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A POET WITH A PAINTER'S EYE:

ASPECTS OF DEVOTION AND DESIRE IN DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI'S DOUBLE WORKS

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ASPECTS OF DEVOTION AND DESIRE IN DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI'S DOUBLE WORKS

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In loving memory of my parents, Livonia Verônica Brückmann Saldanha and Vicente Alves Saldanha.

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“For those poems were the work of a painter, understood to belong to, and to be indeed the leader, of a new school then rising into note.”

Walter Pater, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (1883)

“At the religious stage [men] transfer [omnipotence] to the gods but do not seriously abandon it themselves, for they reserve the power of influencing the gods in a variety of ways according to their wishes.”

Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (1913)

RESUMO

A presente tese visa analisar um grupo específico de poemas de Dante Gabriel Rossetti (os chamados poemas de imagens), e pinturas e gravuras de sua autoria, a fim de mostrar como a ligação entre desejo físico e devoção espiritual ilustra a expressão de Rossetti como artista, e como ela ajuda a colocá-lo como uma figura de transição no sistema literário britânico. O desejo físico e a devoção espiritual são duas forças antagônicas que ocupam um espaço predominante na literatura e na imaginação vitoriana, e na obra de Rossetti temos o momento em que a Poesia Romântica Inglesa converge para o Modernismo experimental britânico. A tese deste estudo, portanto, é de que trabalhando com essas duas forças, Rossetti tornou-se um precursor do Modernismo na Grã-Bretanha. Este trabalho investiga, desse modo, como a tensão vitoriana entre devoção espiritual e desejo erótico é representada em pinturas de Rossetti, como as suas vozes poéticas lidam com estas questões, e que soluções são criadas nas obras do poeta-pintor. Para alcançar os objetivos acima, esta tese relata uma pesquisa bibliográfica sobre a interação entre poesia e pintura e uma análise, de cunho psicanalítico, de obras pictóricas e poéticas de Rossetti. O primeiro capítulo apresenta um histórico da discussão sobre a relação entre poesia e pintura e um resumo dos conceitos freudianos a serem utilizados na análise. O segundo capítulo faz uma revisão da fortuna crítica de Rossetti e dos movimentos artísticos e literários aos quais ele é associado. O terceiro capítulo analisa um grupo das "obras duplas" de Rossetti (i.e., quadros e poemas), identificando como são construídas as imagens de devoção e desejo, e como elas se inter-relacionam. A conclusão estabelece a contribuição da obra poética e pictórica de Rossetti para o desenvolvimento dos sistemas literário e artístico britânico, à luz da relação dinâmica entre os aspectos de devoção e desejo presentes na sua obra, e analisa seu papel no cenário vitoriano. Apresenta também o papel de Rossetti na transição do Romantismo ao Modernismo britânico. A tese contém também dois apêndices: a) uma cronologia de fatos relevantes da vida de Rossetti e das obras aqui estudadas, e b) as "obras duplas" analisadas neste trabalho.

Palavras-chave: 1. Poesia e pintura. 2. Devoção espiritual e desejo. 3. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 4. Psicanálise. 5. Transição literária.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes a specific group of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poems (the so-called picture poems) and pictures, in order to show how the connection between physical desire and spiritual devotion illustrates Rossetti's expression as an artist, and how it helps to place him as a figure of transition in the British literary system. Physical desire and spiritual devotion are two antagonistic forces which occupy a predominant space in Victorian literature and imagination, and in Rossetti's work we have the moment in which Romantic English Poetry melts into experimental British Modernism. The thesis of this study, therefore, is that by working with those two forces, Rossetti became a precursor of Modernism in Britain. This dissertation thus investigates how the Victorian tension between spiritual devotion and erotic desire is represented in Rossetti's paintings and drawings, how the speakers in his poems deal with these issues, and what solutions are created in Rossetti's works. In order to reach the objectives above, this dissertation comprises a bibliographical review of the relationship between poetry and painting, and a psychoanalytical analysis of pictorial and poetic works by Rossetti. The first chapter presents a historical account of the discussion on the relationship between poetry and painting, as well as a summary of the Freudian concepts to be used in the analysis. The second chapter reviews Rossetti's critical fortune and presents the artistic and literary movements with which he is associated. The third chapter analyses a set of Rossetti's double works (i.e. pictures and poems), identifying how the images of devotion and desire are built and how they interrelate within the works. The dissertation conclusion establishes the contribution of Rossetti's poetic and pictorial works to the development of the British literary and artistic systems in light of the dynamic relationship between the aspects of devotion and desire in his work, and analyses his role in the Victorian scenario. Rossetti's role in the development from British Romanticism to Modernism is also presented. The dissertation has two appendixes: a) a chronology of relevant events in Rossetti's life associated with the works studied here, and b) the double works analyzed in this dissertation.

Key words: 1. Poetry and painting. 2. Spiritual devotion and desire. 3. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 4. Psychoanalysis. 5. Literary transition.

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INTRODUCTION

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882) was a poet with a painter's eye who built poetic images with a sharp sense of pictorial elements. In the descriptive parts of his poems one may easily recognize the skills of someone used to looking at the world in order to represent it graphically. The descriptions of people and scenes in the poems are sometimes so vivid and well defined, or at least so suggestive, that they may be easily visualized in the reader's mind or compared to Rossetti's paintings themselves.

In addition, Rossetti's works often establish a dialogue between poetry and painting. As a poet, Rossetti wrote some sonnets which described or interpreted paintings by different artists. Some examples are his poems "'Our Lady of the Rocks' by Leonardo da Vinci," "For a Venetian Pastoral by Giorgione," and "For 'Ruggiero and Angelica' by Ingres." As a painter, he sometimes produced pictures and drawings which rendered his visual interpretation to fictional characters or poems by different authors. Such rendering included scenes and characters by Shakespeare, Goethe, Poe, Tennyson and Dickens, among others, but Dante Alighieri was by far Rossetti's favorite.[1]

The same kind of rereading is also present in Rossetti's own works. He wrote a number of poems after his own pictures on different subjects, and produced a painting (*The Blessed Damozel*) and some drawings (e.g. *Eden Bower*, *Sister Helen* and *Troy Town*), to illustrate poems with the same titles which he had previously written. Those examples of a "double work of art," as McGann calls it, emerged from Rossetti's own experience with book illustration[2] and

[1] This preference was due to the fact that, since his childhood, Rossetti's imagination was filled with his father's scholarly researches on the Medieval Italian poet. *Signor* Gabriele Rossetti's passion for Dante Alighieri's work was even the source of Dante G. Rossetti's own name (Marsh *DGR* 1).

[2] Marsh tells us how since boyhood Rossetti illustrated some of his favorite books as well as some literary creations of his own (*DGR* 8-20).

are representative of his aesthetic program (Rossetti, *Collected* xxv).[3] They aimed at providing a complete view of the subject matter both in pictorial and verbal means. In addition, as Marsh reports, in 1847 Rossetti purchased William Blake's notebooks and was fascinated by them. The association of poems and illustrations in Blake's works thus highly influenced Rossetti's aesthetic.[4]

At the same time, Rossetti manages to juxtapose, both in some of his poems and paintings, two strong forces which sometimes collide in the Victorian ethos: spiritual devotion and physical desire. In Rossetti's works, women are often portrayed with strong sensuous elements. In the poems, for example, the blessed damozel wears a robe "ungirt from clasp to hem," and her yellow hair "like ripe corn… lay along her back" ("The Blessed Damozel" 7, 11-12). Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, Rossetti's poem says that "her sweet tongue could deceive [even before the snake], / And her enchanted hair was the first gold" ("Body's Beauty" 3-4). Rossetti's Venus "hath the apple in her hand for thee, / Yet almost in her heart would hold it back" ("Venus Verticordia" 1-2). Her glance "is still and coy" for a short time, "[b]ut if she give the fruit that works her spell, / Those eyes shall flame […]" (9-11). Examples such as these show female body parts in various degrees of physical representation, ranging from mild sensuality to tantalizing voluptuousness.

Concurrently, the representation of those and other women is often associated with spiritual devotion. Thus, the blessed damozel leans out "from the gold bar of Heaven" and has seven stars in her hair ("The Blessed Damozel" 1-2, 6). Mary, "God's virgin," brings "devout respect, / Profound simplicity of intellect, / And supreme patience" unto God's will ("Mary's Girlhood" 2, 4-6). Astarte's (Ishtar's) "twofold girdle clasps the infinite boon / Of bliss whereof the heaven and earth commune" ("Astarte Syriaca" 4-5). A strong sense of sanctity and religious reverence emerges from the description of the poetic subjects, endowing them with a spirituality which is immanent in their physical matter.

This coexistence of physical and spiritual forces is also present in Rossetti's paintings. The blessed damozel casts a deep longing look down at her lover on earth, while she is surrounded by heavenly couples in sensuous kisses and embraces. Mary Magdalene's strong half-covered arms express her anxiety to meet her Bridegroom (i.e. Christ). Beata Beatrix (the

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[3] Quotations throughout this work are presented according to MLA (2009). The references are presented according to ABNT (2002).

[4] Marsh (*DGR* 29).

blessed Beatrice)'s closed eyes and light-surrounded head suggest a moment of mystic revelation, while her long thick hair and nearly bent neck enhance the beauty of her face. Even the Virgin Mary's long red hair gives a tone of sensuality to her virtuous demeanor. Thus, like the poems, Rossetti's paintings express an interplay between physical desire and spiritual devotion (even more so, because they show it graphically) which has become a hallmark of Rossetti's work.

This interplay is the object of study of this dissertation. By analyzing a specific set of Rossetti's poems (the so-called picture poems) and paintings, this study shows how the connection between physical and spiritual beauty illustrates Rossetti's expression as an artist, and how it helps to place him as a prominent figure in the British literary and artistic systems. Spiritual devotion and physical desire and are two antagonistic forces which occupy a predominant space in Victorian literature and imagination, and in Rossetti's work we have the period in which Romantic English Poetry leads to experimental British Modernism. The thesis of this study, therefore, is that by working with those two forces, Rossetti became a transitional figure between Romanticism and Modernism in Britain.

The starting idea for this dissertation is grounded on a double realization: not only is Rossetti a poet with a painter's eye, as mentioned before, but he also defies classifications even within the British literary system. Rossetti may be read as a late Romantic poet in the Victorian Age who sometimes challenges Victorian mores and other times yields to them. Likewise, his contribution to the formation of a modern sense of artistic taste is indubitable both during his Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood years and later in his career, as the critical review of his work will show. However, the study of his work in Brazilian universities is still scarce, thus making studies such as this one necessary to fill the academic gap.

On a personal note, I must say I have great consideration for Dante Rossetti's poetry and paintings, not only because of their rich symbolism, but also because of their highly descriptive quality. This graphic feature has enabled me to work with some of his poems and paintings in literature classes, with a very positive response from students.

In addition, I must say that having taken my undergraduate and graduate studies at the UFRGS Letras Institute, I feel greatly indebted to the academic formation and development of literary critical skills I received as a student. Now, long after I received my master's degree in literature produced in English, I have felt the need to update my knowledge in the field. I also believe I can contribute by producing an innovative reading of a writer and artist who, despite

his importance, has not yet received due attention either at the local or the national level, and whose merit has not been sufficiently acknowledged yet.

Here lies the originality of this dissertation, and thus its relevance. Despite the undeniable importance of Rossetti's work both as a poet and a painter, a research on the *Lattes* theses and dissertations databank reveals that very few studies on the interrelationship between Rossetti's poetry and paintings have been carried out in Brazil, especially the specific group studied here.[5]

Likewise, the binomial combination of body and spirit is often referred to by Rossetti's critical fortune as an essential aspect of his work. Many critics, such as the ones to be mentioned in Chapter 2, have pointed out the centrality of spiritual devotion and of physical desire in Rossetti's works. However, the actual interrelationship between both is a constant debate. Therefore, this dissertation investigates how the Victorian tension between a devotional attitude and erotic desire is represented in Rossetti's paintings, how the speakers in his poems deal with these issues, and what solutions are created in Rossetti's works.

Part of Rossetti's importance lies in the fact that in his work one may notice that the boundaries between such categories as Romanticism, Pre-Raphaelitism and Aestheticism become blurred, as if diluted, and some elements of the Decadent movement and Symbolism are also present. Such dynamic features indicate the comprehensiveness of Rossetti's works, which, while portraying long-established forms such as sonnets and ballads, show evidence of a freshness that will lead to new literary and artistic movements.

In an interesting historical coincidence, Rossetti died on the same year two of the main pillars of British Modernism, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, were born. Rossetti himself was born a few years after the death of such important Romantic names as Keats, Shelley, Byron, and Blake. Therefore, Rossetti's productive life enabled him to participate in the development of the British poetic setting. Examples of his contribution include the erotic spirituality visible in his paintings and poems (the main object of study of this dissertation), his powerful exploration of poetic imagery and sound effects, and the dramatic use of refrain.

The main objective of this dissertation, therefore, is to identify the role of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's work within the British literary and artistic systems. The use of the imagery of

[5] To date, according to the *Lattes* Platform, there are only a few oral presentations in congresses, some articles, and an undergraduate final paper. This is the first Brazilian PhD dissertation focusing on Rossetti.

physical desire and spiritual devotion in some of his verse and pictorial works is investigated in order to characterize his literary and artistic relevance between Romanticism and the beginnings of Modernism in Britain.

This dissertation expects to contribute to the study of the work of Dante Gabriel Rossetti in four ways. Firstly, it aims at studying the iconography and iconology of Rossetti's paintings and drawings used as a source for the corresponding poems, or which illustrate them. Secondly, it analyzes how the themes of devotion and physical desire are portrayed both in Rossetti's pictures and in his picture-poems. Thirdly, it investigates what the images of devotion and physical desire in Rossetti's works reveal about his aesthetic in the Victorian scenario. And, finally, it makes a statement about the contribution of Rossetti's work to the development of the British literary and artistic systems in light of the tension between individual artistic expression and public reception in Victorian England.

In order to reach the objectives above, this dissertation comprises a bibliographical review of the relationship between poetry and painting, and a psychoanalytical analysis of pictorial and poetic works by Rossetti. The first chapter thus presents a historical account of the discussion on the relationship between poetry and painting, as well as a summary of the Freudian concepts to be used in the analysis, such as repression, sublimation, id, ego, Oedipus complex, condensation, displacement, and symbolism. The second chapter reviews Rossetti's critical fortune and presents the artistic and literary movements with which he is associated.

The third chapter deals with Rossetti's pictorial and verse works. As may be counted on McGann's webpage, Rossetti produced fifty-five *double works* (i.e. pairs of pictures and poems), out of which twenty-three refer to one another.[6] This study focuses on twelve of these as representative of his aesthetic approach to integrating poetry and pictorial representation.[7] His paintings and drawings and their corresponding poems are grouped according to two major categories: devotion and desire. Thus, the first section of chapter three analyzes the double works in which spiritual devotion is more apparent at first sight, investigating how the images of devotion and desire are built and how they interrelate. The works include: *The Blessed Damozel*, *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary /* "Mary's Girlhood (For a Picture)," *Found*, *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee*, *Beata Beatrix /* "The Portrait," and *Sibylla*

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[6] (*Rossetti Archive Doubleworks*). Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/racs/doubleworks.rac.html#T>. Accessed on March 1, 2016.

[7] See Appendix A for a chronology of Rossetti's life and of the double works studied here.

Palmifera / "Sonnet LXXVII – Soul's Beauty." The second part of the chapter reverses the focus, analyzing the double works in which physical desire is the dominant drive, and examining how the images of desire and devotion are constructed and how they interact. The chapter focuses on the following works: *Venus Verticordia*, *Lady Lilith* / "Sonnet LXXVIII. Body's Beauty," *Eden Bower* (*Lady Lilith)*, *Sister Helen*, *Troy Town*, and *Astarte Syriaca.*[8]

The iconographic and iconological aspects of the pictures are examined and compared with the formal and thematic features of the poems. A psychoanalytic interpretation is used in order to identify how the themes of devotion and physical desire illustrate Rossetti's aesthetic within the Victorian context.

The dissertation conclusion establishes the contribution of Rossetti's poetic work to the development of the British literary and artistic systems in light of the dynamic relationship between the aspects of devotion and desire in his work, and analyses his role in the Victorian scenario. Rossetti's role in the shift from British Romanticism to Modernism is also presented.

This study draws from different theoretical fields. As it deals with the tension between devotion and sexual desire in poetic and pictorial works, it must necessarily look for support in iconography and iconology, in psychoanalysis, in the discussions about the relationship between paintings and poems, in literary criticism, as well as in Social and Cultural History.

The support from iconography and iconology comes from the work of Erwin Panofsky. In his seminal book, *Studies in Iconology*, Panofsky sets the basis for the pictorial study of images and artistic symbolism. Iconography, defines Panofsky, is the branch of Art History concerning "the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form" (3). By artistic forms, the author means specific arrangements of lines and colors, specific shapes which represent natural objects, their mutual relationships as events, and expressional qualities, such as the mood of a character or the atmosphere of a place (5). Those elements, when carrying meanings, are understood as artistic motifs, and their enumeration would constitute a pre-iconographical description of a work of art. This is the first level of analysis, which Panofsky calls the primary or natural subject matter (5).

A second level of interpretation is attained by connecting artistic motifs and their combinations, known as compositions, with themes or concepts which are part of artistic

[8] The italicized titles listed here correspond to both the pictures and the poems when they have the same name. Throughout the text, unless otherwise indicated, the titles in *italics* refer to the pictures, whereas the poem titles are presented between quotation marks (" ").

convention. When motifs are attributed conventional meaning, they are called images, and the combinations of images are called stories and allegories. The identification of such images, stories and allegories is what Panofsky refers to as iconography (Panofsky 6).

The third level of interpretation proposed by Panofsky refers to the intrinsic meaning or content of a work of art. It deals with social and cultural aspects, such as a national attitude, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical assumption, used by the artist in a specific work. Those aspects acquire symbolical values within the work of art, and the interpretation of those values is what the German art historian calls iconology (or "iconography in a deeper sense") (7-8).

The analytical approach set by Panofsky guides the description and analysis of Rossetti's paintings and drawings in this dissertation. Thus, for instance, I will be commenting on the wealth of details in Rossetti's *Mary Magadalene* or the Blessed Damozel's longing look as part of the first level of interpretation. The iconographic reading will be seen in such examples as the red piece of cloth symbolizing Christ's blood in *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary*, or the sundial meaning the inevitability of death in *Beata Beatrix*. Finally, the iconological level will be present in the interpretation of *Found* as referring to prostitution, or of *Lady Lilith*'s mass of flowers as an example of the aesthetic of the Decadent movement.

Besides those three interpretative strata proposed by Panofsky, a fourth one is suggested by German-born historian Rudolf Wittkower, namely the influence of the art historian and critic. The "intuitively gifted and persuasive" critic, says Wittkower, "acts as a kind of middleman between art producer and art consumer" by canalizing the emotions of the receiving public and by often creating the symbols himself (183). Wittkower proceeds to state that both the professional art critic and a large portion of the public depend on "their emotive reactions on consciously and unconsciously held theoretical convictions which have a long history of their own. We need only think of men like […] Ruskin" (183-184). For a thorough understanding of an artistic or literary work, its time of production cannot be disregarded. Therefore, its placement and assessment by relevant and influential names in the history of art or literature must be taken into consideration. The natural implication of this position is that no study of Rossetti's work would be complete without a discussion of John Ruskin's role both as an influence on Rossetti's production and as a significant force in its reception by the artist's contemporaries. Such discussion will be carried out in the section dedicated to Rossetti's critical fortune.

As the specific focus of study of Rossetti's works are spiritual devotion and physical desire, the work of Sigmund Freud also serves as an important basis for the research. Freud is relevant here because he began to structure his ideas at the end of the Victorian Age, thus being close to the social-cultural setting lived by Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites. In fact, Victorian society was the epitome of Freud's studies. Therefore, the concepts of devotion and desire in this study follow the Freudian perspective.

Freud does not provide a specific concept of spiritual devotion. However, he discusses the subject in some of his works. In *The Future of an Illusion*, for instance, Freud calls religion "the most important item in the psychical inventory of a civilization. This consists in its religious ideas in the widest sense – in other words […] in its illusions" (14). Religious ideas are created to protect man "against the dangers of nature and Fate, and against the injuries that threaten him from human society itself" (18). Freud proceeds to say that man's relationship with God (or deities in general) recovers "the intimacy and intensity of the child's relation to his father. But if one had done so much for one's father, one wanted to have a reward, or at least to be his only beloved child, his Chosen People" (19). In other words, at the basis of worshipping there is a wish for compensation for the invested emotional attachment.

In *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud deepens the discussion by saying that religion plays an important role in the forming of civilization in that it supports the struggle between man's life instinct and his natural aggressive instinct (69). Religion (especially Christianity) also claims to redeem humankind from its sense of *guilt* produced by civilization, which is ultimately a form of anxiety, or an unconscious fear of the superego, caused by the restrictions and contradictions of the civilizing process (82-83).[9]

Freud thus provides important clues to the elaboration of a concept of spiritual devotion: man sees God as a primal and almighty father and *directs his emotional energy* to God or a deity in the hope of receiving their love and protection against the threats imposed on him by nature and society. Devotion also seeks relief from man's immanent sense of guilt, as well as a future compensation for his present burdens and ordeals. When this devotion is inserted in a religious system, worshipping is characterized by adherence to a series of regulations, restrictions, and rituals.

[9] See the definitions of *guilt* and *superego* in section 1.2 below.

As for desire, it is included in Freud's concept of *libido*. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud defines libido as "the energy (regarded as a quantitative magnitude [...]) of those instincts which have to do with all that may be comprised under the word 'love'" (24). Freud warns us that what he means by love is not only the one which aims at sexual union, but it involves all possible expressions of love, including "self-love, [...] love for parents and children, friendship and love for humanity in general, and also devotion to concrete objects and to abstract ideas" (24). What lies behind all those manifestations is the available energy of the sexual instinct, or Eros. It must be remembered again that sexuality for Freud does not comprise exclusively genital sexual intercourse. As Freud elaborates in *Three Contributions to Sexual Theory*, the sexual impulse is developed from infancy to puberty with the stages of fixation of the libido on different erogenous zones: the oral stage, the anal stage, the phallic stage (all of which have an autoerotic nature), the latent stage, and finally the genital stage (34-76). The sexual drive also extends throughout adult life, with all kinds of possible manifestations, sexual or otherwise.

In *Civilization and its Discontents*, libido denotes "the manifestations of the power of Eros in order to distinguish them from the energy of the death instinct" (68). In other words, libido tames and moderates the destructive power of the death instinct and directs it to the satisfaction of the individual's vital needs.

Considering the concepts exposed above, sexual desire is here understood as the *targeting of libido towards a specific individual, with the purpose of sexual intercourse*. For desire to be expressed, the energy of the sexual drive must be able to overcome the energy of the death instinct, otherwise it may be replaced by such states or behaviors as aggression, inertia, depression, or melancholy.

Besides spiritual devotion and sexual desire, this dissertation draws from other important concepts of Freudian theory. They will be summarized in section 1.2 below, as part of the presentation of the theoretical foundations of this study. In the analyses, other concepts will be presented according to specific situations.

In order to analyze the interrelationship between Dante Rossetti's paintings and poems, some authors who have discussed the issue are presented chronologically, and their seminal works are reviewed. Such works include Plato's *The Republic*, Aristotle's *Poetics*, Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Plutarch's *De Gloria Atheniensium*, in his *Morals*, Leonardo da Vinci's

Notebooks, André Félibien's *Dialogues*, Jean-Baptiste Du Bos' *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music*, Gotthold Lessing's *Laocoon*, and John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*.

The discussion of Rossetti's literary and artistic role in the Victorian Age is supported by both his critical fortune and a number of theoretical sources. The review of Rossetti's criticism ranges from Victorian critics, including John Ruskin and Walter Pater, to present-day international and Brazilian scholars, whereas the examination of his literary and artistic production draws from relevant names from the fields of History, Literary Theory, and Aesthetics. These names include Eric Hobsbawm, Arnold Hauser, René Wellek, Northrop Frye, Terry Eagleton, J. Ginsburg, Peter Childs, Theodor Adorno, and Umberto Eco.

In the analyses of Rossetti's double works themselves, besides Freud, Cirlot's and Ferber's *Dictionaries of Symbols* provide important assistance. In addition, some online sources give valuable support for the analyses and discussions. Jerome McGann's hypermedia archive of Rossetti's works (http://www.rossettiarchive.org/index.html) is the most comprehensive internet source available of materials produced by Rossetti, commented by the editor. *The Victorian Web* (http://www.victorianweb.org/), edited by George Landow, presents a wealth of academic articles. Jan Marsh's massive biography of Dante Gabriel Rossetti is also a constant companion.

Having thus established the grounds for this dissertation, let us proceed to its theoretical foundations, i.e. the relationship between poetry and painting, and the Freudian concepts which guide the analysis.

1 PENS, BRUSHES, DREAMWORK

This first chapter sets the theoretical and analytical bases for the study of Rossetti's works. The following sections present a discussion of the interrelationship between poetry and painting, as well as the key concepts of Freudian theory which will be used in the analysis.

1.1 POETRY AND PAINTING: A DIALOGUE

The relationship between poetry and painting is ancient and has been discussed by generations of philosophers, artists, writers, critics, and scholars. Plato, in *The Republic*, for instance, refers unfavorably to poets when discussing the education of youngsters. In Book II, Socrates censors telling a lie which is not "a fine one" and compares tales with painting. For him, those tales should be blamed "when a man makes in speech a bad representation of what gods and heroes are like, just as a painter who paints something that doesn't resemble the things whose likeness he wished to paint" (55). Plato is particularly reluctant to acknowledge the beauty of poetry because, for him, as imitation it fails to grasp the true good and the essential function of the object it imitates. When comparing poetry to painting in Book X, Socrates says that at least a painter imitates the form of an object, whereas a poet would be incapable of truly imitating someone's feelings, for example (285-289). Thus, in the analogy he draws between poetry and painting, Plato is not particularly fond of either, but is rather unsympathetic towards the former. This attitude is explained, as Du Bos reminds us, by the fact that poetry – and, to some extent, painting – might have a great effect over people's imagination and excite their

passions to a dangerous level in the Greek philosopher's ideal and well-balanced republic (35-37).[10]

A highly contrasting attitude is shown by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Unlike Plato, not only is he unafraid of poetry, but he also carries out the first important study of it. When defining and describing mostly epic, tragedy and comedy, in a few moments he compares the poetic text with painting. Thus, for Aristotle the most important feature of poetic texts is the presence of action: men in action, who must be represented "as better than in real life, or as worse, or as they are" (11), and the plot, which is "the soul of a tragedy" (27-29). The same characteristics are visible in painting, he adds (11, 29). Therefore, for the Greek philosopher the subject matter, colors and composition of a painting should present the same narrative quality as a poem. This view will set the ground for future comparisons between the two artistic media. By focusing on narrative texts and paintings, Aristotle inaugurates a long line of critical positions which use the mimetic quality of a written or painted work in order to establish comparison criteria.

Another standard set up by Aristotle refers to the perfection of imitation. Later in the *Poetics*, when discussing character, he states that poetry should follow the example of "good portrait painters [...]. They, while reproducing the distinctive form of the original, make a likeness which is true to life and yet more beautiful" (57). Such improvement of the imitated object would be the means by which the poet – and, by analogy, the painter – would lead the audience – or the viewer – to the cathartic movement. By enhancing the qualities of the object, the artist would remind spectators of the distance between the work of art and the original, and allow them to identify with the people represented in the work on the one hand, and to learn from their suffering on the other. Here again, Aristotle's position contrasts Plato's: while the latter disregards poetry and is afraid of its power to excite one's passions and imagination, the former values it for the same reasons. This standpoint accounts for the high value attributed by critics and thinkers to the dramatic effect of a poem or a painting, and will again influence the definition of parameters for the comparison between both artistic forms.

A similar attitude is visible in Horace's *Ars Poetica*, or *Epistle to the Pisos*. While addressing the art of writing, the Roman poet declares, "painters and poets / Have always shared the right to dare anything" as long as they keep their work "to a unified form" (10-11). Later in his epistle, however, Horace utters what would become the most famous phrase in the

[10] Besides the danger of exciting imaginations and passions, Du Bos suggests that Plato would also be afraid that, by frequently playing the parts of vicious men, actors might eventually contract "the corrupt manners" of their characters (37-38).

comparisons between poetry and painting, "*Poetry's like painting*: there are pictures that attract / You more nearer to, and others from further away. / This needs the shadows, that to be seen in the light (…)" (lines 361-363, my italics). *Ut pictura poesis*, says the Latin text, establishing what would be taken as the dominant doctrine for the comparison over centuries. In other words, comparing a poem to a painting would be valid as long as the assessment of the painting served as a reference to evaluate the merits of the written text. In the Renaissance, however, the meaning of the phrase would be reversed to *Ut poesis pictura*, i.e. painting is like poetry. As Lichtenstein reminds us, this reversed meaning, emphasizing the narrative aspect of paintings, would become traditional in comparisons until the eighteenth century, when Gotthold Lessing questioned that doctrine (Lichtenstein 10-11). At any rate, the Latin phrase inaugurated a long line of debates which have regarded both practices as sister arts with an ambivalent relationship: at times one or the other is seen as superior in its capacity to imitate, symbolize or recreate reality in an attempt to legitimize their artistic and social validity.

Another perspective, which would also become traditional in the discussion, was adopted by Plutarch. In his *Morals*, he quotes Greek lyric poet Simonides, who "calls painting silent poetry, and poetry speaking painting" (par. 1). The Greek historian elaborates on that quotation by relating the works of painters and poets with historical action. He states that what the painter presents "in colors and figures, the [poet] relates in words and sentences; only they differ in the materials and manner of imitation" (par. 1). Thus, for Plutarch, the standard of quality does not rely on the intrinsic nature of either painting or poetry, as Plato and Horace had claimed, but rather on their results in the service of History. A painter or a poet, as Plutarch puts it, "is accounted the best *historian*, who can make the most lively descriptions both of persons and passions" (par. 1, my italics).

This view reflects a change of focus on the representational feature of both media from the essential or material aspects of the subject matter to its representation as a narrative. In this respect, Walter Benjamin, in his essay "The Storyteller," reminds us that storytelling (the oral tradition from which written narratives evolved) is related with shared experience in the sense that "the storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others" (364), and he in turn makes it the experience of his listeners. At the same time, Benjamin states, storytelling is "an artisan form of communication" (367). This is due to the fact that some personal features of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of an artisan cling to his work. Later in his essay, the German thinker adds that epic forms would share the common ground of historiography, and that the historical chronicle would be the most

comprehensive form of historical narrative (369). These Benjaminian theses, which express the relevance of narratives as oral tradition and their closeness with written fictional and historical narratives, help us to understand Plutarch's appreciation of poetry and painting as potential historical account. Firstly, because narrative poems and paintings would be part of the shared experience of the poets, artists, and their audiences. Secondly, because poems and paintings which were "true to history," so to speak, would be comprehensive in their representations and would share the artisan nature of storytelling: they are all the result of some degree of craftsmanship.

Plutarch's view, however, is questioned by Leonardo da Vinci in his *Notebooks*. Painting, he argues, would be superior to the other arts, and therefore to poetry, because "the eye, which is called the window of the soul," would be the main means by which we can truly apprehend the natural world, whereas the ear would be "the second" (par. 1). If a poet tells "a story with his pen," says da Vinci, "the painter with his brush can tell it more easily, with simpler completeness and less tedious to understand" (par. 1). He then challenges Plutarch's view by stating, "if you call painting *dumb* poetry, the painter may call poetry *blind* painting" (par. 1, my italics), and he questions which is the worse defect: to be blind or dumb. Da Vinci's standpoint changes the original Simonides' quotation and presents a derogatory view of poetry. If, in the original quote, painting would be poetic in a "silent" way, now it is "dumb," i.e. mute. In addition, for da Vinci poetry has lost its "speaking," or expressive, quality and is now "blind"; in other words, poetry is equivalent to painting which cannot be seen or properly visualized.

These statements, which have become popular quotations from the Italian genius, set the attitude of primacy of painting over poetry based on its synthetic quality, i.e. its capacity to represent objects in the natural world all at once, or synchronically, whereas the linearity of the written text demands a diachronic progression. Da Vinci concedes that "the poet is as free as the painter in the invention of his fictions" (*Notebooks*, par. 1), but, due to the limitations of language, a text would not be as satisfactory to an audience as a painting, which gratifies "the worthier sense" of the eye.

Da Vinci's positions make explicit the capacity of an image to convey condensed information, thus impressing the viewer's mind instantaneously, which narrative or descriptive texts cannot do. The reader's mind needs time – the reading time – to apprehend the same amount of information and to imagine descriptions or actions. This contrast not only allowed

da Vinci to deem painting superior to poetry (in fact, to all other arts), but also influenced a long line of discourses in defense and praise of painting.

A more balanced – and singular – perspective is introduced in the seventeenth century by André Félibien, court historian to Louis XIV of France. In his book about "ancient and modern painters" Félibien presents the debate in allegorical form. The narrator falls asleep in the gardens of Versailles and in his dream sees both Painting and Poetry represented as sisters having an argument about their own qualities. Painting is described as tall, blonde and blue-eyed, whereas Poetry is slightly shorter and with black penetrating eyes. Both are dressed as goddesses (42). Félibien's singularity lies not only in the portrayal of both expressions as allegorical characters but also in their discourse: Painting speaks in prose, whereas Poetry expresses her ideas in verses. Their disagreement is originated in several arguments: each character claims to represent the feats of the king or other important names with more grandeur; each sister accuses the other of trying to do so by stealing her glory; and each one claims to be older in the representation of beauty as direct descendant of the gods (42-56). Their dispute moves on without their reaching a consensus until Love comes into the scene to pacify them. He then tells them to serve the king by dealing with different themes and by employing their specificities: Painting should portray the beauty of Louis' soul, whereas Poetry should represent his heroic and memorable actions (56-58).

While Félibien's aesthetic approach is not entirely original (he suggests that the realms of painting and poetry be physical portrayal and narrative account respectively), he introduces a political facet into the discussion. As Lichtenstein points out, the arrival of Love, telling the two sisters to serve the glory of the king, is replicated by the narrator's dream in the garden being interrupted by the king himself and his court (40). Being himself a member of Louis's court, Félibien produces a text which not only flatters his king but also reminds us of the social position occupied by art and literature. At Félibien's time artists and writers depended a great deal on patronage to produce, therefore the themes and material resources they employed were influenced by their sponsors. An artist's reputation could be at risk in case he did not do his best in order to please his benefactor.

In the eighteenth century, Jean-Batiste Du Bos will introduce a perspective which considers both painting and poetry equally valid. He even states that "a poet can tell us several things, which a painter would find impossible to exhibit" (69), regarding a character's ideas or feelings and their corresponding actions or facial expressions. While a poet can present a

character's thoughts, feelings and utterances, as well as all incidents of a narrative, a painting can only depict relevant incidents prior to the moment portrayed (71-72). Thus, for Du Bos, in some respects poetry would have a higher quality than painting, especially when considering narrative painting and dramatic poetry.

Du Bos also acknowledges the specificity of poetic and pictorial themes, arguing that a poet may employ different strategies to depict a character's passion or feelings. If some of those strategies fail, others may compensate for them, so the poet's idea will be fully expressed (75). Inversely, a character's physical aspects or those which have visible implications are more easily portrayed in a painting than in a poem (78). Du Bos adds that the emotion of different spectators in a painted scene turns them into actors in the picture, whereas a poem would not be able to express the same degree of passion of so many different participants (83-84). Painting would also have the capacity to immediately portray incidents which may arouse in us a strong impression (85).

Du Bos' standpoint, therefore, contrasts da Vinci's, and from the same starting point. If, for da Vinci painting would be superior to poetry because of its connection with the sense of vision, for Du Bos the same characteristic would pose a limitation, given the static nature of painting. Thus, the French author attributes both narrative painting and dramatic poetry complementary values.

Another important contribution to the study of the relationship between painting and poetry is the one offered by Gotthold Lessing. In his extensive essay entitled *Laocoon* (first published in 1766), Lessing states that each form of expression has its own limits, but, when both are originated in the imitation of a subject, some parallels can be drawn. According to the author, when one says that an artist imitates a poet, or the other way round, one means that one original subject matter will be represented according to the specific devices of each art (49). However, the author continues, when poet and artist study one common original from their points of view, their works may coincide in several features, but will not be a simple imitation of each other (49-50). This phenomenon is to a great extent what happens in Rossetti's poetic renderings of some paintings: although the poem may not be a mere description of the picture, it keeps the visual aspects of the essential subject-matter with novel effects.

In the specific case of gods or other spiritual beings, Lessing proceeds, they are not precisely identical for artists and poets. In the visual arts, those beings are "personified abstractions which must always be characterized in the same way, or we fail to recognize them"

(58). Naturally, this happens because viewers can only rely on the given visual elements to immediately recognize a traditional figure. Lessing concedes that the artist may introduce innovative actions to a god as long as they result from the god's character. In poetry, however, the same beings may acquire different personal features according to the poet's will without presenting any major problem to the readers' understanding (58-59). This comparison is particularly relevant when one considers again Rossetti's pictorial and poetic representations of biblical and mythological characters. To someone acquainted with art history, Rossetti's renderings of such characters as the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, or Venus, for instance, should present no challenge to identify. However, their very physical features or actions often present some innovative aspect (e.g. the Virgin Mary's latent sexuality or Venus's assertive look), which is further developed in the poems about them.

The last name to be reviewed in this section is a contemporary of Rossetti, and an important influence on his work: John Ruskin. As Landow reminds us, when Ruskin published *Modern Painters* the tradition of *ut pictora poesis* was dead, and Ruskin surprisingly brought the discussion back to light with "a romantic emphasis of the expression of emotion" ("Ruskin" par. 1). In the first volume of his work, Ruskin states, "painting, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language," and a great painter expresses himself as well as a great poet (*Modern Painters* I: 8). It is not "the mode of representing or saying," continues Ruskin, "but what is represented and said," which grants high quality to a painter or a poet (9). In other words, the technical and formal aspects of a painting or a poem, albeit important, would be in the service of expressing its content. This line of reasoning even allows Ruskin to use both words "pictures" and "poems" as synonymous (9).

Ruskin elaborates on this notion in the third volume of *Modern Painters*, where he argues that the best employment of both poetry and painting would be "to excite noble emotions" (13). He criticizes the "careless and illogical custom to oppose painting to poetry" (13), thus understating the ancient discussion, and asserts that painting should be "opposed to *speaking* or *writing*, but not to *poetry*" (13, italics in the original). Ruskin here introduces a novel aspect in the debate when he equates painting with speaking as forms of expression, whereas poetry would use either speaking or writing in the service of "noble" aspirations. Later in the volume he adds, "[w]hatever is in words described as visible, may with all logical fitness be rendered so by colours" to reinforce the parallel between poetic and pictorial renderings (101). Ruskin holds that art is inventive, useful and instructive when it puts on canvas the "great allegories" invented by poets (101).

Such assessment is not incidental. At the time Ruskin proposed these ideas, as Landow notes, painting in Britain did not enjoy the same popularity or prestige as literature ("Ruskin" par. 13). Education and new publishing methods contributed to the formation of a wider reading public, especially in the middle classes, who were not well informed about painting (par. 13). In this respect, Ruskin's statement that both painting and poetry serve "noble purposes" appealed to the sense of morality of the growing consuming public. Concurrently, when Ruskin began writing his volumes he wished to defend English painter J. M. W. Turner, whom he greatly admired, from charges that Turner's works were not true to life (par. 2). Therefore, the aim of Ruskin's new perspective in the discussion about painting and poetry is threefold: to grant painting a more favorable role in British society, to emphasize the role of religion and morality in the artistic expression of emotions, and to vindicate Turner as a romantic painter worthy of recognition.

The discussion about the parallel between painting and poetry could go on indefinitely; however, that would go beyond the scope of this study. The purpose here was to present some milestones in the history of the debate, reviewing their positions and inserting them in the analysis. Plato, the first philosopher to discuss the issue, shows a rather unfavorable position towards poets, whom he considers bad imitators of truth. Later on, Aristotle's *Poetics* sets the ground for the production and appreciation of poetry and parallels its mimetic quality to that of painting. This comparison is further developed by Horace, who addresses poetry from a practical viewpoint, as a craft, and whose phrase *ut pictora poesis* sets painting as the standard for the assessment of poetic texts. In contrast with those views, Plutarch does not really consider either poetry or painting as worthier, but places both in the service of historical account. In the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci deems painting superior to all the other arts, including poetry, because it appeals to vision, the noblest and most comprehensive human sense. In the seventeenth century, André Félibien innovates the discussion by presenting the debate in the form of an allegory and by introducing the political aspect of the artistic functions. Then in the Enlightenment, Jean-Baptiste Du Bos regards each expression as more suitable for specific subject matters depending on the resources they use. Subsequently, Gotthold Lessing discusses the limits and intersections of painting and poetry. His views offer a good standpoint to analyze the dynamic relationship of Rossetti's double works and validate the comparison intended here. Finally, John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* offers a view of both painting and poetry as expressive languages in the service of befitting emotions. Thus, from Plato's utter disdain to Ruskin's Romantic praise, a gradual development from highly biased views to more balanced ones is

possible to notice as we come closer to Rossetti's time. Now is the moment to present some Freudian concepts to be used in this work.

1.2 FREUDIAN CONCEPTS

As mentioned in the Introduction, the present study of Rossetti's paintings and poems follows a Freudian perspective. Therefore, the key concepts of Freudian theory which are suitable for artistic and literary analysis are important to be summarized. Those concepts may be arranged in specific systems or groups. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud characterizes the *pleasure principle*, which regulates the course of mental events. That is to say, those events are "set in motion by un unpleasurable tension" in an attempt to lower that tension and avoid unpleasure or increase pleasure (1). By doing that, the mental apparatus tries to keep the quantity of excitation present in the mind as low as possible or at least constant. The mental apparatus, as Freud affirms in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, is inhabited by "unconscious wishful impulses" and memories which are inaccessible to immediate understanding (642). As those impulses know no logic or rational direction, their fulfillment could generate an effect of unpleasure (e.g. by hurting oneself), therefore their *repression* by the mental apparatus becomes necessary (643). In other words, those impulses or memories are forced to remain out of the reach of the conscious mind. Another strategy used by the mind is *sublimation*, or a displacement of instinctual energies in such a way that they do not suffer frustration from the external world,[11] as Freud explains in *Civilization and its Discontents* (26, 44). Both repression and sublimation occur for the mind to adjust to the constraints of reality and due to the need for self-preservation, therefore the pleasure principle is gradually replaced by the *reality principle*. Freud explains that this principle does not abandon the search for pleasure, but develops strategies for the postponement of satisfaction and gratification as an indirect road to pleasure (*Pleasure Principle* 4).

The pleasure principle and the repressions which affect the reality principle participate in another group of Freudian concepts: the *conscious*, the *pre-conscious*, and the *unconscious*. Freud remarks in *The Anatomy of the Mental Personality* that the conscious is the portion of

[11] This would be the case, says Freud, of "an artist's joy in creating, in giving his phantasies body, or a scientist's in solving problems or discovering truths" (*Civilization* 26).

the mind which is aware of its immediate environment. Pre-conscious is the unconscious material which is latent and capable of becoming conscious at any given moment. The unconscious coincides with the repressed portion of the mind which does not come to the surface, so to speak (*Anatomy* 2-3).

A third group, also described in *The Anatomy…,* constitutes the mental apparatus: the *id*, the *ego*, and the *super-ego*. The id is the "obscure inaccessible part of our personality," a chaotic cauldron of impulses and energy which knows no laws of logic, contradiction, values, good or evil, or morality (3). The little access we have to it is learned from the study of dream-work and of neurotic symptoms (3). Besides, the id is unaware of the passing of time, i.e. its impulses and repressed impressions are preserved for an entire lifetime. The id is also the great reservoir of *libido*, i.e. the energy of the sex instinct (4). The ego is the "part of the id which has been modified by its proximity to the external world" and works as a mediator between the id and reality, representing the external world for the id by means of memory traces (4). The ego also turns the pleasure principle into the reality principle by way of repressing instinctual drives and postponing gratification (5). Conscious awareness resides in the ego, though most of the ego is actually unconscious (5). In comparing both, Freud affirms that "the ego stands for reason and circumspection, while the id stands for the untamed passions" (5). If the ego protects the individual, the superego's function is to protect society. It originates in the internalization of cultural rules taught by parents or caretakers and is mostly unconscious. "It holds up norms of [moral] behavior" and, in its struggle with the ego, installs the notion and sense of conscious or unconscious *guilt*[12] in the individual (6). Thus, in the complex system of the mental apparatus, the ego is the element which is susceptible to the most suffering. It has to serve and try to find a balance among three tyrannical masters: the external world, the anarchic and impulsive id, and the severe superego. When the ego is not strong enough to perform its role, "it breaks out into *anxiety*.[13] Reality anxiety in face of the external world, moral anxiety in face of the superego, and neurotic anxiety in face of the strength and passions of the id" (7, my italics).

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[12] In broad terms, guilt is "the emotional feeling associated with the realization that one has violated an important social, moral or ethical regulation" (Chaplin 201). Freud, however, defines the essence of guilt as "a fear of the loss of love, 'social' anxiety" related to people one depends on or to whom one attributes superiority (*Civilization* 72).

[13] As mentioned in the Introduction, in *Civilization and its Discontents* Freud defines anxiety as "an unconscious fear of the superego" (82). It is experienced as a feeling of dread and apprehension, in varying degrees, towards specific or unidentified objects (Chaplin 31).

Another important concept – and a highly polemical one – in Freudian theory is the *Oedipus complex*, as elaborated in *The Ego and the Id*. In simple terms, it happens as follows: the boy-child's close involvement with his mother's body arouses an unconscious incestuous desire for his mother and ambivalent love-hostility feelings towards his father (30). At the same time, the boy perceives the girl with no penis as being castrated. As the father is the primary source of authority and punishment, the boy-child develops a *castration complex*, i.e. he imagines he might be castrated as a punishment for his desires (56, 57). This situation is typically resolved by the boy abandoning his desire for his mother and identifying with both parents in various degrees, but mostly with his father, which leads to the formation of the superego. The outcome of the Oedipus complex forms "a precipitate in the ego, consisting of these two identifications," i.e. with the mother and the father (33). The precipitate (the superego) retains the character of the father, thus consolidating the residence of moral standards and prohibitions.

In the case of girls, Freud affirms that the Oedipus complex works differently. When the little girl compares her male counterpart's large and visible penis with her "small and inconspicuous" clitoris, she immediately feels castrated and develops a *penis envy*, with several important consequences to female sexuality ("Psychological Consequences" 177, my italics). The first is that the wound to the girl's narcissism would lead to a sense of inferiority (178). The second would be, by displacement of the feeling of envy, a tendency to jealousy (178). A third consequence would be a loosening of the girl's affection for her mother, because the latter would be held responsible for the former's lack of a penis (179). The fourth and most important effect would be the suppression of clitoral masturbation (felt as a masculine activity), thus leading to the timely admission of the vagina as the main source of feminine sexual gratification (180). Concurrently, the girl would replace her wish for a penis with a wish for a child, thus turning her father into her love-object, and her mother into the object of her jealousy. In Freud's words, "[t]he girl has turned into a little woman" (181).

The most important difference between the Oedipus complex in both sexes, continues Freud, is that "[*w*]*hereas in boys the Oedipus complex succumbs to the castration complex, in girls it is made possible and led up to by the castration complex*" ("Psychological Consequences" 181, italics in the original). Therefore, unlike boys, who form their superego by the smashing of the Oedipus complex, the girls' superego would be slowly formed by external repression (181-182). This process would account, according to Freud, for women's level of what is ethically normal as being different from men's. Women's superego would be not as

inexorable, impersonal and "independent of its emotional origins" as it is expected to be in men (182). As debatable as these positions are, the fact remains that the Oedipus complex plays an essential role in the formation of an individual's psyche. As Elizabeth Wright reminds us, "the Oedipus complex is for Freud the nucleus of desire, repression and sexual identity" (15). The individual's mental and emotional health, their capacity and expression of love, as well as their relationship with the world, are all highly influenced by the way their Oedipus complex is resolved.

The systems described above account for the constitution and functioning of the unconscious, and were developed for their application in the context of clinical work. Artistic and literary analyses must naturally follow a specific path. Although Freud himself wrote some essays on art and literature, his approach to artistic creation tends to be limited and focuses on the creators – artists and writers themselves. For instance, in Lecture XXIII of *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, "The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms" Freud relates the artist to the introvert neurotic (3430). The artist, for Freud, is "oppressed by excessively powerful instinctual needs, [but] he lacks the means for achieving them" (3430). Therefore, he transfers all his interest and his libido "to the wishful construction of his life of fantasy" (3430). In addition, in "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," Freud states that creative work, like daydreaming, is the fulfillment of a childhood wish (427). Thus, it is not in Freud's papers on aesthetics, but in another work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, that one finds the tools for artistic and literary inquiries. The interpretation of dreams is "*the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*" (647, italics in the original), and Freud's description of the "dream-work" provides a suitable parallel with the way artistic and literary – notably, poetic – images are built.

Freud defines a dream as "*a (disguised) fulfillment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish*" (*Dreams* 194, italics in the original). Dreams spring from an unconscious impulse, or desire, which is not fulfilled in waking life. Unable to find expression in action, the wish gathers substance both from recent external and internal stimuli (the day's residues), and from past infantile wishes, thus shaping images in order to gain satisfaction (197). However, the censoring ego transforms the images which might be too disturbing or shocking into symbolic representations (595-596). This process happens by means of four operations: *condensation*, *displacement*, *representability*, and *secondary revision*. In condensation, a series of dream-thoughts (i.e. unconscious thoughts, drives and desires) are compressed into a single dream image or event (312-315). In displacement, an element of the dream-thought is distorted and

takes on the appearance of something else in the manifest dream, usually with a different degree of intensity, so that a very important wish may appear as a trivial element in the actual dream (341-343).

The third dream-work mechanism, representability, refers to the preference given to the latent material which lends itself more easily to visual or verbal representation (*Dreams* 379).[14] Such material includes *identification*, in which a person who is linked by a common element is represented in the manifest content (355-358), and *symbols*, which are independent of the individual dreamer and have a fixed conventional meaning which is historically or culturally set (386-388). Here we have typical dream-symbols such as birds and upright or elongated objects symbolizing the male sexual organ, flowers representing the female genitals or virginity, boxes and urns meaning the uterus, apples standing for breasts, among many others.[15]

The constitution and the role of these dream-work operations received an important contribution by Roman Jakobson. In his seminal work, *Fundamentals of Language*, Jakobson defines *metaphor* as the capacity of two words to replace one another via positional and semantic similarity (or contrast); and *metonymy* (which includes synecdoche, i.e. the figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole, or the whole for a part), as the capacity of replacement via semantic contiguity (77). Thus, says Jakobson, Freud's notion of displacement is a metonymic process, and condensation is synedochic, whereas identification and symbolism are metaphorical (81). This classification is of special interest to the study of Rossetti's works in a Freudian perspective: the synedochic condensation, the metonymic displacement, as well as the metaphorical identification and symbolism, are recurrent pictorial and poetic devices.[16] Examples of these resources include the dream-like atmosphere in Rossetti's poem "The Portrait" condensed into the fuzzy strokes of *Beata Beatrix*; the face of Jesus in *Mary Magdalene* (the picture) and his equivalent "Bridegroom" in the poem (displacement); the

[14] Freud gives a fine example of representability in the field of poetry. He says that any one thought operates selectively in relation to the possible forms of expression of other thoughts, and this may happen from the very beginning in the case of writing a poem. In Freud's words, "[i]f a poem is to be written in rhymes, the second line of the couplet is limited to two conditions: it must express an appropriate meaning, and the expression of that meaning must rhyme with the first line" (*Dreams* 375-376). Thus, in a poem of high quality, the poet's intention of finding a rhyme should go unnoticed, and the two thoughts have influenced each other in such a way that the rhyme will emerge naturally.

[15] These are all recurrent elements in Rossetti's works and will be analyzed in the third chapter.

[16] Regarding metaphors, Jakobson states that the principle of similarity is essential to poetry: "the metrical parallelism of lines or the phonic equivalence of rhyming words" puts semantic similarity and contrast in evidence. Thus, "the study of poetical tropes is directed chiefly toward metaphor" (81).

metaphorical identification of Keats as the "English nightingale" in "Found"; and the rich symbolism of *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary* (picture and poem).

The fourth dream-work operation is secondary revision, which typically happens when the awake dreamer gives a verbal account of his or her dream. The conscious mind tries to organize the absurd and disconnected dream-sequence into a logical order and tries to build a coherent narrative (Freud, *Dreams* 526-529). This stage also contributes to the repression of the dream content because, in the selection and ordering of the dream material, important elements may be ignored of falsified (537).[17] An application of secondary revision to Rossetti's works may be seen in the transposition of his paintings to the poems. The condensed and highly symbolical pictorial images are at one time elaborated on and restricted in the poetic images within formal poetic conventions such as sonnets or ballads.

Besides the four operations of the dream-work, Freud also stresses the importance of *affects*, or the emotional content, of dreams. The feelings experienced in dreams are as intense as the ones experienced in waking life (*Dreams* 497). Freud even adds that dreams have more right to be included in our real mental experiences as regards their affective than their ideational content (497). This is due to the fact that, while dream-thoughts undergo displacements and substitutions, the feelings associated with them remain unaltered (498). This feature is particularly relevant when we consider Rossetti's poems, because the characters' feelings are an important aspect of the texts. Therefore, the expression of those feelings deserves careful investigation.

Freud's concepts, especially the ones concerning the Oedipus complex, are highly controversial and have been subject to constant criticism and revision since his own time. However, the context in which he carried out his studies and formulated his ideas must be taken into consideration if they are to be used as the theoretical basis for literary and artistic analysis. The nineteenth-century European mindset was for the most part extremely conservative and repressive, and really placed a position of social and sexual inferiority to women, limiting them to their "maternal and wifely duties" (Hall 58). As Catherine Hall reminds us, women were thought of as having a dependent nature and should be cared for by their husbands (50). In nineteenth-century Europe, religious and pseudo-scientific discourses reaffirmed the different fields of action for both men and women. According to Hall, English Evangelical reformist

[17] An evidence of this process is the fact that we may overlook misprints in a text "which destroy the sense, and [still] have the illusion that what we are reading is correct" (Freud, *Dreams* 538).

Hannah Moore claimed that "men and women were born to occupy different spheres. This was the rule of Nature as well as of custom and propriety" (58). At the other end of the spectrum, French physician Pierre Roussel advocated the "soul's supremacy over the body" to call maternity a "metaphysical vocation for the woman" (Corbin 477). It should not be difficult then to understand how Freud's own discourse was influenced by such a male-centered, patriarchal society. The same effect applies to Rossetti. As the analyses of his paintings and poems hope to demonstrate, the same ethos which grounded Freud's theory also lies behind Rossetti's rendering of female characters.

It must be remembered that, although this dissertation draws from Freudian theory, it does not aim at exploring the author's psyche via his works – what Wright calls "id-psychology," i.e. "the notion that the work of art is the secret embodiment of its creator's unconscious desire" (37). After all, trying to analyze the unconscious drives of a writer who has been dead for over a century, besides being a piece of speculation, would hardly bring any contribution to the academic field. Nor is this study solely restricted to the unconscious motivations of the characters in the paintings and poems, which, as Terry Eagleton reminds us, is just as limited and problematical (155). Instead, what is aimed here is a dialectical reading of Rossetti's works as artistic expressions of a subjectivity inserted in and interacting with a specific and complex social-historical context. This means looking *into* the paintings and poems in order to investigate how their imagery is built from a psychoanalytical perspective, and looking *out of* them as artifacts produced in Victorian society, thus illuminating their interpretation.

The Freudian concepts summarized above complete this chapter about the theoretical foundations of this study, which also presented a historical account of the relationship between poetry and painting. Let us now proceed to the survey of Rossetti's critical fortune regarding his production both as a poet and as a painter and the outline of the literary and artistic movements Rossetti is identified with.

2 DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI – POET AND PAINTER

This chapter reviews the critical fortune on Rossetti's poetic and artistic works and summarizes the literary and artistic movements with which he is associated. Relevant assessments of his works are thus presented, ranging from contemporary Victorian responses to present-day critics. These reviews include: Ruskin's (1888) *Modern Painters*; Robert Buchanan's (1871) essay "The Fleshly School of Poetry – Mr. D. G. Rossetti," Jan Marsh (1999), Walter Pater's (1883) essay "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," Brian Eschrich (2007), Kate Moller (2004), Florence Boos (1976), Elizabeth Helsinger (2008), William Fredeman (1982), Steven Kolsteren (1982), Suzanne Waldman (2008), Maria Angélica Melendi (1996), and Angiuli C. de Aguiar (2013).

The second part of the chapter presents a social-historical account of nineteenth- to twentieth-century literary and artistic European movements, as well as Rossetti's relationship with them, as an author and artist engaged in the manifestations between Romanticism and Modernism.

2.1 REVIEWS OF ROSSETTI'S POETRY

Rossetti was a polemical and influential figure who received greater critical acclaim both as a poet and as a painter after his death than in his own lifetime. Contemporary Victorian critics and later anthologists portrayed, in the words of Florence Boos, "a simplistic view of Rossetti's poetry," claiming it showed "little development and variation," emphasizing its

Keatsian influence, and categorizing him as "an art-catholic word-painter" (1).[18] As a result, critical interest in Rossetti's poetry was initially deflected, and for some time his written works were difficult to obtain. Thus he went into posterity better known as a painter of irregular achievements who preferred to sell his watercolors to private collectors rather than expose himself to large exhibitions and therefore to widespread criticism.

One of the first assessments of Rossetti's oeuvre was offered by John Ruskin. In *Modern Painters*, volume III, Ruskin refers to Rossetti's work as a fine example of what he calls "the third kind of grotesque,"[19] i.e. "art arising from the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp" (III: 97). Ruskin considers this kind of grotesque "thoroughly noble," because it emerges out of the use or materialization of not easily expressible truths, including most of "symbolical and allegorical art and poetry" (III: 98). This approach, as Berg comments, sees the grotesque as deriving "from an exploration of the world of dreams, a 'universe of noble dreamland'" (106). Ruskin's Platonic view of poets and artists, granting them access to transcendental truths which they would grasp and express by means of symbolical imagery, is aligned with his view of the "noble purposes" of art. By following this idealist perspective of artistic expression, Ruskin is highlighting the relevance of artists in a context in which art does not have the same widespread prestige as literature.

A fine grotesque, proceeds Ruskin, is the immediate expression, via "bold and fearless connection of symbols" (III: 99), of a truth which would take a long time to be uttered verbally. The viewer (or the reader) is responsible for disclosing the connection and forming the grotesque character. This claim means that both the artist and the viewer join in a collaborative work in which the former has a vision of a transcendental or inner truth and translates it into composite symbolism, whereas the latter has to decode the symbolism to access that original truth. This process involves great responsibility on both parts, including the artist's skills and the viewer's knowledge of the symbols.

For Ruskin, the truly great artists are the ones who "delight in symbolism and […] fearlessly employ it" by skillfully introducing fantastic beings in their works with a realistic treatment (III: 101). The critic concludes, "[i]n many of the works of […] Rossetti, is already

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[18] Some important examples of Keats' influence upon Rossetti are the musing atmosphere of *The Blessed Damozel* and *The Portrait*, as reminded by Marsh (*DGR* 24-25); the imagery of Victorian medievalism, the merging of plastic arts and poetry, and even the name Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as pointed out by Bottai (pars. 1, 5).

[19] The other two kinds are "A) Art arising from healthful but irrational play of the imagination in times of rest. B) Art arising from irregular and accidental contemplation of terrible things; or evil in general" (Ruskin III: 97).

visible […] a true unison of the grotesque with the realistic power" (III: 103). Therefore, Ruskin's acknowledgement of Rossetti, albeit short, helped to legitimize him both as a skillful painter who produced elaborate symbolism and as an artist of merit, whose works would be worth commissioning. Ruskin's assessment, allied with his own patronage, which lasted for some years, helped Rossetti to establish a place among wealthy patrons and not depend directly on exhibitions.

In time, however, not all critics shared Ruskin's views. In a bitter essay called "The Fleshly School of Poetry – Mr. D. G. Rossetti" (1871), Robert Buchanan, under the pseudonym of Thomas Maitland, dissected Rossetti's *Poems* (1870) and produced the most negative review Rossetti ever saw in his entire career. Opening his review with a comparison between the contemporary British poets and the characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Buchanan calls Rossetti Osric (334), alluding to the courtier's pompous and empty language. Buchanan then elaborates on his assessment by calling Rossetti's poetry such epithets as "fleshly," "spasmodic," "erotic," "unwholesome," "an intellectual hermaphrodite," a "morbid deviation from healthy forms of life," "superfluous," "unmanly," among others. Rossetti, says Buchanan, opens his sexual intimacy to the public and "is gratified by their applause" (339), thus taking delight in a subject which would not be fit for poetic expression.

Besides, Rossetti would not be competent enough to give his poetic characters a thorough personality: "[i]n petticoats or pantaloons, in modern times or in the Middle Ages, he is just Mr. Rossetti, a fleshly person," jibes Buchanan (339). Throughout the text Buchanan points out every possible fault in Rossetti's poems, from poor rhymes and awkward prosody to inadequate phrases and feeble imagery. In addition, the critic suggests that Rossetti imitates other contemporary poets such as Tennyson, Elizabeth and Robert Browning – and Buchanan himself! (343). He concludes by calling Rossetti a "secondary" writer of poetry whose "maturity is fatal" (350).

According to Marsh (*DGR*), Buchanan's essay stemmed from old literary animosity between himself and the Rossetti brothers, William and Dante Gabriel (392-393). Feeling outraged, Rossetti reacted to it by publishing a satirical article entitled "The Stealthy School of Criticism" (433). A long stressful controversy followed, culminating in Rossetti's mental breakdown in 1872 (437-438).

Buchanan's assessment, however hostile in its highly subjective and personal attack, was at least partially correct in its essence. "Nuptial Sleep," for instance, does describe the

aftermath of an orgasm; "Jenny" takes place in a brothel; and "The Blessed Damozel" replicates earthly physical love in heaven. Rossetti's sensuous physicality of love was uncommon in typical Romantic poetry, which tended to idealize it, or at least allude to it rather than show it. Not surprisingly, it caused discomfort among puritanical Victorian critics. Rossetti, however, felt that those poems in the 1870 edition were among his best, and as Marsh reminds us, in his desire for poetic fame he would like to produce "an original volume of sufficient quality and quantity" (*DGR* 380). The originality of Rossetti's approach to love was aligned with what he – and his friendly reviewers – considered an innovation in aesthetic experience,[20] parallel to the one expressed in *Venus Verticordia*, who boldly looks the viewer straight in the eyes.

After Rossetti's death, another influential critic would return to Ruskin's view of the grotesque as emerging from a dreamland: writer and critic Walter Pater (1839-1894). His essay "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," first published in 1883, surveys Rossetti's poetry and notes his "quality of sincerity" (229). The essay takes on the tone of a eulogy, praising Rossetti's poetic qualities and justifying his faults as signs of that same sincerity. Thus, for instance, Pater explains Rossetti's "forced and almost grotesque materialising of abstractions" as "a moment of weakness" deriving from a "poetic divine mania" (232), in a Platonic view of poetic construction. The "dream-land" from which Rossetti's imagery arises corresponds, claims Pater, to an "expansion of, or addition to, [Rossetti's] waking life" (238).

For its most part, the text is complimentary. When he describes Rossetti's poetic imagery, Pater refers to "a really new kind of poetic utterance" with original effects, which stems from "the ideal intensity of love […] based upon a perfect yet peculiar type of physical or material beauty" (234-235). By looking back at the Middle Ages as a source of inspiration, Rossetti would promote a "revival of the mythopœic age, [in which] common things […] are full of human or personal expression [and] sentiment" (234). Therefore, Rossetti's view of objects and landscapes in his poems would be the one of a painter looking for their picturesque effect.

[20] In this study, the concept of aesthetic experience draws from Theodor Adorno's definition, according to which aesthetic experience "becomes living experience […] in that instant in which artworks themselves become animate under its gaze" (Adorno 175-176). "Through contemplative immersion the immanent processual quality of the work is set free. […] In its immanent dynamic, […] aesthetic experience resembles sexual experience, indeed its culmination" (176). This dynamic process stems from the artist's intentionality and finds response in the recipient's willingness to experience it. It is therefore part of a specific social-cultural and historical setting of production and consumption of artworks.

Rossetti then would be a true follower of Dante Alighieri, for whom "the material and the spiritual are fused and blent" (Pater 236). In Dante, as in Rossetti, the spiritual attains visibility, whereas the "material loses its earthiness and impurity" (236). Consequently, in Rossetti's poetry earthly bodies (i.e. objects, places, and people) keep their physicality in the spiritual world. So do feelings, says Pater (237). The "great affections" of people on earth form a "solid resisting substance" which is pictorially represented in the "world of shadows" (237). In this sense, Pater's arguments may well be read as a counterpoint to Buchanan's attack on Rossetti's sensuality. If for Buchanan Rossetti's depiction of sensuous love was offensive, for Pater it was justified by a fusion of the spiritual and the material worlds.

Pater concludes his assessment by referring to a double function of poetry. Poetry, he says, may "unveil [...] the ideal aspects of common things, [...] or it may actually add to the number of poetic motives" by creating new ideal things (242). For Pater, Rossetti performed the two, but excelled in the second function by adding fresh poetic material (242). Pater's perspective then is that, at a time (i.e. the Victorian Age) when spirit and matter were severed, and the body was constantly being watched, Rossetti, by taking inspiration in the Dantean worldview, attempted to overcome the opposition between body and spirit.

Pater's view on Rossetti's fusion of spiritual and physical matters is shared by Eschrich. He argues that "no Rossettian image is physically beautiful without possessing some spiritual force, nor spiritually powerful in abstraction from concrete, living experience" (par. 3). In this sense, the material content of Rossetti's images would be interrelated to their spiritual essence.

As Rossetti does not seem to follow any orthodox religious systems, Eschrich affirms he shows "a broader, [...] humanistic view of spirit, which must be more accessible to humans in order to be relevant" in his works (par 4). For Rossetti then the spirit must be found within the reach of human experience (par 4), through the expression of one's emotions and personal choices.

Kate Moller follows another perspective on Rossetti's relationship with spirituality. She holds that art was a substitute for Rossetti's religious upbringing, therefore he turned to the image of the "Fair Lady – whether as Blessed Damozel, *femme fatale*, or victim – as a source of salvation" (par. 1). His heaven then would be one of earthly pleasure, filled with women types whose eyes and mouths and skin exude some kind of spirituality.

Drawing inspiration for his works from his personal experience, Rossetti would personalize his medieval and mythological figures and attempt to make them tangible to modern audiences (Moller par. 7). The same would happen to Christian symbols and imagery, which were major thematic elements in his work (par. 9). As he did not follow an orthodox religious system, says Moller, Rossetti concentrated first "on spiritual and conceptual meaning in his work […] and then found physical and visual representations" which would make that concept concrete for his audience (par. 11). *The Blessed Damozel* thus would be an example of this blending of physical beauty and sensuousness with the idea of heaven and salvation (par. 13).

Moller then discusses how the actual women in Rossetti's life played the roles of the artistic Fair Lady. Lizzie would represent heavenly beauty and spiritual love, the eternal Blessed Damozel of divine sexuality (pars. 22-23). Fanny would represent physical and sensuous love, an objectified *femme fatale* (pars. 26-28). Jane Morris would join elements of the two types, yet would not identify closely with either, remaining an unattainable beauty, aloof and unhappily married (pars. 37-41).[21]

Moller comments on Rossetti's incapacity to "reconcile his two moral codes that set the spiritual, heavenly beauty against the corporeal, body's beauty" (par. 44). Although both the blessed damozel and the *femme fatale* were sexual beings, the former's gaze led to salvation, whereas the latter's attraction led to damnation (par. 44). This dichotomy would be a sign of how much conventional morality influenced Rossetti's work (par. 46).

Moller's line of reasoning correctly points out the dichotomy between the spiritual and the material worlds which is apparent in Rossetti's works. On the other hand, it tends to overestimate the connection between Rossetti's personal life and his artistic expression. Any artists will undoubtedly project something of themselves onto their art. However, they will employ their talent and their skills to transform their subject matter into artworks. The relationship between an artist's affections and their plastic representations are more complex than they seem. In the case of Rossetti, one must not forget how particular he was about creating elaborate imagery often filled with complex symbolism, besides being a perfectionist about his creations. In addition, Rossetti's double work pictures have a dynamic relationship with the poems which accompany them. In *The Blessed Damozel*, for instance, the woman's gaze is not

[21] These are Rossetti's most important relationships. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Siddal (1829-1862) was his first important model and his wife. Fanny Cornforth (1835-1909) was his model and mistress, and later his housekeeper. Jane Burden Morris (1839-1914) was his model and married to his friend William Morris. Rossetti and Jane Morris kept an entangled relationship for several years. See Marsh (*DGR*) for more information on the three women.

a guarantee of salvation, as may be inferred by the male lover's anguished look and position on earth. In the poem this sensation is intensified by the damozel's final tears.

Performing a Formalist analysis of Rossetti's poetry, Florence Boos accentuates the formal treatment of his idealism, materialized in the many versions he wrote of the same poems to "reflect shifts in his own and contemporary taste" (3). Boos reports that, in his compositions, Rossetti often built "sonnets around images or sensations, and later attached 'ideas' or interpretations to them" (16). This method of composition illustrates Rossetti's attitude towards the construction of poetic imagery or symbolism as a perfectionist attempt of aesthetic expression.

Later in her analysis, Boos highlights the theme of love in Rossetti as "a metaphor for all that is best and most concentrated in life" (88). Aligned with nineteenth-century poetry, Rossetti explores different facets of love – sensuousness, idealism, memory, the aesthetic. However, complements Boos, his view is that private experience must involve someone else (88). This is the aspect which first aroused Buchanan's vehement reaction in 1870 and which endows Rossetti's poetry with a sense of ambiguity. If some poems (e.g. "Found" and "The Blessed Damozel") express moral guilt, others (e.g. "Nuptial Sleep" and "Body's Beauty") contain no moral judgements. What seems to be constant, argues Boos, is a suggestion of time passing, death, separation, doom (89). Not surprisingly, Rossetti was favored among both the Symbolists and the Decadents, with their dreamy, dark and introspective representations.

Boos also underlines Rossetti's uniqueness in that he "is the only mid-Victorian poet who expresses throughout all his poetry the intuition that love, art, and guilt must be allied" (90-91). For Rossetti, says Boos, "art must reflect inner truth whatever the limitations or incompatibilities it recorded" (91). Whether this may be a fusion or rather a coexistence of different forces in his poetic production, Rossetti spared no efforts to express his subjectivity and his views about different subjects in his attempt to create aesthetic experiences. His elaborate imagery and varied symbolism endeavored to stylize his profuse ideas and affections regarding different aspects of his life, including love, sex, spirituality, guilt, and the aesthetic.

Another critic who pays close attention to formal and thematic aspects of Rossetti's poetry is Elizabeth Helsinger. She points out the device of structural repetition present, for instance, in the refrains in Rossetti's ballads or the multitude of flowers in the paintings. Repetition, argues Helsinger (5), forces a shift of attention, from slight differences into whole patterns, thus arousing in the listener or the viewer a continued rhythmic force. This is certainly

true in ballads such as "Eden Bower" and "Sister Helen," in which the refrains contribute to creating the poetic effects and the sensations suggested by the narratives. It is also a hallmark of Rossetti's pictures of mythological characters: the profuse flowers surrounding the women transcend their ornamental function to suggest different atmospheres.

Rossetti constructs his poems and paintings, proceeds Helsinger, in such a way one sense suggests or includes another (26). Thus, hearing and sight "can incorporate or become touch and feeling" (26). The use of colors, sense verbs, nouns suggesting textures and other lexical devices contribute to this integration and the variety of imagery. They also demand the reader's great concentration to experience that imagery in his or her own mind.

As for Rossetti's portraits, Helsinger highlights his Titianesque influence in the portrayal of women and in writing the "picture-sonnets" to accompany the paintings (144). His *Venus Verticordia*, for instance, came from the Venetian courtesans in the style of Titian (Marsh, *DGR* 279). When such poems are read in reference to the paintings, they acquire a different poetic status which oscillates between aesthetic commodity and manifest thought (Helsinger 144). This dynamic relationship thus adds meaning and intensity to Rossetti's double works, for they mutually contribute to the aesthetic phenomenon of each one.

Additionally, Helsinger reminds us that, in Rossetti's inspiration in medieval and early Renaissance poetic models, and in bringing those earlier traditions into English poetry, he pointed the way, through translations and poetic experiments, to modernist poets like Pound and Eliot (221). If his own poetry was not formally experimental (his favorite forms were traditional sonnets and ballads), the particular treatment he gave it was a source of inspiration for later authors who wanted to innovate poetic expression.

On the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Rossetti's death, William Fredeman (1982) argued that, despite the wealth of studies on Rossetti's works, at that time he still remained "elusive and evasive" to any formulae which aimed at providing a single account of his poetry (xxi). In his search for an explanation, Fredeman notes some paradoxes in Rossetti's works: although Rossetti considered himself as primarily a poet, he worked at poetry at some specific "creative bursts" in his life, while "painting was his *business*, his livelihood" (xxii, italics in the original). In Rossetti's own words, as quoted by Marsh, his painting was "'pot-boiling and no more. Whereas [his] verse, being unprofitable, [had] remained […] unprostituted'" (*DGR* 398).

Another paradox in Rossetti's relationship with art, as Fredeman points out, lies in Rossetti's refusal to exhibit his paintings and in delaying publication of his own poetry (xxiii). To avoid galleries, Rossetti had to resort to wealthy patrons whose taste interfered in his creations to some extent. This relationship would account for his formulaic depictions of women, which would eventually become his hallmark. As for his poetry, Rossetti's notorious endless revisions manifested an ideal of perfection impossible to achieve (Marsh, *DGR* 380). On the one hand Rossetti chose not to follow a regular paid job like other contemporary authors (including his own brother William, who was a civil servant), and decided to rely on his own art as a source of livelihood and recognition. On the other, his perfectionism and fear of failure resulted in an entangled relationship with his clientele – Marsh (*DGR* 302, 325) reports on frequent delays – and with his own aesthetic production.

According to Fedeman, Rossetti interpreted poetry and painting as "reciprocal responses to similar […] stimuli" and would be capable of a kind of blending (xxiv). His choice of vocabulary, his attraction to literary subjects and his means of expression would reflect this attitude (xxv). As a result, the imagery contained in each medium is dynamically transposed to the other, thus connecting them as double works.

Fredeman argues in conclusion that the sense of strangeness aroused by Rossetti's poems, their "ellipticity," may be "a conscious strategy employed to distance himself from his poetry" (xxviii). Kolsteren corroborates this argument by referring to Rossetti's "ineluctable difficulty" owing to diffuseness, obscurity, or to an "elliptical opaqueness" which would obscure important details (142). The use of elaborate symbolism and unusual vocabulary, concludes Fredeman, would be a protective device to create some degree of estrangement and hinder precise definitions (xxviii).

I would add that this protective device stemmed from Rossetti's attitude towards his own production. His artistic drive and perfectionism were at one time aligned and in contrast with the demands of the art-consuming public. While his desire for fame and recognition impelled him to produce both poetry and pictorial art, the difference between their market value made him choose painting as his main employment, and poetry as a more intimate means of expression of his subjectivity. His perfectionism, however, motivated an ambivalent attitude towards both media. Knowing he was not as skilled as his Pre-Raphaelite Brothers such as Millais and Hunt (Marsh, *DGR* 129-130), Rossetti may have turned from gallery exhibitions to patronage for fear of not receiving enough recognition, or even for fear of a debacle. On the

other hand, he needed to deal with the demands and whims of his clients. Poetry then remained as the personalized channel for his creative energy. If it was not profitable, it could remain "unprostituted." Again, as a compulsive perfectionist, he would not be satisfied until his poems expressed the multiplicity of his feelings and thoughts as perfectly as possible and leaving a mark of genius. Therefore, Rossetti's "protective device" would be in fact a defense mechanism against rejection.

Rossetti's personal relationship with his own creations is also explored by Suzanne Waldman. Following a Lacanian reading of Rossetti's poems, Waldman holds that Rossetti's poetic speaker embodies the fundamental conflict of self against the world (2). This would be a typical Victorian split between a desire of personal autonomy and the wish to adapt to the demands of the social tissue. Although this statement refers primarily to Rossetti's love poems, the premise also applies, at least partially, to some of those poems studied here (e.g. "The Blessed Damozel," "The Portrait" and "Sister Helen"), since the nuclear narrative conflicts stem from either the impossibility of fulfillment of the speakers' desires in contrast with some greater restraint or from their adverse results.

In her analysis of Rossetti's sonnets, Waldman states that in *The House of Life*, Rossetti "gently echoes the redemptive narrative of the sonnet sequences laid out by Dante and Petrarch, while at the same time he forges a new and distinctive process for the symbolic transformation of desire" (95). By comparing Rossetti's poetic expression of desire with that of his medieval Italian precursor, the critic acknowledges the former's metaphysics which contains "ethical potential in our post-Romantic era" (73). Rossetti's contribution, therefore, lies on his dual movement of paying homage to a sanctioned poetic form, the amatory sonnet, while renewing the attitude toward love, by including references to physical desire, thus helping to pave the way from Romantic to Modernistic expressions.

The reviews discussed above come from a long tradition of international assessments of Rossetti's works. In Brazilian academia, there are still few studies on him. One of them is an oral presentation by Prof. Maria Angélica Melendi. As she points out, there is an intimate relationship between Rossetti's paintings and his literature. Whereas many of his paintings may be considered transcriptions of poems and narratives, some of his poems are verbal renderings of paintings.[22] This binomial relationship, for Melendi, is due to Rossetti's work as a painter

[22] "[P]odemos considerar muitos dos seus quadros como transcrições de poemas ou narrações, da mesma forma alguns dos seus poemas são traduções de pinturas" (Melendi n. pag., my translation).

and poet being founded on references, transpositions, and translations.[23] One may add that his multicultural origin and the cultural support he received since childhood contributed to developing this attitude of permanent intersection and transcription between the world of his imagination and the actual world around him.

The author also considers Rossetti an intermediary between "modern" (i.e. industrialized Victorian) England and the old Italian culture, rewriting medieval Italian poetry to his contemporaries.[24] Melendi's assessment implies that this backward look in history and place allows Rossetti to create a particular view in the Romantic tradition, searching for inspiration in the world of Dante Alighieri and his contemporaries to create an imaginary world with specific forms of expression and a peculiar imagery.

Rossetti's work, says Melendi, is populated by blessed damozels and adulterous women, such as Beatrix and Guinevere. His work is marked by duplicity of refusal and acceptance. These two facets intertwine, producing hybrid works in which pictorial, religious, and literary elements stemmed from his personal life.[25] Melendi's statements highlight the expression of subjectivity conveyed as an aesthetic experience, which was so dear to Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites. In Rossetti's case, his intense and shifting creative drive gave rise to elaborate symbolisms which attempted to conciliate his feelings towards the physical and the spiritual worlds. The duality of sacred and profane love thus becomes a distinctive mark of Rossetti's work as a projection of his own entangled relationship with love, sexuality, and religion.

For Melendi, the Pre-Raphaelites see painting as a narration through images, and they intend to have it true, self-contained, and deeply inspired. For them art is equivalent to poetry because poetry is the "spirit of truth" in the depth of things and of people.[26] Here one is reminded of Ruskin's (*Modern Painters* I) synonymous use of pictures and poems. Both art and poetry are means of expression of subjectivity, with expressive languages to convey the artist's

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[23] "[T]odo o trabalho de Rossetti, seja como pintor ou como poeta, foi sempre fundamentado em citações, transposições, ... traduções?" (Melendi n. pag., my translation).

[24] "Mediador entre a nova nação inglesa e a antiga cultura italiana, [Rossetti] rescreveu para seus compatriotas a poesia toscana dos primeiros tempos" (Melendi n. pag., my translation).

[25] "Donzelas abençoadas, mulheres adúlteras, Beatrix e Guinevere, sua obra é uma obra de duplicidade, de recusa violenta e de aceitação resignada. Ao longo de sua vida essas duas vertentes se entrelaçaram produzido obras as vezes híbridas nas quais os elementos pictóricos, religiosos, literários passaram solipsisticamente através da própria história pessoal" (Melendi n. pag., my translation).

[26] "[Os Pré-Raphaelitas] consideram a pintura como uma narração através de imagens, a pretendem verdadeira, contida, profundamente inspirada. A arte é poesia porque a poesia é o 'espírito da verdade' que existe tanto no fundo das coisas como no íntimo das pessoas" (Melendi n. pag., my translation).

or poet's intention. Therefore, each field's array of devices may be used to attain the artistic or poetic objective, and each field may be transcribed into the other. In addition, this idealistic view, shared by Rossetti, seeks to find the essence of the focused object, and to represent it as truthfully as possible and with expressional perfection.

Melendi also holds that both in Rossetti's poetry and painting, simplicity of expression and particularization coexist. His works exhibit highly visual and sensory details, a taste for ornamentation, autumnal feelings of decadence, death and desolation, and an evocative religiosity. The literary origin of his writing allows a visual transcription based on the same sophisticated and artificial forms.[27] The characteristics listed by Melendi not only align Rossetti with Aestheticism and the Decadent movement, with their ornamental artificiality and sense of decay, but also suggest his influence on Symbolist poetry, which also relied on suggestion and elaborate imagery.

Another Brazilian study on Rossetti is Angiuli Aguiar's undergraduate final paper dealing with sacred and profane love. Initially, Aguiar comments on the literary influences on Rossetti's works: Dante Alighieri's medievalism; Poe's "phantasmagoria and oneiric atmosphere," which would eventually influence the French Symbolists; and Keats' "sensory-naturalistic inclination of Rossetti's poetry and painting" (5-6). The figure of Dante permeates Rossetti's life and work, also being a source of Rossetti's personal identification. Poe's influence is visible, for instance, in Rossetti's "Blessed Damozel," inspired by the maiden Lenore in Poe's "The Raven." From Keats, Rossetti inherited a taste for elaborate imagery, as seen, for example, in his poetic and pictorial representation of flowers.

Aguiar then analyzes some poems and paintings by Rossetti under the perspective of two binomials: the "fatal woman" and the "blessed damozel," and the poetic speakers' perception of time and nature. As Aguiar reminds us, the fatal woman is seductive and destructive, and is exemplified by such characters as Lilith, and Venus, whereas the "blessed damozel" is a pure heavenly muse, the personification of spiritual love, at one time distant and accepting. "The Blessed Damozel" and the Beatrice poems and pictures are examples of this theme (7). This dichotomy of female representations is part of a long tradition of assessments

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[27] "Tanto na poesia como na pintura de Rossetti coexistem uma deliberada simplicidade de expressão e uma curiosa forma de particularização, com detalhes sensoriais especificamente visuais, gosto pelo ornamental, sentimentos outonais de decadência, morte e desolação, uma certa religiosidade evocativa. A óbvia origem literária da sua escrita permite uma transcrição (tradução) visual calcada nas mesmas formas sofisticadas e artificiais" (Melendi, n. pag., my translation).

and dates back to Buchanan's view of Rossetti as a "fleshly" poet. The body versus soul dichotomy permeates Rossetti's work, and any attempt to find a definitive response to it is elusive, given his dynamic representations. Aguiar thus provides a sensible approach by concluding that both representations of fleshly and spiritual love "converge to the same aspects of [astonishment, female superiority,] stillness, and death" (16).

Aguiar also argues that the duality of physical and spiritual love is mirrored in the binomial time and nature. "In the struggle between sacred and profane love," says Aguiar, "the poet is torn apart not only by desire and piety, but also by remembrance and longing" (17). While the fatal woman consumes the lover's present thoughts, the "woman of ideal love" remains unattainable in his memory of the past, and his only hope is to meet her again in the future. Consequently, the poetic speaker is incapable of seeing nature as it is in the present, but as a symbolical projection of his own feelings (25). Naturally, this is a typical Romantic attitude in feeling at odds with the present emotional maladies and seeking relief in a re-elaborated version of the past or in a distant and improbable future, or even in an imaginary world. Rossetti's rich use of symbolism is also his hallmark within the Pre-Raphaelite movement in their attempt to express the artist's "own feelings and intimate convictions" (Honour and Fleming 666).

In his conclusion, Aguiar points out Rossetti's influence on the Symbolist movement and on later British authors such as Wilde and Yeats in his characters' search for "an out-of-time dream of paradise" (35). Aguiar also highlights the centrality of love and time in Rossetti's work, in his representation of a lost and much missed Beatrice, as well as in the feeling of a Paradise lost at the end of the nineteenth century (35). These themes are intertwined in Rossetti's poetry and painting; therefore, concludes Aguiar, these "sister arts" in Rossetti should always be studied in reference to each another (35). Aguiar's statements support the basic premise of this study. Rossetti's backward look into the world of Dante shapes the romantically oriented expression of his art and poetry, whereas his use of symbolism and the sense of loss influence later writers and artists closer to Modernism.

The diversity of critical analyses surveyed above illustrates the thematic and formal dynamic of Rossetti's works. The different approaches address recurrent issues in his poetry and painting, which remain open to possible interpretations. Thus, in Victorian times, Ruskin's and Pater's idealistic views contrast with Buchanan's moral critique. Since the twentieth century, the approaches have included, for instance, Eschrich's philosophical interpretation,

Boos' formalist analysis, Melendi's, Aguiar's and Helsinger's intersemiotic readings, Marsh's, Moller's and Fredeman's biographical studies, and Waldman's psychoanalytical inquiry.

Their attitudes towards the duality of spiritual and material worlds in Rossetti are also varied. Some analyses propose a blend of the two worlds in Rossetti's poetry and painting, whereas others claim he never reconciles the two dimensions. Some affirm this duality stems from Rossetti's own complicated relationship with religion, thus trying to identify the spirit with the body, while others suggest a humanistic view as a substitute for a formal religious doctrine. If some identify Rossetti's affections as a source of his spirit-mater dualism, others attribute it to an intentionally complex aesthetic procedure. Therefore, the feeling one has while reading Rossetti's critical fortune is that the paradoxes in his works remain unresolved.

The approach followed in this study does not aim at resolving those paradoxes, but at making use of them as a viewpoint on Rossetti's oeuvre. Since the features of spiritual devotion and physical desire in his works are frequent and have a dynamic relationship, this dissertation intends to examine this relationship within the works. As mentioned in the Introduction, the aspects of devotion and desire will be studied in the proportion they appear in the double works. The intention here is not to find a solution for the duality, but to demonstrate how, by displaying this duality, Rossetti became a prominent poet and artist within the nineteenth century. This role will also be exposed in the following section.

2.2 ROMANTICISM, MODERNISM, AND OTHER "ISMS" IN BETWEEN

This section presents a panorama of the artistic and literary movements to which Rossetti may be associated in his production. As an artist who created in different fields and who saw important changes in the production and consumption of art and literature in his own time, Rossetti related to different mentalities and aesthetic tendencies. Rossetti's poetry, although romantically inspired, deals with as diverse themes as Medievalism, myth, social issues, and sensual love, to name but a few, and points out to some aspects of Modern poetry. His art is identified with Romanticism, Pre-Raphaelitism (of which he was one of the leaders), Aestheticism, the Decadent movement, and Symbolism.[28] Thus, these movements are important

[28] Rossetti also associated with his friend, poet and social activist William Morris, in the Arts and Crafts Movement, which aimed at raising the quality of British industrialized products and creating design of good quality

to be characterized, not as close categories of forms and peculiarities, but as tendencies of thoughts, sentiments, and expressions.

Romanticism, unlike previous artistic and literary movements, was at one time a movement, an ideology, a spirit, an attitude. This multiplicity of spheres accounts for both its wealth of characteristics and the difficulty to define it. The word "Romantic," as Honour and Fleming remind us, was adopted by critics, artists and writers simply in want of another word to define what had previously baffled definition (640). The term "romance" "had originally been used in the Middle Ages to distinguish songs in the French vernacular from those in Latin and traces of this sense survived" (640). Another feature which contributes to the complication of matters is that Romanticism did not simply emerge out of a reaction against or a development of a previous movement or ideological framework. Rather, "a number of individual styles radiated out from the still centre of Neoclassicism" (642). As Umberto Eco points out, Romanticism gathers different characteristics and attitudes, "dictated not by reason, but by the sentiments *and* reason. The aim of this bond is not to exclude contradictions or to resolve antitheses (finite/infinite, whole/fragment, life/death, mind/heart), but to bring them all together" (Eco 299, italics in the original). Here lies the originality and complexity of Romanticism, as well as its elusiveness and the difficulty to grasp it into one single concept. Nevertheless, regarding Romantic poetry, a guiding definition is provided by René Wellek. Carrying out a comprehensive survey of studies on Romanticism, Wellek concludes that Romantic poetry has four elements in common: the implication of organic nature, imagination, symbol, and myth (108). This implication is also part of a great attempt to "overcome the split between subject and object, the self and the world, the conscious and the unconscious" (132). Other specific features would include the Renaissance of Wonder, the Gothic romance, the interest in folklore, and the Middle Ages (132).

In painting, as Galitz points out, portraits were one of Romantic art favorites (par. 4).[29] The interest in the individual and subjective was reflected in the Romantic approach to portraiture. "Traditionally, records of individual likeness, portraits became vehicles for

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for the public at large (Reynolds 103). However, as the present study of Rossetti's paintings and poems does not include the Arts and Crafts Movement, it will not be discussed here.

[29] Other recurrent Romantic themes in art, according to Galitz, included the "uncontrollable power, unpredictability, and potential for cataclysmic extremes" of nature, overwhelming landscapes, animals as both "forces of nature and metaphors for human behavior," exotic subjects, and Orientalism (pars. 2, 3, 5, 6).

expressing a range of psychological and emotional states in the hands of Romantic painters" (par. 4). Portraits are particularly relevant here, because they are Rossetti's specialty. His pictures of actual people and fictional characters convey a series of emotions by means of careful attention to facial expressions (notably the eyes and the mouth), body language, hair texture and volume, and ornamented backgrounds.

Naturally, the word "romantic" does not apply only to the nineteenth-century movement. We can speak of a romantic attitude in Dante's *Vita Nuova*, in Petrarchan sonnets, in Shakespeare's sonnets, in *Romeo and Juliet*, in Camões' sonnets, in Goethe's work, among many other authors of different epochs and stylistic inclinations. As J. Guinsburg reminds us, there are as many romanticisms as there are romantics, which would be the greatest accomplishment of Romanticism in its individualistic character (14). Romanticism, however, does have "a historical center of gravity," as Northrop Frye points out, which roughly spans from 1790 to 1830, and is related to the creative arts of painting, literature and music (1). Additionally, what makes Romanticism peculiar is precisely the centrality of those individual attitudes and its awareness of the historical processes which were taking place at the moment. The Romantics assessed artistic and literary works "not by predetermined rules, but according to the sensibility of the individual" (Honour and Fleming 640). Whereas their Neoclassical predecessors had tried to find a clear expression of universal truths, "the romantics sought to express only their own feelings, beliefs, hopes and fears in all their myriad forms" (Honour and Fleming 640). The romantics thus valued and made use of both traditional and innovative forms to voice their subjectivity.

This way of expression came about due to a series of revolutions which burst in Europe and in America in the eighteenth century. The Industrial Revolution propelled Britain to a leading economic and military position in Europe, accompanied by rapid demographic growth and urban migration, whereas the development of the banking system led to the formation a new class of capitalists. The American Revolution of 1765 to 1783 meant a breach of the colonialist relationship between England and America, as well as a threat to the monarchic system. Then the ideals of equality of the American Independence directly influenced the French Revolution of 1789 to 1799, which meant the rise of the bourgeoisie to the power. For the first time in history, the ordinary citizen was able to occupy the position previously destined to kings or emperors imbued with a divine right to rule. The ideals of the Revolution were systematized in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789), which expressed such principles as equality, natural law, social contract, separation of powers, and the right to

property, freedom, and life. The development of the Revolution contributed to a growing feeling of nationalism and nationalistic movements which erupted all over Europe throughout the nineteenth century. However, the advent of the Terror from 1793 to 1794 and the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799 frustrated the expectations of a popular and universal fraternity.[30] The impressive train of events which took over Europe created the conditions for History to occupy a central role in Western thought throughout the nineteenth century, just as reason had in the previous century. The "spirit of the age," the Romantic *Zeitgeist*, as Abrams calls it, is a spirit of revolution, following the atmosphere of the French Revolution and its aftermath (28).

Another important influence upon Romanticism was a series of philosophical systems which emphasized the centrality of subjectivity. Rousseau proposed a mystic connection with nature; Johan Gottlieb Fichte sought a pure and absolute *I*; Friedrich Schlegel defended the union of art, philosophy, religion, and moral; Friedrich Schleiermacher promoted a religion of an intuitive understanding of the Universe; Friedrich Schelling advocated that art could reveal the Absolute.[31] Inspired by these systems, Romantic artists and writers saw the expression of the subject as the only valid one, and aimed at a religious communion with the Universe.

Those systems of thought and the sense of historical awareness were especially appealing to young writers and artists who, for the most part, came from the middle classes. As Umberto Eco points out, the middle classes perceived that "the aristocratic world, with its Classical rules and elevated concept of Beauty, was a cold and narrow-minded one" (Eco 313). Likewise, as Arnold Hauser points out, Romanticism is the first movement to take the bourgeois as the measure of man. From then on, literature was intended "for the free market, that is to say, for a middleclass public" (Hauser, *Social History* III: 164). This view was intensified by the growing emphasis given to the individual and by the artists' and writers' need to compete for the favor of the consuming public. This, says Eco, led to the exploitation of sentimentalism and the search for ever more surprising effects (313). In addition, the dominant middle-class taste "demanded an escapist art: evocations of distant times, distant lands, happy country folk and the beauties of nature" (Honour and Fleming 637-640). To quote Eco, "what was specifically Romantic was the *aspiration* to all […] that was distant, magical, and unknown" (303, italics in the original). The Romantics' close and intense experience of history unleashed what Hauser calls "a psychotic fear of the present and an attempt to escape into the past" (*Social History* III:

[30] See Falbel (23-40) for more details about the historical foundations of Romanticism.

[31] See Bornheim (75-111) for more details about the philosophical foundations of Romanticism.

155). However, unlike neoclassical art, Romanticism did not take the Greeks and Romans, and their sense of balance, as an example, but turned instead to a mythologized version of the Middle Ages, thence, the Romantic "aspiration" mentioned by Eco. As a consequence, Romanticism showed strong interest in medieval and later historical figures as subject matters.

This flight from the present reality also motivates the Romantic artist's discovery of his "double," rushing into the dark and chaotic recesses of his mind. Thus, he discovers "the unconscious, […] the source of his wishfulfilment dreams and of the irrational solutions of his problems. [He praises] the unconscious, obscure instincts, dreamlike and ecstatic states of soul" (Hauser *Social History* III: 166-167). The poetic emphasis then is not on what we call the senses, but, as Frye affirms, "on the constructive power of the mind, where reality is brought into existence by experience" (11). The poet's inner world is the one projected onto reality and builds it according to his wishes and sentimental expressions. (A psychoanalytical reading of Romantic works naturally comes to one's mind here.) Also striking is the fact that Romantic "poetic technique is, psychologically speaking, akin to magic, which also aims at bringing spiritual forces into reality" (Frye 11). Such words as "charm" and "spell," for instance, which thrive in Romantic poetry, and certainly in Rossetti's, suggest a sorcerer's repertoire. It is then easy to understand the popularity among the Romantics of such themes as a return to an idealized past, notably the medieval period, intense expressions of feelings, especially melancholy, a reverential identification with the natural world, extreme individualism, and a magic atmosphere, among others. In addition, the impact of Romantic art is also so strongly felt that it influences the whole of the nineteenth century and sets the ensuing imagination regarding artists and poets as being driven by inspiration in their creative process.

This image particularly applies to Dante Rossetti. As Marsh reminds us, as a young man he seemed to find inspiration in every possible event, writing a sonnet or ballad, or producing a piece of drawing on his favorite readings, his family affairs, his travels or his visits to museums (*DGR* 58-80). Similarly, Romantic themes populated his entire poetic career. Noteworthy are his fixation with Dante Alighieri's relationship with his beloved Beatrice, as in "The New Life," the supernatural, as in "Sister Helen," and the binomial life and death, e.g. in "The Blessed Damozel." Nevertheless, Rossetti adds an individual touch when he deals with biblical characters from a medieval perspective (e.g. in "Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee"), or when he explores the intense feelings of mythological figures, as in "Eden Bower." Rossetti also shows his particular views when he touches upon contemporary social concerns such as prostitution, as in "Found," or when he introduces strong sensuality, as in

"Troy Town" and "Venus Verticordia." While romantically oriented, these poems deal with themes considered daring, sometimes even shocking, to the Victorian taste.[32]

As for Rossetti's pictorial oeuvre, from its beginning it showed a dialectical relationship with Victorian art. On the one hand Rossetti kept a Romantic attitude inasmuch as he looked back to religious themes or expressed strong emotions. On the other, together with William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, Rossetti attempted to break up with the artistic standards imposed by academicism and to react against the superficial formalism of Romantic art from the mid-nineteenth century. Influenced by John Ruskin's ideas, the young artists aimed at breaking free from tradition and contemporary standards in painting, and expressing their ideals of art under a "modern" perspective (Reynolds 94-95). The result of their endeavor was the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which rebelled against the lack of "expression of the painter's own feelings and intimate convictions, [and aimed at] a return to Nature" (Honour and Fleming 666). In addition to that, the PRB proposed a choice of worthy subject matters, as well as precise and detailed handling.[33]

Rossetti's work as a painter, McGann tells us, is traditionally divided into three periods: the early work, up to around 1860; the middle work, which went to approximately 1871, and the later work (*Pictures*).[34] The first phase started with the outburst of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, with oils, and was later dominated by his pictures of Elizabeth Siddal (whom he met in 1851), as well as his watercolors dealing mainly with Dante Alighieri and medieval subjects. In 1859 Rossetti painted *Bocca Baciata* (see figure 2 on page 60), which marked a change in his style towards intense sensuality. After the death of his wife "Lizzie" in 1862, Rossetti turned once again mostly to oils, producing the mythological paintings of women for which he eventually became best known. In 1871 Rossetti was deeply affected by Robert Buchanan's highly unfavorable article "The Fleshly School of Poetry," and in 1872 he suffered a mental breakdown. Although he was soon recovered, from that period on he did not produce much new work, focusing instead on repainting earlier work, or making copies.

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[32] The famous example, as seen above, was Robert Buchanan's essay "The Fleshly School of Poetry – Mr. D. G. Rossetti," in response to Rossetti's *Poems* (1870), accusing him of indecency (Rossetti, *Collected Poetry and Prose* xxi).

[33] Marsh reports that in the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris, William Rossetti criticized Gustave Coubert's works for not translating "the sentiment of things [and] their conformation, as well as the true artist's love and reverence […] to Nature" (*DGR* 147). On the other hand, French artists and critics were "both impressed and offended" the Pre-Raphaelites' overwhelming precision of details (147).

[34] See in this respect <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/racs/pictures.rac.html>.

If Rossetti's general attitude is inherited from Romanticism, his early Pre-Raphaelitism is in accordance with the important changes happening in Britain and in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. In fact, it can hardly be taken merely as a coincidence that the PRB's first exhibit at the Royal Academy happened in the same year of the European Revolutions. The series of political disruptions which swept Europe in 1848-1849 aimed at lessening the strains suffered by the proletariat and creating independent national states, with more popular participation in government and democracy. The revolts also voiced the demands of rural and urban workers who felt oppressed by the effects of increasing industrialization and liberalism. However, reactionary forces regained control and the revolutions failed, leaving behind them a general sense of frustration.[35] Concurrently, Roberts tells us, in April 1848 the English Chartist movement gathered a large yet peaceful demonstration in London to deliver a petition to the House of Commons, asking for reforms in the political system (par. 3). The movement, however, failed, and the petition was refused (par. 13). Hunt and Millais attended the unsuccessful demonstration, whereas Rossetti did not, but later wrote a long poem, "A Last Confession," extoling the heroic spirit of the movement (Marsh, *DGR* 37-39). At any rate, the PR Brothers sensed the strong need for reform of the times and expressed it in their early production.

This feeling of change – and its consequent artistic expression – had evolved over a long time. As Hauser points out, "[t]he years between 1832 and 1848 [were] a period of the most acute social crises, full of unrestrained bloody conflicts between capital and labour" (*Social History* IV: 63). Industrialization accelerated at the cost of appalling working conditions, such as extremely long working hours, unsanitary environments, low wages, uncertainty of continued employment, and child labor.[36] In addition, as Cody reminds us, the stratification of English social classes increased ("Social Class" par. 3). However, the working classes remained "shut out from the political process, and became increasingly hostile not only to the aristocracy

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[35] See Falbel (48-49) for more information about the European Revolutions of 1848.

[36] A few examples of those working and living conditions include the following: Eric Hobsbawm points out that Victorian workers had no social security, and had to rely on such sources as family, friends, credit with shopkeepers or pawnbrokers in case of unemployment, which might happen at any moment (129). Burnett comments that despite improvements in general living standards, during most of the Victorian period the working classes "were both excluded, and excluded themselves, from the acquisitive, accumulative impulses of the Victorian economy [and from] public life" (par. 2). The Report from the Poor Law Commissioners of 1842 stated that epidemic and endemic diseases spread mainly among the laboring classes, and that "the annual loss of life from filth and bad ventilation [were] greater than the loss from death or wounds in any wars in which the country [had] been engaged in modern times" (Del Col par. 9). Cody reports that around 1802 "many children worked 16 hour days under atrocious conditions, as their elders did" ("Child Labor" par. 2). In 1847 a parliamentary act "limited both adults and children to ten hours of work daily" ("Child Labor" par. 2).

but to the middle classes as well" (par. 3). The working classes' terrible labor and living conditions then led to bouts of riots and demonstrations throughout the century which were vehemently repressed.[37] In the meantime, as Hall affirms, the English middle classes wanted to impose their worldview to both the upper classes, which they considered indolent, corrupt and immoral, and the working classes, towards which they showed a biased and patronizing attitude (74-91). Different initiatives were then taken in order to instill a sense of morality, religion and hard work into the lower classes.[38]

As the successful British bourgeoisie became more and more conservative, and social contrasts deepened, Victorian art became more literature-oriented and overly sentimental, as a sign of what Hauser calls the middle class' wish for "respectability, puritanical morality, high ideals and feeling for poetry," and their obsession with "high art" (*Social History* IV: 64-65). Empty formalism and repeated routine became abundant and were sanctioned by the Royal Academy. Thus the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's major feature was that, in the words of Hauser, "[w]ith its Victorian spiritualism, its historical, religious and poetic themes, its moral allegories and fairy-tale symbolism, it [united] a realism [with] minute details" (IV: 65). While the PR Brothers were concerned with formalism, they believed their art had a higher aspiration and an uplifting educational character.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's principles are clearly visible in Rossetti's initial paintings: *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary*, *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (*The Annunciation*), and *Found*. *The Girlhood* (see figure 4 on page 71), from 1849, is Rossetti's first painting and embodies all the tenets of the PRB, i.e. a noble subject, reliance on nature to treat the subject, and precision of details. *The Annunciation* (see figure 6 on page 76) of the following year is a sequel to the former painting and shows the same characteristics; however, it is better accomplished. In both paintings Rossetti treats the subject of the Virgin Mary with both a look of medieval representation and a modern perspective. Whereas *The Girlhood* depicts both the Virgin Mary and St. Anne in a pious attitude, *The Annunciation* follows a long tradition in medieval art. The modern element lies in the fact that in the former picture Mary's family is engaged in ordinary household chores, whereas in the latter Mary looks awestruck at the sight

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[37] See <http://www.victorianweb.org/victorian/history/riots/index.html> for a list of nineteenth-century riots in Britain.

[38] Examples of such initiatives include Sunday schools, which taught domestic values to boys and girls; a Society for Aged and Infirm Women, which provided for women who were left "deserted in their old age"; and Mechanics Institutes, which aimed at training men not only to be industrious and rational, but also to be better brothers, husbands and fathers (Hall 76-77).

of the angel. In addition, the careful execution of the composition is in accordance with the naturalistic representation or European Realism at the time. The third picture, *Found* (see figure 7 on page 80), from 1854, deals with the theme of prostitution and attempts to present a moral. Nevertheless, as Marsh recalls, although Rossetti worked on it at different moments throughout his life, he never managed to finish it (*DGR* 515). The surviving picture, however, suggests the same meticulous work.

An important inspiration for the PRB's philosophy was John Ruskin's ideas about fidelity to nature and about symbolism. In volume I of *Modern Painters* Ruskin claims that fidelity of representation of the natural world "is the result of keen sensibility, combined with high powers of memory and association," and that the more fidelity is shown in the rendering of an object, the higher the quality of the rendering (439-440). This idea was particularly appealing to the young PR Brothers, because they saw contemporary Victorian art as a progressive degeneration of Renaissance standards, and thus aimed at depicting objects as accurately as possible. Also interesting to them were Ruskin's ideals about the use of symbols in a work of art. In the second volume of *Modern Painters* Ruskin notes that symbolism "is of the highest value, and in religious art, […] even necessary" (222). Ruskin elaborates on this idea in volume III, when he praises the greatest artists' "delight in symbolism" and their fearless employment of it (*Modern Painters* III: 101). This view legitimized the PRB's search for elevated subjects, as well as the rich symbolism utilized in their works. Ruskin thus became a spokesperson for the Pre-Raphaelites, for, as Hauser states, he had a "concrete philosophy of beauty [and shared their] enthusiasm for the Middle Ages and the communal culture of the Christian West" (*Social History* IV: 64-65). Ruskin also showed "a clear awareness of the organic relationship between art and life," and was the first critic in England to emphasize that "art is a public concern and its cultivation […] represents a social necessity" (Hauser IV: 66). These ideals were highly appealing to this group of young painters who wanted to revolutionize the artistic practices they saw around them. Thus, the Pre-Raphaelites spared no efforts to express their idealism and sense of morality with the utmost perfection in their works, and were excited at every opportunity to gain visibility.

An example of the Pre-Raphaelites' revolutionary ambition is the controversy over Millais' *Christ in the House of His Parents* (*The Carpenter's Shop*) of 1850. Marsh reports that art critics had received the picture with such epithets as "a perversion," "blasphemous," "revolting," or "disgusting," whereas the PR Brothers were delighted at the publicity (*DGR* 74-75). There was so much stir that Queen Victoria herself asked the painting to be brought to her

from the walls of the Royal Academy. The episode is also emblematic of Umberto Eco's assessment of the group, saying that their Beauty aimed at a liberation "from Classical canons, and could now express itself by making opposites converge, so that Ugliness was [...] its other face" (321). For the Pre-Raphaelites, depicting the members of the holy family as ordinary people (i.e. Rossetti's *Girlhood* or Millais' *Christ in The House of His Parents*) did not mean a blasphemy or desacralization; it only meant being "true to Nature" by means of a realistic representation.

Throughout his career, Rossetti's work presented a dynamic relationship with artistic movements while it helped to pave the way to later public and critical response. If his early narrative paintings received little appreciation from contemporary art critics – his *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (*The Annunciation*) was accused of ignoring "the advanced principles of light and shade, colour and composition" (Upstone 16) –, his later representations of beautiful idealized women have become an attribute of Pre-Raphaelitism in art, as Prof. William Vaughn reminds us (*The Great Artists*, 00:03:28). However, Rossetti's bold and ambivalent attitude in art may be traced back prior to the formation of the PRB. As a student at the Royal Academy, the first work he intended to submit for evaluation was entitled *Retro Me, Sathana!* (see figure 1 below), and its subject was, in the words of Marsh "both sacred and satanic" (*DGR* 32).

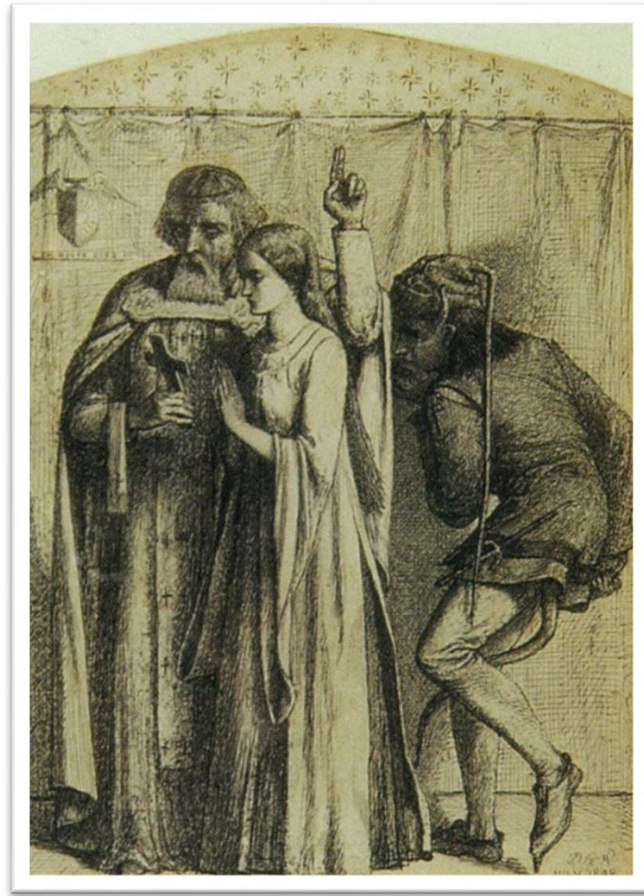

Figure 1 – *Retro Me, Sathana!*
1848, pen and ink, 24.5 x 17.5 cm.
Bolton Museums, Art Gallery & Aquarium, Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w18482>. Accessed on: Nov. 30, 2015.

As Marsh puts it, the drawing was "pious in theme but bold in treatment," and it was "both diabolic and Catholic" (*DGR* 32). Behind its seemingly pious theme, at the time it could be understood as an attack on Catholicism due to the representation of Satan, the priest in a cassock, and the Latin phrase of the title. Rossetti began to produce a painting out of the study, but after unfavorable criticism, he put the canvas aside, and later destroyed it (33).

At any rate, Rossetti's hallmark, the physicality of the spiritual world, is already present. The devil calls particular attention with his features and his accessories: his dark complexion, his horns, pointed ears and tale, his long-tipped cap resembling the tail, and his dagger. On the other hand, his general attitude looks quite human, and he could be taken for a young man who is ashamed of some misdoing.

This interplay between the earthly and the heavenly worlds is a recurrent feature in Rossetti's work and is aligned with the Pre-Raphaelite agenda. The Pre-Raphaelites wanted to

produce works which were "true to nature" and which brought subjects, religious or otherwise, to life "with the observational detail and realistic strength of life itself" (Upstone 12). In this sense, an earthly love which is strong enough may have its physicality replicated in heaven (as in the case of *The Blessed Damozel*), a romantic theme with a "modern" treatment.

As industrialization and capitalism advanced in the nineteenth century, and as their joys and disappointments became more visible, the romantic nostalgia of Victorian art and literature heightened. It aimed at escaping from what Hauser calls "the laws of capitalistic economy, of commercialism, of mercilessly impersonal competition and all the unpleasant realities" of the time (*Social History* IV: 64). As a reaction to the general rationalistic attitude which prevailed in society, artists wanted to produce works whose aesthetic nature was an objective in itself. *Aestheticism* thus emerged as an artistic reaction against "the oppressiveness of the industrial world, the expansion of the [crowded] metropolis, the appearance of new classes whose urgent needs certainly did not include aesthetics, and the […] functionality of new [manufactured] materials" (Eco 329). The spirit of "Art for Art's Sake" then was that "Beauty was a primary value to be realized at all costs" (330). The difference now was that art did not aim at documenting or judging any longer, but it wanted to encompass all positive and negative aspects of life in the light of Beauty and to make them fascinating.

Aestheticism kept the basic Romantic features of nostalgia and imagination. On the other hand, it repudiated "liberalism and rationalism and [took] refuge from the complicated problems of the present in a higher, superpersonal and supernatural order," as Hauser comments (*Social History* IV: 64). The works then focused on aesthetic qualities rather than social or political meanings, and the subjects were highly stylized. Thus, for instance, Rossetti's *Bocca Baciata* (see figure 2 below) shows his identification with the "art for art's sake" attitude.[39] The composition highlights the exuberant features and intense sensuality of the female figure,[40] her exotic clothes, and the flowery ornamented background. The painting was an important shift in Rossetti's art, as it turned away from the artist's typical devotional and symbolical portrayals, and focused on a sensuous effect without conveying specific moral messages.

[39] Marsh mentions *Bocca Baciata* as a hallmark of the emerging Aestheticism (*DGR* 212, 263).

[40] Marsh tells us that the model was Fanny Cornforth (DGR 208).

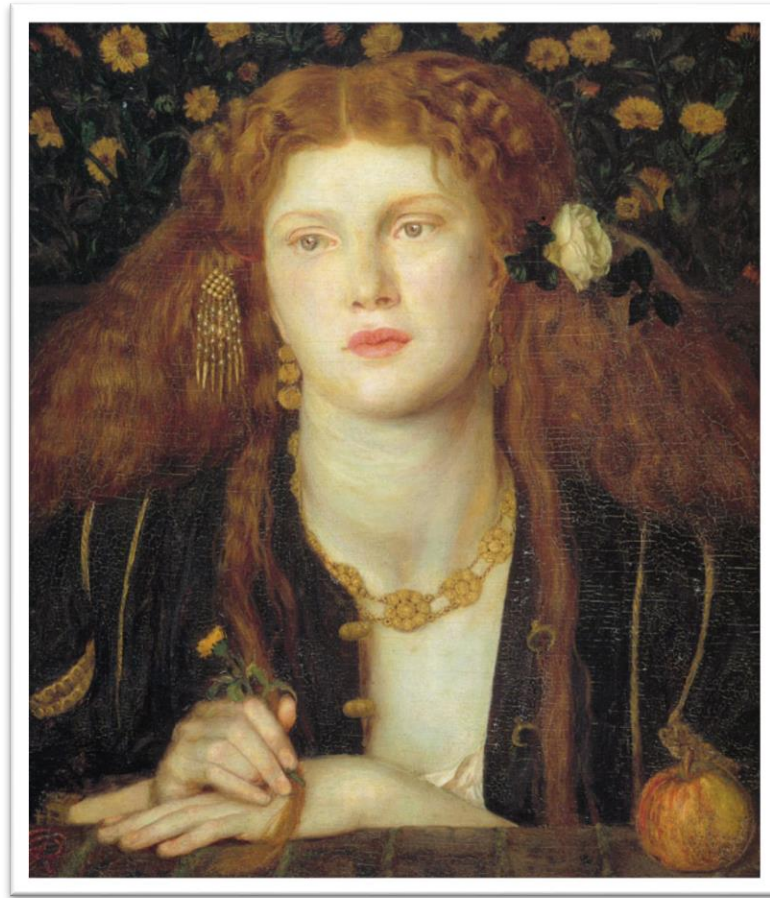

Figure 2 – *Bocca Baciata*
1859, oil on panel, 32.2 x 27 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w19356>. Accessed on: Feb. 5, 2016.

In time the Aesthetic spirit evolved into an extreme Romantic sensibility which exaggerated every aspect. Hauser (*Social History* IV:121) refers to a "feeling of doom and crisis," an awareness of standing at the end of a process and witnessing the disintegration of a civilization. This feeling stemmed from the transformations Britain was going through at the end of the century. Hobsbawm tells us that along the second half of the nineteenth century, several important changes affected Britain's international position and caused a decline of the Victorian spirit (144-149). The USA, France and Germany witnessed a series of scientific and technological advancements, development of automation and mass production, extension of the consumption market, and an increase in scale of economic enterprise (i.e. monopoly and oligopoly of companies). Therefore, those countries became stronger international competitors than Britain, which suddenly turned from "the leading and most dynamic industrial economy into the most sluggish and conservative" (149). This meant that after a long period of prosperity,

the British Empire now went through an economic crisis, which unfolded into a crisis of the optimistic and arrogant Victorian spirit itself. As a consequence, England was “strongly under French influence in the last quarter of the nineteenth century” (Hauser, *Social History* IV: 129), and increasingly imported such French cultural traits as bohemianism, art nouveau, and aestheticism. Artists and writers then identified with the decline of the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Hence, as Eco reminds us, the term *Decadent* was adopted for the cultural period spanning from the second half of the nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century (330). Thus, Hauser asserts, some recurrent artistic expressions of the time included a preference for the old, exhausted, cultures, overrefinement, Hellenism, the later years of the Roman Empire, the Rococo, and the “impressionistic” style of the great masters (*Social History* IV: 121).

Decadent art was permeated by a sense of “corruption, swooning, weariness, and languor” (Eco 346). The Romantic influence of the Gothic tradition was recycled and translated into a heightened sense of fear and morbidity. The “Byronic weariness of life and the romantic passion for death” were visible, says Hauser (*Social History* IV: 121). The same vertiginous abyss which had attracted the Romantic also appealed to the Decadent; however, for the Decadent, “everything was an abyss” filled with the fear of life and with uncertainty. As a response to that insecurity, the Decadent constantly searched for luxury, sophistication, and refined sensory experiences.[41]

Some particular objects seemed to obsess the Decadents, such as flowers and jewels. More specifically, Eco tells us, Decadent artists were fond of the pseudo artificiality of flower arrangements as ornaments and arabesques (342). This fondness naturally stems from the symbolic meaning of flowers as girls and as the brevity of beauty and of life itself (Ferber 76-77). Therefore, picturing flowers in abundance or in elaborate arrangements both increases their aesthetic effect and reminds the viewer of the fragility of the life (especially women’s life) depicted in the composition. Concerning jewels, Boos holds that they were appealing to the Decadents because a “metal or gem seemed a refining of elements, a concentrated essence, the

[41] The most famous British literary representative of both Aestheticism and the Decadent movement was Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). A notorious dandy, Wilde dressed flamboyantly, frequented fashionable clubs and theaters, and never missed an opportunity to display his witticism and irony. His 1891 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is his most elaborate example of both aesthetic tendencies. The Preface to the novel is composed of some Aestheticism aphorisms, such as, “[t]he artist is the creator of beautiful things. […] They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty. […] All art is at once surface and symbol. […] All art is quite useless” (Wilde 3-4). The Decadent element of the novel is visible in Dorian Gray’s morbid search for ever more intense sensuous pleasures, besides his insatiable passion for jewels, perfumes, clothing, and exotic objects.

attempt to pass beyond ordinary expressions of material form" (66). Jewels require both intense (sometimes, extreme) and precise (often delicate) procedures to be made, such as burning, melting, cutting, carving, and polishing. The strenuous work of joining and transforming different materials results in one single piece of beauty and desire. For Decadent art, this meant materializing the sublime.

All the features of the Decadent movement mentioned above are visible in the works of the Pre-Raphaelites, and particularly in Rossetti's from the 1860s onwards. *Beata Beatrix* presents both a moment of ecstasy and the realization of impending death in a melancholy, impressionistic atmosphere, while mythological figures such as *Lilith* and *Venus* are depicted as languid *femme fatales* surrounded by luxurious flowery backgrounds. At the same time, these literary and mythological women are depicted with full lips, ample breasts and thick hair which heighten their sensuality in a perverse juggling game of life and death.

As for jewels, they are abundant in Rossetti's pictures and also appear in his poetry. In "Sister Helen," for instance, Keith of Ewern sends Sister Helen "a ring and a broken coin" (line 148) as an attempt to compensate for his misdoings. In "Troy Town," Helen offers Venus a breast-shaped cup to ask the goddess to grant her love.

A few other example s of Rossetti's direct influence on Aestheticism and the Decadent movement are provided by Landow. As Landow reminds us, Rossetti and his follower Edward Burne-Jones explored "themes of medievalized eroticism (or eroticized medievalism) and pictorial techniques that produced a moody, often penumbral atmosphere" ("Aesthetic Pre-Raphaelitism" par. 1). *Beata Beatrix* and *Paolo and Francesca da Rimini* are clear examples of Rossetti's shadowy atmosphere with an erotic tone. Another example of Rossetti's influence, argues Landow, was his "reclusive, bohemian [lifestyle] surrounded by his collection of odd animals and blue china," which forged his image of a London Aesthete (par. 3).

Landow adds that Rossetti's early short story "Hand and Soul" (1849) also provided inspiration for Aesthetes and Decadents. In the story, a first narrator tells the reader that a thirteenth-century painter named Chiaro goes through a personal crisis motivated by artistic and spiritual doubts. One night Chiaro's soul appears to him in the shape of a woman, reprimands him for his frustration at his lack of fame and for his feeble faith, and then orders him to paint her. Chiaro depicts her hands with special care. Centuries later, a second narrator finds the painting abandoned among others in a museum, recognizes it as Chiaro's work and admires it. However, some nearby art students do not give it consideration. First published in Pre-

Raphaelite periodical *The Germ*, the story illustrates in narrative form some of the principles Rossetti wanted to set for his art, such as a return to artistic expressions prior to the Renaissance and the importance of spiritual devotion as an artistic subject, thus becoming his artistic manifesto. The pronouncement of painting one's own soul, states Landow, also influenced Aestheticism and the Decadent movement because it "embodies the attenuated romanticism that is the essence of the Aesthetic movement, for it holds that the artist's only duty is to cultivate his own emotions and imagination and then express them" (par. 4).

Rossetti's mythological and otherworldly imagery was also a source of influence on nineteenth-century *Symbolism*. As Prof. Alison Yarrington states, Rossetti's work "fits into the wider movement of Symbolism" (*The Great Artists*, 00:03:13), and as Prof. William Vaughan comments, the Pre-Raphaelite woman, as created by Rossetti, is "a mixture of saint and sinner [...]. You can find her in Symbolism, amongst the Symbolist poets and painters" (*The Great Artists*, 00:03:38-00:03:49). The interplay between sensuality and spirituality in Rossetti's mythological women not only became his hallmark but also influenced younger poets and painters both in Britain and abroad. Rossetti's poetry also carries some Symbolist features, as noted by Kolsteren. Rossetti's "Willowood" sonnet sequence, for instance, takes place in an unearthly region where the speaker encounters Love and conjures a vision of his dead beloved (139).

Symbolism originated in the poetry of Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), and was carried out by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) and Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), among others, as a reaction to the formalistic and rationalistic aspects of the Parnassian movement. Symbolist poets explored the potentialities of metaphor and built a wealth of impressionistic imagery, thus loading their poems with symbols which are open to different interpretations. As Hauser comments, the Symbolists discovered the symbol as a means of expression whose content can be interpreted in different ways, and they consciously made use of it as their poetic style (*Social History* IV: 126). Therefore, it is not surprising to see, in Symbolist poetry, the rich, malleable symbolism of Rossetti's and the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings, as well as their subjectivity and mystical, ornamental quality. Symbolism was "the most celebrated literary trend of the day," says Hauser, when English Pre-Raphaelitism became prominent in Victorian art (*Social History* IV: 118).

Deriving from the Symbolist poetic style, the artistic version aimed at a reaction against the rationalism and materialism predominant in Western European culture in the last decades

of the century. Thus, as Myers points out, its adherents rejected the conventions of Naturalism, and proposed that "art should reflect an emotion or idea rather than represent the natural world in the objective, quasi-scientific manner embodied by Realism" (par. 2). Returning to the personal expressivity of earlier Romanticism, Symbolists believed that the symbolic meaning of a work of art emerged "from the recreation of emotional experiences in the viewer through color, line, and composition" (par. 2), thus seeking a synthesis of form and feeling in their works.

Symbolists, according to Myers, aimed at attributing spiritual value to their works; therefore, they created "imaginary dream worlds" inhabited by mysterious biblical or mythological figures, as well as fantastical creatures (par. 4). Recurrent themes were "love, fear, anguish, death, sexual awakening, and unrequited desire" (par. 4). Women were the favorite symbols to express those emotions, appearing either as dreamy virgins or as threatening *femmes fatales* (par. 4). Again, we are reminded of Rossetti's mythological women and their languor, melancholy, and their sensuous spirituality as a source of influence for Symbolist painting.

Rossetti's influence eventually goes as far as some Modernist poets. William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) admits in *Four Years* that as a young man he was "in all things Pre-Raphaelite" (II). Yeats' father, John Yeats, was an artist who had started his career as a Pre-Raphaelite painter. When Yeats was about sixteen years old, his father introduced him to Rossetti's poetry. Once in Liverpool he saw Rossetti's painting *Dante's Dream* in a gallery and was impressed by "its colour, its people, its romantic architecture" (II). At another moment in the text, Yeats praises Rossetti's "quality of soul, personified again and again, as a great poetical painter, [who depends] for his greatness upon a type of beauty which presently we call by his name" (III). Yeats' explicit admiration for Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites is paralleled in his own love of symbolism and mysticism, as well as in his participation in the Celtic Revival, the Irish equivalent to the medievalism of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Take, for instance, Yeats' "The Second Coming," with its wealth of symbolic imagery and mystic allusions. The "loosened anarchy" and "drowned innocence" of the world make the speaker wait for some revelation as signs of a second coming. However, instead of a second Jesus to be born, the Sphinx awakens in the desert after "twenty centuries of stony sleep" and "slouches" towards Bethlehem. The sequence of images and the prophetic tone suggest the end of a time and the imminent beginning of another, pervaded by a sense of disillusionment. As a

whole, the poem challenges one's interpretation by making use of a concentrated, enigmatic imagery which is, nonetheless, highly pictorial, thus promoting an aesthetic experience on its own.

The poetry of Ezra Pound (1885-1972) and T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) also account as examples of Rossetti's influence, although more indirectly. As Peter Childs reminds us, Modernist poets were inspired by the Symbolists, as part of a strong assimilation of French culture in Britain from the 1890s. In Childs' words,

> [t]he idealist and aestheticist philosophy of the *symbolistes* insisted upon the autonomy of the poem together with the importance of the mystical and spiritual worlds they alluded to through symbols and phrases. They also advocated that the poet needed to revel in sensuality and in language (101).

Pound, Eliot and Yeats borrowed from the Symbolists the aesthetic power of words and their concentrated symbolism, suggesting rather than showing their views of the modern world. Both Pound's minimalist "In a Station of the Metro" and Eliot's fragmentary "Hollow Men," for instance, are suggestive of a world in rapid transformation, in which the individual is reified. In the former, the hasty vision of the faces turns them into featureless petals, whereas in the latter, instances of extreme violence forge "stuffed" faithless people; the general tone of the poem is one of existential emptiness and desolation. Thus, the symbolic allusion, language revel, and the importance of the spiritual world of the Symbolists were taken to higher standards by the Modernists, whose poems drew from historical events to create an autonomous aesthetic experience by using inventive imagery.

These aspects illustrate the influence of Rossetti's work. As Helsinger has noted, modern poets such as Pound, Eliot and Yeats drew from the Pre-Raphaelites when they "took the nature of aesthetic experience itself – the response to a poem, a picture, or a piece of music – for both subject and horizon in making poetry new" (2). The same Symbolist inheritance of Modernist poets is seen in the dialogue between Rossetti's painting and poetry. It performs an interplay of the spiritual and physical worlds conveyed by a rich symbolism, with an aesthetic orientation which he kept throughout his work.

Rossetti's productive poetic and artistic career enabled him to interact with the major aesthetic tendencies of his time. His poetry kept its Romantic vein and inspiration throughout. While it was not formally experimental, it approached themes which were patent in the different stages of Victorian Britain, such as prostitution and sensuality. As for Rossetti's paintings, they related to different movements. His Pre-Raphaelitism broke with Romantic academicism and introduced a new aesthetic philosophy which would eventually become prominent in Victorian art. His pictures of languid, voluptuous women with florid backgrounds were inserted in the "Art for Art's Sake" and Decadent movements. The rich symbolism and mythological imagery of his paintings, together with their sensuous spirituality, were influential to the emergence of Symbolist art. Finally, Rossetti's own aesthetic approach to experience, using it as a continuous source of inspiration for his written and pictorial works, his double works which make the physical and spiritual worlds converge, his approach was mirrored in Modernist poetry. Rossetti thus managed to actively participate in nineteen-century literary and artistic movements and eventually antecede British Modernism.

It is time now to see some of Rossetti's poetic and artistic qualities in more detail. With this intent, the next chapter presents my analysis of some of his paintings and poems.

3 ON BLESSED DAMOZELS AND *FEMMES FATALES*

This chapter presents my analysis of some of Rossetti's double works, according to the categories of spiritual devotion and physical desire. As mentioned in the Introduction, the paintings and poems are arranged according to the feature which is most apparent in the visual and poetic images. Therefore, the first section analyzes the double works in which spiritual devotion is more apparent at first sight, investigating how the images of both devotion and desire are built. The works include: *The Blessed Damozel*, *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary /* "Mary's Girlhood (For a Picture)," *Found*, *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee*, *Beata Beatrix /* "The Portrait," and *Sibylla Palmifera /* "Sonnet LXXVII – Soul's Beauty."

The second section focuses on the double works in which physical desire is the dominant drive, examining how the images of both desire and devotion are constructed. The chapter focuses on the following works: *Venus Verticordia*, *Lady Lilith /* "Sonnet LXXVIII. Body's Beauty," *Eden Bower* (*Lady Lilith)*, *Sister Helen*, *Troy Town*, and *Astarte Syriaca.*

Both sections focus on some of the double works and deal with them in more detail, whereas others are mentioned as examples of similar themes or processes of imagery construction. The works receiving more emphasis are representative of different stages of Rossetti's aesthetic production and his most important models.

3.1 DEVOTION

The Blessed Damozel is one of Rossetti's double works in which he produced the poem first. The 144-line ballad, written in 1847, when Rossetti was around nineteen, is his first and

probably most famous poem (see Appendix B). As Marsh points out, he wrote it inspired by Lenore, the "sainted maiden" from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" (*DGR* 23). He first published it in the Pre-Raphaelite periodical *The Germ* in 1850, and revised it until his 1870 volume of *Poems*. The poem is composed of twenty-four sestets, with alternate iambic tetrameter and trimeter, and rhyming scheme ABCBDB.

The poem introduces "[t]the blessed damozel leaned out / From the gold bar of Heaven" ("The Blessed Damozel" 1-2) and thinking about her beloved on earth. She has eyes "deeper than stilled waters"; she holds "three lilies in her hands, / And the stars in her hair were seven" (5-6). The symbolic lilies, which will appear in later works such as *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary* and *The Annunciation*, are already present. However, besides the association with the Virgin Mary, here they also stand for the Holy Trinity, mentioned later in the composition. As for the seven stars, Upstone associates them with the Pleiades (175). However, as Marsh (*DGR*) reminds us, they may allude to Rossetti's political heritage. His father, Gabriele Rossetti, a political exile, expressed his feelings towards his native Italy in an 1846 poem which reads, "Lovely art thou, *stars within thy hair*, / Shine as with the living sapphire's day […]"[42] (qtd. in Marsh, *DGR* 24, my italics). Thus, the romantic figure with stars in her hair may also stand for Italy longing for freedom.

The poem presents a complicated relationship between desire and devotion, built, among other aspects, by a temporal displacement. While for the damozel one day has passed, on earth it has been ten years since she died. She longs for the arrival of her beloved in Heaven, where their souls will be reunited like other "newly met" pairs of lovers around her. A dialogue takes place between the damozel and her beloved, with her actual words and his words or thoughts in parentheses.[43] The end of the poem, however, suggests the entire dialogue was his imagination: she "laid her face between her hands, / And wept. (I heard her tears.)" ("The Blessed Damozel" 143-144). As a projection of his own suffering and doubts, he imagines her hopeful attitude turning into apprehension and sorrow.

[42] The original stanza reads, "Sei pur bella cogli astri sul crine / Che scintillan quai vivi zaffiri, / È pur dolce quel fiato che spiri, / Porporina foriera del dì. / Col sorriso del pago desio / Tu ci annunzii dal balzo vicino / Che d'Italia nell'almo giardino / Il servaggio per sempre finì" (*Il Veggente in Solitudine*, Novena Seconda, I, XIII, 231). Available at: <https://archive.org/stream/ilveggenteinsoli00rossuoft#page/204/mode/2up>. Accessed on: Oct. 16, 2015.

[43] Although Bronfen inaccurately states that the poem was written in 1873, ten years after the death of Elizabeth Siddall, she correctly observes that the object of the damozel's discourse is "a representation of [the male lover's] resurrection after death and a legitimation of [their] earthly love" (367-368).

The couple's physical expression of love is complicated by the prospect of its spiritual dimension. The damozel wishes to replicate their earthly love in Heaven, like the other couples who have divine permission to do so, whereas the man has mixed feelings of nostalgia and insecurity about their possible reunion. "Surely she leaned o'er me – her hair / Fell all about my face…" ("The Blessed Damozel" 21-22), he says, suggesting their sexual intercourse, which triggers his sense of guilt towards their relationship, and consequently his doubt regarding his own access to Heaven. Thus, while she appears blessed and hopeful, he feels impotent and stuck to his earthly condition, for death seems an insurmountable cut in their relationship. The poem then is a "succinct poetic embodiment of Rossetti's personal myth," as Berg puts it (109). This Victorian sense of morality and entangled relationship between affective and physical expressions of love permeate Rossetti's career, and may be seen in his later productions as well.

The Blessed Damozel was commissioned in 1871 and finished in 1878. Alexa Wilding modeled for the damozel. The painting illustrates the poetic conflict to perfection. It shows the damozel with deep longing eyes looking downwards, leaning on the "gold bar of Heaven," holding the three lilies, and with stars around her hair.[44] Behind her, celestial couples embrace and kiss, and underneath her are three of Mary's handmaidens. In the predella, the lover lies on the ground with his hands in prayer and looking anguished (see figure 3 below).

[44] Marsh (*DGR*) tells the anecdote about a young Oxford student, an admirer of Rossetti's work, who, upon visiting Rossetti's house, saw the picture and asked where the seventh star was. "Round the back," replied Rossetti with a laugh (506-507).

Figure 3 – *The Blessed Damozel*
(1878; oil on canvas, 84 x 174 cm)
Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University.
An illustration of Rossetti's poem.
Available at: <http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/dante-gabriel-rossetti/the-blessed-damozel-1878>.
Accessed on: Oct. 31, 2011.

The picture illustrates the psychological conflict of the poem in its structure and in the depiction of the characters. The division in the composition indicates the irreversible separation of the lovers, whereas their hands show the contrast between their present feelings. While her fingers are languidly crossed in sweet longing, his hands look as if they were tied up behind his head, expressing his anguished doubts. In addition, she is graphically on top, while he is lying on his back, thus suggesting a sexual role reversal, related with his guilt complex, and which accounts for his passive and depressive attitude towards her.

If "The Blessed Damozel" was Rossetti's first famous poem, *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary* (1849) (see figure 4 below) was his first complete painting to grant him public recognition. It was also the first one through which he identified with the PRB, displaying the group's enigmatic acronym beside Rossetti's signature at the bottom. It was conceived after the

censure of *Retro Me, Sathana!*, when, as Marsh (*DGR*) tells us, Rossetti had an insight: to produce "[n]ot a Madonna and child, but the childhood of the Madonna" (42). The picture puts together Anglo-Catholic symbolism and contemporary ideas about the feminine role, such as submission, virtue, and obedience. (42)

Figure 4 – *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary*
(1849, oil on canvas, 83 x 65 cm)
Tate Britain, London. Bequest of Lady Jekyll (1937)
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w20961>. Accessed on Nov. 30, 2015.

The familial atmosphere of the painting replicated its production. The models for the Virgin and St. Anne were Rossetti's sister Christina and their mother Frances respectively. The composition displayed "simple rectilinear lines, […] delicate detail and bright tonality," with "a sense of freshness or naiveté" (Prettejohn 34) which caught the public's attention at the Royal Academy "Free Exhibition." The characters' sober features, precision of details, rich

symbolism and visible attempt to overcome technical limitations also contributed to the positive reception (34).[45]

The painting presents a household scene of the holy family. The Virgin Mary is embroidering a tripoint lily on a red cloth while being observed and taught by St. Anne. On the left, a red-winged angel stands beside a red vase with a white lily on top of a pile of books. A thorn briar and a leaved palm lie in the foreground. A curtain behind St. Anne and Mary helps to highlight their illuminated figures and to separate the inside from the outside environment. Behind the wall, St. Joachim tends the vine, while the dove of the Holy Ghost observes the whole scene, perched on the trellis. On the wall, a nursing lamp sits right beside a solitary vase containing a rose, and a red piece of cloth hangs next to the trellis. Outside is a green field, a lake and, on top of a hill, a castle.

The composition is loaded with Anglo-Catholic symbolism. The books have Christian virtues written either on their spines or on their fore edges: “caritas” (charity), “fides” (faith), “sapientia” (wisdom), “prudentia” (prudence), “temperantia” (temperance), and “fortitudo” (fortitude). Those virtues may be seen in a long tradition of Catholic theology and illustrate Rossetti’s closeness to Anglo-Catholicism. The inscriptions on both sides of the books allude to the medieval practice of illustrations explained by headings, thus contributing to the atmosphere of anachronism of the painting. On top of the pile of books, an ornamented vase contains a lily, which, as Cirlot reminds us, is the common emblem of the Virgin Mary (359). The planted lily is inversely projected onto Mary’s embroidery. In the second sonnet which accompanies the painting the incomplete embroidery indicates that “Christ is not yet born” (“Mary’s Girlhood” II: 3-4). Also according to the sonnet, the briar and the palm in the foreground stand for Mary’s “great sorrow and her great reward” (II: 10), i.e. her suffering and glory for Christ.

Apart from these elements, other symbols abound in the picture. For instance, the vine, which, according to Cirlot, “often appears as a symbol both of youth and of eternal life” (360), is also traditionally associated with Christ. In this particular scene, the vine grows from the outside of the house and comes inside toward Mary, as a prediction of her maternity of Jesus. The shape of the trellis and the red cloth hanging next to it make a clear allusion to the future crucifixion and bleeding of Jesus.

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[45] Prettejohn comments on the figure of St. Joachim being “too large for the perspective scheme of the picture” (34). One may add that St. Anne and Mary look compressed behind the embroidery desk.

The wall plays an important role in the composition as it may be seen from different perspectives: iconography, symbolism, psychoanalytic reading, and social relationships. It divides the composition into two halves: the inside household action bathed in light and the outside landscape, with its distant elements. Symbolically, "the wall seen from within as an enclosure has [an] implication of protection," and is psychoanalytically regarded as a mother-figure (Cirlot 362). It is "a mystic symbol representing the feminine element of mankind" and symbolizes "matter as opposed to spirit" (363). In this sense, "matter corresponds to the passive or feminine principle, and spirit to the active or masculine" (363). Thus, the wall here separates the material present of Mary as a young woman from the spiritual future which her Son will represent.

The wall also has implications at the social and psychoanalytical levels. As Marsh points out, the division of labor and attitude of the characters matches the Victorian division between the feminine (i.e. indoor, virtuous and submissive) and masculine (i.e. outdoor and endeavoring) spheres of action (*DGR* 42). In addition to that, Waldman reminds us that the gender division is not only social, but also metaphysical: the female characters and the angel are surrounded by a bright light seemingly coming from the front of the canvas, whereas St. Joachim, outside, is lit by less radiant daylight (138). Thus, the female figures seem to be more sanctified by the light which illuminates the scene than the male character. This feature will constitute a pattern in Rossetti's later pictorial and poetic works: an emphasis on the roles or feelings of female characters, such as Mary, Beatrice or the blessed damozel, to the detriment of their male counterparts.

The objects on the wall and the landscape beyond it are also symbolical. The lamp is associated with intelligence and the spirit (Cirlot 176), whereas the rose is a symbol of completion, of consummate achievement and perfection (275). The rose is contained in a vase, a traditional feminine symbol which stands for immanence, acceptance, and fertility (359). The lake surface, Cirlot tells us, has "the significance of a mirror, presenting an image of […] consciousness and revelation" (175). The lake itself is symbolic of a transition between life and death (175). The field stands for wide and limitless potentiality (104), whereas the castle on top of the hill has a variety of possible meanings. It is a symbol of the transcendent soul and of the heavenly Jerusalem (39), with an additional importance because of its level. It is also "spiritual power, ever on the watch," as well as "expressive of the will to salvation" (39).

Considered together, all these elements tell a narrative of the future events reserved to the Virgin Mary and her Son Jesus. A concentration of elements in the same rectangle, formed by the trellis and the wall (see figure 5 below), is important to notice here: the dove is perched right above the nursing lamp, whose phallic upward tip almost touches the vase with the rose, which is paralleled by the vine trunk. Both the vine and the rose look as if they were touching the distant castle. Therefore, the narrative suggested by the symbols goes as follows: the pure and chaste Virgin Mary is preparing for her mission (i.e. the vine is coming inside the room) and is observed by an angel and the Holy Ghost. When her time comes and she is perfect and ready to play her role (the rose), the Holy Ghost will provide spiritual intelligence (the nursing lamp) to her and will make her conceive (the full vase). She will then give birth to Jesus (the vine again). Jesus will fulfil his own mission (the field), reveal the Word of God, and die (the lake). Then He will resurrect and bring the New Jerusalem (the castle).

Figure 5 – Detail of *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary*

Along with this wealth of Christian symbolism, there are hints of a latent sexuality in the picture. The first indication is the abundance of the color red, traditionally associated with sexuality as well as with blood. Mary's loose hair indicates her marital status as a single young woman, and her virginity, as opposed to St. Anne's covered head. However, her hair is long and reddish, giving her virtuous demeanor a touch of sensuality. This points out to the girl's hidden sexuality, which will have to remain repressed for her to become the immaculate mother of Jesus. Interestingly, St. Anne's headscarf is also red, in parallel with Mary's hair, alluding to the mother's longer experience.

Also revealing is the embroidery at which Mary is working: an incomplete tripoint lily on a red piece of cloth which is close to her bosom and which hangs, as if shed, onto the floor. This is a clear allusion to her future menarche, the moment she will be ready to conceive.

At the other end of the scene, a red-haired, red-winged angel stands by the books and the lily and observes the embroidery. Like the Holy Ghost above him, the angel is waiting for Mary's right moment to conceive. This angel is particularly interesting in the composition. Firstly, his appearance duplicates Mary's: both wear light robes and have red hair. Besides, his red wings parallel Mary's red embroidery. Just as she is still young, this angel looks like a child. Therefore, the childlike angel's red wings work as a projection of the young Mary's latent sexuality. Interestingly, in Rossetti's next painting, *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (see figure 6 below), Mary's time to conceive will have come, and the angel will look like a grown-up man holding a phallic lily to her surprise and consternation.

Figure 6 – *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (*The Anunciation*)
1850, oil on canvas mounted, 72.4 x 41.9 cm
Tate Britain, London
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w22113>. Accessed on: Nov. 30, 2015.

The two sonnets which accompany the painting (see Appendix B) were attached to its frame when the picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy in March 1849 (McGann, "Mary's Girlhood" par. 10).[46] This procedure, McGann reminds us, alludes to the medieval tradition of providing an interpretation of the pictorial features in order to engage the viewer's active participation in the work (pars. 1-2). This process suggests a temporal displacement of the artwork by reminding both the viewer and the reader of an older practice of relating to the artistic object.

The historical displacement is heightened in the poems by their style and diction. Both sonnets are in the Petrarchan style, with an octave and a sestet, in iambic pentameters, and rhyme scheme ABBAABBACDECDE. Words and phrases such as "she / *Dwelt* young" ("Mary's Girlhood" I: 3, my italics), "as Paul *hath* said" (II: 5, my italics), "the lily *standeth*"

[46] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s64.rap.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 15, 2016.

(II: 7, my italics), and “*yea*, God the Lord” (II: 13, my italics) help to create an atmosphere of anachronism and solemnity which matches the subject of the painting.

Sonnet I describes Mary as a girl; the octave provides her identification and location. She is the “blessed Mary, pre-elect / God’s Virgin […], and she / Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee” (I: 1-2). This excerpt shows that her fate has been decided from birth, and therefore she has no choice upon her own life but to follow God’s will. The capitalized “Virgin” is significant here because of the renunciation of her own sexuality. Like the Roman Vestals, Mary will forgo her sexuality in exchange for her powerful mission: to be the Mother of God in the form of Jesus. Being the chosen one by God implies renouncing her sexuality in total repression in order to keep the sacramental purity demanded by her position. This repression is associated with the moralistic idea of impurity and dirtiness attributed to sexuality, and especially the power attributed to female sexuality. In *The Taboo of Virginity*, Freud reminds us of the high value attributed to a woman “being sexually untouched” (60). Freud argues that the demand for virginity is reminiscent of “the exclusive right of possession over a woman which is the essence of monogamy” (60). The taboo is rooted in a “dread of woman” (66) due to her inherent power of giving birth, thus providing a new life. Besides, continues Freud, considering that defloration is often a painful and disappointing experience for the woman, the taboo also stems from the danger of female hostility towards the man who deflowers her (69). This danger was so embedded in ancient or traditional cultures that in some cases images of gods were “entrusted with defloration” (71). It was the case, reports Freud, of the wooden lingam in India and the stone phallus of Priapus in ancient Rome (71).

In Mary’s case, the phallic substitute is symbolized by the “angel-watered lily” (“Mary’s Girlhood” I: 10). While she is a girl, the flower, i.e. her virginity, is being tended by spiritual powers, in order to keep Mary’s purity. For the time being, the lily “near *God* / *Grows* and is quiet” (I: 10-11, my italics), in keeping with the latency period of the girl’s sexual development (Freud, *Three Contributions* 47-48). The juxtaposition of the two words and the alliteration of the /g/ sound reinforce the divine power over her latent sexuality: the lily “grows” (i.e. is tended) under God’s caring guardianship, as suggested by the subtle enclosure of the voiced stop consonant.

Although Mary does not yet seem aware of her future mission, she already behaves accordingly and displays a series of qualities: “unto God’s will” (“Mary’s Girlhood” I: 4) she shows devotion, respect, “simplicity of intellect,” and patience. “From her mother’s knee” (I:

6) (i.e. since she was little), she has developed faith, hope, wisdom, charity, peace, and circumspection. As Marsh reminds us, these qualities are “appropriate to both the Mother of God and the God-fearing Englishwoman” (*DGR* 49). Besides restricting herself to a limited intellectual life, this Victorian version of Mary is obedient, virtuous, and submissive, as befitted a typical Victorian young woman who relied on both church- and state-supported institutions for her upbringing and education. In this sense, the historical displacement is reversed, for now it is the biblical character who acts according to the Victorian reader’ mores.

Then the poem describes what awaits Mary, “one dawn at home / She woke in her white bed, and had no fear / At all, – yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed” (“Mary’s Girlhood” I: 11-13). Dawn, as Ferber reminds us, corresponds in literature and culture to infancy or youth (53). It may also stand for a moment of illumination, as the verb “dawn” means (53). These lines thus describe Mary’s insight at the moment she becomes a young woman. She then wakes up in her *white* bed, i.e. virginal and about to be stained by her menstrual blood, and is overwhelmed by emotion “[b]ecause the *fullness* of the time was come” (I: 14, my italics). The metaphoric filling turns time into a spacial concept, suggesting that the time Mary would be ready to be deflowered has arrived, and that she is going to be *filled*, i.e. pregnant. This image is visually represented in Rossetti’s next painting, *The Annunciation* (see figure 6 on p. 76), which shows Mary’s astonishment at the angel holding the phallic lily.

Sonnet II refers directly to the symbols in the painting, and it mirrors Sonnet I. The “Tripoint” (i.e. the incomplete embroidery with three lilies) on the red cloth indicates that “Christ is not yet born” (“Mary’s Girlhood” II: 4). In the painting, as mentioned before, the red cloth with the embroidery is close to Mary’s bosom, suggesting her future menarche and motherhood. That is the reason why she was called God’s “Virgin” in sonnet I; in the future she will be God’s “Mother.”

The books stand for Christian virtues Mary displays, as Sonnet I reads (“Mary’s Girlhood” I: 6-8). The pile is headed by charity, “as Paul hath said” (II: 5).[47] On top of the pile of books, says the poem, “the lily *standeth*, which / Is Innocence, being interpreted” (II: 7-8, my italics). This excerpt both describes the erect lily tended by the angel in the painting and refers back to Mary’s latent sexuality displaced as *innocence*. The Latin origin of the word,

[47] This particular excerpt refers to I Cor. 13.13, “[a]nd now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (*King James Version*).

"innocentia," meaning harmlessness, suggests that as the lily grows, Mary will remain unharmed, i.e. a virgin.

The sonnet proceeds to explain that "[t]he seven-thorn'd briar and the palm seven-leaved / Are her great sorrow and her great reward" ("Mary's Girlhood" II: 9-10), thus anticipating Mary's suffering and glory for Christ. The poem also explains the position of the Holy Ghost, "[u]ntil the end be full, the Holy One / Abides without" (II: 11-12), thus repeating the metaphoric use of "full." In other words, for the time being, Mary is still preparing for her great mission, therefore the dove is outside. In due time the Holy Ghost will come inside, and she will conceive.

Considered together, both poems complement each other and the painting. The first sonnet describes Mary's divine role (slightly suggested in the painting) and her future insight about her mission. The second sonnet interprets the two environments of the painting: the symbols in the indoor portion and the conception, suffering and glory of Christ anticipated by the outdoor scene. The only major disparity between the painting and the sonnets is that in the picture nobody seems to notice the symbols mentioned in Sonnet II. They are incorporated to the household scene as regular objects.

A different approach is taken by Rossetti in *Found* (1854-1881). While most of his double works deal with literary, mythological or biblical themes, it shows direct concern with a social issue, i.e. the "fallen woman" (see figure 7 below). In Victorian times, as Lee reminds us, they were moralistically considered "women who had given in to seduction, living a life in sin" (par. 1). Rogers reports an estimate that in 1857, the time of Rossetti's picture, "there were 8,600 prostitutes in London known to the police but […] the true number may have been nearer to 80,000" (par. 1). Therefore, prostitution was seen as both a serious social problem and a moral threat. Nevertheless, the English approach to the issue combined "social and moral anxiety and intention to reform or eradicate" (par. 1). Rogers also mentions a Victorian tendency to identify three main sources of "falleness": seduction; degeneracy or immorality, and poverty (par. 2). Thus, aligned with other artists and writers, Rossetti attempted to approach the subject, showing his concern and giving his personal expression of it.

Figure 7 – *Found*
(1854-55, 1859-1881, oil on canvas , 91.4 x 80 cm)
Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w17087>. Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.

At the time Rossetti designed his study for *Found*, William Hunt produced *The Awakening Conscience*, dealing with the same theme with a positive view. On seeing Hunt's painting, Rossetti felt dismayed at the possibility of his own being considered a sequel or a copy (Marsh, *DGR* 128). Thus began his endless delay about the picture, on which he worked at different times throughout his life, but never managed to finish.

The picture shows a country drover who has crossed a bridge to bring a calf to the market. He grapples the hands of a woman crouching against a wall in an attempt to raise her, but she turns away from him in refusal. Their intense expressions indicate that she is his former sweetheart. Her exceedingly pale skin and gaudy clothes denounce her present occupation as a

prostitute. Behind the man is a tilted lamp post base. Fanny Cornforth sat as the woman, while Ford Maddox Brown modeled for the drover (McGann, *Found*).[48]

The focal point of the composition is the couple's clasped hands. This motif, as Prettejohn points out, indicates "the complex relationship between the two figures" (211). While he intensely tries to reestablish contact with her, she refuses and avoids his look and his presence. Her obstinate resistance, especially when he looks so sorrowful and willing to help her, makes the viewer look at the drover's calf in the background, trapped and struggling within a rope net. As Lee mentions, the net which holds the calf suggests that "either the woman is too entangled in her life of sin of else she refuses to be caught in the impositions of married life" (par 4). At any rate, the picture avoids a simplistic view of her situation, and focuses instead on the intense encounter between desire and its avoidance.

The symbolism of the calf is extended to other elements of the composition. The bridge, as reminded by Cirlot, represents that which links two separate worlds, and it is symbolic "of a transition from one state to another – of change or the desire for change" (33). In the picture, the bridge connects both the rural and the urban worlds, and also the two people: the drover, who wants to change his former sweetheart's pitiful situation, and the woman, who has lost her references and has been engulfed by the lack of perspectives. The wall, states Cirlot, "expresses the ideas of impotence, delay, resistance, or a limiting situation" (362), which is precisely what the scene depicts. In spite of his attempt to rescue her, their worlds have grown much too apart; therefore, she refuses his help, while he feels impotent before her situation. In addition, as was the case in *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary*, a wall stands for the contrast between matter and spirit (Cirlot 363). Thus, the wall suggests that the woman's access to transcendence is limited or inexistent. She only knows a limited material world, which is further reinforced by her gaunt pale features. The lamppost base is also significant. As the lamp is symbolic of the spirit (176), the broken lamppost enhances the absence of spiritual comfort to the situation.

At a deeper level, the tilted missing lamppost suggests the drover's impotent desire for his lover, which, with the theme of rescue of the "fallen woman," relate to what Freud calls the mother-whore complex. As Freud argues, a common object of male desire and even affection would be a woman of degraded sexual reputation, ranging from a flirtatious woman to a prostitute. Such affection would often be accompanied by an impulse to "rescue" the beloved ("Special Type of Object Choice" 41-42). This impulse would stem from the moment in a boy's

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[48] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s64.rap.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 16, 2016.

psychical development when he learns that he owes his life to his parents' sexual intercourse. As he also hears about women who make their living out of sex, he cannot help comparing his mother to a prostitute, which re-activates his infantile feelings of desire for his mother. The boy then unconsciously sees his father's exclusive sexual access to his mother as an act of infidelity on her part, which, if fixated during the resolution of the Oedipus complex, may turn into a sexual or affective preference for women of low sexual reputation (43-45). Concurrently, the impulse to "rescue" the beloved would stem from the boy's unconscious wish to repay the gift of life he received from his mother, by giving her back another life in the form of a child like himself. Therefore, the boy would wish to "save" his mother's life (or the life of other women who remind him of her, such as a prostitute) by taking on his father's position. (46-47).[49]

An important and common companion to this lowering process is what Freud calls psychical impotence. A "fully normal attitude in love," states Feud, is ensued by the confluence of two currents of feelings – the affectionate and the sensual ("Degradation" 49). As civilization (especially through the incest-barrier) often forces boys to postpone the fulfillment of erotic desire to a moment long after their affectionate feelings have been developed, the union of the two types of feelings is often impaired. In this process, two factors determine the successful development of the libido: the degree of fixation to infantile incestuous erotic objects and the degree of frustration in reality which is opposed to the new object-choices outside the family circle. Thus, depending on the influence of these two forces, as some men grow up they tend to seek degraded objects of desire (e.g. in prostitutes) for their sexual satisfaction, while they have difficulty to have sexual excitation for someone of high esteem, who would unconsciously remind them of their mothers or sisters (50-53).

Seen from this perspective, the composition of *Found* illustrates both aspects of the mother-whore complex: the theme of rescue of the "fallen woman" and psychical impotence. The drover's sorrowful encounter with his former sweetheart, now turned into a prostitute, triggers his wish to rescue her. At the same time, his desire is mixed with his former affection, resulting in the graphic representation of impotent desire, i.e. the tilted lamppost.

[49] Although, as mentioned in Chapter 1, a psychoanalytical investigation of Rossetti himself is outside the scope of this study, it is interesting to note that he seemed to have an affective preference for prostitutes and women of a lower social status than his own. Lizzie Siddal worked in dressmaking, and her family had an ironmongery business (Marsh, *DGR* 86); Jane Morris was the uneducated daughter of a stableman, while Fanny Cornforth was a prostitute whom he helped financially (185, 202, 337). The only woman of wealthy and cultured origin, Marie Spartali, who showed interest in Rossetti, was not corresponded, and he kept her only as a model (330-331).

Rossetti only wrote the accompanying sonnet (see Appendix B) in 1881, when he resumed work on the painting (McGann, “Found” par. 2).[50] The poem opens with a beautiful quotation from Keats’ sonnet “To Homer” (1818), “There is a budding morrow in midnight” (“Found” 1). Besides paying homage to Keats, the “English nightingale” (2), the metaphor of the budding new day leads the first part of the octave and introduces the setting of the painting. The poem reads, “And here, as lamps across the bridge turn pale / In London’s smokeless resurrection-light, / Dark breaks to dawn” (3-5). While the lines describe the far background of the picture, the extended image of morning stands for the renewal of hope, of new possibilities, the “resurrection” from “darkness.” Thus, the breaking of a new day acquires a spiritual overtone, providing a devotional attitude to this section of the poem. The new day deserves to be worshipped, as it brings new life.

Nevertheless, the second part of line 5 introduces a sudden shift in the serene picture, “*But* o’er the deadly *blight* / Of love *deflowered* and sorrow of none avail / Which makes this man gasp and this woman quail” (5-7, my italics). The previous floral metaphor of the “budding” morning is retrieved with multiple negative meanings: “blight,” i.e. a plant disease or an agent of ruin, and “deflowered” love, i.e. love whose essence has died or the loving woman who has lost her virginity. The previous atmosphere of hope is halted by the contrasting conjunction “but”; now the harm is done and there is no use in sorrow. This image introduces important information which may explain the woman’s reaction both in the painting and in the poem. She has had sex with her lover, and therefore she was dishonored (maybe expelled from home, as was a frequent outcome of such events) and left with no alternatives for an occupation. Now he “gasps” at the surprise of the encounter, while she “quails” at both the painful recollection and her shameful present situation. The octave closes with a question which can hardly have an affirmative answer, “Can day from darkness ever again take flight?” (8) Thus, the metaphoric resurrection of the new day is denied and the negation is extended to her whole life.

The sestet repeats the temporal shift from the octave. Its opening describes the climactic moment of their past relationship, “Ah! gave not these two hearts their mutual pledge, / Under one mantle sheltered ’neath the hedge / In *gloaming* courtship?” (“Found” 9-11, my italics). Now the metaphor of daylight is turned into twilight (“gloaming”) to set the moment of their sexual intercourse, when, moved by passion, they exchanged promises for life. Then the present

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[50] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/7-1881.s64.raw.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 15, 2016.

situation is reintroduced, this time with the conjunction "and" meaning "but," and the last moment of devotion in the poem, "And O God! to-day / He only knows he holds her; – but what part / Can life now take?" (11-13). The speaker's invocation of God is projected onto the man, who not only expresses his surprise but also acknowledges his limitation to deal with the situation and its consequences. As for the question he poses, the woman's reaction gives the answer by falling into total denial towards him, "She cries in her locked heart, – / 'Leave me – I do not know you – go away!'" (13-14). Thus, what was once love and binding desire has now turned into a rejected rescue attempt, and life cannot take any part in these circumstances.

In the thematic trail of the "fallen woman," Rossetti produced *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee* in 1858. Actress Ruth Herbert modeled for Mary Magdalene (Marsh, *DGR* 193), while Edward Burne-Jones modeled for the head of Christ (McGann, *Mary Magdalene*).[51] The drawing shows Mary Magdalene in the rear of a lively crowded procession heading to a house where a feast is held. Mary is climbing up the stairs to go into Simon's house and is taking some roses off her hair. Some people are trying to prevent her, while others look at her inquisitively. A man, presumably Mary's lover, is talking to her and holding her knee and her foot. Inside the house, Simon the Pharisee looks disdainfully at Mary while a meal is being served. Two vases, one with lilies and the other with sunflowers, stand at the entrance door. Mary intently looks through the house door at the face of Jesus, who appears at the right window, surrounded by a halo. At the right bottom a fawn is cropping a vine which grows up to the window, while at the bottom of the stairs a half-naked girl, presumably a beggar, is eating and looking surprised at Mary. All figures wear medieval clothing (see figure 8 below).

[51] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s109.rap.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 18, 2016.

Figure 8 – *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee*
(1858-1859, pen and India ink, 52.7 x 45.7 cm)
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w21072>. Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.

Waldman relates the drawing to the New Testament account of how Mary Magdalene became one of Jesus's disciples and witnessed his resurrection (152). In fact, the drawing places together two characters from different official gospels. One is Simon the Pharisee, who invited Jesus for a meal and failed to show him proper hospitality, while a woman identified as a "sinner" treated Jesus with extreme courtesy.[52] The other is Mary Magdalene, who had seven devils cast out of her by Jesus, became one of his closest disciples, witnessed his crucifixion, and was the first person to see Jesus after his resurrection.[53] With this poetic license, Rossetti

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[52] "And one of the Pharisees desired [Jesus] that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment" (*King James Version*, Luke 7. 36-38).

[53] "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils" (*King James Version*, Mark 16.9).

blends the two female characters and attributes new meaning to their relationship with Jesus, turning Mary Magdalene into a passionate follower.

Mary Magdalene is one of Rossetti's double works most charged with elements of both devotion and desire. Besides the biblical theme itself, a rich symbolism of spirituality is present in the composition. The roses Mary Magdalene is taking off her hair are traditionally associated, as Cirlot reminds us, with completion, consummate achievement and perfection, the beloved, as well as with Eros and Venus (275). Therefore, Mary seems to be trying to get rid of her life of sensual pleasures and worldly concerns, reinforced by the poor half-naked girl, and to imbue herself with complete love for her Master Jesus. On the other hand, her naked arms and abundant hair heighten her sensuality, thus forming a complex figure who is moved by intense drives. In other words, her strong devotion is equivalent to the intense physical desire she feels.

This complexity is also expressed by other symbols in the composition. Mary Magdalene resolutely climbs the staircase towards the door. Walking up (or down) stairs, in Freud's words, "are representations of the sexual act" (*Dreams* 390), as is going through a door (433). Conversely, the vases with flowers at the door represent purity and devotion. The lily is a symbol of purity, "used in Christian – and particularly mediaeval – iconography as an attribute of the Virgin Mary" (Cirlot 188-189). When depicted standing in a vase, it is a symbol of the female principle (188-189). Ferber adds that the lily suggests perfection, and it is associated with Christ (117). As for the sunflower, it is traditionally associated with "the unrequited devotion of a lover, or [with] the longing of the earthbound soul for its heavenly home" (212). In addition, the sunflower naturally reminds one of the sun, a symbol of heroic power and resurrection (Cirlot 319). The lily and the sunflower thus stand for the purity and piety associated with the house where Jesus is having a meal as opposed to the other house, where the festive procession is going. The two opposite houses, which also appear in the poem, represent the duality between access to the spiritual world granted by the resurrection of Christ and the material world of sensuous pleasures. These symbolic representations suggest that Mary Magdalene's strong desire is sublimated into great devotion to Jesus. Not surprisingly, in the poem she calls him her "Bridegroom." While she is moved by intense sexual desire (after all, she is a "sinner"), climbing the stairs towards the house becomes ascending to a higher level of existence and having direct access to her object of worship.

Besides the visual symbols at the front of Simon's house, the ones at the side are also significant. The fawn cropping the vine suggests a female representation – according to Ferber,

the deer is associated with women (57) – performing a sexual act (Freud, *Dreams* 391) with Christ (the vine). The image of eating (and, therefore, its sexual implication), is replicated inside the house, where the meal is about to be served. Finally, the window, which shows the face of Jesus, is symbolic of consciousness, especially when it is located at a high position (Cirlot 373).

Again, the visual elements hint at the targeting of Mary Magdalene's libido towards Jesus as the object of her passionate desire. However, as the consummation of such desire would be impossible, it is converted into nonsexual worship. This helps to explain why Jesus' face looks two-dimensional, in striking contrast with the rest of the composition. As McGann reminds us, the face of Christ has an ambiguous representation, since it may be seen both as "a head in a window that opens into a room with other figures, or […] as an artistic image like a religious icon […], as if it were hung [on the exterior wall] like a picture" (*Mary Magdalene* par. 3).[54] The sublimation of strong desire into intense devotion then accounts for the dual graphic representation. Although the entire compositional setting is medieval, Jesus is represented as an iconic figure in the style of early medieval art, as befits his holy nature, while the other people and spaces are drawn according to traditional notions of perspective.

The accompanying Petrarchan sonnet is built as a dialogue between Mary Magdalene and her lover (see Appendix B). The lover speaks throughout the octave, representing the call of the material world of sensuous pleasures. He starts by questioning her attitude of taking the ornamental roses off her hair, "'Why wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair? / Nay, be *thou all* a rose, – *wreath*, *lips*, and *cheek*" ("Mary Magdalene" 1-2, my italics). Rather than taking off the adorning symbols, the lover asks Mary to become entirely the object of his desire. His request is reinforced by the partial assonance of /iː/ ("wreath" and "cheek") and /ɪ/ ("lips"), in which the repetition of sounds contributes to providing a sense of unity to the physical parts. In addition, if Mary is to be "all" a desirable rose, those figures from her hair and face must also correspond, by displacement, to her genitalia.

The lover's speech then closely describes the drawing by referring to the two houses and the procession. The poem reads,

> Nay, not this house, – that banquet-house we seek;
> See how they kiss and enter; come thou there.

[54] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s109.rap.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 16, 2016.

This delicate day of love we two will share
Till at our ear love's whispering night shall speak. (3-6)

The lover's words voice the theme of the opposing houses, identifying the entrance to the symbolic site of pleasure (the kissing couple) and urging Mary to remain engaged in their free expression of desire. The man equates desire with love, using a temporal metaphor to suggest they relish the festivity during the "delicate day of love" until they can enjoy their intimacy at "love's whispering night."

Next, the lover reacts to Mary's implicit insistence on seeing Jesus. "*W*hat, s*w*eet *o*ne," exclaims the man, "hold'st thou still the *f*oolish *f*reak?" ("Mary Magdalene" 7, my italics). The alliterative /w/ sound enhances his exclamation of surprise at what he sees as stubbornness on her part, while the alliterative /f/ sound reinforces his disdainful attitude towards this figure who is utterly different from his world of bodily pleasure. It also hints at some jealousy on his part, for he promises, "Nay, when I kiss thy feet they'll leave the stair'" (8). In another verbal description of the picture, and as his last resort, the lover appeals to explicit sensuality to try to dissuade Mary. He also treats her foot as a fetish object, enticing her with anticipation of the pleasure he wants to have with her.

Mary Magdalene's impatient response comes in the sestet, "'Oh loose me! See'st thou not my *Bridegroom's* face / That *draws* me to Him?" ("Mary Magdalene" 9-10, my italics). By telling the man to release her, Mary is also making it explicit that her previous liaison with him has become insignificant. While he used the word "love" meaning pleasure and sex, Mary refers to a serious commitment with Jesus, her metaphorical future husband. Here she also refers to the peculiar iconographic representation of Jesus' face in the window. The pun on "draw" as pulling or making a picture indicates both her attachment to Christ and the new life *design* she wants.

Also in response to the man's fetishist proposal, the Magdalene continues, "For H*i*s f*ee*t my k*i*ss, / My h*ai*r, my t*ea*rs He cr*a*ves to-d*ay*" ("Mary Magdalene" 10-11, my italics). She thus turns the man's invitation for physical pleasure into absolute devotion for Jesus. In a direct reference to the biblical verse (Luke 7: 38), Mary alludes to the ritual of washing a host's feet. As she does not belong in the household, she will wash Jesus' feet with her own tears and wipe them with her own hair, in an act of extreme humility and self-denial. The assonance of /ɪ/ ("his," "kiss," "tears") and /iː/ ("feet"), /eɪ/ ("craves today"), as well as the open /eə/ ("hair") imitate her

moved weep. Mary proceeds with the theme of Jesus' feet as symbolic of her devotion. She questions, " – and oh! / What words can tell what other day and place / Shall see me *clasp* those *blood-stained* feet of His?" (11-13, my italics). The man's previous question, "hold'st thou still the foolish freak?" (7) is echoed in Mary's "clasp." In addition, the double meaning of Jesus's "blood-stained" feet alludes both to his present physical hardships and to his future crucifixion. Mary thus knows this opportunity to show her personal devotion to Jesus is unique.

Mary Magdalene ends her speech with a statement of strong feelings, "He needs me, calls me, loves me: let me go!'" ("Mary Magdalene" 14). By attributing the subject of the verbs to Jesus, she is in fact projecting her own wishes onto him, as the verbal expression of the sublimation of her desire into devotion. After a gradual intensification of affects, her last words restate the beginning of her talk as a way to emphasize the strong spiritual bond she has now, and to get rid of her former physical lover. Again, she wants to ascend from the material world of bodily pleasures to the spiritual connection with her Master. The steady rhythm of the iambic meter also marks Mary's passionate speech, as in, "What WORDS can TELL what Other DAY and PLACE / Shall SEE me CLASP those BLOOD-stained FEET of HIS? / He NEEDS me, CALLS me, LOVES me: LET me GO!'" (12-14).

While *Mary Magdalene* is a woman who has a passionate object of devotion, *Beata Beatrix* is the opposite situation, in which the woman is the worshipped figure. *Beata Beatrix* / "The Portrait" is a unique case among Rossetti's double works. Unlike the other pairs, Rossetti did not transpose the imagery of one medium to the other, which is surprising, considering the affective content of the painting.[55] Nevertheless, the poem alludes to some pictorial images and keeps the same atmosphere. The picture is generally considered a memorial from Rossetti to his wife Elizabeth Siddal, in which she is depicted as Dante's Beatrice entranced[56] (see figure 9 below). According to Marsh, in 1861 Rossetti drew a first draft of Lizzie as Beatrice, but left it aside with her death the following year (*DGR* 242). He resumed work in 1865 and completed it in 1870 (302-303), drawing the theme from Dante's account of Beatrice's death in *La Vita Nuova*. For Dante, "[a]fter this most gracious creature had gone out from among us, the whole city came to be as it were widowed and despoiled of all dignity" (*Vita Nuova* 58). Rossetti shared this feeling of despondency with the loss of his own wife and muse; therefore, the painting acquired a cathartic meaning to him.

[55] Also surprising is the fact that this is the only double work depicting Lizzie Siddal.

[56] See in this respect Marsh (*DGR* 302), McGann ("Beata Beatrix"), and Helsinger (142).

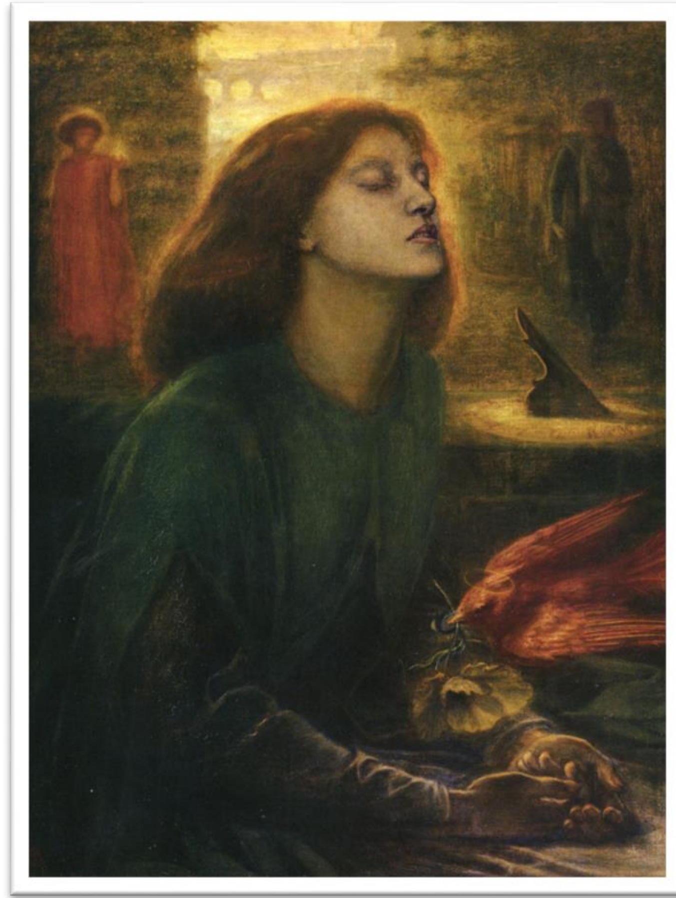

Figure 9 – *Beata Beatrix*
(1864-1870, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 66 cm)
Tate Gallery, London
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w17910>. Accessed on Feb. 7, 2016.

The painting represents Lizzie as Beatrice in an attitude of ecstasy, with her head raised, her eyes closed, her lips parted, and her hands loosely before her. In his explanation of the picture to his commissioners, Rossetti mentioned that she "'sees through her shut lids, […] conscious of a new world, as expressed in the last words of the *Vita Nuova*'" (qtd. in Marsh, *DGR* 303). The original passage from Dante's text reads, "that blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance *qui est per omnia scecula benedictus*" (*Vita Nuova* 77, italics in the original). The hazy quality of the design and the intense mixture of colors give the viewer the sensation of a dream or vision. Beatrice is wearing a sleeved purple dress and a green mantle, indicating hope and sorrow (Marsh, *DGR* 303). A haloed red dove, "a messenger of death" (303), is about to drop a poppy between her hands. The sundial on the wall that separates the two parts of the composition marks the time of Beatrice's death, according to Dante: nine

o'clock. The same light that projects the shadow of the sunlight illuminates Beatrice from behind, forming an aura around her head.

In the background of the composition, the shadowy figure of Dante looks across at Love, who holds a flaming heart, presumably, Beatrice's soul. Dante stands in front of the woods and a well. The color of his clothes replicates Beatrice's, and he holds a heavy book, probably, *La Vita Nuova*. Love stands in front of a tree with glittering fruit, possibly the Tree of Life; he wears a red robe and looks over his shoulder at Dante. In the far background, the mist-covered Ponte Vecchio signifies the city of Florence, the setting for Dante's story (McGann, *Beata Beatrix*).[57]

In accordance with Rossetti's projection of his own deceased beloved as Dante's Beatrice, the variety of symbols in the painting operates at different levels. Thus, for instance, Beatrice's ecstatic pose calls for the viewer's affinity. As Waldman reminds us, Beatrice's closed eyes help to increase "the viewer's connection with her" (118). As neither Dante nor Love can see her face, her "private narcissistic rapture" grants the viewer intimacy with her as he is implicitly "the sole beholder of [her] passion" (118). Although her closed eyes do not allow a clearer expression of what she actually sees, the gleam that illuminates Beatrice from behind, creating a halo around her head, and her enraptured pose allow the viewer to share the pathos of her moment of revelation.

Beatrice's vision is reinforced by the other symbols, as exemplified by the dove. A "symbol of spirituality and the power of sublimation," it is also symbolic of souls (Cirlot 46). It is as well the Christian symbol of the Holy Ghost (85), which is reinforced by the halo. Conversely, the dove corresponds to Venus (63), and therefore to her embodiment of love and sexuality. It should be harmless, yet it brings an omen of death in the form of the poppy. As an apparent phallic symbol, the red dove flying towards Beatrice's bosom stands for the libidinal desire of both Dantes, Alighieri and Rossetti, addressed to her. If the former's desire was sublimated as devotion, the latter's became harmful affection in their entangled relationship.[58] In this sense, the haloed dove is suggestive of an atonement of Rossetti's personal issues regarding his relationship with Lizzie.

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[57] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s168.rap.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 24, 2016.

[58] Examples of their entanglement include frequent quarrels over money, Rossetti's flirtatious attitude towards other women, and his nine-year delay to marry Lizzie (Marsh, *Sisterhood* 104-7, 109-115).

The sundial and the bridge are also significant. The time the sundial marks, nine o'clock, not only indicates the time of Beatrice's death, but also refers to the association Dante attributed between Beatrice and the number nine. He was nine years old when he first met her (*Vita Nuova* 5), and he claims that the number nine "seems […] to have borne a part in the manner of her death" (56): nine o'clock on 9th June 1290 (Marsh, *DGR* 302). He also appeals to the Ptolemaic system of nine revolving heavens to justify Beatrice's perfection, suggesting that, at her birth, "all these nine heavens were at perfect unity with each other as to their influence" (*Vita Nuova* 57). In addition, Dante proceeds, nine is three multiplied by three, and three corresponds to the Holy Trinity (57), which justifies that after her death Beatrice has gone straight to the side of the celestial Mary. Nine is also the number of heavenly spheres in Dante's *Paradiso*, through which Beatrice guides Dante towards the Empyrean. Additionally, the sundial gnomon points to Beatrice's face, suggesting that her revelation is in fact her impending death and beatification. This is heightened by the illuminated bridge, which suggests Beatrice's mystical transition from the material to the spiritual world (Cirlot 33). At another level of symbolism, the bridge is also a reminder of Rossetti's relationship with Lizzie. As pointed out by McGann, the bridge may be literally the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, but it can equally be seen as Battersea Bridge with its many arches spanning the Thames in London (*Beata Beatrix* par. 8). In this sense, the bridge illustrates the identification between the affective liaisons of Rossetti and his Dantean persona.

The blurred figure of Dante stands between two symbols of the unconscious: the woods[59] (Cirlot 112) and the well (113). With their symbolic association with obscurity and the hidden recesses of the mind, these elements operate as reminders for Beatrice, Dante, and Rossetti himself. In her ecstatic moment, Beatrice no longer sees Dante as a physical presence but as a hazy figure. Dante sees Love carrying Beatrice's soul away towards the Tree of Life, a hidden source of immortality (348). For the Italian poet, the removal of his object of devotion means weakening his own vital energy, which will account for his projection of the city as being "widowed" and deprived of dignity. He can only try to keep her memory alive by writing the *Vita Nuova*. Finally, for Rossetti, Dante remains as a shadowed persona, a memory of his own relationship with Lizzie/Beatrice, and Dante's book a recollection of Rossetti's own poems, which were buried with her (Marsh, *DGR* 244).

[59] The image of the woods is especially significant here because it alludes to the opening of Dante's *Inferno*, where he declares, "Midway upon the journey of our life / I found myself within a *forest dark*, / For the straightforward pathway had been lost." (*Inferno*, 1: 1-3, my italics).

With Rossetti's particular treatment of Lizzie as Beatrice, he creates, in the words of Bocher, "a spiritualized vision of romantic love which goes beyond a simple, one-sided adoration of beauty" (par 2). The depiction of Dante's relationship with Beatrice illustrates Rossetti's feelings of grief and remorse towards his deceased beloved. The two women thus become objects of devotion that inspire both works, Dante's *Vita Nuova* and Rossetti's painting.

Although "The Portrait" does not seem to hold immediate identity with the painting, the poem keeps its memorial attitude and dreamy atmosphere (see Appendix B). As McGann points out, it is an 1869 reworking of a dramatic monologue called "On Mary's Portrait Which I Painted Six Years Ago," written by Rossetti in 1847 ("The Portrait" par. 1).[60] The poem has some intriguing formal characteristics: it is composed of twelve nine-line stanzas, adding up to 108 lines (one plus eight equals nine), as reminders of the number nine, which Dante associates with Beatrice. The rhyme scheme is ABABCCDDC; the fifth line introduces a transition to the second part of each stanza.

The poem revolves around the speaker's memories of his unnamed beloved, which led him to produce a painting of her. The opening lines set this mood,

> This is her picture as she was:
> It seems a thing to wonder on,
> As though mine image in the glass
> Should tarry when myself am gone. (1-4)

The speaker's longing for his deceased beloved is translated into a narcissistic look which projects his wishes onto her pictorial representation. The resemblance of the picture with the actual woman stirs a disquieting sensation of her permanence ("a thing to wonder on"), which the speaker expresses by recalling the mythical symbolism of the mirror that can conjure up again "the images which it has received at some time in the past" (Cirlot 211). The picture triggers his memories, and therefore his desire for her, which, given enough contemplative time, wishes to animate the painting with motion. The speaker says, "I gaze until she seems to stir, – / Until mine eyes almost aver / That […] her sw*ee*t l*i*ps part" to speak ("The Portrait" 5-7, my

[60] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/50-1869.raw.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 20, 2016.

italics), even though he knows she is dead ("And yet the earth is over her", 9). The image of her parted lips is here suggested by the near assonance of /iː/ ("sweet") and /ɪ/ ("lips").

This interplay between the picture resemblance with the model and her absence also works, as Bronfen reminds us, as part of Freud's concept of the uncanny (117). Freud (*Uncanny*) defines *uncanny* as something which is at one time frightening and familiar (1). An uncanny effect, argues Freud, is often produced by "uncertainty whether an object is living or inanimate" (7) and by "effacing the distinction between imagination and reality" (15). Freud relates the uncanny with a type of morbid anxiety resulting from the recurrence of repressed content (13). In other words, things or people are perceived as uncanny when they remind us of something familiar, hidden and repressed in early childhood (e.g. an impulse or fear of castration), which emerges back in our projections. Therefore, by being astonished at the painting ("a thing to wonder on"), and by wishing to animate it, the speaker reveals part of his desire towards his beloved while she was alive, replicated in the precise reproduction of her countenance. In this sense, her image is, in Bronfen's words, "a displaced representation of the viewer's own mortality" (117). By depicting his deceased beloved as accurately as possible, the speaker performs an act of symbolization that replaces her former physical presence with her visual representation, which stresses her absence by death, and therefore the prospect of his own end.

This emphasis on visual elements and the look permeates the poem. However, as the speaker's perceptions are filtered by affective memory, they are not clear or precise, but dimmed. He compares his loneliness with the effect of the "thin-drawn-ray / That makes the prison-depths more rude," or "[t]he *d*rip of water night and *d*ay / Giving a *t*ongue to soli*t*ude" ("The Portrait" 10-13, my italics). The alliterative sounds of /d/ and /t/ suggest the continuous dripping water that break solitary silence. He adds that what remains "of love's whole prize" (14) is only "what in mournful *guise* / Takes counsel with [his] soul" (15-16, my italics), that is, "what is secret and unknown" (17). In other words, he does not have access to the physical certainty of love anymore, and is only left with misguiding appearances produced by his sorrow.

The painting expresses the speaker's devotional attitude towards his beloved, "In painting her I *shrined* her face / Mid *mystic* trees, where light falls in / Hardly at all" ("The Portrait" 19-21, my italics). He then describes the picture setting as "a d*ee*p d*im w*ood" (28, my italics) full of mystery and suggestive of enchanted beings. The almost assonant /iː/ ("deep") and /ɪ/ ("dim") and closed /m/ and /w/ consonants suggest the gloomy setting of the woods.

Typical Romantic tropes, the woods or forests, with their phantasmagoric noises, lights and shadows, symbolize a boundary between the physical and the spiritual worlds. Thus, placing his beloved in the woods heightens the devotional character of his memories. Nevertheless, even these visual memories are blurred, as he laments, “though of herself, alas! / Less than her shadow on the grass / Or than her image in the stream” (34-36). The woods are significant to the speaker because he and his beloved had a special encounter there. He recalls the day they met there, “One with the other *all alone*; And [they] were *blithe*” (38-39, my italics). Although the speaker does not make it clear whether they had an intercourse, this is suggested by the fact they were “all alone” in the woods, and by the pun on “blithe” as not anxious or careless. Also suggestive is the fact that later that day he expressed his feelings to her, and she listened “[w]ith *under-glances* that surveyed / The empty pastures blind with rain” (53-54, my italics), thus showing their intimacy. Again, however, these recollections are unhappy, “as when the moon / Looks upon daylight” (40-41). This visual simile thus compares the pale moonlight at daytime with the blurred content of the speaker’s sad memories.

His memories oscillate between positive and negative stimuli. The day after their meeting in the woods, his memories “[s]till vibrated with Love’s warm wings; / Till I must make them all my own / And paint this picture” (“The Portrait” 57-59). Thus, producing the painting is the speaker’s attempt to both make explicit and fixate his affective memories of that special moment. This attitude is equivalent to what Susan Sontag reminds us about photographs, “[a]ll photographs are *memento mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person’s (or thing’s) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time’s relentless melt” (11, italics in the original). Unlike a posed portrait, the speaker’s painting is a visual rendering of his feelings for his beloved, as well as an effort to overcome the inevitability of death. That is the reason why it is so special to him.

On the other hand, her loss mars the affective content of his memories. Therefore, daytime is not pleasant anymore (“For now doth daylight disavow / Those days, – nought left to see or hear,” “The Portrait” 73-74), while the night brings him sounds and sights that remind him of her death (“At night-time these things reach mine ear; / [and they] Lie like the mystery of death” 76, 81). The speaker is then trapped in an emotional borderline between light and shadows, represented by his intentional sleepless night (“Last night at last I could have slept, / And yet delayed my sleep till dawn” 82-83). Unconsciously drawn by his desire, he walks to the clearing in the woods where he and his beloved were together once (“unawares I came upon

/ Those glades where once she walked with me" 85-86), and wishes for his own death ("there suddenly, […] / Upon the *desolate* verge of light / [I] Yearned loud the *iron-bosomed sea*" 87, 89-90, my italics). In his desolation, the speaker uses a metallic metaphor of the heavy stillness of the ocean to refer to his own death and possibly, suicide.

Nevertheless, the speaker does not seem hopeful to actually meet his beloved again in Heaven. "Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears / The beating heart of Love's own breast […] / How shall my soul stand rapt and awed" ("The Portrait" 91-92, 95), he asks about his possible reunion with her. His only hope then is to keep his memories in her painting ("Here with her face doth memory sit / Meanwhile" 100-101) and eternalize her for other more hopeful and affectionate eyes ("Till other eyes shall look from it, / Eyes of the spirit's Palestine / Even than the old gaze tenderer" 102-104).

If "The Portrait" does not explicitly describe *Beata Beatrix*, both share some important features. The poem does not deal with the beloved's tranced state and does not refer to the *Vita Nuova*. Besides, while the painting depicts a revelation about impending death, the poem expresses nostalgia for someone who is already dead. On the other hand, the poem shows a devotional attitude, and it expresses the feeling of loss and the presence of death by means of a dreamy atmosphere. Some of its images strongly resemble some elements of the painting, such as the woman's "sweet [parted] lips" ("The Portrait" 7), "a deep dim wood" (28), "the still movement of her hands" (30), and "Love's warm wings" (57). In addition, the penultimate stanza refers to the beloved's beatification in Heaven, whereas the "secret of all spheres" (93) and the "music of the suns" (97) allude to the celestial spheres and the music of the spheres mentioned in Dante's *Paradiso*.[61] Finally, both works are Symbolist pieces. With its dreamy treatment of color, lines and composition, *Beata Beatrix* engages the viewer into an immediate emotional experience prior to the comprehension of its individual symbolic elements (Bocher par 8). "The Portrait" aims at the same effect with its elaborate imagery, twists of language, iambic meter, and variety of sound effects by means of alliterations, assonances, and repetitions.

In the vein of *Beata Beatrix*, *Sibylla Palmifera* (1870) also deals with Rossetti's concerns about aesthetics, love, and death. The painting shows the sibyl holding a palm and seated before an ornamented marble niche. She wears a red satin robe. Two lamps stand underneath the carved figures on each side of the niche: Cupid and a skull, meaning love and

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[61] "The power and motion of the holy spheres, / As from the artisan the hammer's craft, / Forth from the blessed motors must proceed" (*Paradiso* 2: 127-129). "Voices diverse make up sweet melodies / So in this life of ours the seats diverse / Render sweet harmony among these spheres" (*Paradiso* 6: 122-124).

death. These symbols are reinforced by a wreath of roses above Cupid and one of poppies above the skull. The lamp before Cupid is fully lit, whereas the one before death has been extinguished, and some butterflies, representing souls (Cirlot 35), flutter between the latter lamp and Sibylla (see figure 10 below). Alexa Wilding modeled for the character.

Figure 10 – *Sibylla Palmifera*
(1865-1870, oil, 98.4 x 85 cm)
National Museums Liverpool
Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w21800>. Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.

The composition draws the viewer's gaze to Sibylla's face, which is illuminated from the outside to reveal a remote beauty. Her mysterious look suggests that she is not a regular object of desire, but rather a beautiful devotional figure. With her prophetic power, Sibylla is a mediator between the material world of the living and Fate or the spiritual world. She is usually sought by heroic and brave men who want to gaze into the future, hoping to win victory, as emblematized by her palm (Cirlot 248). Here lies the devotional content of the picture, in which

her predictions and advice bridge the worlds of humans and gods. On the other hand, the sculpted figures and the lamps behind her remind the viewer that the essential quests are associated with love and death. The fire that illuminates Cupid stands for Eros, as the libidinal drive which moves one forward to seek love and to overcome obstacles. The other possibility, that is, being moved primarily by the death drive, ultimately means annihilation.

Like the painting, the sonnet presents “Lady Beauty,” exulted in a complex interrelationship of devotion and desire (see Appendix B). She is enthroned “[u]nder the arch of Life, where love and death, / *Terror and mystery*, guard her shrine” (“Soul’s Beauty” 1-2, my italics). Besides the images of love and death from her niche, the “terror and mystery” of life are present in her look. Despite the uncanny impression caused by it (“her gaze struck awe” 3), the speaker drew it “as simply as [his] breath” (4), trying to deal naturally with something beyond his understanding. He then refers to her infinite power to attract anyone “[b]y sea or sky or woman” (7) to be “[t]he allotted bondman of her palm and wreath” (8), as she is the messenger of Fate. In addition, she embodies Ideal Beauty, and therefore worthy of eternal devotion, “This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise / Thy voice and hand *shake still*” (9-10, my italics). The pun on “still” as meaning “yet” or “motionless” (therefore, an oxymoron) creates a duplicity of temporal and physical implications: her beauty may be overwhelming over a long time or as an indication of its spiritual character. Thus, *Sibylla Palmifera* / “Soul’s Beauty” represent an important Rossettian aesthetic expression, which is the depiction of beauty that transcends the physical body and conveys its spiritual nature.

The double works studied in this first section display a dynamic relationship between devotion and desire. If at first glance, they seem to be paintings and poems with a devotional attitude, their analysis reveals strong forces of desire operating concomitantly. These drives are often repressed or sublimated, creating images of deceased lovers, such as the blessed damozel and Beata Beatrix; an obedient repressed girl like the Virgin Mary; or “fallen women” and repented sinners like Mary Magdalene, or enigmatic beauties like Sibylla. The next section shows the reverse, in which the dominant aspects of desire include or lead to a devotional content.

3.2 DESIRE

Venus Verticordia (1868) is Rossetti's first double work exploring the image of the *femme fatale*. Rossetti drew the title of the painting from Lempriere's *Bibliotheca Classica*, which named the goddess *Verticordia* "because she could turn the hearts of women to cultivate chastity" (n. pag.); however, in Rossetti's version, she draws the viewers' hearts, i.e. their desire, to her. She is surrounded by roses and myrtles (her symbolic flowers), holding an apple and an arrow pointed at her left breast. Her head is surrounded by a halo with butterflies, and another butterfly is alighted on the arrow (see figure 11 below). Alexa Wilding modeled for Venus.

Figure 11 – *Venus Verticordia*
(1863-1868, oil on canvas, 83.8 x 71.2 cm)
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery, Bournemouth
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w17861>. Accessed on: Nov. 7, 2011.

Her most striking feature, her direct look into the viewer's eyes, removes from her the oblique sensuality of traditional representations of Venus, while it creates a threatening effect of both enticement and challenge.[62] If with one hand she offers the viewer the alluring apple as a token of her beauty and seduction, with the other she holds the phallic arrow, reminding the viewer of the castrating danger that awaits him should he yield to her seduction. Conversely, being the goddess of love and sexuality, her exuberant physical beauty shows a spiritual nature that creates a dynamics of desire and ambivalent devotion. The butterflies fluttering around her head symbolize the souls of worshippers who have fallen for her charms. In this sense, she is quite literally a vamp whose spiritual nature feeds with the souls of her prey. As a female figure, she is perceived as threatening because of her masculine force materialized by the phallic arrow.

The Petrarchan sonnet that accompanies the picture represents Venus' attitude and anticipates the Trojan War (see Appendix B). At the opening of the octet, Venus "hath the apple in her hand for thee, / Yet *almost* in her heart would hold it back" ("Venus Verticordia" 1-2, my italics), thus playing an enticing game of offer and pretense of withdrawal. The ambivalent apple, as McGann reminds us, alludes to both the biblical temptation of Eve and the golden apple which Venus won by bribing Paris with the most beautiful woman on earth ("Venus Verticordia" par. 3).[63] In both cases, the fruit was the triggering element of doom. Her penetrating eyes follow "the track / Of that which in thy spirit they can see" ("Venus Verticordia" 3-4), that is, the viewer's soul. If he bites the apple, the dart will pierce his heart, and he will lose his peace forever. Thus, this *femme fatale* plays her fetishist game of seduction, waiting for her prey to take the bait. The sestet shows the outcome of yielding to desire: for a moment "her glance is still and coy; / But if she give the fruit that works her spell / Those eyes shall *flame* as for her Phrygian boy" (9-11), alluding to her victory at the judgement of Paris and foreshadowing the burning of Troy. The goddess then is presented as an agent of desire that leads to both individual and collective destruction.

Another Rossettian double work with the image of the *femme fatale* is *Lady Lilith* / "Sonnet LXXVIII. Body's Beauty," conceived as a counterpart to *Sibylla Palmifera*. He began the painting in 1866 and soon wrote the sonnet about it. However, the painting was completed only in 1869 (see figure 12 below). Initially, Fanny Cornforth sat for the figure. Later, however,

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[62] As Marsh remarks, this feature aroused Ruskin's strong criticism on Rossetti's painting and his gradual distancing from the painter (*DGR* 208).
[63] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/4-1868.s173.raw.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 21, 2016.

Rossetti replaced the original face with the face of Alexa Wilding (McGann, *Sibylla Palmifera*).[64]

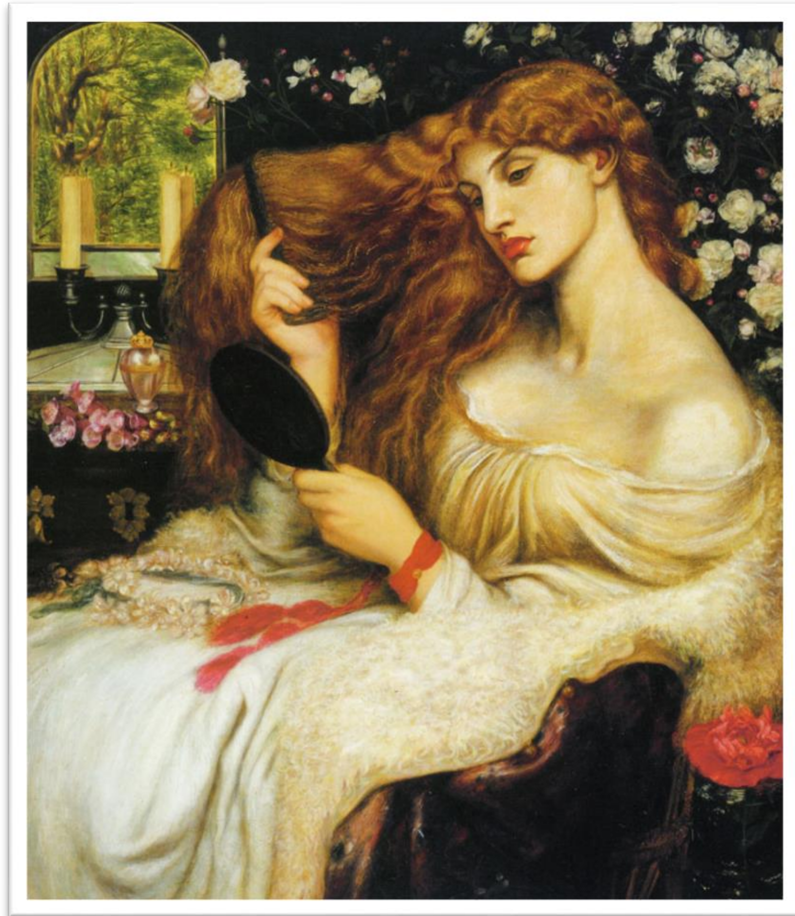

Figure 12 – *Lady Lilith*
(1868, oil on canvas, 97.8 x 85.1 cm)
Bancroft Collection, Wilmington Society of Fine Arts, Delaware
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w21177>. Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.

The double work draws from the myth of Lilith, Adam's legendary first wife. As Eggert and Neuenfeldt remind us, the word Lilith derives from a Hebrew word meaning *night*. Isaiah 34:14 is the only place in the Old Testament which refers to Lilith,[65] who, in that passage, is in

[64] According to McGann, accounts differ whether Frederick Leyland, the commissioner of the painting, asked for this change, or whether it was Rossetti's own decision (par. 6. Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s205.rap.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 20, 2016).

[65] "And there shall the beasts of the desert meet with the jackals, and the wild goat shall cry to his fellow; the lilith also shall settle there, and find for herself a place of rest" (*Darby Bible Translation*, Isaiah 34:14).

the desert with other nocturnal creatures (Eggert and Neuenfeldt 403).[66] According to the Talmud, God had created both Adam and Lilith from the earth, but she was not submissive to him, argued with him, and did not agree to stay "under" him, which may be interpreted in terms of social relations or a sexual position (Buscemi qtd. in Eggert and Neuenfeldt 403-404).[67] Therefore, Lilith was expelled from Eden, and God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs (or from his side).

The painting shows a "modern Lilith," a *femme fatale* sitting on a chair in her boudoir. She is leisurely combing her massive golden hair while she narcissistically looks at herself in her hand mirror. Flowers surround her. A mass of white roses appears from behind her and extends as far as her hair towards the standing mirror, and a red poppy is at her left side. On the bureau is a spray of foxglove and on her lap a crown of magnolias. The sensuous figure of Lilith dominates the depthless space; her sensuality is heightened by her exposed neck, bosom, and shoulder. As her clothes are the same hue of her skin, they look indistinguishable from her, and she seems to dissolve in the chair. On the top left what might seem to be an open window is in fact a mirror reflecting the pair of candles and a scene from nature or a lush garden, thus creating the unusual effect of a simultaneous inner-outer space. This mirror unrealistically reflects either some hidden lighted portion of the dark chamber or the viewer's standpoint. The bizarre mirror, Lilith's pale dissolving body, and the lack of depth give the composition a surreal atmosphere aligned with the theme: the immortal seductress expelled from Eden keeps her enchantment in modern times.

The painting focuses on Lilith's enchanting hair, thus turning it into a fetish object, as defined by Freud ("Fetishism"), "a token of triumph over the threat of castration and a safeguard against it" (206). According to Freud, the fetish is an unconscious substitute for the missing female penis, which in the Oedipus complex the boy somehow failed to overcome. Rather than developing an interest in the female genitals, the male fetishist seeks their replacement in an object or a nonsexual part of the body for his sexual gratification (206). A woman's hair is an obvious substitute for female pubic hair, which would hide the missing penis.

---

[66] "Lilith deriva de uma palavra que no hebraico significa '*noite'*. Isaías 34:14, o único lugar onde se tem referência a Lilith no AT, a insere no ambiente do deserto junto das criaturas da noite" (Eggert and Neuenfeldt 403, my translation).

[67] "Deus cria uma mulher para o homem, pois viu que não era bom que ele estivesse sozinho. No entanto, a mulher não era submissa ao homem, e argumentava com o homem, serem feitos iguais, da mesma terra; ela não concordava em ficar 'por baixo' do homem, podendo aqui ser interpretado a posição em referência a relações cotidianas ou a posições da relação sexual" (Buscemi qtd. in Eggert and Neuenfeldt 403-404, my translation).

With her naked neck, shoulder and bosom, and her hand-held mirror, Lilith's hair forms the triangular center of the composition (Aguiar 32), which dynamically guides the viewer's look. Her seductive hair and sensuous body catches the viewer's attention; however, Lilith is both narcissistically engaged in her own reflection in the mirror and indifferent to the observer. Lilith thus plays a double game of seduction and refusal which both attracts and intimidates the viewer with the power of her sex appeal. In a perverse fetishist game of enticing and threatening desire, this castrating figure uses her enchanting hair to both seduce and annihilate her victims.

The mirrors also play important symbolic roles in the composition. Mirrors, as pointed out by Cirlot, are a "symbol of the imagination – or of consciousness – in [their] capacity to reflect the formal reality of the visible world" (211). They also serve "to invoke apparitions by conjuring up again the images which [they have] received at some time in the past" (211). "Hand-mirrors, in particular," states Cirlot, "are emblems of truth" (212). The hand mirror which absorbs Lilith's self-centered gaze steals the true completeness of her beauty from the viewer, who then can only imagine what she actually sees in the glass. This process enhances the viewer's fascination for Lilith, turning this mythological figure into a distorted object of devotion.

Concurrently, the standing mirror participates in a subtle and complex game, as it is the focal point of different movements in the composition. The branches of white roses, traditionally a symbol of cold sensuous love (McGann, *Lady Lilith* par. 11),[68] undulate towards the mirror. Lilith's hand mirror points to it. In addition, the crown on Lilith's lap leads the viewer's look upwards through a series of elements towards the mirror (see figure 13 below).

[68] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s205.rap.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 14, 2016.

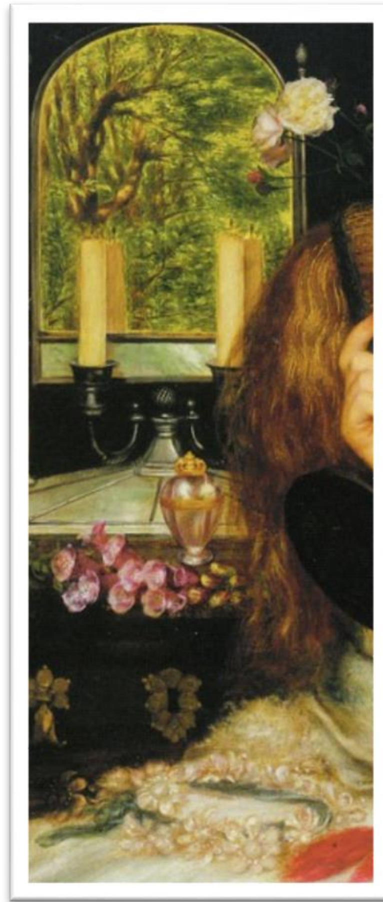

Figure 13 – Detail of *Lady Lilith*

The flowery crown on Lilith's lap, a displaced image of her vagina, is headed by the flowery keyhole of the drawer, another displacement of her genitalia, suggesting the dangerous secret of her sexuality. Above the keyhole, the spray of foxglove lies by the urn on the bureau. The foxglove signifies insincerity, according to McGann (*Lady Lilith* par. 11), and the urn is a displaced image of Lilith's uterus, thus heightening the deceitful nature of Lilith's sex appeal. The pair of phallic unlit candles suggests the increasing arousal of the enchanted viewer; however, the standing mirror behind them reflects the memory of Eden. Thus, the hints of Lilith's sex appeal head towards the highly charged standing mirror, which reminds the viewer of where Lilith comes from and who she actually is: the immortal non-human "creature who precedes the creation of mortal woman" (Helsinger 158). In this sense, her seductive, but otherwise inaccessible, internal reciprocity may be read, as Helsinger points out, as "a representation of wholly physical desire" (158), in which Lilith claims devotion to herself.

As Aguiar reminds us, the mirror motif is duplicated in the dominant colors of the composition (32). The white roses, Lilith's pale skin and white dress contrast with her detailed golden hair and pouting red lips, her red wristband, the red tails of the hand mirror, and the poppy, a flower associated with sleep and forgetfulness (McGann, *Lady Lilith* par. 11). This double color scheme replicates the duality of coldness and the passionate attraction she exerts. Together with the amount of flowers, the duality also contributes to building the artificial image of this *femme fatale*, in the taste of Aesthetic and Decadent imagery (Eco 342).

The magical atmosphere and the *femme fatale* motif of the painting are mirrored in the accompanying sonnet (see Appendix B). Lilith is presented as a legendary witch who seduces men using her deceitful words and her hair, "Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told, / […] / That ere the snake'*s*, her *s*weet tongue could de*c*eive, / And her enchanted hair was the first gold" ("Body's Beauty" 1, 3-4, my italics). The alliterative sibilant /s/ imitates the hissing of the snake, thus suggesting Lilith's identification with it. Therefore, with her metaphoric deceitful tongue, Lilith is identified both physically and morally with the serpent of Eden. She is also the first *femme fatale*, whose golden hair is a deadly instrument of seduction, as it may strangle one's heart (14).

The poem proceeds to express the central images of the painting: the fetishist game of her everlasting sensuous beauty, her narcissistic self-contemplation, and her enchanting hair,

> And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
> And, subtly of herself contemplative,
> Draws men to *w*atch the bright *w*eb she can *w*eave,
> Till heart and body and life are in its hold. (5-8, my italics)

The fetish of Lilith's hair in the painting is here translated into the arachnid metaphor of the "bright web" she weaves in order to draw men to their emotional and physical annihilation. The image is reinforced by the pun on "still," alluding both to her immortality and to her motionless position, like a spider waiting for its victim to be caught in its web. In addition, the alliteration of /w/ in "watch," "web" and "weave" suggests the wavy motion of her hair/web.

Lilith's flowers, the rose and the poppy, are also her tools of attraction. The speaker poses a question to suggest the comprehensiveness of her charms to include virtually all men, "[…]; for where / Is he not found, O Lilith, whom *sh*ed *sc*ent / And *s*oft-*sh*ed ki*ss*es and *s*oft *s*leep *sh*all *s*nare?" ("Body's Beauty" 9-11, my italics). The visual quality of the white roses and the red poppy in the picture is expressed via other senses in the poem: their perfume, their soft touch to a kiss, and the "soft sleep" provided by opium. The abundant alliterations of the /s/ and /ʃ/ sibilants highlight the sensorial quality of the flowers used by Lilith to entangle her victims. Thus, her machinery of desire includes the pleasure-giving flowers as reminiscent of the delightful Garden of Eden. By gratifying basic senses and arousing primal pleasures, they mobilize the reader's pleasure principle and awaken his desire.

The malicious effect of that desire eventually appears at the end of the sonnet, "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" ("Body's Beauty" 12-14). The exclamation "Lo!" introduces Lilith's snake-like lunge at her victim. Her self-absorbed behavior increases his desire up to the point they make eye contact. Then his eyes "burn" with desire, close to the climax of his arousal, and he is paralyzed by her spell, like a prey by the hypnotizing serpent. As the coils of Lilith's serpentine hair strangle his emotions and his life, the *femme fatale* perpetrates her deadly game of attraction and symbolic castration.

Like the construction of desire, the structuring of devotion in the sonnet is resonant as well as visual. The array of assonances, alliterations, repetitions, and the steady rhythm built by the iambic pentameter meter are suggestive of an incantation. Thus, for instance, Lilith is associated with the assonances of /ɪ/ and /iː/, as in "[…] L*i*l*i*th, *i*t *i*s told / (The w*i*tch […] the g*i*ft of *E*ve) / That *e*re the snake's, her sw*ee*t tongue could dec*ei*ve" ("Body's Beauty" 1-3, my italics), "And st*i*ll sh*e* s*i*ts […]" (5, my italics). The internal rhyme "[…] that youth's *eyes* burned at *thine* […]" (12, my italics) highlights the fateful eye contact between Lilith and the young man, who in turn is associated with assonances of /e/, "Thy sp*e*ll […], and l*e*ft […] n*e*ck b*e*nt" (13, my italics). As for alliterations, besides the ones mentioned above, others are suggestive of her behavior, as in "And, *s*ub*t*ly of her*s*elf con*t*empla*t*ive" (6, my italics), "Till *h*eart […] in its *h*old" (8, my italics), which is repeated in "And round *h*is *h*eart one strangling golden *h*air" (14, my italics). Repetitions such as "shed scent," "soft-shed kisses" and "soft sleep" are used to suggest Lilith's increasing spell on the young man. The iambic beat is especially marked in some key lines, such as,

(The WITCH he LOVED beFORE the GIFT of Eve,)
That ERE the SNAKE'S, her SWEET tongue COULD deCEIVE (2-3)

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 (6-8)

Thy SPELL through HIM, and LEFT his STRAIGHT neck BENT
And ROUND his HEART one STRANgling GOLDen HAIR (13-14)

This variety of sound effects, allied with the iambic beat, suggests a chant whose intensity increases as the young man comes closer to Lilith's "snare," and has its resolution when she casts her final spell on him. Thus, by proclaiming her seductive power, the speaker addresses his devotion to the holiness of her sexual power.

After his "modern" version of Lilith, Rossetti turned to a closer rendition of the biblical myth. *Eden Bower* (1869) is another example of Rossetti's double works in that the drawing (see figure 14 below) was made for the poem (Marsh, *DGR* 372-373).

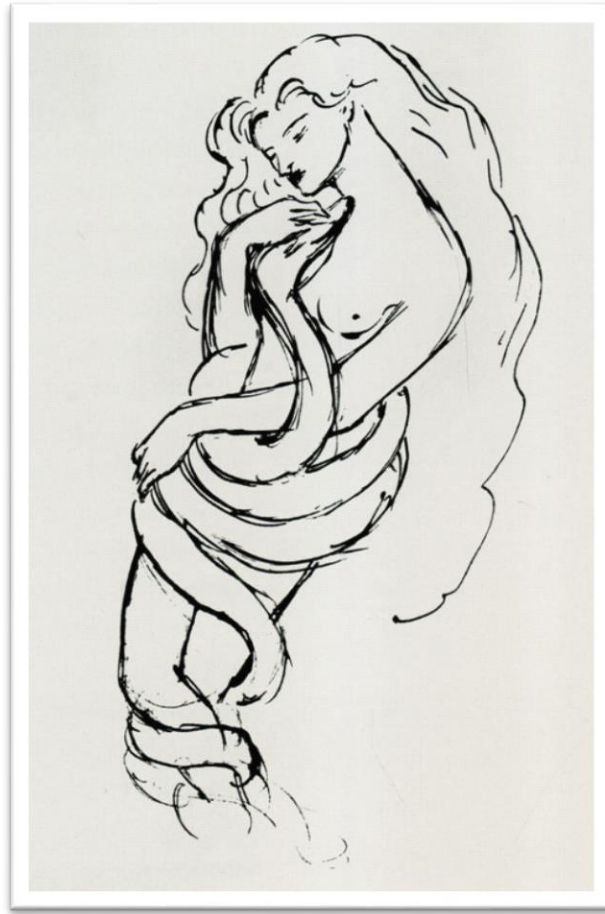

Figure 14 – *Lady Lilith* (*Eden Bower*)
(1869, pen and ink on paper, 22 x 18.4 cm)
Private collection
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w25898>. Accessed on: Nov. 26, 2015.

The picture shows the naked figure of Lilith with long thick hair, and the serpent is coiled about her with its head resting at her throat. Lilith caresses the serpent's head with her right hand and embraces its lower coils with her left hand. The lower parts of their bodies disappear in the composition, which was never completed.

The drawing illustrates some specific sections of the poem, in which Lilith tells the coiling snake her intention to turn into its shape and deceive Eve and Adam,

> In the ear of the Snake said Lilith: – (9)
>
> "Would'st thou know the heart's hope of Lilith?
> […]

> Then bring thou close thine head till it glisten
> Along my breast, and lip me and listen. (73, 75-76)
>
> "Am I sweet, O sweet Snake of Eden?
> […]
> Then ope thine ear to my warm mouth's cooing
> And learn what deed remains for our doing. (77, 79-80)
>
> In thy sweet folds bind me and bend me,
> And let me feel the shape thou shalt lend me! (91-92)
>
> "In thy shape I'll go back to Eden;
> […]
> In these coils that Tree will I grapple,
> And stretch this crowned head forth by the apple. (93, 95-96)
>
> Grip and lip my limbs as I tell thee! (188)

The two striking elements in the picture are the snake intertwining with the sensuous Lilith, as well as Lilith's abundant hair. Her hair stands for her vital energy. As Cirlot reminds us, "a full head of hair represents *élan vital* and *joie de vivre*, linked with the will to succeed" (135, italics in the original). Hair also corresponds to the element of fire, meaning the development of primitive forces (135). Ferber adds that in literature, "hair is an expression of life, youth, strength, or fertility" (91). Abundant hair, continues Ferber, is a sign of fertility and strong sexuality (92). Lilith's long thick hair then symbolizes her vital energy, or Eros, which knows no limits, as well as her immediate intention to carry out her revenge. Interestingly, her "golden" hair ("Eden Bower" 23) is the same color of the "flaming sword" (128) which separates Eden, thus equating her vital energy with the divine power which rules over Paradise.

As for the snake, it bears a rich symbolism which complements Lilith. Besides its obvious sexual connotation as a phallic symbol (Freud, *Dreams* 392), other symbolic meanings arte important. Cirlot notes that snakes are symbolic "not of personal sin but of the principle of evil inherent in all worldly things" (286). With their "sinuous shape […] similar to that of waves, [they] may be a symbol of the wisdom of the deeps and of the great mysteries (286). Cirlot also points out the connection "between the snake and the feminine principle" (286),

understood as “a nature-based, interconnected existence for all creation, both in life and in death,” as well as the natural cycles of birth, growth, female periods, pregnancy, among others (Winters pars. 3, 11, 23). The snake also refers, argues Cirlot, to “the primordial – the most primitive strata of life” (286). He also refers to the Jungian view of the snake as “a symptom of anguish expressive of abnormal stirrings in the unconscious, that is, of a reactivation of its destructive potentiality” (287).

The cultural and psychological symbolism of snakes is also present in literature. As Ferber points out, snakes or serpents are common literary motifs because they are said to “‘fascinate’ their prey, cast a spell on them with a look” (186). In Genesis the serpent is associated with “knowledge or wisdom, though a false or even fatal knowledge, and with human mortality” (186). The underlying notion behind these connections is that serpents would be immortal because they shed their skins, and wise because of their longevity and “their intimate relation with the earth” (186).

The rich symbolism of the snake attributes deeper undertones to its sensuous embrace with Lilith. Having been both rejected by Adam and cast out of Eden, Lilith feels her love for Adam turning into hatred and a strong desire for vengeance. The snake thus becomes again her lover and a surrogate sexual partner, “I snake was I when thou wast my lover” (“Eden Bower” 12); “I was the fairest snake in Eden” (13); “Take me thou as I come from Adam: […] / Once again shall my love subdue thee; the past is past and I come to thee” (17, 19-20). Like the snake, who has intimacy with the earth, Lilith was born “[b]y the earth’s will” (15). In addition, by merging with the snake and destroying the couple, Lilith knows she alone will remain immortal. Besides, the snake embodies the turmoil of Lilith’s feelings and primitive impulses. Moved by her basic drives and without God’s direct censorship in Eden, Lilith does not hesitate to ask the snake for help in order to do both Adam and Eve harm and eventually cause their death. She has no sense of sin, and therefore of guilt, and neither does the snake. In fact, *she* is going to be the trigger of the original sin. The snake then receives her pledge with the deep wisdom of the evil power which is also present in nature. That is the reason why Lilith looks so intimately connected with the contented snake.

The drawing was produced after the poem, a ballad with forty-nine stanzas (quatrains) (see Appendix B). All the first lines of the quatrains end in “Adam,” “Eden,” or “Lilith,” establishing a relationship between the legendary biblical couple and the setting of the narrative. The second line of each quatrain alternates between the two refrains “(Sing Eden Bower!)” and

"(Alas the hour!)," thus working as a chorus which punctuates the narrative with both joy and sorrow. The third and fourth line of each stanza end in often loose feminine rhymes which enhance the meaning of the first line. Thus, for instance, in "Look, my mouth and my cheek are *ruddy*, / And thou art cold, and fire is my *body*." ("Eden Bower" 63-64, my italics) the association between the color of Lilith's mouth and cheek, and the fire in her body refer back to the request for the shape of the snake, "'Lend thy shape for the love of Lilith!" (61). In "'Of all this wealth I have made thee *warden*; / Thou'rt free to eat of the trees of the *garden*" (83-84, my italics), Adam's role as the guardian of Eden refers back to God's words to him, "'Thou didst hear when God said to Adam: –" (81).

The narrative opens with an external narrator, up to line 10, and then continues with Lilith's words. Lilith is introduced in the first stanza as a deceitful non-human creature with pleasing female features, "Not a drop of her blood was human, / But she was made like a soft sweet woman." ("Eden Bower" 3-4) The snake-like hissing alliteration of /s/ in "*s*oft *s*weet" foreshadows her identification with the serpent, which is confirmed in the fourth stanza: "I was the fairest *snake* in Eden" (13, my italics). As the poem opens, Lilith has already been cast out of Eden and is jealous of Eve, whom she sees as a rival, "With *h*er was *h*ell and with Eve was *h*eaven." (8, my italics) The metaphoric hell of Lilith's hatred is reinforced by the alliterative /h/ sound in the verse.

Although the reason for her expulsion is not mentioned in the poem, Lilith herself alludes to it, "By the earth's will, new form and feature / Made me a wife for the earth's new creature" ("Eden Bower" 15-16). In other words, Lilith was originally a snake who was turned into a woman by the natural world to be Adam's wife. For some time, Adam was madly in love with Lilith. He was "thrall to" her (22); his heart was "holden" in her golden hair (23-24); she was "queen of Adam" (25); "[a]ll the day and the night together / [her] breath could shake his soul like a feather" (27-28); they had "great joys" (29); and had bright snake babies (33). Then suddenly, God gave Adam another woman out of his flesh, "O thou God […] / Say, was this fair body for no man, / That of Adam's flesh thou mak'st him a woman?" (37, 39-40). Therefore, unlike the Talmud tradition, Lilith's indignant words of rejection suggest that she was replaced by Eve and expelled from Eden by God's own decision, and not because of Adam's complaints. This explains her resentment against God as well.

The magical process by which Lilith was first turned into a woman (by the "earth's will") seems extraneous to God's intervention and allows her to be unafraid of Him. Therefore,

despite being part of the creation, Lilith's devotion to God is limited. The title she uses to call God ("O thou God, the Lord God of Eden!," "Eden Bower" 37) is paralleled with the title addressed to the snake, "O thou Snake, the King-snake of Eden!" (41). She acknowledges God's superior position, "God's strong will our necks are under" (43); "Strong is God, the fell foe of Lilith: […] / Nought in heaven or earth may affright him" (53, 55); "Strong is God, the great God of Eden: […] / Over all He made He hath power" (57, 59). However, in her bitterness, she asks the snake to help her destroy God, "But thou and I may cleave [God's will] sunder." (44); "But join thou with me and we will smite him." (56); "But lend me thou thy shape for an hour!" (60). The intensity of Lilith's feelings even makes her consider God as inferior, "Is not the foe-God weak as the foeman / When love grows hate in the heart of a woman?" (71-72). Thus, the expression of uncontrollable female passion ignores the limits imposed by the sanctioned divine authority. Lilith thus embodies the chaotic forces of Eros raging against the protective and repressive father-figure, or superego, represented by God.

Lilith indistinctly addresses her anger towards God and the Edenic couple,

> "And let God learn how I loved and hated
> Man in the image of God created. (47-48)
>
> "Help me once against Even and Adam! (51)
>
> "Lend thy shape for the hate of Adam!
> […]
> That he may wail my joy that forsook him,
> And curse the day when the bride-sleep took him. (65, 67-68)

Being moved by the primal forces of nature, or the feminine principle, Lilith stands against the representatives of culture and hints at what McGann calls "an apocalyptic destruction (at once psychic and cultural/historical)" ("Eden Bower" par. 4).[69] Her tale is one of "treacherous erotic love" (Boos 21), rendering the representation of women as "psychologically threatening" (103). Nevertheless, it must be remembered that Rossetti's

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[69] Availble at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/20-1869.f30.raw.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 18, 2016.

source, the Talmudic myth, is inserted in an ancient masculine tradition. As Eggert and Neuenfeldt remind us, the compilation and writing of texts from the Old Testament were restricted to masculine groups, marked by a patriarchal and androcentric culture (403)[70]. The Judeo-Christian tradition is pervaded by a misogynous view of women's roles, based on a dualism of good and evil women. Thus, by effacing Lilith's narrative, the Old Testament appoints her the single role of evil woman, whereas Eve is good as long as she is the obedient mother of all humanity (405).[71]

Like *Eden Bower*, *Sister Helen* is a double work which deals with the theme of revenge (see Appendix B). Written originally in 1852 and revised for its publication in 1870, this 294-line ballad is set in Ireland in the Middle Ages. It tells the tale of Sister Helen, who has been seduced by her lover, Keith of Ewern, but he married another woman instead. For three days since his wedding day, Sister Helen has been melting a waxen image of Keith, and he is dying. The poem is built as a dialogue between Sister Helen and her Little Brother, who reports on the visit of three men – Keith's brothers, probably, and their father – and the desperate bride. The men come to pledge for Keith of Ewern's soul, whereas the Lady tries to speak but swoons. Towards the end, as the waxen figure melts completely, bells are heard, announcing Keith's death, and his ghost finally appears for Sister Helen and her brother.

With its intricate meter, repeated phrases, and alliterative lines, this macabre tale of witchcraft resembles Poe's gothic narrative poems. The refrain is especially significant, as it repeats, "(O Mother, Mary Mother, / […] between Hell and Heaven)" with variations at the first half of the last line that comment on Sister Helen's discourse. It thus works as a grotesque prayer, invoking Mary in association with sorcery. The allusion of the names "Sister" Helen and Little "Brother" as titles of religious orders also contributes to the content of perverse devotion carried out in the narrative.

Sister Helen is motivated by her betrayal. She has yielded to her lover's desire, "[…] he melts before a flame.' / 'My *heart* for his *pleasure* fared the same.' […] 'What else he *broke* will he ever join […]?' […] 'What else he *took* will he give again […]?'" ("Sister Helen" 122-

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[70] "A compilação e a redação do material bíblico estavam estritas a grupos masculinos e sacerdotais" (Eggert and Neuenfeldt 403, my translation).

[71] "Há uma antropologia misógina na história da tradição judaico-cristã. Ela funciona no dualismo mulher boa e mulher má. [...] Ao obscurecer Lilith de qualquer relato bíblico, o modelo dual segue na própria Eva, nas suas filhas e nas outras mulheres no decorrer da tradição bíblica. Eva é boa, ideal enquanto obediente" (Eggert and Neuenfeldt 405, my translation).

123, 151, 158, my italics), and she has been replaced by another woman. Her feelings and her honor have been metaphorically broken and taken away and turned into hatred, as she explains, "'Hate, born of Love, is blind as [Love]" (165). Thus, she feels justified in her desire for retaliation, which she performs via a deadly symbolic castration of her former lover. However, the ritual does not please or relieve her. "'Fire shall *forgive* me as I *forgive*" (186, my italics), she says ironically, stating her awareness that she may eventually be burned on a stake for witchcraft. When Keith of Ewern is finally dead, Sister Helen sorrowfully adds, "'But he and I are sadder still" […] 'A soul that's lost as mine is lost" (277, 291).

Sister Helen's feelings and the ritual are illustrated in the drawing from 1870 (see figure 15 below). She kneels on the floor with her head turned to the left and looking down, her arms extended downwards, and her hands tightly clasped. Her entire body expresses the intense anguish she feels. In the fireplace beside her, a waxen figure is tied to a stake and melting. Little Brother is at the gallery door, talking to her and pointing, probably, at the people outside.

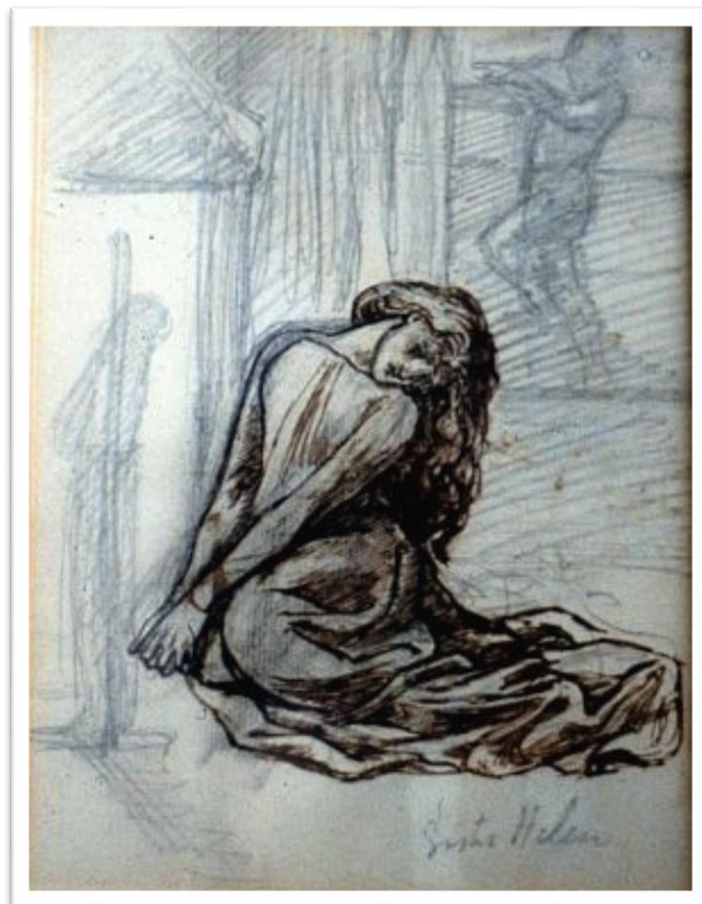

Figure 15 – *Sister Helen*

(1870, pencil with brown ink, 16.5 x 21.6 cm)
Private collection
Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s220.rap.html>. Accessed on: Nov. 26, 2015.

Sister Helen's attitude, grotesquely represented in both the poem and the drawing, illustrates an extreme outcome of what Freud defines as a *narcissistic scar* or *injury* left in the ego by loss of love and a perception of failure which usually accompanies one since childhood (*Pleasure Principle* 14). In her specific case, it also points out to the narcissistic injury which results from the destruction of the hymen, and the symbolic value attributed to it, as well as the perception of "a diminished sexual value after virginity is lost" (Freud, "Virginity" 69-70). In other words, as someone who probably already had a fragile ego, Sister Helen could not stand the psychic pain inflicted by her unfaithful lover, and thus resorted to extreme personal vengeance. In a society in which she will be disgraced due to her loss of virginity, her act stands as both a personal and social affective response.

"Troy Town" is Rossetti's third ballad dealing with the disastrous outcome of desire (see Appendix B). It is also another instance of his double works in which he wrote the poem first, and later produced the picture. He wrote the poem in 1869, and the following year he drew a sketch to illustrate it, but never concluded the picture. "Troy Town" is a fourteen-stanza ballad with septets of irregular meter, rhyming ABACABC. The second, sixth and seventh lines are repeated throughout between parentheses, forming a refrain which recalls the fate of Troy, "(O Troy Town!)"; "(O Troy's down, / Tall Troy's on fire!)." The fourth line always ends with the phrase "heart's desire," indicating the central theme of the composition. The ballad is an erotic tale of desire, devotion, and impending doom. "*Heaven*born *Helen*, Sparta's queen" ("Troy Town" 1, my italics) offers Venus a cup molded after her own breast as a petition for the love of Paris. The first line sets the divine origin of Helen as the daughter of Zeus and Leda, which is heightened by the internal rhyme; and introduces her as the queen of Sparta, therefore, Menelaus' wife. The first stanza describes her beauty, focusing on her breasts "of heavenly sheen, / The sun and moon of the heart's desire" (3-4). They are so beautiful that "[a]ll Love's lordship," i.e. its power, "lay between" them (5). As a daughter of the supreme god, her beauty is irresistible, and therefore she is a unanimous object of desire.

In the second stanza, Helen kneels "at Venus' shrine" ("Troy Town" 8) and offers Venus the "carven cup" (15) as "a little gift" (10), thus showing her devotional attitude to the goddess as an expression of her desire. The cup, an ancient symbol of the human heart (Cirlot 119), materializes Helen's "heart's desire," which is in fact her libidinal drive towards Paris. This

image permeates the poem in such a way that it creates a dynamic relationship between desire and devotion. In her ritualistic attitude, Helen holds up the cup to the goddess and praises its perfect shape and quality, "[s]haped it is to the heart's desire, / Fit to fill when the gods would sup" (18-19). As an extension of herself, the cup is so perfect that no man who sees it can rest "for his heart's desire" (25). Helen then shows Venus her bare breast "for the *air* to *kiss*" (31, my italics), so that Venus can compare it with the cup. With this sensual metaphor, Helen exposes herself to both the goddess and the reader, as a witness of her desirability. Thus, she offers the cup in exchange for her breast, "Is the cup to thy heart's desire? / O for the breast, O make it his!" (32-33).

Next, Helen repeats Venus' implied question about the identity of her "heart's desire" – or rather, projects her own wishes onto the goddess as if she could hear Aphrodite speak, "Whom do I give my bosom to?" ("Troy Town" 40). And she responds with another extended metaphor by comparing her breasts to "sweet apples," thus alluding to Eris' golden apple. "Once an apple stirred the beat / Of thy *heart* with the *heart*'s desire" (45-46, my italics), says Helen, reminding Venus of her own desire and vanity, and mimicking the stirred beat with the repetition of "heart." Helen then hints at the identity of the target of her pledge by posing a question, "Say, who brought [the apple] then to thy feet?" (47). She reminds Venus of her competition with Hera and Pallas Athena for the golden apple, "For thy sake two hearts did he / Make forlorn of the heart's desire." (52-53), and begs the goddess to favor him now. Helen's ultimate argument is that her "apples" are "grown to the south" (57), to be tasted in times of drought and tasted to exhaustion. She concludes with explicit sensuality, "*M*ine are apples *m*eet for his *m*outh" (61, my italics), munching the alliterative /m/ with anticipated pleasure.

Venus looks at Helen's offering with a significant smile ("with subtle drift," "Troy Town" 66), and acknowledges her intense devotion for the sake of love, "There thou kneel'st for Love to lift!" (68). She then looks "in Helen's face" (71) and foresees what awaits these mortals. She knows "far off an hour and place, / And *fire lit* from the heart's *desire*" (73-74, my italics). The fire that stems from Helen's desire foreshadows the fire of Troy. The goddess ironically says that Helen's "gift hath grace!" (75) and grants her wish. Then Cupid looks at Helen's breast and, in another foreshadowing of Troy's fire, sees "the *flame* of the heart's desire, – / Marked his arrow's *burning* crest" (81-82, my italics). Finally, Cupid sets another arrow and shoots it into the heart of Paris, who wakes up "[d]ead at heart with the heart's desire" (95) for Helen.

In Rossetti's version of the myth, although Helen is married to Menelaus, she already craves for Paris. This illicit desire will eventually lead to destruction: motivated by her own desire to grant Paris the most beautiful woman on earth, Venus fulfills Helen's wish and makes Paris fall in love with her, which will trigger the Trojan War and the destruction of the city. The doom of Troy is presented by the refrain from the beginning of the poem, creating, as reminded by Landow (*Typological Structures*), a juxtaposition of two different facts and times "stanza after stanza until they are understood to merge into each other" (par. 10). The second line of each stanza introduces a general, timeless lament for Troy, whereas each final pair of lines reminds the reader that Troy is already burning while the narrative is being told. This proleptical structure gradually increases the sense of imminent disaster, thus warning the reader about the possible outcomes of unchecked desires.

Although it is incomplete, the drawing expresses the general conception of the poem. *Troy Town* specifically illustrates lines 8-29 of the ballad, depicting Helen as kneeling before a sculpture of Venus, offering her a *double* cup, and showing her breasts to the goddess. Venus and Cupid watch from behind a thin curtain (see figure 16 below). The double cup offers a visual solution to represent the peculiar quality of the container as being molded after Helen's own breasts. The sculpture is a visual synthesis (Cirlot 156) of the qualities attributed to the goddess. As Freud (*Psychopathology*) holds it, representations of deities are anthropomorphic attempts to explain the external word by means of personalities created in humans' own image (1328). Here lies an essential aspect of devotion: by addressing an anthropomorphic image of a deity, worshippers recognize themselves in the human traits of the image, while acknowledging the deity's superior powers. Therefore, the image acts as a condensation or intensification of the content of the devotee's wishes. It is no coincidence, then, that Helen kneels before the sculpture of Venus, the goddess of beauty and fertility, to pray for the love of Paris: she is projecting her wishes onto a superior entity who can grant her narcissistic desire.

Figure 16 – *Troy Town*
(1870, black chalk and violet wash, 40 x 37.4 cm)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s219.rap.html>. Accessed on: Nov. 26, 2015.

The curtain or veil is a symbol of separation (Cirlot 74), in this particular case between the earthly and the spiritual worlds. By standing behind it, the deities can hear Helen's pledge and see her gestures without being noticed by the mortal woman. Cirlot reminds us that the veil also "signifies the concealment of certain aspects of truth or of the deity" (359). Again, the goddess of female sexuality and Eros himself stand as projections of Helen's libidinal drive. Thus, the drawing shares the central theme of the poem with the simultaneous presence of desire and devotion.

One of Rossetti's last double works was *Astarte Syriaca* (1877). Marsh reports that Rossetti found information about the ancient deity in Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary* (DGR 490). The dictionary entry reads, "a powerful divinity of Syria, the same as the Venus of the Greeks. […] She was interpreted in medals with a long habit, and a mantle over it, tucked up on the left arm" (Lempriere n. pag.). Lurker adds, "she appears in the Old Testament as

Asthoreth [or Ashtoreth or Ashtaroth], and in Babylon as Ištar (Ishtar)" (22). She was worshipped as an oriental goddess of love and fertility, and her cult was consequently marked by excesses such as temple prostitution (22).

Rossetti's version, for which Jane Morris sat, shows an impressive female figure who wears a sea-green robe and looks past the viewer (see figure 17 below). She has one leg stepped forward, as if she were walking towards the viewer. Her hands hold two floral girdles, one under her breasts, and the other around her waist. She has long thick wavy hair and full pouting lips. She is sided by two winged female torchbearers, looking upwards and dressed in green robes. Creepers are curled around and dangle from the handles of the torches. In the background, the sun overlaps the moon behind the eight-pointed star of Ishtar.[72] The sun and the moon are partially covered by the smoke of the torches. The glazing technique provides a dreamy atmosphere to the painting, which is aligned with the "mystery" to which the accompanying poem refers. In addition, as McGann reminds us, Astarte's pose recalls Botticelli's Venus, while the winged figures recall Blake's illustrations of angels (*Astarte Syriaca* pars. 3, 5).[73]

[72] Ishtar "is the goddess of Venus as morning star, and on Middle and late Babylonian border markers she is represented as an eight-pointed star" (Lurker 91).

[73] Available at: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s249.rap.html>. Accessed on: Feb. 25, 2016.

Figure 17 – *Astarte Syriaca*
(1877, oil on canvas, 182.9 x 106.7 cm)
Manchester City Art Gallery
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w21576>. Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.

Astarte Syriaca develops the sensuality of *Venus Verticordia* (1863-1868) and *Lady Lilith* (1868) to a further level, in which female physical beauty acquires an immanent spiritual force. The symbolic elements of the composition contribute to this development. Her long smooth wavy hair disappears behind her back in a way which resembles Rossetti's previous *femmes fatales*, and her naked shoulder and arms expose the beauty of her body. The girdles add to her sensuality. Traditionally a symbol of "protection of the body and […] an allegory of moral virtues, [in Venus' case the girdle] takes on an erotic, fetishistic tone" (Cirlot 24). This is especially true of Rossetti's Astarte in the sense that her hands hold the girdles and thus draw the viewer's look to both her bosom and her pubis. Her left hand gently plays with the lower girdle as if she were going to untie it, offering the viewer an enticing game of seduction.

On the other hand, other visual elements imbue Astarte's physical appeal with a higher spiritual nature. Her flowing sea-green mantle seems to mingle with her skin and dissolve like

liquid towards the bottom of the scene. This watery quality alludes to the symbolism of the sea as the source of life (Cirlot 281). As the goddess of love and fertility, Astarte thus embodies the origin of life. The twining plants, "an image of life, expressive of the […] birth of forms" (259), reinforce such symbolism. The torches behind the goddess, as Cirlot points out, are identified with the sun and are symbolic "of purification through illumination" (344). Thus, Astarte's visible sensuality is gradually revealed as having a transcendental nature which checks the viewer's expression of desire and calls for his devotion. The sun and the moon overlapping behind Astarte's head from a halo which subtly solicits the viewer's devotional attitude. In addition, the sun and the moon stand for the marriage of heaven and earth (215), to which the poem refers as the "bliss whereof the heaven and earth commune" ("Astarte Syriaca" 5). The angel-like figures behind her also contribute to the devotional suggestion of the composition, especially considering they look upwards and seem to be calling the "thrones of light beyond the sky and sea" (10).

Therefore, while Rossetti's Venus and Lilith were female characters who possessed an absolute sensuality, Astarte is an idealized figure who blends the physical and spiritual natures. As Helsinger reminds us, "Rossetti's Asian Venus promises pleasures but remains inaccessible. […] She is no longer the human subject for a portrait: she is already an icon" (167, 169). In common with the other mythological women, Astarte attracts the viewer's desire with her hair and her seduction game. However, the viewer is immediately reminded that she is a powerful goddess, and therefore unattainable.

The accompanying sonnet explores the theme of Astarte's physical beauty as indicative of her divine nature via the construction of binomials (see Appendix B). The first line, "Mystery: lo! betwixt the sun and moon" ("Astarte Syriaca" 1) is mirrored in the last one, "Betwixt the sun and moon a mystery" (14). The mystery which permeates the poem is suggested by the binomial sun and moon, as symbolic of the masculine and feminine principles, and is present in both the opening and closing lines. The interjection ("lo!") then calls the reader to visualize this ancient goddess of love and fertility ("Venus Queen / Ere Aphrodite was"), and introduces her appealing physical features. The next pair is introduced by her "*twofold* girdle," which "in silver sheen / […] clasps the infinite boon / Of bliss whereof the heaven and earth commune" (3-5, my italics). In this paradoxical metaphor, Astarte's *double* girdle, which has the mystic gleam of the moon,[74] *holds* the *infinite* blessing of the marriage of "heaven and

[74] Silver corresponds to the mystic aspect of the moon (Cirlot 53).

earth," previously alluded by the sun and the moon. Thus, the goddess manages the fusion of the material and the spiritual worlds, which expresses the divine nature of her physical beauty.

Aligned with the vegetable images in the painting (i.e. the twining plants), Astarte's face is next described in a floral metaphor, "And from her neck's inclining *flower-stem lean* / Love-freighted lips and absolute eyes" ("Astarte Syriaca" 6-7, my italics). The pun on "lean" as the verb "bend" and the adjective "angular" refers both to the figure depicted in the painting and to her model, Jane Morris herself.[75] The binomial lips and eyes reveals Venus' power of physical seduction and command which extend from the earthly world to heaven: her lips full of love and powerful look "wean / The pulse of hearts to the spheres' dominant tune" (7-8). In other words, she has the power to turn the beating of passionate hearts into the Pythagorean music of the spheres, thus raising physical desire to higher levels of expression in the universe.

The poem then describes the role of Astarte's attendants: her "sweet" "torch-bearing" heralds "compel / All thrones of light beyond the *sky* and *sea*" (i.e. all gods) to be "[t]he witness of Beauty's face" ("Astarte Syriaca" 9-11, my italics). Thus, the earlier binomial heaven and earth is now rephrased to indicate the extent of Astarte's beauty also among other gods. The poem ends by defining her face, "of Love's all-penetrative spell" as "[a]mulet, talisman, and oracle" (12-13). Astarte's beauty is so intense that through it Love magically takes on one's body, and her face becomes an object of protection, a charm, and a prophecy. Therefore, she is no longer a human face, but a mystery between the physical and the spiritual worlds.

Similarly to the double works in the first section, the ones studied here show a dynamic relationship between desire and devotion. The expression of desire is the driving force behind these female figures who became Rossetti's hallmarks. They either draw the gaze, and therefore the desire, of the viewer/reader to them, tuning themselves into *femmes fatales*, such as Venus and Lady Lilith, or they yield to their unchecked drives, as Eden Bower's Lilith, Sister Helen, and Helen of Troy do. In these situations, the outcome is usually personal or cultural doom. In either case, a devotional aspect is present in the composition of the characters or their narratives, ranging from perverse devotion or mythical worship to the mystification of beauty. The synthesis is embodied by Astarte, whose transcendental beauty comprehends both the material and the spiritual worlds.

[75] As Healey comments, with her "lean, pale face and a mass of long, dark brown hair, Jane represented an alternative beauty to the more traditional, rosy-cheeked, golden-haired 'stunners' of the time" (par 21).

Taken as a whole, Rossetti's devotional and sensual double works offer a panoramic view of his aesthetic concerns, his poetic craftsmanship, and his detailed attention to pictorial depiction. From his early paintings and poems filled with Anglo-Catholic references to his later representations of mystical beauty, he draws from religious, literary, mythological, and historical references to produce pictorial and poetic works which complement one another and allow for a dynamic reading. It is now time to draw some general conclusions from the research, which are presented in the following section.

CONCLUSION

The double works analyzed here constitute a small part of the universe of Rossetti's double works. Even so, they provide a good view of Rossetti's aesthetic approach to integrating poetry and pictorial representation, and contribute to the assessment of this integration. Looking back at the first section of this study, one is reminded that the parallel between poetry and painting received more or less sympathetic appraisals according to the current thought and aesthetic perceptions of each time, as well as the thinkers' personal inclinations. Thus, for instance, Plato, in his view of art as imitation of beauty, deemed poets bad imitators of truth, as well as dangerous, because they might incite strong emotions in the audience. Horace treated poetry from a practical standpoint, as a craft, and thus set the *ut pictora poesis* standard for poetic appreciation. Leonardo Da Vinci, who was fascinated by representations of the visible world, considered painting superior to poetry because of its visual appeal. As the court historian of Louis XIV of France, André Félibien highlighted the importance of the political aspect of pictorial and poetic production. Lessing, from his Enlightenment perspective, set the imitative limits and possibilities of the two media. In Victorian England, Ruskin placed both poetry and painting in the service of the expression of noble emotions. In Rossetti's works, it is possible to see his attempt to integrate both artistic media in such a way that, while they can be appreciated individually, when considered together, they acquire further meanings. The poetic imagery and the pictorial symbolism of the double works communicate with one another, expanding the significance of the individual works.

This attempt of integration stems from Rossetti's own aesthetic view, as he hinted at it in his 1849 short story "Hand and Soul."[76] The command of Chiaro's soul for him to "work from [his] own heart, simply" ("Hand and Soul" 316) sets Rossetti's principle that poetic and pictorial construction should be a matter of personal expression. An artist should be primarily

[76] See the commentary on "Hand and Soul" on p. 62-63.

true to himself and seek his own conscience – "not thy mind's conscience, but thy heart's," says Chiaro's soul (314). This Romantic view of truth would guide some of the tenets of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood when they first launched their paintings. Their works should express genuine ideas, sincerity of both form and content, and precise representation of nature.[77] At a time when the Royal Academy standards resulted in artificiality and formulaic reproduction of models,[78] the aesthetic aspirations of Rossetti and his fellow artists was a daring fresh initiative.

In Rossetti's seminal narrative, Chiaro's soul also tells him, "set thine hand and thy soul to serve man with God" ("Hand and Soul" 316), thus reminding him of his social role as an artist. Rather than an instrument to win fame, Chiaro's art should be an act of devotion to remind men of the spiritual content of his subject matters. This assumption moved Rossetti and his PR Brothers, especially at the beginning of their careers, to depict religious issues with the same careful treatment given to any other subjects. Therefore, poetic and pictorial works with a devotional content of Anglo-Catholic influence are recurrent among Rossetti's early production. As he became less attached to his Christian roots and more famous as an individual artist, his works shifted from Christian to mythological subjects; however, the devotional content was still present to various degrees. Although he never adhered to any institutional religion,[79] Rossetti always expressed his interest in the spiritual world, and thus in some manifestation of devotional attitude.

In the story, Chiaro's soul then gives him one last direction, "Chiaro, servant of God, take now thine Art unto thee, and paint me thus, as I am, to know me" ("Hand and Soul" 316). This is the core of Rossetti's artistic program: the way to truly know and apprehend the soul is by depicting its physical appearance. This is what he seeks painting after painting and poem after poem: to portray spiritual beauty in the physicality of the characters. From the chaste Virgin Mary and the spiritual blessed damozel to the sensuous Helen of Troy and the fetishistically enticing Lady Lilith, Rossetti's female figures convey a spiritual dimension via physical features, such as their eyes, their hands, their hair, and their breasts, or via their actions.

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[77] See in this respect Marsh (*DGR* 55).

[78] Marsh comments that in 1848 William Hunt's *Eve of St. Agnes* caught Rossetti's attention at the Royal Academy among "all the *predictable* cattle pieces, seascapes and *simpering* maidens" (*DGR* 40, my italics).

[79] Marsh reports the words of Rossetti's brother William about him, saying he was not "'a strict doctrinal Christian […], but he had an earnest reverence for a Christian ideal and a delight in Christian legend and symbol'" (*DGR* 108).

The epitome of this fusion between body and soul among Rossetti's double works is *Astarte Syriaca*, a supreme goddess whose striking beauty comprehends earth and heaven.

Rossetti's double works then aim at integrating poetry and painting as part of his own aesthetic program. While he saw himself primarily as a poet, painting offered him a better chance of livelihood as an artist. Therefore, converging the two media meant a more complete subjective expression, as he initially identified in Blake's work. As seen in the analyses, this integration operates by means of content identification or complement between iconographic components and poetic imagery. In some instances, as in *Found* and *Venus Verticordia*, a pictorial element condenses a metaphor or an excerpt from a poem, whereas in others, as in "Mary's Girlhood" and "Astarte Syriaca," a poetic passage describes or alludes to parts of the pictorial composition. Sometimes, as in "Body's Beauty" and "Eden Bower," the poetic sound effects (i.e. alliterations, assonances, repetitions) are suggestive of specific compositional aspects. In other cases, such as *The Blessed Damozel* and *Beata Beatrix*, the general atmosphere built by the conjunction of features in one medium is transposed to the other. These processes increase the possibilities of aesthetic experience and add quality to the individual works. They also represented an opportunity for Rossetti to convey his artistic creativity by conciliating his profitable pictorial production with an uncompromised poetic expression.

While these dynamic processes arouse the reader's or viewer's vivid impressions, they also create highly charged images which are sometimes complex and challenging to understand. In this sense, the psychoanalytical perspective followed in this study offers an effective instrument of analysis. The characters' emotional intensity and the affective content of the works are signs of powerful unconscious drives in action, as the Freudian concepts adopted here reveal. Thus, for instance, both the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene represent situations in which one's desires are repressed or sublimated into devotional attitudes, whereas *The Blessed Damozel* and *Found* convey situations in which sexuality stirs a sense of guilt, resulting in doubts or even refusal to accept personal salvation and reunion with one's beloved. In the case of *Beata Beatrix* / "The Picture", the lover's entangled feelings turn his desire into a devotional attitude towards the deceased beloved herself.

At the other side of the spectrum, both *Venus Verticordia* and *Lady Lilith* represent castrating *femmes fatales* who entice the viewer's or reader's desire to themselves and become objects of dangerous devotion. Venus offers her alluring godly beauty, while Lady Lilith's narcissism turns her into an equally deadly fetish object. If Helen of Troy offers her devotion

to Venus in exchange for the satisfaction of her desires, vengeful figures like Lilith from "Eden Bower" and Sister Helen are moved by wild passions. In addition, Lilith stands for the uncontrollable drives of Id raging against superego, embodied by God. The two mythological figures who show a balance between desire and devotion, Sibylla and Astarte, are embodiments of mystical beauty, which comprehends the life and death drives and transcends the limits of the physical world.

All these works are loaded with poetic imagery and pictorial symbolism which account for their emotional content. Thus, by regarding the works from the standpoint of the mechanisms of dreams, "the royal road to the unconscious," this study has shown the construction and the dynamic interaction of the drives of devotion and desire within the works. In both "devotional" and "sensual" double works there is a powerful interplay of both drives constituting the characters' actions and their settings. As these characters are Rossetti's constructions, they may be seen as projections of his own personal issues, which is easily identified in the different themes and female figure types he produced at different times in his life. For instance, the familial setting of the *Virgin Mary*, for which his own mother and sister posed in his early twenties, is full of Anglo-Catholic symbolism. It stands in stark contrast to the "fallen woman" of *Found*, for which he used his exuberant lover Fanny Cornforth, and which illustrates the mother-whore complex. The dreamy atmosphere and devotional attitude of *Beata Beatrix*, a tribute to his wife Lizzie Siddal, find an extreme counterpoint in the fetishist Lady Lilith, for which Fanny was also the first model. Finally, the mysterious and transcendental Astarte depicts Jane Morris, Rossetti's last great love who, nevertheless, was married, and therefore socially unavailable. These women may be seen in the pictures. However, the pictures, and especially, the double works, are not just about them. The paintings and poems are carefully crafted expressions of Rossetti's subjectivity and creative talent, showing his personal interpretation of the themes he dealt with and devising compositions with rich symbolism and intricate meanings.

In many of the works, Rossetti seems to be saying that unchecked desire leads to individual or collective ruin. All the double works which refer or allude to sexual intercourse present outcomes ranging from personal shame and doubts about faith to individual death or cultural destruction. This recurrent attitude suggests a normative stance on the physical realization of desire as part of a satisfying affective experience, imbuing it with a sense of guilt which displaces its content. When intercourse happens, it is either part of a longing memory of a deceased beloved, or the triggering factor of a past or future disgrace. However, while this

position follows the Romantic literary tendency to emphasize the transcendental aspects of love and obliterate the physical ones, it ends up acknowledging the immanent power of desire as a catalyst for individual and collective history. The characters in "The Blessed Damozel," "Found" and "The Portrait" have had their lives changed; "Eden Bower" sets the fate of humanity out of Lilith's revenge, whereas "Venus Verticordia" and "Troy Town" anticipate the Trojan War.

These poetic and pictorial representations of desire reveal an ambivalent position towards Victorian mentality. On the one hand, Rossetti did portray sensuality in his works, even if stylized, to the point of receiving strongly negative criticism (e.g. in Buchanan's "Fleshly School" review). On the other, his approach to it corroborates what Freud calls the "'civilized' sexual morality," according to which only *legitimate* sexual activity (i.e. within marriage) is allowed ("Sexual Morality" 17, italics in the original). In the Victorian context, when the satisfaction of sexual desire was not possible within the sanctified limits of marriage, the only alternatives for a man would be either abstinence or resorting to prostitution.[80] It is no wonder, therefore, that Rossetti's representation of intercourse outside marriage is filled with mixed feelings of pleasure and guilt. In this respect, the analyses reveal his rather typical Victorian heterosexual male view of women, ranging from idealization to a fetishistic attitude towards female figures. In Rossetti's double works, women are saints, sinners, witches, or goddesses, never regular lovers.

Concurrently, Rossetti's poetic warnings about collective doom are aligned with current Victorian concerns about cultural deterioration expressed in British literature and art. As mentioned in the section devoted to the artistic and literary movements with which Rossetti was identified, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Britain experienced a growing feeling of uneasiness about both internal social and economic issues, and the growth of international competitors on both sides of the Atlantic. As a result, Romantic sensibility increased to a feeling of disintegration and decline of civilization, expressed as a sympathy with older, refined cultures, and Hellenism. Rossetti shared this sensation in his own Romantic archaism and distaste for scientific advancements,[81] thus producing works which seem unsympathetic to a Positivist notion of evolving progress. In this sense, he shares, in advance, Walter Benjamin's

[80] Shaw reports that the Contagious Diseases Act of 1864, 1866 and 1869 legalized prostitution, but at the same time enabled the police to arrest women suspected of being prostitutes, and obliged them to medical examination for signs of venereal diseases (par. 2).

[81] See in this respect Marsh (*DGR*, 106-107).

view of History as Klee's *Angelus Novus*, which is permanently blown away from Paradise by the storm called progress ("Theses" 257-258). Rossetti shows his own concerns about the unfolding of historical events via his representation of often gloomy themes and the intricate structure of his works.

This thematic diversity and structural complexity account for the variety of critical assessments of Rossetti's poetry over time. Since Victorian times, issues regarding the dualism between body and spirit have been present in his critical reviews. From moral and biographical approaches to Structuralist and intersemiotic readings, the dynamic relationship between the material and spiritual worlds in Rossetti's works has intrigued literary critics and scholars alike. As discussed in the critical fortune section, many reviews of Rossetti either focus on the duality of bodily and spiritual love or discuss whether a synthesis of the two is possible. The approach followed in this study did not seek to find a synthesis of desire and devotion; rather, it aimed at examining the extent to which both drives are present in the same works and how they interact with each other. The classification of Rossetti's double works into apparently more devotional and seemingly more sensual allows one to clearly see how both drives of devotion and desire are built, as well as their dialectic relationship within the works. If any complete fusion is attained, it happens in the works, i.e. *Sibylla* and *Astarte,* in which female beauty is so intense that it transcends its own physicality. In most double works, one drive is dominant, while the other dynamically interacts with it, creating aesthetic expressions of intense subjectivity.

This dynamic relationship of devotion and desire sets Rossetti's work as transitional between Romanticism and Modernism in the British literary and artistic systems. While Romantically oriented in its idealization of love, as well as in its lexical and thematic archaism, Rossetti's poetry deals with manifestations of desire which show multiple affective expressions. In its interplay between the two drives, Rossetti's poetry gives visibility to typical Victorian issues such as sexuality, gender relationships, and religion. In addition, its wealth of symbolism, suggestive sound effects, and the linguistic twists of his poetic imagery come close to features of Symbolism. Besides, his attempt to depict the correlation between devotion and desire is expressed by his aesthetic program, which promotes an intimate dialogue between the two "sister arts," and seeks to transform his own experience of the world into aesthetic experience. These facets in turn will influence Modernist poets in their search for "making it new."

In Rossetti's art, the interrelationship between desire and devotion also contributed to his association with different aesthetic movements. His early devotional aesthetic helped to

oppose the British Academicism which was dominant at the beginning of his career, and to pave the way to the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic, which would eventually become a hallmark of Victorian art. As his personal and artistic experience broadened, he increased the level of stylization of his work, distanced himself from moral messages, changed his focus from Christian to mythological figures, and introduced a higher level of sensuality, thus becoming influential in the development of Aestheticism. With the sense of doom, physical spirituality, sensuous women and florid backgrounds that are present in his paintings, Rossetti also allied himself with the Decadent movement. Thus, the dynamic relationship between devotion and desire in Rossetti's pictorial works contributed to placing him as a relevant figure in British art as well.

Naturally, Rossetti was aware of his own entanglement in the process of production and professionalization of art in the Victorian scenario. At a time when mass production was rapidly increasing, the production and consumption of "high art" meant a symbolical distinction for both artists and their public. Thus, one of Rossetti's major challenges (and certainly one of the causes of his anxiety and procrastination) was to conciliate his hyperactive artistic creativity and his indulgence in a lifestyle which would disengage him from a regular paid occupation. While he was sensitive to the taste and demands of his wealthy clients willing to pay high sums to have a fashionable painter's name in their drawing rooms, this sometimes meant sacrificing his own desire for expression at the cost of quantity of production. This process also brought him a sense of degradation in the relationship between artist, art dealers and clients. Therefore, between one major painting and another, Rossetti would often produce smaller works on demand, including drawings, watercolors, and book illustrations. In addition, his anxiety of production, accompanied by his health problems, often resulted in long delays to complete the works.[82] In some cases, he was never able to finish them. The picture-poems then offered him a personalized medium of subjective expression, not intended for specific clients but for the public at large. The correlation between the poems and the paintings thus mirrored his aesthetic dialogue with his own art.

As a whole, Rossetti's romantic representations, both in verse and in paintings, of medieval scenes of religious piety, evocative lamentations of lovers for their Beatrices and blessed damozels, and languid women surrounded by florid backgrounds, helped to build an image of a lost Golden Age prior to the Industrial Revolution. It was not by chance, then, that

[82] See in this respect Marsh (*DGR* 148-150, 272) and William Rossetti (28, 51, 54, 85).

Rossetti's work sold well among the nouveaux riches, as reminiscent of a time of simplicity and naivety which would become part of British cultural imagery from the nineteenth century on.

The findings above illustrate the relevance of Rossetti's work in the British literary and artistic systems, and are part of the contributions of this study. Besides being the first Brazilian PhD dissertation on Rossetti, it is the most comprehensive research on his works in Brazil so far. In addition, the classification of his double works into the categories of devotion and desire, as adopted here, has revealed the construction and the dialectic relationship between the two drives within the works, as well as how the poems and paintings complement each other, thus attributing further meaning to the double works themselves. Finally, the analysis has demonstrated my thesis that, by working with the interplay of the two forces, Rossetti became an author and artist of transition between English Romanticism and Modernism.

This research contributes to broadening the knowledge of Rossetti's work in the Brazilian academic field, especially in terms of interdisciplinary studies between literature and other arts. Future studies include different possibilities, such as deeper analyses of the double works which were not fully explored here, analysis of the other double works, and commented translations of his poems.

On a personal note, I must agree with Wright when she says that readers "do not only work on texts, but texts work on readers, and this involves a complex double dialectic of bodies inscribed in language" (Wright 15-16). This is certainly true of my relationship with this dissertation. Along the way, I was able to notice how dynamic my relationship with my object of study was. Variations in mood and disposition were part of my course of analyses, along with moments of excitement or anxiety triggered by new discoveries or by challenges posed by a study such as this one. As a reader who carried out a psychoanalytic interpretation of pictorial and poetic texts, and delved into their depths, I experienced a dynamic interplay of ideas, emotions and insights which constantly evolved during the process, illuminating the works and, in turn, being illuminated by them.

It remains to say that carrying out this study has increased my appreciation for a gifted author whose written works reveal his artistry of turning his subjective expression into plastic aesthetic experience. Dante Gabriel Rossetti was indeed a poet with a painter's eye.

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APPENDIX A – CHRONOLOGY OF ROSSETTI'S LIFE AND WORKS

The major events in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's life are listed chronologically below, according to Marsh (*DGR*) and McGann (*Chronology*). Priority is given to the events related to the production of the pictures and poems studied in this dissertation.

1828	May 12	Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti is born in London to Frances Polidori Rossetti, sister of John Polidori, Byron's physician, and Gabriele Rossetti, an Italian political exile and Dante Alighieri scholar. Gabriel is christened Charles after his godfather Mr. Charles Lyell, a patron of his father, and Dante after his father's fascination for the medieval Italian poet.
1829	September 25	William Rossetti, Gabriel's brother, is born. He is to participate in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and keep a journal of the Brotherhood's activities.
1830	December 5	Christina Rossetti, Gabriel's sister, is born. She is to model for some of Rossetti's pictures, and will become a notable poet herself.
1837-1842		Gabriel Rossetti attends King's College School.
1843-1846		Rossetti attends Sass's Academy of Art in order to prepare for admission at the Royal Academy.
1846	July	Rossetti begins his studies at the Royal Academy.
		Rossetti develops a taste for Gothic literature, particularly Edgar Allan Poe.
		Rossetti writes "The Blessed Damozel" inspired by Lenore, the "sainted maiden" mourned in Poe's "The Raven." He revises the poem in 1850 for publication in *The Germ*, and continues revising it until the edition of his *Poems* in 1870.
1847		Bored with the Royal Academy classes and insecure about his own lack of artistic skills, Rossetti thinks of turning to poetry. He then sends his poems to poet and critic Leigh Hunt for appreciation. However, Hunt tells him that poetry is not a good source of livelihood and advices him to follow a career in painting instead.
1848	March	Rossetti convinces Ford Maddox Brown to take him as a pupil.
		Rossetti makes friends with fellow students William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais at the Royal Academy. With a few other classmates, they form a club to share and discuss their artistic and literary productions.
	May	Bored with still life, Rossetti leaves Brown's studio and takes William Hunt's tutorage.

	July	Rossetti draws *Retro Me, Sathana!* He begins an oil version to present at the Royal Academy, but after unfavorable feedback, abandons it.
		Rossetti starts working on *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary* as his first work to be exhibited at the Royal Academy. Rossetti's sister Christina sits for Mary; his mother Frances sits for St. Anne; and an employee of the Rossetti family sits for St. Joachim.
	November	Rossetti writes Sonnet I of "Mary's Girlhood (For a Picture)" to accompany the painting.
		When his godfather dies, Rossetti deletes Charles from his name and brings Dante forward, thus signing Dante Gabriel Rossetti from then on.
	December 31	The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is officially started at Rossetti's and William Hunt's studio.
1849	March	Rossetti writes Sonnet II of "Mary's Girlhood (For a Picture)" to accompany the painting.
		The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary is exhibited at the Royal Academy Free Exhibition with great success. The painting is soon commissioned by the Marchioness of Bath.
1850	January 1	*The Germ* is launched. The journal aims at publicizing the ideas and the works of the PRB. Poor sales force the journal to close after its fourth issue in April.
		Rossetti meets Elizabeth "Lizzie" Siddal, who works as a model for different artists. They immediately fall in love. Like Rossetti, she also aims at an artistic and poetic career.
		Rossetti will produce innumerable pictures and poems inspired by her.
1851		After the controversy over Millais' *Christ in the House of His Parents*, the PRB receives a burst of negative criticism, including from Charles Dickens. However, John Ruskin, the leading British art critic at the time, writes favorably about their art, thus becoming their spokesperson.
	November	Rossetti and Lizzie get engaged, but will not marry until 1860, because of his family's opposition to the liaison (she comes from a working-class family) and because of his affairs with other women. This situation, besides a stillborn daughter in 1861, will lead to Elizabeth's growing depression and addiction to laudanum.
1852		Rossetti writes a first version of "Sister Helen," which he will revise again in 1869 to be published in *Poems* (1870).
1854		Rossetti produces a study for *Found*. He will continue working on it at intervals during his life and attempt to complete the painting from 1881 to accompany the sonnet about it. During this phase, Fanny Cornforth sits for the figure of the woman. The picture will be left unfinished.
1855		John Ruskin invites Rossetti to teach at the Working Men's College, where they become friends. Ruskin will be Rossetti's friend and patron until 1868, when they will have a rift on account of *Venus Verticordia*.

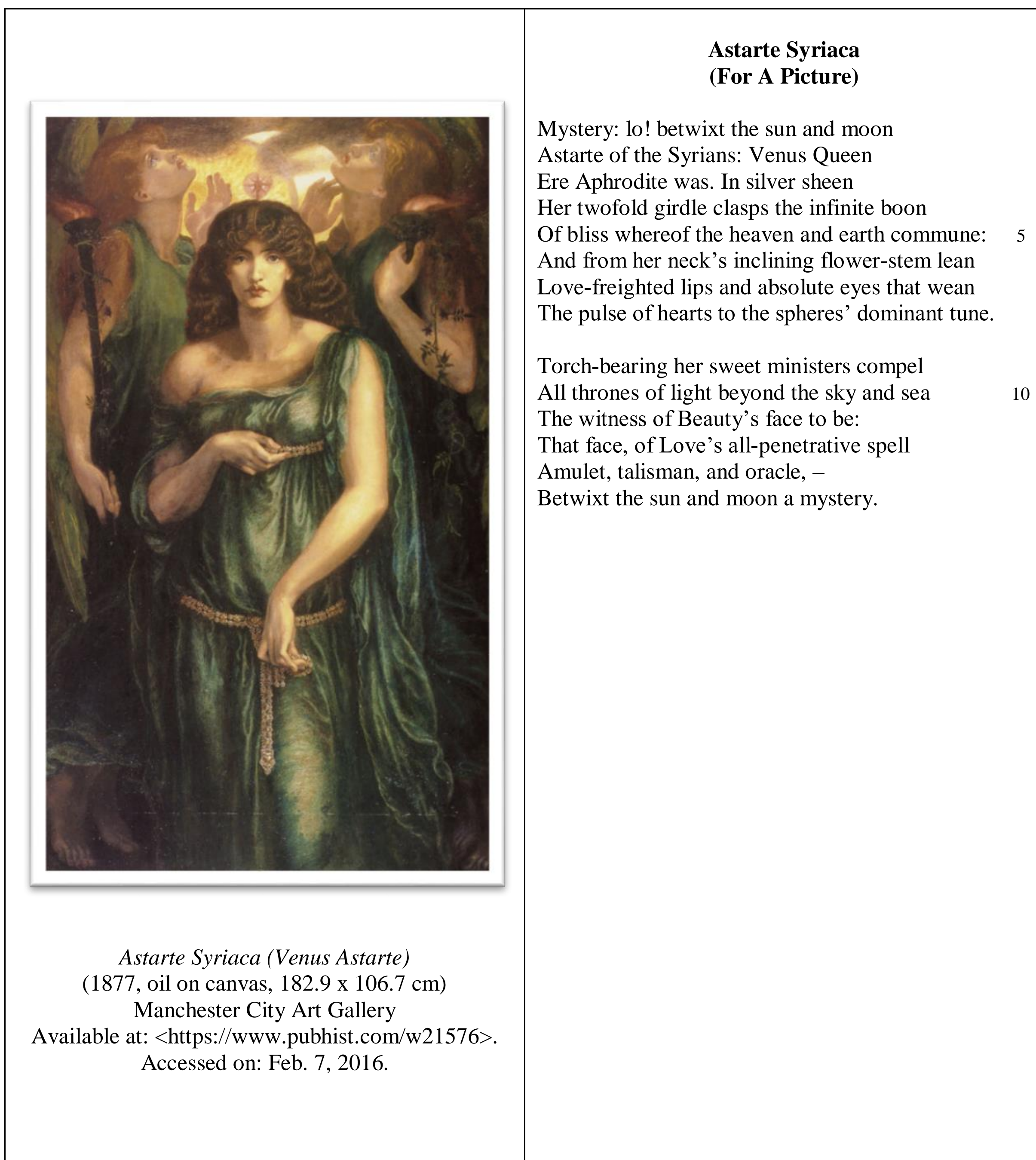
1856		Rossetti meets William Morris, a young writer, painter and social activist, and they become close friends.
	February	Rossetti sees actress Ruth Herbert on stage and is fascinated by her face and expressivity. She will model for his *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee* and some other works.
1857	September	Rossetti meets Jane Burden. She starts modeling for him.
		Jane will get married to William Morris in 1859. Even so, Rossetti will obsessively keep her as a muse for his paintings and poems until the end of his life.
1858	Autumn	Rossetti meets Fanny Cornforth, a beautiful and lively prostitute, and has an affair with her. She will sit for many of his pictures, becoming the model for some of his more erotic paintings.
		Soon after Rossetti's marriage in 1860, Fanny will marry a mechanic from Liverpool, though she and Rossetti will continue to see each other. After the death of Elizabeth in 1862, Fanny will leave her husband and join Rossetti at Cheyne Walk as his housekeeper. Rossetti's family will always disapprove of their relationship, and will eventually exclude her from the house in 1881.
		Rossetti sketches *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee*.
1859	July	Rossetti persuades patron and friend George Boyce to commission an oil picture of Fanny Cornforth in sixteenth-century costume. The painting is entitled *Bocca Baciata* and is completed in October.
1860	May 23	After increasing deterioration of Lizzie's health, Rossetti and Lizzie get married.
1862	February 11	Elizabeth Siddal dies of an overdose of laudanum. There are suspicions of suicide. On her burial, Rossetti is overcome with sadness and remorse for having been writing poems when Lizzie was sick, so he places the volume containing all his poems in her coffin.
1863		Rossetti begins working on *Venus Verticordia* upon commission. He works on it until 1867, when he repaints Venus with Alexa Wilding as a model. He finishes the picture in 1868, but revises it as of 1873.
1864	May	Rossetti has mumps. It is the beginning of a long series of increasing health problems, including eye-strain, dizziness, tremor in the hands, hydroceles, chronic insomnia, and possibly hypertension, diabetes and impotence. To fight insomnia, Rossetti will start taking chloral hydrate and whiskey. He will be afflicted by ill health for the rest of his life, so that his capacity to paint will be gradually impaired.
		Rossetti starts working on *Beata Beatrix*, representing Lizzie as Beatrice. The painting will not be completed until 1870.
1865	April	Rossetti sees Alexa Wilding, a dressmaker, on the street and asks her to sit for his *Sibylla Palmifera.* She will model for him until 1873.

		Rossetti starts working on *Sibylla Palmifera*, and soon convinces George Rae, a client, to take it up on commission. He finishes it in 1870. Alexa Wilding sits for the sibyl.
		When Ruskin sees *Venus Verticordia*, he has a highly sensitive reaction to it. He praises the flowers and condemns the female figure, which he considers bold and vulgar. As a result, Rossetti and Ruskin have a rift.
1866	May	Rossetti writes "Soul's Beauty" as a commentary on *Sybilla Palmifera*.
	July	Rossetti starts working on *Lady Lilith*. He completes a first version of the painting in 1868, then revises it until the end of 1869. Fanny Cornforth is the model.
	October	Rossetti writes "Body's Beauty" regarding the painting *Lady Lilith*, on which he is still working.
1868	January	Rossetti writes "Venus Verticordia (For a Picture)."
1869		Rossetti writes "The Portrait" as a development of his 1847 dramatic monologue "On Mary's Portrait Which I Painted Six Years Ago."
	August	Rossetti starts writing "Eden Bower" and finishes it in September. He also produces the sketch of *Lady Lilith* (*Eden Bower*).
	September	Rossetti writes the sonnet "Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee" to be sent for publication.
		Rossetti starts writing "Troy Town," which he will revise until February 1870 for publication.
	October 5	With the help of his friend Charles Howell, Rossetti exhumes his book of manuscripts from Lizzie's grave. He knows those were among his best poems, and now intends to have them published.
1870		Rossetti sketches *Sister Helen* after his own poem, but never finishes it.
		Rossetti begins the *Troy Town* drawing, but does not finish it.
1871	October	Robert Buchanan's harsh essay *The Fleshly School of Poetry: Mr. D. G. Rossetti* sternly accuses Rossetti's poetry of base sensuality and low quality.
	December	Rossetti reacts with an article entitled *The Stealthy School of Criticism*, but his poetry receives similar reviews by other critics and the press. Rossetti is distraught.
1872	June	After months or stressful quarrels over Buchanan's criticism afflicting his already decaying health, Rossetti has a mental breakdown, attempts suicide with an overdose of laudanum, has a stroke, and goes into a coma. After waking up, he hears hallucinatory voices and feels constantly tormented. For several weeks, Rossetti cannot produce anything.
	September	Rossetti moves to Kelmscott Manor with the Morrises and recovers from his mental breakdown.
1873	May	Rossetti starts working on *The Blessed Damozel*, commissioned by William Graham. He will continue working on the painting until 1878, and on a replica (also started in 1871) until 1881. Alexa Wilding sits for the Damozel.

1875	August	Rossetti receives a commission to paint *Astarte Syriaca*. He will complete it in January 1877, when he inscribes the sonnet on the frame. Janes Morris is the model for the main figure.
1877	March	Rossetti writes “Astarte Syriaca” for the painting.
1881	February	Rossetti writes the sonnet “Found” to accompany the painting.
	Autumn	Rossetti’s health rapidly deteriorates.
	December 11	Rossetti has a mild stroke, leaving his left side paralyzed.
1882		Rossetti is diagnosed with kidney failure and liver damage.
	April 9	Rossetti dies of kidney failure.

APPENDIX B – ROSSETTI'S DOUBLE WORKS

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's paintings, drawings and poems analyzed in this study are listed below in alphabetical order of the pictorial works.

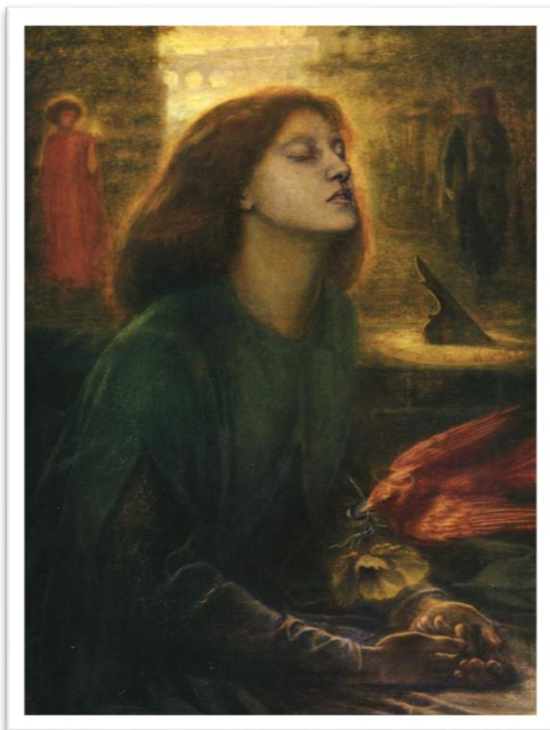


Astarte Syriaca (Venus Astarte)
(1877, oil on canvas, 182.9 x 106.7 cm)
Manchester City Art Gallery
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w21576>.
Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.

Astarte Syriaca
(For A Picture)

Mystery: lo! betwixt the sun and moon
Astarte of the Syrians: Venus Queen
Ere Aphrodite was. In silver sheen
Her twofold girdle clasps the infinite boon
Of bliss whereof the heaven and earth commune: 5
And from her neck's inclining flower-stem lean
Love-freighted lips and absolute eyes that wean
The pulse of hearts to the spheres' dominant tune.

Torch-bearing her sweet ministers compel
All thrones of light beyond the sky and sea 10
The witness of Beauty's face to be:
That face, of Love's all-penetrative spell
Amulet, talisman, and oracle, –
Betwixt the sun and moon a mystery.



Beata Beatrix
(1864-1870, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 66 cm)
Tate Gallery, London
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w17910>.
Accessed on Feb. 7, 2016.

The Portrait

This is her picture as she was:
It seems a thing to wonder on,
As though mine image in the glass
Should tarry when myself am gone.
I gaze until she seems to stir, – 5
Until mine eyes almost aver
That now, even now, the sweet lips part
To breathe the words of the sweet heart: –
And yet the earth is over her.

Alas! even such the thin-drawn ray 10
That makes the prison-depths more rude, –
The drip of water night and day
Giving a tongue to solitude.
Yet only this, of love's whole prize,
Remains; save what in mournful guise 15
Takes counsel with my soul alone, –
Save what is secret and unknown,
Below the earth, above the skies.

In painting her I shrin'd her face
Mid mystic trees, where light falls in 20
Hardly at all; a covert place
Where you might think to find a din
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame
Wandering, and many a shape whose name
Not itself knoweth, and old dew, 25
And your own footsteps meeting you,
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood; and there she stands
As in that wood that day: for so
Was the still movement of her hands 30
And such the pure line's gracious flow.
And passing fair the type must seem,
Unknown the presence and the dream.
'Tis she: though of herself, alas!
Less than her shadow on the grass 35
Or than her image in the stream.

That day we met there, I and she
One with the other all alone;
And we were blithe; yet memory
Saddens those hours, as when the moon 40
Looks upon daylight. And with her
I stoop'd to drink the spring-water,
Athirst where other waters sprang;
And where the echo is, she sang, –
My soul another echo there. 45

But when that hour my soul won strength
For words whose silence wastes and kills,
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length
Thunder'd the heat within the hills.
That eve I spoke those words again 50
Beside the pelted window-pane;

	And there she hearken'd what I said, With under-glances that survey'd The empty pastures blind with rain. Next day the memories of these things, 55 Like leaves through which a bird has flown, Still vibrated with Love's warm wings; Till I must make them all my own And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease Of talk and sweet long silences, 60 She stood among the plants in bloom At windows of a summer room, To feign the shadow of the trees. And as I wrought, while all above And all around was fragrant air, 65 In the sick burthen of my love It seem'd each sun-thrill'd blossom there Beat like a heart among the leaves. O heart that never beats nor heaves, In that one darkness lying still, 70 What now to thee my love's great will Or the fine web the sunshine weaves? For now doth daylight disavow Those days, – nought left to see or hear. Only in solemn whispers now 75 At night-time these things reach mine ear; When the leaf-shadows at a breath Shrink in the road, and all the heath, Forest and water, far and wide, In limpid starlight glorified, 80 Lie like the mystery of death. Last night at last I could have slept, And yet delay'd my sleep till dawn, Still wandering. Then it was I wept: For unawares I came upon 85 Those glades where once she walk'd with me: And as I stood there suddenly, All wan with traversing the night, Upon the desolate verge of light Yearn'd loud the iron-bosom'd sea. 90 Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears The beating heart of Love's own breast, – Where round the secret of all spheres All angels lay their wings to rest, – How shall my soul stand rapt and aw'd, 95 When, by the new birth borne abroad Throughout the music of the suns, It enters in her soul at once And knows the silence there for God! Here with her face doth memory sit 100 Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline, Till other eyes shall look from it, Eyes of the spirit's Palestine, Even than the old gaze tenderer: While hopes and aims long lost with her 105

<table>
<tr>
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<td>Stand round her image side by side,
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre.</td>
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<td>The Blessed Damozel
(1878; oil on canvas, 84 x 174 cm)
Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University.
An illustration of Rossetti’s poem.
Available at:
<http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/dante-gabriel-rossetti/the-blessed-damozel-1878>. Accessed on: Oct. 31, 2011.</td>
<td>The Blessed Damozel

The blessed damozel lean’d out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters still’d at even;
She had three lilies in her hand, 5
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary’s gift,
For service meetly worn; 10
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseem’d she scarce had been a day
One of God’s choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone 15
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place, 20
Surely she lean’d o’er me – her hair
Fell all about my face ....
Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God’s house 25
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun. 30

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth 35
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
’Mid deathless love’s acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remember’d names; 40
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bow’d herself and stoop’d
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made 45</td>
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The bar she lean’d on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fix’d place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce 50
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curl’d moon 55
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together. 60

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird’s song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearken’d? When those bells
Possess’d the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side 65
Down all the echoing stair?)

“I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come,” she said.
“Have I not pray’d in Heaven? – on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray’d? 70
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

“When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is cloth’d in white,
I’ll take his hand and go with him 75
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God’s sight.

“We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod, 80
Whose lamps are stirr’d continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

“We two will lie i’ the shadow of 85
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly. 90

“And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hush’d and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause, 95
Or some new thing to know.”

	(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st! Yea, one wast thou with me That once of old. But shall God lift To endless unity 100 The soul whose likeness with thy soul Was but its love for thee?) "We two," she said, "will seek the groves Where the lady Mary is, With her five handmaidens, whose names 105 Are five sweet symphonies, Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen, Margaret and Rosalys. "Circlewise sit they, with bound locks And foreheads garlanded; 110 Into the fine cloth white like flame Weaving the golden thread, To fashion the birth-robes for them Who are just born, being dead. "He shall fear, haply, and be dumb: 115 Then will I lay my cheek To his, and tell about our love, Not once abash'd or weak: And the dear Mother will approve My pride, and let me speak. 120 "Herself shall bring us, hand in hand, To Him round whom all souls Kneel, the clear-rang'd unnumber'd heads Bow'd with their aureoles: And angels meeting us shall sing 125 To their citherns and citoles. "There will I ask of Christ the Lord Thus much for him and me: – Only to live as once on earth With Love, – only to be, 130 As then awhile, for ever now Together, I and he." She gaz'd and listen'd and then said, Less sad of speech than mild, – "All this is when he comes." She ceas'd. 135 The light thrill'd towards her, fill'd With angels in strong level flight. Her eyes pray'd, and she smil'd. (I saw her smile.) But soon their path Was vague in distant spheres: 140 And then she cast her arms along The golden barriers, And laid her face between her hands, And wept. (I heard her tears.)

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Found
(1854-55, 1859-1881, oil on canvas , 91.4 x 80 cm)
Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w17087>.
Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.
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Found
(For A Picture)

"There is a budding morrow in midnight": –
So sang our Keats, our English nightingale.
And here, as lamps across the bridge turn pale
In London's smokeless resurrection-light,
Dark breaks to dawn. But o'er the deadly blight 5
Of love deflowered and sorrow of none avail
Which makes this man gasp and this woman quail,
Can day from darkness ever again take flight?

Ah! gave not these two hearts their mutual pledge,
Under one mantle sheltered 'neath the hedge 10
In gloaming courtship? And O God! to-day
He only knows he holds her; – but what part
Can life now take? She cries in her locked heart, –
"Leave me – I do not know you – go away!"
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Mary's Girlhood
(For a Picture)

I
This is that blessed Mary, pre-elect
God's Virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
Unto God's will she brought devout respect,
Profound simplicity of intellect, 5
And supreme patience. From her mother's knee
Faithful and hopeful; wise in charity;
Strong in grave peace; in pity circumspect.

So held she through her girlhood; as it were
An angel-watered lily, that near God 10
Grows and is quiet. Till, one dawn at home
She woke in her white bed, and had no fear
At all,– yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed:
Because the fulness of the time was come.
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The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary
(1849, oil on canvas, 83 x 65 cm)
Tate Britain, London
Available at: Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w20961>. Accessed on Nov. 30, 2015.
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II
These are the symbols. On that cloth of red
I’ the centre is the Tripoint: perfect each,
Except the second of its points, to teach
That Christ is not yet born. The books – whose head
Is golden Charity, as Paul hath said – 5
Those virtues are wherein the soul is rich:
Therefore on them the lily standeth, which
Is Innocence, being interpreted.

The seven-thorn’d briar and the palm seven-leaved
Are her great sorrow and her great reward. 10
Until the end be full, the Holy One
Abides without. She soon shall have achieved
Her perfect purity: yea, God the Lord
Shall soon vouchsafe His Son to be her Son.
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Lady Lilith
(1868, oil on canvas, 97.8 x 85.1 cm).
Bancroft Collection, Wilmington Society of Fine Arts, Delaware
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w21177>.
Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.
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Sonnet LXXVIII. 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, 5
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 10
And soft-shed 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.
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Lady Lilith (*Eden Bower*)
(1869, pen and ink on paper, 22 x 18.4 cm)
Private collection
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w25898>.
Accessed on: Nov. 26, 2015.

Eden Bower

It was Lilith the wife of Adam:
(Sing Eden Bower!)
Not a drop of her blood was human,
But she was made like a soft sweet woman.

Lilith stood on the skirts of Eden; 5
(Alas the hour!)
She was the first that thence was driven;
With her was hell and with Eve was heaven.

In the ear of the Snake said Lilith:—
(Sing Eden Bower!) 10
"To thee I come when the rest is over;
A snake was I when thou wast my lover.

"I was the fairest snake in Eden:
(Alas the hour!)
By the earth's will, new form and feature 15
Made me a wife for the earth's new creature.

"Take me thou as I come from Adam:
(Sing Eden Bower!)
Once again shall my love subdue thee;
The past is past and I am come to thee. 20

"O but Adam was thrall to Lilith!
(Alas the hour!)
All the threads of my hair are golden,
And there in a net his heart was holden.

"O and Lilith was queen of Adam! 25
(Sing Eden Bower!)
All the day and the night together
My breath could shake his soul like a feather.

"What great joys had Adam and Lilith!—
(Alas the hour!) 30
Sweet close rings of the serpent's twining,
As heart in heart lay sighing and pining.

"What bright babes had Lilith and Adam!
(Sing Eden Bower!)
Shapes that coiled in the woods and waters, 35
Glittering sons and radiant daughters.

"O thou God, the Lord God of Eden!
(Alas the hour!)
Say, was this fair body for no man,
That of Adam's flesh thou mak'st him a woman? 40

"O thou Snake, the King-snake of Eden!
(Sing Eden Bower!)
God's strong will our necks are under,
But thou and I may cleave it in sunder.

"Help, sweet Snake, sweet lover of Lilith! 45
(Alas the hour!)

And let God learn how I loved and hated
Man in the image of God created.

"Help me once against Eve and Adam!
(Sing Eden Bower!) 50
Help me once for this one endeavour,
And then my love shall be thine for ever!

"Strong is God, the fell foe of Lilith:
(Alas the hour!)
Nought in heaven or earth may affright Him; 55
But join thou with me and we will smite Him.

"Strong is God, the great God of Eden:
(Sing Eden Bower!)
Over all He made He hath power;
But lend me thou thy shape for an hour! 60

"Lend thy shape for the love of Lilith!
(Alas the hour!)
Look, my mouth and my cheek are ruddy,
And thou art cold, and fire is my body.

"Lend thy shape for the hate of Adam! 65
(Sing Eden Bower!)
That he may wail my joy that forsook him,
And curse the day when the bride-sleep took him.

"Lend thy shape for the shame of Eden!
(Alas the hour!) 70
Is not the foe-God weak as the foeman
When love grows hate in the heart of a woman?

"Wouldst thou know the heart's hope of Lilith?
(Sing Eden Bower!)
Then bring thou close thine head till it glisten 75
Along my breast, and lip me and listen.

"Am I sweet, O sweet Snake of Eden?
(Alas the hour!)
Then ope thine ear to my warm mouth's cooing
And learn what deed remains for our doing. 80

"Thou didst hear when God said to Adam:—
(Sing Eden Bower!)
'Of all this wealth I have made thee warden;
Thou'rt free to eat of the trees of the garden:

"'Only of one tree eat not in Eden: 85
(Alas the hour!)
All save one I give to thy freewill,—
The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.'

"O my love, come nearer to Lilith!
(Sing Eden Bower!) 90
In thy sweet folds bind me and bend me,
And let me feel the shape thou shalt lend me.

"In thy shape I'll go back to Eden;
(Alas the hour!)

	In these coils that Tree will I grapple, 95 And stretch this crowned head forth by the apple. "Lo, Eve bends to the breath of Lilith! (Sing Eden Bower!) O how then shall my heart desire All her blood as food to its fire! 100 "Lo, Eve bends to the words of Lilith!— (Alas the hour!) 'Nay, this Tree's fruit,—why should ye hate it, Or Death be born the day that ye ate it? "'Nay, but on that great day in Eden, 105 (Sing Eden Bower!) By the help that in this wise Tree is, God knows well ye shall be as He is.' "Then Eve shall eat and give unto Adam; (Alas the hour!) 110 And then they both shall know they are naked, And their hearts ache as my heart hath achèd. "Aye, let them hide 'mid the trees of Eden, (Sing Eden Bower!) As in the cool of the day in the garden 115 God shall walk without pity or pardon. "Hear, thou Eve, the man's heart in Adam! (Alas the hour!) Of his brave words hark to the bravest:— 'This the woman gave that thou gavest.' 120 "Hear Eve speak, yea list to her, Lilith! (Sing Eden Bower!) Feast thine heart with words that shall sate it— 'This the serpent gave and I ate it.' "O proud Eve, cling close to thine Adam, 125 (Alas the hour!) Driven forth as the beasts of his naming By the sword that for ever is flaming. "Know, thy path is known unto Lilith! (Sing Eden Bower!) 130 While the blithe birds sang at thy wedding, There her tears grew thorns for thy treading. "O my love, thou Love-snake of Eden! (Alas the hour!) O to-day and the day to come after! 135 Loose me, love,—give breath to my laughter. "O bright Snake, the Death-worm of Adam! (Sing Eden Bower!) Wreathe thy neck with my hair's bright tether, And wear my gold and thy gold together! 140 "On that day on the skirts of Eden, (Alas the hour!)

In thy shape shall I glide back to thee,
And in my shape for an instant view thee.

"But when thou'rt thou and Lilith is Lilith, 145
(Sing Eden Bower!)
In what bliss past hearing or seeing
Shall each one drink of the other's being!

"With cries of 'Eve!' and 'Eden!' and 'Adam!'
(Alas the hour!) 150
How shall we mingle our love's caresses,
I in thy coils, and thou in my tresses!

"With those names, ye echoes of Eden,
(Sing Eden Bower!)
Fire shall cry from my heart that burneth,— 155
'Dust he is and to dust returneth!'

"Yet to-day, thou master of Lilith,—
(Alas the hour!)
Wrap me round in the form I'll borrow
And let me tell thee of sweet to-morrow. 160

"In the planted garden eastward in Eden,
(Sing Eden Bower!)
Where the river goes forth to water the garden,
The springs shall dry and the soil shall harden.

"Yea, where the bride-sleep fell upon Adam, 165
(Alas the hour!)
None shall hear when the storm-wind whistles
Through roses choked among thorns and thistles.

"Yea, beside the east-gate of Eden,
(Sing Eden Bower!) 170
Where God joined them and none might sever,
The sword turns this way and that for ever.

"What of Adam cast out of Eden?
(Alas the hour!)
Lo! with care like a shadow shaken, 175
He tills the hard earth whence he was taken.

"What of Eve too, cast out of Eden?
(Sing Eden Bower!)
Nay, but she, the bride of God's giving,
Must yet be mother of all men living. 180

"Lo, God's grace, by the grace of Lilith!
(Alas the hour!)
To Eve's womb, from our sweet to-morrow,
God shall greatly multiply sorrow.

"Fold me fast, O God-snake of Eden! 185
(Sing Eden Bower!)
What more prize than love to impel thee?
Grip and lip my limbs as I tell thee!

"Lo! two babes for Eve and for Adam!
(Alas the hour!) 190

Lo! sweet Snake, the travail and treasure,—
Two men-children born for their pleasure!

"The first is Cain and the second Abel:
(Sing Eden Bower!)
The soul of one shall be made thy brother, 195
And thy tongue shall lap the blood of the other."
(Alas the hour!)

Mary Magdalene At The Door
Of Simon The Pharisee
(For a Drawing)

"Why wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair?
Nay, be thou all a rose, – wreath, lips, and cheek.
Nay, not this house, – that banquet-house we seek;
See how they kiss and enter; come thou there.
This delicate day of love we two will share 5
Till at our ear love's whispering night shall speak.
What, sweet one, – hold'st thou still the foolish freak?
Nay, when I kiss thy feet they'll leave the stair."

"Oh loose me! See'st thou not my Bridegroom's face
That draws me to Him? For His feet my kiss, 10
My hair, my tears He craves to-day: – and oh!
What words can tell what other day and place
Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His?
He needs me, calls me, loves me: let me go!"

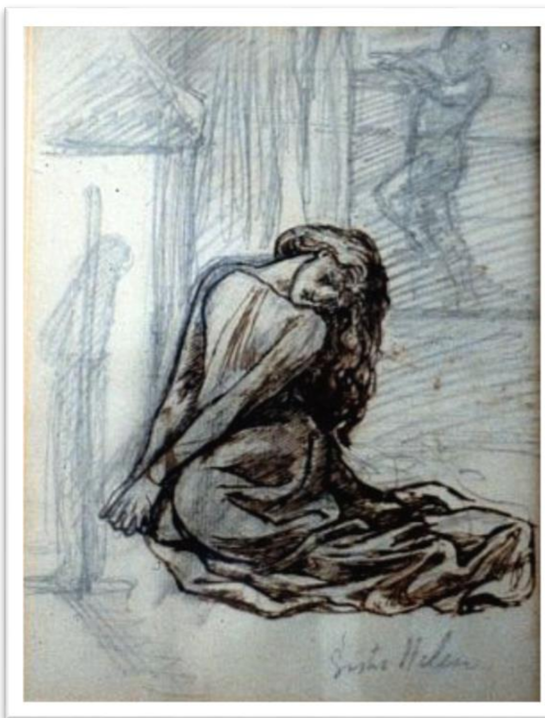
Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee
(1858-1859, pen and India ink, 52.7 x 45.7 cm)
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w21072>.
Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.

Sibylla Palmifera
(1865-1870, oil, 98.4 x 85 cm)
National Museums Liverpool
Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight
Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w21800>.
Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2016.

Sonnet LXXVII. Soul's Beauty

Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath.
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath, 5
The sky and sea bend on thee, – which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still, – long known to thee 10
By flying hair and fluttering hem, – the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!



Sister Helen

Sister Helen

"Why did you melt your waxen man,
Sister Helen?
To-day is the third since you began."
"The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother." 5
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But if you have done your work aright,
Sister Helen,
You'll let me play, for you said I might." 10
"Be very still in your play to-night,
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Third night, to-night, between Hell and Heaven!)

"You said it must melt ere vesper-bell, 15
Sister Helen;
If now it be molten, all is well."
"Even so, – nay, peace! you cannot tell,
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother, 20
O what is this, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh the waxen knave was plump to-day,
Sister Helen;

(1870, pencil with brown ink, 16.5 x 21.6 cm)
Private collection
Available at:
<http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s220.rap.html>.
Accessed on: Nov. 26, 2015.

How like dead folk he has dropp’d away!”
“Nay now, of the dead what can you say, 25
Little brother?”
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven?)

“See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
Sister Helen, 30
Shines through the thinn’d wax red as blood!”
“Nay now, when look’d you yet on blood,
Little brother?”
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven!) 35

“Now close your eyes, for they’re sick and sore,
Sister Helen,
And I’ll play without the gallery door.”
“Aye, let me rest, – I’ll lie on the floor,
Little brother.” 40
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What rest to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

“Here high up in the balcony,
Sister Helen,
The moon flies face to face with me.” 45
“Aye, look and say whatever you see,
Little brother.”
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What sight to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

“Outside it’s merry in the wind’s wake, 50
Sister Helen;
In the shaken trees the chill stars shake.”
“Hush, heard you a horse-tread as you spake,
Little brother?”
(O Mother, Mary Mother, 55
What sound to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

“I hear a horse-tread, and I see,
Sister Helen,
Three horsemen that ride terribly.”
“Little brother, whence come the three, 60
Little brother?”
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Whence should they come, between Hell and Heaven?)

“They come by the hill-verge from Boyne Bar,
Sister Helen, 65
And one draws nigh, but two are afar.”
“Look, look, do you know them who they are,
Little brother?”
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Who should they be, between Hell and Heaven?) 70

“Oh, it’s Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white mane on the blast.”
“The hour has come, has come at last,
Little brother!” 75
(O Mother, Mary Mother,

	Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven!) "He has made a sign and called Halloo! Sister Helen, And he says that he would speak with you." 80 "Oh tell him I fear the frozen dew, Little brother." (O Mother, Mary Mother, Why laughs she thus, between Hell and Heaven?) "The wind is loud, but I hear him cry, 85 Sister Helen, That Keith of Ewern's like to die." "And he and thou, and thou and I, Little brother." (O Mother, Mary Mother, 90 And they and we, between Hell and Heaven!) "Three days ago, on his marriage-morn, Sister Helen, He sicken'd, and lies since then forlorn." "For bridegroom's side is the bride a thorn, 95 Little brother?" (O Mother, Mary Mother, Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven!) "Three days and nights he has lain abed, Sister Helen, 100 And he prays in torment to be dead." "The thing may chance, if he have pray'd, Little brother!" (O Mother, Mary Mother, If he have pray'd, between Hell and Heaven!) 105 "But he has not ceas'd to cry to-day, Sister Helen, That you should take your curse away." "My prayer was heard, – he need but pray, Little brother!" 110 (O Mother, Mary Mother, Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven?) "But he says, till you take back your ban, Sister Helen, His soul would pass, yet never can." 115 "Nay then, shall I slay a living man, Little brother?" (O Mother, Mary Mother, A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!) "But he calls for ever on your name, 120 Sister Helen, And says that he melts before a flame." "My heart for his pleasure far'd the same, Little brother." (O Mother, Mary Mother, 125 Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!) "Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast, Sister Helen,

	For I know the white plume on the blast." "The hour, the sweet hour I forecast, 130 Little brother!" (O Mother, Mary Mother, Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven?) "He stops to speak, and he stills his horse, Sister Helen; 135 But his words are drown'd in the wind's course." "Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce, Little brother!" . (O Mother, Mary Mother, What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven?) 140 "Oh he says that Keith of Ewern's cry, Sister Helen, Is ever to see you ere he die." "In all that his soul sees, there am I Little brother!" 145 (O Mother, Mary Mother, The soul's one sight, between Hell and Heaven!) "He sends a ring and a broken coin, Sister Helen, And bids you mind the banks of Boyne." 150 "What else he broke will he ever join, Little brother?" (O Mother, Mary Mother, No, never join'd, between Hell and Heaven!) "He yields you these and craves full fain, 155 Sister Helen, You pardon him in his mortal pain." "What else he took will he give again, Little brother?" (O Mother, Mary Mother, 160 Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven!) "He calls your name in an agony, Sister Helen, That even dead Love must weep to see." "Hate, born of Love, is blind as he, 165 Little brother!" (O Mother, Mary Mother, Love turn'd to hate, between Hell and Heaven!) "Oh it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast, Sister Helen, 170 For I know the white hair on the blast." "The short short hour will soon be past, Little brother!" (O Mother, Mary Mother, Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven!) 175 "He looks at me and he tries to speak, Sister Helen, But oh! his voice is sad and weak!" "What here should the mighty Baron seek, Little brother?" 180 (O Mother, Mary Mother,

Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,
The body dies but the soul shall live." 185
"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh he prays you, as his heart would rive, 190
Sister Helen,
To save his dear son's soul alive."
"Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother, 195
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
Sister Helen,
To go with him for the love of God!"
"The way is long to his son's abode, 200
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The way is long, between Hell and Heaven!)

"A lady's here, by a dark steed brought,
Sister Helen, 205
So darkly clad, I saw her not."
"See her now or never see aught,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What more to see, between Hell and Heaven?) 210

"Her hood falls back, and the moon shines fair,
Sister Helen,
On the Lady of Ewern's golden hair."
"Blest hour of my power and her despair,
Little brother!" 215
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Hour blest and bann'd, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,
Sister Helen,
'Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago." 220
"One morn for pride and three days for woe,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Her clasp'd hands stretch from her bending head, 225
Sister Helen;
With the loud wind's wail her sobs are wed."
"What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,
Little brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother, 230
What strain but death's, between Hell and Heaven?)

"She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,
Sister Helen, –
She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon."

"Oh! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune, 235
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven!)

"They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-bow,
Sister Helen, 240
And her moonlit hair gleams white in its flow."
"Let it turn whiter than winter snow,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Woe-wither'd gold, between Hell and Heaven!) 245

"O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen!
More loud than the vesper-chime it fell."
"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,
Little brother!" 250
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen;
Is it in the sky or in the ground?" 255
"Say, have they turn'd their horses round,
Little brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have rais'd the old man from his knee, 260
Sister Helen,
And they ride in silence hastily."
"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother, 265
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,
Sister Helen,
But the lady's dark steed goes alone."
"And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown, 270
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen, 275
And weary sad they look by the hill."
"But he and I are sadder still,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!) 280

"See, see, the wax has dropp'd from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!" 285
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven!)

“Ah! what white thing at the door has cross’d,
Sister Helen?
Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?” 290
“A soul that’s lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!”
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!)

Troy Town
(1870, black chalk and violet wash, 40 x 37.4 cm)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Available at:
<http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s219.rap.html>.
Accessed on: Nov. 26, 2015.

Troy Town

Heavenborn Helen, Sparta’s queen,
(O Troy Town!)
Had two breasts of heavenly sheen,
The sun and moon of the heart’s desire:
All Love’s lordship lay between. 5
(O Troy’s down,
Tall Troy’s on fire!)

Helen knelt at Venus’ shrine,
(O Troy Town!)
Saying, “A little gift is mine, 10
A little gift for a heart’s desire.
Hear me speak and make me a sign!
(O Troy’s down,
Tall Troy’s on fire!)

“Look, I bring thee a carven cup; 15
(O Troy Town!)
See it here as I hold it up,—
Shaped it is to the heart’s desire,
Fit to fill when the gods would sup.
(O Troy’s down, 20
Tall Troy’s on fire!)

“It was moulded like my breast;
(O Troy Town!)
He that sees it may not rest,
Rest at all for his heart’s desire. 25
O give ear to my heart’s behest!
(O Troy’s down,
Tall Troy’s on fire!)

“See my breast, how like it is;
(O Troy Town!) 30
See it bare for the air to kiss!
Is the cup to thy heart’s desire?
O for the breast, O make it his!
(O Troy’s down,
Tall Troy’s on fire!) 35

“Yea, for my bosom here I sue;
(O Troy Town!)
Thou must give it where ’tis due,
Give it there to the heart’s desire.
Whom do I give my bosom to? 40
(O Troy’s down,
Tall Troy’s on fire!)

"Each twin breast is an apple sweet.
(O Troy Town!)
Once an apple stirred the beat 45
Of thy heart with the heart's desire:—
Say, who brought it then to thy feet?
(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire!)

"They that claimed it then were three: 50
(O Troy Town!)
For thy sake two hearts did he
Make forlorn of the heart's desire.
Do for him as he did for thee!
(O Troy's down, 55
Tall Troy's on fire!)

"Mine are apples grown to the south,
(O Troy Town!)
Grown to taste in the days of drouth,
Taste and waste to the heart's desire: 60
Mine are apples meet for his mouth."
(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire!)

Venus looked on Helen's gift,
(O Troy Town!) 65
Looked and smiled with subtle drift,
Saw the work of her heart's desire:—
"There thou kneel'st for Love to lift!"
(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire!) 70

Venus looked in Helen's face,
(O Troy Town!)
Knew far off an hour and place,
And fire lit from the heart's desire;
Laughed and said, "Thy gift hath grace!" 75
(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire!)

Cupid looked on Helen's breast,
(O Troy Town!)
Saw the heart within its nest, 80
Saw the flame of the heart's desire,—
Marked his arrow's burning crest.
(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire!)

Cupid took another dart, 85
(O Troy Town!)
Fledged it for another heart,
Winged the shaft with the heart's desire,
Drew the string and said, "Depart!"
(O Troy's down, 90
Tall Troy's on fire!)

Paris turned upon his bed,
(O Troy Town!)
Turned upon his bed and said,

	Dead at heart with the heart's desire, — 95 "Oh to clasp her golden head!" (O Troy's down, Tall Troy's on fire!)
Venus Verticordia (1863-1868, oil on canvas, 83.8 x 71.2 cm) Russell-Cotes Art Gallery, Bournemouth Available at: <https://www.pubhist.com/w17861>. Accessed on: Nov. 7, 2011.	**Venus Verticordia** **(For a Picture)** She hath the apple in her hand for thee, Yet almost in her heart would hold it back; She muses, with her eyes upon the track Of that which in thy spirit they can see. Haply, "Behold, he is at peace," saith she; 5 "Alas! the apple for his lips, – the dart That follows its brief sweetness to his heart, – The wandering of his feet perpetually!" A little space her glance is still and coy; But if she give the fruit that works her spell, 10 Those eyes shall flame as for her Phrygian boy. Then shall her bird's strained throat the woe foretell, And her far seas moan as a single shell, And through her dark grove strike the light of Troy.