical elements aside, Hunt's fifteenth-century Lady would no more have access to a mirror of that size and clarity than she would the Internet. Hunt infuses his medieval setting with a thoroughly modern mirror, one with a size and clarity of reflection that is specifically Victorian.

### ***Memling's Mirror***

Another possible source for Hunt's mirror, in addition to the Arnolfini mirror and one that has not previously been considered, is Memling's *Diptych of Maarten van Nieuwenhove* (1487). Hunt and Rossetti had seen the Memling in the Saint John's Hospital in Bruges<sup>279</sup> during their 1849 trip that took in Paris, Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent and Bruges. Prior to arriving in Bruges, Hunt and Rossetti had been in Paris would have seen the mirrors of Titian's *Woman with a Mirror* and his *Allegory of Marriage* (c.1530), Quentin Massys's *The Moneychanger and his Wife* (1514, acquired by the Louvre in 1806) in the Louvre, a combination of Northern Renaissance and Venetian prototypes. It is during their travels through the Netherlands that Rossetti in particular waxes lyrical about the Van Eyck and Memling pictures, writing from Bruges to the other members of the P.R.B. in London,

By far the best of all are the miraculous works of Memling and Van Eyck [. . .]. I assure you that the perfection of character and even drawing, the astounding finish, the glory of colour, and above all the pure religious sentiment and ecstatic poetry of these works, is not to be conceived or described<sup>280</sup>.

<sup>278</sup> 'Tennyson,' *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 42: 249 (September, 1850), 245-255; 250.

<sup>279</sup> The *Maarten Nieuwenhove* diptych was in the St. John's Hospital collection by 1815. See Dirk de Vos and Ted Alkins (transl.), *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Antwerp and Ghent: Fonds Mercator Paribas & Ludion Press, 1994), 282.

<sup>280</sup> 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt to James Collinson, 25 October 1849,' William E. Fredeman (ed.), *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Formative Years 1835-1862, Charlotte Street to Cheyne Walk, Vol.I: 1835-1854* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), 128.

In the *Diptych of Maarten van Nieuwenhove*, a devotional image of ‘the pure religious sentiment’ described by Rossetti, Memling juxtaposes an outward-facing convex glass with the Virgin and Child in a visual structure that unites earthly with spiritual spaces and figures, an arrangement both Hunt and Rossetti would repeat in works of the early 1850s. Like the Arnolfini mirror, the glass faces outward, compresses the space to reveal more of the interior, and serves to draw the viewer into the work. It is possible that Memling was familiar with *The Arnolfini Portrait*, and thus the mirror in the Nieuwenhove diptych represents another component in the Van Eyck-Pre-Raphaelite mirror continuum.<sup>281</sup> Memling’s mirror represents the point of intersection between the physical and the spiritual in a more subtle way than the Arnolfini mirror with its overt use of narrative roundels, for the two separate panels containing the Virgin and Child on the left and the donor on the right are shown merging together in the mirror’s reflection (fig.82). The convex glass collapses the separate spaces as it encases a supernatural vision of the donor’s communion with the sacred figures through prayer. As such, the mirror functions to fuse together the earthly with the spiritual in a supernatural realisation of the donor’s prayers: in the mirror’s reflection, Maarten van Nieuwenhove is seen to transcend the temporal world through prayer.

Hunt’s reflection likewise creates a vision of the Lady and Lancelot inhabiting the same space (fig.83), the optical effect Memling used to unite the figures of the Virgin and Child with the donor: physically separated by two panels, the mirror’s reflection creates the illusion that the figures exist in the same space. In Hunt’s drawing, the Lady and Lancelot appear to be on the same plane, separated only by the vertical line of the pillar. The convex mirror distorts our sense of the ‘real,’ for the reflected figures are substantially smaller than the Lady who stands before it, and, like the Memling mirror, Hunt’s reflection reveals the present-but-unseen: a momentary glimpse into the Lady’s emotional and psychological state, creating the illusion that she and Lancelot are so close they could be in conversation. Hunt and Rossetti had seen the Memling in Bruges during their 1849 trip and it is not unreasonable to suppose this was in Hunt’s mind when he worked on this image of the Lady of Shalott the following year. Hunt’s drawing thus not only responds to the Van Eyck mirror but also supplements it with Memling’s spiritual reflection in a visual amalgamation of the Northern masters.

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<sup>281</sup> ‘even if Maarten van Nieuwenhove or the people to whom he chose to show the painting were unacquainted with Van Eyck’s original, they probably would have known the pictorial tradition of convex mirrors, of which the *Arnolfini Portrait* is the origin, or at least a very early example.’ Jessica E. Buskirk, “Salve Maria Gods Moeder Ghepresen,” *The Salve Regina and the Vernacular in the Art of Hans Memling, Anthnis de Roovere, and Jacob Obrecht*, Joost M Keizier and Todd M Richardson (eds.), *The Transformation of Vernacular Expression in Early Modern Arts* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 86.

### ***The Lady of Shalott (1857)***

Hunt explored 'The Lady of Shalott' for over sixty years, from the early 1850 drawing to his final masterpiece finished in 1905, and throughout the variations the mirror features as a dominant force in the composition both in terms of size and as an essential narrative vehicle that facilitates the viewer's reading of the work. The Lady's character changes over the years as Hunt's representation of the subject evolves; she becomes a larger and more dynamic figure than the waif-like girl in his early study, but the mirror remains essentially the same, a magicked representation of modern glass that establishes a point of synthesis between the Northern Renaissance, the truth-to-nature aims of the early P.R.B., and modern life. Hunt's illustration of *The Lady of Shalott*, published in the 1857 edition of the Moxon Tennyson (fig.84), combines elements of both the Van Eyck and Memling mirrors to create a distinctly Pre-Raphaelite interpretation.

The potential for reflections-within-reflections, seen in other Hunt works such as *The Awakening Conscience* and the portrait of *Fanny Holman Hunt* (discussed in the following section), takes on a metaphorical consideration in the 1857 Moxon illustration. The succession of reflections from the river to the mirror, the tapestry reflected in the glass while simultaneously 'reflecting' the outside world, the sun flashing on burnished armour and bouncing off the river again creates a madhouse of mirrors and after his original illustration with nine reflections, Hunt pares down the design and focuses instead on one mirror with an allegorical roundel on either side. Some twenty years before Lewis Carroll would take readers through the looking-glass,<sup>282</sup> Hunt's glass reflects a mirror-world that actively engages the viewer, encouraging us to look through the glass surface at the reflection of our own space in which is pictured the landscape, Camelot in the distance and Lancelot riding past. Its large reflective plane, no longer alluding to convex glass curvature, conveys the pivotal narrative detail of the work while engaging the viewer with a representation of space beyond the picture frame, breaking down boundary between the artwork and the viewer. The two large roundels on either side of the mirror create a triptych that incorporates the Crucifixion and Lancelot, the earthly and the spiritual, diametrically opposed images that are connected by the Lady's flying hair that spreads across the top of the picture.

The image of the Lady is vastly different from the angular convent-like figure in the 1850 drawing, and rather than depicted in a moment of contemplative pause, the 1857 Lady actively abandons her post in pursuit of Lancelot. Resembling more the Victorian fallen woman than the angel of the house archetype, this Lady has wild hair (Tennyson complained her hair looked as though it had been 'wildly tossed about as if by a tornado'<sup>283</sup>), a cinched waist and plunging neckline. Hunt's pen-and-ink sketches of the subject that date from around 1856 (figs.85-87)

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<sup>282</sup> Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* was published in 1871.

<sup>283</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II (1913), 95.

reveal his experiments with the Lady in positions that are different from his original 1850 study: sitting cross-legged inside the loom as she works, kneeling as she leans over to look at the reflection, and standing to face the mirror as she drops her work. There is an active progression from sitting at what appears to be embroidery work (rather than a more realistic depiction of weaving with an upright loom and shuttle), to peering into the mirror with hands raised to her head in a gesture that could be her taking down her hair; Bronkhurst has identified another sketch of the Lady unpinning her hair as symbolic of her unrestrained sexuality and abandonment of her life of duty.<sup>284</sup> The mirror with its historic, contradictory iconography of purity and truth as well as vanity and corruption (the mirror as a metaphor for the Virgin Mary or the tool of the vain courtesan), underscores the Lady's moral status in the later illustration as well as behaves as a magic mirror both within Tennyson's poem and Hunt's visual interpretation.

Hunt's Moxon illustration features a subtle but significant change to the mirror from his early sketches, for the unfeasibly large convex mirror is now flattened out into a product of nineteenth-century glass production, a large glass plate manufactured through mechanised industry in an English glass factory and widely distributed to middle-class consumers. Although the Lady references Malory's fifteenth-century Arthurian romances, she occupies a space between Camelot and the modern world, placed as she is between the viewer and a nineteenth-century mirror. By way of mirror comparison, *The Lady and the Unicorn Tapestries* cycle at the Musée National du Moyen Âge in Paris provides an example of a mirror from an allegorical Middle Ages (c.1500, fig.88) that could be compared with the imagery of Arthurian romance. No larger than the lady's hand, the small handheld mirror is encased in a splendid gold and jewelled frame, suggestive of the value of the glass object. Fantastical creatures and dream-like *mille-fleur* ground aside, the tapestry illustrates the realistic proportions one can expect to find of a mirror from Malory's time. Given that large mirrors were not cast until the late 1600s in France, the vaguely medieval-to-fifteenth-century Lady of Shalott would no more have access to a mirror of that size and clarity than she would the Internet. Hunt's mirror is magical indeed.

Hunt's circular mirror in the Moxon illustration was also on the cusp of fashionable looking-glass décor, for the circular convex mirror, which had been popular at the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, experienced a revival in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>285</sup> The contemporaneity of the mirror is reinforced by it being unmistakably made of plate glass (sheet glass, which was less expensive than plate glass, was typically used for windows as it did not achieve the perfection of plate glass), a process in which molten glass was rolled into a thin piece of flat glass before being ground, polished and cut.<sup>286</sup> A product of the new chemical

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<sup>284</sup> Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. II, 89.

<sup>285</sup> Lucy Orrin Smith, *The Drawing-Room: Its Decoration and Furniture*, 125-126.

<sup>286</sup> See Bruno Schweig, *Mirrors: A Guide to the Manufacture of Mirrors and Reflecting Surfaces* (London: Pelham Books Ltd., 1973), 28. Also see Robert Hunt, 'On the Applications of Science to the

method of silvering glass patented by Thomas Drayton of Brighton, a plate glass mirror such as the one Hunt portrays was capable of brilliant clarity of reflection without distortion.<sup>287</sup> Although circular in shape, her mirror does not have the distortion or wide-angle effect of convex glass, nor do the dimensions compare to the size of convex mirrors in nineteenth-century homes. The size of the glass is more comparable to the cheval glasses seen in Clementina, Lady Hawarden's photographic studies (see fig.89 for example) or the mirrors in *The Awakening Conscience* or the *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt*. These mirrors are rectangular plate glass but they are more similar to the Lady of Shalott's mirror than either medieval or nineteenth-century convex glass variants. Evidently the product of nineteenth-century glass production, Hunt's mirror corresponds to a familiar object from the middle-class drawing-room and establishes a link between the everyday and far-off Camelot.

In *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, Hunt relates an anecdote about the Pre-Raphaelites preparing illustrations for the Moxon Tennyson in which Rossetti was most put out that Millais and Hunt had taken what he considered the best subjects, in particular 'The Lady of Shalott,' 'which was the one I cared for most of all.'<sup>288</sup> Hunt strengthens his prior claim on the subject (from a vantage of point of many years later), referring to the previous 1850 drawing and the extensive thought and labour put into the conception of which he had worked on until 'the paper was so worn that it would not bear a single new correction.'<sup>289</sup> Hunt staked a claim on representing the Lady's mirror and, in the wake of his Moxon illustration of 'The Lady of Shalott,' the subject is almost impossible to separate from the great circular mirror behind her. Subsequent representations of the Lady in the tower always portray her with a large, round mirror. derivatives of Hunt's original conception, the size and shape of the Lady's mirror seem virtually embedded in Tennyson's text, Hunt's painted image superimposed over the original words of the poem that never specifically describe the mirror. For instance, William Maw Egley's 1858 *Lady of Shalott* (fig.90) was recognized as quoting Hunt's work from a year earlier; the critic in *The Saturday Review* acknowledged that the picture 'is conscientiously wrought out, and shows resource and ambition' but warned that Egley 'must beware the worse dangers of Pre-Raffaelitism' [*sic*].<sup>290</sup> The 'dangers' of Pre-Raphaelitism aside, Hunt's fusion of Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* with Tennyson's nineteenth-century mythology and contemporary glass

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Fine and Useful Arts: Mirrors. – Drayton's Patent Process of Silvering Glass,' *The Art Journal*, 10 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1848), 325-327; 325.

<sup>287</sup> Patented in the United Kingdom in November 1843 and in the United States in August 1844. See Robert Hunt, *Ibid.*, and United States Patent no. 3702 A (August 12, 1844): Thomas Drayton, 'Improvement in Silvering Looking-Glasses.'

[http://worldwide.espacenet.com/publicationDetails/originalDocument;jsessionid=089023E6C9B5D0BB5A0936AC8B55F42D.espacenet\\_levelx\\_prod\\_2?CC=US&NR=3702A&KC=A&FT=D&ND=&date=18440812&DB=&&locale=en\\_EP](http://worldwide.espacenet.com/publicationDetails/originalDocument;jsessionid=089023E6C9B5D0BB5A0936AC8B55F42D.espacenet_levelx_prod_2?CC=US&NR=3702A&KC=A&FT=D&ND=&date=18440812&DB=&&locale=en_EP).

<sup>288</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 100-101.

<sup>289</sup> Hunt, 101-102.

<sup>290</sup> 'The Modern Masters at the British Institution,' *The Saturday Review* 5: 121 (February 20, 1858), 189-190.



production created a potent image and what would eventually become a signifier of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. The size of the flat mirror, the character of the Lady, and the composition for the 1857 are elements that Hunt repeats in his final oil painting on the subject in 1905; *The Lady of Shalott* bookends Hunt's career and from the outset establishes an approach to incorporating and modernising Van Eyck's early mirror, would ultimately become a Pre-Raphaelite motif.

### ***Elizabeth Siddall***

In between Hunt's 1850 and 1857 *Lady of Shalott* pictures, Siddall created her own pen-and-ink sketch (fig.91) of the subject in 1853 and, in one of the first instances that signifies the influence of Hunt's mirror treatment, she incorporated a large, circular mirror that reveals Lancelot's reflection to the viewer. Siddall illustrates the same lines from Tennyson but her version depicts a different relationship between the Lady and the mirror, indicated by the depiction of the Lady at an upright loom, facing a mirror that reflects the reverse side of her tapestry as well as the outside world. The rendering of the loom is more in keeping with Tennyson's description of weaving (as opposed to embroidery work) and is more accurate for a medieval setting.<sup>291</sup> Traditionally, tapestry work was created from the back and the mirror's purpose was to reflect the other side in order that the weaver might be able to work while viewing the correct side. Hunt's depictions have always shown the tapestry work hovering just above the floor, making it impossible for the Lady to use the mirror in this way: by positioning the tapestry-mirror relationship like this, Hunt places more emphasis on the mirror's magical powers than its functionality. Christopher Ricks and Gerhard Joseph have both remarked upon the practical purpose of the Lady's mirror in the original poem as a necessary part of the art of weaving, as a way to monitor the front of the tapestry,<sup>292</sup> and Jane Wright has expanded upon this observation to point out that what the Lady sees in the mirror is a reflection of Lancelot's reflection in the river; thus 'Mediated by the mirror and the river, this is the closest visual experience of the 'real' world outside the Lady has yet had' within a context of actively mirroring a back-to-front a reflection of the 'real' world.<sup>293</sup> The possibilities of reflections to represent are endless but Siddall brings simplicity to the visual narrative.

The austerity of the space with its plain wooden floorboards is marked by few details except for a faintly defined tapestry on the back wall, a chest with a crucifix and a bird resting on the

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<sup>291</sup> See Eric Broudy's description of thirteenth and fourteenth-century looms in Broudy, *The Book of Looms: A History of the Handloom from Ancient Times to the Present* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1979), 141-142.

<sup>292</sup> See Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1989), 74; Gerhard Joseph, *Tennyson and the Text: the Weaver's Shuttle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 103.

<sup>293</sup> Jane Wright, 'A Reflection on Fiction and Art in "The Lady of Shalott",' *Victorian Poetry* 41: 2 (Summer, 2003), 287-290; 287-288.

Lady's loom; Siddall scales back historicising or symbolic details to emphasize instead the slight motion of the Lady turning her head. It is likely that Siddall would have been aware of Hunt's drawing<sup>294</sup> and the angular, medieval figure with the large round mirror seems to echo Hunt's initial conception. In this instance, however, a Victorian female artist illustrates Tennyson's text and the relationship between the Lady and the mirror is depicted quite differently. The Lady is shown turning away from her work and looking past the crucifix that stands between her and the outside world/Lancelot in a calm manner that seems more curious than desperate. The mirror is in the process of shattering into more pieces than Hunt's singular crack 'from side to side' and within the cracks and shards of glass we can just make out the armoured figure of Lancelot who, unlike Hunt's knight who rides *away* from the Lady, appears to riding straight towards the broken mirror. Rather than a woman trapped in glass, Lancelot is framed by sharp edges and is dangerously close to fragmenting into pieces himself. There is no hint of landscape, architecture, or the Lady's own reflection in the mirror, and instead it is as though her world has suddenly reduced and contracted into the fragment of the knight on horseback riding into her glass. Rather than an image of entrapment within the loom or wrapped in threads and framed by the circular mirror behind her like Hunt's work, Siddall's Lady moves away from her work, heedless of the tapestry threads waving wildly towards the cracked mirror like a magnetic field of static electricity.

Siddall's mirror, although large and convex like Hunt's, does not indicate the narcissistic undertones that can be read in Hunt's 1850 image with its multiple reflections of the Lady; from where Siddall's Lady sits at her work, the loom and tapestry actually block her view of herself in the mirror, and her attire is so simple that, with the plain room and crucifix, the image calls to mind a novice in her cell rather than a sensuous woman driven to uncontrollable passions, quite the opposite of Hunt's 1857 version four years later with the wild hair and sinuous *contrapposto*. Elaine Shefer has argued that Siddall's version is a symbolic rendering of her position as a woman artist in the nineteenth century and represents the dichotomy of Victorian gendered space divided between the interior/domestic female world and the active male-dominated world outside the home. Shefer suggests reading Siddall's illustration as a self-portrait in which she depicts herself, through the visual language of Tennyson's mythology, as trapped by the limitations that come with being a woman and an artist. 'Siddall effectively creates another story, the story of

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<sup>294</sup> Coventry Patmore, friend of the Pre-Raphaelites, owned Hunt's 1850 drawing; Staley and Bronkhurst argue that it was on display in the Patmore home where visitors would have seen it. See Allen Staley, *The New Painting of the 1860s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 302; note 26, 409. Also see Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. II, 28-30, no. D46. The National Gallery of Victoria catalogues the drawing's provenance as given by Hunt to either Coventry Patmore or his wife; see Sonia Dean (ed.), *The Pre-Raphaelites and their Circle in the National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1978), 43.

Elizabeth Siddal, the artist ... what might be better called *A Self-Portrait of the Artist*, reveals that Siddal did not separate the Lady from the artist.<sup>295</sup>

Deborah Cherry echoes Shefer's reading and draws attention to the Lady's gaze – she actively looks rather than is looked *at* and unlike Hunt's later incarnations with gravity-defying hair and figure-hugging garments, Siddal's Lady is depicted nun-like, consecrated and set apart from the outside world.<sup>296</sup> Compared with Hunt's versions, the absence of the Lady's reflection in the mirror can be read as though her self-reflection has transcended the glass surface, momentarily freeing her from its thrall. Indicative of the potential for varying interpretations of the Lady and her mirror, Siddal's picture is tantalising in its unfinished state – we have to imagine what her finished version of this would have looked like and if it would have challenged the weight of Hunt's influence on popular culture's imagination.

### **The Awakening Conscience (1853, exhibited 1854)**

As for excellence of painting, we have only to call attention to the mirror with its reflection of the window and garden beyond – a mere miracle of clever realisation<sup>297</sup>

I suspect that the *Arnolfini Portrait* ... lies, at perhaps even a subconscious level, behind the whole visual conception of *The Awakened Conscience* [. . .] although we do not know how far Holman Hunt may have gone in 'interpreting' the Arnolfini group, it may not be entirely accidental that both paintings employ an elaborate system of disguised symbolism.<sup>298</sup>

Although Hunt was working through ideas of the mirror in 1850 and the 1857 Moxon version became widely known, the first Pre-Raphaelite mirror seen at exhibition was not related to *The Lady of Shalott* but was instead a contemporary subject, what *The Athenaeum* critic described in 1854 as 'drawn from a very dark and repulsive side of modern life'.<sup>299</sup> Hunt's modern moral subject was conceived as a pendant piece to *The Light of the World* (1851-53) and depicts a kept woman in a moment of spiritual revelation and repentance, symbolised by the sunny garden seen in the mirror, while her oblivious male companion sings and plays the piano. Met with mixed

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<sup>295</sup> Elaine Shefer, 'Elizabeth Siddal's "Lady of Shalott,"' *Woman's Art Journal*, 9: 1 (1988), 21-29; 26 (Shefer uses the spelling of Siddal with one *l* in this article).

<sup>296</sup> Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 190.

<sup>297</sup> 'Mr. Holman Hunt's Pictures,' *Illustrated Times* (June 10, 1865), 366.

<sup>298</sup> Keith Roberts, 'Holman Hunt in Liverpool and London,' *The Burlington Magazine*, 111: 794 (May 1969), 315-316 + 319+321; 316.

<sup>299</sup> 'Royal Academy,' *The Athenaeum*, 1384 (May 6, 1854), 559-561; 561.

reviews when it was exhibited in 1854, it was still derided ten years later as ‘a picture of an idiotic “Swell” disporting himself at the piano in company with a wretched red-haired “Traviata”’.<sup>300</sup> The two figures are set within a claustrophobic riot of domestic details rendered with eye-watering precision, all of which are multiplied by the Queen Anne-style gilt-framed mirror in the background. The carefully chosen domestic details not only convey the authenticity of the setting, recognisable and familiar to the nineteenth-century viewer, but function to relate the underlying morality of the picture. Inspired by a verse in Proverbs<sup>301</sup> and the ‘desire to show how the still small voice speaks to a human soul in the turmoil of life,’ Hunt portrays a modern life subject with an emphasis on a powerful underlying symbolic structure.<sup>302</sup>

Nochlin has argued that *The Arnolfini Portrait* is a source of the inspiration for *The Awakening Conscience*, ‘perhaps for a certain validation of Pre-Raphaelite authenticity, for a reassuringly primitive freshness of feeling, as well as sincerity of execution.’<sup>303</sup> Malcolm Warner, Keith Roberts, and Elizabeth Prettejohn have likewise suggested Hunt’s picture is a nineteenth-century interpretation of the Van Eyck, albeit a pendant piece that parodies or inverts the original soberly portrayed couple.<sup>304</sup> Rather than depicting a sacred union between a man and a woman,<sup>305</sup> Hunt illustrates a separation: the female protagonist responds to a spiritual awakening by rising from her lover’s knee to move away from him towards the sunlit foreground. In Hunt’s modern version, the figures’ hands are separated rather than joined, instead of a dog symbolising fidelity there is a cat tormenting a bird, and the cluttered interior with its harsh colours and hyperrealism of minutiae suggests disorder rather than stability. The intimacy of the figures, the contemporary domestic interior, the background mirror and even the pet animal, however, allude to Van Eyck’s original. Hunt multiplies the references to modern life, creating a dizzying array of detail that pounds the viewer with its immediacy and physicality, insisting upon a frozen moment of contemporaneity. Prettejohn reads the array of meticulous detail in the picture as contributing to the psychological complexity of the modern-life scene:

all of these [details] [. . .] are pinpointed and displayed, like specimens in a Victorian butterfly collection pinned inside a box. They remain in the exact

<sup>300</sup> ‘Mr. Holman Hunt’s Pictures,’ *The London Review of Politics, Society, Literature, Art, and Science*, 11: 262, (July 8, 1865), 37-38; 38.

<sup>301</sup> Proverbs 25:20: ‘Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on a wound, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.’ (NIV)

<sup>302</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I, 347.

<sup>303</sup> Linda Nochlin, ‘Lost and Found: Once More the Fallen Woman,’ *The Art Bulletin*, 60: 1 (March, 1978), 130-153; 145.

<sup>304</sup> In addition to Nochlin, see Malcolm Warner, ‘Pre-Raphaelites and the National Gallery,’ *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 55: 1 (Winter, 1992), 1-11; 9; Keith Roberts, ‘Holman Hunt in Liverpool and London’, 316. Also see Jenny Graham, ‘Artistic Inspirations,’ Elizabeth Prettejohn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 39.

<sup>305</sup> The painting was listed as a self-portrait of the artist and his wife in the National Gallery catalogue from 1847, not identified as Giovanni Arnolfini and wife until 1861. See Graham, 102.

positions they occupied at the climactic moment depicted in the picture, but they are observed with a thoroughness that would ordinarily required prolonged viewing. Thus they match in visual complexity the psychological complexity of the figures' situation. The strident colour and minute detail of Pre-Raphaelite technique not only produce a vivid sense of immediacy but also convey the specificity, solidity and sheer abundance of objects in the modern middle-class interior [ . . . ] Hunt emphasises not the transience but instead, the multiplicity and complexity of visual data in the modern scene.<sup>306</sup>

The meticulous symbolism in Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* in which items of household décor contain a depth of symbolism (whether 'disguised' or not, depending on the semantics) beneath their surface veneers of glass, wood and brass is reproduced here in high visibility; Hunt's painting is overflowing with a wealth of symbols integrated in the pictorial space that cumulatively create what Nochlin identifies as a 'painstaking scaffolding of symbolic incident.'<sup>307</sup> For example, rings on every finger but her wedding finger and a cat clawing at a helpless bird are indicative of her relationship with her male companion while a discarded glove on the carpet reinforces her potentially disposable position; she is simultaneously dependent upon and expendable to the young dandy portrayed singing heartily with flushed cheeks and gleaming teeth. The brightly-coloured yarns unravelling in the foreground that recall the *Lady of Shalott's* desertion of her post perhaps indicate that the delicate feminine art of embroidery is not her forte. Details such as the shiny casters on a new chair and books that have not been read are more suggestive of a show flat than a family home. Demonstrating his allegiance to the early Pre-Raphaelite ideals of truth-to-nature, Hunt rented a villa in St. John's Wood, what Stephens characterised as a *maison damnée*,<sup>308</sup> in order to precisely capture the domestic interior of a gentleman's mistress. Amidst the layers of symbolic realism in the picture, the most overt visual element that ties together Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* and Hunt's *Awakening Conscience* is the statement mirror in the centre of the back wall.

Stripping away the accompanying narrative roundels he had used in the 1850 *The Lady of Shalott*, Hunt emphasises the plate glass mirror's clear reflection. Like Van Eyck's original, the mirror in *The Awakening Conscience* creates a space of glass mediation between the viewer and the picture. Supplementing our view of the interior, the glass reflects a fireplace with decorative objects on the mantel, what appears to be another clock under a glass dome and two green porcelain ewers as well as an additional table and decorative settee. The coloured border of the

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<sup>306</sup> Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 98.

<sup>307</sup> Nochlin, 145.

<sup>308</sup> F.G. Stephens, 'English Painters of the Present Day: XXI -William Holman Hunt,' *Portfolio*, 2 (January, 1871), 33-39; 39.

wallpaper is echoed throughout the picture space, delineating the edges and corners of walls. The large mirror reveals a window in the viewer's space that opens onto a sunlit garden, a visual arrangement that has the potential to cause spatial confusion for upon first glance it appears to be a window behind the figures rather than the reflection of one.

One has to trace the succession of gilt and glass through the painting before we realise there are two additional mirrors in the picture. They are easily missed at first, hidden amongst an overstimulation of finely wrought objects and are only present as reflections. One gilt mirror hangs on the left wall, a space seen only in the first mirror, and in its reflection is seen a third mirror hanging above a fireplace on opposite side of the room (refer to detail, fig.67). The mirror on the back wall behind the figures is physically located in their space but the other mirrors are external to the picture, further establishing a link between the viewer and the pictorial setting. As such, we are drawn into the painting, peering through a series of reflections that unite a spring garden and Victorian décor with our own space.

Adding to the intricate play of reflections, glass windowpanes mirror the flickering sunlight and the green of the outside garden, doubling the presence of nature just as the mirror multiplies the material objects in the room. We are asked to suspend our own assumptions about how mirrors behave for while the mirrors' reflections play off one another to create a somewhat disorienting sensation of a house of mirrors, we cannot see our own reflections. This is a fact that, while natural and expected when viewing a painting, is at odds with the interior world of reflections on canvas if we take the scene before us as a truthful extension of our own space. Although drawn into the narrative through reflections of the space we are occupying, Hunt does not paint us in like Van Eyck's diminutive witnesses; our reflections are missing and we are ghostly voyeurs of a modern moral subject.

Hunt portrays the contemporary subject matter within a heavily symbolic space in which the objects signify deeper moral implications than their financial worth and Stephens would write later of *The Awakening Conscience* that it 'may be said to have continued and, with aptitude to the time, developed the Englishness of Hogarth moralising.'<sup>309</sup> As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Hogarth's moral satires constructed an intricate web of contemporary visual details weighted with symbolism, prefiguring the nineteenth-century symbolic realism outlined by Brooks. Malcolm Warner describes *The Awakening Conscience* as an image in which 'Van Eyck meets Hogarth,'<sup>310</sup> an observation that raises a critical point to understanding Hunt's mirrors in his *oeuvre*: we can read an emphasis on English glass within a specifically English tradition of the modern moral subject, a response to the contemporary question of a national English school, what Lynn Nead describes as the idea of 'a national school of art devoted to representing the

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<sup>309</sup> Stephens, 38.

<sup>310</sup> Warner, 9.

outstanding qualities of English moral life.<sup>311</sup> *The Awakening Conscience* not only looks back to Hogarth, that ‘expressly English painter,’<sup>312</sup> it represents Hunt’s response to Van Eyck and constitutes a uniquely English picture with a visual language derived from the brilliancy and detail of the Northern Renaissance but seen through the eyes of Hogarth’s moralising and symbolic narrative structure.

Carol Jacobi asserts ‘Almost all, if not every item in a painting by Hunt works as a symbol, index and icon. ... Even peripheral accessories [ . . . ] have a potent indexical motivation in that they establish the time, place’.<sup>313</sup> Within this structure of visual signifiers, Hunt’s prominent use of the mirror is representative of the innovative Pre-Raphaelite treatment of modern glass as it expands upon Hogarth’s mirrors discussed in the previous chapter. Writing on Hogarth’s works in an 1868 exhibition, one critic declared that he was

a true originator of our English school, we recognise even in the specimens now before us the traits from which first to last have ever distinguished that school – honesty of purpose, allegiance to nature, point in incident, sparkle and perspicuity in narrative, individuality and breadth in character.<sup>314</sup>

These adjectives, ‘point in incident,’ ‘allegiance to nature’ and ‘sparkle...in narrative’ can just as accurately be applied to Hunt’s image of the kept woman’s spiritual awakening, presided over by a very decidedly English plate glass mirror.

Landow, Nochlin, and Macmillan all cite Hogarth’s *The Lady’s Last Stake* (c.1759, fig.92), which was exhibited at the British Institution in 1853, as a likely source for Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience*.<sup>315</sup> *The Lady’s Last Stake* depicts a lady and gentleman who have been gambling through the night, with the lady’s cumulative losses resulting in the impending loss of virtue, her last stake. Having already given up money, jewels, a watch, the lady is left with only her honour. While the narrative is left open-ended, Hogarth’s picture illustrates a scene from a play by the same name, leaving the viewer to complete the plot (the lady does give in although

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<sup>311</sup> Lynn Nead, ‘The Magdalene in Modern Times: The Mythology of the Fallen Woman in Pre-Raphaelite Painting,’ *Oxford Art Journal*, 7:1 (1984), 26-37; 27.

<sup>312</sup> ‘National Portraits: Third and Concluding Exhibition,’ *The Art Journal: The Illustrated Catalogue of the Industry of All Nations*, 15 (London and New York: Virtue and Co., 1868), 95.

<sup>313</sup> Carol Jacobi, *William Holman Hunt: Painter, Painting, Paint* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 191.

<sup>314</sup> ‘Leeds Exhibition, Part II: Pictures by Deceased British Artists,’ *The Art Journal: The Illustrated Catalogue of the Industry of All Nations*, 154.

<sup>315</sup> John Duncan Macmillan, ‘Holman Hunt’s Hireling Shepherd: Some Reflections on a Victorian Pastoral,’ *The Art Bulletin*, 54, 2 (June, 1972), 187-197; 195 + 196. Nochlin, 145. George P. Landow, ‘The Influence of William Hogarth on Pre-Raphaelite Integrated Symbolism,’ *Replete With Meaning: William Holman and Typological Symbolism. A Victorian Web Book*, from *William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1979), <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/whh/replete/hogarth.html>.

she is saved at the last minute).<sup>316</sup> Hogarth's commentary on the scenario can be inferred from details such as the figure over the clock that appears to be Cupid brandishing a scythe and the harpies or sphinxes that guard the fire grate where playing cards have been thrown. The narrative is supported by symbolic details from contemporary eighteenth-century life and the drawing-room setting with the large window, rich wallpaper, lapdog under the card table, scattered paraphernalia on the carpet and the clock on the mantelpiece all correspond to Hunt's *Awakening Conscience*, as does the subject matter of a woman poised at a moral crossroads. While Hunt's narrative is also left unresolved, with its subject of spiritual awakening, the star at the top of the picture frame, and the Garden of Eden seen in the mirror, he conveys the possibility of redemption.

Hogarth's mirrors seen in *Marriage à-la-mode: The Marriage Settlement* and *The Toilette* relate to the overall construction of symbolism in the pictures as objects denoting vanity and luxury, but fall short of exploring the mirror's reflective properties: Hogarth's mirrors are all empty reflection. Hunt, however, takes Hogarth's initial framework of moral symbolism and unites it with Van Eyck's detailed reflection to create a new order of contemporary mirror imagery. Hogarth's use of *things* to convey narrative and moral characteristics as well as the authenticity of setting can be seen emulated by Hunt in a convergence of the material and the symbolic or spiritual, what Baudelaire described as the 'perceptual correlation between what is called the "soul" and what is called the "body"[. . .] everything that is "material" [. . .] mirrors, and will always mirror, the spiritual reality from which it derives.'<sup>317</sup> This concept of the spiritual emanating from the physical, and in this case the spiritual awakening reflected in the gilt-framed contemporary mirror within an excess of domestic objects, establishes Hunt's painting at an intersection of materiality and symbolism.

Met with mixed reviews ranging from disgust to confusion, Hunt eventually had to repaint the woman's face as his patron, Thomas Fairbairn, did not want to live with the original tortured expression,<sup>318</sup> critics disliked the stark realism of the piece with its vulgar interior décor that was too realistic and, lacking any trace of Hogarthian humour, the shallow depth projected the 'morbid anatomy of modern society'<sup>319</sup> too closely to the viewer. Ruskin's famous letter to *The Times* defending the work praises the wealth of details 'in which even the most trivial objects

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<sup>316</sup> Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: Art and Politics, 1750-1764* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1993), 221.

<sup>317</sup> Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life' in Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (eds.), *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 41.

<sup>318</sup> 'It is a matter of regret to me that the woman's head in its present condition is not exactly what it was when Ruskin described the picture. After some years the possessors, feeling that the expression of the girl was painful, persuaded me to change it.' Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I, 418. See contemporary reviews, 'Royal Academy,' *The Critic*, 13: 315 (May 15, 1854), 275; 'Royal Academy,' *The Athenaeum*, no.1384 (May 6, 1854), 559-561; 561.

<sup>319</sup> 'Royal Academy,' *Ibid.*, 275.



force themselves upon the attention ... They thrust themselves forward with a ghastly and unendurable directness'. Ruskin goes on to declare,

There is not a single object in that room, common, modern, vulgar [. . .] but it becomes tragical if rightly read. The furniture, so carefully painted even to the last vein of the rosewood – is there nothing to be learnt from that terrible lustre of it, from its fatal newness; nothing there [. . .] is ever to become part of home? Those embossed books [. . .] marked with no happy wearing of beloved leaves; [. . .] the very hem of the poor girl's dress, which the painter has laboured so closely thread by thread, has story in it, if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street; and the fair garden flowers seen in the reflected sunshine of the mirror.<sup>320</sup>

The viewer, as Ruskin suggests, is left to imagine the helpless woman alone in the street following her defection from the St. John's Wood villa and consider her plight as a 'fallen woman.' Prettejohn explains Ruskin's praise of the work, 'For Ruskin it is vital that everything about the picture should be interconnected, that the tiniest detail (such as the hem) should signify the greatest moral truth (the inevitability of retribution for sin).'<sup>321</sup> The profusion of details overseen by and repeated in the large mirror underscores not only the middle-class setting but communicates the moral subject.

Possessing both physical and symbolic properties, the mirror's function as a material object in *The Awakening Conscience* warrants further consideration within the pictorial composition of nineteenth-century interior décor. While much has been written about the gaudiness of the decorative scheme and the window reflected in the mirror,<sup>322</sup> the placement of the mirror is important to understanding the scene, for the 'fatal newness' of the décor conflicts with Victorian principles of moral goodness in taste. The mirror calls attention to itself within this context through its frame with gold swirls (so hated by Eastlake), illuminating series of reflections and, in an inversion of a long-established historical iconography of women with mirrors, the woman is shown in the act of turning away from the mirror, like Siddall's *Lady of Shalott*, rather than engaging with it. Even though two of the mirrors in the work exist beyond the picture frame and

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<sup>320</sup> John Ruskin, Letter to *The Times*, May 1854, quoted in Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I, 418-419.

<sup>321</sup> Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Beauty and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 113.

<sup>322</sup> See in particular Kate Flint, 'Reading *The Awakening Conscience* Rightly,' Marcia Pointon (ed.), *Pre-Raphaelites Re-Viewed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989); Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. I, 165-168; Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 94-98. See the catalogue entry for the picture in Tim Barringer, Jason Rosenfeld and Alison Smith (eds.), *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*, exh.cat. (London: Tate Publishing, 2012), 134.

are seen only via reflection, all three function together as a critical narrative element of the kept woman's *nouveau riche* interior and inner transformation.

One critic writing in 1856, who seems to have missed Ruskin's reading of the moral symbolism contained in each brushstroke, focused on the décor, 'showy rather than substantial; the furniture purchased for the temporary household is slop, the carving thereon shows an attempt to imitate in style that of a more expensive kind.'<sup>323</sup> The critique has the tone of respectable disdain for 'showy' *nouveau riche* taste, let alone the immorality of the fallen woman - one inherently associated with the other. One might literally be 'new money' such as Thomas Fairbairn, Hunt's patron for *The Awakening Conscience*, but one ought to rise above this drawback to achieve the domestic ideal through the commodification of taste and class seen most prominently in the drawing-room décor.<sup>324</sup>

Within the nineteenth-century understanding of taste was the underlying aversion for cheaply made, gaudy materials associated with new money and questionable taste. One article in *All the Year Round* relates the author's horror of shopping for furniture in rooms that dazzle with 'gilding and varnish and carvings and stuffs [. . .]' to an artistic mind such a show-room is a chamber of horrors' and goes on to pronounce that one might find such items in a brothel.<sup>325</sup> The writer explains the sort of mirror fit for such an establishment, a large ostentatious glass with a gilded frame decorated with elaborate carving and points out,

it is a fact that these things are cut out separately and affixed with needles and nails. No carving could produce such a result; therefore there is a deception to begin with, also an insecurity, as they loosen with time and drop off<sup>326</sup>.

The article praises both Eastlake and Ruskin for educating the public in matters of taste; the writer clearly supports the Aesthetic style of interior décor which was fashionable some years later than Hunt's *Awakening Conscience*, but the disdain for the flashy style associated with cheap production (a form of deception, as described in the above quotation) and suspect new-money taste nevertheless applies to Hunt's interior.

A rigidly controlled and tastefully decorated household was the sign of a well-ordered mind and an appropriately moral sensibility, and in keeping with the importance of a well-ordered house as an indicator of morality, stability, and success, punctuality was required everywhere from railway timetables and factory production to the dining room. A manifestation of this can be inferred from the clock often seen displayed on the mantel in representations of nineteenth-

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<sup>323</sup> *Birmingham Journal* (September 27, 1856), supplement p.2.

<sup>324</sup> Thomas Fairbairn's father was the son of a Scottish farmer. Turned successful industrialist in Manchester, Sir William Fairbairn (1780-1874) was awarded a baronetcy in 1869.

<sup>325</sup> 'Furniture - Bad and Good,' *All the Year Round*, 8: 182 (May 25, 1872), 42-43; 42.

<sup>326</sup> 'Furniture - Bad and Good,' 42.

century drawing-rooms; positioned directly under the overmantel mirror, the clock-mirror pairing physically and symbolically delineates time and space. This new emphasis on time-keeping with social ritual in the nineteenth century, and the arrangement of the clock and the mirror as focal points in the drawing-room visually articulate the nature of socialising within structured increments. For instance, the formidable Mrs. Beeton in her bestselling *Guide to Household Management* compares the mistress of the house to the general of an army and advocates that she rise early to put the house in order and ensure breakfast is served punctually (at which all family members should be present and on time unless there is an illness or some other extenuating circumstance).<sup>327</sup> Likewise, social calls that took place in the drawing-room were timed by the mantel clock, occurring between the hours of three and five in the afternoon and typically lasting at least fifteen minutes but no more than thirty.<sup>328</sup> One writer attributed the fashion for the mantelpiece clock to the French:

In a drawing-room a clock plays still a more ill-mannered part, for what can he do there but tell visitors when to go away, a piece of information the well-bred man is in no need of, and which the ill-bred man never heeds [ . . . ] We get his habit of clocks, with their flanking candlesticks or vases, on all our mantel-pieces from the French.<sup>329</sup>

In the western art-historical tradition, the mirror can symbolize the transience of life in allegorical pictures that warn against vanity for, unlike the clock, the mirror has no inherent knowledge of time but nevertheless captures its effects. While this form of *vanitas* iconography is not typical of nineteenth-century mirror imagery, the clock and the mirror are so often paired together alongside the hearth, the symbol of the family home, that perhaps they signify an unconscious association of time and appearances that underscores the fragility of the domestic sphere, a house of cards that could so easily topple. Susan Casteras has cited Hogarth's *The Lady's Last Stake* as a precedent for 'the encoded nature of the hearthside setting as a place that could either reinforce or destroy the feminine character and necessary domestic virtues of the wife and/or mother.'<sup>330</sup> Hogarth's fireside setting aligned with the somewhat menacing Cupid

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<sup>327</sup> Isabella Beeton, *Guide to Household Management, New Edition* (London: Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd., 1907. Originally published in 1861.), 17.

<sup>328</sup> Michael Paterson, *Life in Victorian Britain: A Social History of Queen Victoria's Reign* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2008), 197.

<sup>329</sup> Clarence Cook, *The House Beautiful: Essays on Beds and Tables, Stools and Candlesticks* (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1881), 120.

<sup>330</sup> Susan P. Casteras, 'The unsettled hearth: P.H. Calderon's *Lord! Thy Will be Done* and the problematics of women in Victorian interiors,' Ellen Harding (ed.), *Reframing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays* (Aldershot, Hants: Scolar Press, 1996), 162 + 164. *n.b.* The capitalisation choice in the title is Casteras's.

figure on top of the clock is the backdrop for a woman choosing between virtue and sexual indiscretion.

Consider the first scene in Augustus Egg's narrative triptych of the Victorian fallen woman, *Past and Present No.1* (1858, fig.93) in which the mirror and the clock are lined up in the centre of the room. The middle-class interior is respectable but while the decorative order may be correct, the arbiter of taste has made a ruin of it, comparable to her children's house of cards in the background that have begun to collapse. The clock on the mantelpiece cuts a vertical line into the reflection of the open doorway, indicating that time has run out for the adulterous woman, her sin has been exposed and outcast isolation is to follow. Linda Nochlin has observed that setting the scene of this woman's 'fall' in the drawing-room makes it even more tragic and unsettling, for the adultery 'shatters the order of nature; the sacred place is profaned: this is perhaps the most serious order of transgression in the canon of bourgeois morality.'<sup>331</sup> The 'temple of the hearth,' as Ruskin described it, has been desecrated<sup>332</sup> and like the picture on the wall of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the woman falls in the direction of the open door, away from the fireplace and her family.

Similar to Hunt's mirror in *The Awakening Conscience*, Egg's gilt-framed overmantel in *Past and Present No.1* faces the viewer and reflects a door opening onto the world beyond the drawing-room. It does, however, represent an inverse of Hunt's picture in terms of interior/exterior associations seen in the mirror's reflection, for the interior of this home is symbolic of Eden's harmony and innocence, and the woman caught in adultery is to be expelled to the outside. Rather than reflecting a sunlit garden and the promise of redemption, Egg's mirror can be read as foreshadowing the more ominous fate that will be played out in the consecutive two pictures in the series. The reflection in the glass shows what is to come; as Ann C. Colley has pointed out, 'Its reflected images lead to the open door and to emptiness – to a space devoid of objects and the security of home [. . .]. Significantly, once she is exiled from home, no mirror confirms her space.'<sup>333</sup>

Egg's triptych reads as an example of the mirror's symbolic significance within a composition for in the second picture, set five years after the events in the previous image, the two daughters are depicted in a small bedroom devoid of the fireplace-with-overmantel-mirror arrangement (fig.94). Instead, the only mirror present is a small wooden toilet-table swing glass in the background, enveloped in shadow and empty of reflection.<sup>334</sup> Egg expands upon Hunt's

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<sup>331</sup> Nochlin, 141.

<sup>332</sup> John Ruskin, 'Of Queen's Gardens,' *Sesame and Lilies: Two Lectures* (London: John Wiley & Son, 1865), 91.

<sup>333</sup> Ann C. Colley, 'Bodies and Mirrors: Childhood Interiors in Ruskin, Pater, and Stevenson,' Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd (eds.), *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth Century Interior* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 47-48.

<sup>334</sup> This can perhaps be read as illustrating the verse 'He does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents,' Numbers 14:18.

climactic moment depicted in *The Awakening Conscience* by imagining the worst possible outcome rather than leaving the ending for the viewer to complete. The narrative ends with a final image of the woman homeless under a bridge (fig.95) where the only reflective surface is the river, a site of suicide.<sup>335</sup> While Egg's triptych is a cautionary tale that ends in tragedy, *The Awakening Conscience*, as a companion piece to *Light of the World*, certainly suggests that there is more to the tale than meets the eye and leaves the ending ambiguous. Unlike the (literally) fallen woman in Egg's first *Past and Present* image, the figure in Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* springs from her lover's knee, asserting self-knowledge and recognition as she moves towards the outside world.

A comparison with Hunt's portrait of his wife, Fanny, completed over a decade later in 1868 highlights the significance of mirror placement within the decorative scheme of *The Awakening Conscience*. The *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt* (fig.96), most likely painted from a photograph after she died in Florence in 1866, depicts the subject standing before a fireplace in a tastefully decorated interior.<sup>336</sup> Posing behind a chair, Hunt's neatly dressed wife is the picture of respectability in contrast to the somewhat dishevelled female figure in *The Awakening Conscience*. The largest element in the room besides Fanny herself is the grand overmantel mirror that creates an eternity of reflections from a mirror on the opposing wall. The series of reflected spaces recalls not only *The Awakening Conscience* but Hunt's prominent overmantel mirror is similar to Whistler's *Symphony in White No.2: The Little White Girl* (1864-65 fig.97), contributing to a dialogue of drawing-room mirrors. Staley and Bronkhurst have pointed to Ingres as a source for Fanny's portrait, for Hunt would have seen Ingres's *Comtesse d'Haussonville* (1845, fig.98) and *Madame Moitessier* (1856, fig.99) in Paris at the Ingres exhibition at the Ecole Des Beaux-Arts in September 1867; Staley suggests the setting is an anglicised version of the Ingres.<sup>337</sup> Ingres's Moitessier portrait does contain more self-referential reflections as a progressions of doorways encased in the large gilt-framed mirror can be seen beside and behind her the back of her head in profile, a repetition seen in Hunt's portrait. The position of Fanny in front of the large mirror with her back to it is indeed similar to the Ingres pictures but by 1868 Hunt had been considering images of women facing away from the mirror for over fifteen years, beginning with *The Lady of Shalott* in 1850. Rather than an anglicised response to Ingres, perhaps

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<sup>335</sup> 'the solution to this woman's problems probably envisaged by the Victorian viewer was suicide.' See T.J. Edelstein, 'Augustus Egg's Triptych: A Narrative of Victorian Adultery,' *The Burlington Magazine*, 125: 961 (April, 1983), 202+204-212; 207. Linda Nochlin draws attention to G.F. Watts's painting *Found Drowned* (1848-50) as a comparative work that suggests the suicide of a fallen woman (Nochlin, 143).

<sup>336</sup> See Allen Staley, 'Pre-Raphaelites in the 1860s: II,' *The British Art Journal*, 5: 1 (Spring/Summer, 2004), 6-12, 9. See also Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. I, 210. Also see the Toledo Museum publication entry:

[http://classes.toledomuseum.org:8080/emuseum/view/objects/asitem/People\\$00404213/0?t.state:flow=02bd4dd1-f48a-4dff-aac5-7a808b4ea818](http://classes.toledomuseum.org:8080/emuseum/view/objects/asitem/People$00404213/0?t.state:flow=02bd4dd1-f48a-4dff-aac5-7a808b4ea818).

<sup>337</sup> Staley, 9.

the *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt* is instead an anglicised response to Van Eyck, and an echoing of his own precedent.

I suggest an additional source of inspiration for Hunt's *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt*, and one that is indicative of the visual conversation and response between the original Pre-Raphaelites and their followers that will be discussed in Chapter III: Sandys's *Portrait of Mrs. Jane Lewis* (1864, fig.100). Complicating the mirror's reflection seen in either Ingres's *Comtesse d'Haussonville* or *Madame Moitessier*, Hunt draws viewer in through the glass with its endless reflections achieved by two mirrors facing each other on either side of the room; Sandys had actually used this visual arrangement several years before in his *Jane Lewis*. Sandys, who would later have a falling out with Rossetti over an argument concerning mirror-plagiarism (discussed in Chapter III), had become connected with Rossetti's circle, including Whistler and Burne-Jones, around 1861. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1864, Sandys's portrait of Jane, mother of the silk merchant Arthur Lewis,<sup>338</sup> depicts the sitter in a drawing-room and features a large gilt overmantel behind her. The mirror behind the subject reflects a complicated succession of spaces for it includes a window in the manner of Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* as well as the reflection of a mirror hung directly opposite. Even more intriguing is the detail of Sandys's easel that can just be glimpsed at an angle in front of the window, a self-referencing visual cue that would be repeated later in mirror reflections such as Simeon Solomon's *A Youth Relating Tales to Young Ladies* (1870, figs.101- 102), genre painter Edward John Gregory's *The Pose* (c.1881, fig.103), and the works of Charles Shannon and William Orpen (for example, Orpen's *The Mirror* of 1900, fig.104 and Shannon's *The Portrait of Baroness Toinon von Essen*, 1912 fig.105). While it is possible that Sandys knew of the Ingres portraits through prints, the use of the mirror to reflect the viewer's space and the overt references to his own presence recall Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* as well as the early works of Hunt.<sup>339</sup>

When Sandys's portrait of Jane Lewis was exhibited again in 1895 at the New Gallery, the critic for *The Magazine of Art* observed 'After the manner of his time, Mr. Sandys puts in a mirror which repeats everything; and, in addition, a touch of blue gloaming seen through an open window is a fine suggestion of the best period of Pre-Raphaelitism.'<sup>340</sup> The remark is suggestive of later critical recognition that the mirror's reflection with the details of the room and the blue

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<sup>338</sup> Lewis was a promoter of the Arts Club founded in 1863 as well as the St. John's Wood Clique. Married to actress Kate Terry, Ellen Terry's sister, Lewis's home in Kensington was a regular gathering place for artists including Whistler, Leighton, Watts, Val Prinsep and Millais. See Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design & Decoration in the Aesthetic Movement* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), 51 & 117.

<sup>339</sup> Betty Elzea, *Frederick Sandys 1829-1904, A Catalogue Raisonné* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collector's Club, 2001), 17; also 180-181. 'this mirror, together with the table-top still life, pose and celebration of female costume brings to mind Ingres, especially such portraits as *Madame Moitessier Seated* (1856). Sandys had certainly never seen it, but he did know Ingres's work from its appearances in London exhibitions and there are undeniable points of comparison [. . .] When *Mrs. Jane Lewis* was exhibited in London in 1895, when Sandys was almost completely forgotten, critics compared it to both Ingres and Van Eyck.' (Elzea, 17).

<sup>340</sup> R Jope-Slade, 'Current Art,' *The Magazine of Art* (January, 1896), 92-97; 94.

sky is 'of his time' ('the best period of Pre-Raphaelitism') and ties him to the Pre-Raphaelites. By the late nineteenth century, was it possible to disassociate the mirror placement and reflection from Hunt's early images of *The Lady of Shalott* and *The Awakening Conscience*? The above quotation would suggest not. The interior depicted in Hunt's *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt* is stylistically different from the Sandys portrait, but the position of the sitter facing away from the gilt overmantel and the reflection of decorative details in opposite-facing mirrors are Sandys's, suggestive of the intermirrortality between the P.R.B. members and their later associates.

The mirrors and the glass chandelier in Hunt's portrait reflect one another endlessly, extending the space of green wallpaper and multiplying the chandelier (replacing the gasolier lamp from Sandys's portrait). While Whistler's figure in *The Little White Girl* turns toward the mirror in self-contemplation and Ingres's *comtesse* looks out at the viewer in front of a mirror that is empty except for the reflection of the back of her head, Hunt's mirror is active and dynamic with reflections like Sandys's – both the mirror and Fanny face the viewer. Ingres's mirror is at an angle that excludes the viewer as it does not give any indication of the setting or allude to the viewer's space. There are no depths beneath the glass surface, symbolic or spatial illusion, a characteristic that Hunt established with his 1850 'Lady of Shalott' drawing and *The Awakening Conscience*. Hunt's mirrors reach out beyond the frame and pull the viewer through the mirror's reflection, like Alice through the looking glass, into the mirror world of the painting. Caroline Levine sees this interaction with Hunt's work as implementing Ruskin's realism: 'The reader, like the painter, is expected to labour in the act of looking. From beginning to end in *Modern Painters* we are faced with painting which misrepresents the world yet convinces its viewers that it is accurate to the real.'<sup>341</sup> Hunt's mirrors are positioned to capture our attention and the reflections compel active consideration rather than a cursory glance.

Hunt also challenges what we might expect to find in the reflection for the mirror behaves somewhat independently like the *Lady of Shalott*'s magic mirror: Staley has drawn attention to the fact that Fanny does not have a reflection and explains this is indicative of her absence during the painting process. As the portrait was painted posthumously, Fanny would not have physically been there to generate a reflection.<sup>342</sup> While, in one sense, we can interpret this lack of reflection due to Hunt painting exactly what he saw, which naturally excluded the figure's double, on a symbolic level the mirror reveals the underlying truth of Fanny's absence – she is simultaneously there and not there, a ghost reflected in the pictorial space but not in the mirror world, the site of spiritual revelation.

The series of reflections in Hunt's portrait of Fanny is structured and symmetrical, unlike the confusing mirroring details seen in *The Awakening Conscience*. While both women are shown

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<sup>341</sup> Caroline Levine, 'Visual Labour: Ruskin's Radical Realism,' *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 28: 1 (2000), 73-86; 78.

<sup>342</sup> Staley, 10.

draped with a paisley shawl and in an enclosed space (similar to the 1850 *Lady of Shalott*), one is represented in a moment of calm repose while the other is in a state of undress and in spiritual turmoil. Each woman's drawing-room reflects her inner state.<sup>343</sup> Alluding to the contemporary moral discourse on interior décor, Hunt's wife is duly represented in a fashionable and orderly interior while the kept woman's parlour is shown cluttered with bright new furnishing that suggests her lack of taste and moral failings. The fireplace, seen as the heart of the family home and the centre of Victorian domestic ideology, is depicted behind Fanny but the apparent absence of one in *The Awakening Conscience* becomes a glaring indication of the woman's disreputable qualities that ultimately threaten the stability of family life. While its placement within the painting allows it to function in a useful way for the viewer, the mirror in *The Awakening Conscience* is not in the position in the room that we might expect. Instead of being depicted over a fireplace in a central position relative to the rest of the décor, as is typical in contemporary drawing-room pictures and seen in the portrait of Fanny, it appears in a cramped space on the back wall, hung without much thought to the layout of the room.

Between the reflection on the left and the piano on the right, the woman's face in *The Awakening Conscience* appears caught between two stock pieces of the Victorian parlour, the mirror and the glass-encased clock that rests on top of the piano, a catalyst for the woman's spiritual awakening. Tellingly, the clock is decorated with allegorical figures of Virtue disarming Cupid, and instead of a mirror hanging above the piano-clock arrangement there is a print of 'The Heart's Misgivings' after Frank Stone's *Cross Purposes* (1840).<sup>344</sup> The *Cross Purposes* print alludes to the subjects' situation and in a sense may act as a stand-in for a mirror; while a mirror over the piano would reflect the physical reality; the print in its place mirrors a psychological state.

Inspired not only by Van Eyck's precedent, *The Awakening Conscience* represents a continuation of the mirror ideas present in Hunt's 1850 drawing, resulting in a fusion of historicism and modernity mediated by the magic mirror. Imagery from the 1850 drawing appears not only in the large mirror and its reflection of the outside world but also in the paisley shawl wrapped around the woman's hips, the unravelling embroidery threads, and the spatial relationship of the woman to the mirror which consists of the mirror reflecting the woman's back as she takes a step to move away from the mirror and toward the viewer. The mirror in *The Awakening Conscience*, like that in the 1850 drawing, is representative of modern glass (this time appropriate to the setting) and dominates the background, functioning not as a decorative footnote but as a significant component in the narrative symbolism of the picture. The mirror breaks down

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<sup>343</sup> Bronkhurst suggests that in *The Awakening Conscience* Hunt may be deliberately confusing the viewer with a complex series of reflections which 'can be interpreted as embodying the girl's mental state.' Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. I, 166.

<sup>344</sup> Bronkhurst, 168.



the notional barriers between 'real' and painted surfaces and while it is not depicted engaging with the characters in the painting but just as the piano music instigates the woman's spiritual revelation, the mirror functions as a catalyst for the viewer's reading of the work.

The garden seen reflected in the mirror of *The Awakening Conscience* can be interpreted as a manifestation of the woman's spiritual revelation of lost innocence, a vision of the Garden of Eden that exists in the viewer's space much like the idealised world of Camelot in the 1850 drawing. In both images the woman is 'kept' in one sense or another and is depicted in a climactic moment of action, moving toward the outside world in rejection of her entrapment. In *The Awakening Conscience* the mirror is more spiritual than magical but it functions in a similar manner to simultaneously reveal missing narrative as well as visually indicate the figure's psychological state. In both pictures the mirror, a physical object grounded in contemporary life, facilitates the viewer's interaction with work and also conveys supernatural insight via the reflection. For instance, both the Lady of Shalott and the woman in *The Awakening Conscience* are physically reflected in the mirror while at the same time the reflections provide a glimpse of their interiority; the fallen woman's spiritual redemption and the Lady's unrequited love for Lancelot and longing for escape.

Like a crystal ball that turns the viewer into a scryer, Hunt's mirrors encapsulate physical reality and narrative vision. In a discussion of Hunt's subsequent version of the Lady of Shalott, his 1857 illustration for the Moxon edition of Tennyson's poems, Armstrong has observed,

Symbol was the other side of Hunt's literalism. It split the world between the body and soul, material and immaterial, real and unreal, and created a dualism that banished true sacramental materialism from the everyday and located it in an abstract, disembodied spirituality.<sup>345</sup>

I would argue, however, that Hunt's use of the mirror *reconciles* this split between the physical and the spiritual. As a literal object that has a physical reality and references an object in the nineteenth-century interior, the plate glass mirror is the point of intersection and facilitation for this series of contradictions.

### ***Ford Madox Brown: 'Take Your Son, Sir!'***

Besides Hunt's 1850 study and the 1857 Moxon illustration, Ford Madox Brown's incomplete *Take your Son, Sir!* (c.1851, 1856-57, fig.106) is among the earliest Victorian responses to the Arnolfini mirror following its appearance in the National Gallery, and together the three pictures illustrate the scope for nineteenth-century reinterpretation. Depicting a mother

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<sup>345</sup> Armstrong, 'Pre-Raphaelites and Literature,' Elizabeth Prettejohn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, 23.

holding an infant, the figures are shown against starry wallpaper with a cradle on the right and a circular convex mirror behind the woman's head. Brown began the work in 1851, stopped for a time and worked on it again in 1856-57 but it was never completed and only exhibited for the first time posthumously in 1897.<sup>346</sup> The Pre-Raphaelite mirror placement within the Brown composition and the use of reflection to extend the canvas space and engage the viewer are, as we have seen, direct quotations from Van Eyck and the Flemish tradition; Brown's picture features the round convex mirror in the central background that manipulates viewer's understanding of space and the narrative of the image, just as Hunt does with his *Lady of Shalott's* mirrors. Hunt's glass, however, is fantastically oversized and located in an imaginary medieval setting, while Brown's is a contemporary scene with an appropriately sized convex glass found in middle-class homes.

Critical to a consideration of responses to the Arnolfini mirror, as well as to Hunt's *Lady of Shalott*, is the question of *when* Brown included the mirror. Mary Bennett believes that the mirror was present in the initial conception around 1851 but suggests that it is likely Brown had seen Hunt's 1850 study<sup>347</sup> and raised the mirror's height to its current position behind the woman's head to create a halo effect and establish a relationship between the contemporary setting with the spiritual association of the Virgin and Child.<sup>348</sup> The historical iconographic complexity of the mirror comes into play here, for as the subject is ambiguous the woman depicted can be read as either Madonna or Fallen Woman, just as the mirror can be associated with the virtues of truth and insight or the vices of vanity and deception; the mirror's signification here shifts between symbolising a saintly halo and exposing sexual deviancy. Brown, who had trained in Bruges,<sup>349</sup> Ghent, and Antwerp and would have been familiar with Flemish mirror imagery, depicts a more traditional convex mirror but uses its position to reinforce a reading of the work as a modern Madonna and Child.

The 1911 catalogue of the Manchester Art Gallery describes 'the happy father coming forward with outstretched arms' but the expression on the woman's face is more enigmatic.<sup>350</sup> One interpretation of the subject suggests that this can be read as the inverse of the *Arnolfini Portrait* in which the woman thrusts her illegitimate infant at the man seen reflected in the mirror, a social commentary from Brown that contrasts the acceptable married state with immoral

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<sup>346</sup> Mary Bennett, *Ford Madox Brown: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. I (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2010), 187-188; also see Arthur S. Marks 'Ford Madox Brown's "Take Your Son, Sir!,"' *Art's Magazine*, 54 (1979), 135-138; 137.

<sup>347</sup> Bennett, 188.

<sup>348</sup> Bennett, 188.

<sup>349</sup> Bennett, 85. At age thirteen Brown was sent to Bruges to study under Albert Gregorius, the Director of the Bruges Academy of Painting and former pupil of Jacques-Louis David. One year later he transferred to the Ghent Academy, and in 1838 he began studying at the Antwerp Academy.

<sup>350</sup> *Loan Exhibition of Works by Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelites*, exh cat. (Manchester: Manchester City Art Gallery, 1911), no.93.

behaviour and its consequences.<sup>351</sup> Supporting this reading, Helene E. Roberts interprets the infant's expression as accusatory<sup>352</sup> and David Sonstroem suggests the appearance of Emma's teeth as indicative of her lower-class status as well as expressing 'passionate, vengeful aggression,' evidence of a righteous mission set against the halo-like mirror and starry wallpaper.<sup>353</sup>

In spite of not finishing the picture, Brown works through the details in the mirror's reflection and reveals enough of the foreground space to suggest a reading beyond its function as a quotation of Van Eyck or even as a moral tool to expose the sins of the middle-class gentleman. The nineteenth-century middle-class interior compressed in the mirror's reflection recalls Hunt's *Awakening Conscience* with a similarly arranged parlour; the piano is on the right with what appears to be a glass-encased clock and framed prints that hang on the wall, and a brilliant scarlet-patterned carpet echoes the red of the woman's bow and contrasts with the green wallpaper. The bright gilt of the mirror's frame encircles this space where one can just glimpse a large window beyond, positioned in the viewer's space. Unlike the window in *The Awakening Conscience*, however, fluttering curtains obscure the view through the window that is shadowed and dusky rather than drenched in noonday sun. The woman in Brown's picture faces the darkened window but her attention seems to be fixed upon something closer to her field of vision, the man in his waistcoat who has the appearance of shrugging, his forearms lifted in an exaggerated caricature. The classic Madonna and Child pose of the figures, the halo-like mirror behind her and the wall of stars perhaps allude to desired alternative of the scenario, the Victorian ideal that was not always played out to perfection in everyday life.

Like Hunt, Brown was an admirer of Hogarth and William Michael Rossetti credits him with suggesting the name of the Hogarth Club, their social and exhibiting society, noting that Hogarth was 'a painter whom he [Brown] deeply revered as the originator of moral invention and drama in modern art.'<sup>354</sup> Given that the woman and infant pictured are Brown's then-mistress Emma Hill and their son Arthur (he married Emma in 1853), his use of the mirror and his high

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<sup>351</sup> For example see Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 214-215. Nina Auerbach also suggests this and describes the figure as a 'majestic fallen woman.. Nina Auerbach, *The Woman and the Demon: the Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 163.

Demonstrating the ambiguous potential for multiple readings, Julian Treuherz argues that this theory came about in the 1960s and argues for the interpretation of a happy family. See Julian Treuherz, *Ford Madox Brown: Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer*, exh cat. (London: Philip Wilson Publishers in Association with Manchester Art Gallery, 2001), 180.

<sup>352</sup> Helene E. Roberts, 'Marriage, Redundancy or Sin: The Painter's View of Women in the First Twenty-Five Years of Victoria's Reign,' Martha Vicinus (ed.), *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (New York and Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2013, original publication 1972), 75.

<sup>353</sup> David Sostrom, 'Teeth in Victorian Art,' *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 29: 2 (2001), 351-382; 372.

<sup>354</sup> W.M. Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti*, vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 224. Ford M. Ford relates that Madox Brown was one of the organizers and unofficial president of the Hogarth Club. Ford, *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life and Work* (London and New York: Longman's Green, and Co., 1896), 158.

regard for Hogarth, I suggest reading this as a modern moral subject like Hunt's *Awakening Conscience*. Associated with the early Pre-Raphaelites, Brown's mirror indicates an awareness of and response to Hunt's work as well as *The Arnolfini Portrait* and can be read as indicative of the possibility that one would soon not be able to think of the Van Eyck without seeing it through the lens of Hunt's interpretation.

### ***Il Dolce Far Niente (1859-1866)***

... a world of surprising conflict between observed reality and imagination<sup>355</sup>

Hunt's *Il Dolce Far Niente* (fig.107) represents a shift in his mirror imagery from reflections of the external world for narrative and spiritual objectives to a more conceptual rendering that can be read as more closely aligned with Rossetti's mirrors of the 1860s. The Italian-themed picture with its solitary female figure accompanied by bright flowers, drapery and a convex mirror reinforces a case for a motif-based dialogue and exchange between the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers, and particularly between Hunt and Rossetti.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) was published during the time Hunt was working on *Il Dolce Far Niente* and although it precedes the picture's public exhibition by five years, the narrator gives a description of Lucy in her boudoir that uncannily anticipates Hunt's image with its 'fairy-like embroideries of lace and muslin, rainbow-hued silks' as well as the 'looking-glasses, cunningly placed at angles and opposite corners by an artistic upholsterer, multiplied my lady's image'<sup>356</sup> and, as she rests by the fire, the narrator muses:

If Mr. Holman Hunt could have peeped into the pretty boudoir, I think the picture would have been photographed upon his brain to be reproduced by and bye upon a bishop's half-length for the glorification of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. My lady in that half-recumbent attitude, with her elbow resting on one knee, and her perfect chin supported by her hand, the rich folds of drapery falling away in long undulating from the exquisite outline of her figure, and the luminous rose-coloured fire-light enveloping her in a soft haze, only broken by the golden glitter of her yellow hair.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Joyce H. Townsend and Jennifer Poulin, 'Painting: Materials and Methods,' Katherine Lochnan and Carol Jacobi (eds.), *Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2008), 168.

<sup>356</sup> Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*, vol. II (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1862), Chapter 6, 96-97.

<sup>357</sup> Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*, 97.

Hunt's picture of the 'sweet doing nothing' captures Braddon's imagery with the rich colours, mirrored reflection and the lady with luxurious hair lounging by the fire, a different approach to subject matter than his previous works with their Hogarthian system of moralising through symbolic realism.

The *Illustrated London News* was severe in its criticism of both the style and content, and described the figure of the woman,

lolling affectedly, almost wantonly [. . .] painted with determined effort at full realization, and in that effort seems to have been studied bit by bit [. . .] there is little truth of revelation [. . .] the face of the lady is like a painted wooden mask, her hair resembles carved mahogany.<sup>358</sup>

*The Saturday Review* pronounced that Hunt's art had begun 'tending towards a chilled materialism, manually laborious, intellectually indolent' and brushed aside *Il Dolce Far Niente*: 'so this lady has a necklace and earrings of amethyst and two small sapphires in her ring. And we think no more about her, no more about her mirror, or her dress, or her azaleas.'<sup>359</sup> The critical dismay with Hunt's work perhaps has more to do with the apparent lack of spiritual content compared to his other pictures, for the half-length female figure glorying in idleness by a warm fire without an accompanying narrative or moral discourse veers off track from previous well-received works such as *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* (exhibited in 1860). *The Art Journal* laments Hunt's descent into 'a picture of costume,' which is derided as belonging to a category of 'unworthy themes.'<sup>360</sup> The critic for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* sums up what was seen as the problematic nature of the piece:

There is surely cause for regret that the painter of the 'The Light of the World,' 'Christ in the Temple,' 'The Scapegoat' and 'The Awakened Conscience' should dissipate his talents on a composition of common costume [. . .] Mr. Holman Hunt has in past times aimed at moral and religious teaching, and therefore he himself indicates the standards whereby he would be judged by posterity . . . We trust that ere long the artist will produce a picture honourable for high intent.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> 'Fine Arts: Exhibition of the Royal Academy,' *Illustrated London News*, 50:1428 (May 25, 1867), 519.

<sup>359</sup> 'Pictures of the Year,' *The Saturday Review*, 24 (July 6, 1867), 16.

<sup>360</sup> 'The Royal Academy,' *The Art Journal* (June, 1867), 137-146; 143.

<sup>361</sup> 'The Royal Academy and Other Exhibitions,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 102 (July-December, 1867), 79-98; 89-90.

In light of his ideals espoused in *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*<sup>362</sup> and his denunciation of Rossetti's sensuous style, *Il Dolce Far Niente* does seem out of context with the lack of narrative, the shallow depth of field that pushes the viewer uncomfortably close to the looming figure, the rich colours and tactile sensuousness of flowers, skin and fabrics. Although not finished until 1866 or exhibited until 1867, Hunt began working on the picture the same year that Rossetti painted *Bocca Baciata* (1859, fig.108), a work Hunt would have seen exhibited at the Hogarth Club in 1860 and had criticised as displaying 'gross sensuality of a revolting kind'.<sup>363</sup> *Bocca Baciata* ('the kissed mouth') has long been considered the turning point in Rossetti's style, a herald of the 'art for art's sake' of the Aesthetic movement; Rossetti's celebration of female beauty eschews narrative and signifies a stylistic alignment with Titian instead of the meticulous Northern Renaissance influence of the early P.R.B. days. Like *Bocca Baciata*, however, Hunt's picture moves towards a more lush Titian-inspired style that recalls the Venetian artist's *Woman with a Mirror* (1512-15), a work he and Rossetti would have seen together at the Louvre in 1849.

In a letter to Rossetti in 1865, Ruskin comments 'I supposed, in old times, you were going to try to paint like that Van Eyck in the National Gallery with the man and woman and mirror' and outlines what he believes to be the only two correct (but contrasting) methods of painting – that of Van Eyck or of Titian, explaining 'one of them involving no display of power of hand, the other involving it *essentially* and as an element of its beauty.'<sup>364</sup> Ruskin thus delineates the aesthetics of Van Eyck *or* Titian as stylistically opposed. *Il Dolce Far Niente* not only represents a response to contemporary 1860's debates about the purpose of art ('art for art's sake' versus narrative or moral objectives) but it also indicates an artistic dialogue between Hunt and Rossetti in relation to thematic and stylistic choices, as well as contrasting source material, regardless of Hunt's protestations in his memoir over the 'gross sensuality' of Rossetti's work.

Hunt later justified his picture as a simple stylistic exercise rather than a declaration of artistic change or support of Aestheticism: 'Having long been engaged on works of scale below life-size, it seemed wise now to take up the painting of figures of full proportions [. . .] I was glad of the opportunity of exercising myself in work which had not any didactic purpose.'<sup>365</sup> Bronkhurst points out though that Hunt may have actually been intending more than either an experiment or an Aesthetic picture: details such as the obvious engagement ring, amethyst jewels

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<sup>362</sup> For example 'The purpose of Art is, love of guileless Beauty, leading man to distinguish between that which, being pure in spirit, is productive of Virtue, and that which being flaunting and meretricious is productive of ruin to a Nation.' See Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1914), 379.

<sup>363</sup> Hunt to Thomas Combe, 12 February 1860, quoted in Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882): A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. I (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), 69.

<sup>364</sup> John Ruskin to D.G. Rossetti in 1865, in William Michael Rossetti (ed.), *Rossetti Papers 1862 to 1870* (London: Sands & Co., 1903), 135.

<sup>365</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 203.

and azaleas (symbolic of sober restraint and temperance) in addition to the mirror's reflection that reveals the woman is sitting quietly with a book in front of a fireplace, all suggest a picture of an engaged woman thinking of her husband-to-be as she waits in the proscribed gendered space of the hearth.<sup>366</sup>

As we have seen, the hearth was symbolic of sacred domesticity and can function as a commentary on the moral standing of the figures in a work (the woman in *The Awakening Conscience* is visually separated from hers while *Fanny Holman Hunt* is posed in front of her overmantel mirror). In this instance the fireplace is only seen reflected in the mirror, a view that adds a note of ambiguity, and the view of the fireplace in Hunt's picture is cropped which makes it impossible to distinguish if an overmantel mirror is present. The placement of the convex glass itself is disconcerting in terms of the decorative scheme of the interior (is it somehow hanging on green draperies? Where exactly in the room is it?) but it nevertheless mediates our view of the fire/family home/woman's role. In 'The unsettled hearth: P.H. Calderon's *Lord! Thy Will be Done* and the problematics of women in Victorian interiors,' Susan P. Casteras suggests the potential for a more sexually charged reading of Victorian fireside images but nevertheless emphasises 'the domestic ideology of perfect motherhood and wifeliness'<sup>367</sup> that is expressed in representations of the domestic hearth. Hunt's picture consequently falls within a genre of contemporary domestic imagery as well as Aesthetic debate and within a continuum of mirror images.

The convex mirror behind the figure in *Il Dolce Far Niente* that reflects the viewer's space ultimately contributes to reading the work and it is necessary to consider Hunt's picture within the scope of mirror representations by Rossetti and his circle. There were a number of convex or circular mirror images produced during the 1860s including Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* (1860-61), Burne-Jones's two versions of *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* (1861, 1862), Solomon's two versions of *The Painter's Pleasance* (1861, 1862), Stanhope's *Juliet and her Nurse* (1863), Burton's *Sleeping Woman* (1866) and Rossetti's toilet pictures of Cornforth (all of which will be covered in more detail with accompanying illustrations in the succeeding chapters). While the mirrors in the above works feature as a motif that can be understood as a reference to Hunt's 1850 and 1857 re-interpretations of the Arnolfini mirror, Hunt's own treatment of the object in *Il Dolce Far Niente* presents a more complex representation in terms of source material and reflection, creating a sensation of the mirror doubling back upon itself through self-referencing as well as Van Eyck-Hunt-Rossetti-Titian associations.

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<sup>366</sup> Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 188. Also see Allen Staley, 'Pre-Raphaelites in the 1860s: II,' 8 and Susan P. Casteras, 'The unsettled hearth: P.H. Calderon's *Lord! Thy Will be Done* and the problematics of women in Victorian interiors.'

<sup>367</sup> Casteras, 154.

The clarity of the reflection in Hunt's glass compared with the shadowy surface of Titian's mirror indicates that it is nineteenth-century glass and, like the large gilt mirror in *The Awakening Conscience*, or even the face and hair of the two models merged together (Annie Miller and his then-fiancée Fanny Waugh) to create the figure, the reflection fuses together the foreground, background and the viewer's space. The details in the reflected surface reveal the contents of the room: the lady lounging by a large stone-carved fireplace where the dying flames creating an additional source of light, the Parian figures under a bell jar,<sup>368</sup> and paintings on the wall. The size of the glass in *Il Dolce Far Niente* at first glance appears to be of a similar diameter to the one seen in Titian's *Woman with a Mirror*, but when we take into account the spatial relationship between the figure, the mirror, and the reflection, it becomes apparent that Hunt's mirror is placed much deeper in the background than Titian's. Either that or the mirror's reflection, like a motor vehicle's side mirror that warns drivers 'objects in mirror are closer than they appear,' is incongruous with the space.

The mirror appears to be directly behind the model's head but the compressed reflection of the rest of the room reveals a depth of space lacking in the 'real' space of the picture. A rather large piece of furniture, not pictured except in the reflection, is shown positioned between the figure and the mirror, and the discrepancy in size between the woman and her reflected counterpart display an inconsistency that is at odds with Hunt's attention to empirical detail.<sup>369</sup> His other mirror representations seen in *The Lady of Shalott* or *The Awakening Conscience* might manipulate the viewer's view of the work but they ultimately supplement our understanding of the works. However, other than establishing the important fireside domestic setting, the reflection in *Il Dolce Far Niente* functions to obfuscate rather than clarify. Rather than solving a puzzle, with such obvious irregularities and spatial confusion the mirror creates more visual riddles for the viewer to solve.

Joyce H. Townsend and Jennifer Poulin have observed that these inconsistencies in the reflection extend to the missing flowers and green drapes, and note:

if the whole room had existed in reality, presumably he would have resolved these issues by painting precisely what he saw, according to the method he had used from his youth. Did the room really exist at all? Even if the mirror hung tilted forward like a picture, the reflection would still not be accurate or logical in all respects.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Bronkhurst identifies the sculpture as Parian-ware, possibly representing Cupid and Psyche. Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. I, 188.

<sup>369</sup> Staley suggests the inconsistency of the large figure with her small background reflection is indicative of Hunt looking at both Burne-Jones's *Sidonia von Bork* (1860) and Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, a further indication of response to one another's works. See Allen Staley, 'Pre-Raphaelites in the 1860s: II', 7.

<sup>370</sup> Townsend and Poulin, 167.



Townsend and Poulin suggest that the mirror might have been added in later and believe the ‘internal contradictions, more easily felt as a general uneasiness and puzzlement than rendered into words, prompted critics to respond to the work with such hostility.’<sup>371</sup> The surprising incongruity is also perhaps suggestive of Hunt exploring a more imaginative representation of vision and reflection, a different approach to visualising the intersection of the real with the imagined, and prefiguring later works such as *The Triumph of the Innocents* with its fantastical floating visions.

In spite of the questions it raises, the glass is still our point of entry to the work and anchors it within a series of pictures that move between Hunt, Rossetti and Rossetti’s circle of followers. For instance, as I shall explore in the following chapter, Rossetti repeats a similar construction almost ten years later in *La Bella Mano* (1876), an ambiguous picture of a woman waiting for her lover; the background convex mirror reveals the woman is in front of a fire, a setting established only in the mirror’s reflection. In a similar manner of utilising background mirrors that suggests an interaction between Hunt and Rossetti, Rossetti also employs a comparable visual device in *Lucrezia Borgia*, an image he was working on during the time Hunt was painting *Il Dolce Far Niente*. The Lucrezia picture features a large modern convex mirror in a Renaissance setting, a work that, like Hunt’s picture, simultaneously refers to *The Arnolfini Portrait* as well as Titian with the languid pose, tumbling hair and voluminous fabrics. Through their use of modern mirrors, Hunt and Rossetti fuse together the two styles Ruskin declared were contradictory to one another (those of Van Eyck and Titian), establish a point of interaction with the world of the picture, and give a contemporary immediacy to their works regardless of the setting established by the figures’ costume.

### **The Lady of Shalott (1886-1905)**

the mirror stands as the immaculate plane of the lady’s own inspired mind, or, if you prefer the interpretation, the unsullied plane upon which Art should reflect Nature as opposed to bald realism<sup>372</sup>

any person with understanding of the fundamental meaning of the word [Pre-Raphaelite] [. . .] must see that the entire treatment [*The Lady of Shalott*] is in accordance with P.R. principles, nor could any painting of mine better illustrate it.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Townsend and Poulin, 168.

<sup>372</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 401.

<sup>373</sup> Hunt, 402.

Hunt's final mirror representation of *The Lady of Shalott* (fig.109) is a culmination of what had become, by the time he finished the work in 1905, a specifically Pre-Raphaelite motif of mirror imagery that he had inaugurated with his original 1850 drawing. Defending his mythical image as the visual definition of 'Pre-Raphaelite,' he illustrates this with the example of the mirror in the above quotation, explaining that the mirror's reflection should have been 'a deep steel colour' had he not been following Pre-Raphaelite principles. Rather than a medieval metal mirror of the kind that would have produced such a colour, however, Hunt's magnificent magic mirror symbolises his approach to Pre-Raphaelitism as a synthesis of realism and imagination. This is exemplified by the fact that while Hunt studied various effects of fractured pieces glass in order to truthfully render the Lady's mirror (fig.110), the setting is, after all, in the realm of fantastical imagination, symbolised by the sheer size of the magnificent mirror. The mirror dominates the composition of this final version of *The Lady of Shalott*, is capable of containing the entire world of Camelot within its frame, and effortlessly moves through the narrative and symbolic structures of the picture outward to the physical world of the viewer. Our 'space' reflected back to us in the familiar form of modern glass neutralises potential displacement between contemporary life and Hunt's mythical setting. Industrialisation melts into the background as the viewer, accustomed to seeing post-Industrial Revolution flat-glass mirrors in 1905 as well as today, may not ever notice the object is out of place in the medieval setting.

Referencing his original mirror conception from the 1850 drawing as well as the 1857 Moxon Tennyson illustration and the Manchester oil sketch, Hunt's circular mirror enlarges and flattens out the glass shapes he had used in *Il Dolce Far Niente* and *The Lost Child* (fig.111), reinforcing his initial quotation from Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*. Hunt's larger-than-life mirror encompasses the viewer's space as well as the inner world of the Lady's 'own inspired mind,'<sup>374</sup> once again occupying a space that negotiates the schism between interior and exterior, physical and psychological, earthly and spiritual. The reflection in the glass reveals not only the turning point of Tennyson's narrative but a vision of the Lady's emotional state: 'half-sick of shadows,' she desires Lancelot who exists in the brilliant outside world, represented in the mirror as flooded with sunlight in contrast to her shadowy, claustrophobic interior.

With undertones of Plato's allegory of the cave found in *The Republic*, the shadows of the world occur in glass (truth is inevitably situated in the 'mirror, mirror on the wall') and the Lady becomes the philosopher who makes the decision to turn towards the sunlight that steals across the foreground of her cave, illuminating two birds in flight and drawing our attention to the Holy Grail at the centre of her tapestry.<sup>375</sup> In Grail legends, the vessel was used by Christ at the Last

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<sup>374</sup> Hunt, 401.

<sup>375</sup> The Holy Grail constitutes another iconographic discourse between the original Pre-Raphaelite members and their later associates. See for instance the Oxford Union murals (1857-59) by the group of

Supper and can only be found by those who are chaste and pure of heart, and as such is ultimately an emblem of a failed quest (just as the Grail remains out of reach for Lancelot due to his illicit love for Guinevere, life outside her tower prison remains unattainable for the Lady).<sup>376</sup> Werner makes the connection between Hunt's use of the word 'immaculate' to describe the Lady's mirror/mind and the Virgin Mary, a particular adjective that 'seems to echo the immaculate mirror, the *speculum sine macula* of *The Book of Wisdom* than Van Eyck used as a Marian symbol.'<sup>377</sup> Perhaps the Lady's choice to leave her prison has more to do with intellectual, psychological and spiritual resolutions than a love-at-first-sight incident (one-sided, at that) that seems more fitting of Shakespeare's thirteen year-old Juliet than the mature woman represented in the picture. Lancelot may be the catalyst for action, but the mirror reveals an entire world, or Holy Grail, that the Lady desires instead devoting herself to replicating it in her tapestry.

Concerning the mirror as a modern material object, what sort of mirror is portrayed? We have already ascertained the mirror is a nineteenth-century piece made from plate glass and of magical proportions large enough to encompass the outside world and, metaphorically, the Lady's psychological state. The picture is set in an interior in which the fireplace and overmantel mirror are noticeably absent (although we must take into account this represents an imagined twist on a medieval rather than Victorian setting), and while the mirror does not appear to be used for traditional weaving purposes, as seen in Siddall's *The Lady of Shalott*, it is also not necessarily used for the Lady's toilette. Tennyson makes clear the Lady uses the reflection to watch the outside world, not herself, and although she does not use the glass to construct a public image of herself through clothing, hair and makeup choices, it nevertheless mediates the Lady's interaction with public space. The mirror is in a metal frame and joined with the classical and Christian scenes on either side in a triptych, although how it is hung or supported is not clarified in the picture. The mirror is larger than life and as such is not demonstrably supported in the form of a toilet glass or cheval mirror and seems unnaturally large for a wall hanging. This ambiguity of location and hang is reminiscent of the mirror in *Il Dolce Far Niente*, as is the slight discrepancy

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artists who included Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Morris. Arthur Hughes, who had participated in the Oxford Union project, returned to the subject later with *Sir Galahad: The Quest for the Grail* (1870), and, more significantly, Burne-Jones and Morris collaborated later to create a cycle of Holy Grail tapestries (1895-96). The six tapestries produced by Morris & Co. can be inferred from Hunt's depiction of a Holy Grail tapestry in the final version of *The Lady of Shalott*. The original images from 1850 and 1857 do not provide an illustration of the Lady's tapestry and Hunt's inclusion of the Grail here is a significant point of reference, a mirroring, or doubling, and continuation of Morris and Burne-Jones's design. Richard W. Barber observes that in the tapestries, Burne-Jones emphasizes 'the personal failure of the individual knights [. . .] It translates visibly in the tapestries as a haunted weariness, a feeling of the mortality of earthly passions.' See Barber, *The Holy Grail: Imagination and Belief* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 276.

<sup>376</sup> 'The Grail [in Tennyson's *Idylls*] becomes a symbol of ascetic religion – religion in its aspect of withdrawal from worldly things [. . .] The Grail, even if it is no "phantom cup," leads to a land of phantoms'. Barber, *The Holy Grail: Imagination and Belief*, 397. Although pictured with an image of the Grail, the Lady imagines the Grail exists elsewhere, outside her tower and commitment to her art, the inverse of her 'withdrawal from worldly things', and her quest ends in failure.

<sup>377</sup> Werner, 241.

between 'real' details and their reflected counterparts: the large silver oil lamp is considerably smaller in the reflection and the position in the mirror of one of the escaping doves appears incongruent with the 'real' bird in flight (the other dove is not reflected at all although this could be due to its position alongside the oil lamp).

Hunt's explanation of the mirror as 'the unsullied plane upon which Art should reflect Nature as opposed to bald realism'<sup>378</sup> reiterates his belief that art should represent the 'reflex of a living image in his own mind, and not the icy double of the facts themselves';<sup>379</sup> an approach literally reflected in the mirror's incongruities (modern in a medieval tale, impossibly large, ambiguously located and betraying an inconsistent reflection). As such, the mirror is presented as the focal point upon which Hunt reworks themes of love, death, desire, the nature of art and the role of the artist, gendered space, vision and representation. Just as the Lady's tapestry depicts scenes from life in Camelot, of which she does not have first-hand knowledge, and thus constitutes an individual vision of another reality seen through a magic mirror, Hunt's fantastical image epitomises the specifically Pre-Raphaelite approach to Realism. *The Lady of Shalott* fuses together modern and historical, Christian and pagan, empirical observation and personal creative license. Although he produced the picture at the end of his career, Hunt asserts that it is in keeping with the original P.R.B. objectives - 'the entire treatment [*The Lady of Shalott*] is in accordance with P.R. principles, nor could any painting of mine better illustrate it'<sup>380</sup> - indicating a continuity of purpose regardless of subject matter, setting or visual emphasis.

When we take into account Hunt's programme of mirror imagery, a comparison between *The Lady of Shalott* and *The Awakening Conscience* is inevitable. The two pictures that draw from *The Arnolfini Portrait* but with different aesthetic approaches can be seen as a model for Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery. Surveying the development of the Lady's mirror from 1850, we can infer that the 1905 version not only represents a distinctly modern glass but a visual continuity with the 1853 mirror in *The Awakening Conscience*; Hunt presents the reflection of the outside world in both images with a detailed clarity only possible with nineteenth-century plate glass. As the point of intersection between exterior and interior spaces in both pictures, the glass reflects the source of sunlight that streams in across the foreground into shadowy interior, emphasising the underlying spiritual contrast between the green, verdant spaces of the natural world and the darkened interior. The minute realism and vivid colours of Hunt's work capture a pivotal moment with brilliant mirror-like accuracy and, like the figure in *The Awakening Conscience*, the Lady of Shalott turns away from the mirror and towards the reflected world glimpsed from a space of confinement. Hunt sums up his definitive Pre-Raphaelite image:

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<sup>378</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 401.

<sup>379</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I, 150.

<sup>380</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 402.

It has been said that my picture of 'The Lady of Shalott' is not Pre-Raphaelite. Some people say it is a great falling-off from Pre-Raphaelitism, that it is altogether different from my early works. I want to show you what would be the difference supposing it had been painted before our reform movement began [ . . . ] Near to her face should be the lightest drapery, either white, or pink, or bright yellow, and the reflection in the mirror should be of a deep steel colour [ . . . ] 'The Lady of Shalott' is my style.<sup>381</sup>

The assertion of self-knowledge and recognition, which is demonstrated in both of Hunt's paintings and contributes to an underlying connecting thread of morality between the two, corresponds to the Biblical Adam and Eve eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Both the 1857 illustration and the Manchester oil sketch (fig.112) include Christian imagery on either side of the mirror, a visual shorthand of Van Eyck's roundels of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection: scenes of the crucifixion and Christ Enthroned (the 1857 version), Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane on the left and Enthroned on the right (the Manchester oil sketch), and the Nativity in the final version are depicted echoing one another in a message of salvation that ties in with the Grail in the tapestry. Viewed together, the roundels on either side of the mirror in these three versions encompass the narrative Christ's birth, death and resurrection but, significantly, they are depicted as shadowy accompanying side notes, subordinate to the overwhelming presence of the glowing mirror.

Hunt draws attention to universal themes of morality, duty, artistic representation and unrequited love by replacing the scene of Christ Enthroned in the oil sketch with a classical Greek myth in the final version, what Hunt explains as 'illustrations of devotion of different orders'.<sup>382</sup> The image of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides on one side of the mirror across from the Nativity, as well as details such the Medusa head and sphinx, are indicative of the variety of contradictory references in the work and although classical/Christian details change between the pictures, the modern glass mirror remains an immovable iconographic presence.<sup>383</sup> Hunt explains that the Manchester version was a working sketch created 'To determine the treatment [ . . . ]

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<sup>381</sup> Hunt quoted in 'Mr. Holman Hunt: Speech at Manchester Exhibition,' *The Manchester Guardian* (December 5, 1906), 4.

<sup>382</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 401. See Hunt's extensive explanation of the work in *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; 401-403.

<sup>383</sup> Venus, Medusa and the Virgin Mary are all alluded to. See for example Sharyn R. Udall, 'Between Dream and Shadow: William Holman Hunt's "Lady of Shalott",' *Woman's Art Journal*, 11:1, (Spring-Summer, 1990), 34-38; 36. All three female figures significantly, I believe, are tied to the conflicting associations with the mirror in western art: the purity of the Virgin as the *speculum sine macula*, the vanity of Venus, and the deadly gaze of Medusa that can only be mediated through a mirror. The Lady of Shalott, herself, has become a fourth mythic female figure inextricably connected to the mirror.

preparatory to the large picture<sup>384</sup> and the change of that particular roundel of Christ in glory is perhaps indicative of what he increasingly viewed as the Lady's moral failing ('the failure of a human Soul towards its accepted responsibility').<sup>385</sup> The Grail remains unattainable, as does Lancelot, Camelot and life outside her tower, and instead of a triumphant conclusion she, like the images of Christ that Hunt pauses at the Crucifixion, faces death without the promise of resurrection. Like Egg's *Past and Present No.1* with its details of the apple and the overmantel mirror, or the garden reflected in *The Awakening Conscience*, the 1905 *The Lady of Shalott* includes imagery that indicates the Lady's decision is spiritual as well as intellectual.

One such detail that contributes to a spiritual reading of the work is the pair of wooden shoes in the foreground, another quotation from *The Arnolfini Portrait* and one that implies the Lady is on sacred ground (if one accepts the interpretation of shoe-removal as an indication of a spiritual space), a reading that works with Hunt's interpretation of the Lady's spiritual duty as an artist. The wooden pattens present a subtle contrast with the order and stability of their world (the calm stillness in *The Arnolfini Portrait*) with the tangled tapestry threads, flying hair and cracked mirror. The mirror quotation in *The Lady of Shalott*, like *The Awakening Conscience*, does not reflect a couple's union but a permanent separation as Lancelot never turns around, unaware of the Lady's existence and of the turmoil taking place inside the tower. Thus far, the Lady has existed only outside of her tower in the sound of her singing that labourer's catch early in the morning; leaving the mirror produces personal catastrophe. The very multiplicity of Hunt's *Lady of Shalott* images themselves creates a sensation of reflections upon reflections as the mirror repeats itself in an endlessly self-referencing series of what had become an iconic image by 1905.

Hunt's description the mirror as the 'immaculate plane of the Lady's own inspired mind' raises questions about the implications of the mirror, specifically described as 'crack'd from side to side.' The folklore tradition that a cracked mirror brings bad luck (it was believed that a person's soul lived in the mirror) is played out with disastrous consequences; the mirror of her mind cracks when the curse begins, and one has to consider the Victorian theme of the madwoman in the attic. Like Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre* (1847), the Lady of Shalott is hidden away from the world with the exception of the nonsensical mediation through a magic mirror. Locked in an isolated island tower, the Lady is depicted in the moment her 'inspired mind' cracks. Is madness the unexplained curse?

Elaine Showalter discusses the rise of the Victorian madwoman in light of the limited options for talented, intelligent women at the time and notes that combined with the prevailing medical beliefs regarding female sexuality and the reproductive cycle, it was 'a wonder that any woman could hope for a lifetime of sanity, and psychiatric experts often expressed their surprise that

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<sup>384</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 308 + 311.

<sup>385</sup> Hunt, 401.

female insanity was not even more frequent.<sup>386</sup> Perhaps we are witnessing a correlation between the madwoman in the attic and the female artist restricted to a life of shadows as represented by Siddall's 1853 drawing of the same subject. Tennyson's poem describes her floating down the river in her boat singing, which brings to mind the Shakespearean character of Ophelia (as well as Millais' 1852 *Ophelia*). The mad, suicidal Ophelia in Millais' acclaimed work was modelled by Siddall whose own life played out in disturbing parallels that can relate to the Lady of Shalott. Like the bird in flight, the Lady breaks out of her richly coloured cage but to the detriment of her mind and body.

Comparing Hunt's final version of Tennyson's tragic heroine with his earlier *The Awakening Conscience*, there is a sense of juxtaposition between tragedy and redemption, interior and exterior spaces mediated through glass, a contemporary space with a medieval setting. Hunt's two paintings of modern plate glass reflections encompass the two main categories of mirrors seen used by the Pre-Raphaelites: the historicised mirror and its contemporary counterpart. Rather than remaining as separate entities, however, Hunt, from the early P.R.B. days began merging the two to create what would become a specific Pre-Raphaelite mirror treatment. A contemporary plate glass mirror set in medieval Camelot is thus transformed into the magic mirror of mythology while the contemporary gauche setting of *The Awakening Conscience* is redeemed through the reflected burst of light in the mirror from the summer garden; Hunt distils the iconography of the drawing-room and historic mirror associations with truth and magic into flashes of inspired reflections.

Prettejohn has observed 'the quintessential optical instrument, for the Pre-Raphaelite project, was never the microscope or the magnifying glass, but rather the convex mirror with its diminution and distortion of the image, and the preternatural clarity of its reflected forms.'<sup>387</sup> An image in place from the early days of the Brotherhood, the continuity of its appearance throughout the rest of the century reinforces a coherent artistic objective between the seemingly contradictory styles and artists who would identify with the movement.

Mirror images in the 1880s and 1890s, during which time Hunt was working on *The Lady of Shalott*, reveal the dynamic effect of Hunt's earlier mirrors as the circular mirror became a motif, creating an artistic dialogue that connects later artists with the original P.R.B. pictures including Emma Sandys's *Viola* (1865-70), Lucy Madox Brown's *Fair Geraldine, or the Magic Mirror*, *Cornelius Agrippa showing the Fair Geraldine in a Magic Mirror to the Earl of Surrey* (1871), and Rossetti's *La Bella Mano* (1875), images I will discuss further in the following chapters, all portray historical scenes with modern mirrors, transposing Victorian glass to ancient, medieval, or Renaissance settings. The size of the circular mirror seen in Watts's *Britomart and her Nurse*

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<sup>386</sup> Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virgo Press, 1987), 56.

<sup>387</sup> Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 261.

*Before the Magic Mirror* (fig.113), for example, directly references Hunt's design for *The Lady of Shalott*. By placing the impossibly large plate glass construction in a dominant, dynamic position presiding over a setting in medieval Britain, Watts aligns his work with the Pre-Raphaelites through what had become a specifically Pre-Raphaelite mirror.

In 1868 a critic writing for *The London Quarterly Review* observed 'he looks at the world through a strange mediaeval [sic] glass; and as plain glass of those days was not altogether transparent, he seems to see often a distorted and discoloured image'.<sup>388</sup> The writer was actually referring, in a rather disparaging article, to Burne-Jones but the concept of looking at the world through a medieval glass is an apt description of Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite approach to realism. The difference, of course, is the modern glass conveyed in the clear, richly coloured reflections in Pre-Raphaelite images is a visual image that can also be understood as a metaphor for Pre-Raphaelitism as a way of seeing and re-presenting modernity. An analysis of Rossetti's mirrors, however, finds not only a response to Hunt/Van Eyck but an alternative conception of the mirror in terms of placement, function and meaning.

Werner characterises Pre-Raphaelite Realism as stemming from empirical observation combined with imaginative representation, a commitment to representing the human experience with authenticity, and the conflation of past with present, and physical with spiritual; in particular she pinpoints an iconographic system of *vanitas* imagery as part of the Brotherhood's self-referencing discourse: roses, hourglasses, clocks and musical instrument appear repeatedly in the works of Hunt, Millais and Rossetti.<sup>389</sup> She does not, however, identify the mirror as part of the *vanitas* structure and it is Pre-Raphaelitism's specific approach to mirror imagery (not just present in their works as shorthand for vanity or middle-class morality but as critical elements with a wealth of meaning) that is significant for reading a motif-based dialogue that unifies the original Brotherhood with their later followers.

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<sup>388</sup> 'The Pictures of the Year,' *The London Quarterly Review*, 29: 57 (January, 1868), 94-129; 127.

<sup>389</sup> Werner, 176-177.



## Chapter II: Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Mirrors are instruments of universal magic that converts things into spectacle, spectacle into things, myself into other, and another into myself.

– Maurice Merleau-Ponty<sup>390</sup>

### *Lady Lilith* - ‘typical of Rossetti’s personal and peculiar Preraphaelitism’<sup>391</sup>

During the time Hunt was painting the portrait of his wife Fanny in 1867-68, Rossetti was working on *Lady Lilith* (fig.114), a sensuous picture of his housekeeper and mistress Fanny Cornforth. Begun in 1864 and finished in 1868, Rossetti’s painting of Fanny as a mythical femme fatale can be juxtaposed with Hunt’s *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt* to read as a metaphor for the two artists’ contrasting use of mirrors and, in particular, Rossetti’s complexity of reflections. A gilt overmantel mirror oversees Hunt’s depiction of his late wife within the ordered materiality of a middle-class drawing room; Rossetti’s painting of his mistress, depicted as Adam’s wife before Eve, locates her in a confusing boudoir space in which interior runs into exterior and the toilet mirror complicates rather than clarifies the setting. Like Hunt, Rossetti’s mirrors represent a point of intersection between underlying magical associations, historical iconography, and modern glass products but while Hunt may have established a precedent for thinking about the structural and narrative function of the modern mirror with his iconic reinterpretation of Van Eyck’s image, Rossetti, through at least twenty mirrors over the course of his career (more than twice the number of mirror images that Hunt produced), explores a more complex, enigmatic interplay of reflections.

In his portrait of Fanny, Hunt portrays his wife posed before the overmantel mirror, that ubiquitous symbol of the middle-class home, and subverts any semblance of vanity in the familiar image of a woman with a mirror by posing Fanny with her back to the glass, her hair neatly parted and pulled back, and her gaze modestly averted from the viewer. As discussed in the previous chapter, the overmantel is positioned to reflect another mirror in the viewer’s space, a dynamic that creates a somewhat disorienting progression of reflections that bounce between the interior of the work and the implied external world. By reflecting the viewer’s ‘real’ space, Hunt keeps within his own precedent dating from the 1850 drawing of ‘The Lady of Shalott’ and in spite of the symbolic potential of the eternity of reflections in Fanny’s posthumous portrait,

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<sup>390</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, ‘Eye and Mind’ in Galen A. Johnson and Michael B. Smith (eds.), *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 130. Merleau-Ponty’s ‘Eye and Mind’ essay was originally published in *Art de France* (1961) and considers painting as a form or act of vision, the mirror image an entity of ambiguity rather than a Lacanian place of identification.

<sup>391</sup> Robert Ross, ‘Rossetti: An Observation,’ *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 13: 62 (May, 1908), 116-119 + 123; 123.

the reflection remains a logical transcription of the space in front of it. Despite the absence of Fanny's reflection in the glass, the painting itself is grounded in the structured world of middle-class respectability with the marble mantel and gilt-framed mirror (its height fashionably greater than its width) depicted behind the lady of the house. At no point in time does the viewer doubt the legitimacy of the world within the picture, and the potential for spatial confusion is reined in by the solidity of form and clarity of detail by which the multiple mirrors are portrayed.

Rossetti's use of mirrors throughout his oeuvre, however, diverges from the more logical orientation of Hunt's reflections, a critical distinction that can be read as a metaphor for their conflicting stylistic versions of Pre-Raphaelitism. Inspired by lines from Shelley's translation of Goethe's *Faust*,<sup>392</sup> *Lady Lilith* exemplifies Rossetti's brand of Pre-Raphaelite realism that highlights the inner experience and employs a sense of the fantastical that coexists alongside, but is not subservient to, his observations drawn from real life. *Lilith*'s incoherent mirror reflection that subverts the viewer's expectations of a rational virtual replica is both a metaphor and a facilitator for this stylistic trajectory.

Unlike Hunt's depiction of his wife, Rossetti's Lilith lounges in a white undergarment that slips from her shoulder as she idly runs a comb through her glowing, abundant hair while she gazes at herself in a hand mirror, a characterisation that is far more Titian-esque courtesan or sensuous embodiment of Venus than a Victorian middle-class angel of the house. Traditional emblems of Venus (the mirrors, roses, flowing hair and toilet accoutrements) fill the boudoir space while her characterisation as an evil witch suggests a lethal quality to her seductive beauty. William Sharp noted that the subject was well-known at the time Rossetti painted it reads the picture as a metaphor for the *femme fatale* inherent in the modern woman, praising in particular Rossetti's creativity in portraying Lilith is a contemporary woman rather than as the legendary serpent-Lilith.<sup>393</sup> The shallow depth of space almost tilts the ancient character into the viewer's surroundings and the nineteenth-century details of the ['ordinary' and 'modern'<sup>394</sup>] mirror, bureau, and chair reinforce the modernity of the picture. Stephens describes Lilith 'seated as if she lived now, and reclining back in a modern robe,'<sup>395</sup> and Rossetti himself wrote that the woman depicted in *Lady Lilith* represents 'a *modern* Lilith'. Upon seeing the original

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<sup>392</sup> F.G. Stephens, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study* (London: Seeley & Co., Limited, 1905), 68; also Henry Treffry Dunn and Gale Pedrick (ed.), *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle: Cheyne Walk Life*, (London: Elkin Matthews, 1904), 20.

<sup>393</sup> William Sharp, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1882), 208. Rossetti did create a sketch of Lilith with a snake coiled around her body (fig.), a more explicit characterisation he uses in the poem 'Eden Bower' (1869). *The Rossetti Archive* dates this c.1863-64 or c.1869. See Jerome McGann (ed.), *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Research Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/f30.rap.html>

<sup>394</sup> W. M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer with a prose paraphrase of The House of Life* (London: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1889), 63. Rossetti notes that while there is nothing that would overtly convey the sitter's identity, one should not forget Lilith's identity as an evil and destructive witch.

<sup>395</sup> F.G. Stephens, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Seeley and Co. Limited, 1894), 68.

work at the Royal Academy in 1868, A.C. Swinburne's writes of her timelessness as 'a living Lilith [. . .] she will sit to all time, passive and perfect'.<sup>396</sup> With these recognisable signifiers of the nineteenth-century dressing room, the shallow depth, and the mirror that reflects the viewer's space, Rossetti reinforces her contemporaneity and the immediate threat, or exhilaration, of danger.

One of Rossetti's 'double works' of art that incorporate both poetry and picture, *Lilith* is intended to be inseparable from its accompanying sonnet (first published in 1870 under the title 'Lady Lilith' and again in 1881 in *The House of Life*, retitled 'Body's Beauty'). Rossetti designed the original frame for *Lilith* to include the verses so that the two might be viewed simultaneously, summing up his concept of *Lilith* as a double work of art in a letter to Thomas Hake in which he refers to the two jointly as a 'Picture-sonnet'.<sup>397</sup>

'Body's Beauty'

Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told  
    (The witch he loved before the gift of Eve)  
    That, ere the snake's her sweet tongue could deceive,  
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.  
And still she sits, young while the earth is old.  
    And, subtly of herself contemplative,  
    Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,  
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where  
    Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent  
And soft kisses and soft sleep shall snare?  
    Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went  
    Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent  
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.<sup>398</sup>

In *Lady Lilith*, as with the accompanying sonnet 'Body's Beauty' and the later ballad 'Eden Bower,' Rossetti responds to Goethe's nineteenth-century literary re-imagining of a character from ancient legend, similar to Hunt reworking Tennyson's medieval narrative of 'The Lady of

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<sup>396</sup> W.M. Rossetti and A.C. Swinburne, *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1868* (London: John Campden Hotten, 1868), 46-47.

<sup>397</sup> D.G.R. to Thomas Gordon Hake, 21 April 1870, reproduced in Roger C. Lewis (ed.), *The House of Life: A Sonnet-Sequence by Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 182.

<sup>398</sup> 'Body's Beauty' Sonnet 78 in *The House of Life*. Quoted here from Roger C. Lewis (ed.) *The House of Life: A Sonnet-Sequence by Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 181.

Shalott'; both the Lady of Shalott and Lilith are literary figures of legend reinterpreted in a contemporary nineteenth-century response. The nineteenth-century toilet mirror, however, differs from Hunt's reflection that fills in narrative gaps; Rossetti's glass undermines a logical interpretation of space or time.

The most prominent indication in the scene of the uncanny or the supernatural is the mirror's reflection. Conveying that this is not an ordinary woman in her boudoir, the mirror does not reflect a nineteenth-century interior as would be expected but a sunlit woodland glade, throwing the setting into confusion as well as the viewer's position in relation to the witch-Venus-modern woman. The subtlety with which Rossetti suggests supernatural qualities, located in the mirror's reflection rather than by a more overt illustration of Lilith's mythology, heightens the role of the mirror in the picture as well as the underlying uneasiness of the image. The modern toilet glass that reflects a sunlit exterior, or a lost Eden as suggested by William Sharp in 1882,<sup>399</sup> is reminiscent of Hunt's *Awakening Conscience* but aside from the subject's resolutely un-awakened conscience (Sharp calls her 'soulless'<sup>400</sup> and Swinburne observes 'there is no life but of the body; with the spirit . . . she can dispense'<sup>401</sup>), Rossetti's ambiguous setting blurs the lines between interior and exterior. Hunt's large modern mirror in *The Awakening Conscience* might cause a moment of displacement before the viewer works out that the reflection is of a garden seen through an open window but Rossetti's mirror in this instance rejects any attempt at clarification and instead suggests displacement and isolation (see the mirrors compared, figs.115-116).

Sharp suggests that aside from the mirror's reflection revealing 'that primal paradise,' it may also symbolically represent the 'intense self-contemplation and true spiritual loneliness of this modern Lady Lilith.'<sup>402</sup> In this reading, Lilith's mirror is the inverse of the mirror of spiritual revelation in Hunt's *Awakening Conscience*, the glimmer of sunlit trees in the reflection framed by unlit candles is indicative of loss rather than renewal, what Sharp identifies as spiritual loneliness rather than redemption. Rossetti's mirror responds to Hunt's reflection of Eden but immediately inverts the implication of paradise. In the legend, Lilith flees Eden rather than be subservient to Adam, and the mirror's reflection creates further ambiguity in terms of temporality – is this a reflection of the present or a memory of paradise lost; is Lilith recalling a lost Eden or is she poised to fall? Does the mirror reflect her inner psychological state or the 'true spiritual loneliness' of present time? Unlike Hunt's scene of redemption caught in glass, Rossetti's mirror does not reflect orderly walled garden of a London townhouse framed by clearly delineated markers separating interior from exterior (the gilt mirror frame, the window

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<sup>399</sup> Sharp, 210.

<sup>400</sup> Sharp, 208-209.

<sup>401</sup> W.M. Rossetti and A.C. Swinburne, *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1868*, 46.

<sup>402</sup> Sharp, 210.

panes, awning and curtains) but a wilder setting with darker colours located within a pictorial space jars between indoor and outdoor settings.

Rather than melting into a haze of sunlight, as the natural depiction seen in Hunt's *Awakening Conscience*, Rossetti's 'fervent foliage' seems to press in and crowd the mirror's space. Swinburne notes the rich colours of the foliage seen in the reflection creates a focal point in the piece,<sup>403</sup> emphasising the importance of the reflection as an integral, yet autonomous, component. The reflection of the two candles and the roses that hover across the mirror frame establish the object is in fact a plate-glass mirror rather than a window and that it functions, as one would expect, by providing a straightforward reflection of what is directly in front of it. The confusion is conveyed, however, in the reflected foliage as well as its depth of field for rather than receding and diminishing in space, the windblown woodland scene is crammed into one plane and the reflected candles are just as close in the mirror as the greenery, a spatial dynamic that creates a claustrophobic effect. If we understand the viewer's space as reflected in the mirror, the greenery should be seen in the foreground alongside and in front of the candles, but the leaves and branches are missing, an abnormality and dislocation that establishes a reflection and a 'reality' that do not spatially coincide. Where is she located? Is she inside, as the furniture suggests, or outside as the array of floating white roses and mirror's reflection indicate? Is the viewer watching her from this woodland exterior? The toilet glass as an object anchors the picture in time (the present) while the reflection simultaneously distorts any concrete sense of space, location, or temporality.

Jerome McGann echoes Sharp's reading when he writes of the mirror in *Lady Lilith*, 'It is as if the mirror in Lilith's enclosed and fantastic realm (or room) magically preserved a memory of the Edenic garden which she fled' and points out that the mirror's position in the work 'suggests that if we are to imagine it reflecting anything actual, it would have to be the world inhabited by the spectator of the painting.'<sup>404</sup> The mirror's reflection, however, is too self-referential to its own mythology that exists solely in the world of the picture to establish a rational connection with the viewer beyond a reinforcement of supernatural ambiguity. The viewer's 'space' reflected in the contemporary mirror is not a reassuring one: if it is a reflection of that lost 'primal paradise,' just where are we located? The inner construct of the 'real' and reflected space within the picture must exist like the mirror world in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871), illogical and impossible outside of its own internal construct of an independent reality.

Lilith's mirror that obeys its own laws, rules of logic that exist only within the painting instead of the world of the viewer, corresponds to the concept I mentioned briefly in the

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<sup>403</sup> W.M. Rossetti and Swinburne, 47.

<sup>404</sup> Jerome McGann, *Rossetti and the Game that Must be Lost* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 18.

introductory chapter, what Rossetti refers to as the ‘inner standing-point,’<sup>405</sup> a re-orientation of a picture’s meaning. Writing in *The Athenaeum* in 1871 Rossetti explained,

the motive powers of art reverse the requirement of science, and demand first of all an *inner* standing-point. The heart of such a mystery as this must be plucked from the very world in which it beats or bleeds; and the beauty and the pity, the self-questionings and all-questionings which it brings with it, can come with full force only from the mouth of one alive to its whole appeal<sup>406</sup>.

Reversing or disregarding ‘the requirement of science,’ Rossetti’s mirrors not only have to be seen from an inner standing-point but can also be read *as* the inner standing-point, the thread on which the imagined world of the picture hangs, the spectator’s point of entry to the interior structure of the picture. Rossetti rejects a ‘treatment from without,’<sup>407</sup> and just as the internal narrator establishes the inner standing-point in the poem ‘Jenny’ through dramatic monologue, and his mirrors function in a similar manner.

McGann expands upon the theory of Rossetti’s inner standing-point and argues that the concept is critical to understanding his works, for, ‘according to Rossetti, art always adopts an inner standing point towards itself.’<sup>408</sup> Referring to the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s 1961 essay ‘Eye and Mind,’ McGann elaborates on Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of the mirror as symbolic of an artistic view of reality, summing up his theory of vision and reflection in such a way that it corresponds to Rossetti’s inner standing-point, for ‘Any meaning situated Elsewhere is merely conceptual meaning, dead on arrival’.<sup>409</sup> Central to grasping Rossetti’s work is this concept, best accessed by the viewer entering the artwork through the mirror, as Carroll’s Alice climbs through the overmantel in *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There*. Pivotal to visually establishing an inner standing-point, Prettejohn suggests that Rossetti’s use of space in his works from the 1860s contributes to the construction of a point of entry, for

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<sup>405</sup> D.G. Rossetti, ‘The Stealthy School of Criticism,’ *The Athenaeum*, 2303 (December 16, 1871), 792-794; 793.

<sup>406</sup> D.G. Rossetti, 793. Rossetti uses the concept of the inner standing point in an explanation of his poem ‘Jenny,’ responding to Robert Buchanan’s attack on the work in his famous ‘The Fleshly School of Poetry,’ *The Contemporary Review*, 17 (October, 1871), 334-351. Buchanan also derided the subject of Lilith in Rossetti’s ballad ‘Eden Bower’ as ‘affected rubbish,’ declaring ‘No good poet would have wrought into a poem the absurd tradition about Lilith’ and that ‘poems of this unnatural and morbid kind are only tolerable when they embody a profound meaning’ (Buchanan, 349).

<sup>407</sup> D.G. Rossetti, 793. Rossetti writes he did consider an external approach to ‘Jenny’ but proceeds to explain he took an internal approach instead, elaborating on his position of the inner standing point, as quoted above.

<sup>408</sup> McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game that Must be Lost*, 202. Also see McGann, ‘D.G. Rossetti and the Art of the Inner Standing-Point,’ David Clifford and Laurence Roussillon (eds.), *Outsiders Looking In: The Rossetti’s Then and Now* (London: Anthem Press, 2004).

<sup>409</sup> McGann, 22.

by cancelling traditional perspective distance they bring the viewer into too close an intimacy with the figure to permit dispassionate contemplation [ . . . ] Rossetti is obliterating the I-thou relationship that had characterized western painting since the Renaissance [ . . . ] The effect is particularly unsettling in *Lady Lilith*, in which the background roses and the bright foliage reflected in the rear mirror seem no more distant than the arm of the chair and the vase of the foreground.<sup>410</sup>

Lilith's toilet glass establishes a point of entry for considering the work in which spatial planes and colours tilt and crowd in such a way that Hunt's reflections of multiple mirrors in *The Awakening Conscience* and *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt* seem the epitome of sane, ordered structure derived from close empirical observation.<sup>411</sup>

Similar to Hunt's portrait of Fanny and her lack of reflection in the overmantel mirror, Rossetti's mirrors in *Lilith* also do not reveal her reflection; her hand mirror is turned away from us and she reclines just past the reach of the toilet glass. The spatial dynamic of her hair, body, and glass do not make sense from a perspective standpoint, however, and as the different picture planes seem to converge and tilt slightly at subtly inconceivable angles, it becomes apparent that at least some of her hair should be seen in the glass, if not also the foxgloves and perfume bottle. If we consider the possibility that Fanny's absent reflection is suggestive of the portrait as posthumous and that the subject has no reflection because she no longer physically exists, the implications of this for *Lady Lilith* are eerie and recall vampire mythology in which the 'undead' do not have mirror reflections; in folklore, the vampire does not have a soul and, therefore, no reflection. Corresponding to this, Swinburne observes of Lilith 'For this serene and sublime sorceress there is no life but of the body; with spirit (if spirit be there) she can dispense.'<sup>412</sup> *Lady Lilith's* accompanying sonnet 'Body's Beauty' in comparison with *Sibylla Palmifera* (1866-70), identified as 'Soul's Beauty' indicates an underlying correlation of body, soul, and reflection.

As mentioned in the introduction to this project, Virginia M. Allen's article in *The Art Bulletin* does not interrogate Lilith's mirror but nevertheless puts forward an insightful reading of the arrangement of the mirror with candles and foxgloves on the chest behind Lilith as an altar to Love and Death, an interpretation that elevates the mirror to a metaphysical position, although

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<sup>410</sup> Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press with The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2007), 214.

<sup>411</sup> See Julian Treuherz, Elizabeth Prettejohn and Edwin Becker (eds.), *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, exh cat., (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 64: 'The contrast between *Lady Lilith* and *The Awakening Conscience* is instructive [ . . . ] in the Hunt we easily read the space as projecting backward into the room [ . . . ] we wonder whether the mirror [in *Lady Lilith*] reflects a view from the depicted room at all, or whether it is perhaps a magic mirror presenting a scene from some remote place or time'.

<sup>412</sup> Rossetti and Swinburne, *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition*, 46.

Allen herself does not expand on any implications of this.<sup>413</sup> Although the mirror in *Lady Lilith* has been referred to or briefly mentioned in past scholarly literature, such as in Allen's article, the mirror's centrality to the inner structure of the picture and Rossetti's depiction of Lilith, whether one interprets her as a modern woman, ancient ageless witch, or the 'poetic embodiment of the principle of evil inherent in man,'<sup>414</sup> typically eludes in-depth consideration. A significant exception to this, however, and one that is particularly informative for this dissertation is J. Hillis Miller's 1991 interpretation of Lilith's mirror's reflection as a site of ambiguity. Miller suggests reading the work as one in a series of mirrors and mirroring: the painting mirrors Fanny Cornforth as well as Victorian interior décor while also mirroring Rossetti's sonnet 'Body's Beauty.'<sup>415</sup>

Adding a level of complexity to the image, Rossetti's picture exists in several versions (oil, watercolour, chalk), and throughout these the lady portrayed has different faces, a fact alone that produces the effect of multiple reflections and incorporates aspects of uncanny doubling, disorientation and illogical reflections whilst it also functions as one of his 'double' works of art. Rossetti's oil painting of the subject dates between 1864-68 and features Fanny Cornforth as the model; several years later for reasons that remain unclear, he took the work back from its owner, his patron Frederick Leyland, and repainted the face with the features of professional model Alexa Wilding. In what has generally been regarded as an unfortunate change to the original,<sup>416</sup> the face of Alexa superimposed on Fanny creates an unsettling series of reflections when viewed together (see figs. 117-121). Of the 1872-73 repaints with Wilding's face, W.M. Rossetti is at a loss as to why this 'great mistake on my brother's part'<sup>417</sup> occurred and Marillier suggests it could perhaps have something to do with Rossetti's state of mind following an illness 'when he became seized with a sort of mania for altering his work. The face . . . was entirely redrawn from a different model, and with anything but satisfactory results, although he himself was not displeased with the work'.<sup>418</sup> The four mirror images do not quite match up due to different heads as well as other smaller details, and create a sensation of a self-absorbed many-headed Lilith, a hydra-Fanny who could not be more different from Hunt's *Fanny Holman Hunt*. The toilet mirror and candles, however, remain a constant through the different versions, functioning as an anchoring common denominator in the multiplicity of images.

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<sup>413</sup> Allen, "'One Strangling Golden Hair: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Lady Lilith,' *The Art Bulletin*, 66: 2 (June, 1984), 285-294; 291.

<sup>414</sup> Sharp, 208.

<sup>415</sup> J. Hillis Miller, 'The Mirror's Secret: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Double Work of Art', *Victorian Poetry*, vol.29, no.4, 'Contemporary Critics Look at Victorian Poetry, Winter 1991, pp.333-349; p.333.

<sup>416</sup> See W.M. Rossetti, 'Notes on Rossetti and his Works,' *The Art Journal* (June, 1984), 165-168; 168; F.G. Stephens, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Seeley & Co. Limited, 1905), 66; H.C. Marillier *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An Illustrated Memorial of his Art and Life*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (London: George Bell & Sons, 1904), 91 and Dunn, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle: Cheyne Walk Life*, 20.

<sup>417</sup> W.M. Rossetti, 'Notes from Rossetti and his Works,' 168.

<sup>418</sup> Marillier, 91.



The mirror itself also functions within the larger structure of the work(s) to contribute to a sense of abnormality and mirroring with the doubling of hand mirrors, toilet mirrors, claustrophobic hothouse roses and Lilith herself all relating to the German *doppelgänger* legends of the ghostly double as an omen of death. In this series of uncanny doubles, the ‘images call out to images’<sup>419</sup> in a series mirrored reflections that ultimately keep doubling back upon themselves in endless self-reflexivity. Rossetti, long interested in the concept of the *doppelgänger*, had explored the legend more overtly some years earlier in the 1864 watercolour *How They Met Themselves* (fig. 122) which depicts a couple in medieval dress encountering their doubles in a dark forest. The ‘real’ woman faints in fright at the sight of her *doppelgänger*, so alike to the originals as to only be distinguished by the faint glow surrounding the outline of their bodies and the menacing staring eyes. In this instance, a physical mirror is not necessary as the reflected images appear to have walked out of their glass entrapment and are roaming freely in the natural world in a bizarre merging of the physical reality with the supernatural, a structural concept that Rossetti explores with his use of mirror imagery throughout his career. Marillier notes that Rossetti was working on this design in pen-and-ink during his honeymoon in Paris in 1860 and had actually conceived of the subject with an earlier version in 1851; the concept of ominous doubling, reflections and mirror imagery spans Rossetti’s creative output from his early Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood days.<sup>420</sup>

W.M. Rossetti mentions his brother’s fascination with *Faust* from early on in his life (a ‘drama he read and re-read’<sup>421</sup>) and, in his memoir, T. Hall Caine recalls that although Rossetti’s library did not contain much German literature, he did own copies of Goethe’s *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*,<sup>422</sup> works that employ mirrors and the idea of the *doppelgänger*. Goethe’s use of use of mirrors throughout his literary works<sup>423</sup> suggests a potent source of inspiration for Rossetti, quite apart from Van Eyck’s convex mirror and one that is both darker and outright more fantastical than that seen in *The Arnolfini Portrait*, regardless of symbolic associations. In 1868 Rossetti produced an image in coloured chalks of the character Gretchen from *Faust Part I*, a tragic character who Faust seduced with jewels from the devil, and a subject Rossetti had conceived of several years earlier around 1865, a time that would have overlapped with the years he worked on *Lilith. Risen at Dawn (Gretchen Discovering the Jewels, fig. 123)* portrays the figure accompanied by mirrors in both the foreground and background, indicative of her

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<sup>419</sup> McGann, 23. McGann expounds on the idea of Rossetti’s textual works in within a structure of mirroring: ‘Texts reflect and open out to each other [. . .] or they develop other kinds of mirroring relations’, a concept that relates to Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality and my idea of intermirrornality.

<sup>420</sup> Marillier, 69.

<sup>421</sup> W.M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters with a Memoir*, vol. I (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1896), 103.

<sup>422</sup> Hall Caine, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 234. W.M. Rossetti also notes *Faust* as one of his brother’s interests from childhood. See W.M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters with a Memoir* vol. I, 59.

<sup>423</sup> See Rita Terras, ‘Goethe’s Use of Mirrors,’ *Monashefte*, 67: 4 (Winter, 1975), 387-402; 391.

succumbing to temptation through her own vanity.<sup>424</sup> The three-quarter turned figure in a state of undress examining jewels in front of a toilet glass, with a mirror on the wall behind her that reflects the bed, could, like *Lady Lilith* at first glance, be read superficially as a Lady-at-her-Toilette scene. The flower in the vase below the rear mirror, however, recalls Lilith's poppy, symbolic of death-like drugged sleep and in this instance is placed before the mirror's reflection of Gretchen's bed. The spinning wheel behind her corresponds to the narrative of the scene from *Faust* in which she spins while pining after Faust, the repetitive thrum of the spinning mimicking her loneliness and desire.

The white bed curtains, poppy, and spinning wheel (which also evokes something of the *Sleeping Beauty* tale told by the Brothers Grimm in *Children's and Household Tales*, published in English in multiple editions throughout the nineteenth century beginning in 1823) and the coral necklace connect the space between the two mirrors and contribute to a more foreboding connotation than that of a simplified toilet scene. Rossetti did not finish working out his pictorial conception for Gretchen but the elements of the modern woman with two mirrors and a background reflection that reveals the viewer's space are hallmarks of Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelitism and correspond with the *Lady Lilith* design. The mirrors between the two reinforce the mirror as motif through Rossetti's works while simultaneously responding to both Hunt and Goethe's mirror imagery.

As a point of entry for thinking about Rossetti's use of mirrors, *Lady Lilith* incorporates the physical and metaphorical structures that can be traced from Rossetti's earliest mirror images from 1850 through to *La Bella Mano* in 1875. In keeping with the early archaic inspiration of the P.R.B., Rossetti's *Lilith* represents a convergence of the stylistic and literary sources of Titian, Goethe and Talmudic legend with modern life, and exemplifies the mirror as a critical motif in both his pictorial and textual works. The specific use of the modern mirror creates not only a link between Rossetti's subjects and contemporary life but in spite of his different approach to representation and use of reflection, it also ties his 'personal and peculiar Preraphaelitism,'<sup>425</sup> to quote Robert Ross, to Hunt's own mirror imagery, creating a dialogue of reflection and response between the two artists.

### **'Holman-Huntism'?**<sup>426</sup>

In order to understand the significance of the mirror dialogue between Hunt and Rossetti, it is necessary to consider not only the stylistic rift between the two but also Rossetti's early mirror

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<sup>424</sup> Terras notes that Goethe uses the mirror to characterize Gretchen after she wants to try on the jewelry in front of it (jewels left by Mephistopheles, the devil), Terras, 'Goethe's Use of Mirrors,' 396+397.

<sup>425</sup> Ross, 'Rossetti: An Observation,' 123. Ross here refers to the modernized character of Lilith as being 'undeniably typical of Rossetti's personal and peculiar Preraphaelitism.' The unwritten subtext, of course, is 'compared to Hunt and Millais.'

<sup>426</sup> 'Fine Arts,' *The Athenaeum*, 4514 (May 2, 1914), 630-631; 630.

development. In his memoir published in 1905 when, it must be noted, Rossetti and Millais were already deceased, Hunt is at pains to demonstrate that it was Millais and himself who inaugurated Pre-Raphaelitism and allowed Rossetti to join them for a short time as a pupil and as a member of the Brotherhood before he went off floundering into ‘medievalism’<sup>427</sup> and ‘hothouse fancifulness’<sup>428</sup> while cultivating a ‘sensuous manner’<sup>429</sup> before he suffered from ‘obstinate mental delusions upon certain matters’ later in life.<sup>430</sup> The continuous theme running through his autobiography delineates himself and Millais as the true Pre-Raphaelites, a position he supports with anecdotes of teaching and lecturing a youthful, impatient Rossetti before he eventually rebelled against Hunt and Millais’s disciplined tenets. Hunt returns to this subject throughout the two volumes to argue his case, positioning himself and Millais as the originators and leaders of the movement who remained true to their youthful ideals, thus creating a narrative of ‘them’ (Rossetti and his circle of followers) and ‘us.’

The prominent and critical mirrors that are persistent in both Hunt and Rossetti’s works create an intermirrortality, a dialogue between their seemingly contradictory stylistic arcs. As discussed in the introduction, the term ‘intermirrortality’ conveys a sense of the visual artistic conversation and clarifies the intentional repetition of mirrors as part of a specific continuum of response and interpretation. I mentioned Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality previously but I would also put forward the term ‘mirrorology’ that one writer for *The Graphic* in 1895 used to describe ‘the art of adequately decorating a room by means of mirrors’;<sup>431</sup> ‘intermirrortality’ draws on both this 1895 term and Kristeva’s intertextuality. Before identifying and analysing this connection between Hunt and Rossetti, however, we should first consider the traditional division between the two (Hunt and Millais versus Rossetti) that renders the idea of intermirrortality significant.

The use of personal pronouns throughout Hunt’s memoir creates this bracketing of himself and Millais apart from Rossetti. For instance, describing Rossetti’s unfinished picture *Found*, Hunt warmly acknowledges that here Rossetti ‘had made a hearty attempt to adopt *our* method of exact allegiance to Nature [. . .] His non-completion of this had a great significance.’<sup>432</sup> The significance Hunt refers to is Rossetti’s changing style, particularly manifest in the 1860s, a manner that Hunt believed ‘showed a settled aversion’ to the founding principles of Pre-Raphaelitism.<sup>433</sup> Referring to Rossetti’s circle later in his life, Hunt notes,

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<sup>427</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 425. Hunt is referring to the ‘medievalism which Rossetti had confused with Pre-Raphaelitism’.

<sup>428</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 436.

<sup>429</sup> Hunt, 164 + 387.

<sup>430</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 356.

<sup>431</sup> J. Ashby-Sterry, ‘The Bystander,’ *The Graphic*, (October 26, 1895), 511.

<sup>432</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II (London: Macmillan & Co., 1905), 364 (emphasis mine).

<sup>433</sup> Hunt, 363.

the special champions of our third member in his later phases, treated Millais and myself as unmoved by the canonical breath of poetic dogma. When it was pointed out to them that our pictures had never attempted quattrocentism, they met this argument with the conclusion that we two were unable to reach the exalted heights of the ‘arch Pre-Raphaelite.’<sup>434</sup>

Hunt’s memoir argues sharply against this public perception of Rossetti as the ‘arch Pre-Raphaelite,’ maintaining that while he and Millais held true to Pre-Raphaelite qualities of serious subjects and authenticity, Rossetti ‘branched off into a treatment, sensuous and august, which, as some thought, gradually grew to be overpowering, as is the odour of voluptuous perfumes in a closed room.’<sup>435</sup> Hunt appears to forget his own experiment with *Il Dolce Far Niente* and maintains a polarisation between himself and Rossetti, contrasting, for instance, Rossetti’s ‘medievalism’<sup>436</sup> with his own interests in scientific discoveries and pursuits of ‘more exact truth’ in comparison to the ‘dantesque shapes of imagery’ that ‘became Rossetti’s alphabet of art’;<sup>437</sup> ‘we’ versus ‘them,’ truth versus medieval fantasy. Hunt’s selective memory is apparent here as he omits his own medievalising subject matter from Tennyson and his perspective on realism which combines fantasy and imagination with empirical observation of reality rather than function as a transcription of ‘the icy double of the facts themselves.’<sup>438</sup> Best demonstrated by the modern glass mirror in all three of his Ladies of Shalott pictures, Hunt’s version of realism, however contradictory, is what he upholds as the true Pre-Raphaelite ideal. Rossetti’s brand of medievalism, also a composite of imagination alongside observation of the natural world, appears in Hunt’s opinion to be another matter altogether.

Rather tellingly, a review in *The Athenaeum* of the second edition of Hunt’s memoir notes that not only is he uncompromising on his definition of Pre-Raphaelitism but in spite of the fact that other artists such as Burne-Jones and Morris are accepted as part of the movement, ‘if the author’s contention prevailed, the meaning of the term Pre-Raphaelitism would be strangely limited to something approaching a synonym of Holman-Huntism’.<sup>439</sup> In other words, Hunt’s version of Pre-Raphaelitism, according to Hunt, is the only acceptable one; Rossetti and his followers should not be considered affiliated with the movement in any way. Hunt does make

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<sup>434</sup> Hunt, 367.

<sup>435</sup> Hunt, 363.

<sup>436</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), 147.

<sup>437</sup> Hunt, 148-149.

<sup>438</sup> Hunt, 150.

<sup>439</sup> ‘Fine Arts,’ *The Athenaeum*, 4514 (May 2, 1914), 630-631; 630.

some concessions to Rossetti in *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*<sup>440</sup> but he is primarily concerned with methodically arguing against W.M. Rossetti's contradictory version of events as well as the critical support for the Rossettis' claims of equal significance between Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti or, worse yet, that Rossetti's particular style was the epitome of P.R.B.'ism. William Michael, for instance, diplomatically asserts that Millais, Hunt and Rossetti were all equally responsible for originating Pre-Raphaelitism<sup>441</sup> and argues that while his brother might have studied under Hunt and shared his studio, he demonstrated independent 'Pre-Raphaelite' tendencies before the official formation of the P.R.B. To support this idea, William Michael refers to Rossetti's drawing of their grandfather, Gaetano Polidori (fig.124), as evidence of Rossetti's loyalty to the doctrine of truth-to-nature.<sup>442</sup> The portrait captures the subject's character with realistic modelling and shading, creating a lifelike picture with details of furrowed brow, wispy hair and stern demeanour, stylistic details that support William Michael's assertion that Rossetti, Millais and Hunt were of a similar mind and approach at the time.

W.M. Rossetti sums up the original concept of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as following guidelines of 'serious and elevated invention of subject, along with earnest scrutiny of visible facts, and an earnest endeavour to present them veraciously and exactly'<sup>443</sup> and lists qualities they admired such as 'emotional sincerity [. . .] grace, decorative charm, observation and definition of certain appearances of Nature, and patient and loving but not mechanical labour.'<sup>444</sup> Considering Hunt's own later works such as *The Triumph of the Innocents*, recently described in 2013 in *The Telegraph* as having floating bubbles that are 'more reminiscent of a ghost story by Bulwer Lytton than of the traditions of Western religious art',<sup>445</sup> one has to question the veracity of Hunt's perception that he and Rossetti were so divisive, with one being the champion of truth-to-nature [true] Pre-Raphaelitism and the other responsible for a sensuous medievalising offshoot that contradicted the original intentions of the P.R.B..

My intention with these references to Hunt's claims in *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* is not to mine it for self-mythologizing or to challenge the truthfulness

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<sup>440</sup> For example, Hunt allows it was Rossetti's idea to add 'Brotherhood' after Hunt himself had insisted upon the Pre-Raphaelite title (*Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I, 147) and acknowledges that Morris, Rossetti and Burne-Jones's decorative principles were brilliant before reminding the reader in the same sentence that they were 'acting upon an idea promulgated by Millais and myself twenty years earlier' (*Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 336).

<sup>441</sup> W.M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti. His Family Letters with a Memoir*, vol. I, 128.

<sup>442</sup> W.M. Rossetti, 123.

<sup>443</sup> W.M. Rossetti, 127.

<sup>444</sup> W.M. Rossetti, 127.

<sup>445</sup> Christopher Howse, 'The Innocents of Holman Hunt. Sacred Mysteries: this Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece is fascinating but weird,' *The Telegraph* (December 27, 2013), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10539464/The-Innocents-of-Holman-Hunt.html>.

of Hunt's version of events<sup>446</sup> but rather to identify the contextual demarcation between Hunt/Millais and Rossetti as put forward by Hunt himself, a categorization that contributed in part to the twentieth-century reception of this narrative of separation, if not perceptions of P.R.B. leadership. If Hunt privately analysed Rossetti's symbolism or noticed any trace of similarities between their pictures, he did not publicly admit to it. Writing in 1901, Percy Bate refers to a 'double sense' of the label 'Pre-Raphaelite,' suggesting that therein lies a double meaning.<sup>447</sup> Bates was referring to the original Brotherhood and the stylistic successors of Rossetti's 'second phase' such as Burne-Jones, but this double sense of the word can also be thought of in terms of mirroring and reflection, a persistent *mise-en-abyme* or intermirrornality between the later artists of Rossetti's circle, Rossetti, and Hunt.

Upon studying the mirrors running through the works of both artists, however, one can trace a series of reflections and mirroring, an intermirrornality that creates a dialogue not only between Hunt and Rossetti but also their later nineteenth-century successors such as Cowper, Waterhouse, and Orpen whose mirrors demonstrate the P.R.B. treatment, a point that will be explored in the following chapter. The source for all of these mirrors, the common denominator that appears at times like a repeating *doppelgänger* of itself through the second half of the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth, is Hunt's early reinterpretation of Van Eyck's mirror in *The Arnolfini Portrait*. While Hunt's interpretation of Van Eyck's mirror may have established a specific precedent, however, Rossetti's exploration and development of it exemplifies his own unique approach to Pre-Raphaelitism as a response to modern life, a treatment encapsulated by the modern *Lilith* and her contemporary, illogical mirror reflection that critically influences the meaning of the work.

### **Rossetti's Early, Medieval Mirrors**

Around 1850 when Hunt was working on his ideas for *The Lady of Shalott* and her magic mirror, Rossetti was also experimenting with the mirror in a sketch of a lady at her toilet as well as in verse form with the poem 'The Mirror.' *The Lady at her Toilet*, mentioned in the introductory chapter of this project, is a simple sketch of a woman standing in a three-quarter turn before a toilet glass, arms raised to attend to her hair, with her reflection just visible in the oval surface. Although the page from Rossetti's sketchbook contains a number of intriguing unrelated images such as a Napoleonic figure, a profile sketch of Dante, and a small, impish Mephistopheles character, they are much fainter sketches than the woman with the mirror which has been worked over until the pen bled through the paper (see figs.125-126), suggestive of

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<sup>446</sup> For a critical interrogation of Hunt's autobiography, see Carol Jacobi, *William Holman Hunt: Painter, Painting, Paint* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

<sup>447</sup> Percy Bate, *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters: Their Associates and Successors* (London: George Bell and Sons, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1901), 8 + 57.

Rossetti's evident persistent preoccupation with the idea. The angular style of the figure with long dark hair and belted medieval costume is consistent with the c.1850 date<sup>448</sup> as it is similar in style to other works from the time such as *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (1850, fig.127), *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (1849). Also notable is its similarity to *Love's Mirror, or A Parable of Love* (c.1850, fig.128), a picture that features a looking-glass of a comparable size.

The glass in *Love's Mirror* appears to be flat plate glass encased in a wooden frame and clearly out of context for the medieval costume of the work as it represents an object closer to a nineteenth-century toilet glass (see fig.129 for example). Likewise, the size of the glass in this particular sketch is significant for it again represents a modern mirror in what appears to be a medieval subject, suggesting that Rossetti, like Hunt, was experimenting with conflating past and present through what would become a shared motif between them of modern plate glass featuring in historic settings. Although of a similar shape to the mirror seen in 'Sight' from the fifteenth-century *The Lady and the Unicorn* tapestry cycle (refer to fig.88), the glass represented is larger and capable of reflecting more than just the figure's face (for comparison refer back to figs.15-16 a fourteenth-century ivory mirror case of ten centimetres in diameter, indicative of a typical size for the time available to the upper-classes). The reflection in the mirror is faintly sketched but we can still make out that the figure's head takes up less than half of the total glass surface and does not appear to be distorted as it would in a convex glass, indicating a nineteenth-century toilet mirror rather than one of an appropriately medieval style. Compared with Hunt's 1850 drawing *The Lady of Shalott*, even here in an unfinished sketch Rossetti's figure has a more sensuous character with her unbound hair and self-contemplative gaze, indicative of what would become a feature of his later oils. While this particular mirror of Rossetti's does not appear to reference either Van Eyck's Arnolfini mirror or Hunt's reworking of it, and the figure perhaps only subscribes to an early Pre-Raphaelite archetype (Siddall's *Lady of Shalott* of 1853, for example, has a similar appearance),<sup>449</sup> Rossetti's study of the lady at her mirror does however establish the existence of the mirror images dating from his early Pre-Raphaelite days and raises questions regarding to what extent Hunt and Rossetti might have influenced one another.

Concerning their early mirror designs and whether or not Rossetti would have been familiar specifically with Hunt's 1850 drawing, we can make a case for the strong likelihood of this. By 1848 Rossetti was bored after two months of still-life studies with Ford Madox Brown and had

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<sup>448</sup> Virginia Surtees supports the c.1850 date: see Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, vol. I (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), 220. Also see Jerome McGann (ed.), 'Page from a Sketch Book,' *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s671.raw.html>.

<sup>449</sup> By way of comparison, the critic reviewing the 1857 Moxon Tennyson illustrations noted that Hunt's *Lady of Shalott* was not drawn in a Pre-Raphaelite style, indicating a general recognition of the early angular, medieval style. See 'Review of *Poems*, by Alfred Tennyson, published by E. Moxon,' *Art Journal*, (July 31, 1857), 231.

begged Hunt to take him on as a pupil after seeing his *The Eve of St. Agnes* at the Royal Academy Exhibition in May. Several months later they were sharing a studio at No. 7, Cleveland Street and between the shared space, the (albeit short-lived) Cyclographic Society, a sketching club whose members would show and critique each other's works, and the monthly Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood meetings, we can assume that they had a fairly good knowledge of each other's designs and ideas, regardless of whether or not there is a textual record to prove this. Significantly, Hunt in his 1905 memoir relates a conversation he claims to have had with Rossetti regarding the *Lady of Shalott* illustration for the 1857 Moxon Tennyson: Hunt reports that Rossetti was angry that he had taken (stolen) 'The Lady of Shalott,' apparently Rossetti's favourite Tennyson subject and the one he had most wanted to illustrate. Rossetti threatened to not contribute to the Moxon publication at all if he could not illustrate 'The Lady of Shalott' and Hunt in response (conveniently remembered verbatim many years later) reminded Rossetti, 'You know I made a drawing from this poem of the "Breaking of the Web" at least four years ago. It was only put aside when the paper was so worn that it would not bear a single new correction.'<sup>450</sup>

As I brought up in the previous chapter in the discussion of Siddall's *Lady of Shalott*, it is highly likely that not only were the Brotherhood members familiar with each other's works ('You know I made a drawing ...') but the image Hunt was referring to in order to establish a prior claim on the subject was the 1850 drawing.<sup>451</sup> Although Hunt does not mention Coventry Patmore by name, we can infer he is referring to Patmore's wife as the lady who took it from his studio after begging him for it, 'expressing a violent liking for it,' on the condition that she would never publically show the work.<sup>452</sup> The drawing, which constitutes the evidence for Hunt's claim on the Lady's mirror and its representation, was nevertheless displayed in the Patmore's home, available for visitors to see. Rossetti had to content himself with illustrating the latter part of Tennyson's poem, the Lady arriving at Camelot in her funeral barge, while Hunt's design of the large circular background mirror was printed for public consumption, establishing a wider public consciousness of his Pre-Raphaelite mirror that would become an iconic emblem. The more intriguing question is how well known were Rossetti's mirrors or mirror ideas outside of the P.R.B. circle? This is a question I will address later within the context of Pre-Raphaelite influence on artists such as Frederick Sandys and Charles Shannon.

Half a century after the fact, Hunt emphasises his prior claim on Tennyson's mirror for the reading public while Rossetti's sole mirror image from the Moxon Tennyson is found in his illustration *Mariana in the South* (fig.130), a subject Millais had exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851. Inspired by the character in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* whose lover abandons

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<sup>450</sup>Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 100-101.

<sup>451</sup>Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. II, 29.

<sup>452</sup>Bronkhurst, 101.



her after the loss of her dowry, Tennyson's poem centres on Mariana's isolation, depression, and pining for Angelo in spite of his betrayal. Millais chose to illustrate the refrain from the original 1830 text:

She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'<sup>453</sup>

Millais depicts Mariana in a moment of reprieve from her embroidery work, arching her back in a physical expression of exhaustion (fig.131). Rossetti's illustration, however, is taken from the 1832 version of the text, 'Mariana in the South,' which describes Mariana praying to the Virgin at a shrine. Blending earthly and spiritual realities, there is a merging (or confusion) of reflections in the text as Mariana sees her face reflected in a mirror while she prays:

Before Our Lady murmur'd she:  
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace  
To help me of my weary load.'  
And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
The clear perfection of her face.  
'Is this the form,' she made her moan  
'That won his praises night and morn?'<sup>454</sup>

As she prays for strength, Mariana sees both the reflection of her face in the glass as well as the image of the Virgin. The setting is ambiguous: does the mirror feature alongside her shrine to the Virgin or does Tennyson allude to an outdoor shrine beside a still lake or pond (the 'liquid mirror')? Whether the reflective surface is a glass mirror beside her shrine or the still waters that surround her decaying residence, the reflection of her face pulls her attention from her prayers and reinforces her solitary abandonment as well as the effects of the passage of time on her beauty.

Rossetti emphasises the claustrophobia of her isolation and oppressive despair by cramming the figure at the edge of the picture plane as she kneels to kiss the feet of a crucifix. Changing Tennyson's description, Rossetti depicts Mariana praying not to the Virgin but to the crucified

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<sup>453</sup> Tennyson, 'Mariana' (1830), the refrain repeats at the end of each stanza, 1-6, with the final refrain of stanza 8 reading, 'Oh God, that I were dead!'

<sup>454</sup> Tennyson, 'Mariana in the South' (1832), stanza III, lines 4-10.

Christ, the definitive figure of a punished, suffering innocent; Mariana's head and clasped hands merge together with Christ's feet, uniting the two in image of spiritual anguish. The Virgin in Rossetti's illustration is missing but we can interpret Mariana as standing in for her as the mirror frame directs our eye to the water cistern and basin in the background, a reference to Dürer's *Life of the Virgin* woodcut series (figs.132-135), a Northern Renaissance reference that elevates her suffering to a level of Biblical intensity.<sup>455</sup> Traditional images of the crucifixion usually portray both Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Christ at the foot of the cross, and in this instance perhaps Rossetti captures something of the polarizing representation of women in the western art-historical tradition as the loose hair and mirror, iconography of vanity and loose morals, are traditional emblems of Mary Magdalene.

In light of what we know (according to Hunt, at least) of Rossetti's desire to illustrate the mirror sequence from 'The Lady of Shalott,' it is significant that he chose the mirror lines from 'Mariana' as a substitute for the other Tennyson mirror that 'crack'd from side to side'.<sup>456</sup> Curiously, though, he has chosen to represent the inverse of Tennyson's lines 'And on the liquid mirror glow'd / The clear perfection of her face,' for instead of depicting Mariana meditating on her reflection, he uses the mirror to reflect her long loose hair from behind. The mirror's reflection is turned at an angle to face the viewer's space, leaving us to peer into it as we try to make out the corner of the room that has been cut off and establish if/how our space merges with Mariana's. The mirror demands our attention,

whereby it implicates that gaze as an integral event [. . .] This is a context within which the beholder must establish a secure footing and thereby stake a claim to his own embodiment as occupier of a spatial continuum.<sup>457</sup>

In the above quotation, Gregory Galligan suggests that the claim of the mirror on our gaze inherently implicates us in the pictorial space, but the three-quarter angle of Mariana's mirror as well as its upward tilting glass displaces our attempts to establish a definitive spatial relationship within the work. Not only does the perspective create an unsteady sensation by forcing us to look upwards at Mariana, downwards to the mirror and straight across through the background, the modern toilet mirror in a simple wooden frame with hinges is in a baffling position on the floor rather than on the top of a bureau as would be expected (seen in *Lady Lilith*). The mirror's placement structurally serves the composition to lead the viewer's eye from the cramped

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<sup>455</sup> See J. Christian, 'Early German Sources for Pre-Raphaelite Designs,' *Art Quarterly*, 36: 1-2 (1973), 56-83; 58-59. 'Rossetti borrowed a complete section of the woodcut's background for that of his illustration to *Mariana in the South* [. . .] [it] is lifted almost intact, the main difference being that the bannisters of Dürer's staircase are removed' (58).

<sup>456</sup> Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott' (1842), Part III, stanza 5, line 7.

<sup>457</sup> Gregory Galligan, 'The Self Pictured: Manet, the Mirror, and the Occupation of Realist Painting,' *The Art Bulletin*, 80: 1 (March, 1998), 138-171; 149.

foreground along the expanse of floor tiles to the background details of Dürer's water cistern, the steps, and Mariana's spinning wheel, a domestic detail that can be read as a characterisation of her as an enclosed, isolated female artist like 'The Lady of Shalott' and Millais's earlier representation of the same subject.

The spatial dynamics enhance the strangeness of the mirror's position for it crowds together Mariana with the mirror and the viewer, and on a narrative level the mirror's position remains awkward. Like the mirrors seen in Rossetti's earlier sketch and also the drawing *Love's Mirror*, it is too small to be a cheval mirror and, in any case, the glass is too large for the medieval context. The cheval glass, a mirror that tilts on hinges and belongs on the floor due to its full-length size, appeared in the late eighteenth century and was first made in Britain by the British Plate Glass Manufacturers who were attempting to compete with French imports at the time.<sup>458</sup> A strange place for such a mirror then, and one is left to imagine Mariana physically carrying the object from her toilet table (not pictured) to the corner under the crucifix where she sits on the floor and looks in despair between it and old love letters from Angelo. No Lady Lilith languidly admiring herself, Mariana instead to be rejects her virtual self as Angelo has rejected her physically; this Mariana/Magdalene/Virgin has turned away from the mirror and towards the crucifix instead in a spiritual positioning that recalls Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* of several years earlier.

We can read Rossetti's mirrors as responding to (and challenging) Hunt, but irrespective of Hunt's first interpretation of the Arnolfini mirror in 1850, Rossetti's earliest known use of the mirror actually dates to a work of poetry around 1841 and displays his interest in its role as a magical object. Predating his sketch of the *Lady at her Toilet*, although demonstrating the same medieval interest, Rossetti's first magic mirror is found in a ballad written when he was around age fourteen or fifteen.<sup>459</sup> 'Sir Hugh the Heron, a Legendary Tale in Four Parts' (1841, 1843) relates the tale of a knight who leaves his lover in the care of his cousin when he departs for the crusades. While away, Sir Hugh learns through the reflection in a magic mirror that his cousin has betrayed his trust and is taking advantage of the helpless lady; racing back, he kills the faithless guardian and marries his betrothed. The poem was printed privately by Rossetti's grandfather, Gaetano Polidori, and William Michael relates that years later when Rossetti learned a friend had come across the poem in the British Museum, he recalled it as 'a ridiculous first attempt of mine in verse' and 'absurd trash,' embarrassed at the thought that anyone should take it as a serious work.<sup>460</sup>

Indeed, the medieval setting, romance, and the wizard with the 'mirror vast . . . / Of the brightest crystal sheen' into which the knight looks and where the visions appear 'On that glassy

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<sup>458</sup> Benjamin Goldberg, *The Mirror and Man* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), 173.

<sup>459</sup> W.M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters with a Memoir*, vol. I, 84.

<sup>460</sup> W.M. Rossetti, 85.

surface clear; / Dubious in the varying light, / Figures indistinct appear' indicate that from a young age Rossetti was thinking of the mirror's use as a supernatural object whose depths could reveal the unseen,<sup>461</sup> a characteristic of his mirrors that continues to appear over the course of his life. For instance, the magic mirror and its visions are a significant, supernatural plot point years later in his gothic ballad 'Rose Mary' (1871, 1881) although in this variation it is a 'beryl-stone' or crystal ball instead of a mirror, a more apropos device for a medieval narrative. Henry Treffry Dunn would later remark on Rossetti's interest in spiritualism and clairvoyance, 'the interest displayed by Rossetti towards everything bearing on the occult gave an insight to his nature [. . .] they show how largely both his poetry and his painting were influenced by the bent of his mind in that direction, and his yearning for the unseen.'<sup>462</sup>

Also dating from around 1850<sup>463</sup> is the aforementioned pen and ink drawing *Love's Mirror, or a Parable of Love* in which a young man (modelled by the Pre-Raphaelite Thomas Woolner) assists a young lady in painting her self-portrait with the aid of a mirror. The subject remains ambiguous but can be read as encompassing the mirror's multiple meanings as an artist's utilitarian device for self-portraiture, creating a greater sense of depth in the picture with the reflection of the viewer's space, and an underlying implication of the magic mirror in which the two lovers are united in 'love's mirror.' It is likely an early drawing of Siddall<sup>464</sup> who would become Rossetti's lover, pupil and future wife, denoting a personal significance to Rossetti in the 'parable.' The setting is medieval, like the early sketch of the lady at her toilet and 'Sir Hugh and the Heron,' although as mentioned earlier in this chapter the size, flatness and clarity of the mirror are of a distinctly later period, a significant characteristic of both Hunt and Rossetti's mirrors from the outset of the P.R.B.

Martin Danahay suggests that in Rossetti's oeuvre, 'All three media [women, paintings, and texts] are represented in Rossetti's poetry and paintings as reflecting masculine desire back upon itself'<sup>465</sup> and in light of this, *The Parable of Love*, or *Love's Mirror* can also be read as an illustration of this reflection of masculine/Rossetti's desire. The glass surface mediates a series of gazes – that of the viewer, Rossetti's own, the young man looking at his pupil, and her

<sup>461</sup> D.G. Rossetti, 'Sir Hugh and the Heron' (1841, 1843), Part III, Stanza I, verses 7-12.

<sup>462</sup> Henry Treffry Dunn and Gale Pedrick (ed.), *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle (Chenye Walk Life)* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1904), 62.

<sup>463</sup> Esther Wood, *Dante Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1893), 105. Stephen Wildman dates *Love's Mirror* between 1849-50; see Wildman, *Visions of Love and Life: Pre-Raphaelite Art from the Birmingham Collection, England*, exh cat., (Alexandria, Virginia: Art Services International, 1995), 102. The angular medieval style and subject is in keeping with works from this period and both Wildman and McGann suggest the lady is one of the first portraits of Siddall. See McGann (ed.), *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Research Archive*, <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s668.raw.html>.

<sup>464</sup> See Wildman, *Visions of Love and Life*, 102. William Michael notes that his brother met Siddall in late 1849 or early 1850, and shortly thereafter began modelling for the P.R.B. as well as studying under Rossetti. W.M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti. His Family Letters with a Memoir*, vol. I, 173.

<sup>465</sup> Martin A. Danahay, 'Mirrors of Masculine Desire: Narcissus and Pygmalion in Victorian Representation,' *Victorian Poetry*, 32: 1 (Spring, 1994), 35-54; 42.

seeming lack of awareness of multiple pairs of eyes upon her as she looks only at her own image on the canvas. Perhaps a picture of frustrated longing that has yet to be requited except through the mirror that reflects the two faces together, Danahay suggests that the young man is ‘seeing himself in the mirror of the woman’s face.’<sup>466</sup> Which then is the mirror, and which is the true reflection?

This displacement of desire and anxiety over literal self-reflection relates to the lines in Rossetti’s poem ‘The Mirror,’ ‘forms that crowd unknown / within a distant mirror’s shade,’ and suggests the potential for the mirror world to behave independently as a separate entity, a thematic structure Rossetti would return to in his pictures (*Lady Lilith*, for example) and poetry. J. Hillis Miller identifies the unsettling experience of the narrator of ‘The Mirror’ when he realises that a woman’s rejection of him has reduced him to invisibility in the mirror (the reflections are of other people) as ‘the missing image is a trope for the female counterpart who would complete him. Her absence of indifference, her failure to match feelings with his feeling, is in turn a figure for something missing in himself.’<sup>467</sup> Rossetti’s later dramatic monologue ‘The Portrait’ (1869), reworked from his 1847 poem ‘On Mary’s Portrait Which I Painted Six Years Ago,’ illustrates this concept with the lines ‘It seems a thing to wonder on / As though mine image in the glass / Should tarry when myself am gone’.<sup>468</sup> In ‘The Portrait’ the narrator gazes at a painting of his dead lover and wonders at the eeriness of her virtual likeness existing after her physical body has been buried, likening it to the scenario of his reflection in a mirror carrying on independently without him.

Rossetti’s concept of the displacement of body and reflection in a mirror world can be read as an inverse of Jacques Lacan’s ‘mirror stage;’<sup>469</sup> although Rossetti’s images predate Lacan’s twentieth-century psychoanalytical theory, setting up a contrast or dialectic between the two can be useful for considering the sense of displacement in Rossetti’s mirrors. As discussed in the introductory chapter, Lacan’s theory of the ‘mirror stage’ is the moment of development in which a child recognises itself in the mirror and for the first time makes the connection between their physical body and reflected image, a cognitive process that resolves a sense of

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<sup>466</sup> Martin A. Danahay, ‘Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s Virtual Bodies,’ *Victorian Poetry*, 36: 4 (Winter, 1998), 379-398; 386.

<sup>467</sup> Miller, ‘The Mirror’s Secret: Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s Double Work of Art,’ 338.

<sup>468</sup> D.G. Rossetti, ‘The Portrait’ (1869), stanza I, verses 1-4. The lines ‘As though mine image in the glass / Should tarry when I myself am gone’ remain the same between the original 1847 conception and the 1869 rewrite. See also Jerome McGann (ed.), *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Research Archive*: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/50-1869.raw.html>.

<sup>469</sup> See Miller, ‘The Mirror’s Secret: Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s Double Work of Art,’ 338-339. Miller touches upon this idea of the mirror stage in relation to the missing reflection in ‘The Mirror’: ‘It is as if for Rossetti, ‘the mirror stage’ were not the discovery of one’s self (the *Ideal-Ich*) in the mirror but the discovery of a vacancy there, an empty glass.’

fragmentation.<sup>470</sup> Rossetti's early mirrors in his texts, however, create an image of reflections that are more vacant, confused, or autonomous rather than a location of coherence and identity.

Comparatively, Hunt's early mirrors, while infused with concepts of magic or spirituality, maintain a direct correlation with the modern world of the viewer while Rossetti develops and problematizes this. We might think of Rossetti's reflections as what Carla Gottlieb terms 'the bewitched reflection' in her exploration of mirror images that do not reflect 'reality' but rather behave to 'proclaim the reflection's paranormality' as a 'reflection untrue to nature signifies or symbolises.'<sup>471</sup> Gottlieb discusses the mirror's innate potential for supernatural reflection and points out, 'In ancient and medieval languages the word for mirror also means "container for shadow": shadow and mirror are identified.'<sup>472</sup> This no doubt correlates to the murky reflection of mirrors prior to the Venetian *crystallo* glass in the sixteenth century, a literal experience rather than a metaphorical one of 'seeing through a glass darkly,' an impression rendered through Rossetti's sense of reflections.

Ambiguous gazes and modern glass that appears in medieval settings characterise Rossetti's mirrors in the early 1850s, indicative of his early conceptual development of the object. As seen in the watercolours *The Return of Tibullus to Delia* (1851, fig.136) and *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice: Dante Drawing the Angel* (1853, fig.137), Rossetti's early mirrors give an impression of moving around the composition (unlike Hunt's unwavering arrangement of placing the mirror in the central background) and also contain different levels of reflective clarity as though he was experimenting with different possible variations. The two above mirror representations, set in ancient Rome and medieval Florence, respectively, mark a departure from *Love's Mirror* for the significance of reflection is downplayed in both pictures that portray longing for an absent lover. Themes of longing and memory, absent love and unsatisfied desire seen in the images of Delia, who has not realized yet that the poet Tibullus has returned from war, and Dante who meditates on the deceased Beatrice while he draws an angel in her memory are found throughout Rossetti's collection of mirror images but in both of these pictures the mirror's function in either the narrative or the composition structure is unclear.

The watercolour of *The Return of Tibullus to Delia* is the first of several re-workings of the subject (I will address the others later) and depicts the moment the Roman poet returns from war to be reunited with his love, Delia. He has asked her to wait for him during his absence and, as he bursts through the door of her bedchamber, he catches her unaware in a trance-like state of limbo. She has been spinning and listening to music but is overcome with boredom and

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<sup>470</sup> See Jacques Lacan and Bruce Fink (transl.), 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience' (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 75-81.

<sup>471</sup> Carla Gottlieb, 'The Bewitched Reflection,' *Source: Notes on the History of Art*, 4: 2/3 (Winter/Spring 1985), 59-67; 59.

<sup>472</sup> Gottlieb, 59.

weariness and, pausing from her domestic work, is absent-mindedly chewing on a piece of hair.<sup>473</sup> This version of Tibullus and Delia is more of a sketch and appears to be unfinished when compared with the later 1867 and 1868 versions that have greater detail and a more polished finish (see fig.138 for example). The mirror in this picture essentially draws attention to itself due to its peculiar positioning and utterly mystifying function. The oval glass, whose shape and size echo the spinning wheel in the background, is supported in a frame that gives it the appearance of being an oversized hand mirror. The mirror is also slightly cut off because of its peculiar placement but it appears to be hanging on the end of Delia's bed, a thoroughly nonsensical position, and while there is a glimmer of light and dim green and white colours that repeat those on the walls and the bed, the reflection in the curved glass is vacant.

Unlike Hunt's mirrors from this time or Rossetti's own *Love's Mirror*, this particular glass is not an active component in the composition; none of the characters interact with it and the absence of reflection prevents the viewer from formulating a response. One has to question if Rossetti intended this to be a mirror but, taking into consideration the suggestion of light on glass and the later renditions of this subject that feature an object on the back wall that W.M. Rossetti definitively identifies as a mirror, it would appear that this is the case.<sup>474</sup> The strange shape, size and placement are perhaps more of a snapshot insight into Rossetti's mind as he worked through early ideas of mirror representation, demonstrating a deviation from Hunt's original mirror treatment.

If the mirror in *The Return of Tibullus to Delia* marked a one-off appearance, it would be reasonable to dismiss its awkward position and seeming lack of coherent function as a technical fault of the artist. However, the fact that it is one of a continuum of mirror images that alternately respond to one another via repetition in Rossetti's textual and pictorial works, one must give it further consideration. It is precisely this emphasised yet confusingly empty mirror that, in light of Rossetti's other mirror images, may be read as engaging the contemporary viewer by establishing a means of accessing the picture's inner standing-point. In his article 'The Self Pictured: Manet, the Mirror, and the Occupation of Realist Painting' (1998), Galligan argues for considering the mirror's implicated presence in realist painting, whether or not it is represented in the work, as a physical object. The painting functions as a stand-in for the missing mirror (or in this case the missing reflection in *The Return of Tibullus to Delia*, as this dissertation is strictly concerned with mirror that *are* represented and not those metaphorically alluded to):

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<sup>473</sup> W.M. Rossetti, *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Ellis and Scrutton, 1886), 505. This is a description of the 1867 version that differs in terms of pictorial details but the subject remains the same.

<sup>474</sup> W.M. Rossetti, 505.

A mirror can be conspicuously absent from a mimetic setting, or *undescribed*, in that it has not been depicted as mounted on a wall of this interior, it may be said to lie close to – indeed, it is conflated with – the gaze of the beholder before the picture. The painting, then, truly displaces the mirror by implying that the mimetic tableau does not unfold *before* the beholder, that is, at a distant remove from him, but, rather, behind him, or at least on a plane that is contiguous with the one he himself occupies.<sup>475</sup>

In spite of the absent reflection in a representation that differs from its predecessors *Love's Mirror* or the sketch of the medieval woman at her toilet, the mirror in *The Return of Tibullus to Delia* occupies a place as an inherent signifier of Hunt and Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelitism and can be read as a reference to the viewer's active sense of *looking* and our analysis of a personal position within the events depicted; perhaps it functions to play on what seems to be an innately human response: when confronted with a mirror, we will always look at it in anticipation of the reflection of ourselves.

Galligan examines what he terms a 'mirror mode of looking,'<sup>476</sup> a theory he applies to reading Edouard Manet's works as ultimately self-reflexive whether or not a mirror is represented, an interpretation I suggest illuminates Rossetti's reflections. Identifying this representation of active mirroring in western realist painting as having originated with Van Eyck,<sup>477</sup> Galligan considers the mirror as suggestive of the paradoxical nature of reflection in art – posing as a reflection while not actually existing in the 'real' world and at the same time implicating both the artist's and viewer's invisible presence as a 'veiled occupant.'<sup>478</sup> Galligan explains that this dislocation of the viewer in front of mimetic painting has to do with the same self-division that can occur before an actual mirror (for example, the self-division seen in Rossetti's photograph of Fanny, 1863 fig.139, and Whistler's *The Little White Girl* of 1864-65, two images I shall return to):

One prospect of the beholder is clearly before the plane of the canvas; the other, however, is implicitly within it, so that the beholder must delineate his position along the scape of the painting from which he experiences such an intimate relationship with the object of his gaze.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> Galligan, 148.

<sup>476</sup> Galligan, 146.

<sup>477</sup> Galligan, 146.

<sup>478</sup> Galligan, 150.

<sup>479</sup> Galligan, 150.



The viewer of Rossetti's *The Return of Tibullus to Delia, Mariana* or *Lady Lilith* cannot help but look in the mirror; whether or not the reflection is coherent with a reality outside of the work itself is another matter. The act of looking at the mirror alone generates a positioning of ourselves within the work, collapsing the 'real' and the 'reflection' and ultimately refers back to Rossetti's continual exploration of the mirror.

*The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* (1853),<sup>480</sup> however, develops the mirror and depicts a more clearly delineated use in terms of placement in the back corner rather than awkwardly floating in the foreground but it still remains void of reflection. The watercolour depicts a scene from Dante's *Vita Nuova*, what Stephens described as a 'mine of mystical, introspective and suggestive matter, to which at this time the painter [Rossetti] [. . .] devoted his attention with great energy'.<sup>481</sup> Set in thirteenth-century Florence, glimpsed in the bright sunlight through the window, Dante's spiritual and artistic reverie is interrupted by unexpected visitors and he is just putting down his drawing to greet them. Like *Tibullus and Delia*, the mirror appears in a scene of longing but this image is tinged with a supernatural element as W.M. Rossetti notes that in the *Vita Nuova*, Dante tells his visitors that the spirit of Beatrice had been with him.<sup>482</sup> The moment depicted, then, is the sudden contrast between supernatural visitation with earthly bodies and physical reality, a diametric emphasised by the sunlit garden juxtaposed with the dark room, an interior/exterior construct seen in Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* of the same year.<sup>483</sup> The interplay between the physical and the spiritual, however, is not developed here to the extent seen in Rossetti's works of the 1860s and 1870s (in particular *La Bella Mano* of 1875), and the viewer is left with an unresolved mirror.

The convex mirror in *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* is positioned in the back corner as though slowly moving through Rossetti's compositional experiments towards the central background position seen in Hunt's work, but has paused to stop beside a painting of the Virgin and Child (see detail, fig.140), an icon partially concealed by a curtain but distinguishable by their golden haloes (this arrangement of a Madonna and Child with an encroaching curtain can be seen repeated in Claxton's *The Choice of Paris* three years after Rossetti exhibited his watercolour at Fitzroy Square in 1857). Rossetti's placement of the convex mirror alongside the Virgin and Child may be read as early experiment in bringing together structures of mirror symbolism found in both Dante's *Divine Comedy* (c.1307-21) and in Northern Renaissance paintings: an alignment of Italian and early Netherlandish motifs that would ultimately become more overt in his pictures over time. Dante's use of mirrors in the *Divine Comedy* utilises their

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<sup>480</sup> This is a watercolour of an earlier drawing of the same subject dated 1849; the original composition does not include the convex mirror.

<sup>481</sup> F.G. Stephens, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 34.

<sup>482</sup> W.M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer*, 18.

<sup>483</sup> Stephens interprets the sunlit garden beyond the dark interior as symbolic of 'the perfect peace of Paradise beyond the grave,' a reading that is also applicable to Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* and *The Lady of Shalott*. See F.G. Stephens, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 35.

dual nature as he differentiates between mirrors that replicate the natural world and the spiritual mirror that supernaturally reflects God. Dante's spiritually symbolic mirrors that alternately relate to Beatrice, the mind or heart of God, and divine knowledge are perhaps encapsulated in an oblique reference with Rossetti's mirror in *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* positioned alongside an image of the Virgin and Child with its underlying associations with death, memory, angelic beings, the Virgin, and Beatrice herself.<sup>484</sup>

While the absence of reflection in the work halts consideration of further spiritual depths beneath the glass surface, it nevertheless recalls Memling's *Diptych of Maarten Nieuwenhove* which Rossetti would have seen in Bruges in 1849 with Hunt, and alludes to a tenuous connection with the Dutch and Flemish mirror tradition. Convex mirror associations aside, Rossetti's use of Dürer's brass cistern and basin just outside the doorway suggests that he was thinking about earlier Northern traditions. As previously examined in Rossetti's illustration for the Moxon Tennyson, *Mariana* (1865-57), the cistern and basin were drawn from Dürer's *Life of the Virgin* woodcut series and, like the convex mirror, feature as a motif in later works such as *Lucrezia Borgia* (1860-61), *Washing Hands* (1865) and *La Bella Mano* (1875), contributing to another strain of Northern Renaissance iconographic continuity.

Not only is the subject matter of *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* taken from Dante's *Vita Nuova*, a work Rossetti began translating in 1848 (he completed a translation of the *Vita Nuova* in an anthology of *Early Italian Poets* in 1861) and one which was to be a long-lasting source of inspiration for his work, but the positioning of the mirror with its flash of light by the icon of the Virgin and Child can also be read as an allusion to the concept of the Madonna as the *speculum sine macula*, the spotless mirror. Taken from the apocryphal *Book of Wisdom*, verses 26 and 29 of chapter 7 in particular describe divine wisdom:

It is more beautiful than the sun, and above the order of the stars. Being compared with the light, she is found before it. She is the brightness of eternal light, and the flawless mirror of God's majesty.<sup>485</sup>

During the sixteenth century, the 'flawless mirror' became embedded in Marian iconography as symbolic of Mary's purity,<sup>486</sup> but before this in the fifteenth century Van Eyck makes this connection with inscriptions on the frames of the *Dresden Triptych* (1437) and the *Madonna and*

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<sup>484</sup> See Anna Torti, *The Glass of Form: Mirroring Structures from Chaucer to Skelton* (New York: Brewer, 1991), 27. For an extensive interrogation of Dante's use of mirrors in *Paradiso* see Tamara Pollack's doctoral thesis, 'Light and Mirror in Dante's "Paradiso": Faith and Contemplation in the Lunar Heaven and the Primo Mobile,' DPhil, Department of French and Italian, Indiana University, May 2008 (copyright 2008 by Tamara Pollack).

<sup>485</sup> *Book of Wisdom*, Chapter 7, verses 29, 26.

<sup>486</sup> Edwin Hall, *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck's Double Portrait* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1997), 119.

*Child with Canon Joris van der Paele with Saints Donation and George* (1434-36).<sup>487</sup> Quoting the verses from the *Book of Wisdom*, inscribed alongside images of the Madonna and Child, Van Eyck creates a correlation between the two, an association of mirrors and reflections with the Madonna's spiritual purity and the idea of flawless glass.<sup>488</sup>

The pictorial equivalent of Dante's symbolic literary mirrors can be found in early Netherlandish examples that position the mirror as a mediator between the physical and the spiritual, highlighting an underlying spirituality of the mirror as we have seen in the works of artists such as Memling, Massys, and Campin as well as Van Eyck. Hans Memling, for example, juxtaposes a convex glass with an image of the Virgin and Child in both the *Diptych of Maarten Nieuwenhove* and his *Virgin and Child* of 1485-90.<sup>489</sup> Both mirrors are positioned to interact with the figures in the work but lack the clarity and precision of Van Eyck's earlier representation, maintaining a certain amount of disconnection from the viewer by means of more indistinct reflections. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the shadowy mirror in *Maarten Nieuwenhove* reflects just enough for the viewer to understand that it unites earthly with temporal space, but the slightly later mirror in the *Virgin and Child* presents a more shadowy and distorted reflection: either the heads of the Virgin and the Christ Child have been reversed in the mirror or there are two other unseen figures in the space, an addition that complicates our reading of the work.<sup>490</sup>

By the time he was working on *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice*, Rossetti's familiarity with Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* as well as Memling's *Maarten Nieuwenhove* diptych possibly informs his experiment with the convex mirror in an early exploration of what would become a motif in his work, merging together historical mirror iconography, the traditions of Van Eyck, Memling, Dante and, later in the 1860s, Titian, with modern life. The size of the convex glass in Dante's medieval settings was noticed by F.G. Stephens, who observed 'Among the objects within the room are an hour-glass with its sand more than half run down, a flowering lily stem, a convex mirror (the existence of which at this time is challengeable)'.<sup>491</sup> Stephens rightly observes that the size of the convex glass is out of place for the time – it was a large,

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<sup>487</sup> Craig Harbison notes these inscriptions in *Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1991), 79.

<sup>488</sup> Rossetti would have seen the *Van der Paele* triptych in Bruges at the Royal Academy (now the Groeninge Museum). He not seen Memling prior to his 1849 visit to Bruges and the trip inspired Rossetti's admiration for Memling in addition to exposing him to more works by Van Eyck.

<sup>489</sup> Rossetti was not necessarily familiar with this particular Memling as it was in a Spanish collection during the nineteenth century and not exhibited until 1892 but I use it here as an example to illustrate the Northern Renaissance mirror associations. See Dirk de Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works*, Ted Alkins (transl.), (Antwerp and Ghent: Fonds Mercator Paribas & Ludion Press, 1994), 220.

<sup>490</sup> The latter solution to the incongruent reflection may be the most plausible for, like the *Maarten Nieuwenhove*, this *Virgin and Child* is part of a diptych; the image of the patron is too badly damaged to be displayed with it but it would not be remiss to make an assumption that, like the *Nieuwenhove* diptych, the mirrored space reveals the missing patron. See Julius Held, 'A Diptych by Memling,' *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 68: 397 (April, 1936), 176-177+179, 179.

<sup>491</sup> F.G. Stephens, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 35.

anachronistic, decorative object in Dante's modest room. Like Hunt, Rossetti has modernised and spiritualised a medieval object.

### **Venus Surrounded by Mirrors: Rossetti's Double Works**

A consideration of Rossetti's early mirror-related poems forms a critical supplement to our understanding of his early mirror representations as separate from (or regardless of) any possible influence from Hunt. That Rossetti created intentional double works of art over the course of his career, marrying text and image in works such as *The Blessed Damozel* (1875-78; 'The Blessed Damozel,' 1846-47, 1850-1871), *Bocca Baciata* (1859; 'Bocca Baciata, or The Song of the Bower,' 1860), and *Lady Lilith* as discussed (1868; 'Body's Beauty,' 1864-69), establishes a context of association for thinking about how Rossetti used mirrors in his poetry in comparison with his representations of them in pictorial form.

This method of text/image mirroring one another to create multiple views of one concept is visually expressed in Rossetti's sketch *Venus Surrounded by Mirrors Reflecting her in Different Views* (c.1863, fig.149), an idea for an unexecuted painting of Venus at her toilet.<sup>492</sup> In a note off to the right-hand side of the sketch, Rossetti mentions looking up mirrors in 'Smith,' indicating historical research for the idea. Rossetti owned the 1842 edition of William Smith's *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*,<sup>493</sup> a scholarly text that included a lengthy reference on mirrors under the heading '*speculum*,' the original Latin word for mirror. We can find the source for Rossetti's concept under the *speculum* entry:

Claudian's description of the chamber of Venus, which was covered over with mirrors, so that whichever way her eyes turned she could see her own image. We frequently find the mirror mentioned in connection with Venus but Minerva was supposed to make no use of it<sup>494</sup>.

The mirror as an attribute of the goddess of love (notably never the goddess of wisdom), multiplies to create a strange, and what must surely be disorienting, house of mirrors effect in this description. Elaborating upon Titian's two-mirror construct in his *Woman with a Mirror* that

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<sup>492</sup> William E. Fredeman, *A Rossetti Cabinet: A Portfolio of Drawings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (1991), 4. See the digital reproduction on Jerome McGann (ed.), *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Research Archive*, <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/f23.rap.html>.

<sup>493</sup> See Fredeman, 'A Rossetti Cabinet: A Portfolio of Drawings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti,' *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic Studies Special Issue*, 2: 2 (1991), 4. Also see *Dante G. Rossetti, Deceased [ . . . ] Catalogue of the Household and Decorative Furniture [ . . . ] which will be Sold by Auction by Messrs T.G. Wharton, Martin & CO., Upon the Premises 16, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, on Wednesday, July 5, 1882, and Two Following Days*, (London: T.G. Wharton, Martin & Co., 1882), 26. Lot Number 530: 'Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, woodcuts, 1842.'

<sup>494</sup> William Smith (ed.), *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* 2nd edition (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1859), 1053.

Rossetti would have seen at the Louvre in 1849 and again in 1860, Venus is depicted with both hands reaching up to twist and pin her hair in front of a toilet glass that, although it is a rudimentary sketch composed of just a few lines, bears resemblance to the mirror in his early 1850 sketch of the woman at her toilet. The additional mirrors ‘reflecting her in different views’ have not been sketched in but one has to assume the viewer’s space would have been reflected in at least one of them, thereby responding to and furthering an on-going series of reflections between Hunt and Rossetti that reinforce the viewer’s role as *voyeur*.

This particular sketch in which we have both text and image together on the page can be read, in one sense, as Rossetti working through a response to the *paragone*, the Renaissance rivalry between painting and sculpture for supremacy of representation; ultimately, though, when considered in the context of his oeuvre of mirrors, Rossetti’s multiple reflections are self-reflexive, seen and explored ‘through a glass darkly,’ an implication of problematic self-reflection. Although Venus at her toilet is a traditional subject for western painting, Rossetti’s sketch already demonstrates a different approach from predecessors such as Titian, Bellini, and Rubens for Rossetti’s Venus does not actually look at herself in the glass. With her gaze turned upwards, even if the other mirrors had been sketched in around her and, barring a mirrored ceiling, she seems more aware of being looked at than in looking at herself – the mirrors multiplying her from different angles would be placed there for the benefit of the viewer, not her. As she stretches out her luxurious hair that, had it been painted, would no doubt resemble that of *Lady Lilith*, her relationship with the mirror is more ambiguous and indeterminate, representing a development in indirect reflections and gazes that stem from his first early mirror sketch of the medieval woman before her toilet glass.

McGann gives a reading of this sketch as a synthesis of Rossetti’s mirroring through text and image,

Each part of the double work is a unique view of an ideal whose existence is posited through the different incarnate forms. The double work ensemble is an index, a momentary monument of the process by which the visionary imagination sustains and develops itself [ . . . ] Rossetti sees it [this process] through a glass darkly.<sup>495</sup>

Rossetti’s double works, as seen in *Lady Lilith*/ ‘Body’s Beauty,’ illustrate his imaginative working process through which he strives to represent an Ideal through multiple reflections, just as the mythical goddess might look surrounded by mirrors. The same year he sketched his idea for *Venus Surrounded by Mirrors*, 1863, Rossetti collaborated with photographer William

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<sup>495</sup> Jerome McGann in Prettejohn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* 98.

Downey to produce a photograph of Fanny Cornforth before a cheval glass, (mentioned previously, refer back to fig.132). Rossetti posed Fanny outside in his garden at Cheyne Walk and we can make out the trees hazily reflected in the mirror while she, like the Venus in his sketch, turns her gaze away from the glass in a position that creates a sensation of a doubling but also of multiplying fractured parts instead of a unified whole. Through this photographic composition Rossetti is perhaps experimenting with the idea of division rather than an interrelation between the real and the reflected self. One year later Rossetti's friend Whistler painted *Symphony in White No.2: The Little White Girl* as a response to Rossetti's photograph of Fanny.<sup>496</sup>

Indicative of the artistic dialogue among members of Rossetti's circle of friends and acquaintances, Whistler's *Little White Girl* can be read as an exploration of Rossetti's ambiguity of reflection and, when viewed within the context of both Hunt and Rossetti's mirrors, further problematizes the viewer-mirror-reflection relationship. 'The influence of that strange man, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, is sufficiently plain in this picture [. . .] he said all that Rossetti had to say in "Before the Mirror" [sic]' the art critic for *The Speaker* commented in 1893.<sup>497</sup> *The Little White Girl*, exhibited with Swinburne's lines 'Before the Mirror,' emphasises the aesthetic nature of *Bocca Baciata* (fig.142) with the absence of narrative and the averted gaze, and the displacement evident in the mirror's reflection that heightens the female figure's ambiguity. Unlike the Pre-Raphaelite mirror that unites past and present, Whistler depicts a contemporary woman in a specific domestic space (his residence on Lindsey Row in Chelsea, see fig.143) with a rather unremarkable overmantel mirror that for all its ordinariness reveals a disconcerting reflection that is not a true likeness of the figure.

The woman and her reflection do not correspond for the reflection reveals a sadness in the face that is not apparent from the girl's profile view ('a ghost of a dead self').<sup>498</sup> Like Rossetti's photograph of Fanny, the real and the virtual do not interact with one another - their eyes are averted from each other while the two heads appear to be at slightly different angles. The dislocation between the woman and her reflection is given an eerie aspect as the reflected face appears to be disembodied, cut off by the sharp linear mirror frame and the diaphanous white muslin sleeve. Whistler depicts a modern image in terms of claustrophobic composition, brushwork, and subject but nevertheless alludes to a separate, independent mirror world with a disembodied reflection that stands slightly apart from the 'real' girl. In Whistler's picture, the familiar rectangular plate glass mirror over the fireplace suggests a world beyond the glass

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<sup>496</sup> J.B. Bullen confirms that *Symphony in White No.2: The Little White Girl* was, in fact, Whistler's response to Rossetti's photograph of Fanny and also puts forward another Titian source that Rossetti might have had in mind at the time, his *Venus with A Mirror* (c.1555). J.B. Bullen *Rossetti: Painter and Poet* (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2011), 155.

<sup>497</sup> G.M. 'The Whistler Album,' *The Speaker*, 8 (December 16, 1893), 667-668.

<sup>498</sup> G.M., 668.

surface, one that does not necessarily correspond as expected but instead illustrates Rossetti's concept of an inner standing-point.

Swinburne's lines composed for the painting render the painting a double work of art in the style of Rossetti with text and image approaching a concept from two complementary angles. Just as we see the figure's face from two different points of view, Swinburne's poem contributes to the series of reflections in the work (the repetition of whites, blues, pinks, linear angles and strong black lines) and emphasises the dominant, active role of the mirror. The three sections of the poem move progressively through the glass surface to a psychological interior space, highlighting an ambiguity between self-conscious observation and a dislocated virtual reflection, between surface and depth. In the first part of the poem Swinburne gives a metaphorical but physical description ('White rose in a red rose-garden'<sup>499</sup>) while drawing the reader into the picture/poem with the second section that reveals the girl's psychological state as she addresses her reflection: 'Art thou the ghost, my sister, / White sister there, / Am I the ghost, who knows?'<sup>500</sup> Swinburne ultimately characterises the mirror as the inner standing-point of the picture with its autonomous reflections that encompass past, present and future circumstances, as well as psychological and emotional states in its shadowy depths: 'Deep in the gleaming glass / She sees all past things pass / And all sweet life that was lie down and lie',<sup>501</sup> concluding:

Face fallen and white throat lifted,  
With sleepless eye  
She sees old loves that drifted,  
She knew not why,  
Old loves and faded fears  
Float down a stream that hears  
The flowing of all men's tears beneath the sky.<sup>502</sup>

The overmantel mirror is given supernatural properties and shows the White Girl 'the flowing of all men's tears' in its glass surface. William Wilson makes a comparison between Whistler/Swinburne's melancholy girl in the glass and *The Lady of Shalott*; in Wilson's reading, however, he differentiates between the two:

The White Girl does not move from her isolated position before the mirror to seek the reality behind the veil of shadows, for to do so is to deny the truth of

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<sup>499</sup> Swinburne, 'Before the Mirror' (1865), Part I, Stanza I, verse 1.

<sup>500</sup> Swinburne, Part II, Stanza II, lines 3-5.

<sup>501</sup> Swinburne, Part III, Stanza 1, verses 5-7.

<sup>502</sup> Swinburne, Part III, Stanza 3, verses 1-7.

her self-consciousness and her awareness that causality and objective meaning are inaccessible [. . .] The self-conscious perception of beauty is the only consolation offered Swinburne's *White Girl*; indeed, the shadowy world without affords none, since the possibilities of towered Camelot have been supplanted by the melancholic longings of Hades.<sup>503</sup>

Unlike Hunt's mirrors that convey narrative and spiritual awakening in Whistler's mirror follows Rossetian characteristics of isolation and displacement: Rossetti's aesthetic mirror deflects expected coherent narrative/reflection and instead works within the picture's own order of logic in contrast to Hunt's equally symbolic but more religious and narrative-driven reflections. Developing this reading of the mirror's incoherent and supernatural properties, Frances Dickey suggests that the painting seen on the back wall reflected in the *White Girl*'s mirror is Whistler's own *Brown and Silver: Old Battersea Bridge* (1859-63, fig.144) a work that he exhibited at the Royal Academy with *The Little White Girl* in 1865.<sup>504</sup> Although Miller identifies the reflected painting as *Nocturne in Blue and Silver*<sup>505</sup> and Richard Dorment and Margaret F. MacDonald assert that *Brown and Silver: Old Battersea Bridge* depicts a view of the bridge from upstairs at Lindsey Row where Whistler also painted *The Little White Girl*,<sup>506</sup> Dickey proposes that *Brown and Silver* was painted prior to Whistler's move to Lindsey Row and instead depicts the view from his window on Queen's Row in Chelsea. Dickey's reading thus implies that along with Swinburne's suggestion of the mirror revealing 'all men's tears' and past lovers in its depths, it also reflects a vision of Whistler's own past, a Lady of Shalott-like mystical reflection of a window that no longer exists.

Whistler and Swinburne's picture/poem work followed Rossetti's method of poetry responding to the visual image after he painted it, constituting a similar structure of mirroring. Rossetti's double works of art create a series of reflections on different levels through two mediums at once in what Miller calls a 'subversive mirroring' for regardless of whether the image or the text comes first in the pair of works, 'In each case [. . .] the secondary version in the other medium is always in one or another a travesty, a misinterpretation, a distorted image in the mirror

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<sup>503</sup> William Wilson, 'Behind the Veil, Forbidden: Truth, Beauty, and Swinburne's Aesthetic Strain,' *Victorian Poetry*, 22: 4 (Winter, 1984), 427- 437; 434-435.

<sup>504</sup> Frances Dickey, *The Modern Portrait Poem: From Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Ezra Pound* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2012) 48. Dickey dismisses J. Hillis Miller's suggestion the painting seen in the mirror represents *Nocturne in Blue and Silver* or *Harmony in Grey and Green* based on the dates of the works (1872 or later). See Dickey note 58 (223).

<sup>505</sup> J. Hillis Miller, 'Whistler/Swinburne: "Before the Mirror,"' David Latham (ed.), *Haunted Texts: Studies in Pre-Raphaelitism in Honour of William E. Fredeman* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 141.

<sup>506</sup> Richard Dorment and Margaret F. MacDonald. *James McNeill Whistler*, exh cat (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1994), 100.



of the other art.<sup>507</sup> Miller's reading of Rossetti's double works of art hinges on the notion of the uncanny and that Rossetti's mirrors always reflect a sense of loss. 'What is the secret that the distorting mirror always tells and keeps? Loss. All Rossetti's work is haunted by an experience of devastating loss.'<sup>508</sup> Miller argues that the notion of loss is always present, whether it is a past memory, occurring in the present or is anticipated as a future state,<sup>509</sup> and at the end of the tunnel of reflections is nothingness.<sup>510</sup> A concept explored in *The Little White Girl*, this sense of the displaced double is at the heart of Rossetti's mirror representations and what qualifies them, from the outset, as functioning quite differently from those of Hunt.

This sense of unease and dislocation in mirrors can be found as early as 1850 in Rossetti's poem 'The Mirror,' a work I briefly mentioned earlier, that sets up a precedent of a reflection that confuses and obscures rather than confirms and clarifies. Although concurrent with his sketch of the lady at her toilet, a fact that further establishes the case that Rossetti's fascination with the mirror dates from the same time as Hunt's drawing for *The Lady of Shalott* rather than following as an inspired afterthought, 'The Mirror' was not published until 1883 in an edition of *The Musical Review* where it was entitled 'A Symbol.' William Michael changed it to 'The Mirror' in the 1886 edition of *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, vol. I; that he considered the two titles interchangeable suggests the mirror's purpose in Rossetti's works, while the atmosphere of unease and displacement with the shadowy reflected images indicate that Rossetti's use of the mirror would metamorphose beyond Hunt's 1850 concept.

'The Mirror'

She knew it not: - most perfect pain  
 To learn: this too she new not. Strife  
 For me, calm hers, as from the first.  
 'Twas but another curdling draught of life, -  
 My silent patience mine again.

As who, of forms that crowd unknown  
 Within a distant mirror's shade,  
 Deems such as one himself, and makes

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<sup>507</sup> Miller, 'The Mirror's Secret: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Double Work of Art,' 336.

<sup>508</sup> Miller, 336.

<sup>509</sup> Miller, 337.

<sup>510</sup> Miller, 338. See also Catherine Maxwell, "'It Once Should Save as Well as Kill": D.G. Rossetti and the Feminine,' David Clifford and Laurence Roussillon (eds.), *Outsiders Looking In: The Rossettis Then and Now*, 229: 'The mirror of art in Rossetti has a double function. It confirms and consolidates the poet-artist's representation of himself through an idealized representation but it also hints at the loss and sacrifice involved in that transformation. The mirror of art is simultaneously a scene of gratification and a scene of loss.'

Some sign – but when the image shakes  
No whit, he finds his thought betray'd,  
And must seek elsewhere for his own.<sup>511</sup>

As previously discussed, Rossetti compares the sense of loss felt when his love is not reciprocated to the feeling of thinking he sees his reflection in a glass but realising it is of others, a 'crowd unknown' in the 'distant mirror's shade,' a sensation that leaves him feeling displaced between the self and the reflected image. Rather than a straightforward surface reflection that corresponds to the 'real' world, or one that works to suggest the reader's space as we might expect from a Hunt portrayal, Rossetti's mirror is interrelated with his own interiority and his desire for a woman who does not return his feelings. Hunt's early mirror also relates a narrative of loss, and ultimately death in his illustration of Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott,' but his mirror imagery runs in parallel with the 'real' world; the tale itself might be one of loss, but the mirror's reflection is accurate and acts as a crystal ball that reveals missing details of past, present and future.

That both Hunt and Rossetti were interested in the mirror and experimenting with ideas of representation at the time the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was becoming a name in the art world is a potent foreshadowing of the mirror as an integral Pre-Raphaelite motif, and one that unites the stylistic differences of Hunt and Rossetti. Rather than considering details of their contrasting ideologies or viewing their works as representative of two Pre-Raphaelitisms, labelled and categorized as separate entities that grew from the same source, perhaps we should instead approach the mirror as a significant point of orientation that endlessly references and reflects itself through these apparently incongruous styles and self-proclaimed differences. Hunt and Rossetti both employ a method of mirror representation that ties them together in the use of a specifically Pre-Raphaelite mirror in comparison to their contemporaries.

In *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, Prettejohn notes the difficulties that arise when trying to affix the Pre-Raphaelite label to works or stylistic affinities and suggests, rather, thinking about Pre-Raphaelitism as a way to 'interpret works, rather than merely classifying them [. . .] meaning can emerge from the conjunction of a concrete work of art and the rich body of ideas that have accumulated, since 1848, around the term'.<sup>512</sup> Rather than working from within a narrative of division between Hunt/Millais and Rossetti, we should consider approaching Rossetti's works from within, from his concept of the 'inner standing-point,' and in this respect, the mirror as the inner standing-point with its 'soul's sphere of infinite images'<sup>513</sup> engages the contemporary viewer.

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<sup>511</sup> See W.M. Rossetti, *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, vol. I, 272 and notes on 520. See also McGann (ed.), *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Research Archive*: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/5-1850.raw.html>.

<sup>512</sup> Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 89.

<sup>513</sup> D.G. Rossetti, 'The Soul's Sphere' (1873), stanza I, verse 8.

### *La Bella Mano* (1875)

She loves him; for her infinite soul is Love,  
And he her lodestar. Passion in her is  
A glass facing his fire, where the bright bliss  
Is mirrored, and the heat returned.

- D. G. Rossetti<sup>514</sup>

The publication of the above lines from Rossetti's sonnet 'True Woman' dates from a time after he had finished painting *La Bella Mano* (1875, fig.145), but the mirror as a metaphor of the woman's passion that reflects her lover's fire in 'True Woman' captures the visual and symbolic imagery of Rossetti's painting of a woman at her toilet as she awaits her lover. The lines that were actually composed to accompany *La Bella Mano*, and painted on the picture frame to create a double work of art, allude to the woman as Venus personified, or, paradoxically, as a waiting virgin attended by cupids as she washes her hands. The sonnet 'La Bella Mano' may echo the painting's atmosphere with its 'music-measured speech,' 'jewelled gifts' and 'lovely hand'<sup>515</sup> but the imagery of glass facing the fire in 'True Woman' 'where the bright bliss / is mirrored' illuminates both the mirror's reflection in *La Bella Mano* and synthesises archaic and modern elements in a uniquely Pre-Raphaelite visual language.

When we take into consideration Rossetti's earliest and last use of the Van Eyck-inspired mirror, a comparison of *Lucrezia Borgia* (1860-61, fig.146) and *La Bella Mano* (1875) is illustrative of the potent imagery of Rossetti's mature, developed mirrors. The two pictures are comparable in that they both depict a woman washing her hands at the same golden ewer and basin first seen in *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* (Marillier identifies the one in *La Bella Mano* as the same one used in *Lucrezia Borgia*<sup>516</sup>), an exotic fruit tree in the foreground and a large nineteenth-century convex mirror in the background. Both works have nuances of the Italian Renaissance, *La Bella Mano* in its title and Venetian-inspired style, and the earlier picture more directly with its subject of the historical fifteenth-century Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of Pope Alexander VI. The difference in the two reflections, however, reveals the different nature of the two women depicted and is indicative of the trajectory of Rossetti's work, moving away from the original Pre-Raphaelite manifesto of 'childlike submission to Nature'<sup>517</sup> and narrative painting to his own richly symbolic and mystical interpretation of truth-to-nature, one that exemplifies his 'devotion to poetic mysticism and beauty, and a power of invention.'<sup>518</sup> Rossetti's two pictures

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<sup>514</sup> D.G. Rossetti, 'True Woman 2. Her Love' (c. 1869-1881), verses 1-4.

<sup>515</sup> D.G. Rossetti, 'La Bella Mano' (1876), verses 1, 6, 7.

<sup>516</sup> Marillier, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An illustrated Memorial of his Art and Life*, 132.

<sup>517</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* vol. I, 132.

<sup>518</sup> Hunt, 137.

illustrate the development of the Pre-Raphaelite interpretation of Van Eyck's mirror with their representations of a re-imagined modern object infused with historical and religious iconography.

Rossetti's early experiment with Van Eyck's mirror, the 1860 watercolour of the early-Renaissance seductress Lucrezia, emphasises the mirror in the background by contrasting its dark colours with Lucrezia's suggestively loose, flowing blonde hair. She appears to be innocently washing her hands at a water basin, her serene gaze directed outwards at something in the distance, and it is only upon looking closer at the large convex mirror's reflection behind her head that the truth becomes apparent: Lucrezia is a murderess and is washing her hands of the poison she has just put in her husband's wine goblet while her father, Pope Alexander VI, walks the unfortunate man around the room to speed up the ingestion of the poisoned wine.<sup>519</sup> The use of the mirror to engage the viewer by reflecting our 'space' and conveying otherwise missing narrative elements is 'a trick much beloved by both Rossetti and Madox Brown,'<sup>520</sup> making the mirror an active component of the picture, rather than a passive detail. That Ford Madox Ford notes this is a device favoured by Rossetti as well as his father, Madox Brown, indicates a later nineteenth-century awareness of this as a Pre-Raphaelite 'trick.'

Directly referencing Van Eyck with its shape and location in the composition, Lucrezia's mirror reflects the viewer's space and contains the missing jigsaw piece to reading the picture. Although still convex in shape, as was popular in interiors of the 1860s, the mirror is again too large for the glassblowing techniques of the period represented and thus conveys a modern relevancy to the Renaissance setting. Other references to the *Arnolfini Portrait* include the orange tree in the foreground that Rossetti, like his re-working of the mirror, has enlarged and multiplied in number from the Van Eyck original in which the oranges almost escape attention on the back window ledge. Rossetti also reproduces the sunlit windows and the red bed-hangings from the *Arnolfini Portrait*, with the red of the Pope's robes echoing the colour of the drapes around the bed destined for the duke. The scarlet colour of the drapery in the mirror's reflection is also repeated in the poppy as well as the poison on the cabinet below in an ominous connection between sex and death, a visual metaphor of Lucrezia herself. Van Eyck's decorative roundels have disappeared and in their place are the accessories of murder to frame and enclose the viewer's reflected space. The bottle of poison, the shape of which creates the illusion of a sharp shard of glass stabbing at the dying man, does Lucrezia's work for her as the viewer assumes the role of witness. Whilst referencing an essential early Pre-Raphaelite source through the mirror, Rossetti has reframed Van Eyck's mirror to reveal the inverse of Christian marriage portrayed by

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<sup>519</sup> William E. Fredeman (ed.) *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, The Last Decade, 1873 - 1882, I: 1873-74*. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 514.

<sup>520</sup> Ford Madox Ford. *Rossetti: A Critical Essay on his Art* (London: Duckworth & Co., New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1902), 107. Ford here refers to Ford Madox Brown's painting *Take Your Son, Sir!* (c.1851, 1856-57).

the Arnolfini couple; the marriage bed has turned into a bier and is emblematic of the wife's betrayal.

Following the concept of the *Lucrezia* picture, in the second of three 'washing hands' pictures together with *La Bella Mano* (an image I will return to shortly), the study for the watercolour *Washing Hands* (1865, fig.147) represents the familiar elements of the convex mirror and the same ewer and basin seen in *Lucrezia Borgia* at which the woman in the painting effectively 'washes her hands' of her most recent love affair. Rossetti explains the subject, 'I mean it to represent that state of a courtship when both parties have come to see in reality that it will never do [. . .] It is all over, in my picture, and she is washing her hands of it.'<sup>521</sup> Between the sketch and the final watercolour version (fig.148), Rossetti moves the mirror from its original placement behind the woman's head to a position over the water basin where all we can catch a glimpse of is the frame and a sliver of glass. Instead of commanding attention and reflecting the viewer's space or communicating more of the plot (is there someone else involved?) it is relegated to the left side of the painting behind the ewer and its reflective surface is tantalisingly just out of our reach. In the final version, the scorned lover occupies the mirror's original position as Rossetti makes him active participant in the picture rather than a ghostly apparition in the viewer's space via the mirror's reflection. The lady literally washes her hands of the affair and perhaps the convex mirror's reflection was rendered unnecessary by the emptiness of narrative (perhaps there is no more explanation or plot to reveal beyond the loss of affection).

The unusual use of eighteenth-century costume with the brass water cistern from *Lucrezia Borgia* and *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice*, the dark flowers on the folding screen and the green walls create a strangely eclectic effect, obscuring a definitive time in terms of the pictorial narrative but not necessarily the location.<sup>522</sup> A gouache and watercolour of Rossetti at home by his assistant Henry Treffry Dunn in 1882, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti Reading Proofs of 'Sonnets and Ballads' to Theodore Watts Dunton in the Drawing Room at 16 Cheyne Walk, London* (fig.142), indicates the possibility that *Washing Hands* was set in Rossetti's home, and with the green walls and profusion of mirrors, religious icons, taxidermy, antiques and lacquerwork this seems likely. Dunn recalls the overwhelming décor of the sitting room where he first met Rossetti in 1863:

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<sup>521</sup> D.G. Rossetti quoted in Marillier, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An Illustrated Memorial of his Art and Life*, 3rd edition, 95.

<sup>522</sup> W.M. Rossetti. *Rossetti as Designer and Writer*, 51. This is Rossetti's only use of eighteenth-century costume besides *Dr. Johnson at the Mitre* (1860). The watercolour was sold at Christie's in the Victorian and British Impressionist Art Sale in December 2012, and the lot notes for the sale catalogue suggest the interior may represent Rossetti's house at 16 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea: <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/drawings-watercolors/dante-gabriel-rossetti-washing-hands-5631463-details.aspx>.

Mirrors of all shapes, sizes and designs, lined the walls, so that whichever way I gazed I saw myself looking at myself. What space remained was occupied by pictures, chiefly old, and of a most interesting character. The mantelpiece was a most original compound of Chinese black-lacquered panels, bearing designs of birds, animals, flowers, and fruit in gold relief [. . .] on either side of the grate a series of old Dutch tiles, mostly displaying Biblical subjects [. . .] In one corner of the room stood an old English china cupboard; inside was displayed a quantity of Spode ware. I sat myself down on a cosy little sofa, with landscapes and figures of the Cipriani period painted on the panels.<sup>523</sup>

Given the shallow depth of the painting and the eighteenth-century dress, it is a disconcerting clash of interior elements, and in particular the presence of the convex mirror that would have been out of fashion in the eighteenth century due to the new vogue for plate glass mirrors from the French glass factories. As we have seen, the convex mirror would not re-emerge as a prominent decorative item until around the turn of the nineteenth century: *de rigueur* in the 1860s, yes, but certainly not during the eighteenth century. The mirror thus contributes to locating the image in a contemporary space, rather than the eighteenth century, a repetitive use of the mirror in Pre-Raphaelitism and one that, like the mirrors in *Lucrezia* or *Lilith*, is similar in essence and representation to those by Hunt.

During the early 1860s when he was working on *Washing Hands* and *Lucrezia Borgia*, Rossetti seems to have been experimenting with different interpretations of the Arnolfini mirror, resulting in the convex glass travelling around the canvas and appearing in different incarnations. Several of his finished watercolours as well as sketches for unexecuted works illustrate his thought process during the 1860s for re-working Van Eyck's prototype. For instance, in the later versions of the watercolour *The Return of to the House of Delia* (1867-68, figs.131, 143), he depicts the convex mirror on the back wall of Delia's bed-chamber as made of bronze, a material that actually would be more authentic to the setting of ancient Rome as mirrors then were typically made from polished metal. The worked metal object in the background is difficult to distinguish as a mirror, and could be mistaken for a shield, but W.M. Rossetti confirms its identity as a metal mirror<sup>524</sup> and Smith's *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* includes this description of ancient mirrors:

The looking-glasses of the ancients were usually made of metal, at first of a composition of tin and copper, but afterwards more frequently of silver [. . .]

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<sup>523</sup> Dunn, 17-18.

<sup>524</sup> W.M. Rossetti (ed.), *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. Vol. II, 505. 'A metal mirror reflects the light of the lamp, and on each side of the doorway are painted figures of Love and Night.'

every substance capable of receiving a fine polish would answer the purpose of a mirror [. . .] We find gold mirrors mentioned once or twice by ancient writers [. . .] but it is not impossible [. . .] that the term golden rather refers to the frame or ornaments than to the mirror itself.<sup>525</sup>

Rossetti thus transforms the Arnolfini mirror into a Roman artefact, and one that is appropriately faulty in its clarity of reflection. The mirror in the earlier version, discussed previously, is made of glass and is located in the foreground to face the viewer but, upon returning to the subject over a decade later, Rossetti moves the mirror around to the back and changes the material. The reflection in the metal version remains just as just as obscure as the shadows in the original, an effect that contributes to an impression of separation, for like Delia kept alone and waiting, the mirror is empty of narrative content.

In 1867 and 1868 Rossetti made sketches for *La Pia de' Tolomei* (figs.151-152), a subject taken from Dante's *Purgatorio*. The original sketches differ significantly from the finished work painted around 1868 that depicts the figure, modelled by Jane Morris, languishing beside a large open window. Returning to the type of mirror he originally used in *Lucrezia Borgia*, the initial drawings emphasise the role of the glass mirror and its clear reflection as he pares down the composition to emphasize the woman and the mirror that comprise the entirety of the shallow space. The woman, imprisoned by her husband, sits in front of the reflective surface gazing out at the viewer's space and although separated from us by a parapet, reminiscent of Renaissance portraiture, the woman is nevertheless connected to our space through the mirror's reflection. The convex glass is too large for the sixteenth-century setting, and again we see Rossetti making use of the size and scale to engage the viewer, suggesting that, like Hunt's *The Lady of Shalott*, we are located in the reflected landscape outside of the woman's tower.

With the later sketch of *La Pia*, Rossetti includes the note 'Little mirrors all round the large one, with the same reflection,' a stylistic concept reminiscent of the decorative roundels of the Arnolfini mirror, although in *La Pia* Rossetti seems to have been planning to use multiple reflections of the same view perhaps as a way of repeatedly reinforcing the woman's confinement. Significantly, this is an approach Burne-Jones used several years earlier in *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* (1861, 1862) a work I shall come back to as further evidence of a shared mirror iconography between the original P.R.B. leaders and their later associates and followers. The mirror in *La Pia*, however, disappears altogether by the finished work and the intriguing convex glass is replaced with a window open on to the grim landscape with a river in the distance and Hitchcock-style birds in flight. After sketching ideas that were never executed and working with the concept of an ancient Roman version of the Arnolfini mirror, as well as considering a scheme

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<sup>525</sup> Smith, 1052-1053.

that would include multiple reflections in *La Pia*, in 1875 Rossetti produced the richly complex *La Bella Mano*. Rossetti's final representation of the convex mirror can be viewed as the culmination of his work and study on mirrors in the 1860s, a strong symbolic and narrative force that recalls his earlier *Lucrezia Borgia* but with a more developed technique and multi-layered visual language.

The circular mirror's large size, comprising most of the background space, and its position behind the focal point of the woman's pale upturned face that frames her head like the halo in Brown's *Take Your Son, Sir!*, accentuate Rossetti's mirror emphasis. Immediately noticeable in the mirror's reflection is the fire blazing in the hearth, 'reflections of the red and yellow flames that twine and flash in the unseen fire,'<sup>526</sup> its golden tones echoed in the castor immediately beneath the mirror, the metal ewer and scallop-shell basin of water, and throughout the painting. Surrounded by flowers and a lemon tree, the woman in dressed in crimson washes her hands as she completes her toilet, her attendants ready with a cloth for her hands and jewels for her arms. The mirror's reflection reveals a bed beside the glowing fireplace, suggesting the impending arrival of her lover in an overt illustration of what Susan P. Casteras identifies as 'the barely contained sexuality of the parlour' seen in Victorian fireside images.<sup>527</sup>

Exemplifying Rossetti's Venetian-inspired style of the 1860s and 1870s, the shallow space and lush, rich colours of the painting recall Rossetti's earlier *Fazio's Mistress* (1863-1873, fig.153), another double work of art with accompanying poetry. McGann suggests reading *Fazio's Mistress* as a metaphor for Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelitism, one that merges together three separate worlds:

Fanny Cornforth, the sitter, is the locus of the picture's modernity; the Titian-esque style and the pictorial 'bricabrac' [. . .] allude to sixteenth-century Venice; and the title references the world of Dante and thirteenth-century Florence [. . .] These three perspectives define the three chief points of reference for most of Rossetti's work as a painter (primitive Italian, Venetian, modern).<sup>528</sup>

*Fazio's Mistress* portrays a half-length beautiful idealized woman at her toilet, monumental in the shallow space of the interior. The glimmer of reflection off the glass object<sup>529</sup> in the back left of the picture evolves into the large, composition-dominating mirror of *La Bella Mano*, a detail that recalls both Van Eyck as well as Titian's *Woman with a Mirror*.

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<sup>526</sup> Sharp, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study*, 239.

<sup>527</sup> Susan P. Casteras, 'The unsettled hearth: P.H. Calderon's *Lord! Thy Will be Done* and the problematics of women in Victorian interiors,' 162.

<sup>528</sup> McGann, 19.

<sup>529</sup> I believe this object is the glass vase seen in Frederick Sandys's *Grace Rose* (1866), painted when Sandys was living at Cheyne Walk (see fig.154).



Painted around the same time that Rossetti was thinking through ideas for the picture of Venus surrounded by multiple mirrors, *Fazio's Mistress* initiates a set of works that explore the subject of the woman at her toilet seen in works from 1864 through *La Bella Mano* in 1875. Taking this series of works as a whole, Venus as the modern woman *is* effectively surrounded by mirrors reflecting her from different angles as we see Fanny Cornforth's likeness reflected and multiplied through works such as *Fazio's Mistress*, *Woman Combing her Hair* (1864, fig.155), *Morning Music* (1864, fig.156), the 1863 photograph and, in particular, the original versions of *Lady Lilith* (1864-68). While Rossetti may not have executed a finished piece of work for his idea of 'Venus Surrounded by Mirrors,' the array of pictures that reflect Fanny's features combine to create just such an effect. McGann's reading of *Fazio's Mistress* as symbolic of Rossetti's artistic output can be considered in tandem with his mirror imagery 'reflecting her in different views' that synthesises modernity (signified by the modern mirror) with a dizzying array of historic and contemporary references (Dante, Van Eyck, Titian, and even Hunt).

This sensation of mirroring one woman from different angles through multiple pictures of her is famously alluded to in Christina Rossetti's sonnet 'In An Artist's Studio' (1856):

One face looks out from all his canvasses  
 One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans;  
 We found her hidden just behind those screens,  
 That mirror gave back all her loveliness.<sup>530</sup>

Although at the time Christina Rossetti was referring to Rossetti's lover and eventual wife Elizabeth Siddall,<sup>531</sup> the repeated drawings and paintings of Siddall's likeness create a similar effect to that seen in the multiple reflections of Fanny and C. Rossetti's reference to the mirror solidifies the analogy of doubling and reflection as though Siddall were Venus Surrounded by Mirrors Reflecting her in Different Views.' Eerily, Rossetti's sonnet was not published until after both her and Siddall were deceased, reinforcing a *doppelgänger* impression D.G. Rossetti expressed in his poem 'The Portrait' in which he ponders 'As though mine image in the glass / Should tarry when myself am gone'.<sup>532</sup> The connecting thread between C. Rossetti's sonnet, Rossetti's 'The Portrait' and the multiple images of Siddall and Cornforth is the association of

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<sup>530</sup> Christina Rossetti, 'In An Artist's Studio' (1856), v.1-4. 'In An Artist's Studio' was published posthumously in 1896 in W.M. Rossetti (ed.), *New Poems by Christina Rossetti Hitherto Unpublished or Uncollected*, (New York and London: Macmillan and Co., 1896).

<sup>531</sup> 'The reference is apparently to our brother's studio, and to his constantly-repeated heads of the lady whom he afterwards married, Miss Siddall.' W.M. Rossetti (ed.), *New Poems by Christina Rossetti*, 383.

<sup>532</sup> D.G. Rossetti, 'The Portrait' (1869), stanza I, verses 1-4.

mirrored reflections with the ability to capture past and present as well as simultaneously reflecting an underlying masculine desire.<sup>533</sup>

Commissioned by Rossetti's friend the art dealer and collector Murray Marks for £400,<sup>534</sup> *La Bella Mano* represents a collaboration between the two men,<sup>535</sup> both in imaginative and practical details with Marks loaning or procuring objects for Rossetti's use. Rossetti himself refers to his 'mania for buying bricabrac [sic],'<sup>536</sup> and the decorative details and 'bricabrac' in this instance reflect the artistic partnership with Murray: certain objects featured belonged to Rossetti (such as the convex mirror, pearl hairpin and bracelets) while Marks provided others such as the toilet castor, ewer and basin, and the blue jar beneath the mirror that holds the hairpins.<sup>537</sup> Illustrating the early Pre-Raphaelite principle of truth-to-nature, the painting faithfully portrays the medley of objects crowding the scene from their real-life counterparts such as the tulips and iris that Marks describes as having sourced in Covent Garden, 'a great deal of bother [. . .] to obtain tulips of the colour to please Rossetti.'<sup>538</sup>

Indeed, the imaginative and idealised qualities that intermingle with this truth-to-nature approach are a case in point of Rossetti's specific, seemingly contradictory interpretation of the earlier Pre-Raphaelite principles. This is actually an approach that aligns with Hunt, however, for just as Hunt meticulously studied variations of fractured glass for *The Lady of Shalott*, Rossetti insists on the precise colour of tulips to paint from life but marries this empirical observation with a stylized mysticism that includes winged figures and an idealized woman. Rossetti also alters the objects, such as changing the silver toilet castor belonging to Marks into gold and, Rumpelstiltskin-like, doing the same to the brass ewer and basin.<sup>539</sup> This disparity between painting directly from life and giving expression to personal mythology is indicative of the 'contradiction that lies at the heart of much Pre-Raphaelite art: whether it is derived from observation or from vision.'<sup>540</sup> Rossetti's use of the mirror eloquently expresses this paradox, a modern physical object that at the same time functions as a vessel of multiple symbolic connotations, the ordinary middle-class household object becomes replete with otherworldly symbolism.

Hunt, later recalling the differences between himself and Rossetti, acknowledged, as I have noted, that they were both in agreement that art should be personal to the creator, a 'reflex of a

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<sup>533</sup> See R.L. Mégroz, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Painter Poet of Heaven in Earth* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1929), 281: 'the mirror is with Rossetti either dark, still water [. . .] or the soul's memory which is a glass reflecting future as well as past.'

<sup>534</sup> G.C. Williamson, *Murray Marks and his Friends* (London: John Lane, 1919), 76.

<sup>535</sup> Williamson, 76.

<sup>536</sup> D.G. Rossetti quoted in W.M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer*, 69.

<sup>537</sup> Williamson, *Murray Marks and his Friends*, 78, 82. The convex mirror eventually hung in Marks's own drawing-room until his death (Williamson, 83).

<sup>538</sup> Williamson, 82.

<sup>539</sup> Williamson, 82.

<sup>540</sup> Colin Cruise 'Sick-sad dreams: Burne-Jones and Pre-Raphaelite Medievalism,' *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 4: 1/2, 'The Arts In Victorian Literature' (2010), 121-140; 128.

living image in his own mind, and not the icy double of the facts themselves.<sup>541</sup> This is, however, exactly what we expect from a mirror – the reflected ‘icy double’ of facts, represented truthfully without question, bias or manipulation. The mirrors of the mid-nineteenth century achieved unprecedented clarity of reflection, an exact representation of the ‘real’ world but, like the paradoxical heart of Pre-Raphaelite art with a division and re-unification of realism and symbolism, the mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite painting do not necessarily behave as expected.

The interior of *La Bella Mano* is crowded with sumptuous colours and textures as metal, glass, flowers, draperies, water, and a lemon tree fill the shallow space inhabited by the three figures. The picture that was praised by as ‘a marvel of art, the whole glowing in rich light,’<sup>542</sup> ‘one of his masterpieces [. . .] has in it elements of endless delight,’<sup>543</sup> reveals next to nothing in the way of narrative; the figures avert their gaze as though each is in their own space of interior reflection, an avoidance of eye contact with one another and the viewer that enhances the picture’s dream-like quality. In the 1955 children’s book *The Magician’s Nephew*, C.S. Lewis describes a mythical place referred to as the wood between the worlds where the air is heavy with the perfume of flowers, time stands still, and travellers there are overcome by the warm drowsiness of the place.<sup>544</sup> Lewis’s description could be applied to Rossetti’s picture, an in-between meditative place where Venus is attended by winged supernatural beings whose flowing white garments, as well as the impression of the mirror again as a halo behind the woman’s head, contribute to the sense of an otherworldly place. A dark wood and gilt mirror frame encircles the convex glass, in which the gold stands out against the dark ground, accentuating the effect of a halo and, rather disconcertingly, within the halo are the fireplace and the bed, but noticeably absent is any indication of human presence. Recalling Hunt’s *Fanny Holman Hunt* and Rossetti’s earlier *Lady Lilith*, none of the three figures are reflected in the mirror, but given their position in the room we should be able to see at least two of them. Are they physically present in the space or not? Perhaps they represent the inverse of the folkloric vampire tradition: instead of not having a reflection because they have no souls, they do not have a reflection because they *are* souls and do not have physical bodies in the present time and space.

As souls rather than bodies, then, perhaps they function as mirrors of a romantic and spiritual ideal whilst the mirror reflects a more tangible reality. Ruskin writes ‘the soul of man is a mirror of the mind of God’,<sup>545</sup> and a sense of that spirituality is echoed in *La Bella Mano* with the mirror-as-halo and the missing reflections. Theodore Watts would later suggest that ‘the corporeal part of man seemed more and more to be but the symbol of the spiritual; and more and more did

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<sup>541</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. I, 150.

<sup>542</sup> F.G. Stephens, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 90.

<sup>543</sup> Sharp, *A Record and a Study*, 238, 240.

<sup>544</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Magician’s Nephew* (London: The Bodley Head, 1955). The wood between the worlds features throughout the story as the main characters, Polly and Digory, travel between post-war London and other worlds, eventually discovering Narnia.

<sup>545</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. V (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1891), 199.

he [Rossetti] try to render it so.’<sup>546</sup> Elements of the physical world (fire, flowers, glass, and man-made objects) surround the spiritually symbolic beings, illustrative of the paradoxical nature of the Pre-Raphaelites and their brand of realism that merges observation of the natural world with personal, spiritual vision. The lingering sense of spirituality associated with the image of the halo and angelic beings creates a visual intermingling of spiritual timelessness with the physical present. For in spite of the mythological associations with Venus through the poetic innuendos of the sonnet, the shell basin, mirror and winged figures in the picture, and the Italian title that recalls Rossetti’s love for Dante and Boccaccio, the reflection in the mirror ultimately functions to bring the figures to contemporary London. Rather than simply inhabiting a Renaissance past or an eternal present in the wood between the worlds, the spiritual beings are represented in a specific time and place found in the mirror’s reflection and relatable to the contemporary viewer.

The mirror in the background reflects the viewer’s space, placing us along with the painting itself in Rossetti’s own bedroom at his house on Cheyne Walk in Chelsea. Due to its convex shape, we are able to see more of the interior than would otherwise be possible and can clearly make out Rossetti’s antique four-poster bed with crewelwork bed-hangings,<sup>547</sup> and the overmantel full of brass plates, candlesticks and china. Compare *La Bella Mano* with the watercolour *Rossetti’s Bedroom at Tudor House, Cheyne Walk* (c. 1875, fig.157) by Henry Treffry Dunn, Rossetti’s assistant from 1867. The mirror’s distorted convex reflection comprises Dunn’s entire painting, affording us a picture of Rossetti’s room identical to the reflection in *La Bella Mano*. In his memoir *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle (Cheyne Walk Life)*, Dunn describes Rossetti’s bedroom as a claustrophobic space with heavy velvet curtains and dark furniture, elaborating on the overmantel reflected in the mirror of *La Bella Mano*:

A massive panelled oak mantelpiece reached from the floor to the ceiling, fitted up with numerous shelves and cupboard-like recesses, all filled with a medley of brass *repoussé* dishes, blue china vases filled with peacock feathers, oddly-fashioned early English and foreign candlesticks, Chinese monstrosities in bronze, and various other curiosities.<sup>548</sup>

The mantelpiece itself is an altar to the aesthetic interior, eclectic in its collection and the display of peacock feathers, bronze, brass, and blue and white china pieces. Bringing the otherworldly scene into a contemporary, personal context, the mirror in *La Bella Mano* reveals the decorative details Rossetti’s bedroom as though emerging in a crystal ball.

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<sup>546</sup> Theodore Watts, ‘The Truth About Rossetti,’ *The Nineteenth Century – a monthly review*, 13: 73; 404-423; 412.

<sup>547</sup> Dunn, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle (Cheyne Walk Life)*, 35.

<sup>548</sup> Dunn, 35 + 36. Dunn makes an aside comment that with such a stifling, ‘shrouded’ room it was ‘no wonder poor Rossetti suffered so much from insomnia!’

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the convex mirror was enjoying a rush of popularity during the 1860s through the 1880s as seen in contemporary representations of fashionable interiors (see figs.158-160, for example). In her interior design publication *The Art of Decoration*, Mrs. Haweis writes,

A convex mirror *in its place*, i.e. so hung as to reflect distant objects only, and never come into contact with the face, is a pretty ornament [. . .] its inly- pictured [*sic*] reflections carry the spectator oddly into Van Eyck's time like a dream within a dream, as you seem to catch the movement of windows or trees or seated men *behind you*, being really for the moment in that room where the Virgin sits and rocks her child.<sup>549</sup>

Inextricably associated with Van Eyck's mirror, the convex mirror was a familiar decorative object in the family home, a revamped antique with connotations of the artistic ingenuity found in the National Gallery. Haweis does, however, go on to note the uselessness of the convex glass as a functional mirror and suggests it should be regarded 'simply as an ingenious toy'<sup>550</sup> and includes a humorous caricature of what Helen of Troy would look like in a convex mirror<sup>551</sup> (fig.161).

The over 140 convex mirrors represented in the appendix catalogue, including forty by Pre-Raphaelite artists and their associates, corresponds to the rise in popularity of the convex mirror during the mid-to-late nineteenth century. In an ironic demonstration of fashion, it appears that no sooner had *flat* plate glass mirrors become more affordable and available than the convex sort that had dominated early mirrors due to the limitations of pre-Industrial Revolution glassmaking became a fashionable decorative curiosity. As mirrors became populist rather than elitist, fashion changed accordingly to rebrand the older style as a tasteful necessity. Obviously no longer convex due to fundamentals of glassmaking, these mirrors came in sizes varying between twelve and thirty-six inches across,<sup>552</sup> quite different from those seen in the works of Memling or Massys, and were associated with the French style that had been popular among the English aristocracy during the Regency period (see fig.162). For instance, by 1795 the Ravenhead glassworks in Lancashire were able to cast large convex glasses, typically supported in gilt frames and often surmounted by a flying eagle or accompanied by candleholders on either side, a style that had become so popular in wealthy homes at the turn of the century that Thomas Sheraton's *Cabinet Dictionary* (1803)

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<sup>549</sup> Mary Eliza Haweis, *The Art of Decoration* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881), 262.

<sup>550</sup> Haweis, 262.

<sup>551</sup> Haweis, 250.

<sup>552</sup> Walter A. Dyer, 'Looking-Glasses Old and New,' *Arts and Decoration*, 10: 4 (February, 1919), 206-208; 208.

defines the word ‘mirror’ as ‘a circular convex glass in a gilt frame [. . .] they are now become universally in fashion, and are considered both as a useful and ornamental piece of furniture.’<sup>553</sup>

As ornamental items that signified connotations of vintage, French, and aristocratic, mid- to late nineteenth-century convex mirrors acquired a new association with middle- and upper-middle class taste as overmantel mirrors and pier glasses became more democratised. Cycling back through in fashion, although somewhat more affordable the second time around,<sup>554</sup> the convex mirror was popular in middle-class homes from the 1860s. Writing in 1881 for the American publication *The House Beautiful*, Clarence Cook wryly observes that although the convex mirror had gone out of fashion for a while earlier in the century,

someone with an eye pulled them by the sleeve and encouraged them to come back again. They are now much sought for, and fetch high prices; large ones . . . have sold for two and three hundred dollars. As mirrors, they are not of any use, their only object being to give pleasure by the queer distorted reflections they make, and by the clever way in which they give back a view of the whole room.<sup>555</sup>

In spite of its acknowledged failure as a useful reflective object owing to the distortions produced by the shape of the glass, the convex mirror added diversity to decorative schemes and compressed the reflection of an interior, providing a comprehensive view of middle-class consumerism on display. Playful, decorative, and old-fashioned, the nineteenth-century convex mirror created ‘splendid spots of sparkling reflection’ and was ‘at last elevated by fashion to a suitable rank and position.’<sup>556</sup> The widespread popularity for the convex mirror as a fashionable article of décor at the time was mocked in satirical cartoons such as ‘Music and Aesthetics’ by George du Maurier for *Punch* (1878, fig. 163) which depicts a young lady singing and playing the piano at a fashionable dinner party, unaware that the fashionable Aesthetic crowd standing behind her are more enthralled with the convex girandole over the piano than they are with her performance.

*Punch* published Du Maurier’s cartoon three years after Rossetti painted *La Bella Mano* but as early as 1850 there were references to the growing popularity of convex mirrors, perhaps related to the reputation of Van Eyck’s portrait in the National Gallery:

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<sup>553</sup> ‘Mirror,’ Thomas Sheraton, *Cabinet Directory*, vol. II (New York and London: Praeger Publishers, 1970, originally published 1803), 271.

<sup>554</sup> ‘People who have little ready money to spend on furnishing should [. . .] look out for old furniture [. . .] A good eighteenth-century mirror, re-gilt and with eagle, costs 25s’. ‘Hints on Household Taste,’ *Pall Mall Gazette* (21 March 1890), 3. This would be the equivalent of £120 today.

<sup>555</sup> Clarence Cook, *The House Beautiful: Essays on Beds and Tables, Stools and Candlesticks* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1881), 128.

<sup>556</sup> Lucy Orrinsmith, *The Drawing-Room: It’s Decoration and Furniture*, 125-126.

the *chef d'oeuvre* in this [English glass] manufacture are mirror globes, of plain silvered service, all sizes from 2 to 30 inches in diameter, from half-a-pint to 40 gallons. These, placed on bronze figures, an Atlas or eagle, or attached to chandeliers or to a sideboard or mantelpiece, are a most striking appendage to a drawing-room or banquet hall, and are perhaps the favourite specimen among the continental connoisseurs<sup>557</sup>

By the time the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood formed and Hunt and Rossetti were experimenting with mirrors in their work, the mirror was already set on a trajectory course to becoming an object embedded with both middle-class taste and the success of the English glass industry over foreign imports. Although newly available to the middle class, as we have seen mirrors were still too costly in general for working-class homes and consequently maintained something of an exclusive edge, particularly the large, gilded variations of pier glasses and overmantels; these large plate glasses were resolutely English, middle-class, modern objects whose appearance in corresponding nineteenth-century images of the home are part of the visual language of modern taste.<sup>558</sup>

The July 1882 sale catalogue for the contents of Rossetti's home after his death lists thirty-four mirrors, in addition to mirrored articles of furniture such as a writing desk with a looking-glass cover, providing evidence of the mirror's significance in Rossetti's daily life as well as his poetry and works of art. This blending of actual mirrors in Rossetti's Chelsea house with their representation in his work contributes to an understanding of the Pre-Raphaelite mirror as a liaison between the truth-to-nature guideline and principles of authenticity and a more imaginative realism. In a case of art imitating life, or perhaps life imitating art, Rossetti's house of mirrors corresponds to his distinctive visual language that blends modernity with the past and physical truths with spirituality as the 'real' mirrors in 16 Cheyne Walk morph between reality and fantasy, surface reflections and interior depths.

Thirteen of the mirrors in the sale catalogue are listed in the dining room, the space depicted in Dunn's aforementioned watercolour of the same year. Even though the watercolour was painted posthumously, Dunn, as Rossetti's studio assistant was responsible for organizing the house and its contents for the sale and we can assume his knowledge of the interior to be accurate. The overwhelming feature of the room, aside from the prominent green colour (recreated in *Washing*

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<sup>557</sup> 'Bohemian Glass Outdone,' *Little's Living Age*, 27: 338 (November 9, 1850), 276.

<sup>558</sup> As discussed in the introduction, the Linley Sambourne home, Stafford Terrace, is representative of the décor in fashionable upper and upper-middle-class interiors by the 1860s. The Sambournes are estimated to have had an annual income of around £2,000, well above the middle-class average. See Shirley Nicholson, *A Victorian Household Based on the Diaries of Marion Sambourne* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988), 23.

*Hands*), is the abundance of mirrors. Inclusive of different styles, shapes and sizes, the mirrors create an endless series of reflections, multiplying the interior space, decorative objects, and people. Dunn's recollection of entering the room for the first time, 'whichever way I gazed I saw myself looking at myself'<sup>559</sup> sounds like a physical manifestation of Rossetti's concept of *Venus Surrounded by Mirrors Reflecting her in Different Views*. For instance, the fifteen mirrors in the dining room alone that would have endlessly multiplied dinner party guests.<sup>560</sup>

The proliferation of mirrors in Rossetti's home lends itself to a reading of Rossetti living in a mirror world, as Venus surrounded by mirrors. Rossetti's acquaintance Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) expands on this idea in what is perhaps the most well known instance of crossing the boundary of surface glass to that ephemeral place of interiority, the mirror world.<sup>561</sup> Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There* was published in 1871, nearly ten years after Rossetti had moved into Cheyne Walk and taken up a passionate interest in its interior decoration. In *Through the Looking Glass*, Carroll explores the notion of a world on the other side of the mirror that could be reached by climbing through a seemingly ordinary overmantel mirror, a concept brilliantly captured in Tenniel's illustrations of a resolutely fashionable, middle-class overmantel. In Carroll's imagination, the mirror world is literally a mirror image of ours with everything in reverse and Alice first notices that her familiar drawing-room is left-to-right once she crosses the glass. However, the deeper she travels into the mirror world it becomes apparent that not only is everything in reverse, but it seems to take on a life of its own with increasingly bizarre characters and circumstances involving talking flowers and chess pieces that come to life. Perhaps technically an imaginative adventure story for children, Alice's bodily displacement through the mirror world where nothing behaves as expected and the concept of that world having an autonomous existence relates to the gothic tales and doppelgänger legends that so interested Rossetti and appear in his works of the 1860s and 1870s.

William Michael observed his brother's passion for decorative household objects, mirrors in particular, upon his move into the house at Cheyne Walk in 1862:

soon the house began to fill with Chinese tables and chairs, Dutch tiles, Flemish and oriental and African curtains and draperies, looking-glasses and mirrors of

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<sup>559</sup> Dunn, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle (Cheyne Walk Life)*, 17-18.

<sup>560</sup> *Dante G. Rossetti, Deceased [ . . . ] Catalogue of the Household and Decorative Furniture [ . . . ] which will be Sold by Auction by Messrs T.G. Wharton, Martin & CO., Upon the Premises 16, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, on Wednesday, July 5, 1882, and Two Following Days*, (London: T.G. Wharton, Martin & Co., 1882), 10-11.

<sup>561</sup> Charles Dodgson knew the Rossetti family and, suggesting an artistic interaction between them, photographed them on several occasions. See, for example, his photograph 'The Rossetti Family' in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig.164).



the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a chandelier here and another there, and numerous knick-knacks of whatever kind<sup>562</sup>.

Elaborating on Rossetti's décor, William Michael draws attention to the fact that Rossetti had 'a particular liking for convex round-shaped mirrors. Many of these things served him for objects to be painted; others were merely for looking at.'<sup>563</sup> Rossetti's curated interior was, like his paintings, a melting pot of time periods and styles in which his lovingly collected decorative pieces would be multiplied in numerous mirrored reflections.

Jessica Feldman's discussion of Rossetti's Aesthetic interior at Cheyne Walk) considers the ephemeral space between his home and painted canvas and suggests a fluidity between these boundaries,

intimate and fluid composition brought to life in the space between his daily life and the formal techniques of writing and painting [. . .] The gap between the rooms of 16 Cheyne Walk and the gloriously filled spaces of Rossetti's paintings [. . .] just be crossed, if we are to appreciate the domestic quality of these paintings [. . .] as rich and inviting as those of Memling and Van Eyck, whom he so admired.<sup>564</sup>

It is in this in-between space, the gap between Rossetti's mirrors and his representations of them, that we can locate the mirrors of Memling, Van Eyck, Titian and Hunt; Rossetti's mirrors close the gap between historic and contemporary depictions.

By setting *La Bella Mano* in what was recognisable as a contemporary, fashionable, Aesthetic interior, and one that he had personally decorated, he reveals what his own private, intimate space. As such, Rossetti subtly establishes himself within the painting, creating an implied self-portrait through the mirror's reflection in a twist on the tradition of the artist including a (physical) self- portrait within a work. The mirror merges together the space not only between the artist, the painting and the viewer, but between the past of Van Eyck and Titian with Rossetti's contemporary Pre-Raphaelitism, between Van Eyck's domestic interior and Rossetti's bedchamber; the convex glass becomes a magic mirror that unifies seemingly disparate components of past and present, materiality and symbolic elements.

In an article on Rossetti following his death, *The National Review* notes that while symbols are a common, recognizable element in art, 'we all know the lion of St. Mark, the lilies of the

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<sup>562</sup> W.M. Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti*, vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 275-276.

<sup>563</sup> W.M. Rossetti, 276.

<sup>564</sup> Jessica Feldman, *Victorian Modernism: Pragmatism and the Varieties of the Aesthetic Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 95, 102.

Virgin, the box of Pandora, the mirror Truth,' Rossetti created works in which 'the symbol is not there as a mere note, an indication like the coat of arms in the corner of a portrait; it is the centre of the picture, and everything is subordinate to it.'<sup>565</sup> The symbolism of the work, expressed in *La Bella Mano* by the prominent mirror, takes over the picture as the prime mover, the central element of the work, a defining feature of the Pre-Raphaelite use of the mirror.

Rossetti's development and use of the mirror from the 1860 watercolour of *Lucrezia Borgia* to *La Bella Mano* is indicative of the development of Pre-Raphaelite responses to the *Arnolfini Portrait* in which the mirror becomes a symbol of modernity and conveys a sense of immediacy to the work even if the subject is seemingly removed from contemporary life. The Arnolfini mirror reconfigured in Rossetti's works of the 1860s illustrate the overarching narrative of the Pre-Raphaelite mirror in the loaded symbolism of the object within the context of re-framing modern life, symbolically collapsing the boundary between the past and the modern present. While the mirrors signify a thematic as well as visual alignment and similarity of source material between Rossetti and Hunt, Rossetti tends to problematize the clarity of the mirror's reflection seen in Hunt's works. Hunt's mirrors are a more straightforward representation that correspond to the idea of Pre-Raphaelitism as a mirror of modern life while Rossetti's mirrors, although drawing the spectator in to access the work from within the pictorial construct, the mirror world, ultimately create more isolation as the reflections often do not behave as expected. Although Rossetti does use a similar 'magic mirror' approach that we see in Hunt, his mirrors create more displacement than clarification. While Hunt's mirrors bounce reflections back and forth between the 'real' world of the viewer, the internal world of the painting, and the reflected surface, Rossetti's mirrors function as self-reflexive, emphasising the work's internal structure rather than logically corresponding to the external world, while simultaneously functioning as the inner-standing point to allow the viewer access to the mirror world, mirror treatment that would be repeated by Pre-Raphaelite followers in addition to Hunt's more logical approach.

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<sup>565</sup> David Hannay, 'The Paintings of Mr. Rossetti,' *The National Review*, 1: 1 (March, 1883), 126-134; 232.

### Chapter III: Intermirrorality in Later Mirrors

Hunt and Rossetti both establish a particular use of the mirror but beyond their respective visual vocabularies the subsequent repetition of their mirror treatment by other artists makes a case for a motif-based methodological inquiry, an approach I explore in this chapter in terms of an iconographical analysis of mirrors by artists who are considered part of the ‘second wave’ as well as those of the later nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century who are more loosely associated with the movement. The frequent appearance of the post-Industrial Revolution nineteenth-century convex or circular mirror angled towards the viewer, regardless of whether the setting is contemporary or not, is arguably an acknowledgement and response to images such as Hunt’s iconic *Lady of Shalott* and Rossetti’s *La Bella Mano*. As we have seen, beginning in 1850, the P.R.B. transformed the aristocratic reflection-less glass of eighteenth-century and earlier nineteenth-century paintings into a significant feature that looked back to the symbolic and spiritual use of the mirror in Northern Renaissance work combined with the size and lush colours of Venetian artists. The context of mirror representation, in addition to the object history, is critical to understanding what is different about mirrors in Pre-Raphaelitism and the contributions of Hunt and Rossetti to thinking about and utilising modern glass. This chapter examines the dispersal of their specific use of the mirror to associates, followers, and artists not connected with the movement, and takes into consideration identifiable points of contact (friends and associates who would have most likely seen Hunt’s 1850 drawing, for instance), instances of direct plagiarism (a questionable term: is it plagiarism or is it a deliberate reference via motif?), and revival by later artists such as Cowper and Waterhouse. Also, I look at instances of the mirror in Victorian genre artists and others outside of the movement as significant evidence of the Pre-Raphaelite sphere of influence, and the strong case for an identifiable intermirrorality that stems from Hunt and Rossetti’s earlier pictures, as well as an underlying public awareness of this specific visual language.

Different motifs appear throughout the works of artists associated with Pre-Raphaelitism, visual devices that include specific gestures and poses, fabrics, or flowers, but none are so prominent and frequent as the mirror. For instance, is it possible to think of the Lady of Shalott in her tower without Hunt’s mirror? It seems not, as his spiritual, mythological, circular mirror of modern glass features behind the Lady in almost every nineteenth-century illustration of ‘The Lady of Shalott’ in her tower beginning with Siddall’s 1853 drawing and Egley’s 1858 version through to the 1896 illustration for *The Yellow Book* by Florence M. Rutland (fig.165), *The Lady of Shalott* pictures by Henry Marriott Paget (1881, fig.166) and Charles Robinson (fig.167), Meteyard’s *I am Half-Sick of Shadows* (1913, fig.168) and the Waterhouse versions (figs.169-170) that I will come back to address at length. The appearance of such mirrors that intentionally quote Hunt and Rossetti’s prototypes, whether concurrent with or years after early P.R.B. output,

confirms the presence of a motif that contributes to a discussion of Pre-Raphaelite influence, the P.R.B. label, and the modernity of the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic that transforms the ordinariness of contemporary life.

As we have seen, Hunt and Rossetti's use of the mirror represents a point of convergence for the dissimilar strands of their Pre-Raphaelite styles and their respective historical sources; the mirror is a visual element that confirms Graham's suggestion that we should 'rethink Pre-Raphaelitism as a conversation, not a rupture, with a canon in the making.'<sup>566</sup> The mirror as a factor in thinking about the Pre-Raphaelite canon contributes to this conversation by its repetitive appearance, establishing a visual dialogue through a motif exchange that echoes through the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. As I have demonstrated, both Hunt and Rossetti were thinking about the mirror from the early days of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and continued to utilise and experiment with the variations of modern glass in their works. The repetitive iconography suggests that their mirrors are integral to their respective stylistic trajectories – on one hand operating towards a physical embodiment of spiritual insight through material detail (Hunt) and on the other an exploration of displacement, self-consciousness, and Aesthetic anti-narrative ends (Rossetti) – that, like their representations of modern mirrors, transcend historic periods and directly reflect contemporary life.

This chapter examines artists such as Burne-Jones, Emma Sandys, Cowper, Shannon, and Waterhouse in light of their contribution to the scope of Pre-Raphaelite intermirrornality and their response to Hunt and Rossetti's original imagery. In some instances these artists quote either one or the other while in other cases they merge the two together to create a composite mirror image that unifies the diverse Pre-Raphaelite characteristics and further underscores my argument for a Hunt/Rossetti realignment. Millais, as will be addressed below, is noticeably absent from mirror discussions and, given his unquestioned status as a P.R.B. leader, represents an inconsistency in visual vocabulary that signifies the necessity of continuing to broaden the breadth of inquiry in terms of defining Pre-Raphaelitism. I contend that the mirror motif is a point of consideration to add to the discussion while also acknowledging it is not exclusive and constitutes but one of a range of possible methodologies.

### **Categorisation: The Pre-Raphaelite Measles**

Two or three men working in somewhat similar direction, but with different aims and different methods, holding at no time more than one principle in common, and quickly abandoning even that single agreement, do not constitute a 'school' in any intelligible sense of that word's meaning [. . .] Nothing dies so hard as a word,

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<sup>566</sup>Jenny Graham, 'Artistic Inspirations,' Prettejohn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, 44.

particularly a word which nobody understands, and there is little doubt that this one in question will survive all of us<sup>567</sup>

all the Pre-Raphaelite painters in any sense worthy of the name are intensely individual in quality, and cannot be classed, arranged, or compared together in the order of a system or school<sup>568</sup>

In spite of the Hunt-propagated stylistic rift between himself and Rossetti and late nineteenth-century critics' endorsement of that division, as we have seen, together with a narrative that privileges Rossetti's influence on later Pre-Raphaelite followers, the mirror treatment by artists such as Burne-Jones, Solomon, and Waterhouse complicates the assumption of a straightforward adherence to a Rossettian style as well as the later nineteenth-century assumption that Rossetti's brand of Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic defined the label. The associations of the name with Rossetti's circle is seen, for example, in George du Maurier's description of dinner party at the Prinseps's home as 'a nest of pre-raphaelites [sic], where Hunt, Millais, Rossetti, Watts, Leighton, etc., Tennyson, the Brownings' were all present. Du Maurier applies the Pre-Raphaelite label to the original P.R.B. leaders as well as to Watts, Leighton and, by association, Tennyson and Browning.<sup>569</sup> Describing another dinner party with Swinburne, Sandys and Rossetti, Du Maurier pronounces Rossetti 'the head of the pre-raphaelites [sic], for Millais and Hunt have seceded; spoilt, so to speak, from their immense popularity,'<sup>570</sup> substantiating the narrative of Hunt/Millais in one camp and Rossetti in the other as well as confirming Rossetti as the true leader of the style with the assumption that Pre-Raphaelitism stemmed from 'the Rossetti clique' or 'the Rossetti lot'<sup>571</sup>. Prinsep would recall later in life that 'Rossetti was the planet round which we revolved [. . .] we copied his very way of speaking. All beautiful women were 'stunners' [. . .] Mediaevalism [sic] was our *beau ideal*'<sup>572</sup>

As discussed in the introductory chapter, late nineteenth-century critics such as Quilter and Bate contributed to the perception of a 'second wave' of Pre-Raphaelites, comprised of Burne-Jones, Sandys, and Solomon, as a Rossetti-centred movement separate from Hunt and Millais but the later artists' use of the mirror problematizes this, an argument this I address in this chapter. As

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<sup>567</sup> Harry Quilter, *References in Art, Life and Literature* (London: Swan Sonnen-Schein & Co., 1892), 66.

<sup>568</sup> Esther Wood, *Dante Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement* (London: Sampson Low Marston and Company, Limited, 1893), 131.

<sup>569</sup> George du Maurier to Ellen du Maurier, February 1862, in Daphne du Maurier (ed.), *The Young George du Maurier: A Selection of his Letters, 1860-67*, 112.

<sup>570</sup> George du Maurier to Ellen du Maurier, April 1864, in Daphne du Maurier (ed.), *The Young George du Maurier*, 235.

<sup>571</sup> George du Maurier to Thomas Armstrong, July 1862, and George du Maurier to Thomas Armstrong, October 1863, quoted in Daphne du Maurier (ed.), *The Young George du Maurier: A Selection of his Letters, 1860-67*, 161 + 216.

<sup>572</sup> Prinsep quoted in Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, vol. I, 164.

we have seen, the Pre-Raphaelite label was problematic from its inception and it continued to mean different things to different critics during the course of the nineteenth century. Claxton's caricature *The Choice of Paris: An Idyll* depicts a contemporary perception of Pre-Raphaelitism as a method of extreme scrutinising and 'mirroring' of the natural world, a point Claxton emphasises with the central placement of the looking-glass (an acknowledgment of the object as a Pre-Raphaelite motif in 1860) as well as the use of opera glasses and a magnifying glass to capture microscopic details. At the time of Claxton's picture, however, the P.R.B. had already dissolved and the original leaders were exhibiting different stylistic inclinations, further complicating the term; Rossetti's sensual, Titianesque *Bocca Baciata*, Hunt's meticulously rendered *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* (fig.171) and Millais's *The Eve of St. Agnes* a few years later (1863, fig.172) are markedly different in style and content, dissimilarities continued to widen over the years. In terms of categorising of Pre-Raphaelitism through visual language, who (or what) can be considered Pre-Raphaelite was to a certain extent open-ended in the nineteenth century although contemporary associations with the label tended to prioritize Rossetti and his circle, a word-association that misses Hunt's significant contribution to what would become a Pre-Raphaelite signifier through the early 1900s.

Acknowledging the impact of Pre-Raphaelitism on British art, nineteenth-century critics Quilter and Bate attempted to categorise Pre-Raphaelite followers and sympathizers into different groups using a classification system based on identifying the different stylistic trends of the original P.R.B. leaders. However, as discussed in the introductory chapter, Bate singles out Rossetti as the stylistic source behind of the later strands of nineteenth-century Pre-Raphaelitism (identifying these as Rossetti Tradition I and Rossetti Tradition II<sup>573</sup>). Bate notes that the varied number of artists during the course of the nineteenth century who demonstrated aspects of Pre-Raphaelitism in their *oeuvre* is proof of the P.R.B.'s profound impact on modern British art, but he nevertheless emphasises Rossetti's influence and explains that the public had come to associate the term Pre-Raphaelite with Rossetti's later works and those by his associate Burne-Jones.<sup>574</sup> Quilter divides Pre-Raphaelite followers into three groups: 1) Contemporary artists who were associated with, though not actually members of the original Brotherhood, including Windus, Hughes and Sandys; 2) The 'New Pre-Raphaelites' such as Burne-Jones, Morris and the writer Walter Pater as well as their followers including Stanhope, Evelyn de Morgan, and Strudwick; and 3) Artists who briefly experimented with Pre-Raphaelitism, those 'who were only partially or temporarily led astray (or put on the right path) by the Pre-Raphaelite idea'<sup>575</sup> such as Brett, Poynter and Prinsep. Quilter humorously describes artists in this last category as 'catching' Pre-Raphaelitism ('At one time [. . .] the disease was so catching, so prevalent, that it was happily

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<sup>573</sup> Bate, 99 + 107.

<sup>574</sup> Bate, 7-8.

<sup>575</sup> Quilter, 68.

dubbed the pre-Raphaelite measles'),<sup>576</sup> and observed that most artists in the mid-late nineteenth century 'caught' P.R.B.'ism sickness at one time or another,<sup>577</sup> a case in point being the appearance of Pre-Raphaelite mirrors in the works of genre artists Sadler, Kilburne, Hardy, and Glindoni or in the works of Orpen with his emphasis on the self-referencing convex glass.

In the early twentieth century Orpen repeatedly used the convex mirror with the same Pre-Raphaelite placement on the back wall to reflect the viewer's space, frequently with the objective of including a reflection of himself in the glass (see figs.173-174). The mirror's position and the emphasis on reflecting narrative or figures in the viewer's space is an orientation towards the Pre-Raphaelite mirror in spite of the fact that Orpen, with his scenes of twentieth-century life and images of World War I, is not a proponent of Pre-Raphaelism. In twentieth-century academic literature, Orpen's *The Mirror* (refer back to fig.104) is often interpreted as a quotation from Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*,<sup>578</sup> an attribution that is certainly correct but one that forgets the persistence through the century of Hunt's reinterpretation of Van Eyck's mirror and disregards the complexity and prominence of the motif (not to mention the self-portrait of the artist at his easel also recalls Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, which in turn was referencing the Van Eyck from a later vantage point). Ultimately, Orpen's *The Mirror* constitutes one image within a continuum of mirrors that stem from Hunt and Rossetti's reinvigoration of the object that in turn acknowledges the original mirrors of Van Eyck, Titian, Memling, and Velázquez.

Applied to a structure of intermirrortality and Pre-Raphaelite categorisation, Esther Wood's more generous assessment of who should be included in the Pre-Raphaelite sphere of influence is a helpful departure point for thinking about the permeable boundaries of the Pre-Raphaelite label with regard to mirror representation. Wood argues that it was too difficult to define Pre-Raphaelism as it had obviously influenced such stylistically different artists.<sup>579</sup> She does identify a list of those associated with Hunt, Millais and/or Rossetti during the years 1848-58 (Shields, Prinsep, Stanhope, Burton, Hughes, and Martineau to name a few), but insists they should be seen as independent artists in their own right rather than how they relate to the initial P.R.B. ideas:

To claim them as merely, or chiefly, satellites drawn into the orbit of genius, or as forming a distinct and coherent school, would be both foolish and unjust. To

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<sup>576</sup> Quilter, 79

<sup>577</sup> Quilter, 79

<sup>578</sup> See for example Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Art,' Francis O'Gorman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). 'The circular mirror, with its reflection of the artist at his easel, is borrowed from van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*, and the placement of the seated figure in profile against a flat back wall instantly recalls Whistler's famous portrait of his mother, by this date a modernist icon in the French national collection' (Prettejohn, 213); Carola Hicks, *Girl in a Green Gown: The History and Mystery of the Arnolfini Portrait* (London: Vintage, 2012), 214. Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design & Decoration in the Aesthetic* (London: V&A Publications, 2010), 212; Anne Gray, *George W. Lambert Retrospective: Heroes and Icons* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia; Seattle, Washington, D.C.: University of Washington Press, 2007), 132.

<sup>579</sup> Esther Wood, 124.

attempt an estimate of their relative merit independent of, or in proportion to, the artistic work of the Brotherhood, would be no less invidious than unprofitable.<sup>580</sup>

Nevertheless, the title of her book privileges Rossetti, a position that corroborates Ruskin's 1883 lectures on Pre-Raphaelitism given at Oxford in which he referred to Hunt as Rossetti's disciple.<sup>581</sup>

Significantly, in the Oxford lectures Ruskin classifies Hunt and Rossetti together rather than demarcating them as strictly opposing schools of thought. Ruskin labels Hunt and Rossetti as 'realists,' distinguishing between their style of painting and that of the 'mythic school' exemplified by Burne-Jones and Watts. Ruskin explains the distinction between 'realist' and 'mythic' as relating to Hunt and Rossetti's approach of grounding the intangible and the spiritual in the physical world of materials compared to Burne-Jones's and Watts's penchant for illustrating more general, abstract ideas. It is this system of grounding and representing spiritual concepts in the familiar and the physical, what Chris Brooks identifies as 'symbolic realism' and what Esther Wood describes as Rossetti's 'insatiable symbolism and his acutely realistic detail; his remoteness of vision, and his keen alertness to present and actual things'<sup>582</sup> that is particularly helpful when thinking about the Pre-Raphaelite mirror and what exactly a *Pre-Raphaelite* mirror is as opposed to other contemporary mirror representations.

Keeping in mind the fusion of material and immaterial components in the mirrors of Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* and Rossetti's *Lady Lilith*, a comparative consideration of other nineteenth-century mirror pictures highlights the uniqueness of the Pre-Raphaelite motif. As mentioned earlier, several nineteenth-century genre painters, notably Sadler, Kilburne, and Hardy adopted the mirror as a *leitmotif* and, given the consistency of the imagery in their works, it is worth thinking about these in the context of what constitutes a Pre-Raphaelite mirror – the intentional use of the object to convey narrative through reflection, symbolism, or psychological depth rather than appearing merely as a decorative feature to delineate the modernity (or historic characteristics) of an interior.

For instance, compare Hardy's mirrors in *Children Playing at Doctors* (1863, fig.175) and *After the Party* (1871, fig.176). Both are pictures of modern life in the middle-class home, one depicting children at play and the other focusing on the exhaustion of household staff in a 'behind the scenes' image. With the quite ordinary contemporary settings and characters, neither picture demonstrates particular inspiration from the Pre-Raphaelites aside from the strategically placed convex mirror on the back wall. Both mirrors represent stylish middle-class taste with one in the popular Regency-style surmounted by an eagle and the other a more elaborate girandole with

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<sup>580</sup> Esther Wood, 31.

<sup>581</sup> John Ruskin, *Lectures Given in Oxford* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1883), 6.

<sup>582</sup> Esther Wood, 21.



candelabras attached on either side. The central background position of a convex mirror in a contemporary setting is certainly reminiscent of Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* but the mirror in *Children Playing at Doctors* does little to elaborate upon narrative, symbolism, or spiritual significance. The small reflection of what is ostensibly the viewer's space indicates just enough of the room to create the sensation of two views at once but is otherwise empty of meaningful figures or detail; the mirror is left to function primarily as a decorative object within the overall scheme of a middle-class drawing-room.

The larger girandole mirror in *After the Party*, however, is more sympathetic to Hunt-Rossettian imagery with the shadowy reflection that reveals the butler or footman carrying a tray out of the room. Augmenting the narrative content of the picture, the reflection reveals the man's movement as he pauses to look at the housemaid who has fallen asleep. Connecting the mirror's depths with the external world of the viewer, a gleam of light punctuates the shadowy reflection and unifies the glass surface with the accompanying candles and light from what a partially open door located in the viewer's space (presumably leading to the downstairs kitchen). The mirror's placement and reflection positions the viewer in the place of the servant carrying the tray, a composition that looks back not only to Van Eyck but also to the more recent and well-known Hunt's *Lady of Shalott* and Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* with their strategically placed reflections of male figures. Similar to Lancelot in Hunt's pictures and the men reflected in Lucrezia's mirror, the male servant in the mirror becomes the viewer's virtual stand-in, representing the accessible point of entry for engaging with the work from an inner standing-point.

Rather than demonstrating a move towards a more Pre-Raphaelite conception of the mirror, however, like Quilter's measles analogy Hardy briefly experiments with the Pre-Raphaelite mirror before returning to his earlier style of mirror representation. The following mirror image in Hardy's work is found ten years later in *The Piano Tuner* (1881, fig.156), and it repeats the style and function of the gilt mirror in *Children Playing at Doctors*. The only reflection in the Regency-style mirror is a glow of light from the nearby window and the shadowy outlines of the rest of the room situated behind the viewer, but implications of communicating with the viewer though narrative, symbolic attributes, or allusions to psychological depth are absent.

The proliferation of convex mirrors in the works of Kilburne, Hardy and Sadler illustrate the difference between the mirror as a Pre-Raphaelite motif and the mirror used primarily as a household object to convey the authenticity of the interior depicted. The historical genre painter Kilburne is particularly prolific in his repeated use of the empire-style convex mirror that he places on the back wall of his pictures (see figs.177-178) but they predominantly figure as part of an interrelated visual structure to portray an eighteenth-century or contemporary setting, quite the opposite of Hunt and Rossetti's anachronistic mirrors that take on a mythical intensity. Kilburne's *Taking Tea* (1876, fig.179) exemplifies this use of the mirror for while the viewer can discern part of the interior décor in our 'space,' the reflection is not clearly delineated enough to communicate

concealed narrative or symbolic details. Taken within the context of the picture, the mirror does little more than the tapestry, the eighteenth-century costume, powdered hair or beauty spot to suggest the setting. In this case, as with many mirrors featured in historical genre scenes by Kilburne and Sadler, the convex mirror is apropos to its eighteenth-century setting rather than standing out as a modern statement piece through its form or reflection, as a visual device that conflates the spiritual and physical worlds, or the inner experience of the figures as seen in examples of Pre-Raphaelite imagery (of course not every mirror by an artist associated with Pre-Raphaelitism conforms to this particular representation, but it is nevertheless a potent use of the object that echoes throughout the movement).

In a rare instance of a Kilburne mirror displaying Pre-Raphaelite influence, however, *The Piano Lesson* (1871, fig.180) features a convex mirror in a contemporary genre scene of a mother and daughter at the piano. Although the composition cuts off the upper half of the mirror, not only is the mother's head seen in the reflection (impossible with the mirror at such a distance above her) but Kilburne also includes a gentleman sitting by a fireplace opposite the two figures by the piano. The incongruous reflection in *The Piano Lesson* recalls the odd spatial arrangement in Hunt's earlier *Il Dolce Far Niente* as well as Rossetti's mirror imagery with its illogical reflections. Kilburne's mirror operates within the continuum of Pre-Raphaelite intermirrornality and follows shortly after Solomon's *A Youth Relating Tales to Young Ladies* in 1870 (refer back to fig.102) in which the convex mirror reflects the artist's easel in the viewer's space. *The Piano Lesson* is one of a number of mirrors that appear in paintings produced in 1871 including Tenniel's illustrations for *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, Lucy Madox Brown's *The Fair Geraldine, or The Magic Mirror*, Cornelius Agrippa showing the Fair Geraldine in a Magic Mirror to the Earl of Surrey (fig.181), and Hardy's *After the Party*, all of which demonstrate Pre-Raphaelite influence and utilise reflections that face outwards from the canvas. Laura Tadema-Epps's *The Mirror* of the following year (fig.182) contains a self-portrait of the artist at her easel seen in the reflection of a convex mirror; the fact that she trained with Madox Brown heightens the significance of the optical choice within the scheme of Pre-Raphaelite intermirrornality.<sup>583</sup> Thus, in 1871 Kilburne's use of the mirror to reveal unseen details in the viewer's space via reflection is hardly novel, nor does he add anything new to the conversation of mirrors, but his convex glass with the revealing reflection suggests an awareness of the Pre-Raphaelite method of representation that had not featured in nineteenth-century painting prior to the 1850s and exemplifies the diffusion of the P.R.B. mirror that encourages the viewer to look more closely at the image. Does one instance of a Pre-Raphaelite inspired mirror make Kilburne (or Epps-Tadema whose other images of mirrors are more conventional and do

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<sup>583</sup> Hannah Pennock, 'Cousins and Colleagues: The Lives of Hendrik Willem Mesdag and Lawrence Alma-Tadema,' *Van Gogh Museum Journal* (1996): 56-75.

not interact with the viewer) a candidate for a position within the Pre-Raphaelite canon? No, but it does indicate the varied influence of Pre-Raphaelitism and contributes to the nineteenth-century visual dialogue of intermirrorness.

While it is possible that pictures such as Hardy's *The Piano Tuner*, Kilburne's *Piano Lesson*, or George Dunlop Leslie's *Roses* (1880, fig.183) suggest nothing more than a realistic representation of contemporary interior décor, and, indeed, most genre pictures that contain a mirror fall into this category, the repeated mirror presence and particular shape and placement indicates an awareness of the Pre-Raphaelite-mediated Van Eyck mirror and, as I have stated, by the mid-century any reference to the Van Eyck mirror inherently carries with it a Pre-Raphaelite re-interpretation of the work the blending of spiritual and physical in a modern glass. Following on from Hunt's widely recognized 1857 Moxon *Lady of Shalott* and the additional mirrors he and Rossetti produced in the 1850s and 1860s, awareness of the Van Eyck would have been inextricably associated with the Pre-Raphaelite mirror. Even if an artist like Hardy or Orpen, as mentioned earlier, was not intentionally working within a specific Hunt or Rossetti style, by the late nineteenth century was it actually possible for an artist to represent a mirror in the central background of a picture that reflects the viewer's space and *not* have it reference the Pre-Raphaelites?

This raises the question of the artist's intentional use of the mirror when considering what is, or is not, a Pre-Raphaelite mirror. For instance, a change in mirror imagery is apparent between Egley's late 1850s and early 1860s P.R.B.-inspired works and his later eighteenth-century costume pictures; the distinctive use of the circular mirror in his 1858 *Lady of Shalott* and *The Tree's Inclined* (1861, fig.184) contrasts with the mirror in his 1871 *Scene from Molière's 'La Malade Imaginaire'* (fig.185). Egley exhibited the *Lady of Shalott* at The British Institution less than a year after the publication of the Moxon Tennyson and, as we have seen, critics at the time alluded to Egley's source material with one describing the work as an example of 'flagrant Pre-Raphaelitism'.<sup>584</sup> Although Egley positions the glass to the left side of the pictorial space rather than the background, the circular modern mirror in the medieval setting recalls Hunt's design. Egley creates a pause in the narrative with the mirror for, angled towards the viewer, it reflects Lancelot outside the Lady's window but, rather than shown riding past, Lancelot has stopped to return our/the Lady's gaze. The mirror itself is a curious object with the size, shape and green drapery resembling a fantastically embellished contemporary toilet glass but the transparent edges of the elaborate gold frame and the awkward angle of the glass create a disconcerting effect. Not well received when it was exhibited ('a work of which, under the present circumstances, the less

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<sup>584</sup> 'British Institution,' *The Athenaeum*, 1581 (February 13, 1858), 213-214; 214.

said the better'<sup>585</sup>), Egley's picture nevertheless marks an early reference to Hunt with the anachronistic glass and the use of reflection to fill in missing narrative content and characters.

Egley's contemporary setting in *The Tree's Inclined* also utilises the mirror and in this case Egley represents the modern, fashionable, gilt convex mirror of the 1860s in the central background of the picture. The mirror alludes to Van Eyck with its shape, position, and reflection of the viewer's space as well as the predominant red and green colour scheme of red draperies and green wallpaper. While the Van Eyck mirror and the Hunt-derived Pre-Raphaelite interpretation of it are inextricably linked, Egley's earlier mirror in *The Lady of Shalott* as well as the spate of mirror imagery produced the same year ought to be taken into consideration when analysing the Pre-Raphaelite intentions of the picture. Egley's 1861 convex mirror is one of a series of mirrors from around the same time that include Burne-Jones's *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* (1861, fig.186), Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, Solomon's *The Painter's Pleasaunce*, and Hunt's *The Lost Child*, rendering Egley's contemporary depiction well within a sequence of Pre-Raphaelite mirrors.

Egley's picture is a pendant piece to *Just as the Twig is Bent* (fig.187) in which one girl is neglected in favour of her more attractive blonde sister, a narrative that continues in *The Tree's Inclined* via the mirror's reflection: the red-haired sister is not in the picture except in the mirror's reflection where she can be seen sitting alone at the piano watching the animated couple in the pictorial space, a visual and physical displacement that enhances her isolation in a most Pre-Raphaelite mirror use. The small figure located in the viewer's space and reflected in the mirror appears to be looking on thoughtfully as the suitors fans her sister, the mirror-girl's actions mimicking this gesture as she holds a sheet of music up to her face. Accompanied by a clock under a glass dome that emphasises her loneliness with passing time, the solitary figure is represented as trapped in glass, cut off from meaningful engagement with the larger, brighter, 'real' world of the two figures. Although unremarkable in size and its middle-class surrounding, Egley's mirror functions in the same way as Hunt's magic mirror - as an essential component to reading the picture while also establishing a role for the viewer within the narrative of the image (joining the girl in observing the couple's flirtation). By contrast, Egley's mirror ten years later in *Scene from Molière's 'La Malade Imaginaire'* reduces the mirror's function to a decorative attribute that contributes to the eighteenth-century setting. The gilt rococo mirror lacks a visible reflection and recalls Hogarth's earlier mirror images instead of one engaging with a Pre-Raphaelite emphasis, perhaps suggestive of the end of Egley's bout of Pre-Raphaelite 'measles'.

#### **Burne-Jones: 'a mirror worthy of Van Eyck'<sup>586</sup>**

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<sup>585</sup> 'The British Institution,' *Dublin University Magazine*, 35: 315 (March, 1859), 315-322; 316.

<sup>586</sup> 'A Glimpse of "The Grosvenor,"' *Pall Mall Gazette* (May 2, 1887), 4.

In spite of traditionally being classified as part of the ‘second wave’ of Pre-Raphaelitism that flourished around Rossetti in the 1860s, within the context of Pre-Raphaelite intermirrorality, Burne-Jones with his 1861 and 1862 variations of *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* (figs.186 and 188) is amongst the early circulators of the motif and demonstrates the complexity of Pre-Raphaelite stylistic association. The specific design of the mirror in both versions looks to Hunt and Van Eyck, not Rossetti who he is traditionally aligned with and, while the watercolours correspond to the date of Rossetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia*, they pre-date later significant Pre-Raphaelite mirrors such as Rossetti’s *Lady Lilith* and his sketch for *La Pia de’ Tolomei* (which repeats this design of Burne-Jones’s), and Hunt’s *Il Dolce Far Niente* and the absence of reflection in *Fanny Holman Hunt*, as well as Whistler’s *Little White Girl*.

Burne-Jones’s two watercolour versions of *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* both feature a Van Eyck-derived convex mirror prominently placed on the back wall between the two titular figures. The twelfth-century legend of Rosamund and Eleanor appealed to the Pre-Raphaelites with its medieval damsel-in-distress and tragic ending: Rossetti, Sandys, Emma Sandys, Evelyn DeMorgan, Cowper, Hughes, and Waterhouse all experimented with the subject of Eleanor of Aquitaine taking revenge on her husband’s mistress, Rosamund Clifford. In the legend, Henry II hides Rosamund in a tower at the centre of a maze but the jealous queen uses a red thread to find her, a tactic that recalls Theseus and the Minotaur in Greek mythology, and, like Theseus, Eleanor overcomes her prey at the centre of the maze. Rosamund’s death is always played offstage in the Pre-Raphaelite pictures of the tale and the artists instead typically emphasise either Rosamund’s embowered isolation or the climactic moment of confrontation between the two women.

Burne-Jones’s watercolours depict the moment Eleanor surprises Rosamund, hidden away in her shadowy tower like a Lady of Shalott figure and depicted as the innocent of the two women - her passive shrinking figure contrasts with Eleanor’s aggressive stance. The mirror in both versions of *Fair Rosamund* is taken from Van Eyck by way of Hunt’s 1850 drawing. The placement on the back wall, the central glass globe with accompanying roundels, and the single burning candle all might indicate that Burne-Jones looked solely to Van Eyck, but the detail of the surrounding discs represented as mirrors, rather than painted scenes in addition to his proximity by that point to original members of the P.R.B., suggests the possibility that Burne-Jones was thinking about Hunt’s earlier treatment of the Van Eyck mirror. I argued in Chapter One that Hunt’s roundels in the 1850 drawing can be interpreted as individual magic mirrors, each reflecting a moment from Tennyson’s narrative, the final three exhibiting surface cracks which correspond to the fractures in the larger mirror. As we have seen, in Hunt’s re-imagining of the Van Eyck, the painted roundels that depict scenes of Christ’s suffering and crucifixion are mirrors that enable the viewer, ‘like some bold seer in a trance’,<sup>587</sup> to see the Lady’s past

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<sup>587</sup> Tennyson, ‘The Lady of Shalott’ (1842) part 4, stanza 2, verse 2.

weaving, the moment Lancelot ‘flash’d into the crystal mirror’ and foretell her ultimate demise before she has leaves her tower.<sup>588</sup>

Unlike Hunt’s mirror in the 1850 *Lady of Shalott*, however, Burne-Jones’s series of mirrors that reflects the queen’s advancing profile appear at first to be more straightforward and stripped of any magical properties that could convey past, present or future events. That is, until we stop to consider that the small mirrors on the right side of the object ought to reflect the corresponding interior space and reveal Rosamund’s retreating figure. Burne-Jones’s mirror is perhaps not quite so uncomplicated after all for while the mirror may not be overtly magical like Hunt’s mirror in *The Lady of Shalott*, instead of reflecting the interior space and figures as would be expected, it behaves as an independent entity that multiplies the Queen’s head to create a sensation of the of the vengeful wife as a mythical many-headed monster approaching her victim. The small mirrors on the right reveal light coming in through a window but Rosamund, soon to be written out of the story, is left completely out of the reflection, a tactic both Hunt and Rossetti use in subsequent images. Burne-Jones’s sketch for the mirror (fig.189) indicates this is a deliberate series of reflections, a creative choice to use the mirror to convey emotional depth through the Queen’s virtual likeness with its multiple Cerberus-like heads.

Like Hunt’s images of women with mirrors, Burne-Jones subverts any preconceived interpretations of vanity in *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* by repeating the dynamic seen in *The Awakening Conscience* and *The Lady of Shalott*: both women turn away from the mirror. Burne-Jones, like Hunt, privileges the viewer’s interaction with the mirror’s reflection rather than that of the figures in the work, a position that sets up a dynamic interface between the viewer and the picture (a structure he does not always follow as demonstrated by the ambiguous 1875 *The Mirror of Venus*, fig.190)<sup>589</sup> As both Hunt and Rossetti demonstrate, a subject’s interaction with their accompanying mirror and their position facing either towards or away from the glass can contribute to a reading of their psychological or spiritual state. Considering that Burne-Jones’s Rosamund is again depicted facing away from the larger mirror on the back wall and, in the 1861 version her hand mirror has dropped to the floor, she is absolved from being frozen in a moment of endless vanity, contemplating herself for eternity like Rossetti’s *Lady Lilith* or *Fazio’s Mistress*. Although Eleanor does not admire herself in the mirror either, her multiple, compressed reflections allude to the terrifying determination of her murderous intent to overpower the reflection-less Rosamund in a small, enclosed space.

Burne-Jones commissioned his father to make the mirror with the surrounding globes for *Fair Rosamund*,<sup>590</sup> and although Georgiana Burne-Jones notes that he did not like the finished

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<sup>588</sup> Tennyson, ‘The Lady of Shalott,’ part 3, stanza 4, verse 7.

<sup>589</sup> *The Mirror of Venus* has been included in the Appendix under ‘Other’ mirror images, but has not been formally evaluated in this project as the work does not include the mirror as an actual, material object.

<sup>590</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, vol. I, 215.

product we can assume that it was designed around his specifications with the smaller mirrors corresponding to Hunt's 1850 drawing rather than the ten roundels of the original Arnolfini mirror. Burne-Jones's second version of *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* one year later is simplified: domestic accessories are pared down to create a stark interior that emphasises Rosamund's isolated entrapment as she struggles against the Queen's threads. In addition to the mirror's design and the snare of threads, there is a similarity between Hunt's 1850 *Lady of Shalott* and Burne-Jones's characterisation of Rosamund in her tower with long loose hair and her simple, white, medieval dress ('robed in snowy white'<sup>591</sup>). The curse that comes upon her, however, is reflected repeatedly in the mirrors rather than kept at a mysterious remove. In a rather simplistic rendering of innocence versus evil, the Queen and Rosamund are characterised by black and white (in spite of the possible moral ambiguity implied, certainly in the nineteenth century, of a mistress caught by the wife). And, perhaps in an effort to render the intentional reflection of the queen with more clarity, the number of small mirror discs surrounding the central globe in the final version has been reduced to six.

How well Burne-Jones might have known Hunt's 1850 drawing is debatable as there is no direct written evidence to support this but the mirror's design and placement within the work, and details such as Rosamund caught in the Queen's cords in the 1862 version, in addition to circumstantial evidence suggests that Burne-Jones knew Hunt's original drawing rather than the 1857 Moxon Tennyson illustration with its single mirror and assertive, sensuous Lady. Burne-Jones had met Rossetti in 1856 and worked on the Oxford Union murals with him in 1857, lodging with him and William Morris at the time,<sup>592</sup> a period during which Rossetti would have also been working on his designs for the Moxon Tennyson. Staley argues that it is highly likely Burne-Jones would have been familiar with Hunt's *The Lady of Shalott* drawing for not only was it a point of contention between Rossetti and Hunt but, as discussed previously, their friend Coventry Patmore owned the work<sup>593</sup> (ostensibly after his wife persuaded Hunt to let her have the unfinished work)<sup>594</sup>. Patmore had been friends with Hunt, Millais and Rossetti as early as 1849<sup>595</sup> and would have met Burne-Jones during the group's work on the Oxford Union murals.

<sup>591</sup> Tennyson, 'Lady of Shalott,' Part 4, stanza 3, verse 1.

<sup>592</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, vol. I (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1904), 160.

<sup>593</sup> Allen Staley, *The New Painting of the 1860s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 302; note 26, p.409. Also see Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. II, 28-30, no. D46. The National Gallery of Victoria catalogues the drawing as given by Hunt to either Coventry Patmore or his wife; see *The Pre-Raphaelites and their Circle in the National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1978), 43. Also Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 101-102.

<sup>594</sup> 'A friend and his wife came to my studio, I showed them this embryo design [. . .] and the lady expressing a great liking for it, begged it of me [. . .] I yielded on the condition that it should not be shown publicly'. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 73 + 75. (Previously discussed in Chapter One as a point of contention between Hunt and Rossetti)

<sup>595</sup> See Basil Champneys, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Coventry Patmore*, vol. I (London: George Bell and Sons, 1900), 82-83. See p.83 for a quotation from W.M. Rossetti that they all spent a lot of time

Burne-Jones was certainly familiar with Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* and, as noted in Chapter One, he would say later in life that he had always longed to do a painting like the *Arnolfini Portrait*.<sup>596</sup> His wistful statement belies the critical review of the portrait of his daughter Margaret (1885-86, fig.191) that affirmed,

If anyone wants an instance [of precision of outline and skill of manipulation], uncomplicated by any strangeness of subject, let him look at the beautiful portrait with the girl's head reflected in a mirror behind, *a mirror worthy of Van Eyck*.<sup>597</sup>

Written in 1887 when the work was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, the comparison with Van Eyck's mirror suggests an underlying consciousness of these visual Pre-Raphaelite quotations and their source material amongst the art-going public, underscoring the recognition of a motif-based dialogue between Burne-Jones and Van Eyck. The large halo-like convex mirror behind Margaret's head recalls both Hunt's *Lady of Shalott* as well as Brown's *Take Your Son, Sir!* and, like the Arnolfini mirror, reflects the sitter's private interior space and the world beyond just visible through the window. Georgiana Burne-Jones identified the reflected space as Margaret's bedroom, 'recognisable in minute detail to those who knew it',<sup>598</sup> a format seen a decade earlier in Rossetti's *La Bella Mano*. Exhibited at the same time at the Grosvenor was Burne-Jones's informal portrait of *Katie Lewis* (1886, fig.192) that depicts her lying on a sofa reading a book and, alongside his portrait of Margaret, includes details from the *Arnolfini Portrait*. Between the two works, Burne-Jones captures the significant convex mirror and its reflection, bed hangings, the little dog, and an orange; Van-Eyckian imagery translated to contemporary life.

Burne-Jones's design for the mirror in *Fair Rosamund* and his use of the reflection to reinforce pictorial content aligns him with Hunt with regard to the latter's *The Lady of Shalott* drawing and the *Awakening Conscience* instead of Rossetti, who he is traditionally associated with to the exclusion of Hunt or Millais. Rossetti's mirror from the same time, seen in *Lucrezia Borgia*, draws more from Van Eyck by way of Hunt with its large glass in a Renaissance setting and the reflection that clarifies the content of the work. As we have seen, the details in Rossetti's *Lucrezia* such as the reflection, the red bed hangings, and the oranges suggest that over ten years after the founding of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood the Van Eyck *Arnolfini* was still present in

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together during 1849-1853; Of Hunt, Patmore remembers that he 'attracted me personally more than any of the other Pre-Raphaelites.' (Champneys, 84); Patmore introduced Rossetti to Tennyson in 1854 (84) and paid Rossetti and the group a visit in 1857 during work on the Oxford Union murals to see how it was coming along (86).

<sup>596</sup> E. Burne-Jones to T.M. Rooke, 1897, quoted in Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, vol. II (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1904), 306.

<sup>597</sup> 'A Glimpse of "The Grosvenor,"' *Pall Mall Budget*, 35 (May 5, 1887), 82. Emphasis mine.

<sup>598</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, vol. II, 160.



the minds of Rossetti and his friends. Nevertheless, Burne-Jones's deliberate shape and use of the mirror in these early watercolours are suggestive of an awareness of and response to Hunt's interpretation of Van Eyck rather than Rossetti's.

Although Burne-Jones is classified as a 'second wave' Pre-Raphaelite, part of the artistic circle that grew around Rossetti ('perhaps no painter has been so much influenced by Rossetti'<sup>599</sup>), his mirror treatment in *Fair Rosamund* signifies an early Pre-Raphaelite mirror image that repeats Hunt's iconic design while at the same time, due to the uncanny reflection of the Queen's head and the absence of Rosamund, anticipates Rossetti's later mysterious reflection seen in *Lady Lilith*, the missing figures in the mirror in *La Bella Mano*, Hunt's *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt*, or Whistler's incongruous reflection *The Little White Girl*. As such, Burne-Jones creates a bridge between the original P.R.B. mirrors and those of the later associates and followers through blending together the Van Eyck and Hunt references with his own literal remake of the mirror for the medieval setting and the use of uncanny reflection to heighten the emotional intensity of the scene, a re-presentation of the *Arnolfini* mirror viewed through the lens of Pre-Raphaelite realism, that conflation of truth and myth.

An unfinished work near the end of his life constitutes a return to the mirror motif and signifies that Burne-Jones was still working with the idea of the magic mirror, just as Hunt had returned to his *Lady of Shalott* subject late in life. Capturing what may be Burne-Jones himself before the mirror, *The Wizard* (c.1891-1896, fig.193) depicts a robed and hooded man poised between a convex mirror and a book as he pulls aside a curtain to show a young woman a vision in the glass. Although the mirror is represented in profile rather than turned to face the viewer, the convex bulge of the glass is pronounced enough that we can make out the scene of a ship caught in storm-tossed waves under a dark sky as well as the reflection of windows on the opposite wall in the pictorial space (fig.194). Burne-Jones's mirror thus conveys a seamless fusion of 'real' space with the enchanted glass, the physical with the magical, a metaphor for the Pre-Raphaelite brand of realism that transforms the commonplace and the ordinary into a magical object that blends the real with the spiritual, the seen with the unseen, the symbol and the facilitator of Brooks's symbolic realism. Sharp's retrospective description of Burne-Jones in 1898 sums up this view of modernity through enchanted glass,

What has come to him in the common light of day, he has transmuted into the light of romance: what impelled his thought by its nearness and exigency, his imagination has compelled into a still a remote beauty [. . .] where the confused

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<sup>599</sup> Cosmo Monkhouse, 'A Pre-Raphaelite Collection,' *The Magazine of Art*, 6 (January 1883), 62-70; 69.

and variegated vision of the many is resolved into the controlled and directed vision of the seer.<sup>600</sup>

### **A Pre-Raphaelite Motif**

Burne-Jones's mirror in the two *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* paintings marks a singular instance of the prominence of this specific design in which the globes surround the circular convex glass in the years after Hunt's 1850 drawing, but its appearance in the background of a work by Stanhope the following year further establishes the convex or circular mirror as a Pre-Raphaelite motif and contributes to the visual dialogue of intermirrornality between the P.R.B. and their followers. Stanhope's barely visible mirror quotation from Burne-Jones in his 1863 picture *Juliet and her Nurse* (figs.195-196) is in the shadowy background of the picture and not prominently utilised, noticeable only by the glimmer of light on the glass. Upon closer examination, the convex mirror is indeed surrounded by smaller circular mirrors and is positioned beside a triptych of the Virgin and Child with saints, a mirror arrangement previously seen in Pre-Raphaelite works such as Rossetti's *The First Anniversary of the Death of the Beatrice*.

Rather than employ the mirror's reflection to contribute to the narrative of the work (the reflections in the glass are indistinct but seem to be of furniture, possibly Juliet's bed hangings, and windows), Stanhope's mirror functions more as a subtle but clever artistic nod to Burne-Jones, Hunt, and Van Eyck. The red bed hangings in the background also allude to Van Eyck (and possibly Rossetti's *Lucrezia* as well), while Juliet's characterisation as the embowered maiden at her window, full of anxious longing as she looks through the stained glass windows after Romeo's flight from Verona recalls the Lady of Shalott archetype as well as Millais's *Mariana*. In light of the context of intermirrornality, Stanhope's inclusion of the Burne-Jones mirror is one of several references to the original P.R.B. members as well as Burne-Jones's version of the Hunt/Van Eyck representation.

Within the wider scope of Pre-Raphaelite imagery and the concept of repetition and motif, not only does the Shakespearean subject recall the early P.R.B. pictures but Stanhope includes another reference to Hunt: the nurse's ebony and ivory chair. Hunt notes in his memoirs that he designed a pair of chairs based on an ancient Egyptian stool in the British Museum<sup>601</sup> and although the chairs were not necessarily, in terms of public awareness, a recognisable Pre-Raphaelite motif associated with Hunt when Stanhope painted *Juliet and her Nurse*, Hunt declares that they were popular amongst the P.R.B. members: 'When I showed my small group of household joys to my P.R.B. friends the contagion spread, and Brown, who idolised the Egyptian

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<sup>600</sup> William Sharp, 'Edward Burne-Jones,' *Fortnightly Review*, vol.64, no.380 (August 1898), 289-306; 306.

<sup>601</sup> Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. II, 136.

chairs, set a carpenter to work to make some of familiar proportions.<sup>602</sup> Well-known amongst the Pre-Raphaelite circle, Stanhope's prop would have been recognised as an artistic reference to Hunt, who in turn included it in *Il Dolce Far Niente* which was exhibited three years later, creating a visual public dialogue between the two through the use of decorative detail (see fig.197) and the convex mirror in the background.<sup>603</sup> That the chair is adapted from an Egyptian piece adds to the visual complexity of the source material for *Juliet and her Nurse*, a fusion of contrasting stylistic references that simultaneously include Hunt, Egyptian exoticism, and the Northern Renaissance style of Van Eyck.

Further underscoring the presence of a motif-based dialogue between the early P.R.B. members and their followers, Hunt's Egyptian chair appears again in Millais's *Jephthah* of 1867 (fig.198), a detail that creates an alignment between Hunt, Stanhope and Millais.<sup>604</sup> The repetition of the chair, however, constitutes a limited visual quotation when compared with the circular mirror, an object seen repeatedly through works from Hunt's 1850 drawing to Waterhouse's final illustration of 'The Lady of Shalott' in 1915. Ultimately, the use and re-use of a specific visual detail contributes to its identification as a motif regardless of the problematic plagiarism charges. In either case, the incident illustrates how well the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood artists and those who gathered around Rossetti in the late 1850s<sup>605</sup> knew each other's works in progress and how certain details, such as the use of mirrors, might have been transferred.

### ***The P.R.B. Mirror: Plagiarism or Motif***

While it is conjecture how well this circle of artists in the second wave of Pre-Raphaelitism and their associates knew details of each other's works prior to exhibition, one has to take into account the camaraderie reported in memoirs and letters. For instance, the illustrator George du Maurier wrote enthusiastically of a studio visit to 'the pre-Raphaelite Burne Jones [*sic*]' in the early 1860s in which he described 'It's so jolly this help-each-other-hand-in-glove with brother artist feeling among them';<sup>606</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones recalled seeing a portfolio of Simeon Solomon's drawings in her husband's possession in 1859, indicative of mutual critique of each

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<sup>602</sup> Hunt, 136.

<sup>603</sup> Possibly referring to Stanhope's *Juliet and her Nurse*, Hunt also notes that for *Il Dolce Far Niente* he 'made use of the Egyptian chairs, which, having been borrowed and painted by other artists, were no longer attractive to me for Oriental subjects.' Hunt, 203.

<sup>604</sup> See Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. II, 287-288, Appendix C4. See also Richard Ormond, 'Holman Hunt's Egyptian Chairs,' *Apollo*, 82: 41 (July, 1965), 55-58; Sotheby's Lot Notes for *Juliet and her Nurse*, Lot 69, Sotheby's Sale of Victorian and Edwardian Art (15 November 2011), London: <http://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.69.html/2011/victorian-edwardian-art>.

<sup>605</sup> Morris, Burne-Jones, Prinsep, Solomon, Stanhope, Sandys, Swinburne and, after 1862, Whistler, who moved to nearby Lindsey Row in 1863.

<sup>606</sup> George du Maurier to his mother Ellen du Maurier (February, 1862), Daphne du Maurier (ed.), *The Young George du Maurier: A Selection of his Letters, 1860-67* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1952), 114; Burne-Jones did not hyphenate his name until the 1890s, so Du Maurier's 'Burne Jones' is correct here.

other's work,<sup>607</sup> as well as a copy of the Moxon Tennyson as a source of inspiration for Burne-Jones.<sup>608</sup> In terms of a visual response to one another's work and the openness of viewing works in progress, the artist George Leslie describes a visit to Burne-Jones's studio in the early 1860s, noting that one of his pictures in progress was of 'a young lady lying on her bed on St. Valentine's Day and Cupid putting his head in at the window; with mirror on the wall, and the servant setting out the breakfast reflected in it.'<sup>609</sup> The work by Burne-Jones with the mirror reflecting the servant in the viewer's space is unknown but Leslie's description indicates that any visitors to Burne-Jones's studio would have seen the work and also suggests something of the source material and development of Burne-Jones's mirror treatment from *Fair Rosamund*. The description certainly relates to Hunt's 1857 *Lady of Shalott* and Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* with the singular large mirror, in addition to a possible reference to the Venetian inspiration for Rossetti: the image of a cupid, a reclining Venus-figure, and a mirror on the back wall that reflects narrative content, resembles Tintoretto's *Mars and Venus Surprised by Vulcan* (c.1555, fig.199) that had been in English collections until 1840.

A falling out between Frederick Sandys and Rossetti in the late 1860s raises the question of artistic exchange in terms of acknowledgment through motif versus plagiarism and highlights evidence that the artists in Rossetti's circle were familiar with each other's works (and mirrors). Sandys lived with Rossetti at Cheyne Walk in 1866-67, during which time Rossetti would have been at work repainting the figure in *Lucrezia Borgia* from the original dark-haired model to Cornforth's blonde sensuous features as well as working on both *Lady Lilith* and *The Return of Tibullus to Delia*. The argument in question has to do with artistic plagiarism, namely whether or not Sandys had copied Rossetti's idea for the mirror in the *Lucrezia* picture, the large modern variety that faces the viewer and reveals her husband's poisoning. Upon learning that he was designing a *Lucrezia* picture that depicted her with poison and the large mirror's narrative reflection, Rossetti wrote Sandys immediately to enquire (accuse) about the picture.<sup>610</sup> Sandys sent Rossetti a strong retort, declaring 'nothing in my life ever gave me more pain than your letter of Tuesday. It is utterly and completely without foundation,' and argued 'You must say how far this is your idea – how far it is the notion of your picture which by the way I have never seen –

<sup>607</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, vol. I, 260.

<sup>608</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, vol. I, 157.

<sup>609</sup> Letter from George Leslie to Graham Storey, quoted in Gladys Storey, *All Sorts of People* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd, 1929), 58. Fiona MacCarthy first drew my attention to this quotation in *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2012), 120.

<sup>610</sup> D.G. Rossetti to Frederick Sandys (10 May 1869), William E. Fredeman (ed.), *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Chelsea Years, 1863-1872*, (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 2004), 180; also D.G. Rossetti to Charles Augustus Howell (15 May 1869), 182-183.

only the photograph. I say it is not.<sup>611</sup> The two argued back and forth during the spring of 1869, during which Rossetti reminded Sandys ‘I remember clearly showing you the watercolour and your looking at it for some time just about a year ago when I repainted the figure in it.’<sup>612</sup>

While Sandys never mentions the mirror, Rossetti emphasises that his use of the mirror is what makes his version of Lucrezia unique:

my claim was based mainly on the mirror and reflection of figures in the background, as combined with the subject. This point, according to the description given me (and since on inquiry confirmed), was identical in my design and yours.<sup>613</sup>

Rossetti also brings up two other instances of Sandys’s works bearing a remarkable similarity to his own, his pictures of Mary Magdalene and Helen of Troy, and suggests that perhaps Sandys did not mean to plagiarise and that it was instead an unconscious reference on his part;<sup>614</sup> in either case, it is indicative of furthering the Pre-Raphaelite mirror treatment. Rossetti’s claim to the unique use of the mirror is hardly substantiated given Hunt’s prior work, but originality of that object married with that particular subject is more arguable. The Helen and Magdalene works (see figs.200-201 for the Magdalene comparison) are similar in conception, particularly the position of the Magdalene with her loose red hair clutching her alabaster jar of perfume, but rather more remarkable is the overt borrowing of Rossetti’s figure of Delia from *The Return of Tibullus to Delia* who is depicted biting a lock of hair in boredom and frustration in the watercolours of 1851 and 1867-68 (figs.202-203). Sandys’s *Proud Maisie* (1868, fig.204) as well as the woodcut illustration to Christina Rossetti’s poem ‘If’ in 1866 (fig.205), shows the figure in an identical attitude of bored hair-biting. Rossetti does not mention *Proud Maisie* but the exchange ends with Sandys terminating the friendship between the two.<sup>615</sup>

The respective mirror quotations by Sandys, Stanhope, and Burne-Jones in the 1860s and the female figure biting a strand of hair exemplify what would become a growing number of references to Hunt and Rossetti by artists in the 1860s and 1870s, followed by a resurgence of visual signifiers of Pre-Raphaelitism again in the 1890s. At what point does a feature in Hunt and

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<sup>611</sup> Frederick Sandys to D.G. Rossetti (15 May 1869). Unpublished letter in the collection of the University of British Columbia Library, Vancouver. See Joanna Karlgaard, ‘Frederick Sandys and Victorian Illustration,’ PhD Dissertation, University of Bristol (2013), 277-286; 278.

<sup>612</sup> D.G. Rossetti to Frederick Sandys (1 June 1869), W.M. Rossetti (ed.), *Rossetti Papers, 1862 to 1870* (London: Sands & Co., 1903), 442-443.

<sup>613</sup> D.G. Rossetti to Frederick Sandys (1 June 1869), W.M. Rossetti (ed.), 442-443.

<sup>614</sup> D.G. Rossetti to Frederick Sandys (10 May 1869), W.M. Rossetti (ed.), 180; also see the letter dated 1 June 1869, 442-443.

<sup>615</sup> ‘you have told me spontaneously that you “resign my friendship,” D.G. Rossetti to Frederick Sandys (1 June 1869), W.M. Rossetti (ed.), *Rossetti Papers*, 443; William Michael does give an epilogue to the episode: years later, around 1880, Sandys wanted to be friends again and while Rossetti was open to the suggestion the two never met again (441).

Rossetti's pictures become a motif or a visual tradition? Rossetti may not have intended his figure of Siddall as Delia chewing on a piece of hair to become a 'motif' as such, but by Sandys repeating the image at various times during his career after his brief residence at Cheyne Walk, it becomes a signifier of Rossetti and Sandys's use of it becomes part of a visual dialogue between himself and Rossetti. Comparative to Rossetti employing Dürer's water cistern and basin as a motif in his own work by repeating, thus establishing a visual association between the two, the re-appearance of the circular mirror in pictures of 1860s, 1870s, and particularly the 1890s creates a visual association with the circular mirrors seen in Hunt and Rossetti's works.

The transformation of a visual component in one work into a [plagiarised] motif through its later overt use by another artist was, as we have seen with Hunt's chair or Rossetti's figure biting her hair, not limited to the mirror.<sup>616</sup> The appearance of other motifs, be it flowers, a subject such as the embowered medieval tragic heroine, or a fabric pattern (see figs.206-209 that demonstrate a clear line of visual connection between Giuliano Romano, Burne-Jones, and Cowper), through the Pre-Raphaelite movement proves useful in terms of a comparison with mirror imagery. Contextualising the repetition and exchange of visual dialogue in addition to tracing its development (who was referring to whom? who originated the design or symbol and who uses it later?) provides a comparative sample as well as ultimately highlighting the mirror's frequent, potent appearances through 1915. For instance, as discussed in the previous chapter, Rossetti's 1868 sketch of *La Pia de' Tolomei* with a mirror device that incorporated small mirrors encircling a larger one, with each globe repeating the same reflection, clearly references Burne-Jones's specific use of the mirror in *Queen Eleanor and Fair Rosamund*, itself a reference to Hunt's *Lady of Shalott* and Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*. Presumably Rossetti did not worry about plagiarising Burne-Jones's design and mirror use; perhaps it was as he suggested to Sandys, an unconscious visual reference or acknowledgment.

Plagiarism charges aside, the dissemination of the Pre-Raphaelite mirror is closely linked to the circle of artists who had access to and were familiar with Hunt and Rossetti's works first hand (such as Hunt's privately owned 1850 *Lady of Shalott*), including those relatives and associates who studied under them, thus strengthening the argument for a specifically Pre-Raphaelite visual device. Constituting a significant point of intersection between the original P.R.B. mirrors and evidence of its later influence, Lucy Madox Brown and Emma Sandys both demonstrate a response to Hunt's original mirror. Married to W.M. Rossetti, Lucy had been trained by her father Ford Madox Brown along with Marie Spartali Stillman and Emma Sandys (the sister of Frederick Sandys), and exhibited with them at the Dudley Gallery in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Her painting, briefly mentioned previously, *The Fair Geraldine, or The Magic Mirror, Cornelius Agrippa showing the Fair Geraldine in a Magic Mirror to the Earl of Surrey* ('a very good

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<sup>616</sup> As noted previously, Marcia Werner has called attention to the repetitive use of *vanitas* imagery (roses, hourglasses, musical instruments) in the works of the P.R.B.

specimen of a modern mediaeval [sic] picture'<sup>617</sup>) is a sixteenth-century subject depicting the wizard Cornelius Agrippa revealing a vision to the Earl of Surrey of his mistress in a magic mirror whose large size, circular shape and supernatural properties echo Hunt's prototype. Subverting the association of vanity that is historically inherent in pictures of women and mirrors, Lucy Madox Brown creates an inversion of this whereby the woman is *in* the mirror and it is the man gazing at her reflection. Oblivious to being watched, Geraldine is not depicted with a mirror herself but is rather engaged in the more intellectual pursuit of reading. Brown takes this one step further than Hunt's *The Lady of Shalott*, for while Hunt's Lady is poised turning away from the mirror, the stance nevertheless implies a relationship with, and response to, the glass. Although she dominates the pictorial space with the large mirror, Geraldine is entirely separate from the mirror and unaware of being watched by both the Earl of Surrey and the viewer.

Fredrick Sandys's sister Emma captures the Pre-Raphaelite dichotomy of a historical setting with modern glass particularly well in *Viola* (c.1867-1877, fig.210), a work depicting the Shakespearean heroine from *Twelfth Night* in Renaissance dress standing in front of a sixteenth-century diamond-pane window casement on the left and a convex mirror on the right (see fig.211). The size of the mirror is not problematic for the sixteenth-century setting but the mirror's design and reflection are intriguing; upon examination, the mirror is the Regency style popular in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, found in numerous paintings of contemporary drawing-rooms from this period as we have seen, *not* an Italian Renaissance design. Set in a frame of gilt and ebonised wood surmounted by an eagle, the mirror reflects a nineteenth-century drawing-room with plush, stuffed furnishings, brilliant red carpet and contrasting green accents, an overmantel mirror and a leopard-skin throw. Incongruous with the sixteenth-century setting, costume, and architectural detail, the mirror's reflection unifies the contemporary viewer's space with the Shakespearean subject and setting. The Shakespearean subject, the use of the mirror's reflection and position in the work, as well as its modernity, reinforces a sense of artistic continuity running from Hunt and Rossetti through the later nineteenth century.

The Birmingham School, an informal grouping of artists in the 1890s in which 'the influence of Burne-Jones is nowhere more patently embodied,'<sup>618</sup> constitutes a significant later point of mirror intersection and transference. Kate Elizabeth Bunce's *Melody* (*Musica*, 1895-97, fig.212) and Meteyard's *I am half-sick of Shadows* both feature solitary figures with convex mirrors in the background that face the viewer and convey information regarding the setting or narrative via reflection. The halo-like placement (albeit off centre) of Bunce's mirror with the reflection of the interior recalls Burne-Jones's portrait of Margaret and Madox Brown's *Take Your Son, Sir!* while the claustrophobic space, profusion of apple blossoms, and the suggestion of music with the lute

<sup>617</sup> 'The Dudley Gallery,' *The Examiner*, no.3339 (January 27, 1872), 95-97; 96.

<sup>618</sup> Aymer Vallance, 'British Arts and Crafts in 1903,' *The Magazine of Art*, 1 (January 1903), 169-173; 172.

relates to Rossettian imagery of the 1860s such as *Bocca Baciata*, *Woman Combing Her Hair*, *The Blue Bower* (1865, fig.213) and *A Christmas Carol* (1867, fig.214). Bunce's figure, swathed in an Arts & Crafts dress reminiscent of William Morris's designs, plays the lute in what appears to be a small chapel – the reflection in the convex mirror, framed in an intricate metalwork pattern of flowers, reveals the viewer's space to be comprised of a crucifix near an open window that opens up onto a landscape of bare tree branches rising out of green foliage (fig.215) Unlike the ambiguous settings and absent narrative in the above works of Rossetti, Bunce's female figure, however solitary and accompanied solely by a mirror, music, and flowers, nevertheless transmits something of the earlier P.R.B. material with the religious iconography present in the crucifix, angels on the wall, and the stained glass window overhead of the Virgin Mary seen in the mirror's reflection, a point of intersection between the spiritual and the materiality of textures, colours, and jewels.

Bunce's colleague Meteyard, who had been friends with Burne-Jones and Morris, produced a stylistically similar variation of the Pre-Raphaelite subject 'The Lady of Shalott' in *I am half-sick of Shadows*' (refer back to fig.168) and, although he includes a large convex mirror that is similar to Bunce's, he changes the setting from medieval to contemporary with the Arts & Crafts dress and hairpin, rendering the convex mirror apropos to the setting. Meteyard's contemporary Lady of Shalott, however, retains an aura of magic with the shadowy reflection in the mirror of the 'two young lovers lately wed,'<sup>619</sup> an illustration choice that anticipates Waterhouse's 1915 picture. Emerging from darkness to appear in the magic mirror as though in a crystal ball, the lovers are lit by moonlight and we can just make out a starry sky and the towers of Camelot in the distance. The Lady's posture of weariness, reclining with closed eyes, and the dominant colour of blue contribute to the sense of oppressive entrapment and loneliness, the full measure of which overcomes her at the sight of the couple as she weaves an image of a golden knight on horseback. Meteyard does include a crystal ball behind her (see fig.216), a detail that further emphasises the magic surrounding the Lady however contemporary she might be, but the dim reflections of light in the crystal render it subordinate to the overwhelming presence of the magical mirror. Derived from Hunt in both subject matter and mirror representation, Meteyard's early twentieth-century interpretation is infused with Rossettian languidness, shallow depth of space that pulls the viewer into the setting, and the rich fabrics and flowers that, like Bunce's *Melody*, recalls Rossetti's works of the 1860s.

### ***Frank Cadogan Cowper***

Like Hunt's Egyptian chair or Rossetti's hair-biting pose, the pattern of repetition and reference to both Rossetti and Burne-Jones in Cowper's works (seen previously in the

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<sup>619</sup> Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott,' Part II, Stanza 4, verse 7.



interlocking Renaissance pattern repeated in *Vanity* and *Venetian Ladies Listening to a Serenade*) suggests there is little doubt that Cowper was deliberately quoting the Pre-Raphaelites in his watercolour version of *Mariana in the South* (1906, fig.217). With the convex mirror on the back wall positioned to face the viewer, Cowper's *Mariana* demonstrates a heavy reliance on Van Eyck but through the lens of the early P.R.B. images of Hunt's *Lady of Shalott* and Brown's *Take Your Son, Sir!* in an image that demonstrates the use of the mirror effectively unifies different strands of Pre-Raphaelitism.

United by the convex mirror on the back wall, quotations from the *Arnolfini Portrait* and early P.R.B. material abound in Cowper's picture: the wooden clogs and dog in the foreground, the swathe of brilliant red and the carved wooden finial are synthesised with an iconic Rossettian type (the richly dressed woman with unbound hair playing a musical instrument in an enclosed space,) and the early P.R.B. subject matter from Tennyson previously painted by both Millais and Rossetti. Mariana, languishing with a pile of old love letters recalls the 1857 Rossetti design for the Moxon Tennyson (not to mention the Waterhouse *Mariana in the South* of 1897, fig. 218, a more contemporary reference), and although she lacks the spiritual intensity of Rossetti's Mary Magdalene characterisation, the pose of lethargy relates to Millais's *Mariana* stretching from her needlework. Her pale face against a blue starry curtain is evocative of the wallpaper in *Take Your Son, Sir!* while the convex mirror that reflects the viewer's space, overly large and modern for a medieval setting, refers to the Van Eyck prototype modified through the Brown and Hunt variations as well as Rossetti's mirrors in *Lucrezia Borgia* and *La Bella Mano*. Unlike the Arnolfini mirror with the figures in the doorway of the viewer's space, Brown's mirror with the contemporary gentleman, Hunt's mirror that reveals Lancelot or Rossetti's mirror in *Lucrezia* that exposes her treachery, Cowper's convex mirror is empty of human life. Instead of a Lancelot/Angelo character type riding away in rejection or the suggestion of a town and other people, the mirror's reflection reveals only the receding floor tiles and the large arched mullion windows suggest an empty grey sky broken up by bits of green foliage; the repetition of tiles, circles and greys in the mirror's surface emphasise her abandonment.

That Cowper's use of the mirror is an intentional Pre-Raphaelite reference (rather than solely a Van-Eyckian homage) is confirmed not only by the example of his other repeated visual citation, the Burne-Jones fabric pattern, but by his fan-like adoration of the original P.R.B. members expressed in a letter to his mother while he was still a student at the Royal Academy. Written in January 1899, he describes visiting the home of Stephens where he viewed Stephens's collection of Pre-Raphaelite pictures, including Millais's original study for *Christ in the House of His Parents* ('the whole house [. . .] is packed with treasures').<sup>620</sup> 'I never had such a time in my

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<sup>620</sup> Frank Cadogan Cowper to his mother, Edith Cowper, 27 January 1899. Royal Academy of Arts Archive, COW/1/a.

life' Cowper enthuses and describes having tea in teacups that had belonged to Christina Rossetti and meeting Coventry Patmore's wife, commenting,

in fact it feels as if we have really dropped into the Pre-Raphaelite world (what there is left of it) at last. It seems awful that they are all either dead or very old, but Mrs Stephens is a delightful sort of Roman matron [. . .] very jolly and never tired of talking especially about the early doings of the P.R.B.<sup>621</sup>

Invited to return to the Stephens's home to see and hear more about the P.R.B., he expresses his serious dedication to Pre-Raphaelitism,

We hope that someday we shall get to know Holman Hunt. But [William Denis] Eden and I daren't say anything about our wanting to follow the P.R.B. seriously until we have done something that we can show them for old Mr Stephens is a very practical old chap being art-critic of *The Athenaeum* and would not listen to us if we only talk, so I want to get my portrait and some drawings done to show them, soon.<sup>622</sup>

Later in the year he would write, in a self-congratulatory tone, that he understood 'the theory of PreRaphaelitism [*sic*] perfectly now, and as far as the method of painting is concerned we [Eden and himself] understand it better than all the P.R.B. (except Millais) did themselves'.<sup>623</sup> Cowper's overt references to Hunt/Van Eyck are indicative of one such interpretation of Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery in the late nineteenth century, a rendering of the modern convex mirror as part of a composite of early P.R.B. references.

### ***William Orpen and Charles Shannon***

a touch of the old pre-Raphaelite spirit seems to live again in the fantastic designs of Mr Charles Ricketts and Mr Charles Shannon.<sup>624</sup>

Shannon and Orpen both use the P.R.B. mirror later in the nineteenth century, demonstrating a motif association by artists posited further outside the Pre-Raphaelite label than those directly associated with the original members such as Burne-Jones or Simeon Solomon. Shannon's use of

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<sup>621</sup> Cowper, *Ibid.*

<sup>622</sup> Cowper, *Ibid.*

<sup>623</sup> Frank Cadogan Cowper to Edith Cowper, 13 August 1899, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, COW 2/1.

<sup>624</sup> 'Art IX. -1. The National Gallery of British Art,' *The Quarterly Review*, 187: 373 (January, 1898), 209-233; 232.

the mirror in particular represents another piece of the puzzle of interrelated mirrors and P.R.B. source inspiration for Shannon and his long-term companion Charles Ricketts owned Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* as well as *Death and the Lovers* (c.1850, fig.219), a drawing that is currently identified as the work of Millais. Thought to be a variation on the Paolo and Francesca tragedy, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge identifies the work as an early Millais based on their belief that the female model is Siddall, a debatable factor when we compare the face of the woman with known depictions of Siddall such as Millais's *Ophelia* (1851-52) or one of Rossetti's many drawings. The pinched angularity of the model's face does not resemble either Siddall or Millais's style, nor does the picture with the encroaching skeleton and somewhat crude style of execution suggest Millais's early work. While the work is most likely incorrectly attributed,<sup>625</sup> what is significant for this study is that Shannon accepted it to be a Millais (and, thus, a Millais mirror). However incorrect, Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* and this piece constitute two instances of convex mirrors [supposedly] from original P.R.B. members owned by Shannon and contribute to the on-going dialogue of influence and response between the early Brotherhood and later artists.

Shannon's mirrors, while not necessarily overt replicas, nevertheless suggest Pre-Raphaelite influence. Shannon's *Tibullus in the House of Delia* (c.1900-1905, fig.220) looks back to the Rossettian subject and incorporates the convex mirror on the back wall in a Titian-esque style of warm rich colours and draping garments set within a shallow space. Unlike Rossetti's previous rendering of the ancient Roman subject, Shannon's depiction recalls *Lucrezia Borgia*, *La Bella Mano*, and Rossetti's toilet pictures of the 1860s that feature Fanny Cornforth in Venetian-inspired scenes. Again, the convex mirror behind Delia's head is halo-like, a quotation from both Rossetti, Madox Brown, and Burne-Jones, and establishes a line of connection between Shannon, Rossetti, and Titian. Shannon does, however, change the P.R.B. mirror construct somewhat for his decision to set the narrative in the sixteenth century renders the mirror appropriate to the setting as seen in Titian's *Woman with a Mirror*, rather than the oversized modern versions often seen in Hunt and Rossetti that are distinctly at odds with their surroundings. As such, the use of a correctly depicted mirror in a historical setting marks a departure from Hunt's prototype but nevertheless there are enough Pre-Raphaelite references in the work, and in particular with the mirror's convex shape and position in the background, to allocate it as a P.R.B. signifier.

Likewise, in *The Bath of Venus* (1898-1904, fig.221) the nude figure is in a pose derived from a Hellenistic sculpture type, Aphrodite Anadyomene (a pose repeatedly used by Waterhouse in particular in yet another motif exchange, see figs. 222-225), and emerges from the water to her waiting attendants, a dynamic in Rossetti's *La Bella Mano* that is particularly evident here with the mirror placement. The garments depicted, however, are not classical but allude rather to the Venetian Renaissance, a setting that is compatible with the size and shape of the mirror (instead it

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<sup>625</sup> Colin Cruise suggests Simeon Solomon as the artist instead of Millais. Colin Cruise to Claire Yearwood, e-mail message on September 2, 2014.

the title that hints at ancient Greece and Rome, a setting that would be at odds the choice of clothing and mirror). Shannon, like Waterhouse (as will I will demonstrate) as well as Hunt and Rossetti before him, manages to combine a series of visual cues and motifs to create a work that draws from seemingly contradictory sources and merges together classical sculpture, Van Eyck, Titian and Rossetti. In spite of the historicism of the subject, the shadowy depths of the reflection contain the suggestion of another figure in the space – possibly the artist/viewer that adds a sense of immediacy to the scene.

Tracing the development of Shannon's mirrors one finds an increasing emphasis on the mirror's reflection, similar to Rossetti's own mirror images throughout his oeuvre. In a letter to Michael Field, Shannon and Ricketts advise that 'mirrors should be allowed to *talk*', and although in this context they were referring to interior décor the concept is applicable to both the Pre-Raphaelite use of mirrors and Shannon's exploration of them.<sup>626</sup> An example of this progression of reflecting the viewer's space, the mirror in Shannon's *Tibullus in the House of Delia* is partially obscured by glasses raised in a toast, but in his *Portrait of Baroness Toinon von Essen* (1912, fig.226), the mirror on the back wall reveals a shadowy reflection of the viewer's space. The arrangement of the subject in profile against red drapery and the convex glass partially hidden by the folds of cloth creates a contemporary setting although jewels, clothing, and scattered flowers at first glance allude to an Aesthetic approach. The reflection in the mirror, however, indicates that she is not isolated like Whistler's *Little White Girl* or that the picture itself devoid of narrative implication for Shannon has depicted himself at his easel in the act of painting her portrait, a tradition that looks back not only to Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* and Velázquez's *Las Meninas* but Sandys's self-referencing easel in his *Portrait of Jane Lewis* as well as Orpen's *The Mirror* of 1900. Like the reflection of Camelot in the Lady of Shalott's mirror, Shannon's convex glass pulls the viewer through the painted world and into the space of figure emerging from the shadows – in this case, the artist himself instead of the mythical Lancelot.

As discussed earlier, Orpen's *The Mirror* overtly references Van Eyck with the simple composition and the minutely delineated interior with two figures reflected in the convex glass. Nevertheless, one has to consider that by 1900 there would have been an association between the Pre-Raphaelite mirror and the Van Eyck, a connection however obliquely realised, that renders Orpen's quote from the Arnolfini at a double remove: the Van Eyck mirror filtered through the lens of Pre-Raphaelitism. Waterhouse's *Destiny* of the same year (fig.227), together with Shannon's *Tibullus* and the pen-and-ink illustrations entitled *The Sphinx* and *The Critic* by illustrator Herbert Cole (1900, figs 228-229) and Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale's '*I Have Married a Wife and Therefore I Cannot Come*' (1900, fig.230) provide a cross-section of comparative

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<sup>626</sup> Ricketts and Shannon to Michael Field, 26 February 1899, in J.G. Paul Delaney (ed.), *Some Letters from Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon to 'Michael Field' (1894-1902)* (Edinburgh: The Tragara Press, 1979), 18. 'Michael Field' was the joint pseudonym of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper.

mirrors that, in addition to Orpen's *The Mirror*, compound the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite adaptation of the Northern Renaissance mirror. While Cole's *The Sphinx* represents a fusion of unlikely details (the classical title, the miniature sphinx, the Renaissance-era globe in the foreground and the ambiguous clothing that could be Renaissance brocade or a William Morris reference), the mirror's design directly refers to Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* and the vision of the skull in the reflection alludes to Dutch *vanitas* iconography. The size of Cole's mirror suggests a modern setting that is more apparent in *The Critic*, while the flat rectangular mirror in Brickdale's image of a woman's vanity ('the form is Dante Rossetti,' a critic observed the picture<sup>627</sup>) calls into question the medieval setting. The identifiable model, the inclusion of his self-portrait, and the reflection in the mirror of his own lodgings highlight the modernity of Orpen's setting, thus positioning the viewer in a personal, contemporary space and giving fresh immediacy to the work, a revelation in glass previously seen images such as Rossetti's *La Bella Mano*, or Burne-Jones's portrait of Margaret.

The subject of Orpen's *The Mirror*, Emily Scoble who was a model from the Slade School of Art, like so many of Hunt and Rossetti's figures as well as Brown's Madonna figure in *Take Your Son, Sir!*, does not interact with the mirror herself but gazes out towards the viewer, a position that underscores the significance of the mirror's reflection for the viewer rather than the subject. Orpen adds a complex series of doubling in the picture by including another convex mirror on the opposite wall as well as a portrait of himself at his easel in the mirror's reflection. Depicted before his easel and looking towards the model (and, by way of the mirror placement, the viewer), Orpen places himself directly in the artwork just as Velázquez had in *Las Meninas* or Van Eyck did with his signature above the mirror. As we have seen, Orpen's self-referencing motif is one he uses repeatedly in his works in addition to his series of self-portraits from 1910 that depict him the act of painting while looking at his reflection in a mirror, including *Self-Portrait or Leading the Life in the West* (fig.231), *Myself and Venus* (fig.233), and the self-titled *William Orpen* (1910, fig.233) which, like Dunn's picture of Rossetti's bedroom, turns the entire painting into a convex mirror. With its detailed reflection of the viewer's space including the additional convex mirror on the opposite wall as well as the figures, *The Mirror* represents a converging of not only a contemporary glass/setting with Van Eyck (much in the same spirit as the earlier P.R.B. images) but also an inescapable association with the mirrors of Hunt and Rossetti.

The Whistlerian composition of *The Mirror* has been remarked upon<sup>628</sup> and it is indicative of Orpen's response to an earlier work (*Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1: Whistler's Mother*, 1871) by an artist who had been a part of Rossetti's circle. If one can make the visual leap

<sup>627</sup> Edith Sichel, 'A Woman-Painter and Symbolism,' *The Monthly Review* (September 1901), 101-114; 109.

<sup>628</sup> See for example Bruce Arnold, *Orpen: Mirror to an Age* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1981),78; Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Art,' Francis O'Gorman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture* (Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 213.

between Orpen and Whistler as intentional, might one not also consider his use of the mirror a reference to the Pre-Raphaelite tradition? Max Beerbohm caricatured Orpen's association with convex mirrors and reflections in *Bravura: Sir William Orpen* (1914, fig.234), a reference that, like Claxton's *The Choice of Paris*, contains the underlying suggestion of recognisable mirror association. The inscription on the picture reads, 'Bravura. Mr. Orpen trying whether it wouldn't be possible to paint, for the Uffizi, one mirror's reflection of another's reflection of a soap-bubble's reflection of himself. May 1914'. Beerbohm's watercolours also feature the mirror in images that poke fun at Rossetti and his circle, such as *Quis Custodiet Ipsum Custodem* (1916, fig.235) that depicts Theodore Watts-Dunton, the novelist Hall Caine, and a corpulent Rossetti depicted lounging with a picture of Jane Morris on one side and a gold-framed convex mirror on the other. Just as Orpen was associated with the mirror, so were the Pre-Raphaelites and although Orpen falls outside the traditional canon of P.R.B. associates, the repetitive inclusion of their motif warrants a reconsideration of his source material.

#### ***A P.R.B. Monogram***

As we have seen, the type of mirror and the reflection in its glass surface can clarify or complicate our reading of what designates an intentionally Pre-Raphaelite mirror, and in light of this we should consider the pictorial framework as a whole and the appearance of mirrors within the artist's *oeuvre* as well its position in a broader range of contemporary imagery. While Stanhope's mirror in *Juliet and her Nurse* does not include the formulaic position and reflection associated with the Pre-Raphaelite mirror derived from Hunt or Rossetti, for instance, the mirror's design is undoubtedly a tribute to Burne-Jones and the re-presentation of Van Eyck's original; although Cowper's mirror in *Mariana* does not reveal figures or surprise narrative in the glass, it is nevertheless an overt reference to the *Arnolfini Portrait* and the early P.R.B. work of Hunt and Madox Brown. While the Pre-Raphaelite mirror most often conveys narrative or symbolic components through the use of reflection, this is not necessarily the case when we take into account Rossetti's early mirrors. An artist whose stylistic orientation is towards Rossetti might reference this variation as a subtle Pre-Raphaelite mirror, as a monogram replacement that stands in for the original P.R.B. signature. Werner argues that the differences between the artists of the Pre-Raphaelite movement is one of emphasis, not theory, and that in fact Pre-Raphaelitism was 'based on a cohesive theory, broad enough to encompass all the individual variations of its members';<sup>629</sup> the inclusion of the mirror with differing points of emphasis reads an example of this when taken in the wider context of an artist's use of mirror imagery.

For example, Simeon Solomon's *The Painter's Pleasaunce* (1861, fig.236), a watercolour of a Renaissance artist painting the portrait of a richly dressed woman, features a convex mirror

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<sup>629</sup> Werner, 13.

positioned in the background next to the gold and red colours of a religious icon. The proximity of the mirror to the triptych (seen in Stanhope's *Juliet and her Nurse*) recalls Rossetti's *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* of 1853 (first exhibited in 1857), and is an arrangement seen in Solomon's *Dante's First Meeting with Beatrice* (1859-63, figs. 237-238) that depicts a large modern rectangular mirror in a medieval setting. In *The Painter's Pleasaunce*, Solomon repeats the earlier Rossetti treatment by leaving the mirror's reflection blank and using a spot of reflected light to delineate the curved surface of the glass. The watercolour incorporates Rossettian-Venetian elements with the women's clothes and auburn hair, and the model leaning back in her chair resembles the late 1850s drawings Rossetti made of Elizabeth Siddall.<sup>630</sup> The small detail of the mirror might be overlooked given its lack of reflection but considering Solomon's close association with Rossetti at the time and the other Pre-Raphaelite indicators present, the convex mirror stands out as an acknowledgment of Rossetti's early work.

In Solomon's second version of *The Painter's Pleasaunce* (c.1862, fig.239), he relocates the circular mirror to the other side of the picture where it takes up residence behind the model's head, replacing the window in his original version. Creating more emphasis on doubling and reflection than in the previous composition, and possibly playing with the idea of the painting itself as a window/mirror, the painter's easel is angled towards the viewer in such a way as to provide an angle of the model similar to Rossetti's *Love's Mirror* while the circular mirror behind her head reflects part of her profile and a window in the viewer's space. Although the convex mirrors in the Solomon watercolours may not reflect a hidden narrative sequence or suggest a psychological state, taken within the context of the picture as a whole the object's location, shape, and placement look back to Rossetti's early works and operates as a P.R.B. monogram.

Likewise, Burne-Jones's mirror in *Pygmalion and the Image: The Soul Attains* (1875-78, fig.240) functions in a similar manner. The subject illustrates the myth of the sculptor who falls in love with the statue he has created, the sculpture of the woman eventually comes to life, and the myth can be read as a commentary on the role of the artist and, by proxy, the mirror itself as it relates to the process of creating a lifelike replica. The only mirror present in Burne-Jones's *Pygmalion* series, the convex glass in *The Soul Attains* is situated on the back wall but positioned on the right hand side at an angle that avoids eye contact with the viewer. The oblique mirror can be read as a meditation on the limitations of the reflected image in contrast to the 'real' figure that becomes an autonomous being, a comparison that translates to the painted image as well. By transforming into flesh and blood, Galatea transcends any shadowy facsimile of herself whether it is caught in glass, paint, or marble. Burne-Jones nevertheless leaves the convex mirror in place, an out-of-place detail for the setting in an inescapable Pre-Raphaelite quotation. A similar mirror construct is found in Burne-Jones's *Dorigen of Bretagne Longing for the Safe Return of Her*

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<sup>630</sup> See also Rossetti's pen and ink *Giorgione Painting* (c.1853, fig.); Rossetti's watercolour was by that time in the collection of mutual friend and patron Thomas Combe in Oxford.

*Husband* (1871, fig.241), a medieval tale filled with magic but condensed here in an illustration of the isolated woman by a window accompanied by an incongruous circular mirror placed at a strange location in the back left of the pictorial space. Devoid of reflection, the inclusion of the modern anachronism is curious unless we take into consideration it is part of a larger canon of mirror imagery. Taking into consideration Burne-Jones's *oeuvre* of mirrors, including the previously mentioned large circular mirror in the portrait of his daughter Margaret and his later magic mirror in *The Wizard*, not to mention the recurring crystal balls present in his work that suggests the concept of the magic mirror was never far from mind (see figs.242-243), the convex mirror in his second series of *Pygmalion* and the modern mirror in *Dorigen of Bretagne* warrant consideration as a mark of Pre-Raphaelitism. Although some Pre-Raphaelite mirrors in works such as those by Burne-Jones and Simeon Solomon discussed above can appear vague with indistinct reflections, I would suggest that Burne-Jones and Solomon, who are already classified as second generation Pre-Raphaelites, both demonstrate a strong stylistic Pre-Raphaelite influence in broader terms of subject matter as well as visual imagery, and these are characteristics that strengthen their connection to Hunt and Rossetti's mirrors whether or not each mirror represented in their work is a straightforward imitation of Hunt's *The Lady of Shalott* or Rossetti's *Lady Lilith*.

As previously noted with Burne-Jones's interlocking fabric pattern, the unusual pose of a model biting a strand of hair, or the distinctive Egyptian chairs designed by Hunt, the mirror was not the only image adopted as a motif by followers of Hunt and Rossetti but it nevertheless has enough of an established, prominent presence in the works of the 1850s and 1860s to warrant consideration as a 'tradition' by the time Cowper, Waterhouse, Shannon and Orpen contribute to the output of mirror imagery in the 1890s and the early twentieth century.

Indicative of the viewing public's conscious association with the circular mirror and Pre-Raphaelitism, when Madox Brown's *Take Your Son, Sir!* was exhibited in 1901, the critic for *The Saturday Review* acknowledged its composition as characteristically Pre-Raphaelite: 'The framework is Pre-Raphaelite, the design of the mother and child, the round mirror taking her head like a halo, the intense still-life of the cot'.<sup>631</sup> Although never finished, Brown's picture of his wife and infant son was well known,<sup>632</sup> and in 1897 H. Wilson praised the picture's unification of realism with spirituality, a noted hallmark of early P.R.B.ism, describing 'the imaginative realism' that 'carries us beyond the real into the essential heart of things, to another sphere, another spiritual plane,' pointing out the 'mystic type of unity' in the mirror's reflection that brings together the figures of the mother and father.<sup>633</sup> Similarly, just as Sandys's portrait of *Jane*

<sup>631</sup> 'East End and West,' *The Saturday Review* (March 16, 1901), 332-333; 332.

<sup>632</sup> In a review of the 1897 exhibition at the Grafton Gallery One critic said of Brown's *Take Your Son, Sir!*, one critic introduced the picture by way of stating that it needed no introduction. See 'Exhibition of the Works of Ford Madox Brown at the Grafton Gallery,' 3616 (February 13, 1897), 220-221; 221.

<sup>633</sup> H. Wilson, 'Ford Madox Brown,' *The Artist*, 19 (January, 1897), 1-6; 6.



*Lewis* with the mirror behind her sparked later observations of Pre-Raphaelite influence, Dicksee's *Paolo and Francesca* of 1894 with its tragic subject from Dante previously illustrated by Rossetti in 1855, Paola dressed in a similar green to Rossetti's earlier picture, and the circular modern mirror in the background, prompted one critic to point out that it was 'conceived and painted in a fashion that almost suggests the Pre-Raphaelites.'<sup>634</sup> The fact that late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century critics acknowledge the Pre-Raphaelitism of these pictures, conveyed by the blend of realism with mysticism, together with the modern mirror, suggests a level of public awareness and acceptance of these characteristics.

### **Millais's Missing Mirrors**

Within a discussion of the mirror as a Pre-Raphaelite motif, and the dissemination of this over the course of the mid-to late nineteenth century, Millais's noticeable lack of mirrors outside of those appearing in his engraved illustrations presents a remarkable departure from both Hunt and Rossetti, a detail that signifies a departure from the construct of the Hunt/Millais style versus Rossetti. Millais's use of the mirror, such as the toilet glass in *The Talking Oak* (1857, fig.244) found in an illustration in the Moxon Tennyson, or the larger cheval mirror in *Was It Not a Lie?* (1860, fig.245), created for Anthony Trollope's *Framley Parsonage*, is decidedly not 'Pre-Raphaelite' in function and behaves instead rather like those found in contemporary genre scenes. Millais's mirrors do not contribute reflections that speak to the viewer of narrative or symbolism and, like the mirrors seen in works by Kilburne, for example, do not emphasise the power of reflection or any associations with magic and the supernatural. This raises the question of Pre-Raphaelite mirrors used by later artists and non-Pre-Raphaelite mirrors used by one of the founding members of the Brotherhood: if Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery is a unifying motif of the movement, where does this leave Millais in relation to Hunt and Rossetti? While Hunt is at pains in his memoir to align himself with Millais and cast Rossetti as the outsider, the mirrors of Hunt and Rossetti create a visual dialogue between the two that excludes Millais.

Millais's only overt use of the convex mirror is found two years after Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* in the engraving *The Fair Jacobite* (1862, fig.246), an illustration for the periodical *Once a Week* in which he depicts a Jacobite woman sewing white ribbons onto a tri-corn hat. In a rare instance of Millais utilising the mirror's reflective properties, we can make out a sword and possibly a shield in the reflection of the wall behind her in the viewer's space. The reflection of the sword and shield positioned above the woman like a cartoon thought bubble supplements our understanding of the otherwise domestic activity of sewing; together with the cross around her neck, it conveys the impression of a religious war that involves both men and women, albeit in different roles. Millais does not include a modern mirror in an out-of-context setting, unlike

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<sup>634</sup> R.J. Slade, 'The Royal Academy of Arts, 1895,' *Art Journal* (June, 1895), 171.

Rossetti and Hunt, as the subject set in the eighteenth century perhaps accounts more for Millais's use of the convex mirror as an accurate representation of a historical domestic interior rather than for its spiritually revealing potential. The engraving became the basis for the painting *The White Cockade* (1862, fig.247) in which the mirror from the original work fades into the background, indistinguishable in form and colour from a wall painting or a tapestry.

Likewise, the circular mirror in his original sketch for *Mariana* (1851, fig.248) inexplicably vanishes between conception and execution. The elliptical object on the wall behind the figure's head resembles the outline of a circular mirror, although in the sketch Millais does not indicate any intention of emphasising the mirror's reflection. Present in the early conception of the work, prior to the toilet table that features in the final version, the mirror's presence indicates Millais was referencing both of Tennyson's versions of the 'Mariana' poem. While 'Mariana' (1830) includes multiple references to rot and decay, details Millais includes as autumnal leaves, mildewed stone, and a scurrying mouse, 'Mariana in the South,' (1832) describes Mariana praying to the Virgin at a shrine at which which Mariana sees the reflection of her face in the ambiguous 'liquid mirror'.<sup>635</sup> Millais includes the element of the golden shrine on the toilet table in the background, although he curiously misses the reflective surface. Later representations of *Mariana* feature a more pronounced reflective mirror (for instance, Rossetti's illustration for the 1857 Moxon Tennyson, Waterhouse's *Mariana in the South* of 1897 and Cowper's *Mariana in the South* of 1906), and its absence in Millais's final version comes as more of a surprise given the appearance of it in his initial conception as well as the mirrors emerging in Hunt and Rossetti's drawings at the same time.

A comparable counterpart to 'The Lady of Shalott,' Millais depicts Mariana alone with her embroidery while she waits for a man whose arrival will never come, and it is possible that Millais intends the stained glass image of the angel Gabriel to symbolize Mariana's lover Angelo: the angel's likeness flashes on sunlit glass like Lancelot in the Lady of Shalott's mirror. Rather than emphasising the viewer's space through a mirror's reflection, Millais instead makes the glass permeable, the autumn light and foliage outside pulls the viewer through the illusory depth of the image, creating a greater depth of surface rather than reflected glass. Andrew Leng successfully argues for a reading of the Annunciation stained-glass standing in for the mirror's reflection.<sup>636</sup> Leng points out that just as in the text the image of the Virgin and Mariana's reflection seem to merge together, Millais positions Mariana before the stained-glass image of the Virgin:

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<sup>635</sup> Tennyson, *Mariana in the South* (1832), stanza III, line 7.

<sup>636</sup> Andrew Leng, 'Millais's *Mariana*: Literary Painting, the Pre-Raphaelite Gothic and the Iconology of the Marian Artist,' George P. Landow (ed.), *The Victorian Web* (May 17, 2007), <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/millais/leng3.html>.

instead of superimposing her mirrored image upon Mary's as Tennyson's Southern Mariana does, Millais's Mariana identifies with her namesake, the Virgin in the window who is her 'mirror' image.<sup>637</sup>

Comparing Millais's stained-glass windows with Hunt's magic mirror in his drawing of *The Lady of Shalott* from one year earlier, Leng argues,

their dual painted and transparent levels, achieve a comparable effect of simultaneity of vision and evoke hallucinatory presences, without compromising their integrity as authentic features of an oratory. Millais thereby creates a Gothic environment in which the supernatural can be represented realistically.<sup>638</sup>

Leng makes a further connection between the two Marianas reflecting one another in pendant poems; both are present in Millais's painting, creating a Rossetti-style double work of art.

Demonstrating a similarity to Hunt's versions of *The Lady of Shalott*, Millais's *Mariana* illustrates Tennyson's poem in such a way that it conveys the subtle, contradictory elements in the original. Like the crystal mirror in 'The Lady of Shalott,' Tennyson's mention of the clock ticking contradicts the medieval setting and suggests a permeability of time and place. Reflecting Brooks's concept of symbolic realism, Millais creates a realistic visual language that conveys the seen and the unseen and, while 'Mariana in the South' might be set in a medieval 'grange' (an ambiguous description), it portrays the nineteenth-century's refracted and re-presented vision of Shakespeare by way of Tennyson and P.R.B. realism.

Carol Jacobi compares *Mariana* with another Millais picture of longing, *The Bridesmaid* (1851, fig.249), which illustrates the folk superstition that a bridesmaid who passes a piece of the wedding cake through a ring nine times will have a vision of her future husband. Divining visions of a future lover, the bridesmaid is connected to both the Lady of Shalott and Mariana who see visions of Lancelot or Angelo in glass. Likening the painting itself to a mirror, Jacobi suggests:

The shining, glassy surfaces of the hair, fruit, ceramic, silk and skin of *The Bridesmaid* give the sense that she is a reflection. This 'liquid mirror', as Tennyson called it, complicates and layers vision like tears. The poem combines the two in the same way as the shining eyes of the bridesmaid hint at both their moisture and the glass surface in which they are reflected, lending it similar levels of reality and

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<sup>637</sup> Andre Leng, <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/millais/leng3.html>.

<sup>638</sup> Leng, *Ibid.*

dream [. . .] The bridesmaid comes in and out of focus as we see her as a figure and as reflection on a glass surface.<sup>639</sup>

The gleaming silver caster relocates from Mariana's shadowy altar to the foreground of *The Bridesmaid*, unless it is we the viewer who have moved back through space to Mariana's 'idolatrous toilet-table.' Barlow describes the work as a 'visual assault of gold against blue, linked to an erotic scenario in which the bride fantasizes about her future husband.'<sup>640</sup> The blues, golds and ambers of the picture are reminiscent of *Mariana* and, with the silver caster that marks the toilet table, perhaps *The Bridesmaid* is a reflective pendant of the double Marianas. Barringer suggests reading *The Bridesmaid* as self-reflective, as though the girl has an 'expression of self-examination, as if in a mirror.'<sup>641</sup>

Anticipating Rossetti's female figures like *Bocca Baciata* of 1859, Millais creates a startling concentration of reflection in a shallow depth of field, as though in a mirror, prompting intermittent sensations of self-identification, self-reflection and claustrophobia. Are we the reflection in the mirror (if so, the bridesmaid becomes the viewer) or are we the mirror she is looking into for divination? Is she the reflection or are we? – 'Art thou the ghost, my sister, / White sister there, / Am I the ghost, who knows?'<sup>642</sup> Considering *The Bridesmaid* as a mirror itself is perhaps indicative of Millais's ambiguous reflective surfaces, for rather than calling attention to or creating a preferential space for surfaces that reflect the viewer's space, Millais's paintings can be read as mirrors themselves; the painted enamel-like surface and spatial depth create a mirror-like reflective accuracy of modern life, effectively constituting one interpretation of Pre-Raphaelite realism. In addition to Barringer and Jacobi, there are also contemporary comparisons of Millais's style with the mirror: 'it is his gift of reflecting like a mirror the very life of his surroundings,' 'the native impulse of Millais, which was, above all things, to hold the mirror up to nature,' and Millais 'was gifted with a sense of sight of crystalline clearness to which Nature made a perpetual and brilliant appeal; he had a hand that, even in childhood, was singularly skilful to record the impressions of the eye.'<sup>643</sup> Millais's sight of crystalline clearness like the Lady of Shalott's crystal/*cristallo* mirror produces a variant angle for considering realism and representation in an avant-garde movement.

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<sup>639</sup> Carol Jacobi, 'Sugar, Salt and Curdled Milk: Millais and the Synthetic Subject,' *Tate Papers*, 18 (November 6, 2012), <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/sugar-salt-and-curdled-milk-millais-and-synthetic-subject>.

<sup>640</sup> Paul Barlow, 'John Everett Millais,' Elizabeth Prettejohn (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, 144.

<sup>641</sup> Tim Barringer, *Reading the Pre-Raphaelites* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 92.

<sup>642</sup> Swinburne, 'Before the Mirror,' Part II, Stanza II, lines 3-5.

<sup>643</sup> Cosmo Monkhouse, *British Contemporary Artists* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 52; quoted in John G. Millais, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais*, vol. I, 57.

Millais's contrary position within the canon of Pre-Raphaelite intermirrorality demonstrates that while the use of the mirror is a useful component in analysing the Pre-Raphaelite characteristics present in a work, and helpful when thinking about Pre-Raphaelitism as an influential movement, it does not constitute a clear-cut scientific method to identify artists as Pre-Raphaelite or not. As we have seen, beginning with Hunt's early drawing of Tennyson's subject, a chronological survey of the Pre-Raphaelite response to the Northern Renaissance mirror yields examples of early experiments with the mirror's shape, style, and position in the image, an arrangement that develops over time into a prominent motif. While not always strictly duplicating the Arnolfini original in terms of narrative-enhancing reflection or a respective mirror-to-historical setting alignment, the mirror as a motif amongst artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement maintains Northern Renaissance characteristics such as symbolic significance and prominent positioning within the structure of the painting. Millais's limited use of the mirror, however, marks a departure from this approach seen in both Hunt and Rossetti whose mirrors are an integral component to a reading of their works, thus suggesting a closer consideration of the latter two artists together as the originators and developers of a potent P.R.B. signifier.

#### **J.W. Waterhouse – Late Nineteenth-Century 'Pre-Raphaelite Theory'<sup>644</sup>**

He painted pre-Raphaelite pictures in a more modern manner. He was, in fact, a kind of academic Burne-Jones, like him in his types and moods, but with less insistence on design and more on atmosphere.<sup>645</sup>

Waterhouse's 1894 *The Lady of Shalott* marks a significant reincarnation of Hunt's mirror in the late nineteenth century - the oversized modern mirror dominates the medieval setting, a composition and representation of the subject that again quotes Hunt's Moxon illustration. Waterhouse made three versions of the subject, each representing a different moment in Tennyson's narrative that capture the prelude to Lancelot's arrival, the climatic moment of the Lady choosing her fate, and her tragic death in the barge. In the 1894 picture, Waterhouse depicts the Lady in her shadowy interior, rising and moving forward towards Lancelot and the sunlit outside world she has seen reflected in the mirror, as her balls of yarn scatter and tapestry threads wind around her knees, a movement and psychological position that recalls Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* as well as the Moxon illustration.

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<sup>644</sup> R.E.D. Sketchley, 'The Art of J.W. Waterhouse, R.A.,' *Art Annual* (*Art Journal* special number, Christmas, 1909), 1- 32; 15.

<sup>645</sup> From Waterhouse's obituary in *The Times*. 'J.W. Waterhouse, R.A.: An Eclectic Painter,' *The Times*, 41400 (February 12, 1917), 6.

Waterhouse's biographer Rose (R.E.D.) Sketchley noted that Waterhouse tried to avoid a direct imitation of Hunt, specifically the Moxon illustration, 'the woodcut of a few inches size which has the momentous import of great art,'<sup>646</sup> but the Lady accompanied by an immense circular mirror whose reflection condensed Tennyson's narrative was by that time iconic and seemingly inseparable. There are three preparatory sketches by Waterhouse (figs.250-252) that show the Lady with a rectangular mirror,<sup>647</sup> evidence that he experimented with this design first before resorting to Hunt's 'unforgettable pattern'.<sup>648</sup> The early sketches, and particularly the design on page eleven of Waterhouse's sketchbook, combine the visual vocabulary of Hunt's 1850 drawing as well as his *The Awakening Conscience*, reconciling a large modern rectangular mirror within a medieval fantasy. Reminiscent of details of Hunt's earliest *Lady of Shalott* in terms of the Lady, the mirror, and Lancelot's reflection, Waterhouse portrays the Lady in a similar stance with her back to the glass, leaning slightly out towards the viewer/Lancelot. The long simple robe, belt and loose hair further suggest Waterhouse's source material and by the following page in his sketchbook he resorts to the large circular mirror taken from Hunt's original prototype (fig.253).<sup>649</sup> Waterhouse would eventually return to the composition of the rectangular glass with a lady in medieval dress facing away from it and looking out towards the viewer in *Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May* (1908, fig.254), yet another example of the Pre-Raphaelite modern glass in a medieval context but, in the meantime, his *Lady of Shalott* images of 1894 and later in 1915 featured Hunt's circular glass.

One critic pointed out an incongruity in Waterhouse's picture, criticising 'the fifteenth-century altarpiece on the walls' as 'being especially out of place in this vision of remote Northern mediaevalism [sic]'.<sup>650</sup> Curiously, he does not mention the more obviously inappropriate mirror in this 'remote' medieval setting, indicative perhaps of late nineteenth-century viewers' over-familiarity with the object, not unlike ours today, that rendered its presence unquestionable. The modern glass mirror in Waterhouse's 1894 *The Lady of Shalott* reproduces Hunt's 'unforgettable pattern', as do the repeated circular patterns in the tapestry and floor tiles together with the chaotic tapestry threads. Rather than contained in an accompanying roundel, the religious imagery alongside the mirror frame in Waterhouse's version is transferred to the candlelit shrine

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<sup>646</sup> Sketchley, 23.

<sup>647</sup> J.W. Waterhouse Sketchbook, E.1110-1963, 8,9,11 (Victoria & Albert Museum). Anthony Hobson suggests the preliminary studies point to Waterhouse's initial intentions to avoid copying the Hunt before finally using the circular mirror. See Anthony Hobson, *J.W. Waterhouse* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1989), 53. Peter Trippi also reiterates this as evidence Waterhouse knew the Hunt design. See Peter Trippi, *J.W. Waterhouse* (London: Phaidon, 2002), 131+133.

<sup>648</sup> Sketchley, 23. 'The design of the [Waterhouse] picture suggests a process of avoiding likeness to that unforgettable pattern'.

<sup>649</sup> While there is no evidence to suggest Waterhouse had seen Hunt's 1850 drawing, the owner, Coventry Patmore, was still alive and it is not too great a supposition that Waterhouse might have seen the work in person or at least known of it. As argued previously, it is highly likely Burne-Jones had seen the work, suggesting an ongoing iconographic exchange between the P.R.B. and their sympathizers.

<sup>650</sup> Claude Phillips, 'The Royal Academy,' *The Academy*, 1149 (May 12, 1894), 399-400; 400.

to the Virgin (the same one of dubious historical accuracy according to our critic for *The Academy*), in which the glowing haloes contrast with the allure of Lancelot's plumed helmet; the altarpiece is obscured in shadow while Lancelot shines in the sunlight, drawing the Lady's attention away from duty and prayer. Two candles before the shrine, one of which has just blown out and the other's flame is flickering but still remains lit, are arguably a Millais reference<sup>651</sup> and it is possible that Waterhouse, having been struck by Millais's work when he visited the 1886 retrospective at The Grosvenor (the exhibition was enormous and included *Mariana* and *Ophelia* among over one hundred and fifty-six works by Millais), borrowed the shadowy, candlelit shrine from Millais's *Mariana* (1851), thereby creating a visual allusion to Millais as well as Hunt. This is a synthesis he repeats three years later in *Mariana in the South*: Millais's shrine with Waterhouse's modern mirror imagery.<sup>652</sup>

Although Millais does not use mirrors as a specific motif in his work, it is significant that references to him, Hunt, and Rossetti converge together in Waterhouse's pictures. For instance, Waterhouse draws from both Millais and Rossetti in his first portrayal of Tennyson's doomed maiden, his 1888 *Lady of Shalott* (fig.255) of the Lady setting off for Camelot in her boat, illustrating Tennyson's lines from Part IV:

And down the river's dim expanse –  
 Like some bold seer in a trance,  
 Seeing all his own mischance  
 With a glassy countenance  
                   Did she look to Camelot.  
 And at the closing of the day  
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay<sup>653</sup>

Waterhouse's choice of subject, Tennyson and a dying girl on a river, and his emphasis on the botanical details of the river's edge positions his *Lady of Shalott* in conversation with Millais's *Ophelia* (1851-52, fig.256). Sketchley uses the term 'Pre-Raphaelite theory' to describe Waterhouse's stylistic approach to rendering the subject in which he 'sought to identify the completeness of fact and poetry.'<sup>654</sup> The blending of fantasy and fact, or the spiritual with the physical, directly relates to the early days of Pre-Raphaelitism and Sketchley identifies

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<sup>651</sup> For example, see Peter Trippi, *J.W. Waterhouse*, p. 129: 'The Pre-Raphaelites prized the psychological expressivity of candle-lit chambers [. . .] Waterhouse borrowed the gilded shrine representing piety from Millais's widely reproduced *Mariana*.'

<sup>652</sup> This suggestion is made in the catalogue entry for *The Lady of Shalott* in Elizabeth Prettejohn and Peter Trippi (ed.), *J.W. Waterhouse: The Modern Pre-Raphaelite*, exh cat., (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 129.

<sup>653</sup> Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott' (1842), Part IV, Stanza 2, lines 1-7.

<sup>654</sup> Sketchley, *The Art Of J.W. Waterhouse*, 15.

Waterhouse as occupying ‘a space between the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their artistic descendants of the first and second generations.’<sup>655</sup> With the tragic heroine’s streaming red hair and parted lips as she goes singing to her death, Waterhouse evokes Millais’s *The Bridesmaid* as well as his *Ophelia* and Rossetti’s *Beata Beatrix*,<sup>656</sup> both modelled by Siddall. The critic in the *Art Journal* noted that the painting brings ‘his work into kinship with that of the “Pre-Raphaelites” of the middle of the century,’ indicating a perceived ‘Pre-Raphaelite’ style some forty years later, however unidentifiable that might be in terms of concrete attributes.<sup>657</sup> This merging of vintage (by the time Waterhouse was painting *The Lady of Shalott*, the original Pre-Raphaelite style would have been vintage) figures and literary subjects, myth and historicism presented with a modern style and observation of physical details, directly correspond to the Pre-Raphaelite mirror and the specific way of thinking about it established by Hunt and complicated by Rossetti.

Waterhouse’s version of another Pre-Raphaelite subject, *Mariana in the South* (1897, refer back to fig.171), features this specific blend of P.R.B. imagery tied together by a modern mirror in a medieval setting. The *psyche* glass, or cheval mirror, accompanies the now-familiar image of a tragic woman in isolation and, in the shadows nearby, a candlelit shrine. The cheval glass was developed in the late eighteenth century as a large, freestanding alternative to the smaller toilet mirror. Based on a similar design to the hinged toilet glass, the size of the cheval glass plate allowed for viewing the entire self, predating nineteenth-century mirrors set into wardrobes doors. By the nineteenth century this early version of the dressing mirror was designed to tilt or pivot on hinges in order to adjust the angle of reflection and often accompanied by sconces on either side, creating a combination of light and reflection.<sup>658</sup> Popular and affordable by the mid-to late nineteenth century, the *psyche* glass appears in a number of photographs from the time (refer back to figs.74. and 89), and was as familiar an object in the middle-class dressing room as the overmantel mirror in the drawing room. It would not, however, have been familiar to someone in the Middle Ages and, as such, Waterhouse’s mirror in *Mariana in the South* is just as incongruous as Hunt’s Victorian mirror with a medieval Lady of Shalott.

Sketchley’s description, ‘The condition of the soul of the lady “half sick with shadows,” is in the shadowiness that tenderly envelops her white-clad figure, the dimness of the chamber where candles flame by day’,<sup>659</sup> refers to Waterhouse’s 1894 *Lady of Shalott*, but the imagery is just as applicable to his version of ‘Mariana.’ Waterhouse’s picture illustrates the lines in ‘Mariana in the South’ that follow her prayer before the Virgin’s shrine and, in a merging or ambiguous

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<sup>655</sup> Sketchley, 21.

<sup>656</sup> Robert Upstone cites *Beata Beatrix* as Waterhouse’s source for his Lady. See Upstone’s essay ‘Between Innovation and Tradition: Waterhouse and Modern French Painting,’ Elizabeth Prettejohn and Peter Trippi (eds.), *J.W. Waterhouse: The Modern Pre-Raphaelite*, 45. Waterhouse would have seen *Beata Beatrix* at the Royal Academy’s exhibition of Rossetti in 1883.

<sup>657</sup> ‘The Lady of Shalott,’ *Art Journal* (May, 1889), 142.

<sup>658</sup> Melchior-Bonnet, 85.

<sup>659</sup> Sketchley, ‘The Art Of J.W. Waterhouse, R.A.,’ *Art Journal* (December, 1909), 25.



confusion of reflections, Mariana sees the reflection of her face. The psyche mirror, whose very name suggests a reflection of the interior life rather than outer physical detail, is angled towards the viewer but does not reveal missing narrative details. Rather, the reflection is more aligned with the subject's emotional and psychological content, reinforcing the grim loneliness of the figure as she notices the effects of time on her face. Mariana's gaze is not one of vanity but, on her knees before the mirror, she rather demonstrates an awareness of the helpless passing of time, a traditional Dutch *vanitas* reference underscored by the sconce candle that has blown out.

In light of the profile view of the figure, the lethargic position, candlelit shrine and the double view of the woman provided by the mirror on the floor, Robert Upstone suggests Millais's *Mariana* of 1851 as the source for Waterhouse's version as well as Rossetti's Moxon illustration of the same subject.<sup>660</sup> Tennyson's Shakespearean subject, Rossetti's scattered letters on the floor tiles, and the Hunt-derived large modern mirror in the medieval environment are diverse elements that unite with Millais's shrine in a synthesis of early Pre-Raphaelite imagery. Waterhouse's *Mariana in the South* is a work that gathers all three together, however unlikely and disparate and, by combining an early P.R.B. subject and iconography from all three of the originators, Waterhouse pulls Millais in to a discussion of mirrors, if somewhat peripheral.

Waterhouse had first experimented with the psyche glass, as well as an early direct reference to Hunt's Moxon *Lady of Shalott* six years earlier in *Circe Offering the Cup to Ulysses* (1891, fig.257). *Circe* portrays a frozen moment in a linear, active narrative in which the sorceress Circe offers the Homeric hero a glass of enchanted wine. No angel of the house before a tasteful overmantel or an embowered virginal figure engaged in the appropriately domestic arts of weaving and embroidery, Circe resembles her mirror: larger than life. A closer inspection of Circe's mirror shows the frame supporting the mirror may have hinges, the psyche mirror that allows the glass to tilt at an angle to the viewer and is perhaps responsible for producing the reflection that reveals both Ulysses at ground level as well as the Doric capitals of the architecture. In an instance of Pre-Raphaelite intermirrornality and merging of source material, the mirror also corresponds to the one in Rossetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, for just as the effect of Lucrezia's poisoned wine is revealed in the reflection, the outcome of Circe's enchanted wine is shown in the mirror. Ulysses's men have been transformed into pigs and are symbolically trapped in the mirror's glass surface and, like Rossetti's *Lucrezia* mirror in which the other (male) players are small footnotes in the mirror's reflection in comparison with the larger figure of Lucrezia herself, Ulysses is only present in the composition via the mirror's reflection. The virtual Ulysses, rather than shown as a powerful Homeric hero, is reflected in the glass as a small, furtive figure under Circe's powerful, upraised arm. Making use of reflection and doubling, Waterhouse

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<sup>660</sup> See Robert Upstone's catalogue entry in which he suggests the influence of Millais's and Rossetti's earlier versions of the subject in Elizabeth Prettejohn and Peter Trippi (eds.), *J.W. Waterhouse: The Modern Pre-Raphaelite*, 138.

extends the virtual image in the looking-glass through to the 'real' world by the additional pigs on either side of Circe's throne. An inverse of the Lady of Shalott and her mirror reflection, Waterhouse's woman with her back to the mirror plots treachery against the reflected male rather than pining after him.

Similar to Waterhouse's other mirror representations in the Lady of Shalott images as well as *Mariana in the South* and *Destiny*, the mirror is Victorian and inherently incompatible with the ancient setting. As discussed in the introductory chapter, ancient mirrors were typically made of polished metal (such as the one seen in Rossetti's later version of *The Return of Tibullus to Delia*) or polished obsidian but, rather than accurately depict a classical scene, Waterhouse re-presents Hunt's enchanted household object in away that instils a sense of contemporaneity and familiarity to the viewer's interaction with the picture. Anthony Hobson's suggestion that the figure of Ulysses is Waterhouse's self-portrait<sup>661</sup> serves to highlight the possibility of a personal detail that emphasises the immediacy of the work. In either case, Waterhouse's mirror in *Circe* draws attention to both the timeless quality of the *femme fatale* and the presence of a recognisable, modern narrative within an ancient myth.

Likewise, Waterhouse's sketchbook reveals that he originally experimented with a rectangular mirror behind Circe's throne instead of the Hunt-derived circular glass (fig.258).<sup>662</sup> Waterhouse appears to have moved swiftly on from this experiment, however, for on the very next page the large round mirror is present (see for example fig.259) and remains a fixture through the following sketches.<sup>663</sup>

### ***The Final Pre-Raphaelite Mirror***

The large modern circular mirror juxtaposed with a medieval setting established by Hunt persisted as the dominant feature in images of The Lady of Shalott over the course of sixty-six years and Waterhouse repeats this mirror design in his final picture of the Lady, the 1915 *'I am Half-Sick of Shadows, Said the Lady of Shalott'*. It is this version by Waterhouse together with Hunt's 1850 drawing that creates the framework for my study, two mirrors on either end of a specifically Pre-Raphaelite continuum of mirror imagery that demonstrates a motif-based dialogue between the early P.R.B. and later followers. Although narrative points and aspects of characterisation change during Waterhouse's experiments with the subject, Hunt's mirror remains a fixed, immovable detail of the Lady's setting.

Similar to the development of Hunt's portrayals of the Lady in which the angular, reserved girl in the original drawing becomes the wild-haired, sensuous woman in his later pictures, Waterhouse's depiction of the Lady evolves between 1888 and 1915 from a pale, red-haired

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<sup>661</sup> Anthony Hobson. *J.W. Waterhouse* (London: Phaidon Press, Limited, 1989), 49.

<sup>662</sup> J.W. Waterhouse Sketchbook, E.1110-1963 (Victoria & Albert Museum), 57.

<sup>663</sup> Waterhouse Sketchbook, 58-60.

figure ‘robed in snowy white’<sup>664</sup> to a dark-haired woman clad in red and depicted in a moment of introspective contemplation rather than a moment of haunted desperation seen in the 1894 version. In fact, she resembles the figure before the circular mirror in his earlier work *Destiny* or the 1902 *The Crystal Ball* (fig.260) in which a lunette window takes the place of the mirror. Both images of contemplative dark-haired women in scarlet medieval attire, one raising a cup to drink to departing heroes whose ships are reflected in her glass,<sup>665</sup> the other a sorceress is gazing into her crystal ball, merge together in Waterhouse’s final *Lady of Shalott* image of the pensive ‘fairy’ woman who divines visions and ultimately confronts her tragic destiny in her magic [modern] mirror. The weary pose with the arched back and belted dress, enforced isolation, position by a window, domestic textile pursuits, and burning oil lamp also recall Millais’s *Mariana*, thus constituting a late additional composite by Waterhouse of early P.R.B imagery.

In his final exploration of the subject, he shifts the focus seen in Hunt’s original work that illustrates the climactic point in the story – the look, the broken mirror, the curse – to portray instead a moment prior to Lancelot riding across the mirror’s surface with its ensuing chaos. At this point in Tennyson’s narrative, the Lady has been content to weave the ‘shadows of the world’<sup>666</sup> that appear in her magic mirror until she observes the ‘two young lovers lately wed’ reflected in the glass. Waterhouse captures a moment of contemplation as the Lady grows tired of her isolation and one-sided reflections for company. The vision of the newlyweds prompts a longing for the outside world she can only see at a remove through her glass and thus sets her up for the site of the passing knight who, in Tennyson’s description, ‘flamed,’ ‘sparkled,’ ‘glitter’d,’ ‘shone’, and, like a ‘meteor, trailing light,’ ‘flash’d into the crystal mirror’<sup>667</sup> in a direct, alluring contrast to the Lady’s world of shadowy visions.

Waterhouse keeps Hunt’s mirror format and the circular modern mirror seen in previous pictures such as the 1894 *Lady of Shalott* and *Circe* is repeated here, facing the viewer to reflect the medieval setting and narrative points in its large, clear surface. The mirror reflects our space, revealed to be many-towered Camelot in the background and a river in the foreground, but unlike his 1894 version the Lady avoids the viewer’s gaze and casts an oblique glance towards the mirror instead. She does not look at herself in the glass but at the reflected figures in the outside world. No Lilith figure absorbed in her own reflection, the construction of gazes that prevents eye contact emphasises the Lady’s isolation for not only does she not ‘see’ the viewer or her own reflection, she is likewise unnoticed by the objects of her gaze. Arm in arm, the two figures cross the viewer’s reflected space, moving from right to left past the Romanesque arches, a foreshadowing of Lancelot’s movements illustrated in the earlier Waterhouse and Hunt works.

<sup>664</sup> Tennyson, ‘The Lady of Shalott’ Part IV, stanza Three, verse 1.

<sup>665</sup> The ambiguous painting was created for the Artist’s War Fund in support of the Boer War.

<sup>666</sup> Tennyson, Part II, stanza II, verse 3.

<sup>667</sup> Tennyson, Part III, Stanza I, verses 4 + 8; Stanza II, verse 1; Stanza III, verses 2 + 8; Stanza 4, verse 7.

Like Hunt's imagery as well, the mirror is not used for the purposes of weaving as it does not reflect the back of the tapestry and is so large, and its objects so close, it calls into question the spatial relationship between the Lady and the viewer, a technique seen in works of his such as *The Lady of Shalott* (1886-1905) and *Il Dolce Far Niente* (as we have seen, Siddall's portrayal of the Lady's relation to the mirror was an exception). We seemingly occupy the space both within her tower and outside of it in the landscape with the passing couple.

Underscoring a sense of the uncanny about the mirror, the oil lamp reflected in the glass corresponds to the one in the Lady's space but the reflection in the mirror eliminates part of the Lady's loom, there is no indication of the Lady's reflection at all, and it curiously includes a flower that is not seen in the foreground of the space. Either the Lady's chamber is so small it is questionable how she fits in it herself with such a narrow space indeed between the back wall and the open arches, or the mirror magically cuts through the foreground distance for a zoom-in effect, an optical device seen in Velázquez's *Las Meninas* and one of the adaptations Hunt makes to the Van Eyck mirror in *The Arnolfini Portrait*.

Two magic mirrors frame this dissertation project of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite painting, and both of them are found in works that illustrate the same Victorian ballad set in the Middle Ages. The isolated Lady of Shalott ensconced in her appropriately gendered domestic space and engaged in the delicate feminine art of weaving ('what more fitting ladies' work than the task of embroidering'<sup>668</sup>) can only engage with contemporary life through visions revealed in a magic mirror. While the setting may not be contemporary the underlying themes of the isolated female, the notion of duty, and the role of the artist weaving reflections of modern life were immediately relevant. Although Tennyson's tale was both set and illustrated in a fantastical medieval construct, the use of modern English glass empowered clarity of vision both metaphorically and within the visual dynamic of the picture, bringing 'the Middle age forward to the Present one' to ultimately be a 'mirror of the nineteenth century.'<sup>669</sup> The potent, ever-present mirrors made of modern English glass and recognisable as a middle-class object demonstrate and facilitate the Pre-Raphaelite brand of realism that engages with modern, middle-class life through the lens of a re-enchanting industrial object; the mirror is the familiar hook in the at times unfamiliar world of the painting, the reflection of the viewer's space compelling a closer look and providing a point of access for engaging with the work.

*'I am Half-Sick of Shadows'* represents the last overtly Pre-Raphaelite mirror use by an English artist in the twentieth century and by 1915 the style was already out of fashion. Britain was involved in the war at this point and there was a corresponding decline not only in the art

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<sup>668</sup> Lewis F. Day, 'The Woman's Part in Domestic Decoration,' *The Magazine of Art*, 4 (January 1881), 457-462; 459.

<sup>669</sup> 'Tennyson,' *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 42: 249 (September, 1850), 245-255; 250.

market in general but also in the popularity for what were now perceived to be sentimental pictures.<sup>670</sup> One writer commented,

The world has gone away from the pre-Raphaelites and cannot return to them, unless Art and her patrons drift away once more from life into a pageantry of dreams. So far as anyone can see at present, the quietism and the comfort that ruled over so many Victorian ideals have gone for ever [ . . . ] painters must play their part as brave citizens, and not as hermits in isles of dreams, in unsubstantial fairy tale palaces.<sup>671</sup>

Most of the so-called hermits had passed away by the time Waterhouse painted *I Am Half-Sick of Shadows*<sup>672</sup> although traces of Pre-Raphaelitism can be found post-1915 in works by Cowper, for instance, who resolutely clung to mid-nineteenth century Pre-Raphaelitism well into the middle of the twentieth century. Waterhouse's repetition of Hunt's subject and specific mirror treatment in 1915, sixty-five years after the original drawing, illustrates not only the longstanding influence of the early P.R.B. mirror, it puts Waterhouse forward as a late proponent of this visual vocabulary. Waterhouse's use of Hunt's mirror, as well as details from both Hunt and Rossetti, also undermines the narrative that Rossetti was sole proprietor of the later styles associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Rather, a more generous and inclusive assessment of Pre-Raphaelite characteristics should be taken into consideration when looking at later artists as well as the relationship between Hunt, Rossetti, and Millais.

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<sup>670</sup> See Andrew Stephenson, 'From Conscription to the Depression: The Market for Modern British Art in London c.1914-1930', eds Charlotte Gould and Sophie Mesplède, *Marketing Art in the British Isles, 1700 to the Present: A Cultural History*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012, pp.58-62

<sup>671</sup> 'A Painter of Dreams: and other Biographical Studies', *The Saturday Review of politics, literature, science and art*, vol.121, no.3147 (February 19, 1916), 288.

<sup>672</sup> Rossetti had died in 1882, Millais in 1896, Stephens in 1907 and Hunt in 1910. Of Rossetti's Cheyne Walk circle of friends and followers, Morris had passed away in 1896, Burne-Jones in 1898, Sandys in 1904, Solomon in 1905, Stanhope in 1908, and Hughes in 1915. Upon Hughes's death *The Times* obituary headline ran 'Last of the Pre-Raphaelite Painters,' noting that by 1910 all of the Pre-Raphaelite 'Brothers' had passed away, with Hughes alone remaining 'of that band of painters who more than 60 years ago wrought such change in English art.' See 'Mr. A. Hughes,' *The Times* (December 23, 1915), 6.

## Conclusion

This dissertation has identified and explored the gap in the literature with regard to the prominent appearance of mirrors in nineteenth-century painting, and specifically the mirror as a Pre-Raphaelite motif, and makes a contribution to reading Pre-Raphaelite works and thinking about a previously unexplored component of Pre-Raphaelite imagery. I have argued for a reconsideration of the object within a contemporary context and its wider implications as a modern, cultural product, a point of access that opens up a more comprehensive reading of familiar images, an object that contributes to rethinking definitions of Pre-Raphaelitism, and facilitates a uniquely Pre-Raphaelite re-presentation of modernity seen through enchanted glass. The attached appendix represents a unique empirical contribution to the study of mirrors in nineteenth-century painting that visually contextualises Armstrong's 'Victorian glassworlds' and the overarching continuum of mirror representation between 1850-1915. Not studied in depth before, and certainly not in relation to Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery, the appendix comprises over four hundred examples of overmantel mirrors, pier glasses, toilet mirrors, hand-held mirrors, cheval glasses, girandoles, and convex mirrors contributes to a contextual reconstruction of the mid- to late nineteenth-century English glass that was produced, seen in interiors, and represented in painting during the time of the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

As we have seen, mirrors recur throughout nineteenth-century English images, particularly in genre scenes in which the glass is integrated into the pictorial scheme as a decorative background detail and often does not engage with the viewer in terms of a revealing reflection. For example, a typical nineteenth-century approach to mirror representation that continues the previous century's use of the object as an ornamental feature is found in Edward Poynter's *Evening at Home* (1888 fig.261), a picture of a young woman reading beside a fire that includes a gilded convex glass on the back wall of a stylish interior. The convex mirror is a visual, decorative component - we can tell the glass is convex by the curved surface of the wall and paintings in the reflection - that is apropos to the setting and contributes to establishing the modern, fashionable context of the scene. However, although the reflection faces the viewer and contains a view of the adjacent wall (which can also be seen without the aid of the mirror), Poynter's mirror lacks narrative or symbolic content that could influence the viewer's reading of the work. There are no moral or supernatural traces, otherwise unseen narrative content or figures (a reflected miniature of Poynter himself, ghostly figures appearing in the viewer's space, or symbolic objects otherwise hidden from sight), and it does not create a platform for exploring the complexities of illusion versus reality by engaging the viewer in a compelling way. In short, the mirror does not add significance to our reading of the work beyond its identity as a costly, fashionable, class-conscious object with an underlying subtext that the woman portrayed, who no doubt was in

charge of determining the stylishly tasteful interior she lounges in, is as decorative as the rest of the objects.

With this common approach to mirror treatment, nineteenth-century artists bypass references to the mirror's historic associations with the preternatural, a characteristic explored by Pre-Raphaelite artists. Victorian depictions of women and mirrors continued, of course, to make pointed references to female vanity (see Horsley's *St Valentine's Day* or Egg's *Young Lady at her Toilet*, figs. 262-263) but, by and large, artists disregard the contemplative, revelatory, and spiritual qualities seen in earlier works by Van Eyck, Memling, and Velázquez whose mirrors appear as strong, critical components. An understanding of nineteenth-century mirror representation, as this dissertation has shown, contextualises what the Pre-Raphaelites were doing differently with their revival and reinterpretation of mirrors from the old masters.

Reinstating the mirror as a significant element, in comparison with the mirrors found in the works of eighteenth-century and other contemporary artists, from the early days of the P.R.B. Hunt and Rossetti looked back to images such as Van Eyck's iconic *The Arnolfini Portrait* but combined its symbolic and functional use with an English Hogarth-derived observation of modern life and, in the case of Rossetti, infused the Northern Renaissance source material with Titian-esque Venetian opulence and narrative ambiguity. As this dissertation has shown, the mirror found in the works of the Pre-Raphaelites was a specifically modern, English object that drew from both its historical iconography as well as its contemporary associations with middle-class morals, Victorian femininity, and interior décor. The added visual imagery in the mirror's depths that so often reflects the viewer's space creates a permeable boundary, an expansion of space that incorporates the viewer in the pictorial narrative and affords a point of access to the world of the painting. In addition to its position within the context of the Victorian glassworld, as this dissertation has shown, the mirror in Pre-Raphaelite painting constitutes a self-referencing object that contributes to a unifying visual dialogue of symbolism and motif between the early P.R.B. and their followers regardless of stylistic differences, demonstrates the wide Pre-Raphaelite sphere of influence on later artists (mirror influence has never been considered a factor in the discussion before), metaphorically and visually defines and facilitates a unique Pre-Raphaelite approach to realism, and repositions Hunt and Rossetti alongside one another regardless of their aesthetic differences or Hunt's combative stance against Rossetti's stylistic choices.

This dissertation demonstrates that the previously overlooked component of the mirror's materiality as a cultural product affords a more comprehensive reading of familiar works and locates Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery within a historical spectrum of mirror representation that highlights their unique mirror treatment. An obviously modern object due to the size of the glass represented and the clarity of reflection, the Pre-Raphaelite mirror establishes a modern hook for the nineteenth-century viewer, a familiar point of reference regardless of the setting that speaks to

the timelessness of human narratives, a device that brings ‘the Middle age forward to the Present one.’<sup>673</sup> That the mirror is so often an anachronistic feature in Pre-Raphaelite painting is perhaps the most overlooked aspect in scholarly literature to date as post-Lacanian thought primarily focuses on the mirror’s philosophical role. As noted in the introduction to this project, scholarly literature on art-historical mirrors typically follows in the footsteps of Foucault or Lacan with an emphasis on psychoanalytical readings of the mirror. Staying within these early twentieth-century constructs that stem from interpretations of Van Eyck’s *The Arnolfini Portrait* and Velázquez’s *Las Meninas*, academic literature rarely, if ever, questions the object’s presence to begin with or looks for meaning outside of these established references. While critical methodology that derives from Foucault’s analysis of vision, Lacan’s mirror stage, or Panofsky’s iconographical studies is necessary and relevant, it also demonstrates a restrictive approach that disregards the social history of the object and how its cultural relevancy and context might inform its iconographic associations and contribute to the meaning of the work. As I have discussed, the repetition of the circular mirror in Pre-Raphaelite imagery has been noted in the past but never thoroughly investigated before - an oversight when one considers it appears in over thirty works by the original P.R.B. members, not counting the number of mirrors in pictures by Burne-Jones, Waterhouse, and other later artists.

While there are other instances of anachronisms in Pre-Raphaelite work as Marcia Werner has pointed out,<sup>674</sup> none are so potent, and repeated so often, as the mirror. Madox Brown’s explanation of the conglomeration of historical details in his painting *Lear and Cordelia* (1849-54) is helpful when thinking about the mirror in works by Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti:

Having its origin in the old ballad, Shakespeare’s ‘King Lear’ is Roman-pagan-British nominally: mediaeval [*sic*] by external customs and habits, and again, in a marked degree, savage and remote by the moral side [ . . . ] I have rather chosen to be in harmony with the mental characteristics of Shakespeare’s work, and have therefore adopted the costume prevalent in Europe about the sixth century, when paganism was still rife, and deeds were at their darkest. The piece of Bayeux tapestry introduced behind King Lear is strictly an anachronism [ . . . ]<sup>675</sup>.

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<sup>673</sup> ‘Tennyson,’ *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*, 42: 249 (September, 1850), 245-255; 250.

<sup>674</sup> For example, Werner draws attention to the Victorian clothing worn by the Virgin Mary and St. Anne in Millais’s *Christ in the House of His Parents*; the modern clothing is given a antiquated look with drapery and head coverings that could be interpreted as either Biblical or medieval. See Werner, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism*, 214. Also, Mary Bennett points out the ‘anachronistic early nineteenth-century two-handled cup’ in Millais’s *Lorenzo and Isabella*. See Mary Bennett, *Artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Circle: The First Generation: Catalogue of Works in the Walker Art Gallery and Sudley Art Gallery* (London: Published for the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside by Lund Humphries, 1988), 122.

<sup>675</sup> Ford, *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life and Work*, 56. This reference was first brought to my attention in Werner, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism*, 88-89.



It was the essence of the characters and the narrative, the ‘mental characteristics’ of Shakespeare that Brown was concerned with or, as W. M. Rossetti asserted in 1858, ‘The motive is everything, the form is comparatively nothing’.<sup>676</sup> The essence of inner characterisation and its timelessness was the point as much as the truth-to-nature creed, creating the unique Pre-Raphaelite approach to realism, identified by Werner as a fusion of scientific observation with spiritual insight, that coalesces in their representation of mirrors with large, clear reflections. In the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* Ruskin instructs the painter to reflect nature like a mirror but clarifies that this approach to realism leaves room for not only the recording of visual data but ‘the impression’ made on the artist’s mind,<sup>677</sup> the inner experience as well as the physical details, a method that incorporates empirical observation with ‘imagination and invention.’<sup>678</sup> Werner discusses the inclusion of anachronisms as a way of crossing temporal boundaries, arguing that the Pre-Raphaelite approach to realism serves to ‘suspend time, to evoke a compelling impression of both historical simultaneity and the current moment,’<sup>679</sup> and suggests that Rossetti in particular ‘envisioned an unbroken and unchanging bond of shared experience among people of all times.’<sup>680</sup> The Pre-Raphaelite use of the mirror visually and symbolically accomplishes this unique merging of past and present through reflections of the viewer’s space in modern, English glass, drawing upon both the ancient tradition of catoptromancy as well as the new brilliant clarity and availability of Victorian mirrors.

In summary, this dissertation has shown that the staggering costs historically associated with mirrors had changed by the late nineteenth century and what had previously been an exclusive luxury item due to the high cost of manufacture, the tenuousness of the materials, heavy taxes, and strict regulations was increasingly available to the middle classes during the formative years of the P.R.B. A newly democratised object, the Victorian mirror had modern associations relating to class, taste, and respectability as well as a long iconographical history with complex, contradictory moral associations with vanity and temporality versus truth and spiritual insight, not to mention that the mirror’s reflection could also be seen as a metaphor of vision and the act of painting itself. The Pre-Raphaelite mirror, positioned on an axis of historical associations and contemporary commodity culture is specific to the nineteenth-century glass industry and Victorian middle-class interiors. To use Armstrong’s term, ‘Victorian glassworlds’ is a significant context for the representation of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite imagery – it is necessary to understand that the mirrors they depicted were very much of their time, appearing in unprecedented numbers

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<sup>676</sup> W.M. Rossetti, ‘The External of Sacred Art,’ *The Crayon*, 5:12 (December, 1858), 333-336; 335.

<sup>677</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. IV (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1885, originally published 1856), 19.

<sup>678</sup> David Masson, ‘Pre-Raphaelitism in Art and Literature,’ *The British Quarterly Review*, 16:31 (August, 1852), 197-220; 220.

<sup>679</sup> Werner, 267.

<sup>680</sup> Werner, 84.

in mid-nineteenth-century public and private middle-class spaces. Quite simply, the mirrors depicted in Pre-Raphaelite painting are a visual record of what the artist was looking at, the overmantels and convex mirrors that were prevalent in London domestic interiors at the time, a product of a truth-to-nature observation captured on canvas and placed in both contemporary and historical settings. The P.R.B. use of the mirror directly related to an extraordinary object for the contemporary viewer who experienced a change of private and public spaces, the interaction with that space and the constant available view of the self on display in various plate glass window reflections and multiple mirrors throughout rooms in the domestic interior. Not only did the Pre-Raphaelites seize upon a modern object, they did so at a turning point in the history of glass production. Glass was a significant element, something being talked about at the time, publicly noticed as it pervaded architecture and interiors, and was a source of national pride at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Unlike other cultural objects, however, the mirror is unique in its ability to reflect and expand space, exist with the opposing dynamics of surface *and* depth, and has an ability to capture the world in front of it and yet also transform it or, if it is a convex mirror, condense it into a single snapshot. Regardless of how common and ordinary the mirror became over the course of the nineteenth century, however much its meaning was entangled with middle-class ideology, it nevertheless maintained something of its ancient and medieval magical associations, the ‘Mirror mirror on the wall’ characteristics that the Pre-Raphaelites mined for added depth and imaginative vision in their work, re-mythologising an industrial product. As we have seen, mirrors in works such as Hunt’s portrait of his wife, *Fanny Holman Hunt*, or Burne-Jones’s *Fair Rosamund and Queen Eleanor* convey a sense of the mystical through the clear reflection of modern glass by revealing unseen narrative detail to the viewer in terms of either physical action, symbolic details that would be otherwise hidden, or the presence of figures in the glass (or in Fanny’s case, the absence of the figure), a composition of elements that convey emotional or psychological depth.

The iconographical associations with the mirror itself, as have been noted, are paradoxical and self-contradictory: truth, deception, beauty, vanity, grim *vanitas* warnings, purity, spiritual knowledge, and clarity. The mirror of the Whore of Babylon (fig.264) is also the mirror of the Virgin’s purity (fig.265). Much, in fact, like the contradictory perceptions of Pre-Raphaelitism: contradictory styles (particularly expressed by Hunt and Rossetti), medievalised fiction versus modern life, realism versus historicism, Italian Renaissance versus Northern Renaissance source material, ‘Pre-Raphaelites or Anti-Dürerites,’<sup>681</sup> empirical facts and scientific observation versus imagination and the inner experience. The etymology of ‘mirror’ stems from the Latin *mirari* which means ‘to wonder at, admire,’ the same root word for ‘miracle’ and ‘miraculous,’ and the early medieval use of the word *mirror* include diverse references to mean a reflective surface, a

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<sup>681</sup> Jane Langley, ‘Pre-Raphaelites or Anti-Dürerites?’ *The Burlington Magazine*, 137:1109 (August, 1995), 501-508;

scientific lens, or a glass or crystal used as a magical object,<sup>682</sup> suggestive of the dual, contradictory nature of the object and the longstanding associations with magic and the supernatural.

For instance, as I have noted, the popularity of crystal balls throughout the nineteenth century, and their appearance in painting that might seem quaint today but it relates to contemporary observation and attests to the consistent association of magic and fortune-telling in a reflective surface. The mirrors in works by Hunt, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Waterhouse represent modern factory-made products but they draw on the historical medieval tradition of scrying and crystal-gazing, and by joining the two contradictory elements together, the mirror captures the underlying essence of Pre-Raphaelitism: the paradox *and* reconciliation of modernity and scientific empiricism with reflective vision. The mirror in Pre-Raphaelite painting makes contradictory associations compatible and is the catalyst for Brooks's 'symbolic realism' that merges the literal with the intangible. Ultimately the mirror acts as a metaphor for Pre-Raphaelitism itself with its glowing surface qualities analogous to Victorian plate glass and images that reflect modern life as though seen through a magic mirror (or crystal) that creates a point of intersection for the material and spiritual, past and present.

If scholarly discussion around Pre-Raphaelitism and the influence of the P.R.B. can, and does, include observations of artists responding to one another in terms of subject matter, thematic variations, or stylistic qualities such as brushwork and use of colour, why should we not also consider the repeated use of a specific motif? Whether it is artists representing the fallen woman of Hunt's *Awakening Conscience* (Egg's triptych for example), or returning to the subjects of Fair Rosamund, The Lady of Shalott, or Mariana, reproducing them in rich colours while emphasising longing and despair, or the precise rendering of botanical details - Millais's *Ophelia*, Shaw's *Boer War* (fig.276) or Waterhouse's first *Lady of Shalott* of 1888 - the repetition of a specific motif, set of characteristics, or thematic content creates a system of recognition and response amongst critics and the public and establishes a visual dialogue between the artists. The use of the mirror among Hunt, Rossetti, and the artists of the second generation and later in the nineteenth century is prominent enough and repeated enough in over sixty-five works to warrant notice. The fact that these mirrors are used (or perhaps plagiarised if one were to ask Rossetti) within a larger context of mirrors in Victorian painting serves to throw into relief the unique characteristics of the mirrors established by Hunt and Rossetti. The fact that the P.R.B. founders themselves disagreed upon the true meaning of Pre-Raphaelitism, and nineteenth-century critics were confounded in attempts to define, label, or categorize, suggests the open-ended possibility for the consideration of a variety of nuances and associations through subject, visual cues, and motifs.

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<sup>682</sup> 'mirror, n.'. OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press.  
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/119110?rskey=Tnb7SW&result=1&isAdvanced=false>

There is a tendency, particularly noticeable in film and literature, to emulate a previous work that has been successful and although certain specifics may be different, the acknowledgement of the original that ranges from a subtle nod to the source material to outright mimicry is not in question; rather, it intentionally aligns itself through visual and thematic constructs. A case in point is George Lucas's *Star Wars* series, famous for referencing scenes from film history (classic Westerns, for instance) and even though the setting and figures are vastly different, Lucas pays tribute to his source material while re-interpreting it in the new world of his own work. For instance, a particular chase scene with Princess Leia and the Ewoks in *The Return of the Jedi* (1983) is an overt homage to the chariot race in *Ben Hur* (1959) while the podrace in *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* (1999) essentially transplants the original scene verbatim from ancient Rome to the 'galaxy far, far away.' More recently, following the overwhelming success of popular works of fiction such as *Twilight*, *50 Shades of Grey*, and *Gone Girl*, there has been a rise in numbers of publications imitating the original works: Waterstones, W.H. Smith, and posters on the London underground regularly announce the arrival of 'the new *Gone Girl*,'<sup>683</sup> the latest contribution to the ever-growing canon of adolescent vampiric romance, or a book whose marketing campaign promises 'if you liked [fill-in-the-blank], you'll love [this new work that is a variation of it].' These examples, far from the realms of fine art, nevertheless represent a pattern that relates to public popularity and marketing success today, constituting a twenty-first century incident of subject matter and motifs that are used and re-used, and whose comparisons are recognisable to the public. Perhaps only to gain the attention of potential buyers, these filmmakers and writers nevertheless align themselves with previous works by other writers and directors, responding to and reinterpreting their work in a public forum.

In the case of the mirrors developed by Hunt and Rossetti, followed by Burne-Jones and Waterhouse, we can trace a specific visual motif used with symbolic and narrative intent from 1850 through to later nineteenth-century artists whose use of it establishes a Pre-Raphaelite mirror tradition. Later artists including Waterhouse, Shannon, Orpen and Cowper and their appropriation of the early P.R.B. image that had become a motif by the 1860s through the power of repetition, highlights the impact of the Pre-Raphaelite movement on the British art scene in the nineteenth century, regardless of the dispersal of the original members of the Brotherhood after a few short years or the seeming incoherent styles of its founders. The recurrence of the mirror throughout images from Hunt and Rossetti generates a particular visual rhythm, a pattern of exchange and repartee through the use of modern glass irrespective of medieval or classical settings. The treatment of the mirror not only visually connects the two artists in a way not

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<sup>683</sup> Book Review, 'The Girl on the Train: How Paul Hawkins wrote 'The New *Gone Girl*,' *The Guardian* (April 21, 2015), <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/apr/21/the-girl-on-the-train-paula-hawkins-new-gone-girl-female-thriller-authors-gillian-flynn>

previously considered, it sets them apart from contemporary representations of the mirror, and it gives their pictures a common denominator of fresh relevance to a contemporary audience by using a familiar modern object to reflect the viewer's space and, whether it clarifies or obfuscates narrative as the case may be in either Hunt or Rossetti, the mirror's reflection takes on a prominent role within the work and directly engages the viewer.

The repeated use of the mirror by artists who are technically outside the Pre-Raphaelite movement nevertheless contributes to a broader sense of intermirrorality that relates to the presence of Pre-Raphaelite influence. The mirrors in Orpen, Shannon, and Cowper directly imitate the Pre-Raphaelite treatment with the shape, object placement, and reflection of the viewer's space that contributes to the experience of the work. As I argued in the previous chapter, Orpen may indeed have been looking at the Van Eyck original but it could hardly have been disassociated from the Pre-Raphaelites by the time Orpen was working. Thomas Benjamin Kennington may not be associated with Pre-Raphaelitism but his *Ace of Hearts* (1882, fig.267) certainly quotes Pre-Raphaelite mirror use with its central convex mirror and reflection of a befuddled gentleman watching the foreground lady's card trick, and the enormous convex mirror with narrative detail revealed in the reflection of genre painter St George Hare's *Pleasing Reflections* (1893, fig.268) refers to Pre-Raphaelite mirror imagery a year before Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott*. Likewise, *The Pose* (refer back to fig.103) and *Last Touches* (fig.269) by genre painter Gregory demonstrate Pre-Raphaelite influence in the convex mirror's reflection of the viewer's space that reveals the artist at his easel, an image that predates Orpen's *The Mirror* or Shannon's *Portrait of Baroness Toinon von Essen*. Orpen's mirror, as such, is located within a continuum of mirror imagery instigated by Hunt and Rossetti that is found both within the Pre-Raphaelite movement as well as with artists not categorised as followers or associates.

John Frederick Lewis's exotic pictures of life in Cairo that include enigmatic mirror reflections (see for example the reflection of the feet in the mirror, a reference to the artist or the viewer, found in *Hhareem Life in Constantinople*, 1857, fig.270) are an exceptional example of Pre-Raphaelite mirror treatment by an older artist who was not associated with the Brotherhood when he returned to England in the mid-1850s. Briony Llewellyn and Charles Newton's catalogue entry for the Christie's 2009 sale of Lewis's *A Cairo Bazaar; The Dellal* (1875, fig.271) acknowledges the mirror's presence in Lewis's works to add 'a puzzling dimension to his compositions' and points out that the boy holding the mirror may be symbolic of Lewis himself and his attempt 'to reflect Egyptian society, acknowledging that refractions and distortions were a necessary part of his creative process.'<sup>684</sup> Lewis's attention to detail is remarkably similar to early

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<sup>684</sup> See Briony Llewellyn and Charles Newton, Lot 14 Notes, Christie's Sale 7823: Orientalist Masterpieces Including An Important Private Collection (London: November 25, 2009), <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/john-frederick-lewis-a-cairo-bazaar-the-5263442-details.aspx>

P.R.B. pictures and Bate writes of Lewis having a Pre-Raphaelite ‘phase,’<sup>685</sup> acknowledging that even though Lewis was not a Pre-Raphaelite he ‘must still be placed beside the Pre-Raphaelite painters’<sup>686</sup> as his work was ‘identical as to manner’ with ‘Extreme elaboration and complexity of drawing, splendid colour and breadth of effect [ . . . ] entirely akin to that evolved by the ardent youths who initiated the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood’.<sup>687</sup> Bate closes his discussion of Lewis with an argument that he demonstrates ‘the Pre-Raphaelite ideal’ found in the works of Hunt and Millais, not Rossetti,<sup>688</sup> an observation that contributes to the necessity of re-examining the complexity of and signification of Pre-Raphaelite intermirrornality to question the perception of a Rossetti-dominated Pre-Raphaelitism of the later nineteenth-century as well as the on-going accepted dichotomy between Hunt and Rossetti’s styles.

Not only does their use of the mirror set them apart from their contemporaries, Hunt and Rossetti re-invigorated the symbolic potential of reflections in a way that had not been seen in nineteenth-century English art up until that point. The eighteenth-century representations of mirrors, as we have seen, emphasised the wealth of the owners rather than the reflective surface, and the nineteenth-century depictions followed suit. Hunt and Rossetti both seized upon the mirror as a modern product with inherent historical symbolism seen in the works of the Northern Renaissance masters and re-presented the materiality of the object with depths below the surface. The intermirrornality between Hunt, Rossetti and later followers who quote their mirror shapes, placement and emphasis on reflection, establishes a motif tradition that links Hunt and Rossetti together just as it does the seemingly opposing stylistic influences of Northern Renaissance and Venetian painting. In light of the continuing response and visual dialogue from later artists that directly engage with Hunt and Rossetti’s mirrors, this dissertation demonstrates that we ought to consider Pre-Raphaelitism as a way of looking at modernity, with the mirror as a potent metaphor of a unique type of realism in which Hunt and Rossetti re-present contemporary life as though seen through a magic mirror. Essentially, they not only re-enchanted an everyday object, they use it as the prism through which to view modernity in both its specific and timeless qualities. Writing in 1927, Priestly meditates on the antique convex mirror in his own drawing-room and compares it to the function of art. Rather than simply comparative to the broad sense of art in general, the analogy works particularly well for thinking about Pre-Raphaelitism:

Art is not a cold reflection of the surface of things, giving fact for fact, nor is it a wild distortion, twisting things insanely out of all recognition in order to escape from reality. The magic of this mirror lies in the fact that it seems to touch reality

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<sup>685</sup> Bate, 89.

<sup>686</sup> Bate, 91.

<sup>687</sup> Bate, 91.

<sup>688</sup> Bate, 92.

with fantasy, keep to the commonplace and yet surround it with wonder, by its power of selecting, compressing, and subtly distorting whatever is presented to its surface.<sup>689</sup>

Just as the Lady of Shalott's mirror, according to Hunt, represents the brilliant flat surface of the Lady's 'inspired mind,' Hunt and Rossetti's mirrors function in a similar fashion. The plate glass surfaces that directly correspond to contemporary glass production anchor Hunt and Rossetti's disparate, anachronistic styles with a modern, specifically middle-class material object that gives solid physicality to the ephemeral nature of 'Pre-Raphaelitism.' Within the unprecedented proliferation of mirrors in mid-to-late nineteenth-century painting, I have shown that the Pre-Raphaelite mirror stands apart as a specific motif and a unique representation of modern glass whether working with themes of middle-class morality through the overmantel mirror, subverting the expected relationship between the woman and the mirror, or exploring the mirror's supernatural potential. Situated firmly within the context of contemporary glass production and signifying a response to these 'glassworlds,' the Pre-Raphaelite mirror functions like Alice's glass in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, facilitating the viewer access of the work's inner standing-point. A late nineteenth-century study of magical practices describes the practice of crystal ball gazing:

it is not in the mirror where such things are seen but in the mind; the mirror merely serves to assist in the entering of that mental state which is necessary to produce clairvoyant sight.<sup>690</sup>

In the above quotation, the image of the mirror as a point of access to the essence of the work, the place of revelation in terms of the interiority of the piece, its inner-standing point is a potent summary of mirrors in Pre-Raphaelitism. While the original aims of the P.R.B. might have gravitated towards truth-to-nature in the contemporary debate around realism, a precise mirroring of nature that was misunderstood and mocked in Claxton's caricature *The Choice of Paris*, the Pre-Raphaelite mirror is ultimately akin to the Lady of Shalott's magic glass and is a metaphor for the artist's own inspired mind. Mediating between and also conflating the separate worlds of the viewer, the independent world of the painting, and that of the artist's mind, the Pre-Raphaelite mirror encapsulates an intersection between the modern middle-class interior and historical iconography, creating a dialogue of motif that is indicative of the Pre-Raphaelites as an avant-garde movement with a wide-ranging influence beyond the set of artists traditionally associated

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<sup>689</sup> J.B. Priestly, 'Art as a Magic Mirror,' *Forum*, 76: 6 (June, 1927), 912-921; 915.

<sup>690</sup> Franz Hartmann, *Magic White and Black* (Chicago: de Laurence, Scott & co., 1910), 147. Originally published G. Redway, 1888.

with the label. Ultimately perhaps we should think of Pre-Raphaelitism as a way of seeing rather than a specific set of principles, an approach that would work well given the variety of artistic inspirations (Dutch, Flemish, Venetian, Tuscan Renaissance), and the incongruent stylistic approaches and beliefs of Hunt, Rossetti, and Millais. As Jenny Graham has suggested, we should ‘rethink Pre-Raphaelitism as a conversation, not a rupture, with a canon in the making.’<sup>691</sup>

M.H Abrams’s classic text on nineteenth-century artistic mimetic theories, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, identifies a change of artistic mimesis with Romanticism; rather than literature functioning as a mirror of the natural world it became instead more like a lamp, illuminating ‘the poet’s natural genius, creative imagination, and emotional spontaneity.’<sup>692</sup> Abrams argues that the metaphorical contrast between the mirror and the lamp defines post-Romantic artistic output that was no longer ‘regarded as primarily a reflection of nature, actual or improved; the mirror held up nature becomes transparent and yields the reader insights into the mind and heart of the poet himself.’<sup>693</sup> Instead of this division of the mirror versus the lamp, I suggest instead that in Pre-Raphaelitism the mirror *is* the lamp that illuminates the work. The mirror-lamp informs a reading of the work as well as gives a physical materiality to the more elusive definition of Pre-Raphaelitism. Grounded in the modernity of the object, contradictory elements, styles, and representations coalesce into a unified modern English vision that reconciles the spiritual, inner experience, imaginative vision and historicising elements with empirical observation of modern life.

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<sup>691</sup> Graham, ‘Artistic Inspirations,’ Elizabeth Prettejohn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, 44.

<sup>692</sup> M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 21.

<sup>693</sup> Abrams, 23.



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