

2012

Eve and the Madonna in Victorian Art

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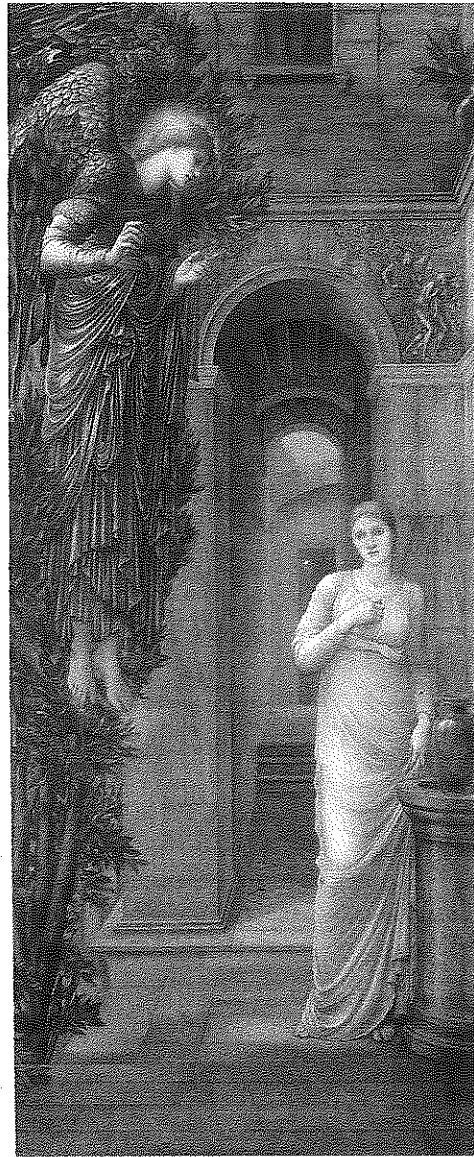
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Eve and the Madonna in Victorian Art

Bebhinn Dungan



**University of Plymouth
Faculty of Arts**

**History of Art
M.Phil. Dissertation**

June 2008

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Eve and the Madonna in Victorian Art

by

Bebhinn Dungan

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Art and Performance
Faculty of Arts

June 2008

Abstract

This study identifies and addresses representations of Eve and the Madonna exhibited at seven well-known London venues during the Victorian era (1838-1901). The subjects of Eve and the Madonna are here selected for detailed analysis from the broader context of Victorian religious subject pictures, a category of Victorian art that remains arguably under-researched. Nineteenth-century religious art was rooted in a Romantic sensibility and was invested with the purpose of providing a balm during a coarse, commercial, industrial age, which, like the Enlightenment that preceded it, heralded the birth of modern life.

Religious art of the mid-nineteenth century was promoted for consumption by the emerging middle class as a balm to the material age. However, the art that reflected this anti-modern, anti-capitalist impulse served, paradoxically, as both an antidote to and a participant in the materialist marketplace. During the mid-nineteenth century, a moralizing, instructional value was invested in art and religious subjects in general, experienced a peak in exhibition c.1850. By the 1860s, however, British art was characterized by a less narrative and didactic sensibility, reflected in Aestheticism, which was concerned with 'a separation of art from the concerns of 'real' life,' as well the introduction of a sensuality that, in the work of some artists, recalled Titian and the Venetian Renaissance.¹ In the 1880s, Symbolism emerged, characterized not by a style, but a sensibility, which included preoccupation with emotions, dream states, mythologies and religion, innocence, sin, beauty, motherhood, sex, disease, death. Although they were traditional religious figures, the Madonna and Eve were each invested with, and emblematic of, some of these *fin-de-siècle* themes.

The seven prominent Victorian London exhibition venues examined range from conservative promoters of academicism to sites that promoted the risk-takers of the nineteenth century, such as the Grosvenor Gallery and the New Gallery. These were venues where national tastes were codified, national heroes were made and international artistic values were reexamined and reevaluated.

This dissertation examines a nineteenth-century trajectory, from the early Victorian era through the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, identifying the styles of art through which two biblical icons of feminine identity, Eve and the Madonna, were expressed, and examining the ideas invested in them, all within the context of the Victorian revival of interest in Renaissance art and the stylistic trends in nineteenth-century art making.

¹ Prettejohn, Elizabeth (ed.) *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999, p. 7.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Master of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

This study was financed in part with the aid of a scholarship from the University of Plymouth, 2003-2006.

Relevant seminars and conferences were attended, external institutions were visited for consultation purposes, and a seminar presentation was given at the University of Plymouth, School of Art and Performance, Faculty of Arts, Exeter.

Presentation and Conferences Attended:

'Victorian Religious Painting,' seminar presentation given at the University of Plymouth, School of Art and Performance, Faculty of Arts, Exeter, November, 2004.

'Pre-Raphaelite Vision: Truth to Nature,' 12 February – 3 May, 2004, Tate Britain, London Conference attended.

'G.F. Watts: Portraits Fame & Beauty in Victorian Society,' 14 October 2004 - 9 January 2005, National Portrait Gallery, London, Conference attended.

'Pre-Raphaelite and other Masters: the Andrew Lloyd Webber Collection,'
'20 September-12 December 2003, Main Galleries, Royal Academy of Arts, London

Dr. Debra Mancoff, "A quest for beauty: the art of Edward Burne-Jones," October 24, 2003, seminar attended.

Dr. Alvin Staley, "Yankees in King George's Court," November 4, 2004, Royal Academy of Arts, lecture attended.

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Art historical research conducted and membership at: British Library, National Art Library (Victoria & Albert Museum, London), Tate Britain, Witt Library & Conway Library (Courtauld Institute of Art, London), Watson Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Public Library (NYPL) Humanities & Social Sciences Library, and Frick Art Reference Library, New York.

Word count of main body of thesis:

40,963

(not including footnotes and endnotes, or 53,265, including footnotes and endnotes)

Signed


Bebhinn Dungan

Date June 30, 2008

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the University of Plymouth and my supervisors there: Dr. Elizabeth Prettejohn, Dr. Jennifer Graham, Dr. Sam Smiles, and the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dr. Roberta Mock. This study was financed, in part, with the aid of a scholarship from the University of Plymouth, 2003-2006. I also wish to thank the administration at the University of Plymouth, particularly Rosemary Hatch, Ann Jervoise and Sue Matheron. I am indebted to fellow students for their valuable seminar presentations and their feedback on my seminar presentation. I am also grateful to the Department of the History of Art, University of Buckingham, who first introduced me to the subject of British art during my undergraduate studies. The staff of the libraries where I have conducted research in London and New York couldn't have been kinder or more helpful, particularly the National Art Library at the Victoria & Albert Museum, where I spent the most time, and benefited from the camaraderie of Gisela Fischer- thanks Gisi. Finally, many thanks to my family, Terry, Sue and Colin, who coaxed the seeds of a love of art, architecture and cultural heritage, from travel together all over England, Wales and Ireland, to International Summer Schools at Cambridge University, where I studied both Medieval art and the art of Pre-Raphaelites and Symbolists. Among family, I count Alison Marshall and Anneli Larsson, who have provided support I could not have done without, as graduate and post-graduate students, and dear, dear friends. Thanks so much Ali & *puss puss* Anneli. My greatest debt is to my husband Jeff, a painter, writer and teacher, who has taught me to think about art making, art theory, art criticism and, indeed, art history in new ways. Jeff has read, and aided in editing, large drafts of this dissertation and I am grateful for his effort and insights.

Chapter I. Introduction

This study identifies and addresses representations of Eve and the Madonna exhibited at seven well-known London venues during the Victorian era (1838-1901). The subjects of Eve and the Madonna are here selected for detailed analysis from the broader context of Victorian religious subject pictures, a category of Victorian art that remains arguably under-researched. Nineteenth-century religious art was rooted in a Romantic sensibility and was invested with the purpose of providing a balm during a coarse, commercial, industrial age, which, like the Enlightenment that preceded it, heralded the birth of modern life.

Writing in 1894, Esther Wood credited the Pre-Raphaelites with having inaugurated a kind of 'Renaissance of the nineteenth century.'¹ By rejecting the conventions of eighteenth-century art, no longer appropriate to the 'tension of modern life,' she credited artists like Dante Gabriel Rossetti for introducing 'Madonnas more human than angelic; with the sweet cares of womanhood on them all' into contemporary art.² The 'humanizing of woman's image' through art, when traditional ideals are modified, can effect 'more natural prototypes.'³ Wood counted the Pre-Raphaelite movement as 'a single wave in a great reactionary tide,' one of 'rising protest and rebellion of our (nineteenth) century against artificial authority, against tradition and convention in every department of life,' which spread from 'ethics to politics,' as well as to science and art.⁴ Indeed, Darwin, she stated, in 'reforming the world of science' had

¹ Wood, Esther *Dante Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites*, London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, Limited, 1894, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

³ Kraus, H. 'Eve and Mary: Conflicting Images of Medieval Woman' in Broude, M. and Garrard, M., *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982, p. 98.

⁴ Wood, 1894, p. 9.

'laid in the doctrine of evolution, the foundations of a new cosmology.'⁵ It was incumbent upon painting, in her estimation, to 'take its stand against the classic and orthodox scholasticism now discredited and void.'⁶ 'Accepted canons,' Wood stated, eventually become 'barren dogmas of an outgrown habit of mind' and one can imagine that G.F. Watts, for example, would certainly have agreed.⁷ In 1894, Wood identified art as a site where 'the strife of the new thought with the old language is begun.'⁸ We can read something of this 'new thought' in the changing 'language' of art during the course of the nineteenth century. Victorian representations of the Madonna and Eve, archetypes who retained the essential qualities with which they are traditionally invested, such as the purity and sanctified maternal love of the former, and the sensuality and morbidity associated with the latter, demonstrate that the way in which they, in particular, were represented during the nineteenth century reflects the broader concerns of the art of the time.

Religious art of the mid-nineteenth century was promoted for consumption by the emerging middle class as a balm to the material age. However, the art that reflected this anti-modern, anti-capitalist impulse served, paradoxically, as both an antidote to and a participant in the materialist marketplace. During the mid-nineteenth century, a moralizing, instructional value was invested in art and religious subjects in general, experienced a peak in exhibition circa 1850. The Pre-Raphaelites were associated with the adaptation of the manner and subjects of early Renaissance art, being likened to Fra Angelico and Perugino, for example. By the 1860s, however, British art was

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

characterized by a less narrative and didactic sensibility, reflected in Aestheticism, which was concerned with 'a separation of art from the concerns of 'real' life,' as well the introduction of a poetic sensuality that, in the work of some artists, recalled Titian and the Venetian Renaissance.⁹ In the 1880s, Symbolism emerged, characterized not by a style, but a sensibility, which included preoccupation with emotions, dream states, mythologies and religion, innocence, sin, beauty, motherhood, sex, disease, and death. Although they were traditional, religious figures, the Madonna and Eve were each emblematic of some of these *fin-de-siècle* themes.

Watts' paintings of Eve, such as *She shall be called woman*, c.1875-92 [Fig. 1], William Dyce's, *Madonna and Child*, 1827-30 [Fig. 2], Rossetti's, *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, 1850 [Fig. 3], and Edward Burne-Jones' *The Annunciation*, 1879 [Fig. 4] are among the best-known Victorian paintings of Eve and the Madonna. The exhibition venues studied are: the Royal Academy of Arts (RA, est.1768), British Institution (BI, est. 1806), Society of Painters in Water Colours (OWS, est. 1804, RWS from 1881), Dudley Gallery (DG, est. 1865), Grosvenor Gallery (GG, est. 1877), New Gallery (NG, est. 1888) and New English Art Club (NEAC, est. 1886).¹⁰

Well-known nineteenth-century paintings of religious subjects include: *The Angel Standing in the Sun*, 1846, by J.M.W. Turner [Fig. 5], *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, 1850, by Rossetti, *Christ in the House of his Parents*, 1850, by Millais [Fig. 6], *The Cross in the Mountains*, 1807-8, by Friedrich [Fig. 7], *The Virgin and Child in the Desert*, 1844, by

⁹ Prettejohn, Elizabeth (ed.) *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999, p. 7.

¹⁰ The Society of Painters in Water Colours was founded in 1804, collapsed in 1812, and was re-formed the same year as the Society of Painters in Oils and Water Colours, was again established as exclusively as a Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1820, and finally became the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1881, by agreement with Queen Victoria. From 1988 to the present day it has been The Royal Water Colour Society.

Delaroche [Fig. 8], *Song of the Angels*, 1881, by Bouguereau [Fig. 9], *The Yellow Christ*, 1889, by Gauguin [Fig. 10]; and *Madonna*, 1894-5, by Munch [Fig. 11]. Originally the domain of the Catholic Church, religious subjects were also produced by European academies as a type of history painting. A new middle class emerged from the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and industrialist collectors increasingly filled new mansions with contemporary British art.¹¹ Publications such as the 'aggressively' middle-class *Art Journal*, the most influential of its kind in England, were formed to promote contemporary English artists.¹² Victorians argued against traditional academic history painting, 'with its obscure subject-matter derived from classical literature and mythology,' because such subjects 'held little significance for contemporary middle-class audiences.'¹³ The Victorian exhibition venues examined range from conservative promoters of academicism to sites that promoted the risk-takers of the nineteenth century, such as the Grosvenor Gallery and the New Gallery. These were venues where national tastes were codified, national heroes were made and international artistic values were reexamined and reevaluated.

Statistical Overview: Types and Examples of Eve and Madonna

Eve has been represented as variety of types: the Birth or Creation of Eve; Eve Tempted; the Expulsion of Adam and Eve; as a mother after Expulsion; and as a Miltonic subject, derived from the epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667). The Madonna was also represented as a variety of types: the Annunciate; at the Nativity; in the Flight into Egypt;

¹¹ Giebelhausen, M. 'Academic orthodoxy versus Pre-Raphaelite heresy: debating religious painting at the Royal Academy, 1840-50' in Cardoso Denis, R. and Trodd, C. (eds), *Art and the Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000, p. 99.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

as a Madonna with Child; and as the *Mater Dolorosa*, mourning the crucifixion of Jesus, for example. The overall number of religious subject paintings exhibited at the RA during the course of the nineteenth century began to rise steadily from the 1830s, peaked in 1850 and then declined until 1855, followed by a marginal increase from 1855-1860, after which the number simply leveled off for the remainder of the century.¹⁴ Overall, subjects from the New Testament outnumbered those of the Old Testament, or Hebrew Bible, with the exception of the mid-1840s and a brief period c.1860, when the trend was inverted.¹⁵ Within the broad category of religious subjects, this study focuses upon the number of works representing both Eve and the Madonna, biblical personalities depicted in the 'Old' and 'New' Testaments respectively, exhibited not only at the RA, but at an additional six London venues during the Victorian era (1838-1901).

Research of the exhibition catalogues of the exhibition venues selected for this study demonstrates that representations of the Madonna were shown more frequently than Eve in the premier galleries of nineteenth-century London. Eve and Madonna subjects at the exhibition venues surveyed collectively occur in a ratio of approximately one to three. There are four times more images of the Madonna available than those of Eve. While the subject of the Madonna occurs in greater proportion to that of Eve, the latter, popularly characterized as a type of *femme fatale*, constitutes an intriguing juxtaposition with the sanctified mother figure.

¹⁴ This is evinced by Giebelhausen's research, which evaluated the overall number of religious paintings in percent exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, from 1825-1870. See *Representation, Belief and the Pre-Raphaelite Project, 1840-1860* (Worcester College, Oxford, Ph.D. Thesis, 1997), p. 308. My research of the years 1838-1901, confirms Giebelhausen's findings, and extends some thirty years beyond through the end of the nineteenth century.

¹⁵ Giebelhausen, 1997, pp. 309-311.

The number of works inclusive of Eve peaked in the 1850s when, as research conducted by Giebelhausen indicates, the overall number of religious subjects peaked. Where Giebelhausen's study ends, in the 1870s, however, is just where the subject of Eve picks up again and peaks in last quarter of the nineteenth century; at approximately the same number as it had during the 1850s. This may be because the subject of a mythological, sensual, even morbid nude was well-suited to the Aesthetic and Symbolist Movements. Similarly, the number of works inclusive of the Virgin Mary, or, the Madonna, also peaked in 1850, when the overall number of religious subjects was at its highest at the RA in the nineteenth century. However, while the subject of Eve was on the rise again from the 1870s, that of the Madonna experienced a decline from the 1860s through the 1880s. Nevertheless, like Eve, the Madonna experienced a relatively high occurrence again in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It might be surmised that, as an emblem of sanctified motherhood, the Madonna, too, served a Symbolist purpose at the turn of the century, and 'peaked' again during the 1890s. In fact, both the Madonna and Eve (before the Fall) traditionally symbolize innocence, and for this reason, they may have been of interest to artists at the turn of the century. Themes in the art of Watts, for example, were described by a contemporary literary and art critic C.K. Chesterton as 'eternal things' such as 'day and fire and the sea, and motherhood and the dead;' all 'typically Symbolist subject-matter.'¹⁶

The first Victorian Madonna subject shown at the venues studied was the *Madonna and Child* by William Dyce; exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1838. Among the last Victorian Madonna subjects at the Royal Academy were: *The Annunciation*:

¹⁶ G.K. Chesterton, cited in Edward Lucie-Smith, *Symbolist Art*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1972, p. 49.

'Hail thou art highly favoured!' by Beatrice Parsons, exhibited in 1899, [Fig. 12], and *Mary, the mother of Jesus* by Jennie Moore, exhibited in 1901.¹⁷ These paintings "bookend" Victorian academic representations of the Virgin Mary, and demonstrate distinct artistic modes characteristic of the Victorian era. The Italian manner adopted by Dyce reflects the nineteenth-century interest in Italian Renaissance art; particularly the revival of "early art," which peaked mid-century. The 'rise in interest in the earlier schools of Italian painting in the English art world,' is described by Plampin as particularly strong in the 1840s, when the 'study and collection of primitive painting was transformed from a marginal pursuit to an aspect of mainstream taste.'¹⁸ The medievalism employed by Beatrice Parsons as late as 1899, reflects the persistence of a loosely Pre-Raphaelite style that was most prominent, in its original form, during the mid nineteenth-century in England, and in a more Aesthetic form, such as that of Burne-Jones, in the latter half of the century. Medievalism was identified with Pre-Raphaelites and their followers, and came to be viewed as a national style by contemporaries. This persistence of the Pre-Raphaelite style in England, as late as the turn of the century, however, is also considered to be a symptom of an 'insularity' that characterized British art, and also accounts, in part, for the style of the representations of the Madonna.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jennie Moore is listed in Christopher Wood's *Dictionary of Victorian Painters* (London: Antique Collectors Club, 1971), p. 105, as "a painter of domestic genre and scriptural pictures", but little else is known: her water colours are held at the Museum of Norwich. Other works exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1901 which likely represent the Virgin Mary are: *Flight into Egypt*, by Simon H. Vedder, and *The Family at Nazareth* by Augusto Stoppoloni. A water-colour by Henry R. Robertson, RPE (member of the Royal Society of Painters and Etchers), entitled *La Madonna di Mestre* was also exhibited in 1901. Because the subject is painted in water colour, and as Robertson is defined by Christopher Wood as a "painter of landscape, rustic genre and portraits", it is most likely travel/genre of a subject in Mestre, Italy (mainland Venice).

¹⁸ Matthew T.W. Plampin, *From Rio to Romola: Morality and Didacticism in the English Appreciation of Early Italian Art 1836-1863* (Courtauld Institute of Art, Ph.D. Thesis, 2001), Abstract.

¹⁹ Lucie-Smith, 1971, p. 33. Examples of the persistence of the Madonna, and Madonna types, in the art of Pre-Raphaelite followers might include: *The Annunciation*, RA 1914, and *The Missal*, 1909, by Waterhouse, *Purity*, 1899, by Philip Richard Morris.

Few Victorian artists represented both subjects, Eve and the Virgin Mary; John Roddham Spencer Stanhope, however, painted both: *The Flight into Egypt*, 1862 [Fig. 13], and, more famously, *Eve Tempted*, c.1877 [Fig. 14]. Edward Burne-Jones, painted several works representing the Madonna, including *The Annunciation*, 1879 [Fig. 4], and *The Days of Creation (The Sixth Day)*, 1877.²⁰ In the 1890s, he completed two large-scale, public works, *The Star of Bethlehem*, 1887-91, and *The Tree of Life*, c.1891-2, for the decoration of the American Episcopal Church of St. Paul's, Rome, a commission for which he received high praise; representing, therefore, the Madonna in the former and Eve in the latter.²¹ These will be discussed and illustrated in chapters two and three.²² In a sense, Rossetti could be credited with tackling both subjects, having painted many Virgin Mary subjects from the late 1840s through the 1860s, including *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, 1850 [Fig. 3], and also Adam's mythological first wife, *Lady Lilith*, 1868 [Fig. 15]. Victorian artists normally represented one or the other, Eve or the Madonna, over the span of a career, but almost never both; the exceptions to this tending to be second-generation Pre-Raphaelites.

Locating images

The study of Victorian art is complicated by the difficulty in identifying and locating the original works or reproductions of the works in question. Most of the original Victorian exhibition catalogues studied were not illustrated, particularly during the first half of the nineteenth century, therefore limiting the number of images of Eve and

²⁰ Discussed in Chapter III., Fig. 98.

²¹ See "THE FACE OF THE MASTER."; The Rev. Dr. John Watson Describes the Ideals of Eminent Painters Regarding Jesus, *New York Times*, March 12, 1899, Pg. 13

²² Figures 81 and 116.

Madonna subjects identified by the titles. Exceptions among the venues researched include *Royal Academy Pictures*, begun in 1887, which illustrated approximately 20% of the art works in the annual Royal Academy summer exhibition; and *New Gallery Notes*, edited by Henry Blackburn, a partially illustrated catalogue of the annual exhibitions of the New Gallery from 1889-1895. From 1882, the exhibition catalogue of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours was partially illustrated.²³

Primary and Secondary Nineteenth-Century Sources

Nineteenth-century exhibition catalogues of the venues selected for study are the primary source of the data gathered in cataloguing the frequency with which Eve and Madonna subjects occurred in the Victorian years (1838-1901). When, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, they included reproductions of works exhibited, these catalogues are also a source of illustration. Victorian periodicals addressing contemporary aesthetic and religious issues will be examined, including art criticism of several works discussed in chapters two and three. In the search for art reviews and illustrations of religious subjects, I read just about every *Art Journal* and *Athenaeum*, from 1838 - c.1901, located in the National Art Library and the British Art Library. Victorian periodical sources for this study, therefore, include: the *Art Journal*, *Athenaeum*, *Contemporary Review*, *Portfolio*, *Observer*, *Fraser's Magazine*, *Literary Gazette*, *Illustrated London News*, and *Burlington Magazine*. Even the satirical publication *Punch*, provides an understanding of Victorian attitudes to contemporary art,

²³ Potter, A. Research Assistant, Royal Academy Library (Library@royalacademy.org.uk). "Image query." E-mail to Bebhinn Dungan. 9 February 2005. The 1882 exhibition catalogue of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours illustrated 24% of the total paintings exhibited. Reproductions are universally inferior to the original art works.

art of the Old Masters, aesthetic discourse, science and contemporary religious and political issues that informed Victorian art production and critical reception, albeit tongue-in-cheek.

Contemporary art historical discourse, Victorian artists' autobiographies and personal letters, even contemporary poetry about Lilith, Eve and the Madonna as well as short fiction on the subject of the Madonna in art, provide a multi-disciplinary context for the examination of these figures in Victorian art and culture. The early-mid nineteenth century taste for the Primitives can be traced through the well-known literature that contributed to the field: A.F. Rio's *De la poésie Chrétienne* (1836), Mrs. Anna Jameson's *Memoirs of Earlier Italian Painters* (serial form 1841, book form 1845), Kugler's *Handbook to the Italian schools of painting* published in English translation (1842), volume two of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1846), Lord Lindsay's *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (1847), volume one of Mrs. Anna Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848) and Dr. Gustav Waagen's *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*.²⁴ Evidence of the contemporary concern with Old Master prototypes in Victorian religious painting is borne out by the fact that when Rossetti's *Girlhood of Mary Virgin* was exhibited in 1849 at least seven of the reviews compared it with the Primitives.²⁵ Jameson's *Legends of the Madonna*, published in 1852 'had a large, willing and enthusiastic readership then and long afterwards,' evinced by more than one hundred printings, and provides a

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. iv.

²⁵ Cooper, Robyn *English Attitudes to the Italian Primitives, 1815-1865, with special reference to the mid-nineteenth century fashion* (University of Sussex, DPhil., 1976), p. 322.

contemporary Victorian framework for relating to the various categorizations of Madonna types.²⁶

Stylistic Idioms:

Academicism, Romanticism, Pre-Raphaelitism, Aestheticism, and Symbolism

Romanticism was extraordinarily popular and strongly influenced historical and religious painting. In England, this is especially evident in the work of Dyce and the Pre-Raphaelites. The *Art Journal* asserted that the names of Overbeck and Müller were 'sufficient guarantee for the purity of design and elevation' which, it was generally believed, should characterise religious subjects.²⁷ British Romantic artists such as William Blake, Samuel Palmer, Turner, Francis Danby and John Martin defined religious painting in early Victorian Britain. In 1906, Robert Ross wrote in the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*:

'Charles Lamb, one of Blake's admirers, complained that the English were too Protestant to paint the Madonna. But Blake has painted her very often. Not as the coarse model posing at one shilling an hour, but as a type of dignity- the dignity of living art, no less than the symbol of a living faith.'²⁸

Ross identified Blake as 'the first Englishman prepared, like Dante, to paint an angel.'²⁹

Ross singled out *The Nativity*, 1799-1800 [Fig. 16], and a *Riposo*, commending the latter for a 'sacrosanct aloofness from probability necessary in pictures intended for devotional

²⁶ (The third volume in her six-volume series *The Poetry of Sacred and Legendary Art*.) Thomas, Clara 'Anna Jameson: Art Historian and Critic', *Woman's Art Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring-Summer 1980, p. 20. Of the series by Jameson, Clara Thomas wrote: 'By 1860 there had been seven editions, and after her death (in 1860), thirty, the last one in 1911, altogether 113 printings.' My parenthetical text. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁸ Ross, R. 'The Place of William Blake in English Art', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 9, No. 39 (Jun., 1906), p. 161.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

purpose;' a quality also addressed by Jameson, and discussed in chapter two of this study.³⁰

Pre-Raphaelitism was modeled in large part upon early Renaissance prototypes such as Fra Angelico and Perugino. The *Art Journal* often engaged in aesthetic discourse favoring the revival of the primitives, describing the 'earnest and sincere treatments of the monastic painters' in contrast to 'the conventions' of 'technical appliance' characteristic of 'the later Italian school' which was identified as a time of artistic 'decline.'³¹ In Britain, the influence of the 'primitives' was apparent in the early work of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1849, and *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, 1850, both by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and *Christ in the House of his Parents*, 1850, by John Everett Millais, for example. Mid-century alternatives to the academic status quo, therefore, included Pre-Raphaelite religious subject paintings.

Stylistic lines were blurred in the third quarter of the nineteenth century when Simeon Solomon, Burne-Jones and John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, although associated with Pre-Raphaelitism, adopted an Aesthetic approach characterized by detachment of the subject from narrative context. In the case of religious subjects, however, some attributes or symbols associated with iconographic tradition were often retained. *The Annunciation* by Burne-Jones, 1879 [Fig. 4], *Eve Tempted*, c.1877, by Stanhope and *The Annunciation* by Solomon, 1892 [Fig. 17], are examples of this tendency. A languorous, Aestheticist sensualism applied to a religious subject is also evident in two *Mary Magdalene* paintings by Frederick Sandys; one of 1858-60 [Fig. 18] and the other of 1862.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

³¹ 'Fine Arts: British Institution', *Art Journal*, June 15, 1850, No. 1181, p. 642.

Walter Pater, principal theorist of Aestheticism, prefaced *The Renaissance* by advising that, when considering a work of art, aesthetic critics should ask of themselves: 'What effect does it really produce on me?' and 'How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence?'³² Pater believed that the answer to these questions constitutes 'primary data' that one must 'realise' for one's self.³³ He concluded *The Renaissance* with the injunction to live a life of 'intellectual excitement' as described by Rousseau, and that a 'quickened, multiplied consciousness' should be achieved through the pursuit of 'wisdom...poetic passion...beauty' and 'the love of art for its own sake,' thereby freeing his art-loving contemporaries from the strictures of moral art history.³⁴

Elizabeth Prettejohn, whilst acknowledging David Carrier's statement that Pater had little interest in or knowledge of contemporary visual art, reminds us that *The Renaissance*, is, nevertheless, 'preoccupied with precisely the same art-historical and theoretical concerns that are evident in the paintings of the artists associated with Aestheticism.'³⁵ Those concerns are: 'Venetian painting, Botticelli, Leonardo, Michelangelo; the distinction between medieval and Renaissance; the analogy between art and music; the possibility of an art that refuses subservience to 'reality' in the form of...visual realism,' for example.³⁶ Among those associated with Aestheticism, by

³² Hill, Donald H. (ed.) *Walter Pater The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1893 text), Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1980, p. xx. Four editions were published during Pater's lifetime: 1873, 1877, 1888, 1893.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 190. Pater specifically referred to Book VI of Rousseau's *Confessions* (1736).

³⁵ David Carrier, 'Baudelaire, Pater, and the origins of modernism', *Comparative Criticism*, Vol. 17 (1995), p.112, cited in Prettejohn, E. 'Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting', *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999, p. 37. My parenthetical insertion.

³⁶ Prettejohn, 1999, p. 38.

organized by the Royal Academy of Arts and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, '1900: Art at the Crossroads' was divided into categories such as Woman-Man and Religion, demonstrating the Symbolist nature of art at the turn of the century.⁴¹ Reference was made to the *femme fatale* in the representation of Eve, Salome and woman as a 'Beast.'⁴² Mary Cassatt, Eugène Carrière, Munch, Bouguereau, Pablo Picasso, Maurice Denis, and Henry Ossawa Tanner all painted religious subjects, which included 'secular Madonnas,' or, paintings of a contemporary mother and child which allude to elements of traditional Old Master religious compositions. Victorian works that represented the 'secular Madonna', adapted from Old Masters, include Ford Madox Brown's, *Take Your Son, Sir!*, 1867, [Fig. 21] and T.C. Gotch's, *Holy Motherhood*, 1902 [Fig. 22].

New Scholarship

Surveys of Victorian art tend to deal with religious art in the context of other categories.⁴³ For example, Biblical scenes, particularly those of the Old Testament, sometimes find their way into chapters on 'Olympians' or landscape painting. Some well-known New Testament scenes, particularly *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1849, and *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, 1850, by Rossetti and 'Christ in the House of His Parents', 1850, by Millais, are requisite inclusions in chapters on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Early Victorian religious subjects such as John Martin and Francis Danby's sublime Biblical

⁴¹ *1900: Art at the Crossroads*. Exhibition catalogue by Robert Rosenblum, MaryAnn Stevens, and Ann Dumas, New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2000. This exhibition was at the RA, London, 16 January – 3 April, 2000, and at the Guggenheim in New York, 18 May – 10 September 2000.

⁴² *Adam and Eve* (1899), by Hans Thoma, *Sin* (1899), by Franz von Stuck, *Salome* (1898), by Wilhelm Trübner, *Salome* (c.1899) by Jean Benner, *Salome* (1899) by Lovis Corinth, *The Beast* (1901), by Munch.

⁴³ See *Victorian Painting* (1999) by Lionel Lambourne, *Victorian Painting* (1999) by Christopher Wood, *Victorian Painters* (1969) by Jeremy Maas, *Victorian Artists* (1967) by Quentin Bell, and *Victorian Painting*, (1966) by Graham Reynolds.

dramas have been addressed within the context of the phenomenon of the panorama. The allegorical, iconic, single-figure compositions that represent later Victorian treatment of religious or spiritual aspects are often classified in chapters on Aesthetic and Symbolist art. Subsequently, surveys of Victorian art introduce the reader to Victorian religious images piecemeal through an incidental approach under a variety of primarily stylistic categorizations. The 'Modern Sacred Art' of the Victorians, arguably remains, as yet, an unwritten chapter in surveys of Victorian art.⁴⁴ This dissertation resurrects many works that are not well-known, along with gathering together works which are, and endeavours to address and examine a marginalized subject that engaged in the general art historical and art making discourses of the nineteenth century.

Michaela Giebelhausen's recent book, *Painting the Bible: Representation and Belief in Mid-Victorian Britain*, makes great strides in filling a gap in the scholarship on religious subjects in Victorian art.⁴⁵ Investigating the transformation of religious painting in mid-nineteenth century Britain, Giebelhausen focuses on the emergence of Protestant, realist religious subject painting, arguably pioneered by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, with particular attention to the work of William Holman Hunt. Giebelhausen's concentration is on the 1840s-1860s. Her book addresses religious art exhibited at the Royal Academy (RA) and critiqued in the Victorian periodicals in order to contextualize the work and critical reception of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P.R.B.). The emphasis is on the 1840s; however, the book culminates in William Holman Hunt's 'Orientalist

⁴⁴ Christopher Wood's book *Victorian Panorama: Paintings of Victorian Life*, specifically addressed religious subjects in Victorian art in a chapter called 'The Seventh Day,' which addresses the representation of the Sabbath in Victorian painting.

⁴⁵ Giebelhausen, M. *Painting the Bible: Representation and Belief in Mid-Victorian Britain*, Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006.

refashioning of Christ' and also examines *The Shadow of Death*, 1870-73.⁴⁶ Her book illustrates some ten Victorian pictures representing the Virgin Mary or Madonna and Child, at least six of which are addressed in this dissertation.⁴⁷ However, the book illustrates and examines a total of 67 pictures, most of which do not fall within the scope of this dissertation: scenes from the Old Testament, none of which address Eve, and scenes from the Life of Christ, most of which do not include the Virgin Mary.

Giebelhausen's D.Phil. thesis, 'Representation, Belief and the Pre-Raphaelite Project, 1840-1860' (Worcester College, University of Oxford, 1997), examines the Victorian art world in the 1840s, focuses upon the Pre-Raphaelites in mid-century, and culminates in a close study of the direction taken by Hunt with *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1854-60. Her examination of Victorian religious art is based upon the analysis of three types of primary sources: the paintings evaluated are primarily works listed in the catalogues of the annual exhibition at the RA, the periodicals whose critical responses to Victorian religious art are discussed are: *Art-Union*, later the *Art Journal*, the *Athenaeum* and the *Times*, and illustrated editions of the Bible published in Britain from 1820-1890 are also examined.

Giebelhausen's thesis charts the 'important transformations that religious painting underwent during the period from 1840 to 1860 and investigates the intervention of the

⁴⁶Giebelhausen, Michaela. "RE: Victorian religious subjects." E-mail to Bebhinn Dungan. 28 November 2004.

⁴⁷ Illustrations of pictures inclusive of the Virgin Mary are: *The Youth of Our Lord*, by John Rogers Herbert, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, by D.G. Rossetti, *Christ in the House of His Parents (The Carpenter's Shop)*, by John Everett Millais, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* and *The Shadow of Death*, both by William Holman Hunt, *The Nativity*, by Arthur Hughes, *Our Ladye of Good Children*, by Ford Maddox Brown, *Madonna and Child*, by William Dyce, *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* and *Mary in the House of St. John*, both by D.G. Rossetti. There are a further six engravings and sketches (studies by Millais for *Christ in the House of His Parents*) illustrated which relate to pictures inclusive of the Virgin Mary.

Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.⁴⁸ The most significant change she identifies is the challenge to the conventions of academic representation such as the notion of 'authentic reconstruction' in nineteenth-century history painting.⁴⁹ She identifies Benjamin Robert Haydon and Charles Lock Eastlake as painters representative of the 'worn-out conventions of academic art.'⁵⁰ Daniel Maclise, John Rogers Herbert and Dyce are painters whose religious subjects of the 1840s are cited as challenges to academic convention. Eastlake is noted for having 'combined an academic style with a popular selection of religious images.'⁵¹ Giebelhausen quotes novelist, satirist and critic William Makepeace Thackeray's pronouncement of Eastlake as the 'archbishop' of art on account of the 'purity and religious feeling' felt to characterize Eastlake's paintings, which were arguably popular on account of sentiment.⁵² Eastlake's art is identified as appearing 'dated' by 1850 when 'the tide had turned' in favor of a 'modified high art ideal that was closer to historical genre painting.'⁵³

In contrast to, and as an alternative to, the conventionality of Eastlake and academics such as Henry Nelson O'Neill, Giebelhausen proposes Dyce's *Jacob and Rachel*, 1850, the contemporary German and French classicism of Maclise, and the symbolic, New Testament subjects by J.R. Herbert as 'modifications of the traditional high art ideal.'⁵⁴ The 'modification' identified in the work of Herbert is represented by synthesis of classical convention in the idealism of contemporary German and French art in the treatment of the figures, with the new interest in authenticity introduced through

⁴⁸ Giebelhausen, Michaela *Representation, Belief and the Pre-Raphaelite Project, 1840-1860* (Worcester College, Oxford, Ph.D. Thesis, 1997), p. i.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. v.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. v.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 90

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.99

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109

'topographical veracity' in nineteenth-century representations of the Holy Land. The emulation of the effect of fresco is noted in the modifications of some religious paintings of the 1840s, such as those of Dyce and Herbert. Examination of the academic modifications of the 1840s and 1850 are followed by discussion of the intervention of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in the 1850s.

Giebelhausen concentrates on the critical reception of the religious paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, with particular attention to Rossetti's *Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1849, and Millais' *The Carpenter's Shop* ('*Christ in the House of his Parents*'), 1851. A significant point of discussion in her thesis is new analysis of *The Carpenter's Shop*. She proposes a reading that 'frees the painting from the limited and long-lived interpretation as a show-piece of Tractarian propaganda.'⁵⁵ A critical language that valued the 'emotive qualities of sincerity and seriousness' in Pre-Raphaelite art is identified with the language of developing art historical appreciation of the Old Masters of Early Art in nineteenth-century. It is posited that the Pre-Raphaelites 'privileged qualities associated with Early Art' which would effectively disassociate art production from the art market and 'invest it with a quality more akin to worship.'⁵⁶ Indeed, the reaction against capitalism, or, 'the market,' is a modernist impulse that characterizes the art of latter half of the nineteenth century; particularly with the increased urbanization c.1850, a transformation famously evinced, in England, by the census of 1851.

The primary artistic discussions center on the Millais and on several works by Hunt: *Christ and the Two Marys*, *The Light of the World*, *The Awakening Conscience*, and *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*. Hunt's representation of nature's minutiae

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 116

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118

is identified as a quality ‘motivated by a deep-rooted Protestantism.’⁵⁷ She asserts that ‘through the strategies of Orientalism, Hunt perfected the combination of the two different modes of representation that had created tensions in a range of illustrated Bibles’ thus creating a ‘historical and scientific religious art’ that represented a ‘truly contemporary and Protestant methodology.’⁵⁸

Giebelhausen’s thesis has the most direct relationship to this dissertation when addressing mid-Victorian religious painting. Her thesis posits and examines paradigm shifts in Victorian religious painting of the 1840s through the Pre-Raphaelites in the 1850s, with concentration on Hunt’s development as a Victorian religious painter, through to *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1854-60. Several other theses represent sophisticated investigations into core areas that inform the study of Victorian religious painting, and the developing fields of art history and art criticism.

Her book, *Painting the Bible: representation and belief in mid-Victorian England* examines the transformations that religious painting underwent in mid-Victorian Britain and charts the artistic climate of the 1840s.⁵⁹ Giebelhausen chronicles the troubled emergence of a ‘unique form of naturalistic painting’ and discusses the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood’s ‘irreverent and innovative intervention in the field of religious painting;’ ultimately focusing on a ‘naturalist mode’ that she believes is ‘best exemplified in the works of Holman Hunt.’⁶⁰ The very fields of geology, history and ethnography, which may have challenged modes of religious painting, could also be said to have influenced it,

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 289

⁵⁹ Giebelhausen, Michaela *Painting the Bible: Representation and Belief in mid-Victorian England*, Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006, p. 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

for better or worse, from about the same time, as the naturalist and Orientalist modes employed by Hunt demonstrate.

Seven Nineteenth-Century London Exhibition Venues

Seven well-known London venues, selected for their cultural significance as premier exhibition sites of the nineteenth century, are studied here for the purposes of examining the frequency and types of Victorian Eve and Madonna subjects. The annual summer exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts (RA, est. 1768) was the most important showcase for modern British art in the nineteenth century.⁶¹ The purpose of the British Institution (BI, est. 1806), as defined by the founders, was to encourage art, and it was not intended to rival the RA, whose members also exhibited at the BI.⁶² The Society of Painters in Water Colours (OWS, est. 1804, RWS from 1881) is significant for the sole representation of the watercolour medium throughout the nineteenth century to the present day. Watercolour was a medium associated with landscape and genre; therefore, the most frequent type of religious subjects exhibited at the OWS/RWS was 'devotional genre.'⁶³ This does not preclude the existence of religious history painting, examples of which include: *St. Paul landing in Italy*, 1850, by Samuel Palmer, *Theophilus and the Angel: A Legend of the Martyrdom of St. Dorothea*, 1867, by Burne-Jones, *St. Mary*

⁶¹ Giebelhausen, M. 'Academic orthodoxy versus Pre-Raphaelite heresy: debating religious painting at the Royal Academy, 1840-50' in Cardoso Denis, R. and Trodd, C. (eds), *Art and the Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000, p. 165.

⁶² Graves, A., F.S.A. *The British Institution: 1806-1867, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from the Foundation of the Institution*, London: George Bell and Sons, 1908, p. vii.

⁶³ Titles indicating scenes of religious worship, practice and ceremony include many by W. Hunt -- presumably William Henry Hunt, RWS (1790-1864) -- for example, whose work was 'much admired by Ruskin.' See: Wood, C. *Dictionary of Victorian Painters*, Woodbridge, Suffolk: Baron Publishing, for the Antique Collector's Club, 1971, p. 72. Examples of Hunt's work exhibited at the OWCS include: *Piety*, OWCS Cat., 1837, no. 105, *Asking a Blessing, Devotion*, OWCS Cat., 1841, nos. 99 & 284, and *Morning Prayers*, OWCS Cat., 1842, no. 258.

Magdalene, 1871, by Wm. C. T. Dobson, *Eastward of Eden*, 1875, by Albert Goodwin, *John the Baptist*, 1883, by Sir John Gilbert.⁶⁴

Progressive exhibition venues were founded during the latter half of the nineteenth-century and include: Dudley Gallery (DG, est. 1865), Grosvenor Gallery (GG, est. 1877), New Gallery (NG, est. 1888) and New English Art Club (NEAC, est. 1886). The Dudley Gallery was distinguished from institutions such as the RA or the OWS for being 'exclusively devoted to Drawings as distinguished from Oil Paintings' and because it did not involve membership of a Society.⁶⁵ The institution of a winter exhibition of oil paintings resulted in the submission of a different type of religious art; for example, *Rosa Mystica*, 1867, by Simeon Solomon [Fig. 23], was the first Madonna oil to be exhibited at the Dudley Gallery.⁶⁶ The Grosvenor Gallery, established in 1877 by Sir Coutts Lindsay, is associated with the fame of Burne-Jones.⁶⁷ Initially a rival to the Grosvenor Gallery, the New Gallery was established in 1888. Burne-Jones and Watts were among the most prominent English artists featured at the New Gallery, as they had been at the Grosvenor. Foreign artists were exhibited at these progressive venues too, fostering mutual interest and influence (such as that of Gustav Moreau and Burne-Jones), which also occurred when English artists exhibited abroad.⁶⁸ In 1900, the *Athenaeum* articulated

⁶⁴ OWCS Cat., 1850, no. 205, OWCS Cat., 1867, no. 10, OWCS Cat., 1871, no. 124, OWCS Cat., 1875, no. 62 (accompanied by the following quote: "And Cain went forth from the presence of the Lord.") OWCS Cat., 1883, no. 70, illustration no. 20, "St. John Preaching in the Wilderness" (accompanied by the following quote: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.") This picture is represented in the OWCS Cat., 1883.

⁶⁵ *General Exhibition of Water Colour Drawings*, Dudley Gallery, Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly 1865: The First, London: Dudley Gallery, 1865, p. 9

⁶⁶ DG Cat. 1867, no. 3. DG Cat. 1873, no. 75.

⁶⁷ Denney, C. 'The Role of Sir Coutts Lindsay and the Grosvenor Gallery in the Reception of Pre-Raphaelitism on the Continent' in *Pre-Raphaelite Art in its European Context*, Casteras, S.P. and Faxon, A.C. (eds), London: Associated University Presses, 1995, p. 66.

⁶⁸ Burne-Jones won a first place medal and inspired admiration in French artists when his work was included in the 1889 Paris Exposition Universelle, for example.

the appeal of the New Gallery as one of originality: 'the distinguishing charm of the exhibitions at the New Gallery as contrasted with those at (the RA) is that the contributors showed original powers of conception and treatment.'⁶⁹ Of the RA, Bayliss wrote: 'the truth is that a great central authority like the (Royal) Academy can reward the Artist, but it cannot initiate a forward movement in Art...It is a Creed, and a Creed does not reform itself...Reform- advance- new forms of life- must come from without.'⁷⁰ The New English Art Club (NEAC) was established in 1886 when approximately fifty artists mounted an exhibition to rival academicism with a modern French influence. The critical reviews of the Victorian exhibitions published in the contemporary periodical press reflected cultural values and were themselves 'sites for the construction and reinforcement of such values.'⁷¹

Old Master Models in the Nineteenth Century

In 1906 Robert Ross wrote: 'No scholarship is necessary to appreciate the obvious qualities, at all events, of a work by Van Eyck or Sargent, to take instances very remote from each other,' thereby indicating that at the turn of the century, only a few years after the death of Queen Victoria, the national taste in art had expanded to include the

⁶⁹ 'Fine Arts: The New Gallery,' *Athenaeum*, No. 3783, April 28, 1900, p. 533. The writer of the review in the *Athenaeum* went on to lament the winter, 1900, exhibition at the New Gallery as one 'singularly limited, and destitute of novelty,' all the more disappointing as the New Gallery had come to represent originality. *Ibid.*, p. 534.

⁷⁰ Bayliss, Sir Wyke, K.B., F.S.A., *Five Great Painters of the Victorian Era: Leighton, Millais, Burne-Jones, Watts, Holman Hunt* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, Limited, 1902), p. 9.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166. When stating the latter function of the critical press, Giebelhausen refers to Helene Roberts, 'Exhibition and review: the periodical press and the Victorian art exhibition system', in J. Shattock and M. Wolff (eds) *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester and Toronto, 1982), pp.79-107.

Primitives as well as the free handling characteristic of Sargent, or Whistler.⁷² In Victorian writing and religious art, however, the revival of early Italian and Northern Renaissance art and attendant debates about its religious and aesthetic qualities are in evidence. Renaissance art could be said to have inspired and informed the work of every artist who will be discussed in this study. A pervasive aesthetic paradigm existed in the nineteenth century, whereby artistic development was evaluated in terms of 'progress' from early Italian Renaissance art, which was regarded as crude, if quaint, through High Renaissance art, the ideal of which were almost universally held to be epitomized by an artistic triumvirate comprised of Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. This paradigm was reexamined in the nineteenth century and broadened to include admiration for artists hitherto considered too artistically primitive in their formal elements, such as drawing and composition: Giotto, Fra Angelico, Perugino and Mantegna were among those reevaluated in the nineteenth century.

Exponents of the aesthetic discourse that sought to reconsider early art included: Rio, Eastlake, Jameson, Ruskin, and Lord Lindsay, for example. Books such as the second volume of Ruskin's series *Modern Painters* (London, 1846) and Lord Lindsay's *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (London, 1847) furthered an interest in early Christian art that is often attributed to the publication of Alexis-François Rio's *De la poésie chrétienne dans son principe, dans sa matière, et dans ses formes* (Paris, 1836). Ruskin and Lord Lindsay were among the prominent founders of the Arundel Society (1848-97), named for the great English Catholic art collector of the late sixteenth and

⁷² Ross, Robert 'The Place of William Blake in English Art', *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 9, No. 39 (Jun., 1906), p. 155.

seventeenth century, Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel. The society sought to reproduce early art and published monographs for public dissemination and education:

At the height of its popularity in the 1860s the Arundel Society had over 2,000 members. The beauty of its chromolithographs, which were characteristically framed and glazed, brought early art into...the Victorian home. From the early 1860s, however, the accuracy of the Society's watercolours...was called into question in the reviews in the *Saturday Review*, the *Art Journal* and the *Athenaeum*. The Society ceased...in 1897 for three reasons: by the 1890s there was a thriving market in second-hand prints' and competition from 'progress in the field of photographic reproductions; and by the 1890s the art the Society had sought to popularize had been comprehensively 'rediscovered'. By the end of the nineteenth century to admire Trecento, Quattrocento and early Northern art was the norm in educated circles.⁷³

When the Arundel Society published prints after Fra Angelico, a reader wrote to the *Athenaeum* in support of the primitives, and described himself as 'having much respect for the sincerity of some for the early masters' and, therefore, 'anxious to see their productions engraved with truth.'⁷⁴

Writer, designer and artist Sir Charles Eastlake was Keeper and Secretary and then the first director of the National Gallery, London, during which time he wrote extensively on the prominent museum collections of Europe, as well as refining and building the mode of display and the collection of art at the National Gallery. Eastlake fulfilled a mission to establish an historical collection beyond the Grand Manner, of which the collection had hitherto consisted. Working with German expert Otto Müндler, Eastlake bought 59 pictures to add to a collection of approximately 200. Among them were works by: Mantegna, Perugino, Pollaiuolo, Ucello, Margarito of Arezzo, Duccio and Piero della Francesca, Giovanni Bellini and even Rogier van der Wyden.

⁷³ Harrod, Tanya: "Arundel Society" Grove Art Online. Oxford University Press, [8 February 2007], <http://www.groveart.com/>.

⁷⁴ 'Fine Arts', *Athenaeum*, No. 1187, July 27, 1850, p. 794.

Contemporary Victorian art criticism betrays a gendered association, whereby the formal elements of High Renaissance art were associated with healthful masculinity and the idiom of early art was associated with ill health, informed, in part, by mainstream Victorian anti-Catholic prejudices and historical stereotypes. There is also evidence of a disparaging association of the so-called 'mannered' art of both Medieval culture and the sixteenth century with an 'unhealthy' emasculation on the part of male artists, as evinced by contemporary criticism of Burne-Jones' 1863 *Annunciation*, which will be addressed in Chapter two.

Scholarship

There are three further theses that address issues which are key to the examination of Victorian religious subject painting that have provided invaluable background on the subject of Victorian religious subjects in art and will be addressed here. Lindsay Errington's thesis 'Social and Religious Themes in English Painting 1840-1860' (Courtauld Institute of Art, 1973), addresses pictorial themes that were drawn from contemporary social and religious problems of the 1840s and 1850s.⁷⁵ Second, Robyn Cooper's thesis, 'English Attitudes to the Italian Primitives, 1815-1865, with special reference to the mid-nineteenth century fashion' (University of Sussex, 1976) examines what ideas the language of mid-Victorian aesthetic discourse represents, primarily in reference to the early Italian Renaissance, with some attention to Netherlandish and German painters. Third, Matthew Plampin's thesis "From Rio to Romola: Morality and Didacticism in the English Appreciation of Early Italian Art, 1836-63" (Courtauld

⁷⁵ Errington, Lindsay *Social and Religious Themes in English Painting 1840-1860* (Courtauld Institute of Art, DPhil., 1973), p. 2.

Institute of Art, 2001) 'defines the critical discourse formulated...to rationalize the taste for artworks which had governed the appreciation of Old Master painting' in the early Victorian period, addresses the persistent 'difficulties regarding religious denomination' and 'the fact that much 'primitive art' drew its iconography from Catholic dogma.'⁷⁶ Plampin's work outlines the mid-Victorian aesthetic paradigm from which the art of the 1860s onwards emerges and proceeds. Plampin's discussion of the Victorian relationship to the Old Masters, like that of Cooper's thesis, sheds light upon Victorian responses to and expectations of religious art; both of the past and of their own time.

Errington's thesis focuses on the relationship of paintings from the 1840-50s to contemporary social themes, including religious tensions; however, much of the thesis focuses on Poor Laws and Irish immigration, in an exploration of artist's party affiliations being inferred from their paintings. Two chapters are particularly relevant to the study of Victorian religious paintings. Chapter four, 'Religious Controversy' primarily addresses the social context of religious subjects of the 1840s and provides thorough social and artistic background to the mid-late Victorian period. Chapter seven, 'A Sermon at Oxford', examines the religious bigotry and 'Christian in-fighting' that informed art criticism of the Pre-Raphaelites. Errington provides a valuable compilation of critical responses to the art of the Pre-Raphaelites as well as background on contemporary mid-Victorian religious issues.

Plampin's thesis, 'From Rio to Romola: Morality and Didacticism in the English Appreciation of Early Italian Art, 1836-63' (Courtauld Institute of Art, 2001), defines the critical discourse formulated 'to rationalize the taste for artworks which had governed the

⁷⁶ Plampin, Matthew *From Rio to Romola: Morality and Didacticism in the English Appreciation of Early Italian Art, 1836-63* (Courtauld Institute of Art, DPhil., 2001), p. 1.

appreciation of Old Master painting' in the early Victorian period, addresses the persistent 'difficulties regarding religious denomination' and 'the fact that much 'primitive art' drew its iconography from Catholic dogma.'⁷⁷ Where Plampin's thesis is primarily concerned with the relationship of Victorians to Old Master painting, this dissertation will examine Victorian artists' creation of, and relationship to, their own 'modern sacred art.' The theses documented here all identify several core issues bound up in the Victorian conception of modern sacred art; Plampin's discussion of the Victorian relationship to the Old Masters, like that of Cooper's thesis, sheds light upon Victorian responses to and expectations of religious art, both past and contemporary.

Cooper examined the nineteenth century from as early as 1815, and both Cooper and Plampin focus on mid-century, when 'the study and collection of so-called 'primitive' painting' was finally 'transformed from a marginal pursuit to an aspect of mainstream taste.'⁷⁸ Plampin gives particular attention to the theories of Ruskin and the controversial emergence of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Plampin identifies A.F. Rio's *De la poésie Chrétienne* as signaling the establishment of a 'polarity...between the morally pure 'mystic' school, and the degenerate 'naturalistic school,' whereby the early Italian masters could be privileged for their moral approach to painting even if faulted for technical deficiency. Thus the High Renaissance could be interpreted as a period of decline into 'depraved sensuality' rather than as the 'elevation of art.'⁷⁹ In describing the mid-Victorian aesthetic paradigm, Plampin's examination of these positions contributes to understanding Victorian views on Old Master religious paintings as well as on contemporary art production.

⁷⁷ Plampin, 2001, p. 1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Plampin examines the discourse of the 'moral art history,' established by Rio, and its effect upon both private and public collection. 'Moral art history' is compelling in terms of its potential for application to Victorian art production and critical reception. Chapter one, 'The Appreciation of the Spiritual: The English Moral Art History of the 1840s' and chapter four, 'From Spirit to Nature, From the Divine to the Human: Moral Art History Refuted' are of particular relevance to defining the attitudes to art which arguably informed contemporary Victorian religious painting. Plampin asserts that 'moral art history' came to be regarded as 'too confining in its strict definition of good and evil, and too limited in the conclusions which could be drawn from the broad judgmental sweep of its theories' and credits Ruskin with having challenged 'the binary opposition of mysticism and naturalism in moral art history.'⁸⁰ The focus is upon the Victorian relationship to the art of the Italian Primitives and 'to the cause of popular education in art history' and historiography.⁸¹

Cooper's thesis, 'English Attitudes to the Italian Primitives, 1815-1865, with special reference to the mid-nineteenth century fashion' (University of Sussex, 1976), examines what ideas the language of mid-Victorian aesthetic discourse represents, primarily in reference to the early Italian Renaissance, with some attention to Netherlandish and German painters. The term 'Primitives' refers to painters of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and indicates relativity in the nineteenth-century judgments made about the art of these periods, both chronologically and stylistically.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Nearly half of Cooper's thesis is dedicated to early Victorian 'art history' and describes the circumstances of the Victorian taste for Italian art. In the identification of Victorian criteria applied to the evaluation of Italian Primitives, Cooper's examination of the changing Victorian taste for the Old Masters, with an increasing fashion towards including earlier art, contributes to an understanding of the application of those criteria to contemporary Victorian religious paintings. Cooper identifies Victorians' 'fears about the baneful effects on (contemporary) British art fostered a more critical attitude towards the Primitives and their defects.'⁸²

Chapter seven, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and the Primitives' examines the language of art criticism in the Victorian periodical press when addressing the Italian Primitives and the ways this was also applied to discussion of the Pre-Raphaelites. Cooper addresses a variety of subjects by the Pre-Raphaelites; it is not exclusively a study of religious subjects. The Pre-Raphaelites are examined within the context of a revival of the Primitives that had peaked by the 1850s, and Cooper identifies critics responding to a style already familiar to them.⁸³ The problematic implications in Victorian culture of the terms 'Pre-Raphaelite' and 'Brotherhood' are addressed; the primary threat is identified as being against the grain of the accepted academic paradigm.⁸⁴ Cooper concludes that the 'fashion' for the Primitives, charted from 1815 in this thesis, 'did not last far beyond the 1860s'.⁸⁵ It is asserted that the fashion waned because 'the attitudes and conditions

⁸² Cooper, 1976, p. 302.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

which shaped its manifestations' had since faded.⁸⁶ The passing social circumstances to which Cooper refers include the 'Anglican and Catholic revivals of the 1830s.'⁸⁷

British art of the last quarter of nineteenth-century was concerned with Italian art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; the influence of Botticelli, for example, is apparent in the work of Burne-Jones and Stanhope, and is examined in chapter two of this dissertation. Interestingly, Cooper identifies an overall 'decline of interest in the content of paintings and a corresponding rise of interest in their pictorial and formal means.'⁸⁸ The waning of moral and didactic pre-occupations, noted by Cooper, is supported by the present dissertation's research and analysis; in relation to both Victorian religious art in general and the representation of Eve and the Madonna.⁸⁹

Victorian artists and art critics referred to the contemporary emulation of early art in terms of identifying it as evidence of the artist or patron's denomination: Catholic or Protestant, High Church or Low. Reading indications of denomination into art works was, to Victorians, understood to be a matter of interpreting style and thereby inferring content. Drawing religious lines within Victorian culture was a politicized exercise. Positing Catholic or Protestant agendas through the identification of idioms associated with Catholic or Protestant art was a characteristic of Victorian writing about art, as evinced by Jameson and art critics such as F.G. Stephens, both examined in chapter two of this dissertation, for example.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 512.

Eve and the Virgin Mary in the Bible

Eve and the Madonna are intimately connected. According to Genesis, Eve was the first woman, created by God, and responsible for inciting the fall when she offered Adam the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Where once she was, with Adam, 'naked...and not ashamed' in the Garden of Eden, Eve was ultimately 'beguiled' by the serpent that approached, telling her 'Ye shall not surely die' upon eating of the Tree of Knowledge but that, in fact, 'Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.'⁹⁰ Mary first appears in the New Testament Gospel of St. Matthew, where she is described as 'with child of the Holy Ghost.'⁹¹ Because the Virgin Mary became the Christian Mother of God when she bore Jesus, she is positioned counter to Eve in an economy of Redemption, which she fulfilled 'in her spirit and will as well as in her body'⁹² Theologically speaking, Mary's paradoxical destiny as the 'Mother of her Creator'⁹³ was necessitated by Eve's transgression.

Adam named the first woman 'Eve,' Hebrew for 'Life-bearer,' an appellation signifying that she would be the 'mother of all' upon expulsion from the Garden of Eden.⁹⁴ Newman posited that this was a name 'expressive, not of a fact only, but of a dignity,' a tribute, however, bound up in the persistent admonition that 'as she thus had her own general relation to the human race, so again had she her own special place as

⁹⁰ Genesis 2:25, 3:4, 5.

⁹¹ St. Matthew 1:18.

⁹² John Henry Newman, *Meditations and Devotions of the Late Cardinal Newman*, (Longman, Green and Co., 1893), pp. 51-52 cited in Breen, Sister Eileen (ed) *Mary- The Second Eve: From the Writings of John Henry Newman*, Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1982, pp. 20 & 22.

⁹³ Mary is identified paradoxically as the "Mother of her Creator" and allegorically as the "Gate of Heaven" in the writings of John Henry Newman (1801-1890). John Henry Newman *A Letter to the Rev. E.B. Pusey, D.D., on his Recent Eirenicon* (Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866), pp. 66-67, and *Meditations and Devotions of the Late Cardinal Newman*, (Longman, Green and Co., 1893), pp. 51-52 cited in Breen, 1982, p. 22.

⁹⁴ Genesis 3:20.

regards its trial and its fall through Adam.⁹⁵ Mary, as the Mother of God, is often identified as the 'Second Eve,' or the 'new Eve,' indicating the investment in her redemptive role defined in opposition to the fatal culpability and sensuousness associated with Eve.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Mary is identified as pregnant 'with child of the Holy Ghost,' and the earliest historical reference to her is in Paul's 'Epistle to the Galatians' where it is affirmed that Jesus was 'made of a woman.'⁹⁶ Both of these passages assert Mary's divine motherhood in Christian theology. Her virginity is asserted in the Gospel of St. Matthew when Joseph is assured by an angel of the Lord in a dream that, though she is pregnant, she remains a virgin in fulfillment of a prophecy.⁹⁷ Marina Warner posited that the 'virgin birth...like the Resurrection' affirms Jesus' 'divinity' for the faithful 'precisely because it suspends the natural order.'⁹⁸ The mythological notion of virgin birth, intended to assert spiritual purity, necessarily disowns the natural, sexual nature and identity of Mary, and, by extension, womankind. In Genesis, and in the art inspired by Genesis, this natural, sexual identity of womankind, both sensual and procreative, is assigned only to the negatively rendered identity of Eve.

A legacy of misogyny is codified in Genesis through the characterization of Eve and the exhortation that, as a consequence of having eaten the forbidden fruit and given it

⁹⁵ John Henry Newman *A Letter to the Rev. E.B. Pusey, D.D., on his Recent Eirenicon* (Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866), p. 33, cited in Breen, 1982, p. 2.

⁹⁶ 'A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted is, God is with us.' St. Matthew 1:18. The 'cumulative evidence suggests that an unknown Greek-speaking Jewish Christian...composed this Gospel, and that in the second century it was attributed to the disciple Matthew primarily to lend it authority.' Meeks (ed), 1993, p. 1858. Further, 'internal references combined with source analysis point to a date between 80-90 C.E.' Meeks (ed), 1993, p. 1857. It is asserted that St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians was 'probably written in A.D 57.' In Warner, *Marina Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*. New York: Vintage Books, 1976, p. 3.

⁹⁷ St. Matthew 1:23.

⁹⁸ Warner, 1976, p. 43.

to Adam, 'in sorrow' she will bear children and that her husband would 'rule' over her.⁹⁹ In order to avoid any possibility that the disobedience might extend from the Tree of Knowledge to the Tree of Life, resulting in human immortality, Adam and Eve were promptly expelled from the Garden of Eden and consigned to a life of sorrows.¹⁰⁰ This can be said to inform Victorian art in images where Eve, the sexualized sinner, in fact sin itself, gendered feminine, is a vehicle for both objectification and condemnation.

Paradoxically, the Madonna is arguably herself an instrument of subjugation, in the sense that she serves as an icon of virtuous obedience for Victorian women to adore and emulate. Warner asserts that 'in the very celebration of the perfect human woman, both humanity and women were subtly denigrated.'¹⁰¹ One turns from the sinful, degraded characterization of Eve to find that the price of the esteem associated with the Madonna is chastity and obedience: Eve and the Virgin Mary are polarized female characterizations rather than psychically integrated subjects. St. Jerome articulated the antithetic relationship between the two Biblical female archetypes of evil and good with the 'formula' of 'Death through Eve, Life through Mary,' and broadly generalized by St. Augustine; 'through woman, death; through woman life.'¹⁰² This formula repeats itself in late nineteenth century-art, and it is famously monumentalized at the turn of the century in Picasso's revolutionary *Demoiselles d'Avignon* of 1907 [Fig. 24]; a painting said to have been a reaction to Matisse's Edenic work *Le bonheur de vivre*, of 1905-6 [Fig. 25].

⁹⁹ Genesis 3:16.

¹⁰⁰ Genesis 3:22.

¹⁰¹ My parenthetical text. Warner, 1976, p. xxi.

¹⁰² Jerome, PL 22, col. 408; Klapisch-Zuber, 1992, p. 23 and PL 38, col. 1108; Klapisch-Zuber, 1992, p. 23, cited in Grössinger, C. *Picturing Women in Late-Medieval and Renaissance Art*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997, p.5.

Victorian Religious and Political Controversies

Anglo-Catholic issues, historical, legislative and theological, arguably inform the making of and writing about religious art in the Victorian era to a greater degree than any other political issue of the day. The paradoxical relationship of Anglican to Catholic, embodied in the Oxford Movement and the Gothic Revival, has the most bearing on the early-mid Victorian era, a period that might be characterized as one of the articulation of faith. The latter half of the Victorian era is identified with a 'crisis of faith,' widely attributed to the science of the day. There was an increase in the overall number of religious subjects 1840-50, followed by a decline. Does this represent a decline in religious subjects in art due to a 'crisis of faith' during the latter half of the century? Was the increase during the 1840s inspired by an impulse to articulate faith in art, prompted by developments such as the Oxford Movement?

Catholic and Protestant tensions date from the Tudor reigns of the sixteenth-century, but persisted and, indeed, informed Victorian culture and politics. Early Victorian anti-Catholicism intensified following a succession of legislative reforms that began in 1828, such as the Test and Corporation Acts, repealed in 1828 (which excluded Catholics, dissenters, and Jews from holding positions in civil or military office), Catholic Emancipation, and the Reform Act of 1832, for example.¹⁰³ The Oxford Movement was born in 1833 out of a growing sense of politico-religious insecurity and it was rooted in the interests of guarding the decidedly Anglican, Tory *status quo* against

¹⁰³ When Irish nationalist leader Daniel O'Connell was elected to the House of Commons for County Clare in colonial Ireland the impetus to assuage Irish agitation led in part to the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. Though prevented from taking his seat as an MP following the 1828 election, O'Connell was re-elected after Catholic Emancipation and remained an MP until his death in 1847. The passage of the Reform Act of 1832 threatened the privileged Conservative establishment. Representation in Parliament was reapportioned to make it more representative of the growing English middle class, especially in the Industrial north, and giving voting power to those lower on the socio-economic scale. Revision of constituencies and imbalances in taxation weakened the Tory benefits.

the legislative reforms instituted by Parliament which threatened the historic privileges of the Church of England. Reviewing recent British history in 1838, the year of Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne, the *Monthly Chronicle* articulated the tendency of 'class interests' to be 'with the Conservative party,' noting that, 'of all such auxiliaries the Church of England is the most powerful.'¹⁰⁴ Oxford Movement co-founder John Henry Newman wrote of the subsequent belief in the 'stand that had to be made against Liberalism.'¹⁰⁵ Historian Owen Chadwick identified the movement as one that sought to 'justify order and authority in Church as well as State.'¹⁰⁶ Paradoxically, while founded in the interests of transcending government by surpassing the threatening power of Parliament through identification with aspects of early Catholic Church history, the Oxford Movement inspired Anglo-Catholicism.¹⁰⁷

A degree of Catholic ritual and aesthetic sensibility was introduced into High Church practice and decoration. Although founded in defense of Anglicanism, in opposition to Catholicism, the Oxford Movement inspired a Catholic revival, and, therefore, Gothic Revival. In religious painting circa 1835-50, the effect of the Oxford Movement, or Tractarianism, shaped the religious thought and artistic aims of Dyce, Millais, and Charles Allston Collins at various stages of their careers. It was perceived that the close relationship of the Oxford Movement to Catholic theology, history and practice inspired conversion: Newman, one of its founders, underwent a high-profile conversion in 1845, which reinforced Anglican anxieties that the movement did more

¹⁰⁴ 'On Public Opinion', *Monthly Chronicle: A National Journal of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, Vol. I March-June 1838, p.338.

¹⁰⁵ John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua*, 1864, (no page given) cited in Chadwick, Owen *The Mind of the Oxford Movement* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960, p. 29.

¹⁰⁶ Chadwick, 1960, p.12.

¹⁰⁷ 'A High Church movement in Anglicanism emphasizing its continuity with historic Catholicism and fostering Catholic dogmatic and liturgical traditions'. Merriam-Webster OnLine [Online].

than appropriate, but in fact led to, Catholicism. Rossetti was within its sphere, therefore, at a time when religious tensions between Catholic and Protestant were high and he changed the Latin title *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, 1850, to the *Annunciation*, thereby eschewing highly controversial Catholic associations.¹⁰⁸ Tim Barringer describes the complexity of the Victorian church:

Anglicanism, which had always sustained within it a multiplicity of conflicting views, became increasingly polarized during the Victorian period. At one extreme – known as the ‘High Church’ – was the Oxford Movement, which reinstated many aspects of Catholicism into the Anglican Church, notably by emphasizing the importance of Communion...The Evangelical Movement, on the other hand, associated with ‘Low Church’ Anglicanism, upheld the primacy of the Bible and therefore valued the verbal more highly than the visual.¹⁰⁹

In 1850 the Catholic Church re-established its full hierarchy in England and, for the first time since the sixteenth century, it was organized and governed as it was in other countries. To liberal thinking, this re-establishment represented a logical extension of toleration and full religious liberties, but it was perceived by Conservatives as a threat to the Church of England; ‘causing widespread anxiety among English Protestants and popular unrest in the form of ‘No Popery’ riots.’¹¹⁰ The re-establishment received a lot of coverage in the contemporary periodical press; the *Illustrated London News* instituted a weekly column addressing the matter, one whose fear-mongering bias is evident in the titles of the articles, which rapidly disintegrated into alarmist phrasing. ‘The New Roman Catholic Bishops’ was front-page news on November, 2, 1850 but the following week, in addition to ‘The Papal Vindication,’ the regular title ‘The Papal Aggression’ was

¹⁰⁸ *Tracts for the Times* was a series of pamphlets, or tracts (pamphlets of political or religious propaganda), published between 1833-1841, expounding the views of the Oxford Movement and, subsequently, the word Tractarian came to mean a promoter or supporter of the Oxford Movement.

¹⁰⁹ Further, ‘The ‘Broad Church’ party, occupied a position between these extremes, believing in an active ministry, especially among the working classes, and emphasizing the power of the religion to heal social problems.’ See: Barringer, Tim *Reading the Pre-Raphaelites*, New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1999, p. 109-110.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

instituted, and by the following month the 'Enthronization' of Cardinal Wiseman' was published.¹¹¹ Commentary in the satirical publication *Punch*, where satire on the status of, or regard for, variously, women, Frenchmen, the Crystal Palace, Bishops and the Pope were favorite targets, as well as the Irish and Jews, was relentless following the reestablishment of the Catholic Bishops. The rapid growth of the Catholic population in nineteenth-century England was also a result of increased immigration from Ireland, due, in no small part, to the famine, and exacerbating Victorian prejudice against the Irish and Catholics. In 1851, *Punch* declared that 'the flower of...monkshood' was 'in full blow' in London, that 'the Pope is manufacturing English (Catholic) Bishops as fast as they make buttons at Birmingham,' and 'the Pope has an army fighting in the very heart of England-fighting in the cause of Popery to the confusion of the English Church.'¹¹²

In 1850, religious and social tensions were even further inflamed by the historic Gorham judgment, one of the 'most celebrated legal actions of the century;' essentially a battle for power and tolerance between High Church and Low Church, with the attendant class associations of upper and middle versus lower.¹¹³ The judgment found in favor of George Cornelius Gorham, a Church of England clergyman lifted to an 'unexpected

¹¹¹ 'The New Roman Catholic Bishops,' *Illustrated London News*, No. 453, vol. 17, November 2, 1850, p. 341-343, 'The Papal Vindication,' *Illustrated London News*, No. 454, vol. 17, November 23, 1850, p. 397-398, 'The Papal Aggression,' *Illustrated London News*, No. 456, vol. 17, November 9, 1850, p. 357-358, 'The Papal Aggression,' *Illustrated London News*, No. 456, vol. 17, p. 406, 'The Papal Aggression,' *Illustrated London News*, No. 457, vol. 17, November 30, 1850, p. 420-423, 'Enthronization' of Cardinal Wiseman,' *Illustrated London News*, No. 459, vol. 17, December 14, 1850, p. 457-458.

¹¹² 'St. Barnabas' Flowers,' *Punch*, vol. xxi, 1851, p. 13, 'More Papal Bishops,' *Punch*, vol. xxi, 1851, p. 30. 'The Pope's Army,' *Punch*, vol. xxi, 1851, p. 43.

¹¹³ My parenthetical text. John Wolffe, 'Gorham, George Cornelius (1787-1857),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11099>, accessed 7 July 2005], pp. 1-3. Phillpotts stalled Gorham's desired appointment to a parish near Exeter, by summoning him for a detailed examination respecting his views on the efficacy of infant baptism' which was 'a touchstone of theological belief' upon which high-churchmen and evangelicals differed. High-churchmen believed that a baptized infant was 'unconditionally regenerate,' but evangelicals believed regeneration to be 'conditional upon the child's subsequent personal profession of saving faith.' Gorham was interrogated and the bishop refused to institute him on the grounds that he held an 'unsound doctrine.'

pinnacle of national prominence' by his dispute with Henry Phillpotts, bishop of Exeter.¹¹⁴ Gorham's relationship to Phillpotts could be characterized as one of Low Church subversion, which agitated and even threatened High Church authority. The case was publicized by the press and aroused great excitement and increased tension between Low and High Church. Gorham's evangelical views conflicted with those of his High-Church superiors and the bishop believed Gorham 'held beliefs contrary to the church of England doctrine.'¹¹⁵ Evangelicals are Low Church, which tends to minimize emphasis on the priesthood, sacraments and ceremonial in worship and often to emphasize evangelical principles such as the authority of Scripture and the importance of preaching as contrasted with ritual. When his career was effectively road-blocked by the authority, Gorham published an open letter in protesting 'the cruel exercise of Episcopal power' and eventually won his case.¹¹⁶

Rifts within its own national religion divided Victorian society. High and Low Church conflicts reflect fundamental doctrinal divisions, class divisions and cultural prejudices; against Catholics, for example, who, in the mid-nineteenth century, tended to be Irish or poor lower class. This subsequently bears out in the nature of the religious paintings produced, for example, by Rossetti, a self-proclaimed 'Art Catholic,' or Hunt, who was Low Church, as well as in the critical reception of art.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2. A curate is a clergyman in charge of a parish, a local church community comprised of constituents of a Protestant church. A diocesan is a bishop with jurisdiction over a diocese, the territorial jurisdiction of a bishop

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Owen Chadwick *The Victorian Church Part I: 1829-1848*, 3rd edn, 1 (A&C Black Publishers Ltd., 1971) p. 252, cited in Wolfe, J., 'Gorham, George Cornelius (1787-1857)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11099>, accessed 7 July 2005], p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Faxon, Alicia Craig *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1989, p. 34.

The Victorian 'Crisis of Faith'

Hilary Fraser's book, *Beauty and Belief: Aesthetics and Religion in Victorian Literature*, is an investigation of the 'cultural and historical conditions which determined such a conspicuous interaction of religion, art and aesthetics' in the Victorian period.¹¹⁸ Fraser introduced *Beauty and Belief* with the assertion that, because the theory of evolution necessarily contradicted Natural Theology, Darwin's discoveries subsequently 'contributed to the crisis of faith which beset the Victorians.'¹¹⁹ Fraser credits a combination of scientific developments, skepticism, German Idealist philosophers, the subjectivism of Kant *et al* regarding faith-based claims, and German biblical criticism with complicating the Victorian relationship to God.¹²⁰

In *Painting the Bible: representation and belief in mid-Victorian England* Giebelhausen defines the Victorian era as 'an increasingly secularized age plagued by repeated crisis of faith;' effected when, for example, 'the scriptures came under scrutiny from contemporary science and biblical scholarship.'¹²¹ Specifically, 'research in disciplines such as geology, paleontology, history and ethnography' challenged what had hitherto been accepted as 'biblical truths.'¹²² The author of *Darwinism in the English Novel 1860-1910, The Impact of Evolution on Victorian Fiction*, Leo J. Henkin, posits that 'it continued to be accepted that the innumerable species of animal and vegetable as

¹¹⁸ Fraser, H. *Beauty and Belief: Aesthetics and Religion in Victorian Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ Fraser succinctly defines Natural Theology whereby "God's creative hand was found in the ordered perfection of the natural universe." *Ibid.*, p. 4. Michaela Giebelhausen, too, refers to a 'widespread' Victorian 'crisis of faith'; Giebelhausen, 1997, p. 298.

¹²⁰ Fraser, 1986, p. 4.

¹²¹ Giebelhausen, 2006, p. 1.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

geology reveals or nature displays them, were separately and divinely created.'¹²³ Henkin defined 'two phases of the Victorian interest in evolution- its effect on religion, and its contribution to the romance of science.'¹²⁴ He explained that 'the interest of Victorians in religion prepared the way for the success of theological and controversial fiction turning on the clash of Scripture and Science.'¹²⁵ The 'battle between Natural Selection and Religion' was described as one which was 'spread out on the pages of every journal of the day,' from the 'sedate pages of the *Times*' to the irreverent pages of *Punch*.¹²⁶ Henkin contended that, from at least 1910, 'the religio-scientific question which fired the passion' in those 'soul-searching Victorian days' to be of historical interest merely.¹²⁷

In the mid-nineteenth century, religious painting 'was regarded as an instrument to elevate the taste and moral faculties of painters and audiences alike.'¹²⁸ However, by the end of the nineteenth century, in 1910, conscious of the cynicism of his readers, Academician Solomon Joseph Solomon, writing admiringly, about a fifteenth-century altar-piece of the Virgin, Child and Saints, by Fra Filippo Lippi, acknowledged that, 'the expression of religious sentiment in a material age may appear somewhat affected,' but stated, nevertheless, that it indicated 'the painter's spiritual attitude towards his sacred subject.'¹²⁹ P.T. Forsyth wrote in 1889 that 'the deepest influences on the art of our

¹²³ Henkin, Leo. *J. Darwinism in the English Novel 1860-1910: The Impact of Evolution on Victorian Fiction*, New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1963, p. 63.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p 10.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Victorian era have been religious influences.¹³⁰ As late as 1901 the subject of the Annunciation was celebrated as an opportunity to 'evolve the Ideal from the Real' and to 'apprehend the spiritual in the natural.'¹³¹ During a period popularly referred to as one defined by a 'crisis of faith,' the persistence of religious subjects in art bears witness to continued investment of meaning in icons such as Eve and the Madonna through the end of the nineteenth century; although the nature of that meaning certainly changed by the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, and waned thereafter, with the increasing engagement, particularly in France, with process, or form, over content in art making.¹³²

¹³⁰ Forsyth, P.T., *Religion in Recent Art* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1889), p. 188.

¹³¹ Kingsley, R.G. 'The Annunciation: The Ideal in Modern Art,' *Art Journal*, January 1901, pp. 8-9

¹³² Fraser, 1986, p. 2.

Chapter II. The Madonna

This chapter will identify the breadth and variety of representations of the Madonna in Victorian art. Writing in 1898, Sir Wyke Bayliss (1835-1906), President of the Royal Society of British Artists from 1888, articulated a contemporary 'desire for the likeness of the Blessed Virgin.'¹³³ This examination of the original exhibition catalogues of prominent nineteenth-century London venues resurrects more than 150 titles of art works in which the Madonna is represented; more than 25% can be illustrated. Several Victorian paintings of the Madonna which were not exhibited at the seven venues selected for this study, but should be acknowledged for their significance are: *Our Ladye of Good Children*, 1847, by Madox Brown, *The Nativity*, 1858, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, n.d. and *The Flight into Egypt*, n.d., by Arthur Hughes. *The Triumph of the Innocents*, 1876-87 and 1883-84 versions, by Hunt, and *Ecce Ancilla Domini: Mater Dei Alma*, 1896, by Solomon. These works identify the various types of Madonna in Victorian art and the artistic styles by which she was represented. The data gathered for this study provides unexpected evidence of the quantity and types of Victorian Madonna pictures exhibited; this chapter will demonstrate, for example, that the Madonna was a greater artistic presence in the late nineteenth century than in the early-mid Victorian years, which are normally associated with the highest number of religious subjects in art. In fact, the subject of the Annunciation was, perhaps surprisingly, a subject not revived in England until *after* 1850, and the frequency with which the Madonna was exhibited

¹³³ Wyke Bayliss, 'The Likeness of Christ; A Reply,' *Contemporary Review*, No. 393, September 1898, p. 355. This article is a reply to defend the writer's book *Rex Regnum* from a critical article written by the Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Farrar. Bayliss studied at the National Gallery, the British Museum and the RA, and enjoyed success as painter of architectural subjects, particularly European Gothic. He wrote books later in life. See the obituary of Sir Wyke Bayliss, *The New York Times*, April 7, 1906, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9800E3D71531E733A25754C0A9629C946797D6CF>

peaked at two points in the nineteenth century; in 1850 and again circa 1900, when popular belief is that the Madonna was vanishing by that stage.

Bayliss asserted that: 'No one pretends that the modern painter, who places before the public his new ideal of how the face of Christ should be painted, is guilty of deception.'¹³⁴ According to Jameson, the Annunciation, for example, when approached 'as a mystery, admits a style of treatment which would not be allowable in the representation of an event...the artist is emancipated from all considerations of locality or circumstance.'¹³⁵ Jameson advocated, therefore, for the possibility of approaching religious art as symbolic or historical. Treating the Annunciation, for example, as a mystery excused the artist from historical concerns in the interest of representing a mystical or spiritual subject. Treating the Annunciation as an event would necessitate a historical approach, however.

When one thinks of Victorian painting, *The Derby Day*, 1856-8, by William Powell Frith, or *The Fighting "Temeraire"*, 1838, by J.M.W. Turner might be among the most familiar works. Scenes of medievalism, Classicism, genre, and landscape or marine subjects were produced in large quantities in the nineteenth century. When one thinks of Victorian paintings specifically of women, *Ophelia*, 1851-2, by Millais, paintings by Rossetti such as *Proserpine*, 1874, or *The Day Dream*, 1880, the fair, classically dressed women of *The Golden Stairs*, 1872-80, by Burne-Jones, *The Lady of Shallot*, 1888, or *St. Cecilia*, 1895, by John William Waterhouse, may come to mind. This chapter, however, addresses a class of Victorian painting that was at the center of contemporary stylistic and art historical debates due to the importance placed on religious subjects. The subjects of

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

¹³⁵ Jameson, 1899, p.285.

Eve and the Madonna specifically reflect Victorian gender characterizations, albeit through archetypal subjects.

The number of Victorian Madonna titles at the RA in a given year peaked at five in 1851 and reached five again in 1900.¹³⁶ The number of titles that refer to works representing the Madonna exhibited at the RA normally averaged 1-2 per year throughout the Victorian era. An average of 2-3 works representing the Madonna were exhibited at the RA per year throughout the 1840s, 2-3 per year in the 1850s, 1-2 per year in the 1860s, 1 per year in the 1870s-1880s, and 1-2 per year in the 1890s.¹³⁷

The averages I have calculated from the nineteenth-century exhibition catalogues demonstrate that the 1840s, 1850s, and 1890s were decades when the subject of the Madonna occurred with greatest frequency during the course of the Victorian era. My findings regarding the 1840s correspond to those of Giebelhausen, whose doctoral research included calculating the frequency with which all religious subjects were exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts from 1825-1870.¹³⁸ However, the scope, theme, and results of my research differ from the results of Giebelhausen's study of religious subjects. I conducted a survey of the frequency with which the subjects of the Madonna and Eve were exhibited at seven Victorian London exhibition venues, including the RA, from 1838-1901. This dissertation addresses the third and fourth quarters of the

¹³⁶ RA Cat. 1851, no.s 42, 229, 513, 643 and 652. RA Cat. 1900, no.s 166, 869, 912, 995 and 1282.

¹³⁷ Dyce's *Madonna and child* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1838; two pictures inclusive of the Madonna and one *Holy Family* sculptural work were exhibited in 1839. I have calculated average number of Madonna subjects for each successive decade of the Victorian era. Some decades consist of more varied numbers year by year: 3 in 1841, 4 in 1842, 2 in 1843, etc. There were three Madonna subjects in half of the individual years in the 1850s and anywhere from zero to five in other years during the 1850s. The 1860s are defined by a similar balance between variety and consistency. The frequency during the 1870s was sporadic. The greatest quantity exhibited in any one year during the 1860s and 1870s however, coincidentally occurred in both 1866 and 1876. Finally, the 1880s and 1890s were relatively consistent; there was generally only 1 picture per year.

¹³⁸ Giebelhausen, 1997, p. 308.

nineteenth-century, including Symbolist and early modern tendencies, and the period when it would appear that the Madonna 'went out with a bang' at high numbers, where Giebelhausen's ends c.1870. Giebelhausen's findings demonstrate that the number of religious subjects peaked in the 1840s and subsequently declined in the 1850s.¹³⁹ My research of the frequency with which the specific subject of the Madonna was exhibited at the RA demonstrates, however, that the quantity remained consistent during the 1840s and 1850s and even experienced developments and an increase in the latter half of the century when religious subjects were generally waning.

Exhibition records demonstrate that the quantity of religious subject paintings increased in the first half of the nineteenth century, and subsequently waned after peaking circa 1850.¹⁴⁰ These figures could be said to support the notion that the introduction of something in Victorian society, such as economic, scientific and philosophical developments, may have contributed to effecting a 'crisis of faith' and subsequent decrease in religious subject painting during the latter half of the century. Conversely, however, the data might be read as indicating an unusually heightened period of Victorian religious activity c.1835-50, perhaps inspired by an impulse towards the *articulation of faith* in the second quarter of the nineteenth-century, as I have identified in chapter one, during the time of the Oxford Movement, and related religious and political upheavals.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

The Second Eve: The Madonna in Victorian Painting

As it was noted in the introductory chapter, I have traced the originals or identified images of approximately one quarter of the total works I identified representing the Madonna in the nineteenth-century exhibition catalogues of the seven London venues researched.¹⁴¹ These 37 paintings, illustrated here, demonstrate that Victorian images of Mary tended to represent her role as the mother of Jesus. It might be said that this characterization is in line with the Protestant and patriarchal English nineteenth-century society in which these art works were produced and exhibited. Conversely, however, recent scholarship by Kimberly Van Esveld Adams points to a Victorian appropriation of the Madonna in the interests of women's empowerment rather than subservience. In *Legends of the Madonna* Jameson referred to the theological identification of the Madonna as 'the second Eve' because Redemption was effected through the birth of Jesus after the Fall of Man was effected by Adam and Eve's transgression.¹⁴² A paradigm of duality was established, therefore, whereby the Virgin Mary is compelled to compensate for Eve's transgression through her obeisance and sacrifice in becoming the 'Mother of God.' This represents something of a split personality, defined as a 'dual nature of character,' with which womankind is subsequently, and problematically, identified.¹⁴³ This polarized characterization of womankind can be regarded as a sort of dissociative disorder, whereby two 'distinct and complex identities,' each of which becomes 'dominant' in different characterizations of the subject of woman (Eve versus Madonna; *femme fatale* versus virgin) constitutes a 'disruption in the integrated

¹⁴¹ Thirty-seven images have been identified out of the one hundred and fifty-one titles identified from the six Victorian London exhibition venues; therefore 24.5% of the pictures can be illustrated.

¹⁴² Jameson, 1899, p. 59.

¹⁴³ Merriam-Webster OnLine, [Online] <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/split%20personality> [May 31, 2008]

functions' of feminine identity, which is destructive to womankind.¹⁴⁴ This psychological, and social polarization, enabled the so-called 'separate spheres' that defined nineteenth-century culture; whereby men went freely out into the world to work and play, and well-behaved, 'virtuous' women, such as middle and upper class wives and daughters, were relegated to the home, for fear of finding themselves among the 'fallen' women, with or without professions, such as bar maids, dancers, milliners, prostitutes, or just poor laborers.

Contemporary nineteenth-century paintings described and reinforced separate spheres, both explicitly and implicitly. The separate sphere of man's urban outside world, also represented as the realm of the 'fallen' and poor, was explicitly constructed and reinforced in English, and, more famously, in French nineteenth-century art: *The Absinthe Drinkers*, 1876, or the many paintings of Parisian laundresses, by Degas, *Le Bar aux Folies Bergère*, 1881-2, paintings by Manet such as the notorious *Olympia*, 1863, *Le déjuener sur l'herbe*, 1863, and *At the Moulin Rouge*, 1892/5, or *The Milliner*, 1900, by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and the narrative, dramatic 'cautionary tales' such as the subject of *The Song of the Shirt*, 1850, or *Found Drowned*, 1848-50, by Watts, *Found*, 1855-9, by Rossetti, and *Past and Present*, 1858, by Augustus Egg. In addition to paintings depicting urban depravity or labor, the separate spheres of nineteenth-century society were equally constructed and reinforced with paintings that exalted women such as upper class or bourgeois mothers and daughters contained in a domestic setting, the so called 'gilded cage'. These settings were overwhelmingly domestic; sometimes indoors, sometimes in the garden, or, occasionally, chaperoned by a man on a boulevard, at a park

¹⁴⁴ See the definition for multiple personality disorder, or, dissociative identity disorder: Merriam-Webster OnLine, [Online] <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/multiple+personality+disorder> [May 31, 2008]

or at the opera; *Mrs. Nassau Senior*, 1857, by Watts, *Hearts are Trumps*, 1872, by Millais, *Camille Monet and a Child in the Artist's Garden at Argenteuil*, 1875, and *Five O'Clock Tea*, 1880, or *Femme Cousant*, 1880-2, or by Mary Cassatt, for example.

Warner's *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* identifies aspects of the Virgin Mary's 'composite personality,' comprised of Virgin, Queen, Bride, Mother and Intercessor, for example.¹⁴⁵ In the role of Intercessor, the Virgin Mary is believed to have the ability to intercede on behalf of those who pray to her.¹⁴⁶ My research reveals that divine motherhood is the aspect of the Madonna referred to most often in Victorian painting. Jameson opened the first chapter of *Legends of the Madonna* with the statement 'No doubt it was as the mother of the Saviour Christ that she was first venerated.'¹⁴⁷ Jameson spoke of the Madonna as an embodiment of the 'sanctification of simplicity, gentleness, maternal love and heroic fortitude.'¹⁴⁸ Jameson quoted seventeenth-century Church of England clergyman Jeremy Taylor's writing about the Virgin and Child: 'She blessed him, she worshipped him, and she thanked him that he would be born of her;' adding, significantly; 'as indeed many a young mother has done before and since, when she has hung in adoration over the cradle of her first-born child.'¹⁴⁹

While Jameson seems to have encouraged her contemporaries in a degree of identification with and admiration of the Madonna, Warner contended that 'in the very celebration of the perfect human woman, both humanity and women were subtly

¹⁴⁵ Warner, M. *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1976, pp. xxiii, vii-viii.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

¹⁴⁷ Jameson, 1899, p. 17.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

denigrated.’¹⁵⁰ In an examination of the way in which Pre-Raphaelite art became an ‘integral part of most Victorian novels, conveying contemporary anxieties over various socio-political issues,’ capturing multiple perspectives on constructions of gender, for example, author Sophia Andres explains in *The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel: Narrative Challenges to Visual Gendered Boundaries*, that ‘in her reconfigurations of the Pre-Raphaelite paintings of idealized versions of feminine beauty, (Elizabeth) Gaskell demonstrates that prevalent notions of ideal femininity sustain conditions for victimization.’¹⁵¹ Likewise, in *The Modernist Madonna: Semiotics of the Maternal Metaphor*, Jane Silverman Van Buren cautioned that, ‘in a culture or society that dichotomizes gender identity and roles,’ such as Victorian society, the identification of the mother could represent a sign of ‘limited womanhood.’¹⁵² Recent scholarship asserts that Jameson, however, is one of several Victorian writers who used the Madonna ‘in arguments designed to empower women’ as opposed to employing her ‘in support of a constrictive domestic ideology.’¹⁵³

Andres points out that Pre-Raphaelite art, for example, was criticized by Victorian contemporaries for straying from the confines of prescribed modes of representation (such as the notoriously unattractive, emotionally overwrought, Virgin Mary in Millais’

¹⁵⁰ Warner, 1976, p. xxi.

¹⁵¹ Andres, S. *The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel: Narrative Challenges to Visual Gendered Boundaries*, Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2005, p. xxiv. For example, Andres writes: ‘Her concern with the social conditions of victimization may explain her reconfiguration of a notable Pre-Raphaelite painting of *Ophelia*, which displays the tragedy of an innocent victim, blending youthful features and vibrant female beauty with the fragility of a tragically premature female death.’ Andres continues, explaining: ‘Her own representation of the relationship between innocence and victimization, however, does not focus so much on inevitable tragic fate as on social conditions that are situational and as such ought to be changed.’ Andres, 2005, p. xxiv.

¹⁵² Silverman Van Buren, J. *The Modernist Madonna: Semiotics of the Maternal Metaphor*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989, p. 5.

¹⁵³ Van Esveld Adams, K. *Our Lady of Victorian Feminism: The Madonna in the Work of Anna Jameson, Margaret Fuller, and George Elliot*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001, p. 1.

Christ in the House of His Parents) as well as being 'recently censured not for their subversion but for their endorsement of Victorian gender constructs.'¹⁵⁴ Indeed, arguably both subversion *and* endorsement of Victorian gender constructs are legible, not only in Pre-Raphaelite art but throughout Victorian art, even in the body of a single artist's work.¹⁵⁵

The Types of Madonna in Victorian Art

A large proportion of the titles I have identified refer solely to the Madonna or to the Madonna and Child. The greatest quantity of titles referring only to the Madonna occurred in the 1850s, when there were nine, and again in the 1890s, when there were seven.¹⁵⁶ As the significance of the Madonna is dependent upon her relationship to Jesus; it would be surprising if she were so frequently represented on her own. However, the Madonna was represented as an icon of motherhood with the infant Jesus nearly as often as titles apparently indicating a Madonna only: 22 titles indicate a Madonna and Child subject, and 32 titles imply the sole Madonna as the subject. When the subjects of the Flight into Egypt and the Holy Family are added to those assumed to represent the Madonna and Child together, the quantity of representations as a mother outnumber those which may picture her alone; tipping the ratio to approximately one in 30 titles referring to the Madonna, and more than 50 titles explicitly identifying mother and child together. In *Legends of the Madonna*, Jameson, while acknowledging the traditionally Catholic investment in Mary as a feminine Intercessor characterized by 'beneficence, purity, and power', stressed her aspect of 'divine maternity' as the 'Mother of our Lord' who was

¹⁵⁴ Andres, 2005, p. 22.

¹⁵⁵ My italics.

¹⁵⁶ Eight titles referred to Mary, or the Madonna, exhibited throughout the 1860s, but most (5 out of 8) were sculptural works.

'clothed in the visible form of Mary.'¹⁵⁷ The characterization of Mary as Intercessor between human votaries, male or female, and God gives Western women a powerful female to develop a spiritual relationship with. Mary's power is relative to that of the supreme power of the male gendered Christian God and womankind is therefore deprived of a mythological or spiritual legacy equal to that of man's; 'indeed, the absence of feminine symbolism for God' is a characteristic of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, 'in striking contrast to the world's other religious traditions.'¹⁵⁸

Most Victorian Madonnas can simply be divided into frequently represented subjects derived from the events in her life, as described in the Gospels: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Flight into Egypt. Several titles refer simply to the *Holy Family*, and the context or composition of the subject, therefore, cannot be inferred. These titles, less than a dozen, represent six percent of the art works I have catalogued. Jameson addressed the Annunciation as both a 'Mystery' and 'Event:' the former sense being an 'expressive symbol of a momentous article of faith' and the latter sense representing 'the announcement of salvation to mankind, through the direct interposition of miraculous power.'¹⁵⁹ Jameson identified the subject of the Nativity the same way: the mystery lies in the 'advent of Divinity on earth in the form of an Infant' and the aspects of the Nativity which represent the event are those Jameson identified as 'historically treated' elements of 'time, place, and circumstance.'¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Jameson, 1899, p. 19.

¹⁵⁸ Elaine Pagels, 'The Suppressed Gnostic Feminism,' *The New York Review* 26, no. 18, (November 22, 1979), p. 42, cited in Phillips, J. *Eve: The History of an Idea*, San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Jameson, 1899, p. 281.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 319, 323.

Less frequently represented scriptural subjects include: the Visitation or the Salutation, scenes of the Holy Family at Nazareth, the finding of Jesus in the Temple, the Crucifixion, the Virgin with St. John at or after the Crucifixion, and the Entombment. Some of the subjects identified shift in proportion of occurrence from early Victorian to mid or late Victorian, or appear to be exclusive to the latter half of the century.¹⁶¹

1838-1850: The Early Victorian Madonna

The data I have gathered demonstrates that the two Madonna subjects represented most frequently 1838-50 were the *Flight into Egypt* and the *Madonna and Child*. They were exhibited in virtually equal proportion to one another. Of the Victorian exhibition venues I have surveyed, the primary sites of the early-mid Victorian period are the Royal Academy of Arts and the British Institution.¹⁶² There were a greater number of titles that simply refer to the Madonna than any other subject inclusive of Mary: approximately 45 titles refer variously to works identified as simply *A Madonna*, *The Holy Virgin*, or *Mary*, and may or may not include the infant Jesus (it is likely that they do). After the sole Madonna titles, the Annunciation, the Madonna and Child, and the Rest on the Flight to Egypt were the most prevalent subjects among works representing Mary; occurring in equal proportion to one another among the venues studied. Titles referring simply to a Madonna vary, and some may be indicative of the potential to define a category of works that are paintings of sculpture. A black and white engraving of *Madonna of the Vineyard*:

¹⁶¹ The subjects of the Flight into Egypt and the Madonna and Child occur in equal proportion throughout the Victorian era, although they both occur in smaller proportion to other subjects in the latter half of the century, such as the Annunciation and titles possibly referring solely to the Madonna.

¹⁶² Additionally, *The Virgin and Child*, by J.M. Wright, was exhibited at the Water Colour Society in 1847.

A Study, by Walter Crane, 1891, [Fig. 26] shows that this painting is a water-colour of a statue of the Madonna.¹⁶³

The Flight into Egypt:

*'Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt'*¹⁶⁴

The exhibition catalogues of the seven venues selected demonstrate that from 1838-50 the Madonna was primarily represented as a subject in the context of the Flight into Egypt.¹⁶⁵ This may reflect an enduring concern with Romantic landscape in the early Victorian years. The shift in Victorian treatment of the subject could be described as one of representing the vulnerability of the Holy Family fleeing amidst vast, Romantic landscapes to one of greater focus upon the intimacy between Madonna and Child. *The Rest on the Flight to Egypt* by Samuel Palmer, c. 1824-5 [Fig. 27], is a Romantic work which, nevertheless, places the Madonna and Child at the fore, where the arrangement and expression of the figures of mother and child immediately conjure both a Byzantine Nativity and the *Pietà*. The flight was precipitated by a vision Joseph experienced, after

¹⁶³ A reproduction of this is included in the partially illustrated exhibition catalogue of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1891. One quarter, Nine out of thirty-six, of the pictures referring to the Madonna in the title indicate clear potential to represent sculpture: *Altar of the Virgin ('Lincoln's Inn Field Chambers')*, by Benjamin Baud, *The Shrine of 'Our Ladye' at Walsingham*, by John Beecham, *'Good Night to the Madonna'*, by Miss Lucette Barker, *La Madonna, nella Loggia*, by Edward Binyon, *Flowers for Our Lady's Shrine*, by Mrs. H. Champion, *La Madonna dei Pescatori*, by Henry Darvall, *La Madonna di Mestre*, by Henry R. Robertson.

¹⁶⁴ Matthew 2:13.

¹⁶⁵ Ten titles referring simply to the Holy Family were exhibited at the venues I have researched; it is impossible to tell whether some of these might be pictures of the Flight into Egypt, the Nativity, or simply a picture of the Holy Family. At the British Institution: one by Archibald Archer, 1845, and another by Rev. Edward Price Owen, 1850. See Graves, F.S.A., A. *The British Institution: 1806-1867, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from the Foundation of the Institution* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1908). See *The Holy Family*, OWS Cat. 1846, no. 214, and RA Cat. 1854, nos. 340 and 357, 1861, no. 1134 (sculpture), 1866, no. 545, 1889, no. 133, and 1900, no. 912. See NEAC Cat. 1886, no. 48.

the Nativity when the three wise men came to honor Jesus, had departed to their own lands.¹⁶⁶

Linnell exhibited versions of the *Flight into Egypt* at the BI in 1841 and 1849.¹⁶⁷ Images for these paintings remain untraced, however, Linnell's *The Landscape with Family Group, Possibly Rest on the Flight into Egypt, c.1827* [Fig. 28], demonstrates the Romantic tendency to dwarf the Holy Family in proportion to the landscape, in this case apparently a rural English setting. Linnell painted the *Flight into Egypt* again when, in the mid-1840s, his increasing popularity enabled him to give up portraiture.¹⁶⁸ Linnell's real ambition was to paint biblical subjects.¹⁶⁹ He would have seen a version of the subject acquired in 1838 by the National Gallery, *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt* [Fig. 29], c.1630-5 by Pier Francesco Mola, whose 'most characteristic works are small, intensely romantic scenes from mythology, the Bible, and from works by the poet Torquato Tasso, set in landscapes inspired by Venetian art.'¹⁷⁰

Early Victorian representations of the subject demonstrate that the artists' primary concern was one of landscape, however, those of the mid-nineteenth century, such as Stanhope's version of 1862, generally shift focus to the Holy Family by enlarging them in proportion to the landscape setting and representing a perceptibly intimate relationship between the Virgin Mary and infant Jesus, so that they appear as a devotional image of

¹⁶⁶ The vision is described in Matthew II, 13-16.

¹⁶⁷ See Graves, F.S.A., A. *The British Institution: 1806-1867, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from the Foundation of the Institution* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1908). He drew a sketch for the subject as early as 1817. See: Linnell, T. 'The Life of John Linnell,' a scanned text of the biography, written by a descendent of the artist, [Online] <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/linnell/story/8.html> [25th August, 2006]

¹⁶⁸ Christiana Payne: "Linnell, John (ii)" Grove Art Online. Oxford University Press, [25th August, 2006], <http://www.groveart.com/>

¹⁶⁹ Payne, 2006.

¹⁷⁰ NG160, Bequeathed by Lord Farnborough, 1838. 'Mola (iii): (2) Pier Francesco Mola,' *Grove Art Online*. Oxford University Press, [26 November 2006] <http://www.groveart.com/>