THE LIFE AND ART OF ELIZABETH ELEANOR SIDDAL (1829-1862): A RE-EXAMINATION

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine the life and art of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal (1829-1862): painter, poet, and member of the Pre-Raphaelite art circle, major innovators in nineteenth century English art. Both her art and life are discussed as a separate phenomenon, rather than as a mere extension of her husband, Dante Rossetti's, work. For the first time, information about her life, much of it drawn from primary sources, such as the letters, diaries, and memoirs of her contemporaries, will be presented in one concise essay. The motivating forces of her life, such as her undertaking a career in modelling which plunged her into the midst of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, will be re-examined in light of their historical context. Her friendships and contacts with major figures of the era, including Algernon Charles Swinburne, Robert Browning, Barbara Leigh Smith, and John Ruskin, who became her patron, will be discussed in order to indicate her importance in this period.

The reasons for this woman, of a low status background, to have obtained the admiration of the Pre-Raphaelites, and especially that of Dante Rossetti, will be analyzed in

light of Rossetti's concurrent fascination with the concept of courtly love combined with the complex implications of her ill health. These factors lent her both an aura of genius and sensual appeal in an era when erotic elements could only be expressed in terms of metaphors.

The major themes of Siddal's art will be deciphered and examined, for the first time, in relation to the art of the other Pre-Raphaelites to which they are integrally related. The assumption that her work was nothing but an imitation of Rossetti's bearing no relation to the art created by her colleagues will be corrected. Her accomplishments will not be exaggerated: it will not be argued that a "female Michelangelo" has been discovered, but, instead, she will be treated as objectively as possible, a right she has generally been denied because of her sex. The fact that she was a woman certainly did influence her choice of specific subjects for her art, but it must be subordinated to the more important factors influencing her art, such as her nationality, training, and contemporaries.

This thesis presents factual information about the brief life and limited accomplishments of Elizabeth Siddal and provides an easily accessible and necessary resource for those interested in either the art of the Pre-Raphaelites or women's art history.

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Now the rule of the game is that men win as long as they keep their noses comparatively clean, and women lose, always, even the extraordinary women. The Edith Piafs and Judy Garlands of the world become great by capitalizing on their losing.

Marilyn French
The Women's Room

INTRODUCTION

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, by its name alone, implies an all-male group of artists and the names of its seven founding members: Dante Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, John Millais, William Rossetti, Thomas Woolner, Frederick Stephens, and James Collinson, confirm this assumption. But these men were not to remain its sole members. Within a few years after the founding of the Brotherhood in 1848, other artists could also be called "Pre-Raphaelite"* and some of these artists were women. Ellen C. Clayton, in her book of 1876, entitled *English Women Artists* discusses some of these women such as Catherine Hueffer and Lucy Rossetti, daughters of Ford Madox Brown; Rebecca Solomon, sister of Simeon Solomon; and Helen Allingham, wife of William Allingham.[1]

It becomes obvious from these names that many of the women were able to be associated with the Pre-Raphaelites because of their ties through husbands, fathers or brothers. Their work has unfortunately been overshadowed by their

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*For the purposes of this thesis, the term "Pre-Raphaelite" will be used in a broad general sense to encompass the many artists who became involved with the group, adopting the style and beliefs of the seven original Pre-Raphaelites as their own. Used in the generic sense, Pre-Raphaelite can include women such as Elizabeth Siddal.

male counterparts, much in the same way as in more recent times the art of Sonia Delaunay and Sophie Tauber-Arp has been overshadowed by their husbands' work.

The earliest of these Pre-Raphaelite women was Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal (1829-1862) who, like many of the other women of the group, became involved in it because of her relationship to a man and later passed into obscurity with them. She was involved with the man who was and who would remain the most famous of the group, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Though their relationship began as a purely professional one, with Siddal working as Rossetti's* model, intimate feelings soon developed, and after a tumultuous relationship of nearly ten years, Siddal became Rossetti's wife. Although Rossetti's life has been well documented, Siddal's has not.+ Certainly, even if her only historically relevant accomplishment was her relationship to Rossetti, one would still hope for factual information about her. But Siddal

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*When the name "Rossetti" is used alone in this thesis, it will always refer to Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882).

+There have been only two books published that deal directly with Siddal: Violet Hunt, *The Wife of Rossetti* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1932) and Roger C. Lewis and Mark Samuels Lasner (eds.), *Poems and Drawings of Elizabeth Siddal* (Wolfville, Nova Scotia: The Wombat Press, 1978). Violet Hunt's book is highly unreliable and generally disregarded by scholars. Lewis and Lasner merely reproduce Siddal's poems and drawings, without any discussion of their contents.

was not merely a famous artist's model and wife. During her brief life, she also executed paintings and drawings and wrote poetry. Though facts can be unearthed about her life, no discussion of her art exists.

To those of the twentieth century, Siddal exists only as a face surrounded by red hair that is found repeatedly in Rossetti's drawings and paintings. Descriptions of what she looked like by her friends, such as the following one by Georgiana Burne-Jones, also have survived. She said of Siddal:

> Lizzie's slender elegant figure - tall for those days, but I never knew her actual height - comes back to me, in a graceful and simple dress, the incarnate opposite of the "tailor-made" young lady [. . . .] the mass of her beautiful deep-red hair as she took off her bonnet: she wore her hair very loosely fastened up, so that it fell in soft, heavy wings. Her complexion looked as if a rose tint lay beneath the white skin, producing a most soft and delicate pink for the darkest flesh-tone.[2]

From descriptions such as this one, it is relatively easy to reconstruct Siddal's appearance, but it is her personality that presents a major problem. There is so little to seize hold upon because so much of her life had been recorded in terms of Rossetti's life and achievements. There is so little definite information that gives any clue to her real self. Yet, the image of this obscure enigmatic artist

was elevated to somewhat of a "cult object" by the Pre-Raphaelites and their descendents. Ford Madox Hueffer, grandson of Ford Madox Brown, referred to her in 1911 as "the almost legendary Miss Siddal."[3] Even in the nineteenth century, personages such as Oscar Wilde talked about her and women associated with the art movement called the Symbolists tried to look like her.

This thesis will attempt to re-examine the motivations in her life and in her relationship with Dante Rossetti and for the first time, to discuss the meaning of her art. Chapter I is a reconstruction of the biography of Elizabeth Siddal which alone is a difficult problem. Little primary source material exists.* Ideally, one would hope to base this chapter on a thorough examination of Siddal's correspondence and papers, but after a careful search, these important documents do not appear to exist in public collections. One can only hope that they have not been completely destroyed and exist somewhere in a private collection and will one day be available to the public.

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*Only two of Siddal's letters have been published. One can be found in William Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelitism* (London: George Allen, 1899), pp. 110-3 and the other is in Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, v. 1 (London: Macmillan and Company, 1904), pp. 220-21.

One inconsequential note, written by Siddal, can be found in Special Collections, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Siddal does not appear to have kept a journal as did many of the Pre-Raphaelites including Ford Madox Brown and William Rossetti. Other than her painting and poetry, nothing really remains. Dante Rossetti's actions are one reason for this lack of substantial information. He destroyed pages of the *Pre-Raphaelite Journal* that referred to her or to their relationship for some unknown reason.[4] Fortunately, the lives of Siddal's friends, such as John Ruskin, Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones, and Algernon Charles Swinburne are more thoroughly documented, and it is through them that one can discover particles of information about her. The insights of those well acquainted with her, even those of her brother-in-law, William Rossetti, are sketchy. He wrote of her talk as having been "scanty" and her personality as having been "distant."[5] Siddal, herself, may prove the most difficult obstacle in the re-telling of her life story, since she appears to have been an elusive character to both her family and friends.

Chapter II will attempt to briefly examine the intricacies of the Siddal-Rossetti relationship and to determine why he became so obsessed with someone who initially appears to not have possessed any extraordinary qualities. Her appeal, it will be argued, not only to Rossetti, but to many of the Pre-Raphaelites, was increased

by her ill health and its implications in nineteenth century England.

The purpose of Chapter III is to closely examine the prevalent belief that Siddal's art was merely an imitation of Rossetti's, with few of its own merits. Her work will be examined not only in relation to Rossetti's, but to other Pre-Raphaelites, because it did not exist in a vacuum, but was an integral part of the Pre-Raphaelite spectrum of expression.

Notes - Introduction

[1]Ellen C. Clayton, *English Female Artists* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1876), pp. 1, 96, 116, 129.

[2]Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, v. 1 (London: Macmillan and Company, 1904), p. 207.

[3]Ford Madox Hueffer, *Memories and Impressions* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911), p. 28.

[4]William Michael Rossetti (ed.), *Pre-Raphaelite Diaries and Letters* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1900), p. 208.

[5]William M. Rossetti, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal," *Burlington Magazine*, I (May, 1903), p. 273.

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF ELIZABETH ELEANOR SIDDAL

In order to examine Elizabeth Siddal's art, it is first necessary to reconstruct the life of the woman whose face is so well known in the history of art, but about whose life there remain so many unanswered questions. While many biographers of Dante Rossetti become pre-occupied with the question of whether Siddal and Rossetti consummated their relationship before or after their marriage, this chapter will offer a new approach to the more important aspects of her life, such as the initial reason for her involvement with the Pre-Raphaelites. Scholars often assume or infer that Siddal was "awed" by the revolutionary Pre-Raphaelite approach to art, when actually, she probably knew very little about art and began modelling for them as a means of improving her economic condition. It was only later that she began to understand their ideology and adopted it as her own as will be seen in her art. She was not the isolated outsider, as she is so frequently depicted, who was linked only to the Pre-Raphaelites through her relationship with Rossetti. She actually was an integral member of

the art circle who must have shared ideas, as well as her art with them. Fresh speculation about the reasons for Ruskin's patronage will be presented in the light of his social orientation and personal crisis at the time. The final problem that will be analyzed is Siddal's death, which was closely linked with her use of laudanum. Though still surrounded with mysteries, it was likely a suicide, which was proved otherwise in order to protect her survivors.

The correct date of Siddal's birth was not known until the 1970's. Historians of the Pre-Raphaelites, including William Rossetti and Oswald Doughty, cite the year of her birth as 1834,[1] which would have meant that Siddal was six years younger than Dante Rossetti. But Marion R. Edwards has now discovered Siddal's birthdate in London as having been 25 July, 1829, which means that she was only a year younger than Rossetti.[2] The reason for this discrepancy is unknown: possibly Siddal did not know the exact year of her birth, or lied about it to appear younger.

The Siddall* ancestral village was Hope, in Derbyshire, where the family had owned Hope Hall, located on the moors.[3]

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*The discrepancy in the spelling of the name Siddal, as opposed to Siddall, is due to Rossetti's spelling of the name with only one "l", while her family spelled it with two. Siddal seems to have adopted Rossetti's spelling of her name, as one can see on some of her signed drawings, such as *The Lady of Shalott* (J.S. Maas Gallery, London).

Elizabeth Siddal's father, Charles Crooke Siddall, married a Welsh woman, Elizabeth Eleanor Evans, at Hornsey in 1824.[4] Before the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth, the Siddall family moved to the Newington Butts area of London.[5] Charles Siddall seems to have had two professions. In the Post Office Commercial Directories for London in the 1840's, he was registered as a "cutler", but on the marriage certificate of Elizabeth Siddal and Dante Rossetti, he was listed as having been an "optician".[6] Elizabeth was the second of six Siddall children,[7] and was given her mother's name.

Siddal received "an ordinary education, conformable to her condition in life."[8] We know that she was capable of reading from an anecdote of her early life, as told by the artist, Arthur Hughes:

> She had read Tennyson, having first come to know something about him by finding one or two of his poems on a piece of paper which she had brought home to her mother wrapped around a pat of butter.[9]

This account is worthy of note because it foreshadows Siddal's continued interest in Tennyson's works, not only for their literary value, but also as an inspiration for her art. While in her teens, she was put to work as a milliner's assistant or apprentice in Cranbourne Alley, off Leicester Square, London.[10] Nothing else of her life before

her contact with the Pre-Raphaelites is known, except that was said to have "spoken and behaved well."[11]

No other factual information exists about Siddal's early life and it is difficult to place her within a social strata because of the scanty information on occupations and specific districts of London before about 1860. Siddal was raised in Newington Butts, an area south of the Thames in London, located in what has been termed the Inner Industrial Perimeter.[12] The Newington area was first developed after 1820, when new bridges built over the Thames made it more accessible, and during this period, the population of the area increased by 50 per cent.[13] The district was described in 1820 as containing many good houses inhabited by citizens connected with public affairs.[14] Overcrowding was not a problem here as was true for other parts of London at this time. From this information, it is clear that Siddal was not raised in a slum.

The Newington district, though, was quite industrialized containing the building trades, engineering and metal workshops, making it a likely area for the cutler, Charles Siddall, to settle. Siddal's father appears to have been regularly employed, but his income was likely not adequate enough to consider him of the "middle class", because this classification implies that the husband provided a

sufficient income, so that the wife and children did not have to work outside the home. But yet, the Siddal family was not so destitute as to have to place their daughter in a factory, an alternative to which so many poor women were forced to succumb. It may be safe to term Siddal's social origins as being lower middle class.

The quality of Siddal's education was far below that of the other Pre-Raphaelites, especially Dante Rossetti who, though not of a wealthy background either, attended school and was taught by his father, a professor at the University of London.[15] But, Siddal was never spoken of as possessing the coarse rude manner of Rossetti's model and probable mistress, Fanny Cornforth, a Cockney of the working class. Siddal's polite manner indicates a refined element in her upbringing.

The degree of Siddal's mastery of reading and writing, when first sent out to work, is uncertain. Charles Dickens noted this sign in the window of a milliner's shop: "Wonted, a femail Prentis with a Premum,"[16] which may indicate the level of literacy of some of Siddal's contemporaries. A job in the needle-trade consisted of extremely long hours in order to keep up with requests for apparel. During the height of the busy season, a work day could consist of as many as twenty hours.[17] A major order, such

as a wedding or funeral, often meant working all night for these young women.[18]

Simply by being noticed at work at the milliner's shop, Siddal made her first contact with a group of artists who would change the course of her life. About 1848-49, Walter Howard Deverell (1827-1854), a young artist who replaced James Collinson after his resignation from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in July of 1850,[19] observed Siddal at work. He thought that her features were perfect for the figure of Viola in his painting of a scene from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*[20] (Figure 1). Deverell persuaded his mother to go bonnet shopping in Cranbourne Alley in order for him to examine Siddal's appearance more closely, and to request her to model for him. He described her as looking:

> . . . like a queen, magnificently tall, with a lovely figure, a stately neck, and a face of the most delicate and finished modelling [.] grey eyes, and her hair like dazzling copper, and shimmers with lustre as she waves it down.[21]

The young artist was satisfied and arrangements were made for her first sitting.[22] Deverell completed his painting of the scene from *Twelfth Night* (MacMillan and Perrin Gallery, Vancouver) and did a second Viola, again employing Siddal as the model. This work was an etching, done for *The Germ*, the short-lived Pre-Raphaelite periodical.[23] These are the

only works by Deverell in which Siddal appears, since his brief life ended shortly afterwards, in 1854.

It was not surprising that Siddal accepted Deverell's proposal to model for him since it presented much more than personal flattery. It offered her an escape from the gruelling hours of the needle-trade, and furthermore, was more lucrative than most other of the limited positions available to women at the time. Models could earn a shilling an hour[24] while a seamstress might work twenty hours a day for the same amount![25] The Pre-Raphaelite, William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), once offered a beautiful woman £5 an hour to model for a figure of Cleopatra.[26] Diana Holman-Hunt, granddaughter of the artist, believes modelling was considered a disreputable profession in the mid-Victorian era* because it was equated with prostitution.[27] William Rossetti noted when his brother rented rooms at Red Lion Square to be used as a studio, the landlord stipulated that the models were to be kept within the bounds of gentlemanly respect "'as some artists sacrifice the dignity of art to the baseness of passion.'"[28]

Siddal's appearance was intriguing not only to Deverell,

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*For the purpose of this thesis, the term "Victorian" refers to Queen Victoria (1819-1901) and will be used interchangably with the term nineteenth century.

but to other Pre-Raphaelites such as William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais (1829-1896), and Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893). Brown described her as "a stunner and no mistake,"[29] which meant, in Pre-Raphaelite terminology, that she was beautiful.[30] These artists may have met Siddal in Deverell's studio or have seen her face in his painting. Soon, her visage could be found on their cavases too.* Holman Hunt recorded in his book, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,* that Siddal posed in 1851 for the

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*There are several sources from which one can deduce Siddal's features: a self-portrait, the many sketches of her by Rossetti, and a possible photograph. Siddal's self-portrait (Figure 2), done in 1853-54, was her only work in oil and has been described by William Rossetti as "the most competent piece of execution that she ever produced, an excellent and graceful likeness and truly good: it is her very self." (William M. Rossetti, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal" *Burlington Magazine*, I (May, 1903), p. 277.) The best source of her appearance are the numerous drawings of her by Rossetti. The only existing photograph of Siddal is in a private collection, but is reproduced as the frontispiece in Violet Hunt, *The Wife of Rossetti* (London, 1932). This photo (Figure 3) does not perfectly match the image of Siddal gained from paintings and drawings, but a letter from Rossetti to Georgiana Burne-Jones may shed some light on this matter. He wrote, in response to Georgiana's request for a photo of her friend: "On several occasions when attempts were made to photograph her from life, they were all so bad that none have been retained." (Quoted in Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones,* v. 1, (London, 1904), pp. 281-82.) This may be true, but it is also likely that this "bad" photograph was retained, but Rossetti, wishing Georgiana to remember Siddal in a more flattering way, as she appeared in drawings, may have denied its existence.

character of Sylvia for his painting, *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus* (Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery), a scene drawn from Shakespeare's drama, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.[31] The critic, John Ruskin, who would later champion Siddal, criticised the "unfortunate type chosen for the face of Sylvia,"[32] in his famous defense of the Pre-Raphaelites published in the *Times* on May 13, 1851.[33] Hunt agreed and subsequently repainted the head. She sat for another of his works, *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Priest from the Persecution of the Druids* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) in which, in 1850, she posed for the girl attending the priest, and William Rossetti was employed as the model for the principal figure.[34]

Her features are best known from John Millais' depiction of her as Ophelia in his painting of the same title (Figure 4, Tate Gallery, London).[35] William Rossetti said that this painting was "the truest likeness [of her] and is indeed a close one."[36] With this painting comes the best known story of Siddal's life: she had to pose fully clothed while reclining in a tub of water, in order for Millais to capture accurately the image of the drowned Ophelia. She continued to hold the pose as Millais proceeded to paint, unaware that the heaters had gone out, subsequently

causing her to become ill. Siddal's father threatened a lawsuit of £50, but the case was settled when Siddal recovered and Millais paid the doctor bill.[37] This incident also foreshadows the chronic illness which will play such an important role during most of her adult life.

It is possible that Dante Gabriel Rossetti first met his future wife while she was posing for Deverell's painting of *Twelfth Night*, since Rossetti sat for the jester in it.[38] Dante Rossetti's first mention of her in his published letters is found on September 3, 1850, and tells of a humourous incident, indicating her already developing friendship with these men. He wrote: "Hunt and Stephens have been playing off a disgraceful hoax upon Jack Tupper, by passing Miss Siddal upon him as Hunt's wife."[39] Siddal did not approve of this incident and her friendship with Hunt began to deteriorate shortly afterwards.[40]

Early in 1850, William Rossetti records that his brother, who had a strong liking for vividly coloured hair, "is now looking for a woman with red hair for the Virgin."[41] The model was likely needed for his painting, *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (S. 44, Tate Gallery, London).* Though several

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*The "S" number following the title of each of Rossetti's works refer to: Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Rossetti (1828-1892) A Catalogue Raisonné* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971).

models were tried,[42] none were satisfactory and Rossetti employed his sister, Christina, as the model, as he had done for his first completed painting, *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary*, of 1849 (S. 40, Tate Gallery, London).[43]

It was also in 1850 that Rossetti executed his first drawing of the face that would engross him for the next ten years. The work is a small pen and ink drawing entitled: *Rossovestita* (S. 45, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery) and is signed "Dante Rossetti Fece Londra 1850."[44] The subject is drawn from Robert Browning's drama, *Pippa Passes*, a literary work that would later serve as a source for Siddal's art, and the title was invented by William Rossetti.[45] Coincidentally, just when Rossetti discovered his "woman with red hair," he ceased painting the theme of the Virgin, because of the strong reaction against his aforementioned religious paintings when exhibited at the Portland Gallery in 1850.[46]

The formal artist-model relationship of Rossetti and Siddal was quickly dissolved in favor of a more intimate one. William Rossetti wrote of the pair: "To fall in love with Elizabeth Siddal was a very easy performance and Dante Gabriel transacted it at an early date - I suppose before 1850 was far advanced."[47]

By 1851, Siddal was unhappy both at home and at her job.[48] It was most likely Rossetti who persuaded his new love to leave her employment at the milliner's shop and to pursue modelling full-time. She began spending most of her time sitting for Rossetti. It is unknown how he was able to pay her, though, since he was only at the very beginning of his career and was notorious throughout his life for being unable to manage his finances.[49] But he undoubtedly was her main, if not her sole source of support, until she later found a patron for her own art.[50]

Siddal could then be found continually in Rossetti's studio, sometimes sitting to him, but often they were together without any pretense of a sitting.[51] An unchaperoned situation such as this was practically unheard of for a respectable London lady,* subject to the elaborate Victorian

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*The term "lady", used in England in the mid-nineteenth century generally referred to women of the upper class, who were the symbol of conspicuous leisure and the agent of conspicuous consumption. (Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin, (eds.), *The Nineteenth Century Woman* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 26.) Their symbolic status rendered them more and more useless, and encouraged them not to think to the point that they believed they must be protected from serious participation in society. A lady did not usually work outside the home for a salary, but did represent women's first emergence from domesticity. She was expected to be highly moral and direct her attentions to visits to the poor and causes like the temperance movement. One could be considered a lady, even if poor, if one was well-bred and possessed a refined manner.

sense of etiquette. By 1851, Siddal was certainly aware of the "bohemian" reputation of the Pre-Raphaelites[52] and was possibly attracted to this life-style. Adoption of it, which implies acceptance, was a daring act, especially for a woman at this time. William Rossetti explained this change by stating that Siddal was certainly not prudish, was inclined to order her life according to her own preferences, whether acceptable or not to the views of the British lady.[53] He continued: "He [Rossetti] was an unconventional man, and she, if not originally, became an unconventional woman."[54]

By 1852, Siddal sat exclusively for Rossetti. Her face disappeared from other Pre-Raphaelite canvases and invaded nearly all of Rossetti's. Ford Madox Brown, artist and close friend of the couple, noted in his diary entry of August, 1855: "Rossetti showed me a drawer full of 'Guggums' [Rossetti's nickname for Siddal]: God knows how many [. . .] it is like a monomania with him."[55]

The intensity of their relationship was noticed by William Rossetti, who believed that perhaps before the close of 1851 or early in 1852, his brother and Lizzie were engaged, but added "it was very secret."[56] This secret was indeed well kept since Mrs. Rossetti, mother of Dante and William, did not even meet Siddal until April, 1855, although

both women resided in London.[57*]

Speculation exists that Siddal may have even lived with Rossetti during their eight year engagement, but it was unlikely that their love was physically consummated until their marriage in 1860.[58] The question of whether the pair lived together and/or consummated their relationship before marriage is one that cannot be decided in light of present evidence. Yet, this question remains the most intriguing aspect of Siddal's life to most authors. With little or no evidence, many authors of books about the Pre-Raphaelites state their views on this issue. David Sonstroem believes that Siddal retained her virtue until late in the relationship, possibly until marriage.[59] Sacheverell Sitwell supposes that they engaged in infrequent intimacy,[60] while Diana Holman-Hunt purports the opposite, stating that Siddal succumbed to Rossetti's desires early in the 1850's.[61] Until some conclusive evidence surfaces, this issue is best left to those interested only in gossip, while we return to the more important factual reconstruction of Siddal's biography.

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*Ford Madox Brown noted the meeting in his diary with the following lines: "At last Lizzie and Mrs. Rossetti have met! The veto of five years had vanished in a day." (Quoted in Oswald Doughty, *A Victorian Romantic: Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, (London: Frederick Muller, 1949), p. 171.)

Of far more importance than her sexual relationship with Rossetti were the changes that occurred in Siddal's way of life. In 1852, in a letter from Millais to Holman Hunt, Millais mentioned that the painter, Charles Collins (1828-1873) was looking for a model for the principal head of his current work and had requested Siddal to sit for him. Instead of accepting the offer, as she most certainly would have only a few months previously, Collins "was answered in a most freezing manner, stating that she had another occupation."[62]

Her new occupation was, of course, that of artist. It is almost certain that it was at Rossetti's suggestion that she began drawing and writing poetry. This point in time marks the peak of Rossetti's infatuation with Siddal as he withdrew from many of his friends in order to devote more time to Siddal and her embryonic art career.[63]

It was not surprising that, though she had no previous training, Siddal began to paint. The overwhelming force of Rossetti's enthusiasm provided an adequate motivation. In a letter to the painter, Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898), Rossetti declared his belief in the importance of the artist: "If a man have any poetry in him, he should paint, for it all has been said and sung, but they have hardly begun to paint it."[64]

William Rossetti recounted the type of questions his brother would have posed to his newly acquired novice:

> Have you got an idea in your head? Is it an idea which can be expressed in the shape of a design? Can you express it with refinement, and with a sentiment of nature, even if not with searching realism?[65]

These questions give two important insights into Siddal's art: first, they show the importance placed upon the idea behind the work, which was Siddal's strength as an artist; and secondly, they denote Rossetti's recognition of her inability to achieve "searching realism", something of which often he was incapable. Rossetti's technical shortcomings, such as faulty mastery of perspective and the human form, are mirrored in Siddal's work, who learned the defects as well as the strengths of her only teacher. Just as the English lady of mid-century has been described as: "wanting to use her mind before it was trained",[66] so was Siddal anxious to produce art before she was properly trained. Rossetti's vision, tunnelled by his affection for Siddal, failed to see the shortcomings of her work and just how closely it resembled his own. Instead, he continually praised her work and proclaimed her the better artist.[67]

At approximately the same time as Siddal and Rossetti's engagement, Elizabeth's health began to deteriorate. Her malady was variously diagnosed as consumption, neuralgia,

and curvature of the spine.[68] One of her recurring symptoms was a lack of appetite and an inability to keep food on the stomach,[69] which explains her so often noted thin frail appearance. Though it is a medical fact that young women were especially vulnerable to tuberculosis,[70] called "consumption" in the nineteenth century, it is more likely that this term, used in reference to Siddal's condition, alludes to many of the vaguely diagnosed female disorders so prevalent in this era. Explanations for consumption are never very clear, but appear a natural corollary for the frail delicate constitutions which all refined women were supposed to have possessed.

A modern hypothesis has been formulated to explain the phenomenon of consumption, which was diagnosed so frequently in middle class women. Treatment for this condition entailed trips to the country, seaside, or at the very least bed rest, which provided an escape from the tedium of household chores and social obligations which filled the greater part of these women's lives.[71] The lack of mental activity, boredom, and repetition of their lives fostered a sense of invalidism and hypochondria which was supported by the medical profession.[72] Sickness filled the gap of inactivity. The middle class woman was the perfect candidate for the ideal patient: her illness was rarely

severe, but the long term treatment that was often recommended could be financed by her husband.[73] Another aspect of this hypothesis suggests that hysteria might have been the only acceptable outburst of rage, despair, or simple energy that was available to women.[74]

The nineteenth century provided two paradoxical explanations for female disorders: women were ill because of their inherent female defectiveness or they became ill if they did anything outside of the prescribed female role.[75] This was the "Catch-22" of the middle class woman: either remaining within the bounds of her role or venturing outside it caused illness. This paradox was supported by the practioners of Victorian science and medicine who used their arguments in place of outdated religious ones, to maintain social inequalities on the basis of race, sex, and class.

In this period, nervous disorders were diagnosed in increasing numbers in young women who faced the dilemma of reconciling independence, often gained through employment, with the demands of family and society.[76] Had Siddal been alive in 1869, her condition may have been diagnosed as "neurasthenia", a feminine disease first described that year. It was believed the disease was caused by the many stresses of contemporary society including the increased mental activity of women.[77]

The modern explanation of the consumptive female is plausible for many Victorian middle class women, but not for Siddal, who was somewhat less than "typical". Her dilemma was that she did not "fit": she no longer lived like those of her working class background nor did she live like a lady. She did not have a reliable career and was not married. Either of these factors would have helped her find an acceptable social role. She must have been very self-conscious of her femaleness, generally equated with weakness, in her predominantly male circle of friends, and used it with her illness, that was possibly exaggerated, to become accepted and even admired. This aspect of Siddal will be more fully discussed in the next chapter.

Siddal's treatment, like that prescribed for so many other women, included a change of environment, in the belief that removal from the dank and dirty city would improve her health. In 1852, Siddal embarked on a trip to Hastings, the first of many for the sake of her health.[78] Later, she would take other trips to Bath, Clevedon, and Matlock for a hydropathic cure.[79*]

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*Hydropathic cures consisted of a series of baths in water temperatures varying from cold to hot and drinking large amounts of water. The treatment was usually accompanied by a diet based on fresh fruits and vegetables and the treatment may have, in fact, been beneficial to the patient.

Siddal returned to Hastings in 1854 and by the time of this trip was considered an invalid.[80] Rossetti joined her and took lodgings in the same house, an act considered highly unconventional by his family and which also indicated Siddal's lessening attention to Victorian attitudes.[81]

Her companion in Hastings was Barbara Leigh Smith, who was interested in both the art and the "bohemian" lifestyle of the Pre-Raphaelites.* Oswald Doughty, biographer of Dante Rossetti, described her as:

> . . . kind hearted, energetic, somewhat masculine, amateur artist, champion of women's freedom, and endowed with a handsome fortune [. . . who] was particularly active on Lizzie's behalf.[82]

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*Barbara Leigh Smith, daughter of Benjamin Smith, Unitarian and radical member of Parliament, grew up in the midst of the leading radicals of the period. She was an ardent feminist who, with Bessie Rayner Parkes, worked to reform property laws for married women. With Emily Davies, she founded Girton College, Cambridge, the first place in England where women could obtain a university education.

In 1854, the same year she met Siddal, she wrote and published the pamphlet, *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women*. In 1858, she founded the *English Woman's Journal*, which was probably the first women's newspaper in England.

Her personal life was unique in that she had her own income, set up by her father, and lived alone. Later in life, she had an equally unique marriage, especially for the nineteenth century. She lived part of every year in Algiers with her husband, Dr. Eugene Bodichon, physican and philanthropist, and spent the rest of the year in England without him.

Further information can be found in Hester Burton, *Barbara Bodichon (1827-1891)* (London: John Murray, 1949).

Rossetti noticed that Barbara Smith soon became quite "thick" with Siddal, taking an interest in both her health and her career.[83] She encouraged her to go to Hastings for a period of rest, fresh air, and recovery. She reported her condition as "worse"[84] and suggested that upon her return to London she enter a nursing home run by her cousin, Florence Nightingale, "where governesses and ladies of small means are taken in and cured."[85] Siddal refused.

Smith was also interested in Siddal's struggle for a career since she, too, was an artist. Other than Rossetti, Smith was the only person to praise Siddal's work and encourage her to continue it. She believed strongly in the often underestimated capabilities of women and aided them in finding suitable professions, especially outside the limited realm of the needle-trade or work as a governess.[86] Barbara Smith was not a lone figure in her support of women's expansion into the art professions. Eliza Cook (1818-1889), writing in her *Journal*, shared this opinion:

> We do not see why women should not be much more extensively employed in the decorative arts generally; as for instance in copper and steel plate engraving, and in all sorts of illustrative art, connected with literature.[87]

The nineteenth century witnessed women's first major involvement in the arts. Leisured women were encouraged to sketch or write as pastime activities, but many accepted these

pursuits on a much more serious level and began considering them as their professions. They were logical endeavors for women to undertake because they could be performed in the home, privately and anonymously.[88]

Siddal's circle of friends grew to include the authors, William and Mary Howitt who, like Barbara Smith, became quite fond of her. They, too, were concerned about her health and encouraged her to see Dr. Garth Wilkinson who diagnosed curvature of the spine, but believed hers was not a case without hope.[89*] For the betterment of her health, her forbade her to paint, a decision with which Rossetti strongly disagreed, believing she must. Curiously, Dr. Wilkinson made no mention of Siddal abandoning modelling, the long hours of which might prove more strenuous to a spine than painting.

The most important friend that Siddal made during this period was John Ruskin (1819-1900), writer, art critic, and philanthropist. An artist could find no better friend than he. On August 13, 1851, the *Times* published his defense of a group of young artists, the Pre-Raphaelite

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*This diagnosis does indeed seem unusual since there is no evidence, either written or visual, that Siddal bore any of the deformities associated with the disease. The diagnosis may be more of a comment about the state of Victorian medicine than about Siddal's condition.

Brotherhood, whom he had never met, but with whom he strongly agreed about truth to Nature in art.[90] Ruskin's unexpected support is said to have rescued the Pre-Raphaelites from "certain death". Ruskin's esteem in the art world was extended in 1855, when he began a series of pamphlets entitled, *Notes on the Royal Academy*, in which he critiqued select paintings. These pamphlets were taken seriously by both artists and the art buying public.[91]

Ruskin did not meet Rossetti until 1853 or 1854, but soon became a close friend, as well as patron and mentor.[92] In an undated letter, possibly from 1854, Rossetti wrote to Madox Brown in reference to Siddal: "I mean to show her productions to Ruskin, who was here again this morning, and who I know will worship her."[93] Rossetti's prediction was indeed correct and Ruskin became enthralled with both Siddal and her art, calling her a genius.[94] The reasons for the art critic's sudden interest in Siddal are not as straightforward as they might appear to be and warrants the following thorough investigation.

Simultaneous to Ruskin's friendship with Siddal was his development of a sensitivity to social problems including the welfare of the working class, the fate of the aged, and the improvement of education.[95] In his writings, the state of England became a prevalent theme. For Ruskin, the

transition from art criticism to social criticism was a very easy one, as it related to the nineteenth century ideal of striving for human perfection in all aspects of society.[96]

His interest in the lower classes was expressed not only in rhetoric, but actively through his involvement in the Working Men's College, founded in London by the Reverend F.D. Maurice in 1854.[97] Ruskin taught art classes and lectured at the college in an effort to expand the mental and spiritual horizons of working class men. He hoped the outcome of his work would be the refinement of the taste of these poor men and thus the elevation of national taste. He believed that: "No person can become a fine artist without being a gentleman."[98]

In April, 1854, Rossetti wrote: "I have told Ruskin of my pupil, and he yearneth."[99] Ruskin's reactions when learning about the former lower class milliner, Siddal, were not surprising in light of his contemporary interests. From their first meeting forward, he seems to have highly regarded both her and her work. He spoke of her as: "a noble glorious creature," and his father added: "By her look she may have been a countess."[100]

Ruskin may have found Siddal a pitiable figure in need of his help not only because of her assumed working class origins, but because of her health problems and melancholy,

conditions from which he also suffered.[101] During one of his bouts of "ennui", he wrote to Siddal: "I could sit down today and cry very heartily."[102]

There was yet another and possibly more important reason for Ruskin's sudden and intense interest in Siddal. In April, 1854, his wife, Euphemia Gray, filed for an anullment of their marriage.[103] This action was the result of a trip to Scotland, taken in 1853, by John and William Millais, Dr. Acland, Euphemia and John Ruskin.[104] During this trip, Euphemia and John Millais, the Pre-Raphaelite, fell in love. They were married after the anullment of the Ruskin marriage. The reasons given for the dissolution were that Euphemia had been neglected while her husband paid more attention to art, and that their marriage had never been consumated.[105] This action caused a split between Millais and Ruskin, who shifted his allegiance to Rossetti and Siddal. She provided an outlet for Ruskin's highly paternalistic, but wounded emotions.

Ruskin called his new female ally "Ida", as evidenced from his letters to her. The name is drawn from Tennyson's poem, "The Princess", in which Ida is depicted as an early advocate of women's rights and education.[106] Siddal's ways as an "unconventional woman" must have proved enlightening to Ruskin, who in his book *Sesame and Lilies*, of 1868,

described woman as: "the helpmate of man."[107]

Rossetti related the enthusiasm with which Ruskin greeted Siddal's art in a letter of March, 1855:

> About a week ago, Ruskin saw and bought on the spot every scrap of designs hitherto produced by Miss Siddal. He declared that they were far better than mine, or almost anyone's, and seemed quite wild with delight at getting them. He asked me to name a price for them, after asking and hearing that they were for sale; and I, of course, considering the immense advantage of their getting them into his hands, named a very low price, £25, which he declared to be too low even for a low price, and increased to £30. He is going to have them splendidly mounted and bound together in gold and no doubt this will be a real opening for her.[108]

Ford Madox Brown described Ruskin's actions as: "the incarnation of exaggeration", but added: "However, he is right to admire them [Siddal's drawings]."[109] Ruskin's attention to his newly discovered artist continued with frequent visits and wishes to help her in any way possible.[110] On April 13, 1855, Ruskin proposed two plans for Siddal, as explained by Brown: "One to buy all she does one by one to give her £150 a year for all she does, and, if he sold them for more, the difference hers; if not, to keep them."[111] Siddal likely rejected both plans in an effort to maintain independence from Ruskin's paternal and patronizing ways. He must have sensed this reluctance and chose to communicate with Rossetti, who viewed the affair

much more favorably. Several letters to Siddal, such as this one from April, 1855, illustrate Ruskin's persuasive persistence:

> . . . consider also that the plain hard fact is that I think you have genius [. . .] I should simply do what I do, if I could, as I should try to save a beautiful tree from being cut down, or a bit of Gothic cathedral whose strength was failing. If you would be so good as to consider yourself as a piece of wood or Gothic for a few months, I should be grateful to you.[112]

In May, 1855, Siddal submitted to Ruskin's plan of £150 annual pension and accepted him as her patron.[113] He wrote and falsely reassured his Ida: "You shall be quite independent."[114] Undoubtedly, Rossetti had encouraged Siddal to accept Ruskin's offer, as both of them were in a precarious financial state.[115]

Ruskin set the first priority for his new protegée as the improvement of her health, the poor state of which curtailed her activities as an artist. He contacted Dr. Acland, of Oxford, about her condition. The doctor was described by Oswald Doughty as: " . . . so eminent in his profession that the local wits declared no one of any respectability thought of dying without consulting Dr. Acland first!"[116] He diagnosed Siddal's condition as: "mental power long pent up and lately over-taxed," and recommended that she move to southern France before the

winter.[117] This was a perfect plan for Ruskin, who had encouraged Rossetti to marry her, but when this plan proved to be unsuccessful, he became determined to separate the pair.[118] He encouraged her to leave England for the sake of her health and was willing to finance the entire journey.[119]

Plans were finalized for the winter of 1855 and Siddal started for southern France, but *en route* to her destination stopped in Paris.[120] Freed from the two men who had been running her life, Ruskin and Rossetti, and enthralled with the excitement of Paris, Siddal lingered and spent her money freely, but was soon bankrupt.[121] She wrote to Rossetti of her misfortune and he completed his painting, *Paolo and Francesca* (S. 75, Tate Gallery, London), in the record time of a week, sold it to Ruskin, and joined her in Paris.[127] Rossetti seemed to relish Siddal's weak moments when she was forced to rely upon him. A friend, Alexander Munro, who accompanied Rossetti to Paris, described the situation: "We enjoyed Paris immensely, in different ways of course, for Rossetti was every day with his sweetheart, of whom he is more foolishly fond than I ever saw a lover."[123] Siddal fell ill again and it was decided that she must move south, to Nice, and Rossetti would return to London.

It is from this stay in Nice that Siddal's most substantial letter comes. The letter was written to Rossetti and dated Christmas-time, 1855, and in it she related an incident involving her passport and revealed a humorous aspect of her nature that is generally overlooked. She describes the border guard as: "an overdone mutton-chop sticking to gridiron [. . .] fizzing in French," who "sees at once that you are a murderer [. . .] wonders whether I shall be let off from hard labour the next time I am taken, on account of my thinness."[124]

Ruskin's plan of freeing Siddal from financial worries in order for her to draw and paint did not succeed. Instead, experiencing financial independence for the first time in her life, she did not work at all, much to her patron's displeasure. Due to her new economic status, she became more assertive toward both Rossetti and Ruskin. Her patron's previous flow of gifts, including an offer of an Albrecht Durer for her room, ceased as he realized he could not direct the life of his stubborn protegee.[125] In the spring of 1856, Ruskin decided she should join him in Switzerland, but she refused, preferring to return to London where she obtained her own residence on Weymouth Street.[126] Upon returning, she became more insistent about marriage to Rossetti,[127] the only socially acceptable means by which

a woman's role was defined in Victorian England.

Ruskin's discontent with both Siddal and Rossetti is evident in a letter to the latter. He wrote:

> I am ill-tempered today - you are such absurd creatures both of you. I don't say you do wrong, because you don't seem to know what IS but just do whatever you like as far as possible - as puppies and tomtits do.[128]

In June, 1857, Siddal gave up her pension from Ruskin.[129]

After her return from Nice, Siddal appeared much more restless. Her ill health continued and she planned a trip to Algiers with Barbara Smith for the sake of her health, but the trip was never taken.[130]

Her poor state of health was not her only problem: her relationship with Rossetti was also in turmoil and quarrels became common. Rossetti would not marry her, yet he would not live without her. Siddal also vacillated on this question, as seen in the following exerpt from one of Rossetti's letters to Ford Madox Brown of February, 1857:

> Lizzy has sometimes lately shown so much displeasure on my mentioning our engagement (which I have hoped was attributable to illness) that I could not now tell how far her mother was aware of it, or how Lizzy would take my mentioning it before her.[131]

After their frequent fights, Siddal often sought solace from Emma Brown, wife of Ford Madox Brown, and friend of the Siddall family.[132] This action only lead to more conflict causing Rossetti to believe that Emma was the instigator

of the trouble, while he neglected to acknowledge his own faults.[138]

In the spring of 1857, Siddal and Rossetti went their separate ways: she to live with her cousin, William Ibbit, in Sheffield, where she studied in the local ladies' art class,[134] while he spent the summer painting the murals of the Oxford Union Society with other Pre-Raphaelites. The two were reunited, though, in the autumn of the same year when Rossetti received word that Siddal was ill again.[135] He joined her at Matlock where she was undergoing hydropathic treatment and did not return to Oxford to complete the murals.[136] The timing of her bouts of illness does cause one to speculate as to how genuine they really were.

Aside from travel, one remedy on which she consistently relied for her "consumptive health" was laudanum.* William Rossetti wrote. "For the neuralgia she took frequent doses of laudanum - sometimes as much as 100 drops at a time; she could not sleep or take food without it; stimulants were also in requisition."[137] Laudanum, although an opiate, was not an illegal drug and was quite readily available. Its use has been compared to the twentieth century utilization of

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*Laudanum is an opium tincture, taken orally, usually dissolved in liquor, such as brandy, to disguise its strong taste.

aspirin in both frequency and convenience.[138] Certainly, its use beyond medicinal purposes were known. Thomas De Quincy in his book, *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, described its effects as: "irresistible".[139] The use of opium by those involved in the arts, especially authors, was not unheard of. Edgar Allen Poe, George Crabbe, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge all indulged in its use.[140]

In the nineteenth century, the general use of laudanum in moderate doses was considered safe by the medical profession. John Jones wrote in 1707, in his book, *The Mysteries of Opium Revealed*, that it "causes pleasant dreams" and "refreshment of the spirit."[141] He was not unaware, however, of the effects of excessive quantities, such as laxity, and debility of all parts; alienation of the mind, loss of memory; darkness of the eyes; a sopor; fury; madness; and death.[142]

The quantities and frequency with which Siddal used the drug leaves little doubt about her addiction, a common phenomenon in her era. There were several causes for addiction to opium in the nineteenth century: physicians, often unaware of its addictive nature prescribed it liberally; it was available without restriction, causing many, like Siddal, to become addicted while in search of relief from pain; it was used as a remedy for "melancholy"; and, as

mentioned, some used it in order to write about their experiences in "another state of reality".[143] Siddal's addiction was most likely related to the first three of these causes. The fourth is a less likely possibility, but may have occurred as a consequence of her addiction. In her altered state of consciousness, she may have discovered inspiration for several of her drawings. This aspect of her art will be more fully discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

The period 1857-1860 presents "a blank" in the reconstruction of Siddal's biography, since references to her in Dante Rossetti's letters, a major source of information, are non-existant, as if they had been deliberately removed. Alienation likely increased between the two and Rossetti turned his attention to another of his models, Fanny Cornforth, an uneducated Cockney.

The spring of 1860 was marked by yet another of Siddal's recurrent bouts of illness and she retreated to Hastings. Her state must have regained Rossetti's concern and he accompanied her. He wrote to Madox Brown of her condition: " . . . she has seemed ready to die daily and more than once a day."[144] The anxiety over Siddal's proximity to death seems to have proved the necessary force needed for the couple finally to agree on marriage. On April 13, 1860,

Rossetti wrote to his mother of his forthcoming marriage:

> Like all the important things I ever meant to do - to fulfill duty or secure happiness - this one has been deferred almost beyond possibility. I have hardly deserved that Lizzy should consent to it, but she has done so, and I trust I may still have time to prove my thankfulness to her.[145]

The timing of Rossetti's marriage is intriguing: he did not make definite marriage plans until his closest friends of this period, William Morris (1834-1896) and Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898), also had made such arrangements. Morris married Jane Burden, a woman to whom Rossetti had been very attracted,* in April, 1859, and Burne-Jones married in June, 1860.[146]

The wedding of Siddal and Rossetti took place May 23, 1860, at St. Clement's Church, Hastings.[147] The Rev. T. Nightingale officiated with two witnesses, probably the caretakers, being the only other people present.[148]

Siddal was well enough after the wedding for an immediate departure for Boulonge and Paris, the latter likely being her choice. The Burne-Jones were to join them

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*Dante Rossetti was attracted to Jane Morris from their first meeting in 1857. After Siddal's death, Rossetti and Jane mantained a very close relationship, though she was married to William Morris. Rossetti's feelings are clearly expressed in his many letters to her. For more information, refer to: John Bryson, (ed.), *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Jane Morris: Their Correspondence* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1976).

after their own marriage, but Edward fell ill and was unable to make the trip.[149]

During their stay in Paris, Rossetti drew *How They Met Themselves* (S. 118, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge). The subject is a pair of lovers who meet their wraiths while walking in the woods and, according to the legend of the "Doppelganger",* will bring their death.[150] The face of the woman is Siddal's, but the male's is not Rossetti's. This ill-omened theme is indeed a strange choice to draw on one's honeymoon and may forshadow Siddal's premature death and Rossetti's superstitions surrounding it.[151] In the lower right corner are two dates: 1851 and 1860, which most likely refer to the two dates of drawings in this theme.+ But the dates also coincide with those of the pair's engagement and marriage, making the symbolism of the drawing even more personal.

The way of life of Siddal and Rossetti changed little after their marriage. They continued in the haphazard manner to which they were accustomed, disregarded formal social customs, and often worked until late in the evening and then

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*The Doppelganger is a German legend that refers to the ghostly double of a living person, who often haunts its own fleshy counterpart.

+The 1851 version is now lost.

dined at a restaurant.[152] Siddal did not even visit her new mother-in-law upon her return to London and saw little of her friends in the summer of 1860.[153] Siddal certainly did not settle into any sort of traditional domestic role. The only major change was in their place of residence. The move from Rossetti's former domicile, 14 Chatham Place, Blackfriars, was essential for Siddal's health since the flat was located on the Thames making it both damp and smelly. They took rooms at Spring Cottage, Downshire Hill, Hampstead, but retained Chatham Place as a studio.[154]

Marriage did bring several new friends into Siddal's sphere, one of whom was Georgiana Burne-Jones, wife of the painter, Edward Burne-Jones, who became one of her few close female friends. Georgiana, interested in art since childhood, had allowed her interest to lag, but was re-inspired by Siddal. In 1856, she studied at the Government School of Design and for a short period afterwards in the studio of Ford Madox Brown, one of Rossetti's teachers.[155] Georgiana's surviving drawings are few and, like Siddal's, are rather amatuerish, but sensitive, which adds to their interest. Her other artistic accomplishments included needlework and wood engraving, both often done with Jane Morris, wife of William Morris.[156] Siddal and Georgiana

planned to collaborate on the writing and illustration of a book of fairy tales, but unfortunately the project never materialized.[157] After Rossetti's death, Edward Burne-Jones requested if it was possible to buy " . . . some little drawing of Lizzie's for Georgie, who cherishes her memory very dearly."[158]

Another friend of this period was Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909), the poet, dramatist, and critic, whose first contact with the Pre-Raphaelites was in 1857 while he studied at Oxford[159] and they painted the Oxford Union murals. About 1860, he renewed his friendship with them and became closely associated with Siddal and Rossetti. In fact, he probably saw more of the two than did anyone else at this period.

Georgiana Burne-Jones explained that Siddal was very amused to see that Swinburne had the same colour hair that she did and immediately liked him.[160] The two friends spent many hours together playing like children, or else Swinburne would read to her.[161] He maintained that he always had a great brotherly affection for her,[162] Siddal being one of the few women to whom he was ever close in his life. He praised her: "Except for Lady Trevelyan, I never knew so brilliant and appreciative a woman - so quick to see and so keen to enjoy that rare and delightful fusion of wit, humour,

character painting, and dramatic poetry."[163] This woman, whom he called a "most loveable creature", became the model for his character, Lady Cheyne, in his novel, *A Year's Letters*.[164*] Swinburne, one of the last people to see her alive, always remained fond of her, which likely helped to create the legendary aspect of her life. He wrote of her in a letter of 1898, thirty-six years after her death: "You know how exceptionally interesting to me is everything that concerns 'Lizzie'."[165]

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*The following description of Lady Cheyne from Swinburne's *A Year's Letters* is also a description of Siddal:

> . . . an invincible exquisite memory of a face . . . pale when I saw it last, as if drawn down by its hair, heavily weighted about the eyes with a presage of tears, sealed with sorrow, and piteous with an infinite unaccomplished desire. The old deep-gold hair and luminous grey-green eyes shot through with colours of sea-water in sunlight, and threaded with faint keen lines of fire and light about the pupil . . . then that mouth of hers and the shadow made on the chin by the underlip - such sad perfect lips, full of tender power and faith, and her wonderful way of lifting and dropping her face imperceptibly, flower-fashion, when she begins or leaves off speaking. I shall never hear such a voice in the world, either. I cannot, and need not now, pretend to dissemble or soften down what I feel about her. I do love her with all my heart and might. And now that . . . she has fallen miserable and ill . . . If I can never marry the one woman perfectly pleasant to me and faultlessly fit for me in the whole beautiful nature of her, I will never insult her and my own heart by marrying at all.

(Quoted in Jean Overton Fuller, *Swinburne A Critical Bibliography* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968), pp. 78-79.

It is a rather curious occurrence that the men with whom Siddal developed the closest friendships, Ruskin and Swinburne, both suffered from sexual problems and did not generally comfortably associate with women. But, since history has been written predominantly by men from their point of view, it was likely her friendships with these important Victorian figures that saved her from total historical obscurity.

Siddal's poor health continued to decline after her marriage and she was described at this time by the artist, Charles Ricketts, as "a ghost in the house of the living."[166] She still occasionally did some drawing, as is evidenced by one of Rossetti's sketches of her at work at an easel (S. 479, Destroyed during World War II).

In 1861, Elizabeth Siddal Rossetti, Georgiana Burne-Jones, and Jane Morris all were pregnant. Although she was very careful and took all precautions, Siddal suffered a miscarriage.[167] Afterward, she sank into a deep depression. Georgiana Burne-Jones recorded that when she and her husband arrived for their first visit after the misfortune, they found Siddal seated on a low chair with the cradle on the floor beside her. When they entered the room, she said: "Hush, Ned, you'll wake it!"[168] She was also sent out to the country to stay at William and

Jane Morris' Red House, Bexley Heath, Kent, in hopes to improve her mental state. Attempts to distract her attention by engaging her in working on mural decorations were unsuccessful.[169] She became more depressed, her behavior more erratic than ever and abruptly departed from the Morris' home. Some believe that after the miscarriage, Siddal tried unsuccessfully to adopt an eight year old girl.[170]

Her behavior is hinted at in a letter to Madox Browns from Rossetti in which he thanks them for taking care of Siddal during an illness and apologizes for the trouble she caused.[171] By January, 1862, Rossetti was losing hope for the recovery of Siddal's health and wrote: "Unhappily too confirmed an invalid to leave hope now that she will ever be able to make the most of her genius. Indeed the strength to work at all is only rarely accorded her."[172] At this time, Rossetti's sister, Christina, noted Siddal's condition in her poem, "Wife and Husband":

> Pardon the faults in me,
> For the love of year's ago:
> Good-bye.
> I must drift across the sea,
> I must sink into the snow,
> I must die.
>
> You can bask in this sun,
> You can drink wine, and eat:
> Good-bye.
> I must gird myself and run,
> Though with unready feet:
> I must die.[173]

On February 10, 1862, Siddal, Rossetti, and Swinburne, dined together at the Hotel Sabloniere, Leicester Square, with Siddal being in exceptionally good spirits. At about eight o'clock, the party broke up and the Rossettis returned home. Dante went out again, supposedly to the Working Men's College, but some scholars believe that he may have had an illicit rendezvous. When he returned home, at 11:30 p.m., he found his wife unconscious and breathing heavily. The smell of laudanum was strong in the room and there was an empty vial near the bed. A doctor was summoned who pumped her stomach and used antidotes without success and at 7:20 a.m. the next morning, she died. Rossetti could not believe she was really dead and brought in three more doctors to confirm her condition.[174] William Rossetti found this poem, that had either been written or recopied, by Siddal on the night of her death:

> How is it in the unknown land?
> Do the dead wander hand in hand?
> Do we clasp dead hands and quiver
> With an endless joy for ever?
> Is the air filled with sound
> Of spirits circling round and round?
> Are there lakes of endless song
> To rest our tired eyes upon?
> Do tall white angels gaze and wend
> Along the banks where lilies bend?
> Lord, we know not how this may be:
> Good Lord we put our faith in thee -
> O God, remember me.[175]

This verse contains a theme prevalent in Siddal's poems: that of weariness and longing for sleep, used as a metaphor for death. She often directly addresses God in her poetry and exhibits a belief in the world beyond this one which adds a sense of hope and comfort to the recurrent depressing mood of her poems.

Rossetti tried to keep the news of Siddal's death out of the newspapers and only one small notice appeared.[176] Due to the nature of Siddal's death, an inquest was held at Bridewell Hospital on February 12, 1862. Both Sarah Birrell, the caretaker and Clara Siddall, Elizabeth's sister, testified that she frequently used large quantities of laudanum in order to sleep.[177] Ellen MacIntire, a neighbor, stated: "She told me once that she had taken quarts of laudanum at a time."[178] Both Rossetti and Swinburne were called to testify and recount the events of two days previous. The jury decided that Siddal "accidently took an overdose of laudanum," and thus, "accidently, casually, and by misfortune came to her death."[179] There was no mention at the inquest of Siddal's consumptive, or tubercular, condition.

On February 17, 1862, just before she was to be buried, Rossetti placed the sole manuscript of some of his original verses in her coffin, knowing that he would never be able

to publish them, but feeling that this was a final tribute to her, since they had been written during their relationship.[180] She was buried at the Rossetti family grave in Highgate Cemetery.

Swinburne wrote of her death in a letter of March, 1862:

> I would rather not write about what has happened - I suppose none of the papers gave a full report, so that you did not know that I was almost the last person who saw her (except her husband and a servant) and had to give evidence at the inquest. Happily, there was no difficulty proving that illness had quite deranged her mind, so that the worst chance of all was escaped.[181]

The "worst chance" to which Swinburne referred was the question of suicide. Helen Rossetti Angeli, daughter of William Rossetti, states in her biography of Dante that there was a suicide note pinned to Siddal's nightgown which read: "Take care of Harry",[182] who was her "feeble-minded" brother. There are also two other theories as to the contents of the note, which are more in the usual spectrum of suicide notes: "Perhaps you'll be sorry now", or "My life is so miserable I wish no more if it."[183] Whatever the contents of the note, it was said to have been destroyed by Ford Madox Brown who discovered it.[184] His reason for this action was to remove any concrete evidence that Siddal really did commit suicide. Rosalie Grylls,

in her biography of Rossetti, states that one reason for disproving Siddal's suicide was so she could have the final dignity of being buried in a churchyard, which she was.[185] This concern may have been of little importance to Siddal, though, since she was not involved in any organized religion, though she does address God in her poetry.

A more likely reason for wanting to prove her death an accidental one was for the benefit of the living, who had to bear the onus of deceaased's act. Al Alvarez, in his study of suicide, explained that until recent times in England, a person who was successful at suicide was considered a criminal, while one who survived an unsuccessful attempt was a lunatic.[186] A suicide was treated as a felony and the deceased's property could be confiscated.[187] As recently as 1961, one could still be sentenced to prison for an unsuccessful suicide attempt. Today, we still use the term "to commit suicide" as if referring to a crime.

Rossetti was approaching the peak of his career, and could not afford the bad publicity of having been married to a criminal. This association would harm the image of all the Pre-Raphaelites, who were already disapproved of by many of the more academically-minded members of the art community. It was to their benefit that at the official inquest into Siddal's death, that the verdict be "accidental".

Thus, a reasonable argument can be made for Siddal's death as having occurred at her own hands, having chosen death over a life of continual sickness. Her method may fall under the category of what Karl Menniger has termed "chronic suicide", characteristic of drug addicts and alcoholics, who will do everything to destroy themselves, *except* the final act.[188] They claim their actions are only to make an intolerable life tolerable. So, Siddal's death may not have been specifically planned for February 11, 1862, but may have been an unfortunate, but likely inevitable, act in her course of chronic suicide.

But even death and the grave did not bring peace to Elizabeth Siddal. In 1867-68, as his eyesight and health began to fail and working became more difficult, Rossetti began to think about the poems buried with his wife. With the approval of some of his friends, especially Charles Howell, he decided to have the grave exhumed in October, 1869, in order to retrieve the manuscript for publication.[189] He never forgave himself for violating her grave and was troubled by it for the rest of his life.[190] He feared supernatural consequences and forbade his burial in the family grave at Highgate Cemetery with Siddal.

Notes - Chapter 1

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CHAPTER II

THE SIDDAL-ROSSETTI RELATIONSHIP

In order to better understand Elizabeth Siddal and the forces acting upon her life, it is necessary to examine more closely her relationship with Dante Rossetti, which concerned her all of her adult life. Unfortunately, due to the minimal amount of information available about Siddal, their relationhip can only be fully studied from a singular point of view: Rossetti's. Yet, his attitudes toward the relationship are important because they help to explain why this highly educated man became so obsessed with a poor, minimally educated woman and from this we can at least infer her passive acceptance of him.

Rossetti's initial attraction to Siddal was a physical one, in the sense that he liked her features, and later, quickly developed more substantial reasons for his continued interest. There are three possible explanations for his sustained interest: first, his peculiar "vision" of her, related to his study of the early Italian poets; secondly, the belief in the association of consumption and genius, and lastly, the erotic aspect of her appearance. The first two

theories are rooted in nineteenth century thought while the latter is a modern view projected back on the situation since serious intellectual thought was not given to sexuality until the turn of the century.

Like Walter Deverell, Rossetti admired Siddal's physical features of a pink and white complexion, massive coppery-golden hair, large-lidded eyes, and tall stature[1] as they coincided with their "pure" pre-Raphael ideal female type, best exemplified in the work of Sandro Botticelli (1444-1510).[2] The simplicity of her appearance appealed to the Pre-Raphaelite sense of beauty because it was free of the Victorian "trappings" of feminine charm that included tortuous corsets with stays, crinolines, and hoop skirts. Siddal, and other women of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, preferred much more simply designed clothing.* In addition, the Victorian style of tight curls was replaced with heavy loose wings of hair. Though the rejection of these artifices was likely consciously undertaken by women such as Jane Morris; originally, Siddal's lack of them was due to her economic state, which did not allow for such frivolities.

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*An example of one of these dresses, designed by William Morris for his wife, Jane, in what he considered to be a "medieval" style, can be seen at the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, England. (See Figure 3.)

Mary Howitt, a friend of Siddal and Rossetti, commented on the unusual appearance of the Pre-Raphaelite women:

> Only dress in the Pre-raphaelite style and you [. . .] will find that so far from being an "ugly duck", you are a full fledged swan [. . . The Pre-Raphaelites] have made certain types of face and figure once literally hated, actually the fashion. Red hair - once, to say a woman had red hair was social assassination - is the rage. A pallid face with a protruding upper lip is highly esteemed. Green eyes, a squint, square eyebrows, whitey-brown complexions are not left out in the cold. In fact, the pink-cheeked dolls are nowhere; they are said to have "no character" - and a pretty little hand is occasionally voted characterless too. Now is the time for plain women.[3]

Her comments make an obvious reference to Siddal, especially in regard to the red hair since Siddal was the only one of the group possessing that colour. Howitt also remarked, after attending a Pre-Raphaelite social gathering, that the women looked just like the ones in their paintings[4] presumably indicating the seriousness with which these women viewed their role in the formulation of the Pre-Raphaelite attitude toward art and life.

Though Walter Hamilton scorned the Pre-Raphaelite style of feminine beauty in his book, *The Aesthetic Movement in England*(1882) claiming that these pale distraught women looked "full of love-lorn langour, or feverish despair,"[5] this type became a major model for later artists including Aubrey Beardsley, Charles Ricketts, Walter Crane, and

Margaret Macdonald.[6] By the 1890's, the Pre-Raphaelite female type was adopted for decorative purposes by the artists of the *fin de siecle* movements of Art Nouveau and Symbolism, almost to the total exclusion of male figures. Works by Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939) and Jan Toorop (1859-1928), who frequently exaggerated the Pre-Raphaelite use of loosened locks into flowing whiplashes of hair, best exemplify this continuum.

1. Dante Rossetti's Vision of Ideal Love

Admiration of physical form did not provide an adequate basis for the continued fascination and long-term relationship between Rossetti and Siddal. As has been mentioned, Rossetti began his artistic career painting standard religious themes, such as the *Girlhood of the Virgin Mary*, before his involvement with Siddal. Because these works were not well received by the London art critics, he rejected them and chose to pursue "mystical subjects of romance and love set in an ideal medieval past."[7]

The main source for Rossetti's conception of the medieval* past was his study and translation of the Italian

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*The term "medieval", is an often vague and misused one. For the purposes of this thesis, it will be used in the very general, and often unobjective way, that the Pre-Raphaelites used it. "Medieval" will roughly encompass the period,

love poets: Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, Lappo Gianni, and most of all, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321).[8] Rossetti translated these works while still a young man, in 1846-50, and later published them.[9] He was introduced to these works by his father, Gabriele Rossetti, whom he acknowledged in the preface of his 1861 edition of *Early Italian Poets*[10] Gabriele Rossetti, a refugee to England from Naples, was a professor of Italian at Kings College, London.* His life's

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400-1500 A.D. This definition is broad, but probably comes closest to that of these artists and most people of the nineteenth century, whose knowledge of the period was often not based on historical fact, but on legends and myths. To the Pre-Raphaelites, "medieval" conjured up images of a period of unity under the Church, visually manifested in Gothic architecture, stained glass, frescoes like those of the Campo Santo, Pisa, that they knew from Lasinios' engravings, and fine quality of craftsmanship in the decorative arts. They often employed a variety of these details in their paintings including religious items (crucifixes, biblestands, and others), a simplified style of clothing, and symbolic elements like those used by Jan Van Eyck and other Northern European artists. Whether these elements are historically correct to the twentieth century viewer is relatively unimportant, since to these artists, they helped to achieve the desired effect.

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*Gabriele Rossetti was active in the constitutional movement in the Kingdom of Naples and later denounced King Ferdinand when he abolished the new constitution. Gabriele had supported the rebels against Ferdinand in the revolution of 1820. Although he had been highly respected as a poet and patriot, he was forced to leave his homeland in 1824 because of his political beliefs. The choice of exile was more desirable than death. (Helen Rossetti Angeli, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Friends and Enemies* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), p. 13.)

work was a study of the writings of Dante Alighieri in order that he might reveal a "secret code" which he believed was hidden in them for those sufficiently dedicated to decipher it.[11]

While his father searched for cryptic messages in Dante's writings, the younger Rossetti, only twenty when he completed his translation of Dante's *Vita Nuova*,[12] sought another meaning. Though it may not have been his original intention, Rossetti, inexperienced in matters of love, searched for guidance and found it in the writings of these advocates of courtly love.

Rossetti took the beliefs of these poets very seriously and they had a profound effect on his life. He wrote in the preface of *Early Italian Poets* (1861): "Thus, in those early days, all around me partook of the influence of the great Florentine [Dante] till, from viewing it as a natural element, I also, growing older, was drawn within the circle."[13]

The seriousness with which he undertook this work is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that his name, given at birth was Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti, while in the midst of translating the poetry of Dante Alighieri, he began to use "Dante" as his first name. This devotion can be seen in his letters, where, in November, 1848, he signed his

name "Gabriel Dante Rossetti", but by May, 1849, his signature appeared as "Dante Gabriel Rossetti", which it remained henceforward.[14]

While undertaking these translations, Rossetti also exhibited his first curiosity about love relationships with women. William Rossetti noted that "juvenile amours, liaisons, or flirtations" were absent from his brother's youth.[15] Rossetti approached manhood without any clear idea of love, coupled with the overbearing moralism of the Victorian era that often prohibited the expression of intimate feelings and personal philosophies[16] and offered little guidance to those who wished to. From the early Italian poets, Rossetti learned what he could not gain from his own era: a philosophy of courtly love, which he adapted to his own needs. He learned that happiness could be obtained through exalted devotion to women.[17] This new concept of love introduced the idea that a beautiful woman was an image of his own soul, different states of which could be expressed through her, as in the relationship between Dante and Beatrice.[18] Dante Alighieri had elevated woman to the level of a Christ-like figure who helped the poet obtain personal salvation.

This search for a philosophy of love was further complicated by Rossetti's rejection of organized religion and his declaration of atheism.[19] He was faced with the

reconciliation of his mother's strict Anglican code, under which he was raised, with his own emerging sexual impulses.[20] Dante's *Vita Nuova* provided him with a solution: his impulses were projected onto an elevated idealistic concept of love,[21] which still contained elements of spirituality and mystery so thoroughly integrated into early Pre-Raphaelite thought. His change in thought presented a major diversion from the other Pre-Raphaelites who were very concerned about Christianity and morality, as is especially evident in the art of William Holman Hunt and Ford Madox Brown. Rossetti explored a new set of mysteries through the concept of courtly love and developed a personal spiritualism.

Rossetti began to view his own life in artistic terms and allowed this dream of love, which he never totally abandoned, to dominate not only his art and poetry, but also his personal life. This coalescence of historical literature and life may appear less than believeable, but the barriers between art and life were frequently blurred for Rossetti. A modern critic has noted: "He [Rossetti] seems to have looked for the reappearance of literary figures in real life, and also to have translated his own experiences into literature."[22] A source closer to Rossetti, his friend, T. Watts-Dunton, provided confirmation of this theory

when he stated: "There is not one sonnet in his book which is merely a literary production."[23]

The most persuasive proof of this meaning of art and life is found in the relationship between Rossetti and Siddal. Before he met Siddal, he only had a dream of idealized love, with no means for its realization. When he met her, he must have experienced the same sense of fate and wonder that Dante did when he first saw Beatrice. Ford Madox Brown recorded: "Rossetti once told me that, when he first saw her, he felt his destiny was defined."[24] In his eyes, Siddal was no longer a poor milliner's assistant, but possessed, whether by her simplicity of appearance or manner, a mystical resemblence to his conception of Beatrice. His relationhip with her now acquired symbolic associations that would surface in his art. Rossetti may have tried to heighten his own emotional existence by identifying his relationship with Siddal with one that had been immortalized in literature.[25] The poet, Christina Rossetti, Dante Rossetti's sister, in an insightful poem entitled, "In an Artists's Studio", best captured their relationship:

> One face looks out from all his canvases,
> One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans:
> We found her hidden just behind those screens,
> That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
> A queen in opal or in ruby dress,

A nameless girl in freshest summer-greens,
A saint, an angel - every canvas means
The same one meaning, neither more nor less.
He feeds upon her face by day and night,
And she with true kind eyes looks back on him,
Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:
Not wan with wanting, not with sorrow dim;
Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright:
Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.[26]

The poem indicates Siddal's very passive acceptance of a vision, though she likely did not comprehend its full historical implications. The closing lines are the most important, though, because they indicate that as long as she appeased Rossetti, his dream could be partially fulfilled, but when the harsh realities of life entered their relationship, conflicts accompanied them. Rossetti pursued this dream throughout most of his life and this fact explains why he never had a successful love relationship.

The effects of the early Italian poets and his relationship with Siddal are exhibited in the changes in Rossetti's poetry and art. An early, and possibly the first, drawing based on Dante, the *First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* (S. 42, Fitzwilliam Museum) of 1849 differed significantly in style from a slightly later work, *Beatrice Meeting Dante at the Marriage Feast, Denies Him Her Salutation* (S. 50, Private Collection) of 1851 done when Rossetti was involved with Siddal. The first drawing did

not contain any female figures, but in the latter work Siddal can be recognized as Beatrice.[27] William Rossetti noted the dramatic change in style from the 1849 work to those that followed it and done on the same theme.[28] Rossetti changed from a style that is generally thought of as being "Pre-Raphaelite", like Millais' *Ophelia*, which is full of minute detail studied from Nature, to a style of densely composed works done on a small scale, permeated with luminous colour.[29]

The writings of Dante Alighieri became a major theme in Rossetti's art during his relationship with Siddal with the most important painting being *Beata Beatrix* (S. 168, Tate Gallery, London). Rossetti had adopted Dante's idea of a man's soul being personified in woman and, thus, there was no better way to honour his own soul than by painting the woman.[30] William Rossetti offered an insight into his brother's interlinking of art and life:

> A leading doctrine with the Pre-Raphaelites was that it is highly inexpedient for a painter, occupied with an ideal or poetical subject, to portray his personages from the ordinary hired models; and that on the contrary he ought to look out for living people who, by refinement of character and aspect, may be supposed to have some affinity with those personages - and, when he has found such people to paint from, he ought, with substantial though not slavish fidelity, to represent them as they are.[31]

So, it is clear that Rossetti equated Siddal with Beatrice in his numerous paintings of that subject and that this "affinity" presumably was carried over into their relationship.

Beata Beatrix, (Figure 6) completed in 1864, as a final tribute to Siddal, was begun before her death in 1862.[32*] The work combined elements from Dante with Rossetti's personal symbolism. Siddal is depicted in the painting with her head tilted upwards, eyes closed, mouth slightly open, looking as if she were in trance. Loosened hair flows down her back. This element, when used in the *Vita Nuova*, seems to have been associated with Beatrice's death.[33] Rossetti linked this factor with a haloed red bird, whom he called "a messenger of death",[34] flying toward Beatrice's breast, bearing a poppy in its beak. The poppy is associated with opium, from which laudanum is derived, which was the cause of Siddal's death. These symbols are even more intricately linked when one realizes that both Beatrice and Siddal died at a very young age, it was almost as if Siddal *had* to die

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*Studies for the head of Beatrice are very similar to those done for Delia in *The Return of Tibullus* (S. 62, Private Collection, S. 62D, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, and S. 62E, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) dating from c. 1855. Life studies done of Siddal presumably for *Beata Beatrix* also exist (S. 168B, William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, England and S. 168C, Birmingham City Art Gallery and Museum).

young to complete Rossetti's vision of her. But this figure of Beatrice-cum-Siddal is not experiencing the death of a mere human, as Rossetti said: "She sees through her shut lids, is conscious of a new world, as expressed in the last words of the *Vita Nuova*."[35] He was not really expressing the physical account of his Beatrice's death, but rather a state of mind and the inevitable fatality of his love for Siddal.[36]

This merging of actuality and literature helped Rossetti to create a personal dream of love expressed in the symbol of woman, the most predominant figure in all of his art. Since Rossetti never followed Dante beyond his early work, Beatrice remained for him "a symbol of impassioned love exalted through longing to an unobtainable ideal,"[37] a theme to which he returned later in his life.

Rossetti was not the only Pre-Raphaelite to create an elevated image of woman. An uncannily similar situation occurred between William Holman Hunt and Annie Miller, a young model he found in the London slums. While he travelled in the Near East for two years, he arranged for her to have lessons in elocution, dancing, and deportment, and for her to be cared for in his absence. Upon his return, he expected to find the "fallen woman" whom he had "saved" to be transformed into a lady. Hunt had, like Rossetti had done to

Siddal, elevated her to a saintly, almost religious status and was forced to admit failure upon his return when she, unlike Siddal, defied him and destroyed his dream.[38]

Rossetti's vision of love eventually caused him to suffer the same disillusionment. Reality crept into his relationship with Siddal and he struggled with his own confusion about her. was he to treat her as a woman or as a concept?[39] He was forced to succumb when he finally realized that Siddal could not comply with his Pygmalion vision of her.

Siddal's reaction to Rossetti's vision of her as his Beatrice may possibly found in her poem, "The Lust of the Eyes", in which she wrote:

I care not for my Lady's soul,
  Though I worship before her smile:
I care not where be my Lady's goal
  When her beauty shall lose its wile.

Low sit I down at my Lady's feet,
  Gazing through her wild eyes,
Smiling to think how my love will fleet
  When their starlike beauty dies.

I care not if my Lady pray
  To our Father which is in Heaven;
But for joy my heart's quick pulses play,
  For to me her love is given.

Then who shall close my Lady's eyes,
  And who shall fold her hands?
Will any hearken if she cries
  Up to the unknown lands?[40]

The first three verses are written as a parody of her own life, as if she is looking at herself through Rossetti's eyes. The accuracy of the description indicates Siddal's degree of insight into the relationship, one far greater than which most authors are willing to acknowledge. Her own concerns surface in the final verse when she realizes the transitory nature of Rossetti's devotion and that it will vanish as will her youthful beauty.

Rossetti's style of art changed once again about 1860, when he moved away from themes drawn from Dante and medieval legend in favor of richly sensual paintings of women in the style with which he is usually associated in the twentieth century. Art subjects drawn from Dante with Siddal employed as the model for Beatrice ended in 1864 with *Beata Beatrix*. After nearly a decade of absence from his work, themes from Dante were revived as Rossetti found the rebirth of his shaken ideals in another chronic invalid: Jane Morris. She appeared as Beatrice in Rossetti's last painting, *The Salutation of Beatrice* (S. 260, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio) of 1881-82.[41]

2. Consumption and Genius

As discussed in Chapter I, when Siddal began to paint and draw, Rossetti termed her a "genius" and Ruskin concurred. Her talents may not have been the sole cause of this reaction since consumption and genius were believed to be integrally related by the Victorians.[42] It was believed that the sedentary nature of the disease allowed the patient time for deep thought and heightened his/her sensitivity.[43] Since tuberculosis, or consumption, is characterized by periods of ill health and inactivity, followed by relatively active periods in which the patient is capable of doing physically undemanding work, one could, if s/he was so inclined, record these thoughts on paper, either as prose, poems, or drawings. Consumptive women writers existed in large numbers in the nineteenth century. Their illness became their "saving grace" because it hinted that if they offended the male world with their literary ambitions, at least they were dying for it.[44] Many major literary and artistic figures of the nineteenth century were grouped under the all-encompassing term "consumptive", in whose ranks were included Edgar Allen Poe, the Brontes, Aubrey Beardsley, John Keats, Henry David Thoreau, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.[45] Many consumptives, including

Goethe, Poe, and Keats, were among the fifty-seven names on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's *List of Immortals*, compiled in 1848 by Rossetti and Hunt.[45] The *List* was drawn up, as William Rossetti noted, to record their belief "that there was no immortality for humanity except in reputation gained by man's own genius or heroism."[46]

Rossetti did not have to look beyond his own circle of friends to find those whose talents he admired, but were dying. Aside from Siddal, Edward Burne-Jones was always sickly[47] and Jane Morris spent most of her life as a confirmed invalid.[48] The causes of Jane's ill health are believed to have been neurotic, but presentiments and dreams also played a major role in her health.[49]

The roots of the belief in the relation between consumption and genius are found in eighteenth century thought, when tuberculosis was considered the index of being genteel, delicate and sensitive.[50] Because the disease was thought to be relatively painless and provided an "easy" death, it was termed a "refined disease" and allowed death to be aestheticized.[51] Charles Dickens described tuberculosis in *Nicholas Nickleby* as a disease:

> [. .] in which the struggle between soul and body is so gradual, quiet, and solemn, and the result so sure, that day by day, and grain by grain, the mortal part wastes and withers away, so that the spirit grows light and sanguine with its lightened load.[52]

The ultimate effect of this refinement of the soul was that the patient was able to delve into his/her very core, or in twentieth century terminology, was able "to get to the real you", and consequently allowed true inner genius to emerge. This theory may actually have some basis in medical facts since some mental activities are greatly increased by the toxins produced by certain diseases.[53]

Rossetti was undoubtedly aware of this connection since several of those around him and so many of the brilliant ones he admired from the past were consumptives. This knowledge presumably added to his admiration for Siddal, who, in her pathetic state, was able to experience more than he was in his robust health. She could be compared to the consumptive women writers, who continued their work, though it was killing them, and that alone added a certain aura to her personality.

3. Erotic Appeal of Consumption

Siddal's ill health was a major factor in her appeal to Rossetti: not only did it reinforce his view of her as a genius, her consumptive appearance also had a sensual aspect to it. A well documented fact is that the Victorian era oppressed overt sexual expression and encouraged hypocrisy.[54] For example, Victorian fashions were designed

to successfully conceal women's legs and other body parts having sexual connotations. This puritanical attitude was considered essential in polite conversation in which one was forced to employ euphemisms for words such as "naked", "breast", or "leg". It was even considered indelicate to offer a lady a "leg" of chicken.[55] These attitudes were promoted by the middle-class, in whose homes "sex" was an unmentionable word, while prostitution flourished in the streets around them. Sexual fantasy had to find indirect expression in both literature and art.[56]

One of these indirect means was through the erotic appeal of consumption and its link with love. So, while the Pre-Raphaelite women fostered an appearance that they believed was a reaction against the middle-class standard of beauty, likely unknown to them, they expressed a form of erotic fantasy. This notion of the link between tuberculosis and love, especially its physical aspects, was not invented by the Pre-Raphaelites, but can be traced back to antiquity.[57] The passion that is believed to accompany tuberculosis, the same passion that burns to one's very soul releasing genius, was also assumed to be the passion of love and the fever that accompanies the disease was thought to be a sign of this inward burning.[58] The symptoms, progressive emaciation, languidness, and fever were thought to give the

victims of the disease a sensual appearance by the Romantics.[59] In the nineteenth century, consumption was used as a metaphor for love and its effect was to render one reckless and sensual.

Ford Madox Brown embodied this mode of thought when he described Siddal in the following diary entry of October 6, 1854: "Saw Miss Siddal looking thinner and more deathlike and more beautiful and more ragged than ever; a real artist, a woman without parallel for many a long year."[60] Brown combined two seemingly contradictory statements about her looks, when he called her "more deathlike and more beautiful", but they coincide with the previously mentioned myths about tuberculosis. These myths of the disease have two opposing applications: either consumption caused the death of someone too good to be sexual, such as a child; or it was used as a means of describing sexual feelings.[61] Consumption became a socially acceptable means of expressing sexuality, "lifting the responsibility for libertinism" from the patient and placing it in the disease.[62] This contradiction was contained in Siddal: she was the pure, saint-like Beatrice, who could see into the inner depths of a man's soul, but she was also sexually enticing to Rossetti. She represents the epitome of the angel/temptress contradiction that has been applied to womankind throughout history.

The myths of consumption still survive. Tuberculosis was, and still is, thought, to produce spells of euphoria, increase appetite and sexual desire. This explanation sheds new light on Rossetti's attraction to invalids.

This explanation is not as outlandish as it may have initially appeared. Nineteenth century opinion supports it and examples can be gleened from literature as well as medical thought. Madeline Neroni, in Anthony Trollope's (1815-1882) novel, *Barchester Towers* (1857), is a vain seductress, but the limits of her enticements are established by her invalidism. Trollope's work was written in a comic vein, but Henry Kingsley (1830-1876) employed a similar theme in a more serious tone in his *Ravenshore* (1861).[63]

The medical establishment approached the subject from another point of view: indulgence in sexual activity, especially for women, caused illness. W.A. Alcott, writing in the *Ladies Magazine* in 1834, warned women that frequent indulgence in intercourse would precipitate neuralgia.[64] William Acton, a leading physician of the Victorian era, warned that those who succumbed to sexual desires were the "puny exotic[s]."[65] Siddal's looks were considered somewhat less than usual, especially in light of Mary Howitt's description of her. Warnings of the period against sexual activity were common, threatening the guilty

that they would suffer "loss, waste, and pain",[66] and again these features match those of Siddal. One can understand how her appearance might have given the impression that she was promiscuous. The fact of whether she was or not is unimportant, though existing evidence points in the opposite direction. As is so often true of sexual enticements, the inference or fantasy is much more important and stimulating than reality. What Siddal actually did was of little relevance when compared with what her contemporaries could infer about her from her appearance.

Octave Mirbeau (1850-1917) intellectual, journalist, and author, made a statement that is a perfect example of the fantasies that could be projected onto consumptive looking women. He said, in reference to the female figures of Edward Burne-Jones, derived from, among other sources, Rossetti's drawings of Siddal:

> The rings under the eyes are unique in the whole history of art; it is impossible to tell whether they are the result of masturbation, lesbianism, normal love making or tuberculosis.[67]

Mirbeau was not alone in his inferences made about Pre-Raphaelite art. Robert Buchanan, a contemporary of Rossetti, who was a minor poet and critic, attacked Rossetti's art and poetry in his essay, "The Fleshy School of Poetry", in which he accused him of being a "sensualist"[68] and by doing so

confirmed that Rossetti had aroused the obsessional fear of sex, so characteristic of the Victorians.

Susan Sontag, author of *Illness as Metaphor*, commented on this aspect of Rossetti's art: "What is hinted at by the yearning but almost somnolent belles of Pre-Raphaelite art is made explicit in the emanciated, hollow-eyed, tubercular girls depicted by Edvard Munch."[69]

Two main factors have emerged in the Siddal-Rossetti relationship: his "vision" of her as Beatrice and the role of her consumption. Though simplified for the purposes of this thesis, it can be seen that Rossetti viewed Siddal and later, Jane Morris, through his vision of love. He expressed the situation best in his poem, "Hand and Soul": "And he knew her hair to be the golden veil through which he beheld his dreams."[70] The vision, which Siddal must have accepted to a certain degree, caused the dissolution of their relationship when coupled with more mundane problems, such as Siddal's demand for marriage.

Her consumptive health acted as a confirmation of Rossetti's pronouncement of "genius" and lent an erotic air to Siddal that must have enticed his burgeoning sexual desires. Their relationship was somewhat less than "typical", but provided both with a certain amount of

satisfaction since they, if only temporarily, achieved their purpose: Rossetti found his ideal love and Siddal found her way out of the milliner's shop.

Notes - Chapter II

[1]William Rossetti, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal," *Burlington Magazine*, I (May, 1903), p. 273.

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[3]Quoted in Diana Holman-Hunt, *My Grandfather, His Wives and Loves* (London: Hamish-Hamilton, 1969), p. 137.

[4]Carl Ray Woodring, *Victorian Samplers: William and Mary Howitt* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1952), pp. 206-7.

[5]Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1882), p. 24.

[6]John Dixon Hunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 201.

[7]Ronald W. Johnson, "Dante Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* and the New Life," *The Art Bulletin*, LVII (December, 1975), p. 551.

[8]David Sonstroem, *Rossetti and the Fair Lady* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1970), p. 17.

[9]Robert D. Johnston, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), p. 44.

[10]*Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

[11]Rosalie Glynn Grylls, *Portrait of Rossetti* (London: Macdonald, 1964), p. 13.

[12]Johnston, *Rossetti*, p. 22.

[13]Quoted in Johnston, *Rossetti*, pp. 21-22.

[14]Oswald Doughty and John Robert Wahl (eds.), *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 51 and 53.

[15]William M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters with a Memoir*, Vol. 1 (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895), p. 171.

[16]Johnson, *The Art Bulletin*, p. 548.

[17]Johnston, *Rossetti*, p. 47.

[18]Johnson, *The Art Bulletin*, p. 551.

[19]Helen Rossetti Angeli, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Friends and Enemies* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), p. 160.

[20]Johnston, *Rossetti*, p. 26.

[21]*Ibid.*

[22]Sonstroem, *Rossetti and the Fair Lady*, p. 5.

[23]Theodore Watts-Dunton, "The Truth About Rossetti," *Nineteenth Century*, XIII (1883), p. 417.

[24]William M. Rossetti (ed.), *Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelitism* (London: George Allen, 1899), p. 33.

[25]Hunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination*, p. 188.

[26]William M. Rossetti (ed.), *The Poetical Works of Christina Rossetti* (London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 330.

[27]Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882): A Catalogue Raisonne* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 17.

[28]William M. Rossetti, *Pre-Raphaelite Diaries and Letters* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1900), p. 209.

[29]Raymond Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 154.

[30]Hunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination*, p. 178.

[31]Rossetti, *Burlington*, p. 274.

[32]Surtees, *Paintings and Drawings*, p. 93.

[33]Johnson, *The Art Bulletin*, p. 555.

[34]Quoted in Surtees, *Paintings and Drawings*, p. 94.

[35]*Ibid.*

[36]Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art*, p. 159.

[37]Johnston, *Rossetti*, p. 26.

[38]Martha Vicinus (ed.), *Suffer and Be Still Woman in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 67.

[39]Johnston, *Rossetti*, p. 26.

[40]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 155.

[41]Millard Rogers, "The Salutation of Beatrice: by Dante Gabriel Rossetti," *Connoisseur*, CLIII (July 1963), p. 181.

[42]Jeannette Marks, *Genius and Disaster* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1968, re-issue of 1926 edition), pp. 156-158.

[43]Selman A. Waksman, *The Conquest of Tuberculosis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 33.

[44]Ann D. Wood, "The 'Scribbling Woman' and Fanny Fern: Why Women Wrote," *American Quarterly*, XXIII (Spring 1971), p. 11.

[45]William E. Fredeman (ed.), *The P R.B Journal* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 107.

[46]*Ibid.*, p. 106.

[47]Philip Henderson, *William Morris* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 101.

[48]*Ibid*, p. 78.

[49]*Ibid*, pp. 197 and 132.

[50]Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977), p. 28.

[51]*Ibid*, p. 16.

[52]Quoted in *Ibid*, p. 16.

[53]Waksman, *Tuberculosis*, p. 29.

[54]Brigid Peppin, *Fantasy: The Golden Age of Fantastic Illustration* (New York: Watson-Guptil, 1975), p. 14.

[55]Dr. C. Willet Cunnington, *Feminine Attitudes in the Nineteenth Century* (London: William Heineman, 1935), p. 5.

[56]Peppin, *Fantasy*, p. 14.

[57]David M. Kissen, *Emotional Factors in Pulmonary Tuberculosis* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1958), p. 89.

[58]Sontag, *Illness*, p. 20.

[59]*Ibid.*, p. 12.

[60]Quoted in Henry Currie Marillier, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An Illustrated Memorial of His Art and Life* (London: George Bell, 1904), p. 32.

[61]Sontag, *Illness*, p. 25.

[62]*Ibid.*

[63]John R. Reed, *Victorian Conventions* (Athens: Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), p. 44.

[64]Quoted in Ann Douglas Wood, "'The Fashionable Diseases:' Women's Complaints and Their Treatment in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 4 (Summer 1973), p. 36.

[65]Quoted in Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 16.

[66]Peter Webb, *The Erotic Arts* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), p. 204.

[67]Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 204.

[68]Henderson, *William Morris*, pp. 162-63.

[69]Sontag, *Illness*, p. 25.

[70]Quoted in Oswald Doughty, *A Victorian Romantic: Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Frederick Muller, 1949), p. 117.

CHAPTER III

THE ART OF ELIZABETH SIDDAL

Discussions of Elizabeth Siddal are generally included in biographies of Rossetti and only mention her work as an artist, treating it as if it were of little importance. Yet, her art was admired by Rossetti, Ruskin, Madox Brown, Swinburne, and others. Her paintings and drawings, though they do owe much to Rossetti, "possess an individual fantastic quality of their own,"[1] and deserve a much more thorough study than the cursory glances they have traditionally been given.

Since Siddal's art was produced in the brief time span of ten years, beginning about 1852 with her first lesson from Rossetti and ending with her death in 1862, it will not be discussed in chronological order. Also, a chronological format would be further complicated because many of her drawings were undated, as were all of her poems. Both were created and reworked over periods of several years and some possibly throughout her entire artistic career.[2] Consequently, the discussion of her work will be categorized by its dominant themes, including "medieval", literary,

and religious ones. Her work will be related to that of the same or similar themes done by other Pre-Raphaelites, including John Millais, William Holman Hunt, and Arthur Hughes. In all these cases her art will be compared to that of contemporary men, because she had no contemporary female counterparts in her artistic circle. Other women involved with the Pre-Raphaelites, such as Jane Morris, pursued more traditionally feminine arts like needlework.[3] Siddal may have consciously rejected work of this nature, due to her former employment in the milliner's shop, or alternatively, because she possibly wished to compete at the same level with Rossetti. Because Rossetti was the first to discover and encourage Siddal's work as an artist, her work has been considered merely an imitation of his with no relationship to that of the other Pre-Raphaelites whom she knew.* A point of contention in this chapter will be that Siddal was not only aware of what other artists within this circle did and used the same themes, but produced designs, in some instances, superior to those of her contemporaries, as seen, for example, in the illustration of *St. Agnes' Eve*

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*For example, the artist, Arthur Hughes, described Siddal's art as: "They were feminine likenesses of his [Rossetti's] own." (Quoted in Curtis G. Coley, "Miss Siddal by John Everett Millais," *John Herron Art Institute Bulletin*, 51 (March 1964), p.3.)

It is true, though, that Rossetti was the major influence on Siddal's art, as seen in her choice of subject, style, and philosophy of art. Not only did he instruct and assist her, but they occasionally collaborated on work, such as the watercolour, *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, which bears both their signatures. One rarely mentioned, but important consequence of this close relationship, is that Siddal's art provided a source of inspiration in some instances for Rossetti's work. Thus, the influence was not totally uni-directional.

Siddal employed favorite Pre-Raphaelite themes for intensely personal purposes, whereas other Pre-Raphaelites, particularly Holman Hunt, employed these themes often for morally didactic ones. She frequently transposed literary themes in an autobiographical manner, full of pathos. The link between art and biography is often a highly tenuous and subjective one, but in regard to Siddal, it is undeniable. This link is evidenced in her tendency to employ young female figures, who often resemble herself, as central characters in her work. The themes of her art and poetry are intimately related: lost love, often closely linked with death; desolation; rejection; and pain.[4] Siddal used her consumptive illness and tragic life as the basis of what Susan Sontag has identifed in her book,

Illness as Metaphor, as the distinctly modern activity of promoting self as image.[5] Siddal's art was part of the mid-nineteenth century phenomenon of modern art in which self-expression became the dominant function of art, forcing other social functions, predominant in the historic arts, into submission.[6] The artist's place in society, and her/his related emotions became the most important theme in their art.

1. "Medieval" Themes

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was formed in 1848 as a reaction against the art of the Royal Academy and in order to promote "strict adherence to Nature".[7] As its name inferred, the Brotherhood admired the art that was "pre-Raphael", or done before the High Renaissance. Hence, much of the art they admired and imitated is what is often referred to as "medieval". Different members of the group interpreted this admiration for the past in various ways: Holman Hunt tried to recapture Catholic didacticism in his art by reinforcing it with strong moral concepts, as in his *Scapegoat* (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, England); Millais did detailed studies of nature in the manner of painters like Jan Van Eyck, as exemplified in his *Ophelia* (Tate Gallery, London); and others, including Siddal

and Rossetti, were fascinated with the visual forms and themes of "medieval" art, and used them to create a personal symbolism.

The Pre-Raphaelites were not the originators of this admiration for the Middle Ages, but were part of a whole movement of thought in that direction. Earlier in the century, Augustus W.N. Pugin (1812-1852) wished to revive Gothic architecture and return to the "goodness" of modern England.[8] These beliefs were continued by Siddal's patron, John Ruskin, and promoted in his writings, such as his book, *The Stones of Venice* (1851).

No person was more adamant in his admiration of the Middle Ages than was William Morris, author, craftsman, socialist, and friend of Siddal. He viewed them as the Golden Age of art, culture, and life[9] and looked to them for solutions to the problems of modern England caused, as he believed, by the rise of industrialism.[10] Unfortunately, the Pre-Raphaelite enthusiasm for the Middle Ages was "usually in an inverse ratio to their knowledge of them."[11]

The Pre-Raphaelites were also fascinated by historic literature, including the various mythologies derived from the Arthurian romances, Irish folklore, Greek myth, Scandinavian sagas, Shakespeare, early Italian poetry, and

the writings of Sir Thomas Malory (15th century) and Jean Froissart (1338?-1410?).[12] Aside from his admiration for Dante, Rossetti particularly admired the latter two authors and proclaimed the world's two greatest books to be the Bible and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.[13] William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones shared this admiration for the *Morte d'Arthur* and knew the legends of it well from hours spent reading passages to one another.[14] These legends served as a source for Pre-Raphaelite art and writing. In 1858, Morris published his *Defence of Guenevere*, which is primarily concerned with Arthurian and related themes.[15] Designs from the Holy Grail legend were used by Morris for stained glass and by Burne-Jones for tapestries.[16] But Rossetti was the first to use the *Morte d'Arthur* as an inspiration for his painting when, in 1854, he did *Arthur's Tomb The Last Meeting of the Lancelot and Guenevere* (S. 73, Private Collection). The culmination of the use of this theme was in the massive project undertaken in the Debating Hall of the Oxford Union (S. 93-95) by Rossetti and six other artists, where they planned to cover the ceiling in frescoes of medieval legends.*

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*The six other artists of the Oxford Union murals were. Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, Arthur Hughes, Spencer Stanhope, Val Prinsep, and J. Hungerford Pollen.

Siddal could not help but be influenced by all this interest in the Middle Ages that surrounded her and adopted these "medieval" themes for her own art. She collaborated with Rossetti on a work of this theme entitled, *Quest of the Holy Grail* (Figure 7, Private Collection). The work is signed "EES inv. & DGR del,"[17] and though undated, is probably from the period of the Oxford Union murals because of the similar subject matter. A possible date for the work is 1854-57, the period of Ruskin's patronage, because the work was in his collection until his death[18] and could have been one of the works that he received as part of his arrangement with Siddal.

The watercolour may be an illustration from Tennyson's poem, "Sir Galahad:"

> Sometimes on a lonely mountain-meres
> I find a magic bark;
> I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
> I float till all is dark.
> A gentle sound, an awful light!
> With folded feet, in stoles of white,
> On sleeping wings they sail.
> Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
> My spirit beats her mortal bars,
> As down dark tides the glory slides,
> And star-like mingles with the stars.[19]

Some details from this intriguing design are quite literally inspired by the poem, including the figure of Galahad, who floats on the kayak-like "magic bark" in the dark of night; the angels, though reduced in number from three to two,

bearing the Holy Grail; and the strange form of their wings which form Gothic arches, which may have been taken (verbatim) from "On sleeping wings they sail." They also show the Grail as it was described by Malory as being covered with white samite.[20] But the closeness to the literature ends there, as many of the most striking elements of the composition were invented by Siddal and Rossetti. Rossetti's illustrations often only had a slight connection with the literature they depict, because the written word often served only as a basis for a fantasy of his own creation,[21] as was true of his works drawn from the writings of Dante Alighieri. The same was true of Siddal in some instances and it was particularly these medieval-inspired works that allowed them the most freedom in their designs in order to create a world of "visual escapism". This trait was characteristic of artists interested in self-expression; instead of working from reality, they created their own.

Upon examination, the most startling element of the *Quest of the Holy Grail* is the strange spatial setting that will show up repeatedly in Siddal's art. Galahad's bark floats in a sunken walled canal that does not give the viewer the feeling of an outdoor setting, but of one tightly enclosed with only a small outlet through an archway at the

left. The viewer is not observing a landscape of "this world", but one of the artist's own creation. Vegetation grows atop the formidable stone retaining walls, giving the impression that Galahad is located in a canal, yet the walls are pierced by oval windows containing crucifixes. The angels are not shown as sexless figures, but as females, like the maidens who guard the Grail in Malory's book.[22] Both of them have reddish hair, particularly the one on the right, who resembles Elizabeth Siddal. (Compare with Figure 2.) The most curious details of the painting are the stone sarcophagus of a knight placed in a niche over the open doorway over which a bell hangs, and a similar figure that barely surfaces in the water of the foreground. The figure in the cave-like niche is probably drawn from the legend[23] that King Arthur is not really dead, but rather asleep in a cave, with a great bell hanging in the doorway. When the bell is rung, Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table will rise again and bring victory to the people of Britain. These elements may be transposed from another poem, "Morte d'Arthur", for which Siddal made sketches* of the lines:

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*In the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England, there is a large portfolio entitled: *Photographs from designs and sketches by Elizabeth Eleanor Rossetti given to Charles A Howell by his Friend D.G Rossetti 18th Janaury 1867,*

> Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
> And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
> Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.[24]

The design for this poem was very close to that of the *Quest*.

Two other works unquestionably meant to look "medieval" are: *Lady Affixing Pennant to a Knight's Spear* (Figure 8, Tate Gallery, London) and the *Woeful Victory* (Figure 9, present location unknown). Works such as these caused Val Prinsep, one of the artists of the Oxford Union murals, to proclaim: "Medievalism was our beau ideal."[25] The first work is an undated watercolour depicting a seated woman with long red hair attending a kneeling knight, while the second shows a woman reluctantly giving her hand to a knight who has just slain another. From this choice of subject matter

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and it is the best source of Siddal's work. There is a second copy in the Ashmoleum Museum, Oxford. They contain the following works:

Pippa Passes
Lady Macbeth
Lady of Shalott
Lady Clare
Holy Family
Taking Down from the Cross
The Holy Sepulchre
Clerk Saunders
Woeful Victory
St. Agnes' Eve
Virgin and Child
St. Cecilia
Wreck of Fishing Boat
The Gay Gosshawk
The Lass of Lochroyan
Sir Galahad
Jephthah's Daughter
King Arthur

This collection of photographs will be referred to as the "Fitzwilliam Portfolio" for the purposes of this thesis.

and that of Rossetti's, such as *The Wedding of St. George and Princess Sabra* (S. 97, Tate Gallery, London), it appears that the two artists were more attracted to the intricate love aspects of the Grail stories and "medieval" legends than to their heroic nature.

The subject for *Lady Affixing a Pennant to a Knight's Spear* was probably drawn from Malory or Froissart, about which Rossetti once commented: "These chivalric Froissartian themes are quite a passion of mine."[26] Rossetti painted a very similar theme in his *Chapel before the Lists* (S. 99, Tate Gallery, London) in which a Lady being embraced by a knight helps to arm him (Figure 10). Because of the similar subject, format, and use of intense colours, it is reasonable to assume that Siddal has depicted the same scene as Rossetti. Though Rossetti's work is dated "1857", Siddal's is undated, and therefore it is impossible to say if the work of one was inspired by the other or if it was another collaborative effort.

Noted on the back of one of the preparatory sketches for *The Woeful Victory* (Fitzwilliam Portfolio) is the following explanation: "The Knights fight for the Princess - the ones she loves is vanquished - This fine subject was I believe wholly her own invention," H.C. Marillier, an early biographer of Rossetti, believes

that this work may be an illustration of Rossetti's poem, "The Bride's Prelude",[27] but this proposition seems unlikely, since the notation was made either by Dante or William Rossetti, who would have recognized it as being such.

Siddal's and Rossetti's "medieval" designs were not confined to watercolour on paper. Together they painted scenes, in oils, on a wooden jewel casket designed by Philip Webb (1831-1915),* (Figure 11). The box was done for Jane Morris and remains in the collection of one of the former Morris family residences, Kelmscott Manor, near Lechlade, England. The jewel casket was obviously meant to look "Gothic" with its metal trim, studs, and handles. Siddal and Rossetti continued in this "medieval" mood with their decorations which consist of six panels on the top, three along the length on either side, and one on each end. The exact subjects were unknown and some are difficult to read because of their damaged state. The scenes along the length of the box are of elegant courtiers in contrast to the scene on the end of the box of dancing peasant girls.

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*Philip Webb, designer and architect, designed furniture, metalwork, and glass for the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Company, of which he was a founding member in 1861. He also designed a number of country houses, one of which was the Red House, Bexley Heath, Kent, England, built in 1859 for William and Jane Morris. The Morrises resided there from 1860-65 and Siddal was a frequent guest.

The designs on this box are reminiscent of the furniture painted by Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Morris for use in Morris' home. This jewel box is never mentioned in the discussions of Siddal, but by its mere existence indicates both her awareness and her interest in the decorative arts as promoted by Morris.

2. Literary Themes

Siddal's use of literature as an inspiration for her art has already been demonstrated. Siddal presumably learned this technique from other Victorian painters who relied heavily on literature. Audiences at the Royal Academy had read the same novels and poems and easily recognized the characters in the paintings with minimal indications.[28] Literature provided an easy way for the painter to represent a complex story when s/he could only depict one scene and one mood.

Art and literature were closely linked for all the Pre-Raphaelites. Though they were primarily painters, several of them, including Siddal and Rossetti, wrote poetry and designed illustrations for the literature of others, such as Tennyson, Browning, Keats, and Wordsworth.

The nineteenth century in England was a highly formative period for book illustration. During the reign of

Queen Victoria, the growing middle class created an increasing demand for books and magazines concerning humorous, literary, and religious topics. Illustration of these publications increased their appeal and broadened their saleability. The use of these illustrations also coincided with the Pre-Raphaelite's wish to bring, what they considered to be high quality art, to the "masses". Paintings can only be viewed as long as an exhibition lasts, while books and magazines last as long as the paper on which they are printed. Printed matter, because of its low price and multiple copies, reaches a greater number of people and by its nature was meant to be held in the hand and examined.

The period, 1855-75, has been called the "heyday of British illustration"[29] due to changes in both technique and style brought about by the Pre-Raphaelites. They replaced the traditional "vignette" illustration and its dominant use of landscape with a style based on painting or pen and ink drawing, with more emphasis on the use of figures, surrounding the design with a border imitative of a picture frame,[30] thus producing more dramatic and visually exciting results.

Joseph Pennel, an illustrator himself, has termed the 1850's "the golden decade of British Art"[31] because of the

publication of two books: *Music Master* (1855) by William Allingham, and the Moxon edition of Tennyson's *Poems* (1857), which both included illustrations by Pre-Raphaelites. These two books are said to have paved the way for the revival of black and white illustration in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and both Siddal and Rossetti were involved with their production. The work that Rossetti did for these two volumes and for two of his sister Christina's books of poetry, amount to a total of only ten illustrations, yet his influence was felt in England, Scotland, all over Europe, and in the United States.[32]

Siddal's and Rossetti's first undertaking as illustrators was for their friend, William Allingham (1824-1889), the poet and collector of British folk songs and ballads. Rossetti worked with the other Pre-Raphaelites, John Millais and Arthur Hughes, who together produced ten illustrations for Allingham's small book of verse, the *Music Master*. Siddal did not take part in this particular project for Allingham, but in order to better understand Rossetti's approach to illustration, which undoubtedly influenced her, it is necessary to briefly discuss the *Music Master*.

Allingham, highly conscious of the contributions of these artists to his book, acknowledged in the preface: "those excellent painters who on my behalf have submitted

their genius to the risks of wood engraving."[33] Eight of the designs are by Hughes, one by Millais, and one by Rossetti.[34] Though Rossetti's contribution was small, it was his illustration for the poem, "The Maids of Elfenmere", (S. 67, Figure 12), for which Siddal posed in 1854, that caused the greatest sensation. In 1856, Edward Burne-Jones wrote of this work: "It is, I think the most beautiful drawing for an illustration that I have ever seen: the weird faces of the maids of Elfenmere, the musical, timed movement of their arms together as they sing, the face of the man, above all, are such as only a great artist could conceive."[35]

This reaction to Rossetti's first published graphic work is not surprising when the severity and clarity of its style is compared with the work of more traditional illustrators like T. Creswick.[36] The design depicts three singing maidens, clad in simple white gowns, who are spinning and casting a spell over the young male seated in the foreground. The viewer is instantly aware of the "weird" mood of the work and without consulting the text of the poem, realizes that only the boy is human.

Rossetti wrote of his attitude toward illustration in a letter to Allingham of July, 1854, regarding the *Music Master*: "I trust certainly to join Hughes in at any

rate one of the illustrations of *Day and Night Songs*[*], of which I hope his and mine will be worthy - else there is nothing so much spoils a good book as an attempt to embody its ideas, only going halfway."[37] His conception of illustration, at this point, was quite literal rather than interpretive. It will be interesting to note how this attitude changed in his next illustrative undertaking.

Rossetti completed his *Maids of Elfenmere* while staying with Siddal at Hastings, in 1854, during one of her many retreats from London for the betterment of her health.[38] Siddal was not idle during this time, but was working on illustrations for another Allingham publication.[39] Rossetti wrote to Ford Madox Brown of the project in May, 1854, stating: "She and I are going to illustrate the old Scottish Ballads which Allingham is editing for Routledge. She has just done her first block (from *Clerk Saunders*) and it is lovely."[40] The term "block" refers to the wood engraving technique used in this period, in which the artist drew the design directly on the wood block and thus indicated every line the engraver was to cut.[41] The advantage of this method, in which the artist worked directly on the block, was

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*For further clarity: Rossetti always referred to the *Music Master* as *Day and Night Songs* in his correspondence with Allingham.

that many of the problems of transferring the design were prevented, but consequently, the original was destroyed when the block was engraved. Further evidence that Siddal intended to publish this design is found in one of her several preliminary drawings of *Clerk Saunders* (Fitzwilliam Portfolio) on which she signed her initials, "E.E.S.", backwards in order to be accustomed to the practice for when she worked on the block. The initials would of course have to be engraved backwards in order to have them correctly positioned when printed.

Siddal worked on the representations of the ballad, "Clerk Saunders", from 1854 to 1857, when she painted a watercolour based on the woodblock (Figure 13).* She seems to have done many sketches for each theme, reworking them numerous times, just as with her poetry. William Rossetti commented on this trait: "[She] used to take a great deal of pains, and I fancy was seldom or never satisfied with her productions. One can find a dozen scribblings of the same stanza here and there, modified and corrected".[42] The same was true of her drawings, possibly

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*Rossetti wrote to Allingham in May, 1856, saying: "Would you kindly in coming to town, bring Miss S.'s wood-block of the old ballad. She wants to borrow it of you, as she thinks of painting the subject at once, and has no other design of it." (George Birkbeck Hill, *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham 1854-1870* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1897), p. 186.)

because she was conscious of the technical capabilities of other Pre-Raphaelites and her own lack of them.

Clerk Saunders is a small watercolour (28.4 x 18.1 cm) signed "E.E.S., 1857" and was considered by Dante Rossetti to have been the best of her works.[43] Its small size and rich colours may be attributed to the influence of Ruskin, her patron at the time, who was a great admirer of medieval miniatures.[44]

In the ballads collected by Allingham, "tragedy" is the dominant theme, often involving superstitions concerning death and other related subjects, such as funerals and ghosts.[45] These elements are all found in "Clerk Saunders", called such after the protagonist who is a learned young knight. The ballad tells of Saunders and Margaret, discovered asleep together before their marriage by Margaret's seven brothers, who slay the knight. After his burial, Saunders is unable to rest until freed from his troth* and his ghost visits Margaret one night. She demands a kiss from him to break the pledge, but he refuses, knowing its effect.+ Siddal has chosen to illustrate the dramatic moment when Clerk Saunders is freed from his promise:

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*Troth is a pledge of fidelity or marriage.

+According to British folklore, contact with a dead person or ghost insured immediate death.

Then she has taken a crissom wand,
And she has stroken her troth theron;
She has given it him out at the shot-window,
Wi' mony a sad sigh and a heavy groan.[46]

Siddal shows Margaret kissing a stick, in order to avoid touching Saunders, just as dawn is breaking over the city, suggesting Clerk Saunder's hasty retreat is impending. Though she has freed him from his troth, the ballad concludes with Margaret following Saunders to the grave, wishing to share it as she shared his bed.

This type of story would have appealed to Siddal, and to the Pre-Raphaelites in general, because of its naive superstitions, which would have been admired as refreshingly "primitive" in contrast with nineteenth century industrial and scientific preoccupations.

The ballad, "Clerk Saunders", is a perfect example of northern British folklore which illustrates both a belief in the existence of ghosts and a lack of fear of them and of the consequences of death. In these stories, ghosts possessed all the characteristics of a living person and were treated as a "living corpse", which is why Siddal depicted Saunders as a human rather than some ethereal apparition. Another of these superstitions is Margaret's kissing of the stick. F. Gummere states in his book, *Old English Ballads*, that this act is related to the custom

of European peasants getting rid of a disease by rubbing it on a stick or a tree.[47] Curiously, Siddal added another branch over the bed, possibly alluding to a future lover.

Siddal also must have had some knowledge of folklore, as she clothes the ghost of Saunders in a green cloak with the wound still visible on his chest. In the British ballads, green is one of the most commonly used colours and is associated with death, witches, or an ill omen.[48] Siddal combines the elements of folklore with Christian ones, such as the Biblestand decorated with an angel, the cross located in the niche behind Margaret, and gives Clerk Saunders an almost Christ-like appearance.

Siddal creates a tightly filled architectural setting, employing a single doorway as the only escape route to the exterior in the design of *Clerk Saunders*. This highly patterned method of filling space is found in many of Rossetti's works of this period, including *The Tune of Seven Towers* (S. 92, Tate Gallery, Figure 14) and *Before the Battle* (S. 106, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), which was done as a pendant to *Clerk Saunders*.[49] These works are believed to reflect the influence of Flemish artists of the fifteenth century, such as Jan Van Eyck Hans Memling, with whom Rossetti was very impressed when he visited Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges in 1849.[50]

Siddal's combination of details in *Clerk Saunders* are intended to promote a "medieval" atmosphere. The unusual key-hole shaped doorway may be an historically correct detail, and suggests that Margaret lived in a border peel.[51]* The recessed bed niche is similar to the one in Rossetti's illustration for the ballad *Fair Annie* (S. 68, Private Collection, Figure 15) done at about the same time as *Clerk Saunders* and for Allingham's book of ballads. The two works are compositionally very close, in that the space is treated as a well filled box, there is a use of successive niches, and there is only one exit through a doorway at one side of the work. Burne-Jones, a later Pre-Raphaelite, presumably learned this spatial arrangement from Siddal and Rossetti and repeated it in his illustration, *Troilus and Criseyde* (Figure 16). In *Clerk Saunders*, Siddal makes optimum use of the combination of the unusual architecture, almost claustrophobic composition, and rich colours, to produce a dream-like mood, similar to the *horror vacui* of Rossetti's works of this period.[52] These elements compliment the intensity of the scene set by the gaze of the two figures, which binds them together,

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*A peel is a fortified house or tower constructed on the border of Scotland and England in the sixteenth century.

though they cannot touch. Through use of this combination, Siddal succeeds in creating a painting in which the psychological mood is more important than the physical elements.

The elements of folklore of the ballad, "Clerk Saunders", are closely echoed in Siddal's own poem, "True Love", written in the first person. The narrator of the poem speaks to her lover at his grave and vows, like Margaret:

> Soon I'll return to thee
> Hopeful and brave,
> When the dead leaves
> Blow over thy grave
>
> Then shall they find me
> Close at thy head
> Watching or feinting,
> Sleeping or dead.[53]

Siddal hints at joining her loved one in the grave, just as Margaret followed Saunders to his. These elements of folklore are even more strongly stated in her poem, "At Last", where, in the fifth verse, she refers to her ghost rising from the dead as did Clerk Saunders' and instructs:

> And, mother, find three berries red
> And pluck from the stalk,
> And burn them at the first cockcrow,
> That my spirit may not walk.[54]

This superstitious belief in one's spirit returning from the dead is consistently found throughout the British ballads and may be drawn from them. The exact meaning of the three

berries is difficult to determine since one does not know the extent of Siddal's knowledge of legend, but in English folklore, the holly with its red berries was feared by witches.[55] Siddal may have intended this meaning in her poem or she could have simply used these elements to create a mysterious "medieval" mood, with no substantial knowledge of their symbolism. In the next verse of "At Last", Siddal continues in this vein:

> And, mother dear, break a willow wand,
> And if the sap be even,
> Then save it for my lover's sake,
> And he'll know my soul's in heaven.[56]

The willow has long been considered a sacred tree and it is the traditional emblem of grief, desolation, sorrow, and those forsaken in love.[57] This latter symbolic use of the willow may have been Siddal's intention because in the next stanza, she states: "Tell him I died of my great love."[58]

The theme of death, often used in relation to lost love, is the most predominant one found in both the painting and the poetry of Siddal and was noted by her contemporary, John Ruskin, in a letter to Rossetti. He wrote: "I can show him [Kingsley] Miss Siddal's [paintings], but he may think them morbid."[59] Her choice of this theme, though easy to recognize, is difficult to explain. Its most basic source is in Siddal's own life. She was plagued by chronic illness during her entire artistic career and by frequent

closeness to death. This factor, when combined with her often tumultuous relationship with Rossetti, provided her with inspiration for many, if not all, of her poems. These notions are repeated in often more subtle ways in her paintings and drawings. A more in-depth discussion of the problem will follow, but it is necessary to examine the other illustration done for Allingham's collection of ballads.

Another watercolour whose design was presumably intended for Allingham's *Ballad Book* is *Sir Patrick Spens* (Tate Gallery, London, Figure 17) painted in 1856 and is still in its original frame, designed by Rossetti. Like the ballad "Clerk Saunders", the theme is of love lost through tragedy leaving a young woman to lament a dead lover. The story of "Sir Patrick Spens" is believed to have been based on an actual historical event of a Scottish ship, captained by Sir Patrick Spens, sent to Norway by order of the Scottish King to retrieve his daughter, but the ship was wrecked during the voyage.[60] Siddal did not illustrate the dramatic wreck of the ship, but again, as in *Clerk Saunders*, she depicts those faced with the aftermath of death - the survivors. Her illustration is of two verses which William Rossetti has referred to as the "Ladies' Lament".[61] These are the only two verses of the

ballad that refer to the women:

O lang, lang may the ladies sit
  Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
  Come sailing to the land!

And lang, lang may the maidens sit
  Wi' their good kaims in their hair
Awaiting for their ain dear loves,
  For them they'll see nae mair.[62]

Siddal paints the wives, lovers, and children of the lost sailors huddled on the rocks of the Scottish coast, gazing out to sea. One woman comforts a baby. The artist follows the narrative closely, even to the detail of showing the "fans" mentioned in the ballad. The landscape setting is rarely found in Siddal's art. Instead, like Rossetti, she most often places her figures in the dense, "contrived", interior space like that found in *Clerk Saunders*.

Several sketches were done for this painting (Fitzwilliam Portfolio), one of which is noted as *Wreck of a Fishing Boat* and shows a woman kneeling, obviously in anguish, while two children look on and an open door reveals a baby in a crib. Its similarity to *Sir Patrick Spens* suggests that it may be a preliminary design for it.

Among the hopeful figures on the shore, the three stages of womanhood are depicted: maiden, mother, and the aged. The most prominent figure of the composition is the young maiden, who stands quite stiffly and resolutely.

This young woman has heavy lidded eyes and long flowing red hair, unlike the women in the poem which states: "Wi' their goud kaims in their hair." This change may be attributed to the fact that this was the way Siddal wore her hair. Both this figure and that of Margaret in *Clerk Saunders* resemble the features of the artist, known both from Rossetti's drawings and from her self portrait (Figure 2). It appears that Siddal has placed herself within the context of the painting in the role of the young maiden suffering from the loss of her loved one.

As with *Clerk Saunders*, a closely related theme can be found in her own poetry, which is always written in the first person. In her poem, "Sheperd Turned Sailor", she has created a caption for this lonely figure with her bleak gaze

> Ten thousand souls are sailing there
> But I belong to thee.
> If thou art lost then all is lost
> And all is dead to me.[63]

The themes of Siddal's art and poetry are often closely linked, as was true of Rossetti, and express the same basic themes. This unification aids in their deciphering.

Siddal was certainly not the only artist of this period to use themes of loved ones separated by death. One of the best known Pre-Raphaelite works that employs this theme is Arthur Hughes' *Home from the Sea* of 1863 (Ashmoleum

Museum, Oxford, Figure 18) which shows a young sailor, who upon his return home, learns of his mother's death and cries on her grave. This sad scene is set against the spring growth of plants in the cemetary. This painting, which has been referred to as the "quintessence of Victorian sentiment,"[64] when contrasted with Siddal's *Sir Patrick Spens*, helps one to appreciate her exercising of restraint in a potentially maudlin subject. Siddal's is the more successful of the two works because Hughes has worked so diligently at portraying the emotions of the boy and his sister, that the viewer is overwhelmed, while Siddal's expression of emotion is more restrained, it is more convincing.

Objections may be raised to the previous statement because of Hughes' superior technical ability when compared to Siddal's stiffly drawn figures, imperfect perspective, and overall flattened effect. These elements must be examined in light of two factors: these characteristics are also true of the art of Rossetti, her only teacher, who always found it difficult to draw from life;[65] and there is no mention, except one, of Siddal ever working from a human model. The information about Rossetti's models abounds, but there is rare evidence regarding Siddal's models, and looking at her work, one wonders how often she was given the opportunity to employ one. One of the rare

pieces of proof that Rossetti sat for Siddal is found in his own drawing, *Rossetti Sitting to Miss Siddal* (S. 440, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, Figure 19), showing Rossetti, who looks rather unkept, sitting beneath a studio lamp while Siddal works intently with her drawing board propped up on a chair. Ruskin also may have discouraged her from pursuing a study of life drawing. He assured his art students at the Working Men's College that the study of anatomy was "not only a hindrance but a degradation."[66] But in twentieth century art criticism, this fault of the nineteenth century has served to aid her reputation. The art historian, Linda Nochlin, said of Siddal's work: "Her very awkwardness has served to her advantage."[67] Her lack of technical training may have prevented her from producing the visually complex and overly sentimental works so characteristic of the Victorian age which have fallen out of favor today. Her awkwardness helps the twentieth century viewer to identify her style as being closer to the modern "primitives" than to some of her own contemporaries, making it more palatable.

Clerk Saunders, *Quest of the Holy Grail*, and all other of Siddal's paintings, except her self-portrait done in oil, are executed in watercolour and her choice of media is not surprising since Rossetti also concentrated

his work in it during the 1850's. When teaching at the Working Men's College at this time, he began his students working in colour, believing all else was subservient to it.[68] Ruskin also encouraged her: "Work as much as possible in colour. I do not care whether they be separate drawings or illuminations, but try always to sketch with colour rather than with pencil only [. . .]. The slightest blot of blue and green is pleasanter to me than a month's work with chalk or ink."[69] Her use of this medium, though, is totally unlike the English "plein-air" tradition. Instead of using delicate washes with attention to light and atmosphere, she used thick rich jewel-like colours which in their application, seem much closer to manuscript illumination than to the contemporary English watercolour tradition.

The last two works for the *Ballad Book* were mentioned by Rossetti in a letter to Allingham: "Those she did at Hastings for the old ballads illustrate *The Lass of Lochryan* and *The Gay Goss Hawk*, but they are only first sketches."[70] It seems that these two designs (Fitzwilliam Portfolio) never progressed to the finished state of the ones previously discussed. Both of these ballads have the combination of love and tragedy as their themes. The "Lass of Lochroyan" tells of Annie who sails to her

beloved's castle with their young son. She is refused admittance by a voice that she believes belongs to her lover, Gregory, but is actually his mother's, who says: "You're but a witch, or a vile warlock/Or a mermaid o' the flood," and orders her away.[71] But she pleads:

> 'Sae open the door, love Gregory,
> And open it with speed;
> Or your young son that's in my arms,
> For cauld will soon be dead.'[72]

She is once again turned away and as she departs by ship, a storm arises and she is drowned. Gregory, her beloved, has dreamt of the entire incident, and wakes just as Annie's body is washed to shore. Gregory laments the loss of Annie, while cursing his mother for what she has done. The sketch is of Annie, shivering at the door of the castle, holding a baby to her chest.

The only illustration undertaken for Allingham with a less morbid theme was "The Jolly Goshawk", but its happy ending is attained via death, or at least, the pretence of death. The goshawk delivers a letter from a knight to his fair maiden in order to arrange a rendez-vous at the fourth kirk in Scotland. Her father, who opposes the union, is told by his daughter that, when she dies, she wishes to be buried at the fourth kirk. She then drinks a potion to feign death, her instructions are followed, and she is

taken to the kirk where her lover awaits her arrival. Siddal's sketch depicts the maiden at the moment of her false death, attended by a knight and woman in medieval dress.

Allingham's publication of his collected ballads of tragic love, death, heroism, as well as those of "Robin Hode", would have been greatly enhanced by the illustrations of Siddal and Rossetti. The fact that they were published in 1865 without them was a loss for nineteenth century British book illustration. There has been no explanation for this occurrence. Only William Rossetti has briefly mentioned it, and he simply stated: "This project lapsed."[73]

Siddal's prevalent use of the theme of death is now established in her work and may have been an extension of her own life into her art. Diana Holman-Hunt, in her book *My Grandfather, His Wives and Loves*, said of her: "She was a neurotic girl and had been obsessed with death since she was a child."[74] Obsession may be too strong a term, but Siddal did exhibit morbid tendencies, as found in a letter written to Rossetti from Brighton in the Summer of 1860:

> I should like to have my water-colours sent down if possible, as I am quite destitute of all means of keeping myself alive. I have kept my-

> self alive hitherto by going out to sea in the smallest boat I can find.[75]

Like Rossetti, Siddal's art is very egocentric, but does not share its complexity, as in the Dante-inspired work. Siddal's education was extremely limited and she did not have the wealth of knowledge that Rossetti had accumulated and from which he could draw. She had little else to refer, other than to her own life and experiences. She uses her art to make a very personal statement, not a moralizing one, as in the true Pre-Raphaelite tradition. Death becomes a means of glamorizing herself stating that everyone will be forced to experience what she will in the very near future. She must have felt insecure, being in contact with some of the leading intellectuals of the day and knew she could not compete at their level. By placing her emphasis on her closeness to entering another state, her thoughts were of less importance than the fact that she was still alive, almost acting as a living medium to another realm.

The idea of promoting herself as the suffering, consumptive victim was entirely original and one is tempted to compare Siddal with the image of the nineteenth century poet, who often possessed the fatal combination of youth, genius, and melancholy, and whose life was brought to its

premature end by consumption or suicide.[76] Models for this type were found in both life and fiction, the best known models being the poet, Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), and Werther, from Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). Chatterton is today best remembered because of the painting *The Death of Chatterton* (Tate Gallery) painted in 1856 for which the artist, Henry Wallis (1830-1916) searched out the same attic in Gray's Inn in which the poet poisoned himself.[77] A tremendous following developed around the image of young Werther, glamorizing feelings of despair, and even inspiring some suicides.[78] These figures were models for a new style of genuis - of ones who are cut down in their prime and remain figures to be forever mourned. At the height of "sentimentality", this image became more important than the poetry itself. Life and work became inseparable and literature was no longer an accessory to life, but a way of life in itself.[79] Siddal perfectly fits this image, because while Rossetti and Ruskin continually tell her that she is a genius, she only experiences pain and suffering. Al Alvarez, in his study of suicide, summarized this era in the following way: "Life was lived as though it were fiction and suicide became a literary act."[80]

A book of even greater importance than the *Music Master* to the history of book illustration was an edition of

Tennyson's *Poems*, published in 1857 by Edward Moxon. Though highly regarded today, it was regarded in its own day as a failure because of its disunity, due to the combination of two diametrically opposed schools of illustrators whose work appeared in the book. Pre-Raphaelite enthusiasts objected to the inclusion of older, more conventional artists such as Thomas Landseer (1795-1880), William Mulready (1786-1863), and Daniel Maclise (1806-1870), while the more conservative artists opposed the contributions of the Pre-Raphaelites: Rossetti, Millais, and Hunt. The objection was that they produced "pictures rather than illustrations"[81] that were not successfully related to the text. Ruskin, frequent champion of the Pre-Raphaelites, was of the opposite opinion and stated that the illustrators "are full of instruction and cannot be studied too closely."[82]

A balance is maintained in the book by the nearly equal number of illustrations contributed by each school: thirty from the Pre-Raphaelites and twenty-four from the other group.[83*] The choice of artists was first generally settled between Moxon and Tennyson, with Moxon making most

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*The following is the breakdown of illustrations done for the Moxon Tennyson:

Pre-Raphaelites		Non-Pre-Raphaelites	
J. Millais	- 18	W. Mulready	- 4
W.H. Hunt	- 7	T. Creswick	- 6
D.G. Rossetti	- 5	J.C. Horsley	- 6
		C. Stanfield	- 6
		D. Maclise	- 2

Rossetti's designs for the Moxon Tennyson:

For "The Palace of Art": *St. Cecilia* (S. 83)
King Arthur (S. 84
The Lady of Shalott (S. 85)
Mariana in the South (S. 85)
Sir Galahad at the Ruined Chapel (S. 115)

of the suggestions, but Tennyson may have invited or included the Pre-Raphaelites himself.[84] The Poet Laureate had known of the Pre-Raphaelites since at least 1850, when the only Pre-Raphaelite sculptor, Thomas Woolner (1825-1892), made a medallion portrait of him.[85] Rossetti had met Tennyson by 1855, as is evidenced by his informal sketch of the poet reading "Maud" at Robert Browning's house in September, 1855 (S. 526, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery).

After the choice of artists was made, Tennyson was not actively involved with the illustrations. He was quite indifferent to them and did not see some until they were on the wood.[86]

Though not a success when first published, the Moxon Tennyson was reissued in 1901 with an introduction by Holman Hunt and contained only the illustrations done by the Pre-Raphaelites.[87] This move indicates that the precedent set by the originality of the Pre-Raphaelite approach had already become a legend by the end of the century.

In 1855, Moxon contacted the Pre-Raphaelites regarding the illustrated Tennyson[88] and work was underway by 1856.[89] Rossetti wrote to Allingham, early in 1855, concerning the diversity of the illustrators being engaged for the project:

> The other day Moxon called on me, wanting me to do some of the blocks for the new Tennyson. The artists already engaged are Millais, Hunt, Landseer, Stanfield, Creswick, Mulready and Horsley. The right names would have been Millais, Hunt, Madox Brown, Hughes, a certain lady and myself. NO OTHERS.[90]

The "certain lady" refers to Elizabeth Siddal. Rossetti was not alone in his enthusiasm for her to join in Moxon's undertaking: Ruskin also supported the idea.[91] Further support arose from an unexpected source, as explained by Rossetti in a letter of March, 1855:

> I wrote about it to Woolner, who has been for a week or two with the Tennysons; and they, hearing that several of Miss Siddal's designs were from Tennyson, and being told about Ruskin, etc., wish her exceedingly to join in the illustrated edition; and Mrs. T. wrote immediately to Moxon about it, declaring that she had rather pay for Miss Siddal's designs herself than not have them in the book.[92]

Siddal's illustrations from Tennyson include one inspired by the poem,"The Palace of Art", which tells of palaces of pleasure where the soul can live, but, in the end, guilt forces the soul to abandon them for a simple cottage.[93] Both Siddal and Rossetti chose to illustrate one of the minor, but more imaginative scenes of the poem, which speaks of St. Cecilia:

> Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
> Near gilded organ pipes, her hair
> Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily:
> An angel looked at her.[94]

Siddal's and Rossetti's designs for this verse exhibit an important change from their literal representations done for Allingham. The choice of interpretation of Tennyson's poems was not dictated[95] and the two artists took full advantage of the freedom as both their illustrations do not describe Tennyson's poem. Rossetti believed that "The Palace of Art" and other of Tennyson's works were ones "where one can allegorize on one's own hook on the subject of the poem, without killing for oneself and everyone a distinct idea of the poet's."[96] This idea was indeed revolutionary to nineteenth century English illustration, since no one, except for William Blake (1757-1820), had promoted this idea of one's personal interpretation of literature being translated into illustrations employing one's personal symbols.

Siddal produced several sketches of *St. Cecilia** (Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, England, Figure 20) and in them combined traditional iconographic elements of the

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*St. Cecilia was one of the early Roman martyrs. Though she had vowed her virginity to God, she was forced to marry a pagan. She converted him and his brother and eventually they were both put to death for their Christian beliefs. Cecilia was sentenced to be stifled to death in her own bathroom, but the steam did not suffocate her, so a soldier was sent in to behead her. Since the sixteenth century, she has been the patron of musicians and the organ, an instrument she was to have played, is used as her emblem.

saint's organ and guardian angel with details of her own invention.[97] Information about the virgin martyr could have been gained from Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848) in which there is a woodcut of Lucas van Leyden's *St. Cecilia* (Figure 21) showing her holding a small organ, aided by an angel, which could have been the inspiration for this detail in Siddal's work. She adds the detail of the quatrefoil containing an image of a Madonna and Child topped by a cross on the wall behind the angel. An element of the design that has no basis in Tennyson's poem, but is the most disturbing, is the indiscernible state of the saint's consciousness. The viewer cannot distinguish whether the saint is asleep or dead. She may be in a troubled moment just prior to death rather than in a peaceful sleep. The equation of sleep and death was not unusual for Siddal who used it frequently in her poems "True Love" and "Worn Out" in which she wrote:

> Then shall they find me
> Close at thy head,
> Watching or fainting,
> Sleeping or dead.[98]

Another reference to death as sleep is found in "Shepard Turned Sailor" where in closing, she states: "And I should know the span of earth/Where one day I might sleep."[99]

Siddal used this same equation of sleep and death in her drawing of *St. Cecilia* to create the ambiguous state

of the saint, which served as the inspiration for Rossetti's design of the same subject. William Rossetti noted on the back of one of Siddal's sketches on this theme: "If this was done (as I fancy) before Gabriel's Tennyson design, it seems to have furnished him with the hint for that."[100] H.C. Marillier, a nineteenth century biographer of Rossetti, concurs: "There is reason to believe that Rossetti availed himself of a design by Miss Siddal for the centre figure of St. Cecily."[101]

Rossetti's illustration of *St. Cecilia* for Tennyson's "Palace of Art" (Figure 22) published in the Moxon edition, owes its inspiration not to the poem, but to Siddal. Here clearly exists a role reversal where Siddal influences Rossetti's art, rather than his directing hers. This example infers that their artistic relationship may have been symbiotic rather than purely "parasitic", as has been generally assumed.

Rossetti's format resembles Siddal's in the use of the swooning saint, the clearly male angel, unlike the female ones in *Quest of the Holy Grail*, and those very weird wings of the angel that are almost indecipherable for those who are not familiar with Siddal's design. Rossetti moves the angel to the same side of the organ as the saint and has him bestowing a kiss upon her forehead. This action,

interpreted as the "kiss of death" by William Rossetti[102] clarifies the state of the saint in Siddal's drawing as that of death.

What is undeniably clear is that the angel is not the one of Tennyson's poem, and the definition of his role has lead to much speculation. Forest Reid, in his book *Illustrators of the Sixties* (1928), discusses the "sublime sensuality"of the design, stating that the forceful kiss of the angel coupled with the swooning of St. Cecilia suggests that this is actually the meeting of mortals.[103] The soldier in the lower left corner, casually munching an apple, has always been a point of controversy as to the purpose of the illustration. Reid believes that he is standing guard until the lovers' rendez-vous is accomplished.[104] George S. Layard, author of *Tennyson and his Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators* (1894), has a similar theory of the design, believing that Rossetti was bored with Tennyson's spirituality and satirized it.[105]

William Rossetti was of another opinion: "He [Rossetti] supposes Cecilia, while kept a prisoner for her Christian faith, to be taking the air on the ramparts of the fortress; as she plays on her hand-organ an angel gives her a kiss, which is the kiss of death. This is what Rossetti meant."[106] The soldier can then be read

as a guard of the fortress and may also allude to St. Cecilia's actual martrydom by a soldier. This spiritual interpretation of the design is further supported by the bird in the lower right of the design who flees upward out of a barred opening. The bird, frequently used as a symbol for the soul, could be that of the saint, freed from the world by death and heading for heaven.

Thus Rossetti's design, based on Siddal's interpretation of the poem, can be read on two levels: spiritual and sensual, both having little relation to the actual text of the poem. But, curiously enough, Tennyson preferred this illustration to any of the others in the book.[107]

Another illustration by Siddal, based on a Tennyson poem entitled "St. Agnes' Eve",* became a favorite Pre-Raphaelite theme. William Holman Hunt was the first to paint this theme in 1848, but his work was based on an earlier poem by Keats, not Tennyson.+

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*The title of these works appear misleading since they do not depict St. Agnes. She was martyred in Rome, c. 303 A.D., at the age of thirteen, and is the patron saint of virgins. Her refusal to marry caused her to be violated before her execution, but by a miracle, she remained a virgin. Her legend is that if a virgin fasts and performs certain rituals (as explained by Keats in the sixth verse of his poem) on the eve of St. Agnes' feast day (January 21), then she will dream of her destined lover that night.

+The title of the poem by Keats is the "Eve of St. Agnes", while the title of Tennyson's is "St. Agnes' Eve".

This theme became one of the most popular of the period and was painted by: Arthur Hughes in 1856 (Tate Gallery, London); James Smetham (1821-1899) in 1858 (Tate Gallery, London); Simeon Solomon (1840-1905) in 1854-1860 (Museum of Art, Ein Harod Kibbutz, Israel); and John Millais in 1863 (present whereabouts unknown). Rossetti also began a work in prose entited "St. Agnes of Intercession" in 1848, but which remained unfinished at his death in 1882.[108]

Tennyson's poem, "St. Agnes" Eve", first published in 1836, used Keats poem as one of its sources.[109] But unlike the earlier work that tells of the triumph of mortal joy and love, Tennyson presents the supernatural side of love. The poet himself noted: "Here the legend is told by a nun."[110] The woman in his poem disdains her body which confines her to earth and wishes for a "spirit pure and clear"[111] in order to meet God as quickly as possible. Tennyson wrote "St. Agnes' Eve" as a pendant to another of his poems, "Sir Galahad". Rossetti and Siddal illustrated this pair of works: he chose *Sir Galahad* (S. 115) and she worked on its female counterpart *St Agnes' Eve* (Wightwick Manor, Figure 23). Both poems share references to chastity, trial and attainment of goals, but Agnes is passive in pursuit of her quest, while Galahad is active.

Both Siddal and Millais illustrated the opening verse of this poem:

> Deep on the convent roof the snows
> Are sparking to the moon:
> My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
> May be soul follow soon![112]

Millais' design (Figure 24) was published in the Moxon Tennyson and has been evaluated by Forest Reid as "not be[ing] the most interesting as a picture, but, as an illustration, is the most perfect thing in the book."[113] Millais very carefully draws every detail of the verse, even the nun's frozen breath and because of this precision, it can be termed a "good" illustration. But Tennyson tells of the hopes of the chaste nun, who awaits her mystical union with a "Heavenly Bridegroom". Millais' drawing lacks any reference to this subdued passion in his literal presentation of a young girl, pausing to look at the snow, while going up the stairs. The mood of the poem is much more accurately captured in Siddal's design, showing a young woman gazing out of a small window with her arms extended in prayer. She indicates that this is a woman of religious convictions by the halo placed over her head, the open doorway showing a chapel with altar and crucifix, and adds "medieval" details such as the mullioned window and the winged creatures on the wall.

Millais did an earlier drawing of this poem in 1854, (Figure 25) and it bears an uncanny resemblance to Siddal's. Both figures stand looking out through an open window and both settings share elements such as the altar with crucifix and the mullioned glass window. The major differences are that Siddal omits the nun's veil to expose her long red hair and Millais uses a larger window allowing more emphasis on the snow covered landscape. Siddal's work dated from August, 1853,[114] while Millais' is dated 1854 and is likely from early in the year.[115] It appears that Millais copied Siddal's design for *St. Agnes*, just as Rossetti borrowed her idea for *St Cecilia*. He may have decided against using this design for his illustration in the Moxon Tennyson, knowing that he could not be credited as the originator of it.

Both Siddal and Rossetti illustrated Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott", but unlike "The Palace of Art", they chose different parts of the poem. The "Lady of Shalott" is related to Arthurian legend and tells of a woman who resides on an island near Camelot spending her days and nights weaving.* A curse will come upon her, should she

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*Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott" uses many of the elements of Arthurian legend, but is not one of the actual stories. Tennyson said: "The Lady of Shalott is evidently the Elaine of the *Morte d'Arthur*, but I do not think that

ever look directly at other people, so she watches the activities of Camelot through a mirror. One day, enchanted by Sir Lancelot, she turns and looks directly upon him and cries: "The curse is come upon me."[116] Siddal illustrated this moment, showing the threads of the Lady's loom flying madly about while her mirror cracks (Figure 26). She then floats down the river in a boat, reaches Camelot, and dies in the sight of Sir Lancelot, who comments: "'She has a lovely face.'"[117] Rossetti illustrated this final scene (S. 85).

Siddal's sketch, dated "December 15 '53", was undertaken before plans were made for the Moxon Tennyson project. Her choice indicates a preference for literary and Arthurian subjects learned from the other Pre-Raphaelites. Rossetti noted this work in a letter of 3 January, 1854, saying: "She has also finished the *Lady of Shalott* sketch, and made quite another thing of it."[118]

Both Siddal and Rossetti follow the narrative of this poem much more closely than for *St. Cecilia*. Siddal places the seated Lady of Shalott in the center of the design, looking out a window where can be seen many elements

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I ever heard of the latter when I wrote the former." (Quoted in Christopher Ricks, *Alfred Tennyson Poems of 1842*, (London: Collins Publishers, 1968, p. 288.)

of the poem, such as the river with barges, quivering aspens, and Camelot itself. Inside the room, opposite the window, is the mirror through which the Lady viewed the world, now cracked with only the figure of Lancelot visible in it. Hanging on the wall behind her is a tapestry depicting a procession she has watched in the mirror. The Lady does not seem distressed as the threads of her loom fly wildly and this component is the weakness of the design. Her mood does seem to be expressed by the bird seated atop the loom, who is ready to flee, just as the Lady will soon flee her island. The bird is reminiscent of the one in Rossetti's *St. Cecilia* and may be another element he borrowed from her art. Siddal has added some minor elements of her own invention including the cupboard with its open door revealing that it is bare, the gargoyle on the corner of the Lady's stool, and the crucufix atop the cupboard.

Another Pre-Raphaelite, William Holman Hunt, produced several designs for the "Lady of Shalott". Some of them are of the same scene chosen by Siddal and it will be instructive to compare their work. Hunt originally planned to illustrate two scenes for the Moxon Tennyson: the breaking of the web and the Lady's death. Rossetti complained that all the good subjects had been taken[119]

and Hunt allowed Rossetti to take over work on the death scene.[120]

Hunt's early designs for the poem closely resemble Siddal's. He began, like Siddal, showing the Lady seated at her loom (Figure 27), but soon changed her to standing position (Figure 28, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). This second sketch, of 1850, illustrates the lines: "Out flew the web and floated wide/The mirror crack'd from side to side."[121] The figure of the Lady and her clothing bear a marked resemblence to Siddal's design, but Hunt is much more effective in describing "the weaving like a web." The similarity of Hunt's use of the mirror, in which both the back of the Lady and Sir Lancelot are shown, is like that of Jan Van Eyck's in the *Arnolfini Marriage* in the collection of the National Gallery, London, at this time, and noted by him early in his autobiography.[122] Like Van Eyck, he surrounds the mirror with small roundels, foreshadowing the final events of the Lady's life.

Hunt dramatically improved this design for use in the Moxon Tennyson and created one of the most visually exciting of all fifty-four illustrations in the book.*

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*Hunt translated the Moxon illustration into an oil painting much later in his career. It is now in the Manchester City Art Gallery and dates from 1887-1905.

The Lady of Shalott is transformed from a frail girl to a formidable woman who is "half sick of shadows."[123] The weaving web flies madly about the room and is echoed in her hair, which forshadows the use of wildly flowing hair in the work of some of the Art Nouveau artists like Alphonse Mucha (Figure 29). Reid believes the design owes too much to Rossetti, especially in terms of the sensuality of the woman, her flowing hair, facial features, and voluptuous body.[124] Hunt eliminates the roundels from the mirror, but adds drama to the composition by showing only the reflection of Lancelot as he rides away, unaware of the effect of his appearance on the Lady. He also employs a crucifix as part of the room decoration, as did Siddal. Layard quotes a conversation between Hunt and Tennyson regarding this illustration:

> "My dear Hunt," said Tennsyon, when he first saw this illustration, "I never said that the young woman's hair was flying all over the shop."
>
> "No," said Hunt; "but you never said it wasn't."[125]

But Hunt's attitude toward his art was rarely so light-hearted. Probably the most moralistic of all the Pre-Raphaelites, he often clearly stated his motives for each design. Regarding the *Lady of Shalott*, he said: "The parable, as interpreted by this painting, illustrates the

failure of the human soul towards its accepted responsibility."[126]

The theme of the Lady of Shalott became extremely popular in the latter half of the nineteenth century with both Pre-Raphaelites and other artists. Those who produced works on this theme include William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Arthur Hughes, Henry Darvall (active, 1848-1889), Peter Macnab (? - 1900), and John W. Waterhouse (1849-1917).

This poor Lady became the basis of George du Maurier's (1834-1896) satire of the Pre-Raphaelite attraction for the Middle Ages and Arthurian legend entitled, "A Legend of Camelot". The parody, published in *Punch* in March, 1866, chiefly ridicules Rossetti and Morris through use of pseudo-medieval subject matter, highly wrought imagery, and over-stated love symbolism.[127] The heroine, Braunighrindas, is drawn from Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott". Du Maurier, an illustrator himself, accompanied the text with his own pictures. His first illustration (Figure 30) shows Braunighrindas with her exaggerated hair billowing like Hunt's *Lady of Shalott* and enveloping her body.

All of Siddal's choices for illustrations in the Moxon Tennyson were also worked on by other Pre-Raphaelites, except for "Lady Clare". The poem tells of Lady Clare who is told

by her nurse, shortly before she is to wed, that she is really her own daughter and not of noble birth, as she has been raised to believe. The Lady becomes determined to end this sham, puts on peasant's clothing, and tells her betrothed, Lord Ronald, of her true origins, to which he replies: "We two will wed tomorrow morn/And you shall still be Lady Clare."[128]

Siddal depicts a very tense moment in the narration when Lady Clare decides to assume her given role in society, while her mother, the nurse, kneels before her with her arms around her daughter's neck, begging her not to walk out the door she is pulling open* (Figure 31). The design of *Lady Clare* showing a woman in "medieval" dress standing before a stained glass window is similar to Millais' painting, *Mariana* of 1851 (Figure 32). Siddal cleverly uses the stained glass windows to show early scenes of Lady Clare's life when she was given up by her mother. The young woman very closely resembles the Pre-Raphaelite type, having the features of dark sunken eyes, long wavy hair, prominent jaw, and long neck. Ironically, Siddal was one of the first models for this standard and so once again introduces herself into her own painting.

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*There is another quite similar version of *Lady Clare* in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Siddal produced some rough sketches for another Tennyson poem, "Jephthah's Daughter", which was not included in the Moxon edition (Figure 33). Millais also painted this theme in 1867, but the two works bear little relation to one another. The poem refers to a passage in the Old Testament (Judges, Chapter 11) where Jephthah is called to lead Israel into battle against the Ammonites. Just beforehand, he vows that if he is victorious, the first person who greets him upon his return will be given as a burnt offering in thanksgiving. He obtains a victory and is met by his daughter, who greets him "with timbrel and with song."[129] Siddal sketched the very dramatic moment when Jephthah must tell her of his oath. He is depicted with downcast eyes, in anguish over the news he must convey. His daughter gases up at him, while he places his hand on her head imposing her doom. The simple clothing of the figures does not detract from the emphasis placed on the facial features. The design, though unfinished, shows the artist's use of restraint in what could easily have been overly sentimentalized by other artists of this era. The poem would have appealed to Siddal because of its antiquity, but also possibly on a more personal level since it tells of an heroic man, who like Rossetti, is successful, while the innocent woman, like Siddal, suffers.

As was the situation with Allingham's *Ballad Book*, Siddal's illustrations were not published and, again, there is little surviving explanation. George S. Layard attests to the fact that Siddal's work, *Lady Clare* and *St. Agnes' Eve*, were intended for the Moxon Tennyson by using them as illustrations in his book *Tennyson and his Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators* (1894), which is entirely about the 1857 edition of *Poems*. William Rossetti believed:

> Her drawings, reasonably controlled by Rossetti, would really have been a credit to the undertaking, but, whatever the reason, she was not enlisted by Moxon. Perhaps he thought the fastidiousness of Rossetti over his woodblocks was quite enough, without being reinforced by that of an unknown female ally.[130]

The problems of having work successfully transferred to a wood engraving for a novice like Siddal may indeed have been a partial reason for exclusion. Rossetti himself pondered this problem while they worked on their designs: "There is only one danger in this affair, and that is the lesson as to the difficulty of wood-drawing which I am still wincing under; but she and I must adopt a simpler method and then I hope for better luck."[131] Rossetti's difficulties with engravers, like the Dalziel brothers who were responsible for cutting many of his designs, are known from his letters, in which he explained: "These engravers! What ministers of wrath! [. . .] It [an engraving] came

back to me on paper, the other day, with Dalziel performing his cannibal jig in the corner, and I have really felt like an invalid ever since. As ye., I fare best with W.J. Linton. He keeps stomach aches for you, but Dalziel deals in fevers and agues."[132]

Reid believes that the reason for the elimination of Siddal's work was because Rossetti, prejudiced by his love, could not see the "mawkishness" of their design.[138] Still, there are no definitive answers to be found and there is no further mention of Mrs. Tennyson's wishes for Siddal's inclusion.

Siddal did drawings based on other literary sources, including Browning, Wordsworth, Shakespeare, and even Rossetti.* Her choices are not peculiar since these are the authors that her friends admired and were also used as inspiration for many of their own works. All of them, including Tennyson and the Early English Balladists, are found on the Pre-Raphaelite *List of Immortals*.[134] The

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*Two works by Siddal, based on literary sources, that will not be discussed in this thesis are: *The Blessed Damozel* (present whereabouts unknown), based on the poem by Rossetti of the same title, and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* (Fitzwilliam Portfolio), inspired by the Keats' poem. *The Blessed Damozel* is of a familiar theme: two lovers separated by death, while the Keats' poem, a Pre-Raphaelite favorite, uses the image of the fatal woman.

Rossetti brothers particularly admired Browning, and Dante first met him in 1852.[135] Both Siddal and Rossetti illustrated a scene from his drama *Pippa Passes*, but Rossetti dropped it[136] and Siddal completed hers (Figure 34). It is a sharp and clean drawing, set in an exterior space, freed from her claustrophobic interiors, showing Pippa, a poor peasant girl, who somewhat resembles Siddal, walking past some women who make fun of her. The theme of *Pippa Passes* is that of the influence that even an obscure person, too insignificant to leave a trace of his or her passage through life, may exert over the lives of others. Throughout the play, Pippa does nothing but sing, unaware of the effect of it on those whom she passes. *Pippa Passes* is one of Siddal's finest drawings because of its legibility. Rossetti showed this design to Browning, who was "delighted beyond measure, and wanted excessively to know her."[137] Rossetti agreed with the poet's favorable opinion of it, believing it "full of very high genius."[138]

Sketches done for other literary works are all linked by the theme of death. The unfinished drawing of *Lady Macbeth* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) shows her in much anguish, holding a knife, while being restrained by the king. Rossetti also did a work called *The Death of Lady Macbeth*

(S. 242, Carlisle Museum and Art Gallery).

The design for Wordsworth's poem, "We Are Seven", is her first recorded work, done in January, 1853 (Whereabouts unknown).[139] The narrator of the poem meets a little girl in a churchyard and inquires how many children are in her family, and she responds: "We are seven", though she can point to the nearby graves of two of her six siblings.

Siddal produced two designs, *Sister Helen* and *The Haunted Wood*, from which one can infer that she shared or at least was aware of Rossetti's interest in spiritualism and the occult. Rossetti turned to these belief systems in search of new mysteries to replace the ones of Christianity which he had rejected.[140] Spiritualism, the most popular form of occult study in nineteenth century England, began in the U.S. and spread to Britain by 1852.[141] As early as 1856, Rossetti and Siddal were introduced to spiritualism by their friends, Mary Howitt[142] and Garth Wilkinson, Siddal's own doctor, who both believed in communication with the spiritual world.[143] John Ruskin was also interested in spiritualism and later in the century joined the Society for Psychical Research, an organization that hoped to prove the existence of life after death. Rossetti's interest increased after Siddal's death and he tried to contact her in seances.[144*] By the 1860's, he had a knowledge of witch-

craft, spiritualism, attended seances, and occasionally held them in his own home.[145]

Rossetti's poem, "Sister Helen", may have been influenced by his interests in the occult. It is a ballad of a cruel woman, who, when betrayed by her lover, destroys him using a voodoo-like technique. Helen puts a curse on her lover by creating a waxen image of him and then placing it in the fire. Rossetti revised this poem several times during his life and Siddal would have known the early version of the poem, written in 1851, called "The Witch" in which Helen is depicted as a witch rather than as a woman.[146]

Siddal did several sketches for this poem (Figure 35, Ashmolean Museum and Fitzwilliam Portfolio), showing Helen standing at the hearth, watching the wax figure melt, while her innocent young brother points to the window, where relatives of Helen's cursed lover come to plead for his life.

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*One incident that occurred after Siddal's death, that gives some indication of Rossetti's spiritualist beliefs, was related by the painter, William Bell Scott, in his memoirs. Rossetti and Scott were out walking and saw a small bird, a chaffinch, in their path. As they approached, it did not fly away and Rossetti picked it up. Scott suggested it had escaped from a cage since it was so tame. Rossetti replied: "'Nonsense! [. . .] I can tell you what it is, it is my wife, the spirit of my wife, the soul of her has taken this shape; something is going to happen to me." (William Bell Scott, *Autobiographical Notes of William Bell Scott*, (New York: AMS Ptess, 1892), v. 2, pp. 113-14.) When they returned home, the housekeeper told them the bell, which took a strong pull to ring, was rung at the same time as the bird incident, but no one was at the door.

In another version of this design, Helen kneels in the center, holding her throat, while leaning against the narrow opening of the hearth. Her brother leans on a balustrade in a gallery, pointing at something. Rossetti was trying to relocate this very sketch in January, 1870, when he wrote to Barbara Smith Bodichon: "There was particularly a little pen and ink design (of a woman kneeling by a fireplace with a boy in the background) which I am very sorry to find it lost, as it was done to illustrate a poem of my own."[147] Rossetti called this sketch "glorious"[148] and must have had it in mind when he produced his own design for the poem about 1870 (S. 220, Private Collection, Figure 36). The format is the same as Siddal's and appears to be another case where Siddal's art was copied by Rossetti.

A more visually disturbing work than *Sister Helen* is Siddal's *The Haunted Wood* (Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, Figure 37) a small gouache, signed "E.E.S./56". William Rossetti notes that this may be the painting to which Ruskin referred, when he wrote to Siddal: "You are a very good girl to say you will break off those disagreeable ghostly connections of yours."[149] The subject is indeed a strange one, showing a tall slim young woman with red hair fleeing while she touches or points to an androgenous figure emerging from the trees. The painting is close in mood

to Siddal's own poem, "A Silent Wood", which it may illustrate. The poem is reprinted here in its entirety:

> O silent wood, I enter thee
> With a heart so full of misery -
> For all the voices from the trees
> And the ferns that cling about my knees.
>
> In thy darkest shadow let me sit
> When the grey owls about thee flit:
> There I will ask of thee a boon,
> That I amy not feint or die or swoon.
>
> Gazing through the gloom like one
> Whose lifes and hopes are also done,
> Frozen like a thing of stone,
> I sit in thy shadow - but not alone.
>
> Can God bring back the day when we two stood
> Beneath the trees in that dark wood?[150]

Though the drawing does not exactly follow the poem, the figure emerging from the woods could be the "voices from the trees" who accompany her as she "sit[s] in thy shadow - but not alone." The eery mood of the drawing is very close to that of the poem.

A final work of this nature is a quickly executed sketch of a strange spectral-like figure with beady eyes and straggly hair which it seems to be pulling. The figure is superimposed over that of a seated woman (Figure 38).

What was Siddal's inspiration for these works? Was it Rossetti's interest in spirituality, or was it dreams and hallucinations induced by her heavy use of laudanum? The latter is plausible because opium is known to heighten the

imagination[151] and cause hallucinations.[152] Some literary and artistic personages in the nineteenth century are known to have used opium, sometimes in combination with mysticism, sorcery, or occult practices, specifically to experience altered states of consciousness.[153] For the present, these questions must remain purely rhetorical until further evidence surfaces. One fact, though, that may help to explain some of these more disturbing drawings is that the tuberculosis toxemia can actually cause morbid psychic states.[154]

A fine drawing, of the quality of *Pippa Passes*, but whose subject remains unidentified, shows a pair of lovers seated on a bench outside a walled forest with two darkly skinned women before them playing a stringed instrument (Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, Figure 39). They appear unaware of a small ominous figure, who guards the gateway to the woods. The theme of the lovers facing some forboding evil is not unprecedented in Siddal's work and recalls *Fair Annie*, *Sister Helen*, and the *Woeful Victory*. Rossetti seems unaware of the subject matter, since he described the work as "two nigger girls playing to the lovers".[155] A notation William Rossetti made on the photo of this work in the Fitzwilliam Portfolio states: "Design reproduced in vol. Letters to Allingham - I don't know the subject - The

man's face is studied from Gabriel." If the latter is true, one realizes that all the male faces in Siddal's work, including Sir Galahad in *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, the angel in *St. Cecilia*, and Jephthah in *Jephthah's Daughter*, have the same features. If they are all Rossetti and many of the female figures are herself, the autobiographical implications, particularly in works like *St Cecilia* and *Jephthah's Daughter* are especially startling.

3. Religious Themes

Rossetti rarely painted religious subjects after 1851, but Siddal, like other Pre-Raphaelites such as Millais, Hunt, and Brown, did. She chose these subjects, as Rossetti did, because they provided a source of interesting stories just as the Arthurian legends had[156] and because the Pre-Raphaelites had a certain nostalgia for medieval religious inspiration so lacking in nineteenth century Britain.[157] It is likely that Siddal treated Biblical subject matter as merely another type of historical painting as she did not have any strong religious beliefs, but neither did she share Rossetti's atheism.[158] Bessie Rayner Parkes, a friend of Siddal's, once said of her: "She had the look of one who read her Bible and said her prayers every night, which she probably did."[159] In her poems, she frequently

invokes the name of God as in the "Passing of Love", she wrote: "O God, forgive me that I merged/My life into a dream of love!"[160] The closing lines of "Lord, May I Come?" are: "Good Lord, we put our faith in Thee/O God, remember me."[161] These lines clearly indicate that she was not totally devoid of some belief in a supreme being.

Her themes are the standard Christian ones: *Nativity* (Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton), *Removal from the Cross* (Private Collection), *Holy Sepulchre* (Private Collection), and possibly the *Annunciation* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). These works are only in sketch form and will not be discussed here, but two watercolours of the *Madonna and Child* will be briefly examined. A small work of this theme (Ashmolean Museum, Figure 40) shows Mary, seated and wearing a dark blue veil and gown, holding the Christ child as he picks a flower. The colours, as in her other paintings, are deep and rich, and curiously, the Child has red hair. There is a very long cord around the Child's waist and the Virgin seems to hold the other end. As is typical of Siddal, she places these figures in a highly illogical architectural space. Below the windowsill, in the lower right corner of the painting, is an open doorway through which there is a tree and grass. The Child's position prefigures his crucufixion and is reminiscent of Hunt's painting,

The Shadow of Death, painted in the Holy Land in 1873 (Leeds City Art Galleries, Figure 41). Hunt shows Christ stretching after a day's work in the carpenter's shop, casting a shadow in the form of a cross.

The *Holy Family*, (Delaware Art Gallery, Wilmington, Delaware, Figure 42) as identified by Rossetti[162] shows the Virgin, accompanied by an angel, holding a fetal-like figure of Christ tucked under her mantle. The angel, bearing those wings so characteristic of Siddal's style, may be playing a small organ that it holds. As a depiction of the Holy Family, it is curious in its absence of Joseph, who Siddal also excludes from her *Nativity*.* Rossetti also omitted Joseph from his triptych, *Seed of David* (S. 105, Llandaff Cathedral) painted in 1858-64. The reason for the omission in Siddal's art may be related to her consistent central use of females in her art and her preference for a female point of view, as in *Sir Patrick Spens*.

An unusual sketch in the Fitzwilliam Portfolio depicts three women, or possibly angels, with uplifted heads, and their arms extended, holding cymbals. They seem to be floating, enclosed by a large circle with two suns in it,

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*Rossetti once noted that Siddal's *Nativity* was designed in a most "original" way and it may have been this detail to which he referred. (George Birkbeck Hill, *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham 1854-1870*, (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1897), p. 35.)

two birds, possibly doves, fly out of the circle. This design could be an illustration to her own poem, "He and She and Angels Three", which employs one of Siddal's favorite themes, that of lovers separated by death:

> She shall stand to listen,
> She shall stand and sing,
> Till three winged angels
> Her lover's soul shall bring.[163]

There is a similar drawing attributed to Rossetti (S. 699, British Museum, Figure 43) showing an angel, holding cymbals, and drawn within a circle. Sharing the page is a design for *St. Agnes' Eve*, undoubtedly by Siddal as known from her painting of the same subject. It is curious that two designs supposedly by different artists appear on the same piece of paper. Another similar drawing of an angel, without wings, accompanied by a dove holding an olive branch (S. 699B, British Museum), is noted as "?Rossetti".[164] These two drawings, because of their similarities in style and subject to Siddal's, may possibly be misattributed to Rossetti and may actually be by Siddal.

While it is well known that Rossetti designed stained glass and furniture, it is rarely mentioned that Siddal also dabbled in the decorative arts. Other then the previously discussed Kelmscott Jewel Box, Siddal also participated in the extensive decorations done at Morris'

Red House.[165] She also designed a capital composed of intertwined angels' heads and wings (Fitzwilliam Portfolio, Figure 44). A note on the back states: "This might be used as a design for a capital (intended but not used for the Oxford University Museum)." Siddal had been included in an invitation to Rossetti to design decorations for the Oxford University Museum, with which Ruskin was associated, but neither assented.[166] This capital is the perfect counterpart to Millais design for a Gothic window of 1853 (Private Collection, Figure 45). The design was part of a projected church plan Millais worked on with Rossetti.[167]

William Rossetti explains a further project of Siddal's:

> She made some designs to be executed in carving in Trinity College, Dublin, a building carried out by Benjamin Woodward (The Architect of the Oxford Museum). One of these designs represented "An angel withsome children and all manner of other things," and was supposed to be in situ in 1855, but I see it stated that no such work is now traceable there.[168]

These plans, like so many of Siddal's artistic career, bear the pattern of high hopes that lead only to disappointment, unpublished illustrations, and stolen designs.

4 Exhibitions and Conclusion

A positive point in the gloomy outlook of Siddal's career was her participation in a Pre-Raphaelite exhibition.

She once had hopes of attaining recognition in the established English manner, that is, by exhibiting at the Royal Academy.[169] She never attained this goal, but then neither did any other of the Pre-Raphaelites, except Millais who eventually became President of the Royal Academy. Instead, her works were privately shown in the Summer, 1857, at a Pre-Raphaelite exhibition, organized by Ford Madox Brown and held at Russell Place, Fitzroy Square, London. Other artists included were Millais, Hunt, Brown, Rossetti, and Hughes.[170] Siddal exhibited *Clerk Saunders, Sketches from Browning and Tennyson, We Are Seven, The Haunted Tree,* and *Study of a Head,* which was probably her self-portrait.[171] Public attitude toward the Pre-Raphaelites had softened, partially due to the favorable reactions to the Moxon Tennyson[172] and critics were no longer violently opposed to them, partially due to Ruskin's support. These comments appeared in a review of the exhibition:

> There was one lady contributor, Miss E.E. Siddal, whose name was new to us. Her drawings display an admiring adoption of all the most startling peculiarities of Mr. Rossetti's style, but they have nevertheless qualities which entitle them to high praise. Her *Study of a Head* is a very promising attempt, showing great care, considerable technical power, and a high, pure, and independent feeling for that much misunderstood object, the human face divine. *We Are Seven* and *Pippa Passes*, by the same lady, deserve more notice than we can stop to give them. Her *Clerk Saunders*, although we have heard it highly praised by high authorities, did not please us so much.[173]

Finally, Siddal had received some public recognition which she had been lacking for so long! But the praise was not to last long. From the exhibit, William Rossetti organized an exhibition of British Art to be shown in New York at the end of 1857.[174] The opinion of one American, William Stillman, was not so favorable, as expressed in a letter to William Rossetti:

> You should have thought that the eccentricities of the school were new to us, and left out such things as Hughes' *Fair Rosamund* and *April Love*. *The Invasion of the Saxons* with Miss Siddal's *Clerk Saunders* and the *London Magdalene*, all which may have their value to the initiated, but to us generally are childish and trifling.[175]

This event marks the last time Siddal's art was displayed during her lifetime and remained out of public view for many decades. Its absence from the public has been to its advantage because in the twentieth century, her art is admired for its lack of Victorian sentimentality and offers a refreshing break from the standard run of nineteenth century English art. One modern author, Rosalie Grylls, has said of Siddal's art: "Indeed, strangely good they are - not copies of his [Rossetti's] own nor under his influence by any hypnotism of love or of propinquity, for they look much more like Blake - than any thing of Rossetti's done at the same time."[176]

As demonstrated, Siddal was an integral member of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, not merely Rossetti's protegée as has been too frequently assumed. Because of her sex, Siddal's art has always been considered apart from that of the rest of the Pre-Raphaelites. She did not work in a vacuum, but employed the same type of subjects, both medieval and literary, as did other artists of the circle. Though she was the only woman artist involved with the Pre-Raphaelites during the 1850's, she should not be isolated because of her femaleness, because there are so many other factors, such as her style, themes, and "medievalism" that closely link her to the male Pre-Raphaelites. She was very much an artist characteristic of her period.

Pre-Raphaelite art has always been the art of intellectuals[177] and though Siddal must be admired for her contributions, especially when considered within the context of her lack of education and artistic training, she was not able to attain the depth of understanding that did her contemporaries. The Pre-Raphaelites never possessed a coherant symbolism from which she could draw, which apparently caused her to look inwardly for her inspiration and it is her own life that provides the clues to her art. Alternatively, one can reject this hypothesis and explain her art as Ford Madox Brown once deciphered his painting

Pretty Baa-Lambs, of 1851-52, as having no meaning from other than what was represented on the canvas. He said the painting was about, " . . . a lady, a baby, two lambs, a servant maid, and some grass."[178]

Regardless of what one chooses to believe, Siddal should be discussed as a part of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, in which she rightfully belongs. William Rossetti summarized it best when he stated: "Her life was short, her performance restricted in both quality and development; but they were far from deserving of notice."[179]

Notes - Chapter III

[1]The Arts Council of Great Britain, *Pre-Raphaelite Drawings and Watercolours* (London, 1953), p. 23.

[2]Ida Proctor, "Elizabeth Siddal: The Ghost of an Idea," *Cornhill Magazine*, 990 (Winter 1951-52), p. 369.

[3]A.W. Baldwin, *The Macdonald Sisters* (London: Peter Davies, 1960), p. 147.

[4]Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *Women Artists 1550-1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), p. 230.

[5]Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977), p. 29.

[6]Class notes from Dr. Alan Gowans' lecture for History in Art 120, University of Victoria, 21 September, 1978.

[7]William M. Rossetti, *Pre-Raphaelite Diaries and Letters* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1900), pp. 205-06.

[8]Alan Gowans, *Images of American Living* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1964), p. 306.

[9]Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth Century English Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 1.

[10]Margaret R. Grennan, *William Morris Medievalist and Revolutionary* (Morningside Heights, New York: King's Crown Press, 1945), p. 3.

[11]*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

[12]John Dixon Hunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 34.

[13]Henderson, *Morris*, p. 47.

[14]Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, v. 1, (London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 116.

[15]Grennan, *Morris*, p. 35.

[16]Gerald H. Crow, *William Morris, Designer* (London: The Studio, 1934), pp. 74 and 82.

[17]John Nicoll, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Studio Vista, 1975), p. 77.

[18]James S. Dearden, *John Ruskin* (Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications, 1973), p. 24.

[19]Alfred Tennyson, *Poems* (London: The Scholar Press, 1976 reprint of the 1857 Moxon edition), p. 307.

[20]Roger Lancelyn Green, *King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 245.

[21]Brigid Peppin, *Fantasy: The Golden Age of Fantastic Illustration* (New York: Watson-Guptil, 1975), p. 7.

[22]Green, *King Arthur*, p. 245.

[23]*Ibid*, p. 281.

[24]Tennyson, *Poems*, p. 198.

[25]Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, v. 1, p. 164.

[26]William M. Rossetti (ed.), *Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelitism* (London: George Allen, 1899), p. 198.

[27]Henry Currie Marillier, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An Illustrated Memorial of His Art and Life* (London: George Bell, 1899), p. 58.

[28]Martha Vicinus (ed.), *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 46.

[29]Phillip James, *English Book Illustration: 1800-1900* (London: King Penguin Books, 1947), p. 35.

[30]Geoffrey Wakeman, *Victorian Book Illustration* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), p. 69.

[31]Quoted in Gleeson White, *English Illustration: The Sixties* (London: Archibald Constable, 1897), p. 99.

[32]Raymond Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 156.

[33]Quoted in David Bland, *A History of Book Illustration* (London: Fabre and Faber, 1958), p. 258.

[34]Forrest Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties* (London: Faber and Gwyner, 1928), p. 33.

[35]Quoted in White, *English Illustrators*, p. 161.

[36]For an example of the style of T. Creswick's illustrations, see: Tennyson, *Poems*, p. 47.

[37]George Birkbeck Hill, *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham: 1854-1870* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1897), p. 34.

[38]Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art*, p. 157.

[39]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 20.

[40]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 7.

[41]Wakeman, *Book Illustration*, p. 73.

[42]Quoted in Proctor, *Cornhill*, p. 369.

[43]As known from a letter written by Fairfax Murray and attached to the back of the painting. Quoted in Laing Art Gallery, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1971), p. 37.

[44]Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art*, p. 153.

[45]Lowry C. Wimberly, *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1959), p. 255.

[46]William Allingham (ed.), *The Ballad Book* (London: Macmillan, 1865), p. 155.

[47]Francis B. Gummere, *Old English Ballads* (London: Ginn and Company, 1899), p. 349.

[48]Wimberly, *Folklore*, p. 240.

[49]Oswald Doughty and John Robert Wahl, *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 433.

[50]Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art*, p. 154.

[51]James Reed, *The Border Ballads* (University of London: The Athalone Press, 1973), p. 198.

[52]Laing, *Rossetti*, p. 37.

[53]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 151.

[54]From transcriptions of some of Elizabeth Siddal's poems in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, which will be further referred to as "Ashmolean Transcript" in this thesis.

[55]Christina Hole, *English Folklore* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1940), p. 88.

[56]Ashmolean Transcript.

[57]E. and M.A. Radford, *Encyclopedia of Superstitions* (London: Hutchinson, 1961), pp. 61 and 364.

[58]Ashmolean Transcript.

[59]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 96.

[60]Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Ballads* v. 2 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1882), p. 19.

[61]William M. Rossetti, *U.B.C., MS.*, p. 4.

[62]Allingham, *The Ballad Book*, p. 63.

[63]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 152.

[64]Peppin, *Fantasy*, p. 12.

[65]Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art*, p. 153.

[66]Quoted in Madge Garland, *The Changing Face of Beauty* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1957), p. 132.

[67]Linda Nochlin, "By a Woman Painted," *Ms* , 3 (July 1974), p. 73.

[68]Marillier, *Rossetti*, p. 55.

[69]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, pp. 66-67.

[70]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 34.

[71]Allingham, *The Ballad Book*, p. 117.

[72]*Ibid.*, p. 118.

[73]William Rossetti, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal," *Burlington Magazine*, I (May 1903), p. 277.

[74]Diana Holman-Hunt, *My Grandfather, His Wives and Loves* (London: Hamish-Hamilton, 1969), p. 138.

[75]Quoted in Oswald Doughty, *A Victorian Romantic: Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Frederick Muller, 1949), p. 269.

[76]Allingham, *The Ballad Book*, p. 224.

[77]Timothy Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), p. 122.

[78]Allingham, *The Ballad Book*, p. 228.

[79]*Ibid* , p. 230.

[80]*Ibid.*, p. 232.

[81]Wakeman, *Book Illustration*, p. 70.

[82]Quoted in George Somes Layard, *Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators* (London: Elliot Stock, 1894), p. 27.

[83]Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties*, p. 36.

[84]Layard, *Tennyson and Illustrators*, pp. 4-5.

[85]Rosalie Glynn Grylls, *Portrait of Rossetti* (London: Macdonald, 1964), pp. 35-56.

[86]Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties*, p. 43.

[87]Bland, *Book Illustration*, p. 258.

[88]Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art*, p. 157.

[89]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 121.

[90]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 97.

[91]Rossetti, *Burlington*, p. 283.

[92]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 111.

[93]Ronald W. Johnson, "Dante Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* and the *New Life*, "The Art Bulletin," LVII (December 1975), p. 549.

[94]Tennyson, *Poems*, p. 118.

[95]Marcia Allentuck, "New Light on Rossetti and the Moxon Tennyson," *Apollo*, XCVII (February, 1973), p. 176.

[96]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 97.

[97]Johnson, *The Art Bulletin*, p. 549.

[98]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 151.

[99]*Ibid.*, p. 153.

[100]As written by William M. Rossetti, on the back of one of Siddal's original sketches of *St. Cecilia* in the collection of Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton.

[101]Marillier, *Rossetti*, p. 78.

[102]Rossetti, *Burlington*, p. 295.

[103]Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties*, pp. 39-40.

[104]*Ibid.*

[105]Layard, *Tennyson and Illustrators*, p. 58.

[106]Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)· A Catalogue Raisonne* (Oxford: THe Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 48.

[107]Marillier, *Rossetti*, p. 78.

[108]Robert D. Johnston, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), p. 61.

[109]Christopher Ricks, *Alfred Tennyson: Poems of 1842* (London: Collins Publishers, 1968), p. 357.

[110]Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 357.

[111]Tennyson, *Poems*, p. 310.

[112]*Ibid.*, p. 309.

[113]Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties*, p. 37.

[114]Oswald Doughty and John Robert Wahl (eds.), *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 153.

[115]From Correspondence with Mary Bennett, Keeper of British Art, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 22 May, 1979.

[116]Tennsyon, *Poems*,

[117]*Ibid.*,

[118]Rossetti, *Pre-Raphaelite Diaries*,

[119]Layard, *Tennyson and Illustrators*,

[120]Walker Art Gallery, William Holman Hunt (Liverpool, 1969), p. 81.

[121]Tennyson, *Poems*, p. 72.

[122]Walker, *Hunt*, p. 70.

[123]Layard, *Tennyson and Illustrators*, p. 3.

[124]Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties*, p. 39.

[125]Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[126]Quoted in Walker, *Hunt*, p. 57.

[127]Leonée Ormond, "A Mid-Victorian Parody: George du Maurier's 'A Legend of Camelot,'" *Apollo*, LXXXV (January 1967), p. 54.

[128]Tennyson, *Poems*, p. 352.

[129]Arthur Burrell (ed.), *A Book of Heroic Verse* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1920), p. 178.

[130]Rossetti, *U.B.S., Ms.*, p. 6.

[131]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 111.

[132]Quoted in Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties*, p. 41.

[133]*Ibid.*, p. 36.

[134]William E. Fredeman (ed.), *The P R.B Journal* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 107.

[135]Helen Rossetti Angeli, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti His Friends and Enemies* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), p. 163.

[136]Marillier, *Rossetti*, p. 25.

[137]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, pp. 161-62.

[138]Quoted in Graham Reynolds, "The Pre-Raphaelites and Their Circle, *Apollo*, XCII (June, 1971), p. 494.

[139]Rossetti, *Burlington*, p. 277.

[140]T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, *Mona Lisa's Mustache* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 26-27.

[141]John R. Reed, *Victorian Conventions* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), p. 455.

[142]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 195.

[143]Angeli, *Rossetti*, p. 205.

[144]*Ibid.*, p. 206.

[145]Grylls, *Portrait*, pp. 24-25.

[146]Robert D. Johnston, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), p. 114.

[147]Doughty and Wahl, *Letters of Rossetti*, p. 782.

[148]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 144.

[149]*Ibid.*, p. 82.

[150]William M. Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences* (London: Brown, Langham and Company, 1906), pp. 197-98.

[151]Jeannette Marks, *Genius and Disaster* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1968 re-issue of 1926 edition), p. 176.

[152]Gerard Rotenberd (ed.), *Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialities* (Canadian Pharmaceutical Association, 1977), p. 618.

[153]Emmanuel J. Mickel Jr., *The Artificial Paradises in French Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 59.

[154]Selamn A. Waksman, *The Conquest of Tuberculosis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 29.

[155]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 111.

[156]R.V. Johnson, *Aestheticism* (London: Methuen and Company 1969), p. 44.

[157]Hunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 35.

[158]Rossetti, *Burlington*, p. 274.

[159]Hill, *Letters of Rossetti to Allingham*, p. 6.

[160]Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences*, p. 199.

[161]*Ibid.*, p. 200.

[162]From correspondence with Rowland Elzea, Curator of Collections, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, Delaware, 29 November, 1977.

[163]Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences*, p. 197.

[164]Surtees, *Paintings and Drawings*, p. 225.

[165]Henderson, *Morris*, p. 82.

[166]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 97.

[167]Hilton, *Pre-Raphaelites*, p. 74.

[168]Rossetti, *U.B.C., Ms.*, p. 5.

[169]Rossetti, *Pre-Raphaelite Diaries*, p. 36.

[170]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 171.

[171]*Ibid.*

[172]Doughty, *A Victorian Romantic*, p. 215.

[173]Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[174]Proctor, *Cornhill*, p. 377.

[175]Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti*, p. 187.

[176]Grylls, *Portrait*, p. 53.

[177]Wylie Sypher, *Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 196.

[178]Quoted in Allen F. Staley, "Radical Romantics," *Art News*, LXIII (May 1964), p. 34.

[179]Rossetti, *Burlington*, p. 273.

CONCLUSION

The Pre-Raphaelites have been described as "artists who founded an aesthetic cult or school, which for a time eclipsed Victorian convention and established new models: maidens wearing an air of unrelieved melancholy and dwelling forever in their own world of romance and beauty."[1] Siddal was both the model for this role, promoted it in her own art, and died, leaving a legacy of unrelieved melancholy.

From her humble beginnings as a poor model, she was introduced to an entirely new way of thinking and a new style of living. Before she had realized it, she had attracted the attention of men who would become the most important artists in nineteenth century England and had met her first and only love. The Pre-Raphaelites had a profound effect on her life and without their attentions, she would have likely remained, for the rest of her days, in the milliner's shop.

The lack of information on her life makes attempts at understanding her personality nearly impossible. One of her traits was certainly restraint, presumably increased by the insecurity she must have felt when mingling with people far more educated than herself.

She was not flamboyant as Rossetti often was. Her quiet personality has never lead any of her contemporaries to remark that she lacked intelligence, instead, they generally praised her.

The frustrations of both her personal and artistic life seem to have overshadowed any of the praise she received. She emerges as a melancholy figure who was constantly ill. She was plagued by intellectual frustration: Rossetti and Ruskin were constantly calling her "a genius", yet she received no professional recognition or satisfaction.

All these factors: her illness, use of laudanum, and proximity to death, were major factors in her appeal to the Pre-Raphaelites and in the formation of her personal iconography. While Rossetti's art, from 1850 to 1860, indicates a move from a belief in the ideal to an acceptance of the real, Siddal does the opposite. She only found discouragement in the real and found her hope in the ideal, or, in the world beyond life.

Since there has been no research done on her art, this thesis can only present basic information: identification and a brief discussion of content. One thing that is clear is her art and poetry were very closely linked with her own life. When more of her biographical information surfaces, so will a better understanding of her art.

Siddal's art is still often considered as merely an extension of Rossetti's as exemplified in a recent one man show of his work held at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in 1971, in which Siddal's art was included. Her art was, in actuality, very much a part of the whole Pre-Raphaelite movement as she shared their admiration for the Middle Ages and their interest in literature. The only way to understand her art is through its context, as its meaning is blurred if examined in isolation. She was a designer of illustrations for important books of the period that set standards for dramatic changes in illustration that are still admired today. Her designs, had they been published, would have been an asset to the revival of black and white illustration.

What Siddal lacked in technical skill, she made up for in innovative ideas for her paintings and drawings. Her works resemble the naivité of early examples done by Edward Burne-Jones and William Holman Hunt. One can only speculate what she could have attained with time and proper training. Rossetti and Millais must have realized the potential of her work when they copied her designs for use as the basis of theirs.

Siddal added a very personal dimension to Pre-Raphaelite art by combining what she learned from them with elements

drawn from her own life. Her art is about what concerned her most: her love relationship and death. Like Rossetti, she made central use of female figures. He used them because they represented an unobtainable love ideal, she used them because their dilemmas were like hers. It was not mere coincidence that the central figures of her paintings are young women with long red hair. Just as her works are of claustrophobic interiors, so is the concept behind them: her personal claustrophobic interior. Her simplified or "primitive" style likely was used by its author to indicate that she was in touch with the most basic sources of truth and feeling.[2]

The fate of the artistic career of Elizabeth Siddal, marked by unpublished poems and illustrations, and paintings that were rarely viewed by the general public infer something about the plight of English women artists in the nineteenth century and their treatment by the established male art world. Few women artists can even be identified as having been active in the 1850's. Either Siddal was one of the first or her contemporaries have passed into total obscurity. It wasn't until the 1860's that women were accepted to study at the Royal Academy, though a few had exhibited at their annual exhibition. But these women, of course, painted in a much more traditional, and therefore academically

acceptable, style. Women who attempted to work in an innovative style, as Siddal had, did not really emerge until the latter half of the century.

Siddal may not have caused "great waves" in the English art world, but she definitely inspired at least two women artists: Georgiana Burne-Jones and Marie Spartali Stillman (1844-1927). Marie Spartali, artist and wife of William Stillman, the American who had criticized Siddal's art, painted a posthumous portrait of *Elizabeth Siddal* (Macmillan and Perrin Gallery, Vancouver). The painting shows a Pre-Raphaelite type woman with red hair seated at table with poppies on it. Though the references are clear, Spartali had never met Siddal and substitutes her own face for that of Siddal's.

The art historian, Linda Nochlin, has best summarized the basic problem of studying woman's art. Art executed by females does not require or demand a different set of values from men's art, but forces us to question the whole frame of reference by which art has been judged in the past few decades.[3]

Until the history of art is rewritten to include the contributions of both men and women, Siddal, and other artists like her, will be remembered as enigmatic creatures who do not quite "fit" into our current standards of art.

Shortly after her death, an almost legendary aspect became attached to Siddal's memory. Figures such as Oscar Wilde used to discuss the unusual circumstances of her death[4] and his friend, Charles Ricketts (1866-1930), designer and illustrator, said of her: "Then, we have all, when young, been in love with Miss Siddal."[5] But she was not then, and is not now, treated as she should be: as one of the many artists of the Pre-Raphaelite circle.

Conclusion - Notes

[1]George Wesley Whiting, *The Artist and Tennyson* (Rice University Studies, 50 (Summer 1964)), p. 83.

[2]Linda Nochlin, "The Changing Vision: Some Women Artists of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Women on Women* (Toronto: York University, 1978), p. 51.

[3]*Ibid*, p. 46.

[4]Robert D. Johnston, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), p. 32.

[5]Cecil Lewis (ed.), *Self Portrait: Letters and Journals of Charles Ricketts* (London: Peter Davies, 1939), p. 294.

APPENDIX

OTHER WOMEN OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITE CIRCLE

The nineteenth century witnessed the first real emergence of women artists, not only in England, but all over Europe and North America. By mid-century in England, women's art organizations, such as the Society of Lady Artists, founded in 1859[1], sprang up.

The Pre-Raphaelite circle was not without its female participants. Siddal was only one of the many women artists either involved with, or influenced by them, though she was probably the first. There actually was a Pre-Raphaelite "Sisterhood", though they never referred to themselves as such, whose contributions are as fascinating as those of the Brotherhood's, but about whom no cohesive research exists. This appendix will briefly outline other artists requiring research.

Siddal's friend, the feminist activist, Barbara Leigh Smith, was also a successful watercolourist. She studied under William Hunt and produced landscapes that were exhibited in London, Washington, and Philadelphia.[2]

As previously mentioned, Siddal's closests female artistic associate was her friend, Georgiana Burne-Jones, with whom she had planned to write and illustrate a book of fairy tales. As a child, Georgiana's greatest interest was in drawing and in artists and while young, she wrote

and illustrated *The History of the Piebald Family* with her sister, Louise.[3] When she married, her dowry was a small table with a drawer for her wood-engraving tools.[4] She pursued this art with Mrs. Du Maurier, and together they did engravings of their husband's drawings.[5] She also collaborated with Jane Morris, doing needle-work and engraving. Her involvement with the Pre-Raphaelites made a great impression on her. She said of them:

> I felt in the presence of a new religion. Their love of beauty did not seem to me unbalanced, but as if it included the whole world [. .] Human beauty especially was in a way sacred to them.[6]

She, like so many of the Pre-Raphaelites, was interested in medieval literature, including the *Morte d'Arthur* and the stories of Dante and Beatrice and married Edward Burne-Jones on Beatrice's birthday.[7]

Two of her drawings depict an unusual subject: medieval *Ladies with Skeletons* (Private Collection, England)[8] showing women grooming themselves before mirrors, while death lurks behind them. These works seem to bear the influence of early German woodcuts, particularly that of Holbein.[9] These drawings date from c. 1861 and clearly show the influence of Siddal's style, whose art inspired her.

A major employer of women in the arts in the latter half of the nineteenth century was the firm of Morris,

Marshall, Faulkner, and Company, founded in 1861 by William Morris, Dante Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown, and others. Though a circular for the company stated they were "fine art workMEN [emphasis mine] in painting, carving, and the metals", they actually employed many women, particularly to do embroidery and tile painting.[10] Later, when the firm moved to Merton Abbey in 1881, photos taken of the tapestry looms show them being run by women.[11] Some of these women, especially those who produced textiles, were relatives of the firm's partners and included: William Morris' wife, Jane; his daughters, Jenny and May; Bessie Burden, Jane Morris' sister; Georgiana Burne-Jones, whose husband was also a founding member; and Charles Faulkner's sisters, Lucy and Kate.

Examples of early works produced by women of the Morris firm can be found at the former Morris country home, Kelmscott Manor, near Lechlade, England. The collection contains the following items: a blue serge hanging with daisy pattern, adapted by William Morris from a Froissart manuscript in the British Museum, and embroidered by Jane Morris, Bessie Burden, and Kate Faulkner; a framed embroidered figure of a woman in medieval dress worked by Jane, Bessie, Kate and Georgiana Burne-Jones; bedspread with an embroidered floral pattern done by Jane for William's and

her bed; and a hanging entitled *Life and Death of Jason* (1870), signed "Si je puis. Jane Morris. Kelmscott." The motto, "If I can", often accompanied the signatures of Jane and William Morris in either English, French, or German and was adopted from Jan Van Eyck.[12]

One of the most talented women of the Morris firm was Jane and William's younger daughter, May Morris (1862-1938), who was a designer, embroiderer, and painter. She was born at the Red House, Bexleyheath, Kent, and trained by her father. She designed textiles, wallpapers, and wall hangings for Morris and Company, but was especially gifted in embroidery, for which she had inherited her mother's talent. She worked on both the choice and execution of designs in the embroidery department of the firm and, in 1885, became its head.[13] Her works include the valance for her parents' bed at Kelmscott Manor and the embroidered hanging, *Orchard*.[14] Her paintings, *Naworth Castle* (Kelmscott Manor) and *Kelmscott Manor* (Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton), fall within the English landscape tradition.

May Morris also designed jewelry and is believed to have altered some of her mother's pieces.[15] She designed and made a silver belt (Victoria and Albert Museum, London), shown at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in 1906[16] and a

heart-shaped pin with fleurets, (Victoria and Albert Museum, London) a favorite shape of Arts and Crafts movement jewelry, c. 1905.[17] In 1907, she helped to found the Women's Guild of Arts and in 1910 toured England and the U.S., lecturing on embroidery and art.[18] She also edited her father's numerous writings.

The Morris firm sold plates, tiles, and other ceramics. Two sisters of one of the founders of the firm, Charles Faulkner, were involved in the production of ceramic ware nearly from its beginning. Lucy and Kate Faulkner painted floral and fauna designs in enamel colours on plain earthenware tiles imported from Holland.[19] Designs were made by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, but Kate Faulkner also contributed.[20*] Lucy Faulkner painted a particularly fine tile panel with scenes from *Beauty and the Beast* in 1863 (William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow) which was designed by Edward Burne-Jones for the home of the artist, Birket Foster (1825-1899) in Whitley, Surrey.[21] Lucy also did embroidery for the firm and in 1878 published *The Drawing Room, Its Decoration and Furniture*.[22] Kate (d. 1898) was an artist for Morris and Company, who painted tiles, worked in gesso, and designed wallpapers.[23]

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*Examples of work by the Faulkner sisters, showing designs of animals and peacock feathers on tiles can be seen at the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, England.

Ford Madox Brown, involved with the Pre-Raphaelites from their genesis, had three talented female students who produced work in a style similar to his own: his two daughters, Lucy and Catherine; and Marie Spartali.[24] Lucy's (1843-1894) talent was discovered when she filled in for one of her father's absent assistants.[25] Her work, as exemplified in a panel painting, *The Tomb Scene From Romeo and Juliet*, executed in 1870 (Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton), continued the Pre-Raphaelite style.[26] She married William Rossetti in 1874 and would have been Siddal's sister-in-law, had she been alive.[27] Lucy Rossetti is also the author of *Mrs Shelley* (1890).

Marie Spartali, already mentioned as the painter of the posthumous portrait of *Elizabeth Siddal*, was a member of the London Greek community. Her schooling, which included ancient Greek and Latin[28], made her one of the most educated women involved with the Pre-Raphaelites. Rossetti admired her beauty and she modelled for him. Later in her life, she married William Stillman, an American journalist. She painted in a style similar to Rossetti's and frequently drew on themes from the *Morte d'Arthur* and Dante.[29*] Her stepdaughter, Lisa Stillman, was also an artist and her portrait of *Mrs. William Hulton* is in Wightwick Manor.

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*Her works can be found in Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, England, and in the Samuel and Mary Bancroft Pre-Raphaelite Collection, Wilmington Society of Fine Arts, Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A.

One of the most successful women artists of this circle was Helen Allingham (née Paterson, 1848-1926), wife of the poet, William Allingham, whom she married in 1874. She studied at the Birmingham School of Design and later moved to London to live with her aunt, the artist, Laura Herford, who was the first woman accepted to study at the Royal Academy, c. 1861.[30] Allingham herself entered the R.A. in April, 1867. She preferred watercolour over all other media and counted Ruskin as one of her admirers. She did designs for children's books and the periodicals *Once A Week*, *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, *Cornhill Magazine*, and was later on the staff of *Graphic*.[31] She is one of the earliest women illustrators and her success helped pave the way for other women like Kate Greenaway (1846-1901). Her watercolours illustrate the books, *The Homes of Tennyson* (1905) and *Happy England* (1909). She also exhibited at the Royal Academy, was a member of the Royal Watercolour Society, and edited her husband's works and letters. One of her most interesting illustrations was published in *Cornhill Magazine* in March, 1875, and depicts the artist, *Angelica Kauffman in Joshua Reynold's Studio*.[32]

One of the most talented women artists of this period was Evelyn De Morgan (née Pickering, c. 1850-1919), who was both a painter and sculptor. Her art bears a resemblence

to that of her uncle, Spencer Stanhope, one of the artists of the Oxford Union Murals with Rossetti.[33] After studying at the Slade School, London, she often travelled with him in Italy, where she studied the works of the early Italian artists whom she admired.[34] De Morgan was a follower of the Pre-Raphaelites and the work of Edward Burne-Jones helped her to formulate her beautiful mature style as can be seen in her painting, *Flora*.[35] She later married the ceramicist, William De Morgan.

Little is known about the life of the artist, Simeon Solomon, who was associated with the Pre-Raphaelites early in his career, but even less is known about his sister, Rebecca. The Solomon family produced three artists: Rebecca, Simeon, and Abraham (1832-1862), who were the first London Jews to distinguish themselves in the visual arts.[36] Rebecca studied at the Spitalfields School of Design and was later a pupil of her brother, Abraham, and a studio assistant to Millais.[37] She painted and studied in Italy and France and exhibited at the Royal Academy, where one year all three Solomons were showing works. Rebecca was attractive and high spirited, had many love affairs, but suffered from alternating high and low moods. Unfortunately, she lived as recklessly as her brother, Simeon, and became an alcoholic.[38] Little is known of her later life.

The Pre-Raphaelite influence on art continued well into the twentieth century. One of the last artists to work in this style was Eleanor Fortesque Brickdale (1872-1945), who studied at the Crystal Palace School of Art and at the Royal Academy. She painted imaginative and historic subjects, including illustrations from the Bible and the English ballads.[38]

This list is not meant to be comprehensive, nor is it meant to infer that all the women included were "great" artists. Its purpose is to point out their mere existence, which is overlooked far too frequently, and to indicate that their realm of accomplishments, whether in painting, embroidery, or designing. Some of them, such as Marie Spartali and Evelyn De Morgan, were artists of high quality and deserve more thorough study.

Notes - Appendix

[1]Georgiana Hill, *Women in English Life* (London: Richard Bentley, 1896), p. 294.

[2]Ellen C. Clayton, *English Female Artists*, v. 2 (London: Tinsley, 1876), pp. 170-72.

[3]A.W. Baldwin, *The MacDonald Sisters* (London: Peter Davies, 1960), pp. 36 and 39.

[4]Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, v. 1 (London: Macmillan and Company, 1904), p. 204.

[5]Baldwin, *The MacDonald Sisters*, p. 146.

[6]Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, v. 1 , p. 169.

[7]Baldwin, *The MacDonald Sisters*, p. 137.

[8]These two drawings are reproduced in John Christian, "Early German Sources for Pre-Raphaelite Designs," *Art Quarterly*, 36 (Spring-Summer 1973), p. 74.

[9]*Ibid* , p. 68.

[10]*A Brief Sketch of the Morris Movement* (London: Privately printed for Morris and Company, 1911), pp. 15 and 17.

[11]Gerald H. Crow, *William Morris, Designer* (London: The Studio, 1934), p. 73.

[12]A.R. Dufty, *Kelmscott: An Illustrated Guide* (London: The Society of Antiquaries, 1969), p. 22.

[13]William Morris Gallery, *Catalogue of the Morris Collection* (Walthamstow, 1969), p. 70.

[14]*Orchard*, by May Morris, is reproduced in *Studio*, 145 (April 1953), p. 132.

[15]Shirley Bury, "Rossetti and His Jewelry," *Burlington Magazine*, CXVIII (February 1976), p. 97.

[16]The silver belt, by May Morris, is reproduced in *Studio*, 37 (1906), p. 224.

[17]Bury, *Burlington*, p. 102.

[18]Morris Gallery, *Morris Collection*, p. 70.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 24.

[20]*Ibid.*

[21]Arnold Wilson, "More From Morris and Company," *Apollo*, 80 (July 1964), p. 58.

[22]Morris Gallery, *Morris Collection*, p. 70.

[23]*Ibid.*

[24]Clayton, *Female Artists*, v. 2, p. 117.

[25]*Ibid.*, p. 118.

[26]*The Tomb Scene from Romeo and Juliet* by Lucy Rossetti is reproduced in Percy Bate, *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1910), p. 25.

[27]Clayton, *Female Artists*, v. 2, p. 122.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 135.

[29]A reproduction of one of the works by Marie Spartali Stillman can be found in Jeremy Maas, *Victorian Painters* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1969), p. 145.

[30]Clayton, *Female Artists*, v. 2, p. 2.

[31]*Ibid.*, p. 4.

[32]*Angelica Kauffman in Joshua Reynold's Studio*, by Helen Allingham, is reproduced in Geoffrey Holme (ed.), *British Book Illustration: Yesterday and Today* (London: The Studio, 1923), p. 73. Other reproductions of her work can be found in Walter Shaw Sparrow, *Women Painters of the World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905), pp. 109 and 132.

[33]Sparrow, *Women Painters*, p. 221.

[34]*Ibid.*, pp. 222-24.

[35]*Flora*, by Evelyn De Morgan, is reproduced in Sparrow, *Women Painters*, p. 91. Other works by this artist can be found in the same book, pp. 117 and 123.

[36]Alfred Werner, "Simeon Solomon: A Rediscovery," *Art and Artists*, 9 (January 1975), p. 7.

[37]Clayton, *Female Artists*, v. 2, p. 129.

[38]Reproductions of works by Eleanor Fortesque Brickdale can be found in Sparrow, *Women Artists*, pp. 73, 103, 114, 126, 141-42, and in Holme, *British Book Illustration*, pp. 158-59.

CHRONOLOGY

1829 25 July. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall born to Charles and Elizabeth Siddall in London.
Grows up receiving a meager education.

1849 By this date, was apprenticed in a milliner's shop, Cranbourne Alley, Leicester Square, London.
Discovered by Walter Deverell and modelled for him.

1850 Models for other Pre-Raphealites including William Holman Hunt and John Millais.
Meets Rossetti.

1851 End of the year. Siddal engaged to Rossetti.

1852 Begins drawing.
Health begins to decline.
First trip to Hastings.
Sits exclusively for Rossetti.

1853 Begins work on *We Are Seven, Self-Portrait, St. Agnes' Eve,* and *Lady of Shalott*

1854 Works on *Sister Helen, Clerk Saunders* (and other ballads), and *Nativity.*
Returns to Hastings with Barbara Leigh Smith.
Is considered an invalid.
Ruskin's wife files for an annulment.
Meets the Howitts.
Sees Dr. Wilkinson.
Ill health takes its toll; Ford Madox Brown writes of her looking "deathlike".

1855 January. Reworks *We Are Seven* and designs *La Belle Dame Sans Merci.* Health poor.
March. The Tennysons learn of Siddal's work.
April. Ruskin buys all of Siddal's drawings and offers a pension of 150 pounds a year.
Summer. Ruskin encourages marriage of Siddal and Rossetti.
Siddal plans to travel to Paris in the winter.
July. Goes to Oxford to see Dr. Acland and works on architectural designs for Benjamin Woodward.
September. Leaves for France.
November. Meets Browning in Paris after he has seen her design for *Pippa Passes.* Rossetti visits her.
December. Goes to Nice.

1856 Spring. Rossetti misses Siddal who is still in France. Ruskin's enthusiasm fades as Siddal asserts herself. Her health declines. Rumours again of Siddal-Rossetti engagement.
May. Works on the watercolour version of *Clerk Saunders*.
December. Ill again. Barbara Smith suggests a trip to Algeria. Works on *Sister Helen*.

1857 Spring. Siddal and Rossetti split up. She visits relatives in Sheffield.
June. Gives up her pension from Ruskin.
July. Exhibits several works on the Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition, held in London. Later, the exhibit travelled to the U.S.
August-November. Rossetti in Oxford working on the Oxford Union Murals.
November. Ill health forces her to Matlock for the hydropathic cure. Later joined by Rossetti.

1858 Until 1860. Many problems in the Siddal-Rossetti relationship.

1860 Taking laudanum regularly.
23 May. Marries Rossetti in Hastings.
Honeymoon in Boulonge and Paris.
Summer. Goes to Brighton.
October. Visits William and Jane Morris at the Red House, Bexley Heath.
Become friends with Swinburne.

1861 Friends with Georgiana Burne-Jones.
2 May. Gives birth to a stillborn girl. Later tries to adopt.
June. Goes to Red House to recover.
October. Deep depression.

1862 Is a confirmed invalid.
10 February. Dines with Rossetti and Swinburne. Later in the evening takes a large quantity of laudanum.
11 February. Dies in the early morning.
12 February. Inquest held, decides "accidental death".
17 February. Buried at Highgate Cemetery with Rossetti's manuscript of poems in her casket.

1864 Rossetti completes *Beata Beatrix*, begun while Siddal was alive.

1869 Exhumation of Siddal's grave to reclaim Rossetti's manuscript.

1870 Rossetti's poems published as "The Siddal Edition".

1. Walter Howard Deverell, *Twelfth Night*, 1850, 40¼"x52½", oil.

2. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Self-Portrait*, 1853-54, 9" maximum, oil on canvas.

3. Anonymous photographer, *Elizabeth Siddal*, c. 1860, size unknown, Private Collection.

4. John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52, 30"x40", oil.

5. William Morris, *Study of Jane Burden*, c. 1857, size unknown, Private Collection.

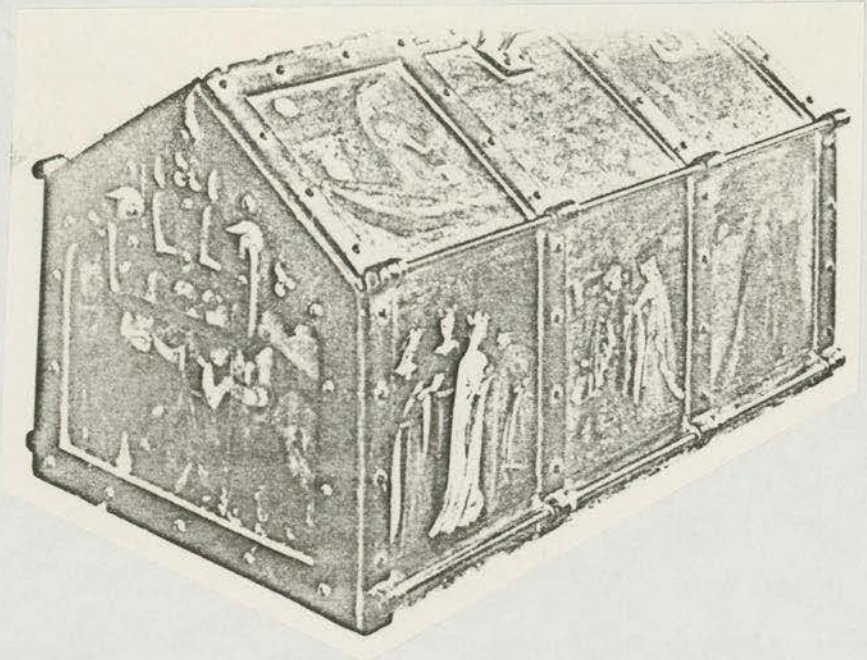
6. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Beata Beatrix*, 1864, 34"x26", oil.

7. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Quest of the Holy Grail*, c. 1855, 11"x9 3/4", watercolour.

8. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Lady Affixing a Pennant to a Knight's Spear*, n.d., 14.3 cm x 14.1 cm, watercolour. Courtesy of the Tate Gallery, London.

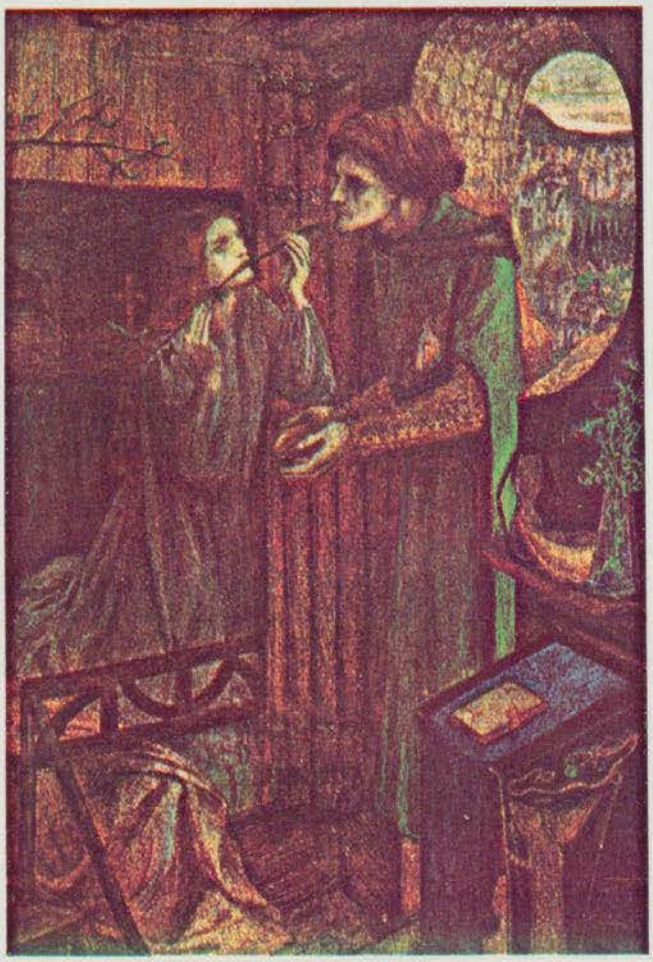
9. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Woeful Victory*, n.d., size and medium unknown.

10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Chapel Before the Lists*, 1857-64, 15½"x16¼', watercolour.



11. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Jewel Box*, n.d., approximately 6" high, oil on wood.

12. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Maids of Elfenmere*, 1854, woodcut.

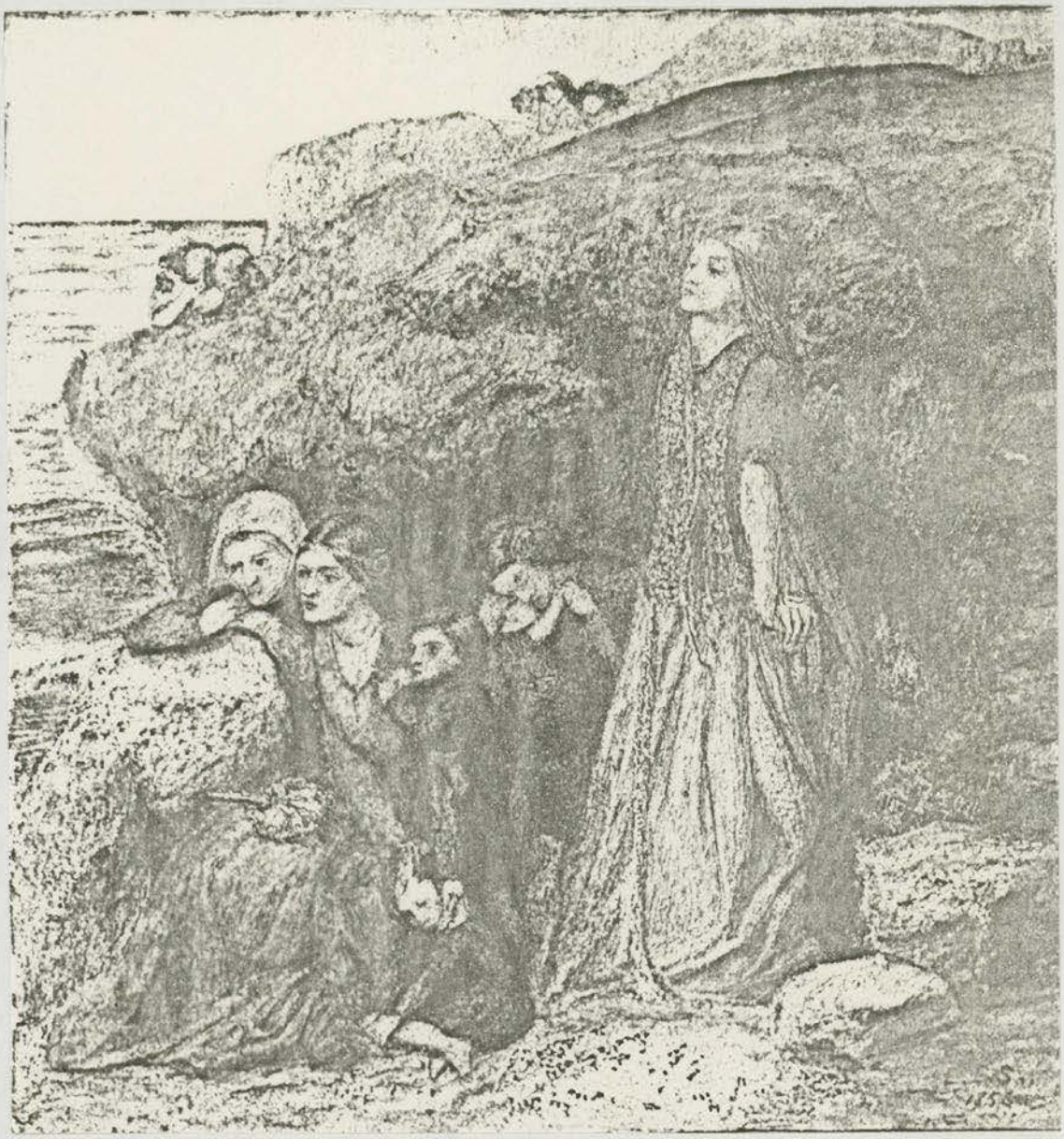


13. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Clerk Saunders*, 1857, 11 3/16"x7 1/8", watercolour, gouache, and coloured chalks on paper.

14. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Tune of Seven Towers*, 1857, 12 3/8"x14 3/8", watercolour.

15. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Ballad of Fair Annie*, c. 1855, 5 3/4"x6½", pen and ink over sketch in black chalk.

16. Edward Burne-Jones, *Troilus and Criseyde*, n.d., size unknown, woodcut.



17. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Sir Patrick Spens*, 1856, 23.2 cm x 21.9 cm, watercolour. Courtesy of the Tate Gallery, London.

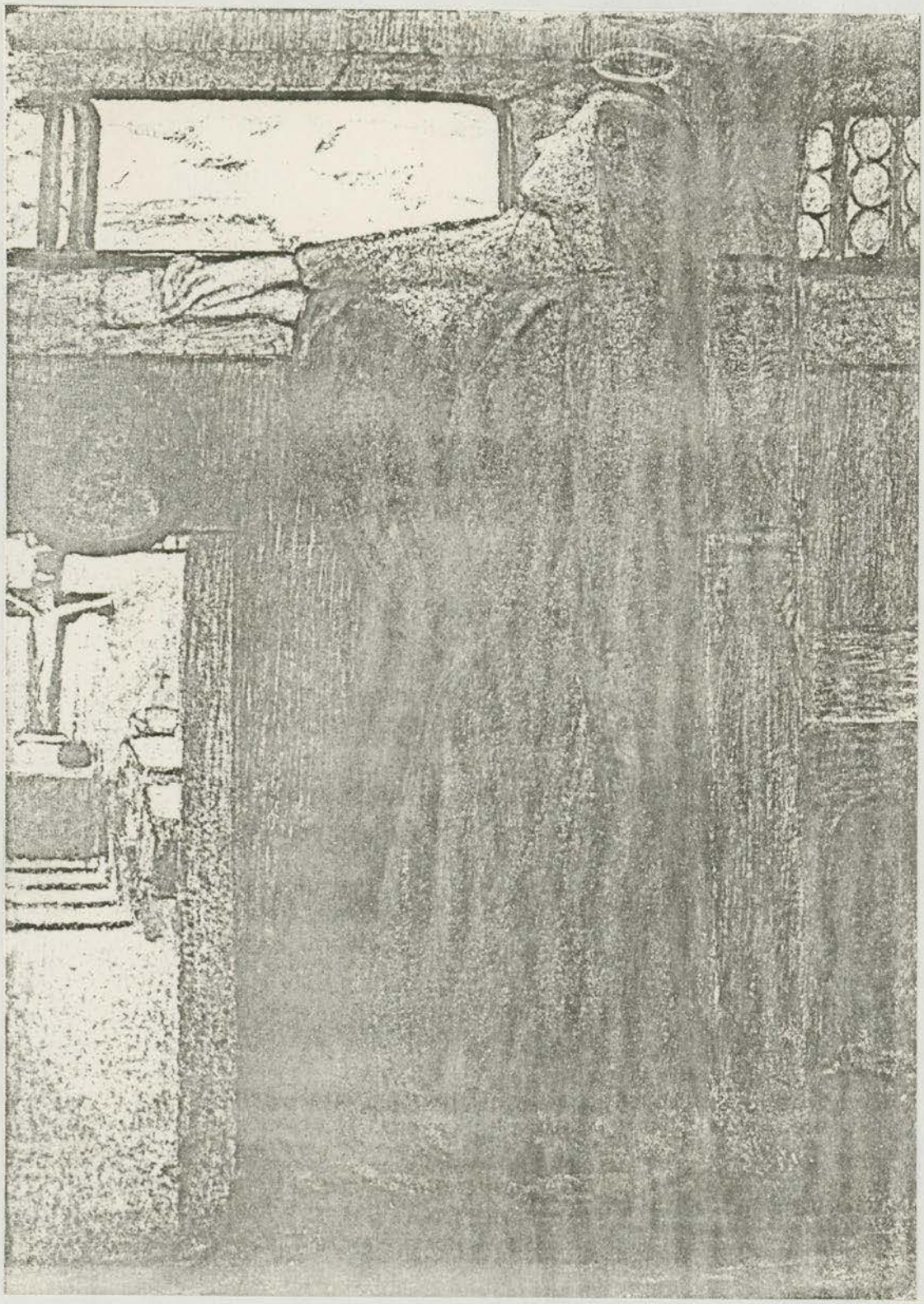
18. Arthur Hughes, *Home from the Sea*, 1863, 20"x25 3/4", oil on panel.

19. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Dante Rossetti Sitting to Miss Siddal*, 1853, 4¼"x6 9/16", pen and brown ink on writing paper.

20. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *St. Cecilia*, c. 1856, size unknown, pencil on paper. Courtesy of Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton.

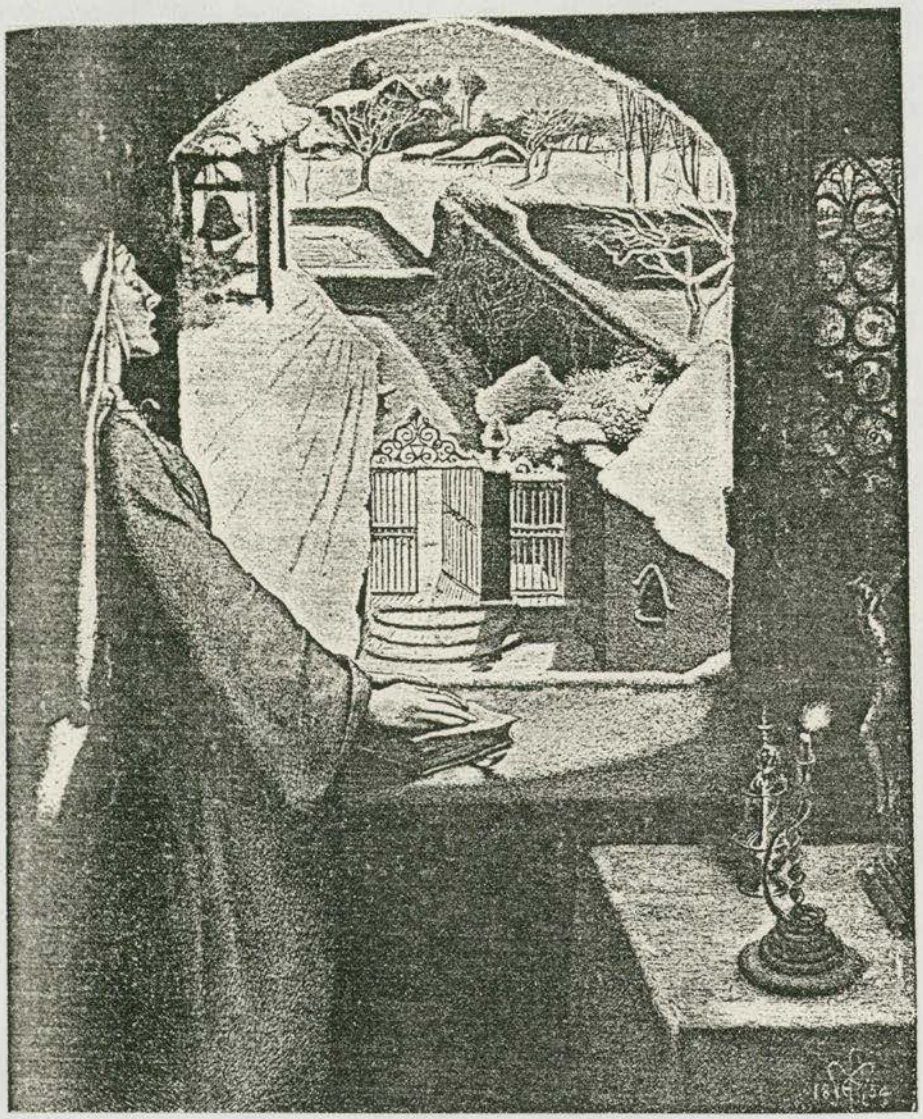
21. Lucas Van Leyden, *St. Cecilia*, n.d., size and medium unknown.

22. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *St. Cecilia*, 1857, woodcut.



23. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *St. Agnes' Eve*, 1853, 6½"x4 3/4", gouache. Courtesy of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

24. John Everett Millais, *St. Agnes' Eve*, 1857, woodcut.



25. John Everett Millais, *St. Agnes' Eve*, 1854, 9 3/4"x8¼", pen and sepia and blue-green ink.

26. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Lady of Shalott*, 1853, 7 3/4"x9 3/4", pen and ink. Courtesy of the J.S. Maas Gallery, London.

27. William Holman Hunt, *Lady of Shalott*, (trial sketch), n.d., size and medium unknown.

28. William Holman Hunt, *Lady of Shalott*, c. 1856-57, 9¼"x5 5/8", pen and ink and black chalk.

29. William Holman Hunt, *Lady of Shalott*, 1857, woodcut.

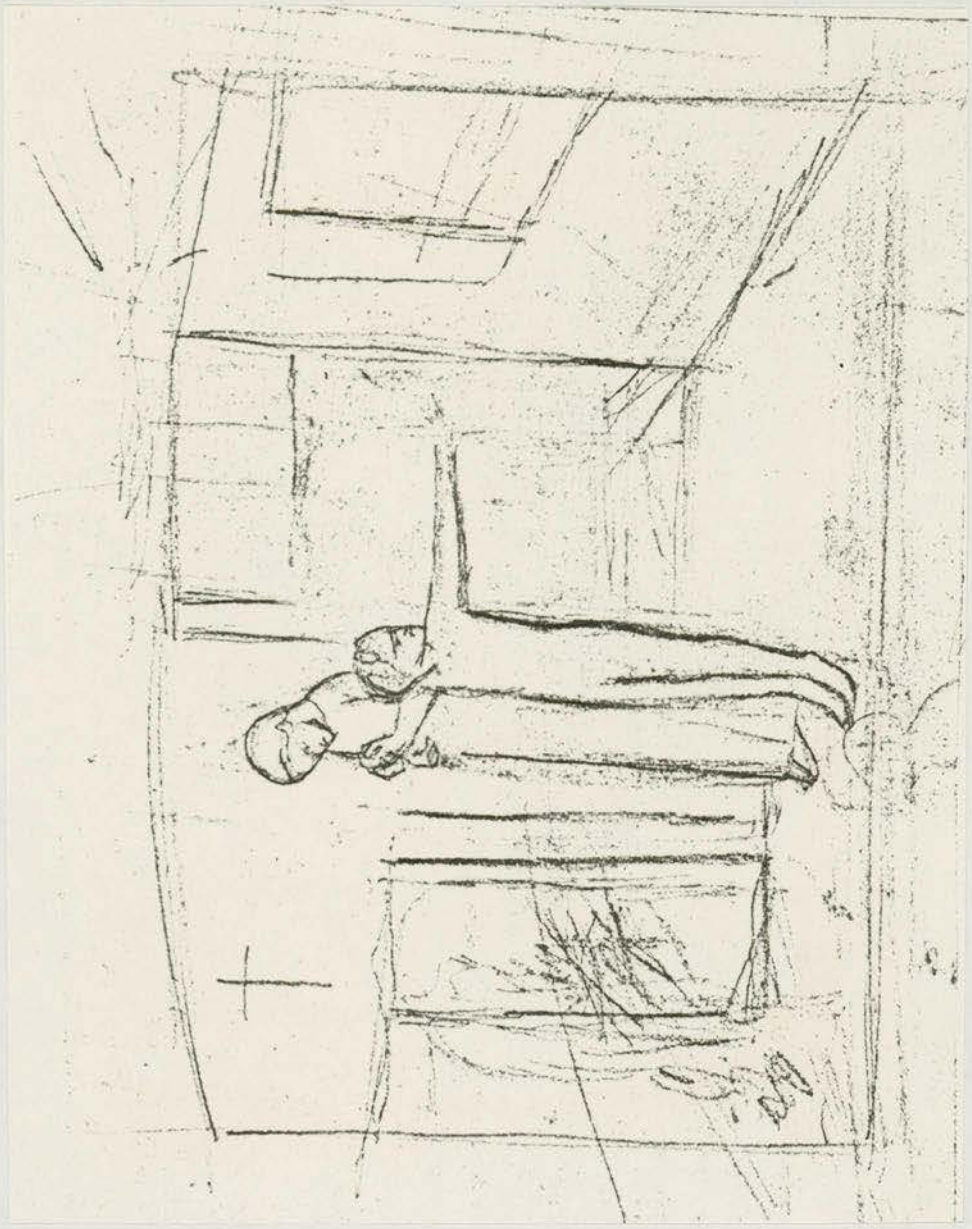
30. George Du Maurier, *A Legend of Camelot*, 1866, woodcut.

31. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Lady Clare*, 1857, 15¼"x10", watercolour.

32. John Everett Millais, *Mariana*, 1851, 23½"x19½", oil on panel.

33. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Jephthah's Daughter*, n.d., 8 11/14" x 5 3/8", pencil on paper. Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

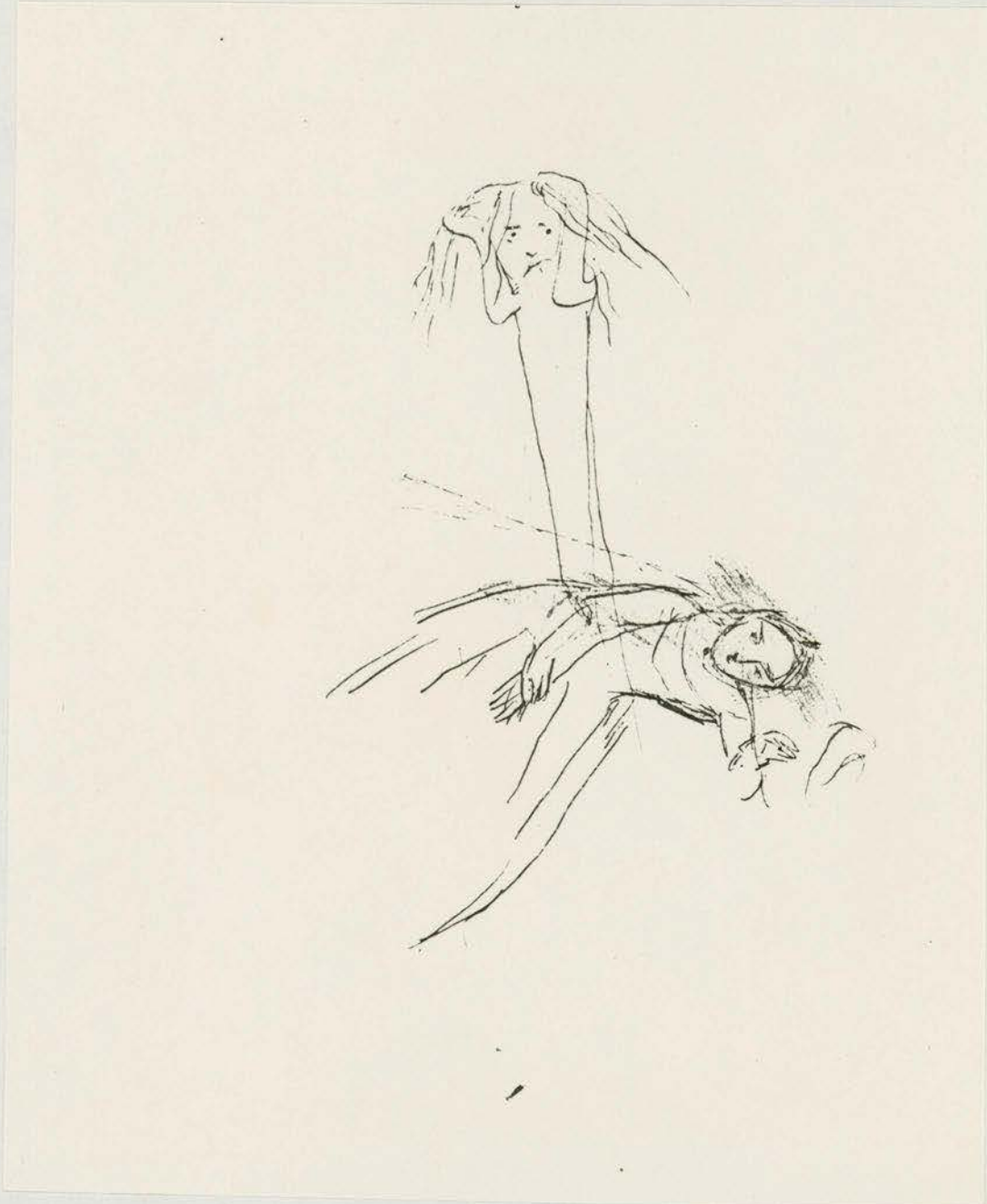
34. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Pippa Passes*, 1854, 21 cm x 27.6 cm, pen and wash.



35. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Sister Helen*, n.d., approximately 4"x6", pencil on paper. Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

36. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Sister Helen*, ?c. 1870, 8½"x6½", pencil and ink on paper.

37. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *The Haunted Wood*, 1856, 4 3/4" x 4 3/8", gouache. Courtesy of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.



38. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Woman and Spectre*, n.d., approximately 8"x6", pencil on paper. Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

39. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Two Lovers Listening to Girls Playing a Dulcimer*, n.d., 8¼"x9 3/8", pencil on paper. Courtesy of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

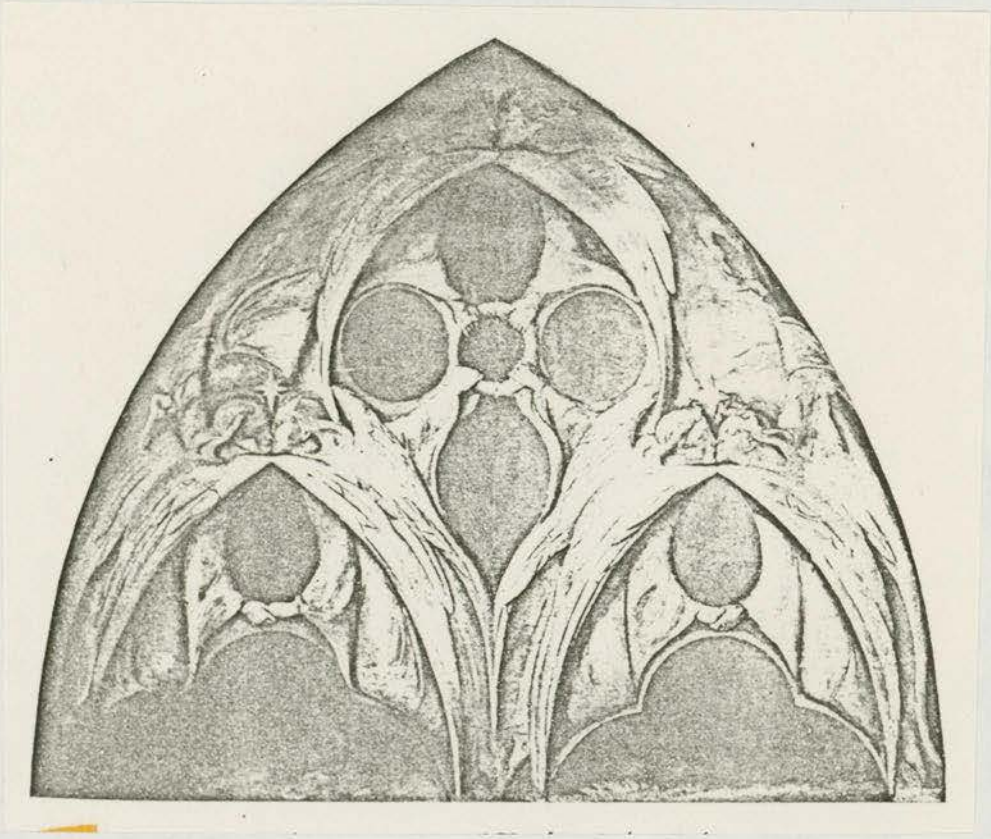
40. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Madonna and Child*, n.d., approximately 8"x4", watercolour. Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

41. William Holman Hunt, *Shadow of Death*, 1873, 36½" x 28 3/4", oil on canvas.

42. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Holy Family*, n.d., 7 7/8"x 6½", watercolour. Courtesy of the Delaware Art Gallery, Wilmington, Delaware.

43. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Angel With Cymbals*, c. 1855, 7"x9", pencil on paper.

44. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, *Design for A Capital*, date, size, and medium unknown.



45. John Everett Millais, *Design for a Gothic Window*, 1853, 84"x109", charcoal and sepia wash on paper, mounted on canvas.

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