

Naturally Artificial: The Pre-Raphaelite Garden Enclosed

Dr. Dinah Roe

Garden historian Brent Elliott tells us that the mid-Victorian revival of the enclosed garden “was not primarily a scholarly movement” but an artistic one, and cites depictions of such gardens in the pictures of “many of the Pre-Raphaelite circle” as evidence.¹ WH Mallock’s satirical 1872 “recipe” for making “a modern Pre-Raphaelite poem” also recognizes the prominence of the walled garden motif in Pre-Raphaelite work. Among his key ingredients are “damozels” placed “in a row before a stone wall, with an apple-tree between each, and some larger flowers at their feet.”² He is probably thinking of the frontispiece of William Morris’s *The Earthly Paradise*, a volume whose title evokes an enclosed garden; as landscape architects Rob Aben and Saskia De Wit point out, the word “Paradise is derived from the Persian word Pairidaeza, literally meaning “surrounded by walls.”³ I want to demonstrate that it is this sense of what garden theorist Elizabeth Ross calls “surroundedness” that attracts Pre-Raphaelites to the enclosed garden. Ross writes that “being surrounded” provides “a basic sensory and kinesthetic” experience signifying “comfort, security, passivity, rest, privacy, intimacy, sensory focus, and concentrated attention.”⁴ Walled gardens, in other words, provide the material and metaphorical conditions for experiencing and making art.

Focussing on Christina Rossetti’s poems, “On Keats” (1849) and “Shut Out” (1856); Charles Collins’s painting *Convent Thoughts* (1851) and William Morris’s poem, “The Defence of Guenevere” (1858), I want to examine the ways in which Pre-Raphaelitism begins to conceive of the walled garden as an analogue of both contemporary art and artistic consciousness.⁵ I will argue that the Pre-Raphaelite revival of the enclosed garden modernizes what was once a medieval space by remaking the traditional *hortus conclusus* in the image of the nineteenth-century artistic mind. Furthermore, I will demonstrate how the enclosed garden’s paradoxical nature (open / closed; natural / artificial; free / constrained) contributes to the Pre-Raphaelite portrayal of consciousness as fluid, multivalent and self-

generating. The early examples of enclosed gardens discussed here are important because they dramatize tensions that lie at the very heart of Pre-Raphaelitism, a movement whose pursuit of “truth to nature” can seem at odds with the requirements of artistic representation. Understood in the context of the horticultural revival of the enclosed garden, these artistic depictions of garden space can refine how we interpret the movement’s realism. Despite their reputation for representing the natural world with “microscopic” intensity, the Pre-Raphaelites’ interest in nature is not primarily scientific or botanical; they do not seek to make discoveries about cellular structure or the cultivation of plant species, but rather to discover in the natural world “truths” about human nature and the artistic imagination.⁶ I will argue that Pre-Raphaelite portrayals of enclosed gardens celebrate interiority, subjectivity and generative consciousness, privileging the mind over nature.

I want to begin by suggesting that early Pre-Raphaelite representations of walled gardens participate in the “revolution in aesthetics” that Brent Elliott identifies in the nineteenth-century “overthrow of the landscape garden” (p. 7). Eighteenth-century landscape gardens encouraged garden visitors to “follow nature” by arranging “garden features” and “scenery” to “inevitably invoke particular responses” (p. 8). Seeking to imitate the natural world, these gardens concealed their own artificiality by disguising their borders and boundaries, making them appear as part of the ‘natural’ landscape. For example, ha-has, woodlands and sunken ditches were designed to draw attention away from themselves as aesthetic objects and from human intervention in the garden.⁷ Horace Walpole’s influential essay, “On Modern Gardening,” promotes this approach, recommending that the English garden should aspire to “no other art than that of softening Nature’s harshness and copying her graceful touch.”⁸

Elliott argues that the Victorian drive to expose “the artistic and unnatural character of the garden” registers a broader philosophical shift from concern with “the qualities of the

material world” to “the relation of that world to the mind” (pp. 7 – 8). The nineteenth-century mind no longer regarded itself as a Lockean “blank slate” passively waiting to be inscribed “by experience” or “a mirror capable only of reflecting what is imposed upon it from without.” An individual’s “aesthetic response” was increasingly thought to be “dependent ... on the personality of the perceiver,” rather than “solely on the properties of the object perceived.” Instead of waiting for objects to reveal their inherent meaning, the individual mind, guided by its unique idiosyncratic “prejudices,” shaped its own impressions of the material world. Where formerly “Aesthetic categories such as beauty were assumed to be part of the external world, independent of the human will,” the “new philosophies of the nineteenth century” saw these “aesthetic categories ... as creations of the human mind.” Consequently, “Aesthetic perception, far from being a passive reception of impressions from nature, was proving a volatile and ever-changing process, determined more from within than without” (p. 8).

Gardening practice reflected this turn inward during the 1840s with the rise of an “alternative form of English Renaissance garden, based on enclosed units without wide vistas” (Elliott, p. 68). John Dixon Hunt identifies the return of these “closed forms” as a “reaction against” the open prospect of the landscape garden, suggesting that “there were many who could not live without a more tangible sense of boundary” (pp. 25, 24). By the 1870s, gardens increasingly incorporated “Walled or hedged enclosures” which “divided the garden into a sequence of self-contained rooms.” Both architectural and organic, the walls of these garden rooms were comprised of hedging, wattle fencing and brick or stone “planted with ivy, Virginia creeper and other climbing plants” (Elliott, p. 164). Spearheaded by Philip Webb’s prototypical design for William Morris at Bexleyheath,⁹ the mid-Victorian revival of the enclosed garden illustrates the belief that “the informing spirit of the garden ... emanat[ed] from man’s mind rather than from nature” (Elliott, p. 77). The previous century’s

landscape gardeners had been suspicious of gardens that cultivated interiority. Horace Walpole, for instance, writes that “it is almost comic to set aside a quarter of one’s garden to be melancholy in.”¹⁰ The Pre-Raphaelites, by contrast, are prepared to take the artificiality of this scenario seriously. They are interested in the ways in which the enclosed garden stages an encounter between the human mind and the material world.

The material and metaphorical consequences of its boundary wall make this type of garden distinct. As garden theorist Kate Baker observes, an enclosed garden “is as much an idea as a reality. By internalising landscape within boundary walls, we transform it, and thereby demonstrate our beliefs and attitudes toward nature.”¹¹ Describing their creation as a “poetic act”, Baker explains that such gardens “intensify our relationship with nature, whether our purpose is for cultivation or enjoyment, for our bodies or our souls” (p. 7). Ross writes that where landscape gardens invite us “to imagine possible ways of engaging and (physically) exploring the vistas that spread out before us,” enclosed gardens prompt us “to imagine heightening and intensifying the experiences framed by boundaries that enclose and surround us” (p. 173). The effect is that “Enclosure brings about a focusing of attention” because it “redirects us to microcosmic features of our surroundings and encourages us to reflect on our sensory and bodily engagement with them” (p. 171). Baker agrees, noting that “Within a small space, the details become very important” because “Enclosure enhances our sensibilities by eliminating other distractions and literally *captures* the atmosphere” (p. 139, 135). Drawn by the ways in which, as Ross puts it, “enclosure ... appeals to our imagination as well as our senses,” the Pre-Raphaelites are interested in the enclosed garden both as a symbolic space where art is created and a literal space where art is experienced (p. 171).

The metaphorical significance of enclosure in Pre-Raphaelite work attracts the notice of many contemporary critics, but Walter Pater’s 1868 review of William Morris’s poems is the first to connect this motif with artistic consciousness. Inspired by the publication of *The*

Earthly Paradise, Pater's anonymous meditation on enclosure and the artistic mind would become a touchstone of Aestheticism after appearing in the conclusion to *The Renaissance* (1873). However, this well-known passage's origins in Pre-Raphaelite criticism are important to our understanding of the dynamics of enclosure in Pre-Raphaelite work. Here, Pater characterizes the poetic mind as an enclosure whose very limitations create the conditions for heightened, intensified experience. He argues that while our "physical life" or "that which is without" is comprised of "natural elements" "processes" and "forces" whose "action ... extends beyond us," our "inward world of thought and feeling" remains circumscribed by our individuality. Pater writes that

Experience, already reduced to a swarm of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that, which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of an individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.¹²

Like J.S. Mill, who defines lyric poetry as the overheard "lament of a prisoner in a solitary cell," Pater conceives of art-making as a prison occupation.¹³ Yet his vision is even more deeply isolated and solipsistic than Mill's; "no real voice," either from inside or out, is strong enough to pierce the "thick wall" of individuality that surrounds us. While Mill imagines someone "listening, unseen" outside the cell (Mill, p. 1217), Pater argues that our isolation is so complete that we can "only conjecture" a listener "without." Circumscribed by an impenetrably "thick wall of personality," individual experiences, impressions and dreams are further enclosed within one another. Paradoxically, these restrictions create the circumstances for escape; each circumscribed "impression" is further "limited by time, and that as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also" (Pater, p. 91). Our "impressions" may be walled in, but they are not immobilized. Rather, they are "in perpetual flight." This importance of movement and flight is reinforced by the passage's

characterization of impressions as a “swarm,” a word Pater changes to “group” in *The Renaissance*.¹⁴

Pater explains that the perpetual movement and infinite division within the individual’s consciousness allows “the elements of which he is composed [to] pass into new combinations” (91). What looks like division is also multiplication, a kind of mitosis of consciousness where the mind, in dividing, simultaneously reproduces itself. Pater confirms this at the end of his review, where he distinguishes “High passions” from low on the basis of the ability of the “High” to “yield you the fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness” (92). He presents human experience as fluid and unstable, a “passage and dissolution of impressions,” a “continual vanishing away” a “perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.” Though it is not possible to escape the lonely constraints of the self and of time, awareness of those very limitations can help us to “be present,” allowing us to appreciate that “experience itself is the end” (p. 91). Maintained by a tension between freedom and constraint, movement and stasis (a swarm contained by a wall), the bounded human mind fosters limitlessness within limitation.

Pre-Raphaelite enclosed gardens represent the isolated “inward world of thought and feeling” which intrigues Pater, but they should also be understood as spaces which must primarily define themselves against “that which is without.” It is their dependence on this dialectic that distinguishes walled gardens from other purely architectural Pre-Raphaelite enclosures (towers, cells, closets) and from other kinds of literary gardens. Like the processes of artistic consciousness Pater describes, an enclosed garden is always deconstructing itself. As Baker notes, this type of garden is insistently “neither and both, an ambiguous space by its very nature” (p. 8). Paradoxical spaces maintained by dialectical polarities (natural and artificial; free and constrained; finite and infinite), enclosed gardens depend on a relationship between inside and outside that blurs the distinction between them. Such gardens cultivate

what Isobel Armstrong has identified as the “Transgressive hybridity” that is a leading feature of the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic.¹⁵ Pre-Raphaelite enclosed gardens themselves are a hybrid creation, combining the reflective, spiritual connotations of the *hortus contemplationis* with the amatory conventions of the *hortus ludi*. Yet these gardens should not be regarded as mere pastiche. Despite a visual and literary debt to the garden conventions of the *Roman de la Rose*¹⁶ and Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (c.1352), walled gardens in Pre-Raphaelite work are generally most notable for the ways in which they resist narrative; these highly-structured spaces are nevertheless insistently anti-structure, anti-social and anti-story. Rather than social spaces for creating stories about stories, Pre-Raphaelite walled gardens are solitary places for experiencing experience.

The experimental space of the Pre-Raphaelite enclosed garden presents a challenge to gender conventions alongside narrative ones.¹⁷ Giuliana Pieri argues that nineteenth-century painters generally use the “recurrent iconographic motif” of women in enclosed gardens to represent “the containment of female sexuality.”¹⁸ Herbert Sussman usefully identifies as the “claustrophilia” of the Pre-Raphaelite depiction of women in enclosed spaces which expresses, “a particularly male, characteristically Victorian delight in the image of the bound or enclosed female.”¹⁹ However, this claustrophiliac “delight” is not an exclusively male privilege, despite its association with the male gaze. Enclosure can also provide sanctuary, a refuge from the male gaze, and a space for women to think, as in the poems of Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Siddal and William Morris, which valorize female interiority, privacy and sexual autonomy. While it is tempting to oversimplify female enclosure as a misogynistic, objectifying process, to do so is to ignore the symbolic role of the enclosed female figure in Pre-Raphaelite art as a stand-in for the artist, and, in the case of walled garden pictures and poems, the paradoxical dialectics on which enclosed garden space depends. Inhabiting a liminal space between seclusion and exposure, representation and reality, inside and out, the

female figure in the garden can be understood as the embodiment of an artistic dilemma. Furthermore, Pre-Raphaelite enclosed gardens are not exclusively female spaces; the garden works considered here accommodate men and women, including a male poet, a novice nun, a knight, a male gatekeeper and a Queen, each of whom brings out different aspects of the gardens' paradoxical connotations.

A male poet is at the centre of the inaugural Pre-Raphaelite enclosed garden poem, Christina Rossetti's 1849 sonnet "On Keats," which treats Keats's Italian grave as a *hortus conclusus*.²⁰ Unabashedly claustrophiliac, the poem conflates female and male modes of sacrifice in a celebration of radical celibacy. A "garden in a garden" that recollects the Song of Solomon,²¹ Keats's grave is doubly enclosed, first within its own plot and then within the high brick walls of Rome's Protestant Cemetery. This concentric gravesite is explicitly Marian; it is "full of grace" and contains the requisite "fountain" and virgin (poet) of the *hortus conclusus*, though the virginal figure is male.²²

The dead poet literally becomes a part of the garden as his body is absorbed by the soil: "His earth is but sweet leaves that fall and rot" (l. 8). By participating in the natural cycle, his body resists horizontal enclosure (plot, wall), realigning itself with the garden's vertical, cosmic orientation (earth and sky). Not only his body, but also his body of work (to which the "sweet leaves" allude) is recycled. The grave's "fertile ground," which we are repeatedly told is a death-defying green, produces Keatsian emblems of innocence ("his own daisies," ll. 5, 6). His seemingly transient watery epitaph, "...*Here lies one whose name was writ / In water...*" becomes a self-generating fountain that nourishes and inspires other readers and poets: "His name, in every humble heart that sings, / Shall be a fountain of love, verily" (ll. 10 – 11, 13 – 14).

This doubly enclosed grave dissolves national and cultural and well as territorial boundaries. An Englishman buried in Italian soil, Keats is both an insider and an outsider. His

English body feeds Italian soil, resulting in his grave's hybrid daisies. The "basil" too is a literary hybrid, alluding to Boccaccio's *Decameron* IV 5 in which a grieving woman conceals her murdered lover's head in a pot of basil. Keats's reinterpretation of the story, "Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil" (1818), is based on an English translation of the Italian poem. The basil of Keats's English poem, itself inspired by Italian poetry in translation, is cross-bred again through its appearance in the Anglo-Italian Rossetti's Petrarchan sonnet. Rossetti's knowing cultivation of this grave-side basil plays darkly on the processes of decomposition and fertilization her poem celebrates.

Rossetti self-consciously includes herself in this Anglo-Italian poetic tradition. Composing her sonnet "For the Eve of St Agnes,"²³ she not only honours the 1820 Keats poem of the same name, but also identifies him as a sort of literary husband. More radically, her poem stakes a sorority claim, playing on the conventions of the *hortus conclusus* as described by The Song of Solomon 4:12: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." Keats here is Rossetti's hybrid literary sister / spouse. In its recycling of Keatsian words and images, her poem is proof that his "fountain" is neither "shut up" nor "sealed," an impression onomatopoeically conveyed by the overflow of syllables in its concluding feminine rhyme "verily."

Rossetti challenges Keats's contemporary reputation for effeminacy, characterising him, not as a sensitive victim of bad reviews, but as an heroic figure, "the strong man grown weary of a race" (l. 3). Yet the poem's paradoxical insistence on his virginal corpse's fecundity incorporates rather than rejects the feminine in Keats, blending conventional notions of masculine and feminine. The poet's radical, redemptive chastity recalls Christ, a virgin male whose feminine qualities were celebrated by Rossetti's High Anglican faith. As Diane D'Amico observes, the contemporary clergy appealed to its female demographic by "[speaking] of the 'character of God' as a 'mingling' of the masculine and feminine" and

arguing that “Jesus Christ restored woman to her position of dignity not by being born of a woman, but by manifesting ‘womanly virtues.’”²⁴ In her devotional prose work, *Seek and Find*, Rossetti approvingly quotes Galatians 3:28: “‘in Christ there is neither male for female, for we are all one.’”²⁵

Keats is both a feminine and a masculine martyr, as is made plain by the absence of thorns on his grave (“there thorns are not,” l. 5), which evokes the Virgin Mary, the “rose without thorns.” The poet’s peaceful “slumber-place” emphasizes regenerative capability rather than violent death (l. 2). Enclosure here promotes cosmic and literary circulation. The protective nature of the garden is emphasized by images of enclosure which promote regeneration: “in a garden”; “in fertile ground”; “*In water*,” culminating with resurrection “in every humble heart that sings.” Rossetti’s treatment of Keats’s grave as a modern *hortus conclusus* anticipates Pater’s vision of artistic consciousness as an enclosed, yet fluid and generative space.

Exhibited two years after Rossetti’s “On Keats” was written, Charles Collins’s “Convent Thoughts,”²⁶ a picture of a novice nun in a walled convent garden, is more ambivalent in its presentation of radical celibacy. Doubly enclosed by a painted garden wall and material picture frame, the novice is presented, like Rossetti’s Keats, as “A garden in a garden,” while her comparison in its inscription (“*sicut lilium*”) to a lily among thorns recalls Keats’s thornless grave. Like Rossetti’s garden, Collins’s registers the presence of both the Virgin Mary and Christ in the images of Annunciation and Crucifixion found in the novice’s open missal. I am not suggesting that Collins knew Rossetti’s poem (though this is not impossible²⁷), only that their works’ similarities reflect a shared Anglo-Catholic faith which informs early Pre-Raphaelite explorations of the enclosed garden.²⁸

Collins’s *hortus conclusus* differs from Rossetti’s in that it reminds viewers that enclosure not only keeps things in (woman) but keeps things out (man). His novice is

concentrically enclosed by painted island and garden wall and material picture frame; the restricted access to the female body and the cultivation of the novice's interior life these artificial enclosures represent draws fire from contemporary critics. Concentrating on the limiting and restrictive character of the space, most of the painting's early critics ignore the dialectical relations on which the garden's significance depends. Andrew Graham-Dixon is clear about this picture's importance to the wider movement: "Out of the debate which this picture provoked the Pre-Raphaelites were to acquire, temporarily, a common sense of purpose."²⁹ Inspired by Collins's representation of an enclosed garden, this critical "debate" indicates this motif's importance to the Pre-Raphaelites.

Punch worries that Collins's novice "makes a mistake" by deciding to "shut up a heart and life capable of love and charity, and good works, and wifely and motherly affections and duties, within that brick wall at her back."³⁰ For Wilkie Collins (the painter's novelist brother), the artificiality of the garden enclosed represents the suppression of the woman's "natural" reproductive capacity: "all the lines and shapes in Mr. Collins's convent garden are as straight and formal as possible; why should he have selected such a garden for representation? Would he have painted less truly and carefully, if he had painted a garden in which some of the accidental sinuosities of nature were left untouched by the gardener's spade and shears?"³¹ For Wilkie Collins, the problem with the picture is that it does not achieve, or even seek, a balance between nature and art in its presentation of the garden.

Ruskin shares *Punch*'s and Wilkie Collins's objections to the picture's restrictive spatial dynamics. His famous *Times* defence of Pre-Raphaelite painting admires the picture as a botanical study but declares "no particular respect for Mr. Collins' lady in white, because her sympathies are limited by a dead wall."³² Collins's wall, however, is not as limiting as he suggests. It is not a "dead" barrier, but a living threshold. The wall is teeming with lichen, moss and tall green vegetation, some of which breaches its boundary, growing into the sky.

Pre-Raphaelite Brother Frederic George Stephens recognizes that the wall itself is a fusion of the natural (plants) and artificial (architecture), praising the “enormous labour and most delicate finish” of the “various and elaborate ... parasites upon the wall of the garden.”³³ While restricting the plants to the garden space, the wall also enables these “parasites” to thrive, and the parallels between these and the novice’s experience of containment complicate Ruskin’s view. The wall simultaneously restricts and liberates the novice. Cut off from conventional social and sexual expectations, she is free to cultivate her intellectual and spiritual life. Rather than being “limited” by the garden wall, the novice’s “sympathies” are intensified by it.³⁴

William Rossetti recognizes that the picture’s boundaries heighten its emotional content, noticing the ways in which the vertical orientation (sky) and horizontal orientation (wall) orient the picture. He argues in *The Spectator* that “a certain coldness may be objected to—some deficiency of that vivid all-informing power which raises exquisite imitation into a higher sphere than it belongs to merely as such. The sky is not only plain but blank. Yet we admit that the feeling of the picture has something to do with this and the flat stretch of convent-wall.”³⁵ F.G. Stephens too notices the relationship between wall and sky: “the boundary wall of the garden was well covered with climbing plants, and the sky was clear, cold, and pure overhead” (p. 326). The “coldness” of the “plain” “blank” sky and “flat” wall are part of an emotional dynamic that elevates the picture beyond “exquisite imitation.” The flat, monochromatic sky and wall heighten the warm, bright colors and variety of the garden, conveying the intensity of the novice’s experience of enclosure. The garden wall may limit the horizon, but it also frames the limitless sky, symbolizing the novice’s rejection of the world and the spiritual rewards for that sacrifice. Collins’s “medieval” use of flattened perspective literalizes this concept; while the novice’s body is rooted to the spot, the top of her head appears to breach the garden wall.

Challenging the boundary between word and image, the painting's literary allusions echo its dialectics. Like so many other Pre-Raphaelite pictures, this one was inspired by a poem, in this case, Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant" (1820). Thomas Frosch notes that Shelley's plant (*mimosa pudica*) "shrinks from the touch and is hermaphroditic."³⁶ While the devout Collins ultimately shies away from Shelley's radical agnosticism, his picture retains the poem's resistance to gender norms in its fusion of masculine and feminine, and its interest in the connection between chastity and art-making.³⁷ This is reinforced by the quotations that Collins includes in the exhibition catalogue. The first, "Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood / To undergo such maiden pilgrimage," is from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Theseus decrees that Hermia must choose between marriage and the convent.³⁸ Though Theseus's speech in its entirety is a finely poised debate between the competing merits of celibacy and "natural" biological destiny, in the quotation Collins chooses for his picture, the king suggests that celibacy makes maidens masters.

Collins's visual material is as finely balanced as the Duke's speech, and that viewers are meant to "read" it this way is suggested by the second quotation Collins includes in the catalogue: "I meditate on all thy work; I muse on the work of Thy hands."³⁹ Playing on the double-meaning of "muse," this quotation emphasizes the intellectual character of the novice's thoughts, situating her in a male hermeneutic tradition stretching back to King David (author of the Psalms). Her function is not just to be thought about, but to think. *Punch* marks this transgression of the muse's traditional role, noting that "the size of the lady's head" was "meant to imply her vast capacity of brains," while "the utter absence of form and limb under the robe ... conveys that she has given up all thoughts of making a figure in the world" (p. 219).

The picture's botanical subject also sharpens *Punch*'s anxieties regarding the novice's "brains." As Caroline Jackson-Houlston explains, for the Victorians, "botany was *par*

excellence the science for women.”⁴⁰ Female botanizing, a form of scientific investigation, sits uneasily alongside period gender conventions associating women with flowers. While permitted, women’s botanical ambitions are circumscribed by the walls of the patriarchal home and garden as well as the domestic roles of wife and mother. Ann Shteir points out that women’s “botanical practice” is understood as “science in a separate sphere,” and practitioners are expected to “disseminate knowledge to the next generation as part of their maternal role.”⁴¹

Covent Thoughts’ depiction of female botanizing hints at another way in which chastity makes maidens masters. In the absence of children to whom to “disseminate knowledge”, the novice nun’s contemplation of the flower is both botanical and religious; one emblem of radical chastity (novice / lily) studies another (Christ / passion-flower). This woman is not just a flower to be looked at, nor does she intend to communicate botanical knowledge to her children; she is looking at and having “thoughts” about the connections between chastity and power. Collins’s use of Psalm 113 makes it clear that this practice is biblically endorsed; both thinking woman and flower are the work of God’s hands.

The “I” of the biblical quotation invites the viewer to “meditate” and “muse” on the work of hands both human (Collins) and divine (God). Psalm 113 also raises the specter of other workers absent from the picture who mediate between art and nature: the gardener (the subject of Wilkie Collins’s critique) whose handiwork surrounds the novice, the architect and / or builder of the wall, and the illuminator of the images displayed in the open missal. The novice’s turn from her missal’s illustrations of the Annunciation and Crucifixion to contemplate the flower records a train of thought rather than (as has often been argued) a wandering of the novice’s attention.⁴² The gesture literalizes the connection between the one hand (the book) and the other hand (the flower) of an argument. Her fingers mark two places in her book, signifying her intention to return to it after studying the passion flower, an

emblem of Christ's crucifixion.⁴³ Her own position between female and male modes of sacrifice is indicated by pages (gathered between the novice's middle and index finger) which separate the two illuminations. A hybrid of text and image, the missal suggests a relationship rather than a dichotomy between art and nature (illuminations and flower).

Presented in a striking frame designed by Millais, the work itself can be understood as the hybrid creation of both artists. Frame historian Lynn Roberts argues that it is "outrageously modernizing" and "would not look out of place on a Belgian Symbolist painting of 50 years later."⁴⁴ The flat, gilded frame is itself framed on left and right by two tall naturalistic plaster lilies whose blooms curve inwards, indicating the black-letter inscription, "*sicut liliam*" ("as the lily").⁴⁵ Its arched shape recalls a traditional altarpiece or a stained glass window, but also suggests an open doorway in the garden wall through which the viewer might be looking. Quite literally gilding the lily, the picture frame's purpose is not illusionistic; this bold border emphasizes artificiality, drawing attention to its function as a boundary between both canvas and wall and viewer and picture.

The picture's insistence on its own materiality (emphatic color, three-dimensional lilies, flattened perspective) gestures toward what Richard Wollheim calls "twofoldness,"⁴⁶ the notion that when viewing a painting "we are *simultaneously* aware of both the painted surface and the image in that surface."⁴⁷ The dissolution of boundaries that *Convent Thoughts* encourages (between word and image; representation and material reality; natural and artificial) forecasts Pater's aestheticism. The picture is a spectacle of materiality that looks uncannily towards Pre-Raphaelitism's future.

The ways in which boundaries intensify what they contain is the subject of Christina Rossetti's "Shut Out," a poem whose "outcast" speaker can only view the garden from outside its walls.⁴⁸ In suggesting that it is possible to be imprisoned *outside* walls as well as inside them, the poem reminds us that boundaries serve a double-function; they can give

refuge and refuse it. This “lost” garden is not an explicitly Christian paradise, though the “shadowless” gatekeeper and the speaker’s grief at her expulsion show some affinity with biblical tradition (ll. 8, 9). Yet the garden’s “Pied” flowers, “song-birds,” “moths and bees” and “delightful land” call to mind the colorful, pleasurable space of a medieval *hortus ludi* like that of the *Roman de la Rose* more than the spiritual isolation of the *hortus conclusus* (ll. 4, 5, 6, 24).

The boundary wall is the focus of the poem’s dramatic action. Initially, the exiled speaker looks through the gate and begs the “silent” male gatekeeper for tokens from the garden, but by the poem’s close the gate keeper has used “Mortar and stone to build a wall,” leaving and “no loophole” for her “straining eyes” (ll. 18, 19, 20). “Blinded with tears,” she is impervious to the charms of a nearby lark’s nest in a “violet bed” because it is “not so dear” as the birds and flowers inside the walls (ll. 22, 25, 28). One lark’s nest cannot compete with “all” the garden’s “nests and stately trees,” and its birds and insects who “cross[ed]” from “bough to bough” and “flower to flower” (ll. 7, 5, 6). The fruitful cross-pollinating environment inside the garden is in stark contrast to the meagre offerings of the landscape outside its walls. Like the poet’s gravesite in “On Keats,” this bounded garden’s artificiality fosters abundance.

Rossetti characterizes the poem itself as more of an artificial than a natural phenomenon: “not mainly the fruit of effort, but the record of sensation, fancy, and what not, much as they came and went.”⁴⁹ The poem is “mainly” a “record” documenting an artistic process (“sensation,” “fancy”) rather than a natural product (“fruit”). Rossetti’s language anticipates Pater’s Aesthetic dictum, “Not the fruit of experience but experience itself is the end” (p. 91). Experience, like a walled garden, has no identifiable “end,” just as it has no verifiable “beginning,” a notion that is enacted in “Shut Out,” whose first lines ironically open on closure: “The door was shut. I looked between / Its iron bars; and saw it lie,” (ll. 1-

2). These lines undermine the door's "shutness" by emphasizing its liminality; this iron-barred door is both open and closed, denying the speaker entry while allowing her visual access. The referent of "it" in line 2 is not revealed as "My garden" until line 3, allowing the possibility that the liminal properties of the door itself make it a kind of "lie" that the speaker can see through, a notion reinforced by the door's metamorphosis into a "gate" in stanza three (l. 9).

As elsewhere in Rossetti work, looking is a transgressive act, one that imaginatively takes the viewer across a boundary her body cannot or should not cross. For instance, in "Goblin Market," Laura is initially spell-bound not by eating the forbidden fruits, but by the spectacle of the goblins displaying them.⁵⁰ "We must not look at goblin men," she says, an injunction she violates moments later when, having looked herself, she tells her sister to "Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie."⁵¹ Virtuous Lizzie echoes, "...Laura, Laura, / You should not peep at goblin men," then "covered up her eyes / Covered close lest they should look," and "shut eyes and ran" (ll. 48 – 51, 68).

In "Shut Out," the speaker's exile is finalized when "Mortar and stone" shut out her "straining eyes" (ll. 18, 20). Visual exclusion from the garden completes both the wall's metamorphosis from threshold to barrier and the speaker's transformation from 'straining' liminal figure to "Blinded" marginal "outcast" (ll. 20, 22, 12). The speaker's grief peaks with the revelation that outside the garden, "nought is left worth looking at" (l. 23).

Regarding the enclosed garden from beyond its walls exposes the instability of the dynamic between freedom and constraint that sustains it. While the landscape outside the wall represents the limitations of freedom, the garden inside the wall represents the freedom of limitation. "Shut Out" departs from *Convent Thoughts* in its celebration of enclosure. Interior space is unquestionably superior to external. The enclosed garden is not a microcosm of the world outside; it is a better world.

Although Pre-Raphaelite work increasingly reflects the amatory medievalism of the movement's second wave by eschewing the religious connotations of the *hortus conclusus* in favor of the *locus amoenus* tradition of the *Roman de la Rose*, it retains the sense of the enclosed garden as a site of unconventional sexuality and formal experimentation. For instance, like the enclosed garden itself, William Morris's "The Defence of Guenevere" (1858) is organized around discourses of freedom and restraint. A frame narrator opens and closes the poem, simultaneously allowing the adulterous Queen to speak and circumscribing what she says. The interlocking structure of the *terza rima* means that each enclosed middle rhyme slips its boundaries only to become the boundary rhyme of the next tercet. Formal poetic conventions here, like garden walls, both gesture toward their limitations and indicate the possibility of escape.⁵²

The enclosed garden releases Guenevere from social expectations, though her experience is radically erotic rather than radically chaste. On trial for her treasonous affair with Lancelot, the Queen defends herself to Arthur's assembled knights by making a spectacle of her own withdrawal. She identifies a "quiet garden walled round every way" as the site of her initial attempt to escape the constraints of her King's "Great name and little love."⁵³ At once natural and artificial, inside and outside, open and closed, this walled garden embodies what Armstrong calls "the contradictions in which [Guenevere] lives."⁵⁴ The poem's central paradox, that the adulterous Queen is telling the "truth" while her accuser "lies," is supported by a site that thrives on ambiguity, instability and contradiction. A framed, dramatic monologue in *terza rima*, that the poem itself is a hybrid of the medieval and the contemporary is emphasized in its appearance on the page; its "medieval" ornaments and decorated initials are printed in modern face Caslon, a nineteenth-century font.⁵⁵

Before being "bought" by her King's "Great name," Guenevere had imagined romantic love as a fluid boundary: "That which I deemed would ever round me move /

Glorifying all things...” (ll. 85 – 6). This boundary ironically materializes outside of the bonds of marriage, as the “quiet garden walled round every way” where she and Launcelot first kiss (l. 111). This “wall of stone” enables a visionary state that accommodates the contradictions of her existence, making this formerly “stone-cold” wife “right joyful” (ll. 88, 112). More significantly, and before the appearance of Launcelot, the privacy and protection of the enclosed garden afford her the opportunity to encounter her erotic self, suppressed in a loveless marriage: “I was half mad with beauty on that day, / And went without my ladies all alone” (ll. 109 – 110). Like Tennyson’s Lady of Shalott (“half-sick of shadows”⁵⁶) and the speaker of Keats’s “Ode To A Nightingale” (“half in love with easeful Death”⁵⁷), the “half mad” Guenevere’s most significant encounter is with herself in solitude. Her ambivalent state of mind is validated by the garden’s dialectics, which mediate between inside and out, open and closed, wild and cultivated.

In limiting her view of the landscape, the wall’s horizontal boundary redirects her attention to the garden’s vertical axis: “...that wall of stone, / That shut the flowers and trees up with the sky / And trebled all the beauty: to the bone” (ll. 112 – 113). Though “shut” within the wall, the flowers, trees are also “up with the sky.” Reoriented around its vertical axis (“up”), the enclosed garden suggests that escape is a matter of perception; up and down subverts inside and out. This vertical emphasis is echoed in the posture of the lovers’ standing kiss, where “both our mouths went wandering in one way” while “Our hands being left behind strained far away” (ll. 136, 138). Guenevere’s subsequent revisiting of the garden in her imagination is characterized in vertical terms: “... wheresoever I may be, *straightway* / thoughts of it all come *up* with most fresh sting” (ll. 107 – 108, emphasis mine). The interaction of the enclosed garden’s horizontal plane and the vertical axis mimics Guenevere’s giddy disorientation and promotes the shift in perspective that her defence demands. Beauty (both the garden’s and Guenevere’s) is multiplied by limitation, “trebled”

by the “wall of stone” whose intensifying role recalls the picture frame of Collins’s *Convent Thoughts*. Unlike the novice in Collins’s picture, however, the Queen is aware of herself as an object of display and self-display, a notion the poem both exploits and problematizes.

Morris here secularizes the medieval *hortus contemplationis*; the subject of Guenevere’s garden contemplation is not God, but herself. Pater identifies the “mood of the cloister taking a new direction” in this poem, by which he means the conflation of the sexual and the spiritual (p. 81). Enclosure directs her perception inward, “to the bone” and “through to my heart” allowing Guenevere to access to her interior, erotic life (ll. 114 – 115). Enclosure turns her inside out. This passage’s aesthetic becomes so concentrated and intense that it anticipates a kind of x-ray vision that science will not discover until the century’s close.

Digressing from her garden narrative, Guenevere speculates what might have happened

“...If I had

Held out my long hand up against the blue
And, looking on the tenderly darken’d fingers
Thought that by rights one ought to see quite through,

There, see you, where the soft still light yet lingers
Round by the edges; what should I have done,
If this had joined with yellow spotted singers,

And startling green drawn upward by the sun?
But shouting, loosed out, see now! all my hair,
And trancedly stood watching the west wind run

With faintest half-heard breathing sound: why there
I lose my head e’en now in doing this;”

(ll. 120 – 131)

This is a complicated moment. On the one hand, Guenevere makes a spectacle of herself in order to distract her accusers from their deadly purpose, drawing out her narrative in order to buy time.⁵⁸ But in literally and figuratively exposing herself, she also makes an

important point about perception. She knows her appeal to their voyeurism is transparent; she wants them to “see...through” her, to connect bone and heart with exterior beauty.

Objectifying herself in order to suggest her own subjectivity is a risky strategy, as the double-meaning of “I lose my head e’en now in doing this” wryly acknowledges. The Queen’s strategy is not just trickery or time-wasting, but a plea for empathy, the ultimate act of imagination that would allow her jury not only to “see” through the body whose destruction they are contemplating, but through her eyes, to perceive things she way she does (““There, see you...”).

Guenevere observes that the brightness of the blue sky darkens fingers held up against it, rather than rendering them transparent, as one might “by rights” expect. She argues that, paradoxically, bright light can make things harder to see, a point that is related to her defence of the subjective “truth” of her version of events. Rather than illuminating the subjective, the bright light of objective truth renders it opaque. Seeing things differently is freeing, as the image of hand and grass (“startling green”) dissolving into a flock of birds (“spotted singers”) flying “upward” suggests. Engaged in the “perpetual weaving and unweaving” of the self to which Pater alludes, Guenevere defends herself by stressing not only a multiplicity of selves, but of times and spaces. The “remember’d bliss” of Guenevere’s past merges with the present scene of her self-defence, allowing her to exist in two spaces and timelines, effecting a kind of escape from both by fully inhabiting neither (l. 135). But such escape, she reminds her listeners, is imaginative and conditional: (“If I had,” “what should I have done / If this had joined”). She can no more escape the truth of her adultery than she can her present captivity. Or can she?

In line 130, she alludes to her escape, “...watching the west wind run / “With faintest half-heard breathing sound,”” before asking her audience to ““shortly listen – in that garden fair / Came Launcelot walking; this is true...” (ll. 132 – 3). This episode forecasts her rescue

at the end of the poem, when Launcelot's much-anticipated arrival is realized: "...she could / At last hear something really" (ll. 291 – 2). Guenevere invites her audience not only to listen *to* her in the present moment but also to listen *with* her to Launcelot's approach in her past. She encourages them to share her perception of what is "true," not about her innocence or guilt, but about her experience. Her "Defence" rejects the linear story-telling conventions (chronology, causality, conclusion) that would surely condemn her in favor of a circular narrative technique modelled on and formed by the literal and symbolic enclosures in which she finds herself.

Pre-Raphaelite enclosed gardens' challenge to narrative convention is complimented by a commitment to visuality as a way of negotiating the relationship between the mind and the material world. Pater's review of Morris's poetry acknowledges and valorizes the connection between vision and thought. We should, he argues, emulate "philosophy," "religion" and "culture," in trying "to startle it [the human spirit] into a sharp and eager observation" (p. 91). The type of "eager observation" Pater advocates is microscopic, permitting us "to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us." Pater reinforces the point by quoting Victor Hugo: "*La philosophie ... c'est le microscope de la pensée*" ["Philosophy is the microscope of thought"] (p. 92). Looking does not simply stimulate thinking; looking *is* thinking. Resisting "the roughness of the eye" that only sees "a stereotyped world," this sharpened vision encourages originality, inspiring us "to be for ever curiously testing options and courting new impressions" (pp. 91 - 92). Here a scientific instrument is repurposed as an artistic one. Prioritizing interiority, close observation and originality, this microscopic aesthetic challenges "abstract morality" and "what is only conventional," allowing for a radical shift in perception that Pater hopes will ultimately facilitate the appreciation of "art for art's sake" (p. 92).

In presenting enclosed gardens as spaces which suspend contradiction, the Pre-Raphaelite garden works considered here explore freedom in constraint, both reflecting and embodying the dilemmas of the human figures they contain, and the artists who create them. Artificially bounded natural environments without beginning or end, Pre-Raphaelite walled gardens celebrate the endless circulation of nature, thoughts and bodies. Rossetti's "garden in a garden" recycles Keats's corpse and corpus, while "Shut Out" promotes the cross-pollinated environment of the shut in. The *Thoughts* of Collins's novice resist resolution, circulating within and around the concentrically organized spaces of garden, wall and picture frame. We leave Morris's endangered Guenevere where we found her, *in medias res* (and in mid-performance), awaiting rescue. Whether claustrophobic, claustrophiliac or cloistral, these gardens are ultimately experimental spaces that exploit the paradoxical relations on which closed spaces depend.

The enclosed garden appeals to the Pre-Raphaelites not only as a space for art appreciation, but as a figure for art itself. When a garden is enclosed, what John Dixon Hunt identifies as "the essential element of garden experience, the art: nature ratio" shifts the balance towards art (p. 21). A boundary wall acts as a framing device that isolates the garden's contents, limits its reach and contains the visitor, yet in doing so gestures beyond itself. Representing enclosed gardens in art and poetry transforms such boundaries into thresholds, both materially and symbolically; even as picture frames or margins circumscribe the space, they expand it. Even as words and images contain meaning, they release it. Pre-Raphaelite portrayals of these naturally artificial spaces both affirm the power of boundaries and create the conditions for their transgression. Whether this state of affairs is liberating or confining depends on the extent to which each artist or writer finds comfort in (in Pater's words) "that, which we can only conjecture to be without" (p. 90).

NOTES

¹ Brent Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* (London: Batsford, 1986), p. 164. Further quotations from this book are cited parenthetically by page number.

² WH Mallock, *Every Man His Own Poet* (Oxford: Thos. Shrimpton and Son, 1872), p. 13.

³ Rob Aben and Saskia de Wit, *The Enclosed Garden* (Rotterdam: nai010, 1999), p. 32.

According to John Dixon Hunt, the word paradise, from the “Old Persian *pairidaeza* (from *pairi* [around] and *daeza* [wall]); hellenized as *paradeisos* ... effectively introduced the word *paradise*, meaning a wonderfully enclosed ground, into several modern languages.” John Dixon-Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), pp. 19-20. Further quotations from this book are cited parenthetically by page number.

⁴ Stephanie Ross, *What Gardens Mean* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 170. Further quotations from Ross are cited parenthetically by page number.

⁵ Though the publication of Morris’s *The Earthly Paradise* is contemporaneous with the 1870s horticultural revival of the enclosed garden and the appearance of walled enclosures in Philip Webb’s design for Morris’s Red House garden, I want to concentrate on the ways in which earlier Pre-Raphaelite depictions of walled gardens anticipate the enclosed garden’s mid-Victorian recovery.

⁶ Pre-Raphaelite work does engage with contemporary botanical contexts in its attention to natural detail and its association of women with flowers, but in general, natural science is used to detect and amplify emblematic and religious meanings. For more details on the Pre-Raphaelite relationship to Victorian botanical practice, see Lothar Hönnighausen, “Typology and allegory in late romantic literature,” in *The Symbolist Tradition in English Literature: A Study of Pre-Raphaelitism and the Fin de Siècle* (1971), trans. Gisela Hönnighausen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 39 – 47. The relationship of botany and

theology in Rossetti's work is carefully considered in Emma Mason, "'All green things': Christina Rossetti's Franciscan Ecology," *Studium*, 4 (2016): 530-557. For useful general discussions of the relationship of women to botany in the period, see the works listed in note 30.

⁷ Elliott notes that "some" Victorian commentators also recognized that "features" of landscape gardens "were derived not from unaided nature, but from the relics of agriculture and industry: from the enclosure of commons, from hedgerows and boundary trees, from the serpentine lakes created to power watermills," but that recognition of the artificiality of "the English countryside" ultimately "played only a minor part" in the decline of the landscape garden (p. 7).

⁸ Horace Walpole, *History of the Modern Taste In Gardening* (1780), quoted in Donna Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside: Hunting, Walking and Ecology in English Literature 1671 – 1831* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2001), p. 70.

⁹ Noting that this Bexleyheath garden "was a prototype of such gardens," Elliott adds that Morris's garden at Kelmscott Manor is an "important later representative" (p. 164). Jan Marsh identifies Morris's Red House garden as "a forerunner of early twentieth century fashions for herbaceous planting and "'garden rooms'". Jan Marsh, *William Morris and the Red House* (London: National Trust Books, 2005), p. 63.

¹⁰ Horace Walpole, "On Modern Gardening" (1780), quoted in *The Writing of Rural England 1500-1800*, eds., Stephen Bending and Andrew McRae (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2003), p. 183.

¹¹ Kate Baker, *Captured Landscape: The Paradox of the Enclosed Garden* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 6. Further quotations from Baker are cited parenthetically by page number.

¹² Walter Pater, unsigned review, *Westminster Review*, 90 (1868): 300 – 312, in *William Morris: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Peter Faulkner (London: Routledge, 1973): pp. 89 – 90.

Further quotations from Pater’s review are taken from Faulkner’s edition and cited parenthetically by page number. For a discussion of this passage in relation to the Pre-Raphaelite depiction of male chastity, see Dinah Roe, “‘Me, Who Ride Alone’: Chastity in Pre-Raphaelite Poetry,” in *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities*, eds. Serena Trowbridge and Amelia Yeates (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 166 – 167.

¹³ J.S. Mill, “What Is Poetry” (1833), in *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory*, eds. Thomas Collins and Vivian Rundle (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), p. 1217.

¹⁴ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* [1873] (London: Macmillan, 1919), p. 235.

¹⁵ Isobel Armstrong, “The Pre-Raphaelites and Literature,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.18.

¹⁶ Guillaume de Lorris wrote the first part of the poem c.1225-40. It was completed by Jean de Meun between 1269 and 1278. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones particularly admired the British Museum’s late fifteenth-century illuminated manuscript copy of the poem (MS Harley 4425). See Michaela Braesel, “The Influence of Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts on the Pre-Raphaelites and the Early Poetry of William Morris,” *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 15.4 (2004): 41-54.

¹⁷ The complex nineteenth-century response to the literary and artistic association of women with enclosed gardens is beyond the scope of this essay. For a detailed exploration of this relationship, see Fabienne Moine, “A Woman’s Place is in the Garden,” in *Women Poets in the Victorian Era: Cultural Practices and Nature Poetry* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 25 –

50. For a general discussion of nineteenth-century literary women and gardens, see *Women, Literature, and the Domesticated Landscape: England's Disciples of Flora 1780 – 1870*, eds. Judith W. Page and Elise L. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2011. See also the works listed in notes 39 and 40.

18 “The Myth of Psyche in the work of D’Annunzio and Burne-Jones,” by Giuliana Pieri, pp. 15 – 31,

in *Text and Image in Modern European Culture*, eds. Natasha Grigorian, Thomas Baldwin, Margaret Rigaud-Drayton (West Lafayette: Pursue University Press, 2012), p. 22.

19 Herbert Sussman, “The Pre-Raphaelites and the Mood of the Cloister,” *Browning Institute Studies*, 8 (1980): 49.

20 For a detailed discussion of Keats’s grave as a literary space, see Samantha Matthews, *Poetical Remains: Poets' Graves, Bodies, and Books in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 113 – 153. For Elizabeth Barrett-Browning’s response to Keats’s grave, see Alison Chapman, “Risorgimenti: Spiritualism, Politics, and Elizabeth Barrett-Browning,” in *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy*, ed. Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 82 – 86. For an analysis of “On Keats” in relation to male chastity, see Dinah Roe, “‘Me, Who Ride Alone’: Chastity in Pre-Raphaelite Poetry” in *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities*, eds. Serena Trowbridge and Amelia Yeates (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 156 – 157.

21 “A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” Song of Solomon 4:12 KJV.

22 Christina Rossetti, “On Keats” (1849), *The Complete Poems of Christina Rossetti*, ed. Betty S. Flowers (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 700, ll. 1, 6, 14. Further quotations from Rossetti’s poems are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically by line number.

23 Rossetti wrote this at the end of this poem in MS. Her note invokes the folk belief that a maiden receives a dream-vision of her future husband on the Eve of St. Agnes. See note 12 for “On Keats” in *The Complete Poems*, p. 112.

24 Diane D’Amico, *Faith, Gender and Time* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 140. D’Amico quotes HWC, “The Position of Woman,” *English Women’s Journal* 6 (January 1861): 289, and Fletcher, “Woman’s Equality with Man in Christ,” *Women in English Religion*, ed. Dale A. Johnson (New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 1984), X., p. 144.

25 Rossetti, Christina, *Seek and Find* (London: SPCK, 1879), p. 32. Quoted in D’Amico, p. 141.

26 Charles Collins, *Convent Thoughts*, 1851, oil on canvas, 84 x 59 cm., The Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford. First exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851 with John Everett Millais’ *The Woodman’s Daughter*, *Mariana* and *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* and William Holman Hunt’s *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus*. Millais proposed Collins for membership in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, but he was ultimately rejected. See William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), I, p. 151.

27 During this picture’s composition, Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s friends and colleagues were aware of his poet sister and were reading her work through him. Although Christina declined Dante Gabriel’s invitation to join the movement, this period, culminating in the publication of her poems in *The Germ* (1850) marks her closest involvement with the Brotherhood. Collins is rumored to have been in love with Christina Rossetti’s sister Maria, who became an Anglo-Catholic nun in 1873. D.M.R. Bentley claims that Maria was the model for the nun in *Convent Thoughts*, though William Michael dates her “preference” for the painter to around 1855. See William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences* I, p. 152. For more on Collins’s relationship with the Rossetti family, see D.M.R. Bentley, “The Pre-Raphaelites and the

Oxford Movement,” *Dalhousie Review* 57 (1977): 533 – 34. Joseph Bristow writes that the picture “arguably relates to this painter’s unrequited love for Maria Rossetti and the establishment of the Anglican Sisterhood into which she would enter.” Joseph Bristow, ““No Friend Like a Sister?”: Christina Rossetti’s Female Kin,” *Victorian Poetry*, 33.2 (1995): 263.

28 For a discussion of the Tractarian influence on early Pre-Raphaelitism, see Elizabeth Ludlow, “Christina Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites”, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement*, eds. Stewart J. Brown, Peter Nockles and James Pereiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 427 – 440.

29 Andrew Graham-Dixon, *A History of British Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 176.

30 “Punch Among the Painters,” *Punch* 20 (1851): 219. Further quotations from this article are cited parenthetically by page number.

31 [Wilkie Collins], “The Exhibition of the Royal Academy,” *Bentley’s Miscellany* 29.174 (1851): 624.

32 John Ruskin, “The Pre-Raffaelites. Letter to the Editor,” *London Times*, May 13, 1851, p. 8 in “*A New and Noble School*”: *Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites*, ed., Stephen Wildman (London: Pallas Athene, 2012), p. 52.

33 F.G. Stephens, “The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms,” *The Crayon* 4.11 (1857): 326. Further quotations from this article are cited parenthetically by page number. Stephens’ discusses *Convent Thoughts* in an article that attempts to define Pre-Raphaelitism six years after the picture’s public exhibition. This demonstrates the picture’s significance to the movement’s “common sense of purpose,” identified by Graham-Dixon (see note 28.)

34 Ruskin’s dismissal of the lady in white reflects contemporary anxieties about Anglican religious sisterhoods (with which Christina Rossetti was involved) and their interference with women’s social and biological roles. Susan Mumm’s *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers*

(London: Leicester University Press, 1999) is an excellent and thorough study of the subject.

For details of the Rossetti family's affiliations with Anglican Sisterhoods, see Jan Marsh, *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994).

³⁵ [William Michael Rossetti]. "Fine Arts. The Royal Academy Exhibition," *Spectator* 24.1196 (1851): 524. <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/31st-may-1851/19/fine-arts> (accessed February 15, 2017).

³⁶ Thomas Frosch, *Shelley and the Romantic Imagination: A Psychological Study* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), p. 71.

³⁷ Collins, a devout Anglo-Catholic who contemplated clerical life, would have been influenced by the High Church view that Christ was a blend of masculine and feminine. See "Rossetti's Eve and the Woman Question" in Diane D'Amico, *Faith, Gender and Time* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1999), pp. 118 – 146, and Julie Melnyk, "'Mighty Victims': Women Writers and the Feminization of Christ," *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 31.1 (2003): 131 – 157.

³⁸ William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Peter Holland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), I.1. 74 – 75.

³⁹ Psalm 113 KJV.

⁴⁰ CM Jackson – Houlston, "'Queen Lilies'? The Interpenetration of Scientific, Religious and Gender Discourses in Victorian Representations of Plants," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 11:1 (2006): 87.

⁴¹ Ann Shteir, "Elegant Recreations? Configuring Science Writing for Women," in *Victorian Science in Context*, ed., Bernard Lightman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 243. For more on the subject of contemporary attitudes toward women and botany, see Theresa Kelley, *Clandestine Marriage: Botany and Romantic Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); "Saying It With Flowers," in Fabienne Moine, *Women*

Poets in the Victorian Era: Cultural Practices and Nature Poetry (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 51 – 98 and Ann Shteir, *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

42 Sussman writes that “she lays aside the book of God ... to examine closely a daisy,” Herbert Sussman, “The Pre-Raphaelites and the Mood of the Cloister,” *Browning Institute Studies*, 8 (1980): 46. Mancoff asserts that “the novice’s attention has strayed from the missal in her hand,” Debra Mancoff, *Flora Symbolica: Flowers in Pre-Raphaelite Art* (Michigan: Prestel, 2003), p. 12.

43 The passion flower’s corona is thought to resemble the crown of thorns, while the five stamens represent the wounds, the three styles represent the nails, and the tendrils resemble scourges. Mancoff, *Flora Symbolica*, p. 12.

44 Lynn Roberts, “Pre-Raphaelite Frames: Part I,” *The Frame Blog*, <https://theframeblog.com/2012/10/06/pre-raphaelite-frames/> (accessed 17 February 2017).

45 “Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters,” Song of Solomon 2:2.

46 Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 47, quoted in Ross, *What Gardens Mean*, p. 178.

47 Ross, p. 178.

48 Christina Rossetti, “Shut Out” (1862), *The Complete Poems*, p. 50, l. 12. The poem was composed in 1856. Further quotations from this poem are cited parenthetically by line number.

49 Christina Rossetti to Adolph Heimann, 29 April 1862, *The Letters of Christina Rossetti*, ed. Antony H. Harrison (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), I, p. 164. William Michael Rossetti notes that the poem’s working title is “What happened to Me,” *The Poetical Works of Christina Rossetti*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 480.

50 The poem's original title, "A Peep at the Goblins," indicates the importance of the act of looking in this poem. See title note for 'Goblin Market' in Notes, *Complete Poems*, p. 884.

51 Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market," *Complete Poems* pp. 5-19, ll. 42, 54. Further quotations from this poem are cited parenthetically by line number.

52 For a detailed discussion of *terza rima* in this poem, see Naomi Levine, "Trebled Beauty: William Morris's Terza Rima," *Victorian Studies* 53 (2011): 506-517.

53 William Morris, "The Defence of Guenevere," *The Pre-Raphaelites: From Rossetti to Ruskin*, ed. Dinah Roe (London: Penguin, 2010), pp. 193 – 204, ll. 111, 83. Further quotations from this poem are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically by line number.

54 Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poets and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 237.

55 See Jerome McGann, "'A Thing to the Mind': The Materialist Aesthetic of William Morris," in *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1992), pp. 57 – 58.

56 Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott," *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: The Victorian Era* (Plymouth: Broadview, 2006) V., p. 161, l. 71.

57 John Keats, "Ode To A Nightingale," *Keats: The Complete Poems*, ed. Miriam Allott (London: Longman, 1970), p. 529, l. 52.

58 Harrison describes this passage as a "seduction." Antony H. Harrison, "Arthurian Poetry and Medievalism" in *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*, eds. Alison Chapman, Ciaran Cronin and Antony H. Harrison (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 250.