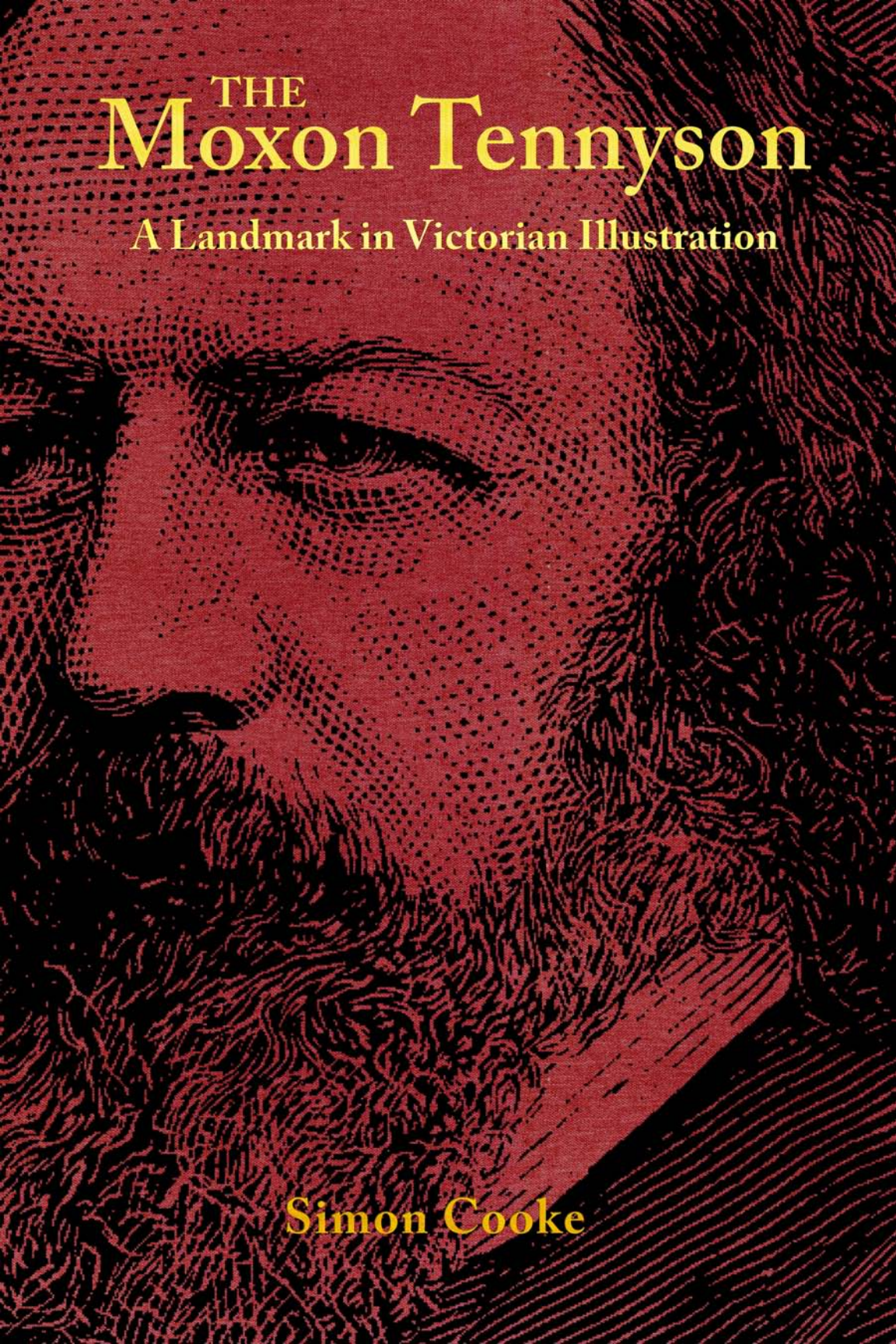

# THE Moxon Tennyson

## A Landmark in Victorian Illustration

Simon Cooke

THE MOXON

TENNYSON

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# THE Moxon Tennyson

## A Landmark in Victorian Illustration

**Simon Cooke**

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In loving memory of

Mark Hinchliffe

*Poet, collector, lifelong friend*

These woodcuts will be of much
use in making people think
and puzzle a little.

—*John Ruskin*

# Contents

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# Acknowledgments

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THE MOXON

TENNYSON

Thomas Woolner, frontispiece of the Moxon Tennyson, 1856.
Diameter 101 mm. The original bas-relief medallion was
carved in marble; engraved version by H. Robinson.

# Introduction

*The Edition and the Critics*

As generations of critics have observed, Victorian illustration had a long and complicated history. More illustrated material was published than ever before, and the "bitextual" or "bimodal" text became the dominant publishing idiom.[1] In an age before television and film and with limited access to photography, the most convenient way to see visual information was in the pages of comic magazines such as *Punch* (1841), in the leaves of literary periodicals of the 1860s, in the serial parts of fiction by Dickens and Thackeray and their contemporaries, and in editions of illustrated poetry. Transmitted through the technologies of copper and steel-plate etching, wood engraving, and occasionally lithography, a wide-ranging imagery was made available to diverse audiences. Indeed, the conjunction of literature and visual art became the norm, converting readers into reader/viewers engaged in an intricate, intimate transaction with the printed page; the talents of a wide variety of artists were employed and intermedial texts underwent a series of changes while still contributing to a recognizable canon.[2] Mapping this tradition is problematic, and several alternative pathways have been traced through a corpus of work that includes the luxury imprints of Morris and Company at the Kelmscott Press, wood engravings of the "Golden Age" of the 1860s drawn by Millais and Sandys, the satires of Cruikshank and Phiz, and the bleak realism of Herkomer and Holl in *The Graphic*.

Taken as whole, with all of its multitudinous turns, the discourse labeled "Victorian illustration," essentially an updating of the eighteenth-century traditions of the "Sister Arts," is rich, complex, and contradictory. It defies a formulaic

reading, and its development was more like a flow of change than a series of discrete compartments. Nevertheless, several books and magazines can be identified as turning points, junctions where new directions are signaled. Two publications stand out. One is Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* (1837), visualized by Seymour and Phiz, which established the pictorial novel as a dynamic form; and the other is Beardsley's erotic treatment of Wilde's *Salomé* (1891).[3] The movement between these two, from scratchy narrative caricatures to the elegant arabesques of Art Nouveau of the end of the century, is a measure of how much Victorian illustration had changed in a period of sixty years, moving from mass, commodified imagery for serialization to arcane designs for an esoteric elite. Yet in between these works is a third publication with an important role in the evolution of the discourse: the gift-book collection of reprinted poems known as the "Moxon" or "Illustrated Tennyson."[4] First published on May 25, 1857, by Edward Moxon as a slightly edited anthology of verse originally issued in 1842,[5] this challenging work, with its striking array of fifty-four fine engravings cut on wood, printed on luxurious glazed paper and bound in an elaborate cloth binding, is routinely described, in the words of Martin Hardie, as a "landmark in the history of book illustration."[6]

The Moxon Tennyson has always been the subject of critical scrutiny and analysis, and its claim to fame is both multifaceted and in many ways curiously unsatisfying. Its principal importance, according to critical orthodoxy, is its promotion of Pre-Raphaelite illustration. Although Maclise, Horsley, Mulready, Creswick, and Stanfield provided almost half (twenty-four) of the total montage, it was only in this edition that Rossetti, Holman Hunt, and Millais were brought together. Most critics have argued that their presence set new standards; often called the "Pre-Raffaelite Tennyson,"[7] the book is anatomized in terms of its revolutionary approach, lauding the Pre-Raphaelites as radicals who changed illustration as they had changed painting a decade earlier. It is more generally regarded as the first important work in the style of illustration known as "the Sixties," anticipating the poetic naturalism of Sandys, Du Maurier, and Keene,[8] while clearing the way for the artist's new role as a coauthor in the production of meaning, rather than a secondary talent: the start, Walter Crane observes, of a "new epoch."[9] As Gleeson White remarks, writing at the end of the century with the advantage of hindsight, "The whole modern school . . . regard it rightly enough as the genesis of the modern movement."[10] But much remains unsaid, unknown, or simply misunderstood; though it is one of the best-known publications of the century, criticism is often repetitive and overdependent on previous interpretations. An intervention, I believe, is needed.

The key issue is the question of the Pre-Raphaelites' dominance, which is always made at the expense of the other contributors. Victorian analysis focused exclusively on this group of artists: G. S. Layard's slim volume of 1894, *Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators,* is almost entirely concerned with the work of the three Brethren; while the only recent critic to consider the book more inclusively is Lorraine Janzen Kooistra. In her wide-ranging and penetrating analysis of the Victorian gift book (2011), Kooistra offers a series of readings which explore the contribution of the non-Pre-Raphaelites and the ways in which Romantic illustrators, exemplified by Stanfield, struggled to visualize both lyric and narrative poetry. Revealing many new ways of reading the interactions of visual and verbal texts, she does much to rehabilitate these artists' efforts and offers several insightful readings. Yet she does not consider them at length, and maintains the traditional view of the Pre-Raphaelites' hegemony.[11]

The aim of this inquiry, by contrast, is to modernize analysis of the Moxon Tennyson by reading it not only as a showcase for Pre-Raphaelite design but as a book illustrated by eight, rather than three, artists, exploring the work of Maclise, Mulready, Clarkson Stanfield, Creswick, and Horsley on *equal terms* with the contributions of Rossetti, Millais, and Holman Hunt. These contributors are read as copartners in visualizing the book's meanings, and I further consider the significance of the other participants in this process of making—the engravers, the publisher, the binding designer, the technicians who produced the material object, and (of course) the author. In so doing, I draw on, and aim to advance, other recent readings, notably one by Jim Cheshire (2017), who studies the book in the continuum of Moxon's imprints, and another by Julia Thomas (2009), who places the work in the context of a long tradition of visualizing the poet's work as one response in a line that ultimately includes photography by Julia Margaret Cameron and narrative paintings. In particular, I aim to build on Kooistra's writing on the Moxon Tennyson in her extended *Branch* essay,[12] placing the tome in its historical moment. So this study—to borrow Layard's subtitle—is "a book about a book," the first since that writer's publication in the 1890s. Where, then, to begin? The Moxon Tennyson's complexity offers numerous points of entry, but the best place to start is by unraveling its history and focusing in detail on the development of criticism which views the *Poems* purely as an exemplar of Pre-Raphaelite design.

## THE BOOK AND ITS CRITICAL TRADITION

The Moxon Tennyson's history is well known, although it is not quite the case, as D. M. R. Bentley remarks in his recent study of Rossetti's designs, that it is so

well known as not to require any further explication.[13] In fact, the narrative as it currently stands is both well known and riven with misinformation. Some basic, contextual facts have to be clarified and others put in place.

The brainchild of Edward Moxon, Tennyson's usual publisher and the individual who had established the writer as a popular figure, the edition was projected as an illustrated gift book of the highest quality; produced at the end of the fifties when this type of publication, essentially a replacement for the illustrated annuals of the thirties and forties, was becoming popular, it aimed to exploit a growing market of middle-class readers and appeal as widely as possible to multiple audiences. Known popularly as the "poet's publisher,"[14] Moxon wanted to shape and generate markets as well as respond to them. For traditional tastes, he assembled a cast of well-noted names. William Mulready, John Callcott Horsley, Thomas Creswick, Frederick Clarkson Stanfield, and Daniel Maclise were all Royal Academicians, better known as painters than illustrators, although all of them had significant experience as graphic designers.[15] The Pre-Raphaelites, conversely, were still regarded as proponents of the avant-garde and appealed to the forward-thinking. Formerly members of the famous Brotherhood, which had revolutionized painting at the end of the 1840s, Millais, Rossetti, and Hunt were still in the process of building a reputation in the artistic mainstream and had only limited experience of illustration: Millais and Rossetti had published single designs in William Allingham's *The Music Master* (1855), and Holman Hunt had drawn an illustration for Thomas Woolner's "My Beautiful Lady" in the Pre-Raphaelites' short-lived journal *The Germ* (1850). The Moxon Tennyson was therefore a combination of expertise and relative inexperience, familiarity and novelty; nevertheless, the two sets of designers created fine drawings on wood, and invested heavily in making the best possible work. All of the images underwent extensive preparation in the form of preparatory drawings, many of which survive, and all of the contributors were committed to upholding the standards of fine art, a position epitomized by Mulready's insistence on expending the same amount of labor, or "pains," with an illustration as with a full-scale work in oil.[16] Neatly packaged in a binding displaying a neoclassical motif, this quality product was aimed at the aspirations of a bourgeois audience stabilizing its position after the political and social upheavals of the 1840s and intent on acquiring the cultural capital of high art as a sign of status and respectability. As Moxon intended, it presented itself as a fine artifact, a "little illustrative gallery" of painterly images for fireside consumption.[17]

However, the publication was far from seamless, and the effect has always been one of aesthetic unevenness, with two competing styles—Pre-Raphaelite

and non-Pre-Raphaelite—contending for dominance. The terms applied to this mismatch are remarkably uniform and extend from the end of the nineteenth century to the present. Reid (1928) describes the two schools as a grating opposition, only notable for creating a "hotch-potch";[18] Holman Hunt calls the book an "apple of discord" (1901);[19] Layard, a "bundle of splendid incongruities" (1894);[20] Burne-Jones, a "mixed pleasure" (1896);[21] Harris, "an odd amalgam" (1988);[22] Kooistra, a "mishmash of visual messages," a blatant piece of "book-cobbling" (2002);[23] and Engen, a "mixed bag" (1995).[24]

More especially, modern interpretations have focused on discriminating between the two sets of contributors. As noted in the section above, in scholarship of the last century or so the Moxon Tennyson's reputation is *almost entirely* based on extravagant praise for the Pre-Raphaelites' contribution—and contempt for the work of Maclise and the other academicians. The Pre-Raphaelites are viewed as better artists than the vilified others, positioned as part of a dichotomized construction in which the "old" and "new," the dynamic and moribund, the innovative and the conventional, are broadly opposed. In the opinion of Percy Muir (1971), for instance, the "new men" score "heavily all the time," creating a clear space between the purported shoddiness of Creswick's and Horsley's drawing and the "splendid" draftsmanship of the PRB.[25]

More important still is the question of the effectiveness of the illustrations *as* illustrations—as graphic images produced with the aim of enriching the text. Once again the Pre-Raphaelites are championed, with the imaginative qualities of Rossetti, Millais, and Holman Hunt contrasted with what is said to be the textual mirroring and replication in the work of the "older" artists. The Pre-Raphaelites are identified as the "innovators" and "interpreters," and the others as no more than slavish "illustrators" whose work depicts what was already inscribed in the poems' imagery. Writing in 1907, Martin Hardie observes that the "older men . . . clung to the older traditions; they picked out a piece of a poem and illustrated it with the same dogged fidelity and commonplace honesty with which they painted a patch of nature, [while the Pre-Raphaelites offered] a symbolic and interpretive art [which expressed] their own instinct and temperament."[26]

The Pre-Raphaelite illustrations for Tennyson are thus described as idiosyncratic readings of the poems which uncover new meanings, add new inflections, develop strata of implication, and generally extend the reader/viewer's experience of the verse. According to this line of reasoning, the Pre-Raphaelite part of the book represents a great improvement in the aesthetics of illustration while also defining a new, imaginative approach to the interpretation of the

verse, projecting a "new impulse,"[27] and transforming the literary source into "something rich and strange,"[28] well beyond the purely paratextual. Stein (1981), Vaughan (1988), Lewis (1997), and Suriano (2000) are all broadly of the same opinion; although their readings are more nuanced than most earlier accounts,[29] they still champion the Pre-Raphaelites' imagery as the *only* important element in book usually viewed as a "curate's egg,"[30] as if in Du Maurier's famous *Punch* cartoon, with the good bits being very good and the bad bits unappealing, or even distasteful.

Taken to the logical extreme, and bearing in mind Kooistra's commentary on some of the academicians, this approach deletes the non-Pre-Raphaelite designs from the record, physically removing them from sight. The Scolar edition (1976) reprints all of the designs, but the Freemantle album of 1901 reproduces only the imagery of the three favored illustrators—dismissing the others as worthless—and so does the Academy imprint of 1978. The work of the older designers is traditionally denigrated or erased, and we are left with a modern construction, a partial representation which accounts for only thirty of the fifty-four illustrations. In place of the original book, we have an abstraction, distorting the historical record and offering in its place an edited version.

But how did this situation arise? The notion of the Pre-Raphaelites' interpretive superiority is so often repeated that it has hardened into a dogma, and one hard to challenge. The Pre-Raphaelites, it seems, *must* be the greater artists. Vaughan sounds a cautionary note, observing how the "older artists were no less attentive" to the texts than the Pre-Raphaelites, insisting Maclise and company were "more sensitive to the tone and narrative" than their fêted counterparts.[31] The point is not developed, but it clearly refocuses attention on the need to challenge an orthodoxy which seems unassailable but is, in fact, a critical construct, a reflection of taste changing over time. Crucially, it has not always been the predominant view.

The idea of the Pre-Raphaelites as insightful interpreters was first established in the 1880s, when the painting of the original Brotherhood was part of the mainstream and the work of the second generation of Pre-Raphaelite artists, notably that of Burne-Jones and Waterhouse, was the dominant artistic idiom. This privileged position set the tone for criticism of Pre-Raphaelite book art; predictably, the impact of painting enhanced the reputation of the images printed in ink. Writing in 1882, William Sharp observes that Rossetti and his colleagues were the producers of "original creations" in the manner of fine art which did not illustrate, as such, but encapsulated the "spirit" of the text,[32] and this reading was further developed in the 1890s. Laurence Housman explains the situation in

his study of Arthur Boyd Houghton (1896), noting how "the illustrations of the pre-Raphaelites were personal and intellectual readings of the poems to which they belonged, were not merely echoes in line of the words of the text. Often they were the successful summing up of the drift of an entire poem within the space of a single picture."[33]

Moreover, this opinion extensively recurs in reviews and reflections, with George Du Maurier offering a typical opinion in his self-reflective analysis of his own practice, "The Illustrating of Books from the Serious Artist's Point of View" (1890). Pre-Raphaelite illustration, he claims, is a vigorous form, extending the poet's meanings through a series of unpredictable insights and new understandings. Du Maurier and Housman are unambiguous in their advocacy, and both had a vested interest: heavily influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite approach, their own illustrations are interpretive rather than illustrative. As Du Maurier explains of his own work, "Sometimes . . . an other's [*sic*] idea lets loose the fountain of one's own originality [and the text becomes] a theme or motif for endless contrapuntal additions and variations, and fugues, and unforeseen embellishments."[34]

The inspiration for this approach came from the Moxon Tennyson, but Housman and Du Maurier were directly influenced by Rossetti's oft-quoted claim, writing to William Allingham, that the role of the illustrator was to "allegorize on one's own hook on the subject of the poem, without killing for one's self and everyone a distinct idea of the poet's."[35] Indeed, using the text as a "hint and an opportunity"[36] for Rossetti's own inventions became by the nineties a mantra—a strategy empowering the artist and superseding the older model of the forties and fifties, in which the illustrator was still regarded as very much the writer's servant and bound, at least in principle (and sometimes challenged, as in the case of the relationship between Dickens and Phiz) to re-create in a visual form the author's messages.

If we move to the book's own period, however, the approach to illustration is far more nuanced, with extensive, thoughtful reviews appearing in *The Art-Journal, The Westminster Review, The British Quarterly Review, The Examiner, Fraser's Magazine,* and a number of daily newspapers. Although there are grumbles about draftsmanship, there is no differentiation of the two sets of illustrations as readings of the text, with critics detecting both strengths and weaknesses: sometimes the illustration is read as a mirror image of the text, sometimes it is seen as interpretive, adding provocative extra dimensions of thought, and sometimes it is judged to be at odds with its literary source.

The older artists (with the exception of Horsley) are praised for the sensitivity of their readings, which privilege the tonalities of Tennyson's verse. Creswick is hailed as a nature poet, a landscape artist to match the writer's ruralism; Maclise is singled out for his depiction of the heroic "attitudes" and feelings of "sorrow" in "Morte d'Arthur";[37] and Mulready is admired for his catching of "pathos" in "The Deserted House" and for his re-creation of Tennyson's humor in 'The Goose."[38] The Pre-Raphaelites also gain plaudits for their capturing of the poems' emotional tone and ambience. Rossetti's illustrations are praised for their deeply felt responses to the text while displaying "originality of thought,"[39] while Millais's "Mariana" is eulogized for its extreme emotionalism, managing to present in a frame of "extreme simplicity" the writer's "sense of utter desolation."[40] Holman Hunt's sensuous design for "The Arabian Nights" is highlighted for capturing the poem's "dreamy" tone, and the same artist gains credit for the his visualization of Godiva's "great dignity and beauty."[41]

On the other hand, the lack of correspondence between the text and the engravings is a serious issue, and one which complicates responses to all of the artists. Writing in *The Times,* Samuel Lucas, yet to become the editor of *Once a Week* and an influential critic of illustration, voices a prevailing complaint: "The most common defect [of books such as the Moxon Tennyson] is the extent to which [the artists fail to] give the best possible thought or attention to the text. It really is extraordinary to what an extent they can mistake or contradict the meaning of the author confided to them."[42]

Lucas goes on to critique Maclise's illustrations, which are supposedly ill-matched with the text, and other reviewers were quick to focus on this incongruity. Rossetti and Holman Hunt are condemned as the worst culprits. *The Art-Journal* finds that Rossetti's "Sir Galahad," though "vigorous and effective," bears no relationship to its poem: "as far as we can make out," it lacks "the slightest reference to any descriptive line it professes to illustrate."[43] Similarly, there is agreement as to what constitutes the *worst* match with the texts. Of all the illustrators, Horsley is the least highly regarded—setting him up as the book's weakest artist and establishing a reputation which, I shall argue later, deserves to be rescued. But he was not alone in bearing the brunt of some vituperative commentary. Two Pre-Raphaelite designs are singled out by several reviewers for condemnation: Rossetti's "St Cecily" and Holman Hunt's "The Lady of Shalott." Each of these is considered an extravagant piece of riddle-making. Writing of Rossetti's design, the *Quarterly* can only detect a baffling absurdity, a "grievous mistake" of bad drawing with no linkage with the verse. The artist, the reviewer complains, has completely

missed the point, showing the saint "in the midst of her playing. . . . She has lost her balance, and is supported by a figure intended for an angel [who boasts] a peruke much disordered [and seemingly] biting a piece of out of her forehead."[44]

Holman Hunt's illustration is similarly ridiculed as a "child's scribble," an arabesque of a swirling hair in "imitation of a spider's web . . . totally unreal and impossible [and] wound about her figure without aim or meaning . . . [hair] that violates so flagrantly the laws of gravitation [that it makes us think] Is there some profound significance in this? Or is it a mere flourish?"[45]

This illustration baffled Tennyson, and as far as the reviewers were concerned it went beyond both illustration and interpretation. Such images, *Fraser's* complains, do not "harmonize with, or throw light, upon the book"; instead, they become an "impertinence,"[46] a challenge to the author's authority.

## ILLUSTRATION/INTERPRETATION

So criticism of the end of the century was decidedly at odds with contemporary reviewers. Late Victorians championed the Pre-Raphaelites at the expense of the so-called traditionalists, but commentators of the book's own time, in the late fifties and early sixties, were far more even-handed in their judgments, with blame and praise being equally apportioned between the two sets of designs; instead of imposing a binary opposition between the interpretive and the purely illustrative, mid-Victorian critics assessed the designs individually, on a case-by-case basis. Their approach, in other words, is far more inclusive than later criticism, enabling us to see the effect of the book as whole rather than a series of divisions.

It is time, I believe, to reinstate this organic model and use it as a means of studying the engravings as a whole, with both sets of artists being viewed as illustrators and interpreters. Indeed, it is pertinent here to justify this critical position by interrogating the long-established division of the "literal" and "interpretive" design: the early reviewers insist that all of the artists used both techniques, and close investigation of a range of images shows there are many overlaps and similarities between them. A good place to start is to by comparing two examples of a mood piece: Millais's design for "Mariana" (fig. I.1) and Mulready's "The Deserted House" (fig. I.2).

According to the long-established reading of the book, the first should be interpretive and the second purely a mirror of the text, replicating its detail. "Mariana" is certainly an imaginative response which edits, reorientates, and

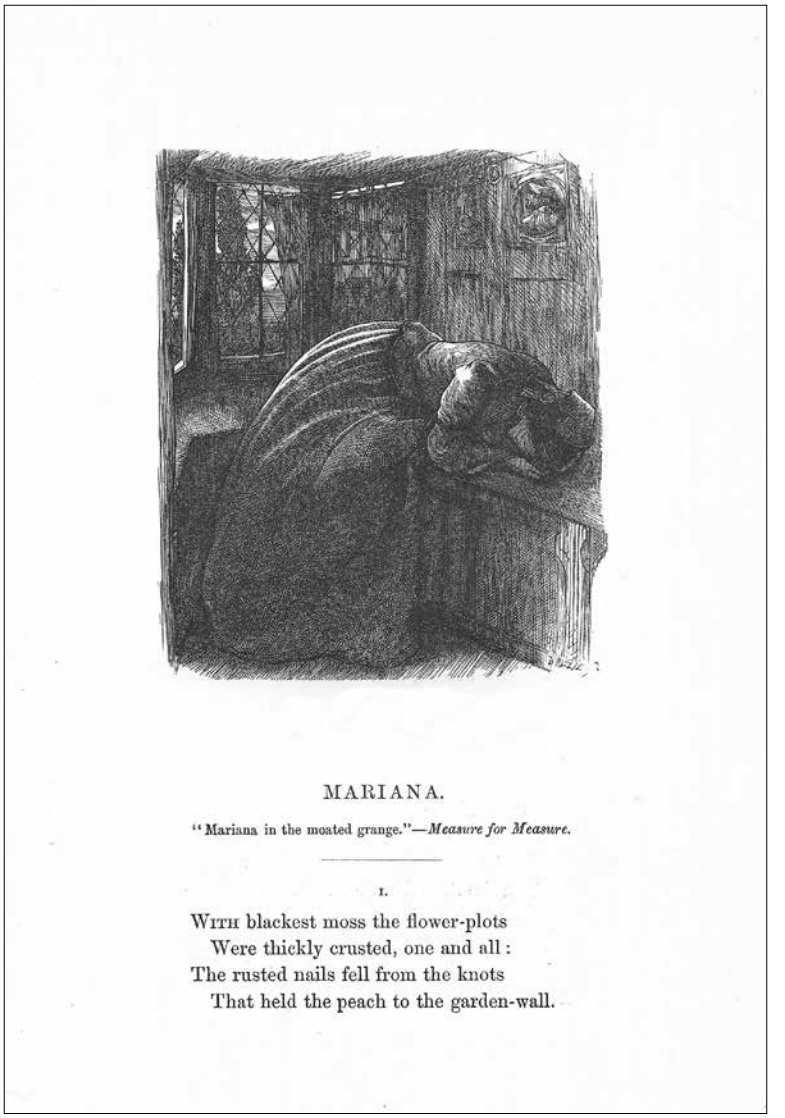



FIGURE I.1. John Everett Millais, "Mariana." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 94 × 78 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 7.

extends the textual information. It shows the moment when the sun is sinking in the "western bower" (10) in accordance with the text, but it does not include any other physical detail; at the same time, it epitomizes the character's despair in a melodramatic pose absent from the writing. The illustration is in this sense a visual gloss, an interpretation which visualizes the poem's emotionalism without re-representing specific information; and, if we follow the usual argument that Pre-Raphaelites are interpreters and the others simply illustrators, it should be entirely different from Mulready's design.

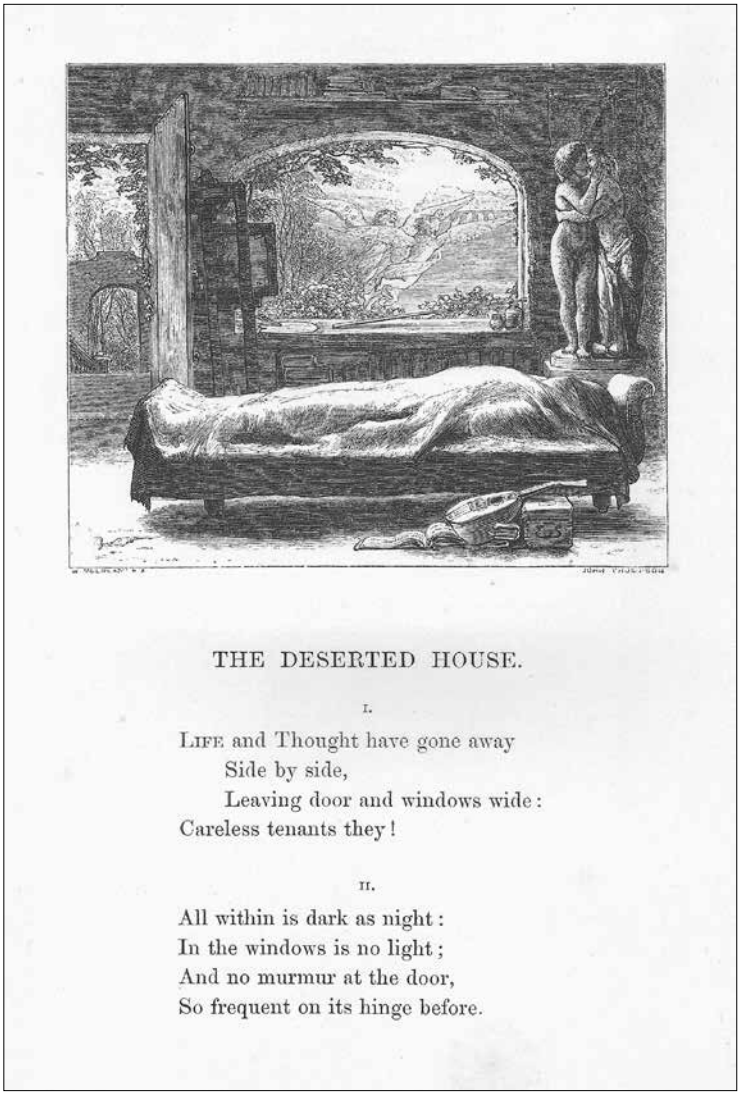



FIGURE I.2. William Mulready, "The Deserted House." Engraved by John Thompson, 81 × 97 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 43.

When we turn to this image, however, we find that Mulready is far from being a prosaic artist of "commonplace honesty,"[47] but is just as imaginative in his approach to the text as Millais. The poem describes the house as a dim zone where "Life and Thought / Here no longer dwell" (44); but Mulready encapsulates the atmosphere by making his own invention, entirely missing from the verse, in the form of a shrouded body. Far from being radically different from each other, the two artists thus adopt parallel interpretive strategies: Millais presents Mariana's gesture as a sign of frustration and despair, and Mulready creates

a distinct visual equivalent to literary implication. The two artists are also alike in their creation of a suitable setting, which acts as a psychological metaphor. Millais's room is a cramped enclosure, physically pressing in on the figure as light breaks in through the limited perspective of a window, while Mulready's deserted house is inhabited not with human life but with the emblems of a life's achievements—a painter's palette, a neoclassical sculpture of embracing figures, the tokens of love and romance, a mandolin and a traveler's box. These are the signifiers of "Life and Thought," "mirth and merry-making" (43–44), but all of them are the artist's and not the poet's inventions.

The parallelism between the approaches suggests that the binary model collapses under close scrutiny, and there are many other examples of the Pre-Raphaelites and the putative traditionalists working in a shared idiom which moves between illustration and interpretation in a single design. The Arthurian illustrations of Rossetti and Maclise (figs. I.3, I.4) epitomize this creative merging. Both respond to specific textual information. Rossetti visualizes a stanza from "The Palace of Art":

> Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
> In some fair space of sloping greens
> Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
> And watch'd by weeping queens. (118)

and Maclise responds to the passage in "Morte' d'Arthur" where the "dusky barge" (197) carries the king to the afterlife:

> That all the decks were dense with stately forms
> Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
> Three Queens, with crowns of gold—and from them rose
> A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars
> And, as it were one voice, an agony
> Of lamentation. (198)

These lines provide distinct, imagistic details for the artists to work with, and both provide efficient illustrations, anchored in, and respectful to, their texts. Rossetti visualizes the "weeping queens" in a group surrounding the supine king, with the "sloping greens" presented as a verdant mass of flowers, while Maclise pays close attention to the setting of "tingling stars" and the "full-breasted swan" of the ship's figurehead.

However, the artists also distort their images in order to convey a powerful sense of grief, making them interpretive in very similar ways. Richard Stein insists the Pre-Raphaelite emphasis on the psychological differentiates the work of

FIGURE I.3. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, second illustration for "The Palace of Art" ("The Weeping Queens"). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 80 × 93 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 119.

FIGURE I.4. Daniel Maclise, "Morte d'Arthur." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 120 × 93 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 199.

Rossetti from that of Maclise and the others,[48] but the comparison made here suggests there is little difference. Praised in the contemporary press, both artists focus the emotional charge of the closely knit embrace. In Rossetti's design the "weeping queens" (118) become a cluster of ten figures, with six identical faces (probably Elizabeth Siddal's) surrounding the dying king, linked by a nexus of gazing looks and gestures of grief; and in Maclise's the monarch is embraced by one of the "Three Queens" (198), who leans tenderly over him. The keening gestures of hands positioned against faces likewise figure in his design, the signs of overwhelming emotion. Posture and pose are therein deployed by both artists as a means of highlighting the obsessive emotionalism, magnifying Tennyson's emphasis on grief to the point of hallucinatory dreaminess.

Space and detail further contribute to the effect. In Rossetti's design the claustrophobic crowding of the surface, with its rhythms of faces and crowns, is pathologically intense; in the words of one reviewer, "it takes some time to separate . . . the head and helmet of Arthur from the arms, and hands, and dresses crowded around him,"[49] the perfect formulation of an all-absorbing sadness which draws the viewer into the circle as s/he struggles to make sense of the arrangement. The crowding of figures into an impossibly small space is likewise Maclise's approach, and here, as in Rossetti's illustration, the physical proximity of the figures becomes a visual metaphor, as if they were literally unwilling to let him go. The closeness of the moment, emotionally speaking, is given a final touch in the deployment of the horizons. In the "Weeping Queens" the background is compressed into a tiny space, and in Maclise's illustration the sail, echoed by the rounded shape of the top of the design, acts as a womblike, protective enclosure, a sign, I have argued elsewhere, of the idea that Arthur will be born again.[50]

Gesture, the replication of detail, and emotionally charged space are used, then, as a means to illustrate and interpret the source material. Rossetti approaches the lines in his brother's terms as an interpretive "hint" and "opportunity";[51] Maclise does the same, and so do Millais and Mulready. Though divided into old and new, illustrators and interpreters, traditionalists and revolutionaries, a close inspection reveals very negligible difference between them.

## NEW APPROACHES

So illustrations to the Moxon Tennyson are more harmonious and integrated, I suggest, than is so often claimed. The Moxon Tennyson, Thomas observes, has always been "contentious";[52] yet if we remove the pointless binaries of "old" and "new," "faithful to the text" and "purely imaginative," it is possible to achieve a more organic view. Released from earlier judgments, this study focuses on

the process of illustration as it is applied to the reading of the text, enabling the imagery of *all* the artists to be studied in detail in a series of thematic investigations.

One possible way of focusing aspects of the verse would be to follow the illustrators' own divisions, who, as we shall see in chapter 1, were free to make their own choices;[53] I might otherwise have divided the material along stylistic lines. However, to maintain my emphasis on the book's unities I have chosen to divide the chapters into a series of thematic nodes which underpin and characterize the selection of poems offered here, focusing on the underlying messages to which the artists responded and gave material form. These readings are framed by consideration of the writer's and artists' contexts as working professionals, the book's afterlife, its continuing interest to scholars and readers of today, and its commodification as a piece of Victorian (and modern) merchandising.

In chapter 1, I examine the book's cultural setting as a product of the mid-nineteenth century. As noted earlier, significant work has been done in this field: Kooistra, especially, has examined the book's publishing contexts and made specific connections between the text, technology, and events of 1857. This scholarship provides valuable information, but I widen the perspective to consider the book's emblematic status as a piece of capitalist publishing, produced in a series of artisanal and industrial collaborations, involving new technologies, and engaging the changing taste of its bourgeois consumers. Drawing on new material, I also trace the relationships between the illustrations and fine art, especially the deployment of preexisting painterly idioms.

Taking up on the theme of painterliness, I explore in chapter 2 the ways in which Tennyson's visuality is reinscribed in the accompanying designs. I consider in detail how the illustrators represented the poet's writing of time and analyze the visualization of landscape and its effects. These readings focus on the rural imagery of Stanfield and Creswick, the genre pieces of Horsley, and the poetic set pieces of Millais and Maclise.

In chapter 3 I examine the representation of the key Tennysonian themes of Englishness and modernity and how the artists navigated these concerns by deploying a series of semiologies to match, materialize, and interrogate the writer's ideas. I further trace the illustrators' registration of Tennysonian realism as a means of depicting the world of the everyday, focusing especially on the deployment of naturalistic gestures and Pre-Raphaelite verisimilitude. In chapter 4, in complete contrast, I explore the other side of Tennyson's modernity: his deployment of an apparently escapist mode to anatomize the psychological. In this chapter I trace the artists' manipulation of medievalist iconography and symbolic space as a coded means to create equivalents to the verse, focusing on

the intricate strategies of Rossetti, Millais, and Holman Hunt as they enhance and extend the implications of the poems.

The final theme is essentially a subtext. Taking up on clues inscribed in all of the poems, in chapter 5 I anatomize the visualization of gender as the illustrators negotiated the writer's troubled, ambivalent treatment of sexuality. This involves consideration of the Pre-Raphaelites' treatment of androgyny, the picturing of love and marriage, and the imaging of Tennyson's unstable versions of gender. I complete these readings with a chapter on the book's afterlife. This chapter links with chapter 1 to create an overall view of how the edition was received by diverse audiences, and how its meanings have changed over time.

Analyzing the illustrations as part of a whole as it operates in a series of contexts, I set out to provide a detailed evaluation of a work that despite its inconsistences has always been regarded, in the words of an anonymous reviewer in *The Athenaeum,* as "beautiful" and "splendid,"[54] a precious item to be valued by all. More recently, Kooistra has described it as a "particularly generative" text or "textual event,"[55] a complex, difficult piece that demands investigation. Its multiple meanings, generated in the interactions of words and illustrations as it engages with and is produced by a series of complex overlapping frameworks, are the subject of the following pages.

# 1

# The Making of the Book

*Contexts, Collaborations, and Clashes*

The Moxon Tennyson was a product of its time and can be framed in a number of mid-Victorian contexts. Created by Edward Moxon as an entrepreneurial venture with the specific aim of generating large profits, it was embedded in the developing tradition of capitalist publishing, based on the exploitation of the industrialized technologies of wood engraving, printing using the steam press, and models of distribution designed to reach out to large, pluralist, middle-class audiences. One of the first of the new generation of gift books to appear toward the end of the 1850s, it helped to define the genre's conventions and was a significant influence on the creation of the Dalziels' "Fine Art" publications of the sixties, defining their bimodality as well as their luxurious appearance.

These contexts, and their impact on the book's format, have been explored in some detail. Several critics have stressed its relationship to technological developments. Writing in 1901, the Dalziel brothers position it as an important work in the rise of wood engraving, boastfully claiming their role as intermediaries in the presentation of a superior imagery even though they engraved only fifteen of the fifty-four cuts; Engen, Wakeman, and Vaughan likewise place the tome as a significant player in what de Maré calls the "age of boxwood," and so does Kooistra, who dubs it, in the terms of Walter Benjamin, as a "mass-produced work of art in

the age of mechanical reproduction."[1] Other approaches have traced the book's relationship to contemporary publishing (Cheshire) and to the wider links between its imagery and the development of Victorian illustration (Suriano, Goldman, Hoffman).[2] Each of these makes specific and often suggestive connections, but the only commentator to take a wider perspective is Kooistra, who frames the Moxon Tennyson in the immediate context of 1857. As she explains, her

> essay re-positions the Moxon Tennyson as a textual event by reading it in the context of documentary, satiric, and artistic wood-engraved images selected from the crucial six-month period after its publication. By situating the Pre-Raphaelite illustrations for Tennyson's *Poems* in relation to representations in the public press of such disparate events as the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom Exhibition in Manchester, the reportage on Indian uprisings at Meerut and Cawnpore, the Matrimonial Causes Act, and the Christy Minstrels show in London, I aim to show the complex ways in which the Moxon Tennyson was a worldly event, caught up in, and contributing to, ways of seeing and knowing in 1857.[3]

Kooistra's approach is a major contribution to the understanding of contextual factors, reminding us how the book's "visual communication was expressed through its reproductive technology at the *historical moment* of its production and reception" (my italics).[4] Although she focuses in this piece entirely on the Pre-Raphaelites, her approach is important because it recognizes the multidimensionality of the cultural settings in which the publication signified. This methodology significantly extends the monolithic evaluations of other critics and points to the necessity of viewing the book as an artifact produced at the intersection of several overlapping contexts, rather than the singular frameworks suggested by linking it, for example, to wood engraving.

In this chapter I unpack the implications of Kooistra's methodology, focusing not on the immediate events of 1857 but on a series of cultural factors that influenced and sometimes determined the book's material form. Most important are the rise of intermediality and its manifestation in gift books; the ways in which the Moxon Tennyson was embedded in new publishing practices involving a complex network of collaborations; the relationships between the production of illustrations and the facilitating technology; and the connection between the designs and contemporary painting.

## VISUAL CULTURE, CAPITALISM, AND BUSINESS STRATEGIES: THE ROLE OF MOXON

The Moxon Tennyson made its first appearance in a period characterized, among other things, by the intersection of pictorial and literary art. In the middle years

of the nineteenth century, Thomas suggests in *Pictorial Victorians,* the Sister Arts coincided and were engaged in a complex dialogue: early and mid-Victorian painting illustrated literary subjects, and literature re-created the structures of visual art.[5] Ruskin argues in *Modern Painters* (1843) that painting, with its deployment of emblematic and iconographic schemes, was "nothing but a noble and expressive language,"[6] and literature of all genres aimed to re-create the pictorial effects of light, color, modeling, and space in the form of densely detailed descriptions. The differences between painting and literature were effectively elided, and it was commonplace in contemporary criticism to conflate and intermingle the two, using technical terms interchangeably: painters used iconographies of "signs and tokens,"[7] engaging their viewers in a hunt for signifiers and their meanings as if they were scanning written language, and writers such as Collins, Dickens, Eliot, and Tennyson were praised for their "coloring," "painting in words," "drawings," "sketches," and "compositions."[8]

This hybridity created a cultural context in which illustration could flourish. Produced to interpret the written word, it elucidated its subjects by converting them into visual signs while also signifying as an art form that demanded to be read. Pictorial material of all sorts embodied this bitextuality, focusing attention on the fluid, symbiotic movement between word and image, reading and looking, that became the central interpretive experience of the Victorian reader/viewer. The terms of this transaction became a given, and was serviced by the development of a vast illustrated literature extending from the serial novels of Dickens and Thackeray to the wood-engraved surfaces of *The Illustrated London News* (established 1842), *Punch* (1841), the periodicals of the 1860s, and the many luxurious plate books displaying comedy sketches or scenes from remote locales. If the discourse surrounding painting was limited to the wealthier middle classes, who could visit exhibitions, then illustrated novels and magazines enshrined the fashion for bitextuality in an accessible, inexpensive medium: for the first time, even the petit bourgeois could consume the hybrid text in the comfort of their homes.

It was the gift book, however, that most popularized the illustrated form. Developed in the mid-1850s as an updated version of the keepsake annuals of the 1830s and 1840s, they were notably influenced by French models of the period, those illustrated *livres romantique,* John Buchanan-Brown explains, which boasted "lavish illustration" and elaborate gilt-embossed liveries.[9] Following their exemplar, these British *cadeaux* of the fifties were typically in the form of a luxurious volume containing reprints of traditional or popular verse, embellished with fine engravings on wood, copper, or steel by contemporary artists and bound in an embossed cloth casing. All were sold relatively inexpensively for a middle-class

pocket at prices between five and ten shillings, and published in time for the yuletide season as an appealing present of visual delights; the gift book became the Christmas book, and was hugely popular. This flamboyant, imposing genre—in part literature, in part illustration, and in part nothing more than visual display for the parlor table—became the dominant form of pictorial literature, an idiom which allowed the bourgeois consumer to express his or her cultural capital.[10]

Viewed from the other end of the transaction, the gift book became a profitable genre, generating large returns for entrepreneurial publishers. Bogue, Kent, Strahan, and Bohn were early to exploit the idiom, although the leader of the field was George Routledge. According to the Dalziels, Routledge was a "strong-minded, clear-headed man of business,"[11] and he quickly became a specialist in this type of publication. All agreed there was money to be made, and the gift book became a dominant mode, a strong element in a commercial strategy, and a winning formula. Yet there were several publishers who had yet to benefit from its glamour.

One of them was Edward Moxon (1801–58).[12] In the early fifties Moxon was still enmeshed in the business of the thirties and forties; most of his editions were standard, unillustrated fare in plain casings and appealed to a minority audience by presenting classic and modern poets at a reasonable price. Moxon was a minor poet himself, and his catalogue included work by Tennyson, Rogers, Hood, Wordsworth, Keats, and others now largely forgotten. However, Moxon was keen to exploit the new taste for pictorial material. He had some experience in publishing illustrated material. He issued Samuel Rogers's two-volume *Italy* (1835), copublished with Cadell and later under his own imprint (1838), and the same author's *Poems* (1834), each with steel-plate etchings by Turner. Both had been successful, and in the early fifties Moxon wanted to build on the potential of this type of book. His initial attempt at breaking into the market was the first illustrated edition of Keats (1854), with 120 neoclassical wood engravings by George Scharf; though handsomely bound, the images were stilted and unimaginative, and did not achieve the required success.

What Moxon lacked, in the years 1850 to 1854, was a publication he could market as a gift book to complete with the luxurious imprints issued by his competitors. Disappointed by his edition of Keats, he conceived the idea of publishing an illustrated book to capitalize on the work of his prime asset: Tennyson. Moxon had published Tennyson's verse since the beginning of the 1830s, and it was logical he should choose the writer's work as an improved attempt at breaking into the already crowded field of picture books for Christmas. Tennyson's growing popularity was enhanced by his recent investiture as poet laureate (1850), and in issuing his work in an illustrated form—buttressing the appeal of established poems with

the attraction of contemporary designs—Moxon aimed to create a commercial blockbuster. Not only boasting the verse of the poet laureate, it was conceived as a gallery of the best artistic talent of the day, radically improving on Scharf's limited efforts, and as a better-made book than was typical; it is especially noticeable that the Moxon Tennyson is sewn rather than glued and is made up of more robust paper and boards than is usually the product norm. Writing to Emily Tennyson, Moxon noted how "neither labor nor expense" was spared in pursuing his new target.[13] Only familiar with the demands of a small elite, he reconfigured his business aims by producing a collection which would not only participate in the discourse of the illustrated gift book but would set new standards, appeal to a large audience, and become a market leader.

These, at least, were his intentions, and in the first instance Moxon approached the project with focus and vigor. He initiated the work in January 1854, visiting Tennyson with his proposal, and soon after agreed to reprint the poems from the edition of 1842. The next and most crucial decision was to select the most appropriate and most appealing artists, and both partners engaged in making this choice. According to Layard, Tennyson suggested Maclise and the Pre-Raphaelites, possibly on the advice of Ruskin, although he was already acquainted with Rossetti, Hunt, and Millais, by then a personal friend; while the others, Horsley, Mulready, Stanfield, and Creswick, were nominated by Moxon.[14] At first glance the combination of talents seems, as so many observers have noted, incongruous and disjointed, a "curious medley" of the avant-garde and the traditional;[15] but Moxon's strategy was always to unite these differing schools in order to appeal to the conservative *and* more radical elements in the readership. So often condemned as an accidental selection or as the product of incompetence, it is quite the reverse: faced with an unpredictable, heterogeneous audience of middle-class readers,[16] whose tastes extended from the emergent discourse of Sensationalism to a conservative interest in traditional poets such as Wordsworth and Cowper and were always changing in response to the latest consumer fad, the publisher set out to create a product, as Holman Hunt observes, to reach out to as many consumers as possible, "please all" and sell as many copies as possible.[17]

Indeed, Moxon's inclusive strategy was based on sound business principles which calculated the artists' relative appeal and capacity to generate sales within an unstable market. No documentation survives, but it is possible to reconstruct his reasoning. The Pre-Raphaelites must have been considered an asset because of their reputation as iconoclasts whose art, a decade after their first appearance, was still regarded as novel and challenging. Millais was chosen because he was regarded as one of the leading artists of the day and had already created unusual designs in the form of frontispieces for Wilkie Collins's *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* (1852)


FIGURE 1.1. John Everett Millais, frontispiece to John Anderson, *The Pleasures of Home.* Engraved by Thomas Williams, 131 × 90 mm (London: Arthur Hall, [1854]).

and John Anderson's *The Pleasures of Home* (1855, fig. 1.1). Holman Hunt, likewise, was selected for his reputation for visual outspokenness, an occasionally jarring quality embodied in his controversial painting of *The Awakening Conscience* (1853, fig. 1.7), the stimulus of vigorous debate. But most daring of all was Moxon's inclusion of Rossetti. This was a bold appeal to public curiosity bearing in mind Rossetti's reputation as a bohemian artist who no longer exhibited his paintings while generating interest in the art reviews and press.

Taken together, these talents were projected as the radicals in Moxon's star lineup, and he selected the other artists for their familiar expertise as both illustrators and painters. Maclise, a household name, was the dominant force in historical painting and one of Dickens's collaborators at work on his Christmas books of the forties; Creswick was the master of English landscapes, whose illustrations featured in *The Deserted Village* (1841); Stanfield's marine pictures had been both widely exhibited and issued in the form of engraved prints; and Mulready and Horsley, whose work had also been engraved, were stalwart experts in the field of narrative and genre, re-creating their homely imagery in a series of books for the Etching Club. All of these artists had considerable reputations, and all featured in the art literature of the time, with reproductions of their paintings and commentaries on their exhibited work appearing in the pages of *The Art-Journal* and the principal newspapers and periodicals, such as *The Literary Gazette* and *The Saturday Review.* Drawing together these names, both traditional and unusual, Moxon assembled an unparalleled cast of talent.

With this lineup in mind, he made final decisions embodying his notion of how the book should be set up. Far from unplanned in the business sense of the term, it was molded into a distinctive shape as a moneymaker, and it is noticeable that at this stage he rejected a number of alternatives as unsuitable. Landseer was briefly mooted in the press and may have been a candidate but was turned down, as was Ford Madox Brown. Despite Millais's attempts to persuade Moxon to enlist Brown[18] and Rossetti's to persuade him to employ both Brown and a "certain lady," his mistress Elizabeth Siddal,[19] the publisher made his choices on the basis of sound investment: Brown, unproven as an illustrator, was a risk (although he almost immediately produced a fine illustration for the rival *Poets of the Nineteenth Century*), and the untrained Siddal too weak to be an asset—a theme explored in more detail in appendix 1—even though Emily Tennyson, impressed by her scratchy amateur drawings, had offered to pay her fee.[20]

All of these decisions were taken by the middle of 1854, and visits were made to the artists' studios, accompanied by Tennyson, to make the proposal. At this stage Moxon deployed the easygoing manners that had earned him a reputation for fairness and good conduct, and by the end of the consultations three of the

academicians, Horsley, Mulready, and Creswick, had been signed up, with no written contracts, in a gentleman's agreement. Maclise, Rossetti, Holman Hunt, and Millais were contacted shortly afterwards along with the engravers, and at the close of 1854 all of the arrangements needed to create the book were in place; though generally unfamiliar with the world of art, Moxon achieved his aim of garnering the best available talent with surprising efficiency.[21]

His management of his illustrators was nevertheless variable and uneven, with only some elements reflecting a directive hand. With no assistance from the author, who was indifferent to the process, the publisher was contracted to take charge of the images, communicating his requirements, limited though they were, directly to the artists.[22] He seems to have had some control over the layout, stressing the need for visual impact. Though no documentation survives, he instructed the illustrators to produce proleptic and analeptic designs which would be positioned over the title to draw the reader into unfolding events and, in some of the poems, at the end or in the middle to act as a reflective focus on the text. These loosely figured demands inform the finished product: for example, Holman Hunt's "Godiva" (fig. 4.3) announces its heroic character in a three-quarters-length design, while Millais's second illustration for "Dora" (fig. 3.7) provides a smaller, more intimate reflection on the saga's tragic narrative. Beyond this, however, Moxon's control over the appearance of the book was extremely limited. He did not direct the artists to compose their designs in a particular way, allowing them to work in both traditional and novel formats as a mixture of vignettes in the manner of Romantic illustration,[23] and as illustrations framed within a black line, a contrast exemplified by the difference between Millais's vignette of "Mariana" (fig. I.1) and Mulready's outline for "The Deserted House" (fig. I.2). This approach produced a mixed effect, with each of the schools practicing both idioms: Millais's "Lord of Burleigh" (fig. 3.11) is a framed oblong, and so is Mulready's "Will Waterproof" (fig. 3.5); Creswick's design for "Move Eastward" (fig. 3.1) is a dreamy vignette, fading at the edges as the scene fades into darkness like French illustrations of the 1830s, while Millais's second image for "Locksley Hall" (fig. 3.9) merges with the whiteness of the page, offering an edited glimpse of domestic life. Once again, the aim seems to have been to cater for every taste—for those who enjoyed the sharply edited qualities of contemporary painting, and for consumers who appreciated the insubstantiality of French vignette illustrations, which seem to dissolve into the page. Moxon also allowed the engravings to be cut in diverse styles: the Dalziels specialized in heavy blocking and crepuscular designs, while Linton's touch was lighter and more lyrical; the others, Green, Thompson, and Williams, worked in any manner they chose, both blocked and linear, though their cutting is generally of a much more variable quality than that of the two main practitioners.

Moxon makes no comment on these approaches and seems contented to have given his artists, especially, the freedom to compose as they wished. Moreover, he did not specify *what* they could illustrate. This strategy, given the care with which he set out on his venture, is surprising. Remembering that the anthology was a reprint of a book first published in 1842, we might have expected the publisher to privilege certain poems with an illustration, aiming to modernize the collection by getting his artists to focus, say, on the sort of neomedieval heroics that were tremendously popular in the 1850s, or perhaps on the domestic themes carried forward in the contemporary novels of Dickens and Thackeray. One would expect him to do the matching; however, this was not the case. Instead, the illustrators were free of any direction of any sort, and were allowed, Harold Merriam notes, to select the material for themselves.[24] Playing to their strengths, each designer chose his subjects with complete liberty and unrestricted by any overarching sense of the book's design or the reader's topical interests: rather, it was self-selection in which they satisfied themselves. Rossetti wrote contemptuously of the arrangement, noting how "Stanfield will do 'Break, Break,' because there is the sea in it, and 'Ulysses,' too, because there are ships in it,"[25] and others were just as predictable. In this arrangement Rossetti and Maclise chose the Arthurian themes, Creswick and Stanfield the poems with landscape imagery, Horsley the genre pieces, Holman Hunt and Millais a mixture of oriental, medieval, and contemporary scenes, and Mulready humor and set pieces of intense feeling. It was partly because of these freedoms, perhaps, that the artists embraced the project with such enthusiasm; as Tennyson remarks, those they visited were "genial," "full of vivacity," and "very amiable."[26]

Their minds were focused, of course, by the publisher's offer of good remuneration. Moxon had already offered Tennyson a share in the book (later offering him, in 1857, £2000 in settlement, when sales were disappointing),[27] and he matched this investment with competitive fees for the artists. Conscious of the need to get the best-quality work, he offered £25 for each design, an amount at the upper end of the payments by other publishers for "drawings on wood," essentially a sort of industry norm at the end of the fifties and early sixties, and he also accommodated Rossetti's demand for £30.[28]

This was a considerable outlay, but Moxon also had to cover the expense of paying the engravers, printers, and binders; modern evaluations of the costs have varied, but Moxon told Emily Tennyson the "designs and engraving alone" had cost him £1,500.[29] So the total expenditure by the end of 1857, if we add Tennyson's settlement to the production costs, was something in the region of £3,500, perhaps as much as £4,000. This was an amount significantly out of line with the book's competitors, most of which did not involve large payments to an author, and were only costed on the basis of the illustrations and production fees. It is not

known if the publisher had any inside knowledge of his rivals' running costs, but compared with other gift books his venture was extraordinarily expensive, with Routledge especially producing much cheaper imprints: for example, *The Poets of the Nineteenth Century* (1857), the Moxon Tennyson's immediate rival, cost £1,600, and Moore's *Lallah Rookh* (1860) £573. These were the overheads for *all* outgoings.[30] Both were a fraction of Moxon's inflated expenditure, and his volume was from the start an extravagant project. Indeed, its promise as an elite publication excited widespread comment and speculation, with one provincial newspaper, *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* (June 1855), proclaiming it had cost Moxon "not less than £25,000" and would be sold well above "the reach of a good many of us," for 10 guineas (£10 and 10 shillings).[31] This claim was wildly inaccurate—the book would initially retail for a guinea and a half (31 shillings and sixpence)—but it was clear from the beginning that in order to turn a profit in a congested market it would have to sell considerable numbers of copies and compete with the other luxurious texts being directed at Christmastime consumers.

This was the situation at the end of 1854: though yet to offer Tennyson his settlement, Moxon had already pumped extravagant sums into his project and needed to achieve a profitable return, rapidly collected. Initially, all was well. In the early stages, at least, the book was well set up and propelled forward by the publisher's commitment to the venture. However, problems soon developed, with deadlines not being met and other production problems. In fact, Moxon unknowingly damaged the book's chances in the open market by adopting a business strategy, or more properly a mode of project management, which was inappropriate to the new demands of industrial publication. The only way gift books could succeed was by embracing the notion of what the Marxist critic N. N. Feltes describes as a "commodity text,"[32] a publication assembled from parts created by a series of partners with rigidly delineated tasks under the direction of one coordinator, produced quickly and on time, and directed towards a specific niche in the market. To some extent Moxon's project conformed to this economic model, and the publisher *had* taken control of the initial stages; but as soon as the work began he failed to move from the small-scale arrangements of "petty commodity production," based on a relationship with a single partner, usually the author, to "the capitalist mode of production," which demanded strict control over the makers or "multiple hands."[33]

At this point he could have imposed a tighter management regime, or he might have put them under the management of another party. The obvious candidate here was Tennyson, who could have directed the illustrators' responses or at least impose a regular system of monitoring; but (as noted earlier in this chapter) he had no interest in liaising with his interpreters. Though he wanted his volume to be illustrated, he disliked illustration,[34] preferred plain formats, and seems,

according to commentators such as Thomas, to have regarded the artists' involvement as a threat to his authorship and a challenge to his status as an author.[35] Unlike Dickens or Thackeray, who manipulated their collaborators, Tennyson was disdainful; Moxon, tellingly, neither asked nor expected him to participate. On the other hand, the publisher *could* have deployed an editor to coordinate the parts. This was Routledge's approach in most of his gift books, appointing Robert Aris Willmott to manage the production of *Poets of the Nineteenth Century* (1857) and Robert Buchanan to work on *Wayside Posies* (1867), both of whom liaised with a single firm of engravers, usually the Dalziels. Moxon, however, kept all control in his own hands while failing to impose strict requirements on the contributors' work rate and productivity. His cardinal error, indeed, was to abandon what Kooistra calls "relative authority" and allow the makers *too much* freedom.[36] This laissez-faire was gainful as a means of promoting creativity and fastidiousness, but it ceded most of the control to the illustrators and engravers.

The publisher does not seem to have inspected their work in any systematic way, while also allowing the illustrators, with damaging effects, to proceed at their own pace. The artists worked on the designs in between their more lucrative work on canvas, and Moxon did not set a schedule. Though work commenced at the end of 1854, he did not specify a publication date for the autumn of 1855, the first reasonable date for completion, when the book could have been issued in time for the Christmas trade. Instead, production proceeded at an irregular pace and dragged on, a process charted by the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor (whose bas-relief of Tennyson features as the pictorial frontispiece) Thomas Woolner. Some of the work, Woolner reports, had been completed by Christmas 1855, when he describes Moxon in "high glee" that so much had been done;[37] but most of it was *not* complete, and Rossetti was procrastinating. In August of 1856 Moxon pressed the recalcitrant designer—which the artist dismissed as "pestering"[38]—and in November of the same year the publisher was complaining about his lack of progress. Christmas of 1856, another opportunity for publication, was just another missed deadline, and there was further dilatoriness in the dealings with the engravers. The work had been divided, creating needless complications, between the Dalziels, Thompson, and Linton; in the early part of 1857 Rossetti was engaged in arguments with the Dalziels about the quality of the cutting, and at the end of 1856 Linton was significantly behind with the work. All of this added to the sluggish pace, and it was not until May 25 of 1857, far from the festive season and at the very time of year when gift books were at their least popular, that the volume was finally published.

Three years in the making, Moxon's Tennyson was unquestionably the longest and most painful gestation of any gift book of the period; only the *Dalziels' Bible*

*Gallery,* inaugurated in the sixties and published at the end of 1880, was longer in the making.[39] During this time, the publisher had consistently allowed the project to be (mis)managed by others, allowing it to drift. When Rossetti failed to deliver, he did not replace him with another artist, and he failed to clamp down on Linton when he was "in arrear,"[40] giving him instead a loan to cover the work he should have completed. Altogether too lacking in the business acumen to succeed in the rapid and mass turnaround of the market he wanted to exploit, Moxon remained the contributors' generous friend rather than a highly focused entrepreneur, a man scornful of the banalities of trade.[41] The publisher's authority was a key issue in controlling the process of making, and Moxon had signally failed to match his desire to make money with the dynamic management style required to realize his project.

In the long period of preparation he must have been aware of the damaging effects of delay, although he did attempt to turn them to market advantage by far exceeding his usual, limited deployment of advertising, this time pursuing a lengthy and expensive campaign of promotion which began in the middle of 1856 and continued until the publication date in 1857.[42] Intending to nurture a sense of anticipation in the audience, he issued advertisements in *The Athenaeum* and in the nationwide press in newspapers as diverse as the *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser,* the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph,* and the metropolitan *Morning Post.* Each of these promised the imminent publication with tedious regularity as the deadline was put back.[43] Some uplift may also have been provided, Kooistra suggests, by the Art Treasures Exhibition in Manchester (May–October 1857), which encouraged buyers to think of themselves as "modest collectors" of images in a "portable art gallery" containing designs by several artists whose work featured in the exhibition:[44] the consumers' desire for cultural capital was a key selling point, and the advent of the Manchester show could only have strengthened the book's appeal. But the publisher's failure to focus the project was matched by the ineffectiveness of the advertising, and when he finally published at a guinea and a half the book was met with limited interest. The price was out of line with its competitors, typically between 5 and 10 shillings, and especially expensive at the wrong time of year when few would be buying gifts (May), and it was regarded, as Crane notes, as "a large sum."[45] Moxon had to impose this markup to recoup his initial outlay and make a profit, needing sales of around 1,500 to break even with his initial costs and more to cover the costs of distribution while also allowing booksellers to make their retail profits; but it was far too expensive, and sales, at 1,300 out of 10,000 copies, were poor. Moxon attempted to rescue the situation by sending review copies to a wide range of periodicals, and by advertising, once again, in *The Morning Post, The Morning Chronicle, The Times,* and elsewhere. Sales took up as Christmas approached, but by the autumn of 1858 only 2,210 of the full consignment had been

sold.[46] It was not a loss, but only managed to recoup its production costs, and was unprofitable. It was certainly not the hit the publisher had hoped for.

So Moxon's grand plan to exploit the vast market for gift books was essentially a failure, a "tragi-comedy," as Reid describes it.[47] No one could question the quality of the work or production, but it was too expensive, out of its context in terms of appearing in spring not winter, and ponderously late in reaching the dynamic, ever-changing, and unstable market of the 1850s, where taste was flexible and fashion a prime consideration. As Tennyson remarked, the book's downfall was its lack of "speedy completion," following an unwise "speculation."[48] Blame for its delay was subsequently heaped on Rossetti; Moxon died at the end of 1858, and the stress of dealing with the artist was rumored to have caused his death. William Michael Rossetti anxiously addressed the accusation in 1895, noting only that Moxon suffered much but declining to "lay any real blame upon" his brother.[49] It is impossible to know the exact circumstances of Moxon's death, but we can certainly say that Rossetti was not responsible for the edition's failure. A better explanation, as I have argued, is the publisher's inability to coordinate the parts of the project and deliver his "commodity text" on time and at the appropriate price. Failing to meet the market's needs or manage the means of production, Moxon was purely responsible for the publication's lack of impact as it stumbled into print. He was cast as a martyr, a gentleman rather than an entrepreneur, and his downfall is emblematic of the ruthless demands of mid-Victorian capitalism. Yet the Moxon Tennyson was only at the first stage of a turbulent history.

## REPACKAGING: THE ROLE OF ROUTLEDGE

Moxon continued to sell the book into the middle of 1858, selling it in October to George Routledge as a remainder; bound up from the unsold sheets, it displayed the name of the original publisher on its title page until 1864. Uneconomic under Moxon's management, it seemed a liability more than an asset, and although the exact price of the transfer is unknown, it was probably sold at the lowest possible rate. Again, it is not known which publisher arranged the sale; Moxon was probably willing to sell it to any reasonable bidder, but it is likelier that Routledge, one of the new generation of capitalist-publishers, acquired the title as part of his growing portfolio of luxury illustrated imprints.

Described by the Dalziels as an able businessman with a clear-sighted attitude to the trade who was willing to flog anything with the potential to make money,[50] Routledge had far more experience of gift books than Moxon and probably envisaged the *Poems* as a valuable addition, part of his strategy to dominate the market. When he purchased the work he already had several publications lined

up for Christmas 1858, among them *Home Affections of the Poets, Summer Time in the Country,* Milton's *Comus,* Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming,* and a reprint of *The Poets of the Nineteenth Century.* Each of these books was a compendium of selected poems illustrated by a variety of artists, and placed in this company Tennyson's work gained a new, meaningful context: no longer presented as a high-class treasure, it was reframed rather more modestly as a superior example of the genre, intended to bolster the appeal of the publisher's catalogue. Routledge emphasized this repositioning by cutting its price from a guinea and a half to a guinea (£1 and a shilling), the usual cost of his other quarto-size gift books. Originally overpriced, the volume suddenly seemed a bargain and was immediately rewarded with interest; no longer an artifact for the elite, it was made accessible to wider sections of the bourgeois audience, the consumers Moxon had targeted but failed to reach. The public bought the book as if it were a new imprint rather than a recycled one, and it became a cause célèbre. In the words of one reviewer writing on Christmas Eve, 1858, it was now available at a reasonable price as one of the "annual delicacies," a superb gift book demanding a new "welcome."[51] The immediate consequence, at Christmas 1858, was improved sales. Though Moxon had only managed to sell just over a third of the ten thousand in the months between May 1857 and October 1858, Routledge sold the remainder over the following year, printing a second run of five thousand copies, to form the second edition, at the end of 1859, and thereafter printing an additional five thousand copies per year until 1869.[52]

So where Moxon only just broke even, Routledge generated profits. He was helped, of course, by the astute conditions of his deal. Having purchased the imprint as a complete package for a nominal transfer, he had no fees to pay for its production. The text and illustrations were acquired as they stood, with no royalties or further payments to be sent to any of the contributors, and Routledge took possession of the copyright of the illustrations along with the blocks from which they were struck, which meant he could reprint without further cost beyond the expense of printing when the remainders were sold. Most notably, he was free from the need to pay for Tennyson's contribution. The book's failure subsequently led to the Moxon family's attempts to recoup some of the company's losses after the publisher's death in 1858 by reclaiming some of the poet's fee, but Routledge was free of any of these complications. Moxon's downfall, in terms defined by Feltes, was his inability to manage "handlings," the various partners and stages through which the book had passed in its making; Routledge, by contrast, was unimpeded by the need to collaborate with anyone. Moxon's Tennyson as published by Routledge became, in other words, a very lucrative venture, widely disseminated. No longer a dead loss, it gained new status, if not a best-seller then a least a fashionable acquisition for middle-class households with cultural aspirations.

This is *not* to say that Routledge allowed his "art-manufacture" to ossify. On the contrary, he realized that in order to succeed in the longer term he would need to modify its appearance, making it fit within the parameters of bourgeois taste. The contents could not be changed, and the mixture of illustrative styles probably appealed, as the original publisher had intended, to sundry contingents. However, Routledge focused on the only part he could change without damaging the book's credentials—the binding. Bindings are of course the first visual sign to meet the potential purchaser's eyes, and in the case of the *Poems* the exterior, created by an anonymous hand, was expressive of the book's elitism; intended to project the idea of excellence associated with the classical, it united the Olympian iconography of an urn on the front and rear boards with a foliate pattern on the spine, all embossed in gilt on a cloth field of green or blue (fig. 1.2). What it failed, to do, however, was to embody a notion of visual pleasure: the audience wanted to be reminded of its status as a piece designed in good taste, but for the gift book to sustain its appeal it had to be a splendid object. Though sold throughout the year, it still needed to have the glamorous impact of Christmas *cadeaux*.

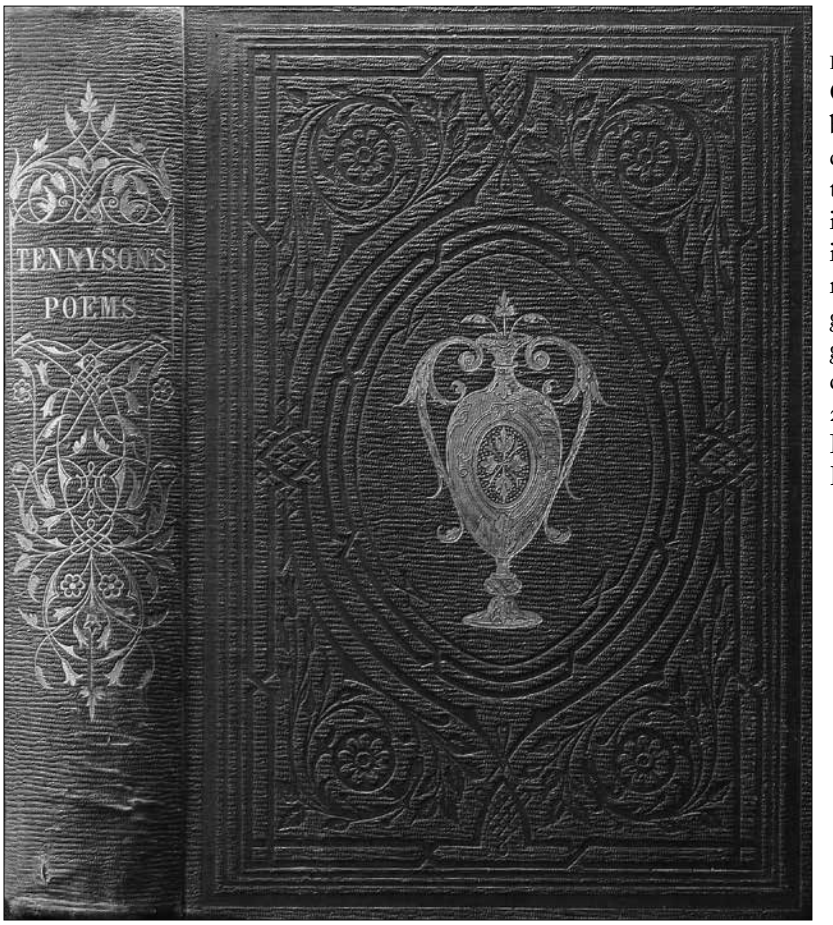



FIGURE 1.2.
Original casing by an unknown designer for the first edition issued by Moxon in 1857. Green ribbed morocco-grained cloth with gilt embossed decorations, 215 × 160 mm. Photograph by Roderick Hogan.

Clearly, a new approach was needed, and once the original run was exhausted at the end of 1859 Routledge replaced the neoclassical original with a binding of greater impact which was already being used, with some modifications, on other books. This was a cloth casing by Albert Warren, an established ornamental designer who had produced many covers for the publisher's expanding stock of gift books and was influential in creating the genre's emphasis on leisurely perusal.[53] Warren's livery (which also appeared in another variant and was supplemented by an edition bound in morocco by James Hayday) fundamentally changed the volume's orientation toward its audience, converting it from an object to admire, a miniature curiosity cabinet of fine art, into a luxurious gift fit for presenting;[54] instead of the elegant refinement of the Moxon cover, it was now cased in blue or purple cloth embossed in gilt with a rustic pergola and a border of vine leaves and floral rosettes (fig. 1.3). No longer an item of high culture, it morphed into an artifact of desirable familiarity, a piece of ornament intended to encourage the consumer to view it as a homely source of pleasure. In a sense, the new cover *domesticated* Moxon's volume, making it chime it with the sort of overelaborate, rustic decoration of the bourgeois home; designed for the parlor table, it was appropriate to signal its consonance with the gaudy furnishings as they are shown, for example, in the interior of Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1853; Tate Britain, London, fig. 1.7) and in Wilkie Collins's eye-boggling description of the Sherwins' household in *Basil* (1852).[55] It looked like wallpaper and it took its place in rooms as part of the décor—art, to apply Matisse's pronouncement anachronistically, as comfortable as an armchair. In the satirical words of a reviewer in *Fraser's Magazine* following its year of success, it became a "gaudy frippery of woodcut and gilding," which might, in this writer's view, be unworthy of the verse, but was certainly welcome in "every boudoir and drawing room,"[56] enjoyed by its owners and impressive as a token of respectability and wealth. In a single move, Routledge democratized the book's appeal and made it into a resonant sign of naturalized culture.

Warren's floral design was equally important in a series of other dimensions, and had considerable implications. It acted, particularly, as a means of highlighting the poet's rusticity as one of the heirs of Wordsworth. Moxon's casing had suggested the poems and illustrations were predominantly classical; the Routledge replacement, by contrast, foregrounds Tennyson's very English emphasis on nature, framing the poems within an iconography of pastoral leisure. Influenced by Romanticism, mid-Victorian audiences associated rural imagery with the relaxed contemplation of imaginative literature, and Warren's binding located the book in a discourse of idyllic fantasy in which "posies" signaled both flowers and poems. In opening the foliate front board, the urban consumer moved from the everyday experience of

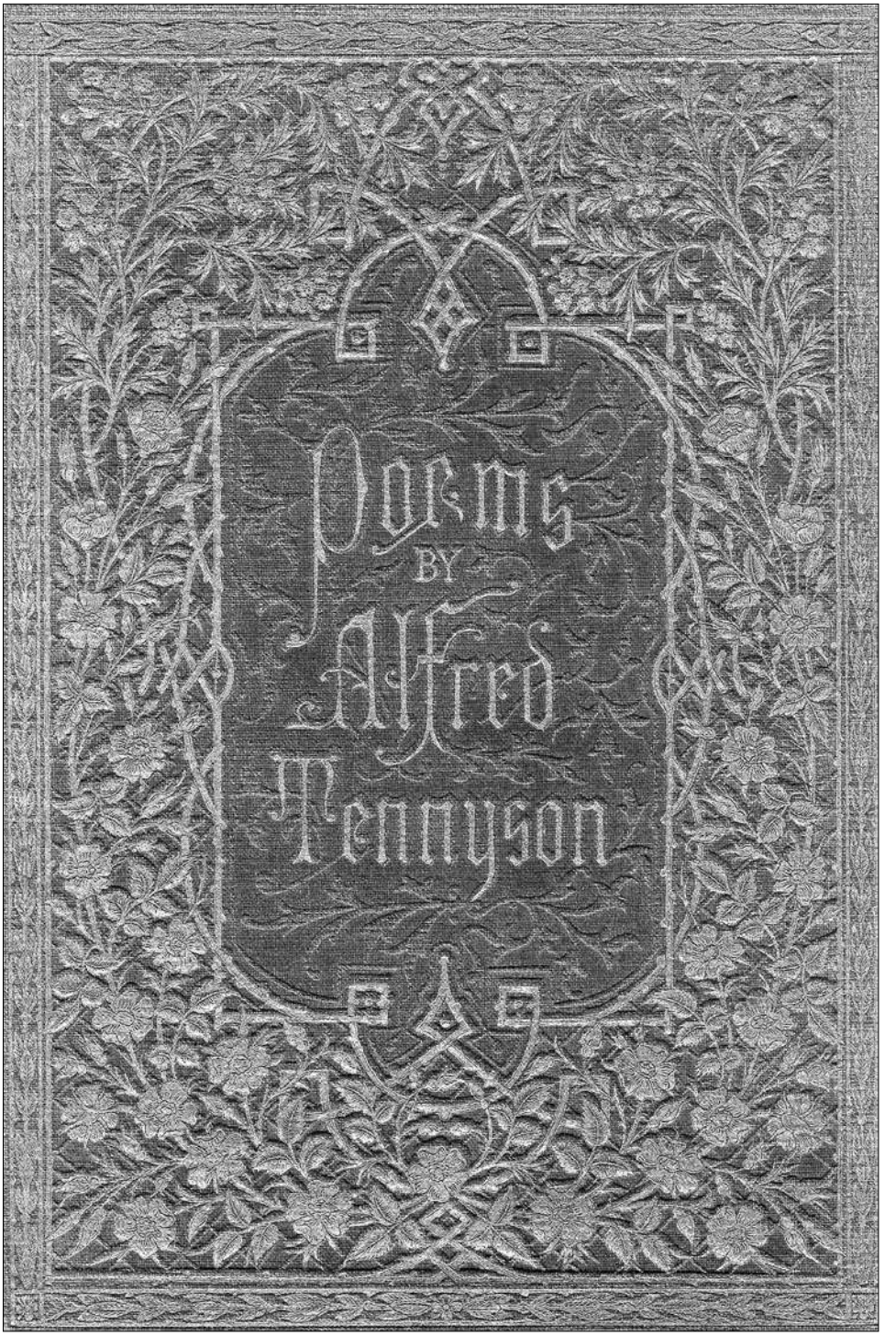



FIGURE 1.3. Albert Henry Warren, the Routledge binding first applied to the book in 1859. Navy morocco-grained cloth with gilt decorations, 235 × 155 mm. Photograph by Roderick Hogan.

metropolitan life and engaged with an imagined poetic innocence, gaining refreshment from the verse and illustrations as one might be revitalized from the scent of the flowers depicted in the binding's design. The covers were in this sense symbolic portals to a better, cleaner, more uplifting reality, as if one were escaping into the purity of the English idyll. At once precious and expensive looking, Warren's livery emphasized the tonal effect of Tennyson's verse as the consumer was sentimentally immersed in the leisurely contemplation of poems and pictures.

This was the imagery popular among the book-buying audience, and the *Poems* became one of a wide series of imprints deploying the same sort of symbolism. Its binding echoed the foliate front covers of the popular literary periodicals, *Once a Week, Good Words,* and *The Cornhill Magazine,* and it merged with Routledge's other gift books with rustic bindings, among them Warren's design for *Wordsworth's Poems* (1859), the same designer's work for *Summer Time in the Country* (1858), and another for Thomas Miller's *Common Wayside Flowers* (1860). The new livery was essentially generic and cost the publisher nothing in terms of commissioning fresh work, instead using the die created by Warren for the front cover of *Bryant's Poems* (1858, 1860, fig. 1.5), the only difference being the title panel, and reusing the foliate composition from the spine of Wordsworth's *Poems* (1859, fig. 1.4).

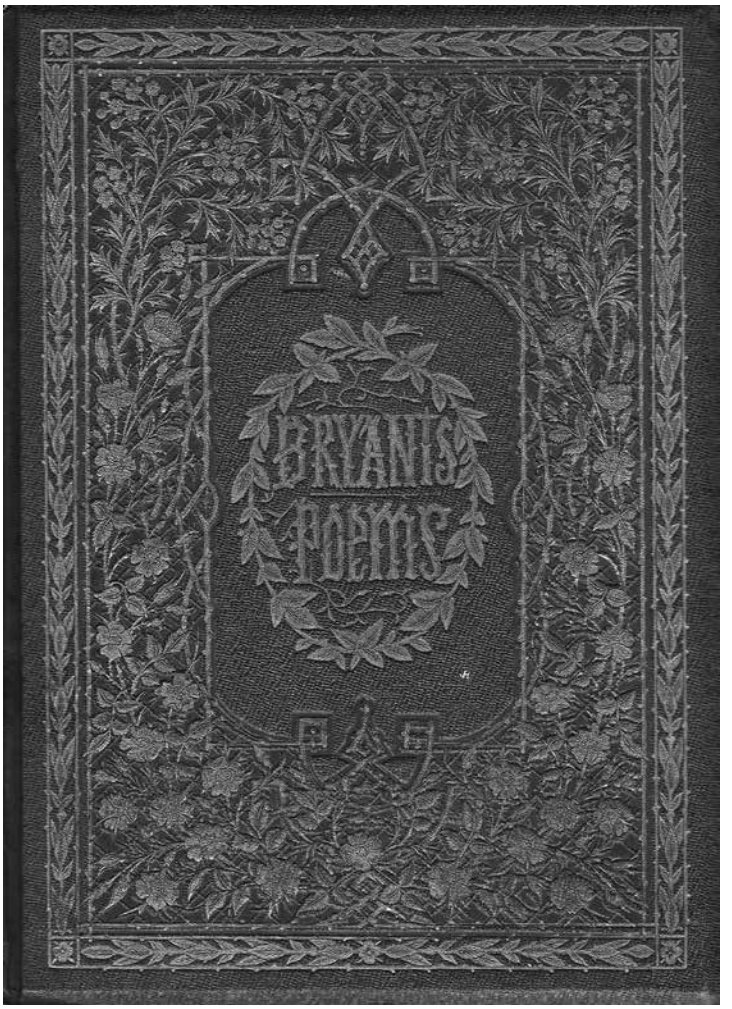
The process of standardization stressed the new emphasis on commercial viability. Packaged afresh, Moxon's Tennyson became *Routledge*'s Tennyson, a true "commodity text," highly responsive to the taste and cultural expectations of its audience, produced with limited outlay, and able to reinforce rather than challenge the consumers' dominant ideologies. Treated in this way, it lost its individuality and became another, slightly quirkier gift book than was usual, a polished product among several.

## MAKING THE BOOK: MULTIPLE HANDS

In the middle years of the nineteenth century it was necessary for an artist to collaborate with the engravers, who would convert his drawing into a "cut" made on boxwood, from which the image would be printed, or, more usually, made into an electrotype to enable it to be reproduced under the unremitting rhythm of the steam press and in large numbers. This "handling" allowed the illustrator to "transmit" or disseminate his work to the audience, translating a private vision into a public utterance, and the same can be said of the working relationship between the binding designer and the technicians who materialized his image, making it into an artifact for the consumer's eye by giving the book a physical identity. Already an operational norm by the 1850s, these industrialized procedures were central to the creation of Tennyson's *Poems,* which exemplifies the various


FIGURE 1.4. Albert Henry Warren, back strip for *Wordsworth's Poems* (London: Routledge, 1859), also used on the Routledge edition of Tennyson's *Poems*. 230 × 45 mm.

FIGURE 1.5. Albert Henry Warren, front cover for *Bryant's Poems* (London: Routledge, 1858). 240 × 155 mm.



methods of making. The Moxon Tennyson especially typifies the ways in which the linkages in the chain of manufacture could be broken down—with just one participant, Rossetti, creating ruinous delays by failing to meet his deadlines while arguing with the engravers. This narrative is well known; I have explained some of it as part of the publisher's story. However, it is equally important to consider the wider contexts of the book's production as it engaged with new technologies and working arrangements. Rossetti's disruptive behavior is an ingredient in this saga, although the stages in the book's production, from drawings to engravings and the production of gilt covers that enclosed them, are rarely considered.

At the heart of the process was the relationship between the artist and the engraver, the quality of which influenced the effectiveness of the printed design. In the first instance it was necessary for the illustrator to be able to transfer his design to the block: this involved drawing directly in reverse onto the end grain of the block provided by the engravers, which had been smoothed down and prepared in Chinese white, or by using tracing paper. At the time of the Moxon Tennyson (1857) photographic transfer, enabling the original drawing to be photographed and printed onto the wood, had not been invented, and would not appear until the end of the decade.[57] Each of the artists was therefore required to manipulate the hard discipline of existing procedures. The destruction of the drawing once it was cut meant that expertise was essential on the part of the artists as well as the engravers; a mistake meant an illustration could be lost, and work would have to be repeated. The dangers of this procedure meant that drawings were photographed in order to preserve a record.[58]

Moxon's calculations of the cost of his edition included an assessment of the illustrators' proficiency as wood-block artists and was almost certainly one of his decisions in employing the Royal Academicians, most of whom were experts in the field. Horsley had drawn numerous wood-engraved designs for Felix Summerly's [Henry Cole's] Home Treasury series for children in the 1840s; Mulready had illustrated *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1843); Stanfield had contributed to Dickens's Christmas books in the 1840s, and Maclise a large number of engravings for *Moore's Irish Melodies* (1846). Of the older artists, only Creswick was inexperienced in the technical demands of drafting on wood, having worked entirely on copper and steel. The Pre-Raphaelites were similarly inexperienced. Holman Hunt was a novice, and at the time of their commissioning in mid-1854 Rossetti and Millais had had only limited exposure to this most demanding of printmaking. Millais had worked in the medium preparing his pictorial frontispieces such as the one for Anderson's *The Pleasures of Hope* (1855, fig. 1.1), but it was not until 1855, after several months of work, with many struggles, that Rossetti published his poetic illustration of "The Maids of Elfen-Mere" (fig. 1.6).

FIGURE 1.6. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Maids of Elfen-Mere." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 126 × 75 mm. William Allingham, *The Music Master* (London: Routledge, 1855), facing 202.

All in all, the technical ability of the Moxon artists was uneven, and the publisher's engaging of at least three of dubious pedigree as illustrators—Creswick, Holman Hunt, and Rossetti—is yet another example of his lack of executive control, a failing only exacerbated by his needless commissioning of several engravers.

Nevertheless, work did proceed as a matter of creation, checking, and revision. Once Moxon had approved a drawing it was handed back to the illustrator with the expectation that all liaison was directly between the artist and the "wood-peckers" (as engravers were dubbed), with no further intervention from the publisher. The artist passed his work to the company masters, Dalziel, Thompson, Green, Linton, or Williams; this was given to the technicians who cut the block, often dividing it into several parts, later bolted together;[59] the proof engraving was printed from the block and sent to the artist, who then returned it with any corrections written in the margin. The final block, as approved by the designer, was used to print proof copies, which were then prepared for printing. In the case of the Moxon Tennyson the first ten thousand were printed from the wood, although subsequent editions were imprinted from electrotypes, with the original blocks only being used after 1857 in the luxurious imprint of 1901.[60]

This sequence was followed in a businesslike manner by *most* of the artists. Records have not survived for all of the transactions, but the character of their dealings is exemplified by the detailed dialogue between the artists Millais and Hunt and the engravers Linton, and the Dalziels. Both of the illustrators compensated for their lack of experience by checking and rechecking, in each case sending the engravers marked-up proofs, sketches showing revisions, and clear instructions. The care with which Millais and Hunt engaged in this process shows how intricate the process could become, and Millais, especially, was skilled at getting the engravers to match his expectations while not diminishing their expertise. In a letter to Linton regarding changes to "Cleopatra" (fig. 5.8), for instance, he guides his collaborator toward revisions in lightening and tone, the first proof being too dark: "I enclose two proofs with such corrections as I think will clear, & greatly improve the block. I must thank you for the evident care you have taken, & then tell you in what way [it different from the original drawing.] The chief touching is required in the face which is a little *patchy* for instance the light on the chin is *too* high. . . . I have with white paint made alterations & added lights upon the darkest proof."[61]

He goes on to provide intricate detail as to how the mouth, cheek, bosom, and even the underlip are subtly revised to create the best and most telling effect, re-creating as far as possible the impact of the original drawing. Holman Hunt was similarly methodical, and was generous in acknowledging the engravers' contribution. Writing to the Dalziels about their work on "Oriana" (figs. 2.8, 2.9), he thanks the brothers for their "very satisfactory" cutting of the second

design, praising the ways in which they have caught the "character of the drawing with great truth";[62] tellingly, and in contrast to Millais, he does not insist on the engraving being an exact facsimile of the original image, but simply one preserving its essentials. His comment implicitly recognizes the fact, as all artists drawing on wood had to accept, that the engravers were *not* providing a neutral facsimile or transcription of their designs; rather, they created an equivalent. Cast as interpreters of the original image using the medium of the graver and the hard surface of the wood, they were essentially coauthors in the creation of an image synthesizing fine art and the technical requirements of printmaking. Willing to learn, both artists engaged with the professional requirements of a collaborative approach, although both were tardy, only presenting work for preparation in November 1856, two years after they were commissioned.

Their dilatoriness suggests it was not only Rossetti who slowed the publication to a snail's pace. However, a close examination of his correspondence shows his delays were more than simple evasiveness. In contrast to his Pre-Raphaelite colleagues and the others engaged on the project, who adapted their approach to whatever was required, Rossetti obstructed production because he struggled, I suggest, with the process of making engravings on wood. Though he denied his own failings and projected his difficulties onto others, he does not seem to have understood that drawing on the block was *not* the same as creating images in oil or watercolor. Millais and Holman Hunt accepted the need to match their technique to the demands of engraving and make do, but Rossetti seems to have believed that the transfer from paint or drawing to an image cut out of wood was indeed a straightforward transmission from drawing to print.

He seems to have misunderstood even the basics, and had to be reminded of the necessity to draw back to front in order to have the reversed image in the correct orientation. In his first attempt at "The Maids of Elfen-Mere" (fig. 1.6) for Allingham's *The Music Master* he had completed the whole process of drawing on the wood before he realized he had done it the wrong way round, and only managed to finish his work for the Moxon Tennyson by using a mirror to copy his designs onto the block.[63] He also misunderstood the minute scale of tiny cuts, believing he could crowd the spaces of his illustrations with intense, particularized detail as he congested the surfaces of his Arthurian watercolors with intricate, fantastical objects, such as those appearing in *The Wedding of St George and Princess Sabra* (1857, Tate Britain, London).[64] This process was problematic, and led to an anguished frustration of endless drawing and redrawing. Famously, the Dalziels sent him a block just a sixteenth of an inch too short, making it marginally too small for his original drawing of "St Cecily" (figs. 4.10, 4.11). His response was not to cut down on the background beyond the city wall but to curse the loss of

space: "Good God," he exclaimed irascibly in one of the best-known statements in Victorian art, "I could get a whole city in there."[65] It was more than a matter of scale, however; adept at using paint to create this level of intricate detail, he was unsure how to translate his approach into the fine lines demanded by the process of engraving on wood, cut under the lens of a magnifying glass, and brightly illuminated by a lamp. While the other artists managed to create a linear design for a linear medium, Rossetti still insisted he could work in the sort of multimedia he had deployed in his medievalist watercolors, sending to the Dalziels a version of "St Cecily" composed of "wash, pencil, colored chalk, and pen and ink," an image, the engravers sarcastically remark, which was "very nice" but entirely unsuited to the "stern realities of black and white" reproduced in "printer's ink."[66]

These difficulties soured the relationship between the artist and the engravers, a dispute enshrined in a series of vituperative letters, notes, and obsessively annotated proofs. Like all of the contributors, he inspected the work in progress, but his responses, as Jan Marsh has shown, were impossibly exacting.[67] A proof of "St Cecily" (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK; fig. 4.11) exemplifies his approach, with detailed instructions framing the print; and though he said he preferred Linton to the Dalziels, he was just as demanding of this engraver's work, returning a proof of "Sir Galahad" (Lilly Library, Bloomington) with an impossible range of new improvements scrawled around its margins.[68] The art of wood engraving, Rossetti complained, was subject to a vast number of variables, and though the wood engravers did their best to accommodate his instructions, the medium failed to satisfy his requirements.

But his dissatisfaction was aimed at the wood-peckers too. W. M. Rossetti reports how his brother was distrustful of the technicians, and constantly "corrected, altered, protested and sent back blocks to be amended," believing they had willfully spoiled his work;[69] Burne-Jones found him in the "worst of tempers" following the delivery of what he saw as an inadequate print, reviling the engravers for being "silly fools" who could never reproduce the thinness of his lines.[70] It was never good enough, and Rossetti's prime issue in producing illustrations for the wood was a matter of control: he did not accept the participation of another hand and constantly complained about the amendments that had to be made. What he needed, always, was authority, a position mapped out in his brother's claim of his always having to "play the first fiddle, and have the lion's share."[71] This attitude was asserted in his famous doggerel satirically begging the Dalziels to "spare that block" and not destroy work that had taken him as much "ten days" to create, under the pressure of the clock.[72]

This desire to direct meant that most of his images were cut according to his instructions, but in some cases the engravers *did* alter the work quite radically. "St Cecily," the engraving over which he fretted at most length, is a good example

(fig. 4.10). As we shall see in chapter 4, comparison of the photograph of the original drawing and the printed image shows significant differences, especially in the treatment of the famous kiss, which does not even appear in the drawing but is a central part of the illustration. Rossetti could control some aspects of the transmission of his work, and surviving annotated proofs and versions of his designs vividly convey his efforts to impose his will.[73] In the end he had to conform to the position of the other illustrators and accept the engravers' interpretive contribution, despite producing "much worry and disappointment" while forcing Moxon to miss his all-important deadlines.[74]

Rossetti's behavior can only be viewed, in short, as unprofessional and unreasonable. More than this, it is emblematic of the necessity of accepting the need for other "handlings," and of working within a clearly delineated role. Rossetti saw the arrangement with the engravers in combative terms as a struggle to control the image, viewing his stance as an assertion of his authorship and ultimately of his status as a visionary artist separated from the craft of the workshop. As Kooistra remarks, the "various makers" were in some sense competing, rather than collaborative talents,[75] and, taken as a whole, the *Poems* undermined the traditional oppositions of artist and craftsman, mental and manual labor. As an important gift book, Moxon's volume was one of the first to collapse this hierarchical, class-based model, dissolving the uniqueness of the artist's creations—which would now be disseminated in the form of endlessly reproducible prints, rather than a unique painting—while reassigning the artist a new status as an artisan working as part of a team of producers. Art and craft, the poetic and the technical, handicraft and mass production were thus intermingled within the nexus of industrial capitalism, new printing technologies, and the democratization of taste; indeed, the qualities of Dürer and the Gutenberg Bible were popularized in books such as the Moxon Tennyson.

Its imitation of the bespoke in the form of the mass-produced was further projected in the binding, another product of new technology. This was the creation of several hands: the unknown designer made the original neoclassical pattern; Warren, the creator of the second casing; the technician who converted his patterns into a brass die to be impressed onto cloth; the craftsmen who cut and dyed the cloth; and those who made the final product.

Unlike the process of procuring the illustrations, the covers would have been commissioned and produced very quickly indeed at one of the many binders working in the capital. The bindery for the first edition is not known, but the 1859 remainder designed by Warren was assembled on the premises of Leighton and Hodge, Shoe Lane.[76] There is no surviving account of the book's production, but contemporary accounts make it possible to reconstruct the procedures. This process is outlined in the 1854 edition of Charles Tomlinson's *Cyclopaedia of Useful*

*Arts,* an account of bookbinding at the workshops of one of the primary binders of the time, Remnant, Edmonds and Remnant:

> The cases are . . . made up, with great rapidity, by two men, one of whom covers the inside with a layer of glue; then places two mill-boards in their proper position on the cover, so as to form the stiff sides, the space between the two depending, of course, on the thickness of the book. He then turns the cover over, and rubs the cloth firmly down with a cloth rubber. . . . He then tosses the cover to [the other] man, who places a strip of paper or canvass along the [space] between the two boards, and then folds down the projecting edges of the cloth over the boards, smoothing them down with the edge of a flat piece of stick with a blunt point at each end, and then drawing the point of the stick down the boundary lines between the back and the sides.[77]

With the boards secured to the cloth and to the strip that would become the spine, usually made of paper backed onto reused fragments from newspapers or other waste, the next step involved the embossing and application of the gilt decorations, which were cut in the form of a brass die and imprinted used an arming press. The *Cyclopaedia* provides a clear outline:

> When the covers thus formed are perfectly dry, they are embossed and gilt. The ornaments which are simply produced by pressure are called *blind-blocking,* and when done by hand *blind-tooling;* while the gilt ornaments or lettering are called *gold-blocking* or *gold-tooling.* The machines employed in both descriptions or ornament are called *blocking-presses.* . . . The ornamental pattern for the back or sides is cut out in a thick plate or block of brass, and is fixed in the upper bed of the press by means of a dove-tail joint. This upper bed is furnished with a cavity containing a gas-pipe with a row of jets for heating the die by conduction of heat from the upper bed. The cloth covers are inserted within metal rules, which serve as a gauge, by a man who sits before the press, while another man swings round with all his strength a long lever, whereby the upper bed is brought down a few inches upon the case in the lower bed, and embosses the impression. When the cases are completed in this way, they are taken to the gilders, who cover the parts intended to be gilt with a thin layer of ovalbumen or white of egg, called *glaire,* and then with a film of leaf-gold. The covers are then passed to a gold-blocking press, containing a plate or block, in which are set up the lettering and other ornaments intended to be gilt. The letters may either be set up in movable type, or cut out of one solid piece of brass. For the ornaments, the latter course is adopted. The block is heated by jets of gas playing in a cavity of the upper bed, and the cover being carefully introduced into a gauged bed, the man moves a handle round, which brings the heated plate with a gentle and equable pressure down upon the cover, and permanently fixes the letters or device.[78]

Further detail is given in *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* of 1872, pointing to the difference between the handicraft of previous generations and the industrial techniques of the nineteenth century:

> Formerly, the ornamental and other work on the outsides of books was executed in a tedious and expensive way by hand. Now, the operation, at least as regards cloth boards, is done by two or three impressions on an arming press; perhaps not taking more than half a minute being employed to execute what in the older time would have occupied a week. When it is deemed necessary, for the sake of attractiveness, to stamp a peculiar device on the covers of a book, of which thousands are required, the design is referred to an artist. . . . His design is cut in brass or steel; and this, in the form of a metal block, gives the stamp at a blow by the arming-press. When the design is to be gilt, leaf-gold is previously applied. The block being heated, gives a firm and clear impression. Such is the expeditious method of titling and ornamenting with blank and gold tooling.[79]

This process was always efficient and cost-effective: during his stockpiling of ten thousand copies Moxon could anticipate the work being turned around very quickly when he passed it on to the next stage. As the *Cyclopaedia* explains, "in a large establishment . . . the whole impression of an octavo work, consisting of 1,000 copies . . . can be folded, stitched, glued, and rounded, the edges trimmed, and the book mounted and pressed, all within six hours."[80]

The casings for Tennyson's *Poems* were created, then, as part of a highly structured industrial process. The prime emphasis was on efficiency, with production limited to the quickest possible turnaround combined with the elimination of unprofitable waste in the management of resources; even the slips of gilt paper left on the workshop floor were gathered and reused. These procedures were taken forward and became the standard means of creating gift books.

The Moxon Tennyson differed, however, in one respect. Unlike most publications in the genre, which were glued along the back strip using caoutchouc or gutta-percha, Tennyson's book was sewn together. Proclaiming its quality, its production values were apparently of the highest standard. It is ironic, nevertheless, to note that its pages, printed on heavy gloss paper, were still too heavy for the relatively fragile cloth binding, so that the volume collapsed exactly as cheaper gift books fell to pieces once the gutta-percha had perished. Purchasers complained almost from the beginning.

But all that mattered was the *impression* of luxuriousness, industrialized *trompe l'oeil* at the service of market expectation. Passed through numerous sets of hands, printed on a steam press, made out of cloth, card, and recycled paper, and featuring engravings which though fine were not really "cuts" but apart from

the first edition were imprinted from steel, it was a prime example of the latest technology put to the service of an apparent uniqueness in imitation of the bespoke qualities of the rare and expensive books, leather bound and hand-crafted, enjoyed by the upper classes. Like so much of Victorian design, its material form was entirely the product of a series of contemporary trends in the management and creation of artifacts for the mass audience: another object to congest a world already overflowing with the plenty of capitalism.

## ILLUSTRATION AND PAINTING

The illustrations for the Moxon Tennyson are essentially small paintings in black and white, sometimes refigured as vignettes but with many being framed, we have seen, as if they were canvases. Kooistra reads this arrangement as a sign of the Pre-Raphaelites' merging of fine art and illustration, but the device is not confined to the putative radicals. In each case the effect, as Kooistra explains, is a "blurring" of the "distinction between fine . . . and decorative art";[81] deeply embedded in mid-Victorian cultural practice, the designers' treatment of illustration closely reflects the free movement between the arts so typical of Victorian culture and explored in great detail by critics such as Julia Thomas and Martin Meisel.[82]

Bound by this intertextuality, the Moxon designers adapted a series of preexisting, painterly styles to the requirements of the small page, exploiting the languages of fine art as a means to visualize and interpret a specific series of texts. All that was needed, we might say, and with due acknowledgment of the many complexities, was to work on a smaller scale and in black and white rather than color.

The transfer was facilitated, certainly, by each artist's expertise as an illustrative painter. Literary painting was a dominant idiom in the mid-Victorian period, and all of the Moxon contributors had painted scenes from well-known texts. Maclise had tackled *The Play Scene from Hamlet* (1842, Tate Britain, London), *Twelfth Night* (1840, Tate Britain, London), and La Motte Fouqué's *Scene from Undine* (1843, Royal Collection, London). The Pre-Raphaelites practiced in the same idiom and throughout the fifties were centrally concerned with narrative imagery. Holman Hunt's *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus* (1851, Birmingham Art Gallery) represents a scene from Shakespeare's *Two Gentleman of Verona,* and Rossetti depicts numerous episodes from Dante's *La Vita Nuova,* such as *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* (1853, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). Millais had also produced literary works, among them a painted version (in anticipation of his Moxon design) of *Mariana* (1851, Tate Britain, London). All of these paintings were a solid preparation, in short, for reading and visualizing Tennyson's text. Devices of space, perspective, modeling, composition,

light, and emblematic detail could be used in black and white as they had in oil and watercolor, and the transference made the images for the page into a natural extension of larger works. Comparisons between the illustrations and paintings reveal this free movement and point to the wood engravings' primary techniques.

In the case of Holman Hunt, his painted images and illustrations deploy the same approach to the treatment of space and figure drawing, and it is instructive to compare *The Awakening Conscience* (1853; fig. 1.7) with several of his illustrations. This painting embodies the artist's baroque arrangement: the woman's gaze is directed to a zone positioned behind the viewer, and *that* place is supposedly shown in the mirror in the background (fig. 1.7); likewise, in the illustration for "The Beggar Maid" (fig. 1.8) the picture plane is edited so that the figures in the foreground project into the viewer's space, creating free movement and interchange between the two.

FIGURE 1.7. William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience,* 1853. Oil on canvas, 760 × 560 mm. Tate Britain, London. © Tate, London, 2019.

FIGURE 1.8. William Holman Hunt, "The Beggar Maid." Engraved by Thomas Williams, 95 × 82 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 359.

At the same time, the solid delineation of the kept woman in *The Awakening Conscience* is echoed in the treatment of the monumental figures of Godiva (fig. 4.3) and "The Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.4). Both are shown in dramatic crises, making a decision, coping with extreme emotion or struggling with inner conflict; as noted by Kooistra, they exemplify the Pre-Raphaelite emphasis on "a large central figure pictured at a moment of great intensity."[83] These painted characters are miniaturized in Hunt's drawings on wood, but their emotional effects are undiminished. The same is true of Rossetti's illustrations, which, as suggested earlier in this chapter, are essentially versions of his watercolors

and drawings of the fifties, reinscribing in black and white the iconography of unique works. The cramped space, heraldic detail, morose attitudes, and physical types appearing in "The Weeping Queens" (fig. I.3) and "St Cecily" (fig. 4.10) are carried over from his medievalist paintings, as well as recalling his drawings of Lizzie Siddal. Millais, likewise, applies the language of gesture and gaze, as typified by *Lorenzo and Isabella* (1849, Tate Britain, London) and repeated throughout his modern subjects, to the domestic situations of "The Miller's Daughter" (figs. 3.14, 3.15) and "Edward Gray" (fig. 3.10). The genre paintings of Horsley and Mulready are similarly linked to their illustrations, reproducing their groupings of figures in rustic settings. In some cases there is a practically a direct transfer from a painting to an engraving. Stanfield and Creswick, especially, exploited their existing work as a source of motifs. Stanfield's illustration showing the landscape and convent in "St Agnes' Eve" (fig. 1.10) is closely modeled on his painting *St Michael's Mount, Normandy,* a work which was engraved and published in *Heath's Picturesque Annual* (1834, fig. 1.9). These images are virtually interchangeable: adopting a low viewpoint, the artist accentuates the loftiness of both buildings and stresses the massiveness of their construction as vast, additive ensemble; the sea in *St Michael* is converted in the illustration into a bare mountainside of crags in echo of waves, and both vertiginous subjects are enwrapped in gloomy light.[84]

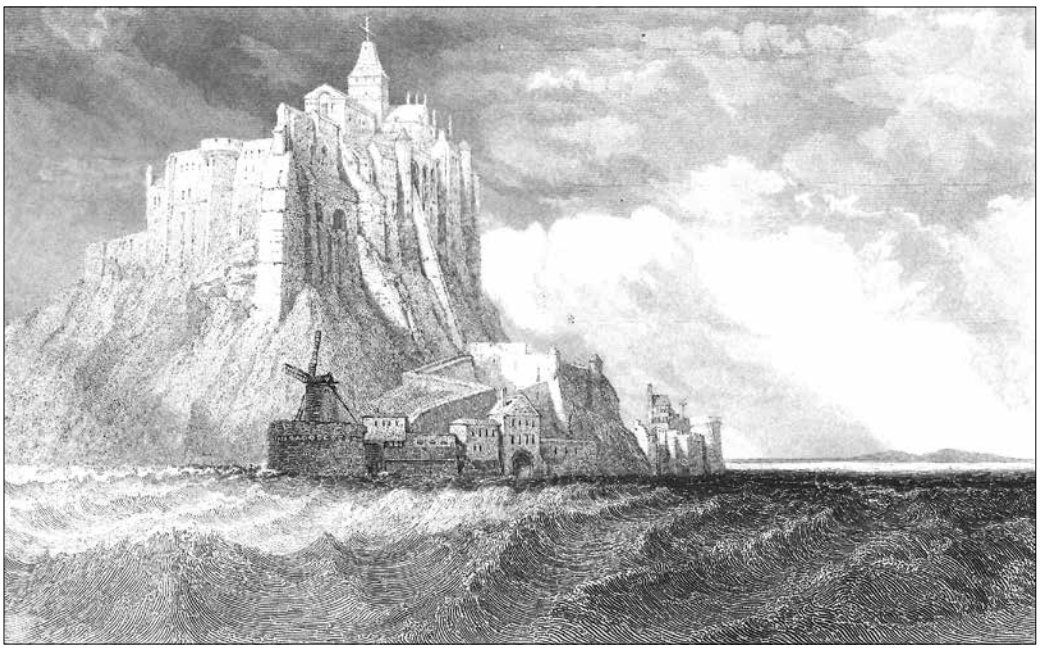


FIGURE 1.9. Clarkson Stanfield, *St Michael's Mount, Normandy from the West.* Line engraving by A. Freebairn, 86 × 140 mm. *Heath's Picturesque Annual* (London: Longman, Rees, Brown, 1834), n.p.

FIGURE 1.10. Clarkson Stanfield, landscape featuring in "St Agnes' Eve." Engraved by William James Linton, 110 × 85 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 311.

This sort of linkage also appears in Creswick's designs, with several of his landscapes for the Moxon Tennyson originating in his oils. His illustration of "The Golden Year" (fig. 3.2), set in Llanberis, North Wales, is a revamped version of his picturesque painting *Dolbadarn Castle* (1835, Sudley House, Liverpool), as well as drawing on his other versions of this subject.[85] There are many other connections between his "landskips" in color and those in black and white.

Though their illustrations were presented as original works, we can see how all of the artists reworked and adapted existing imagery to fit the new purpose of interpreting Tennyson's poems. This borrowing was ideal from the economic point of view, releasing the contributors from the laborious necessity of creating at least some of their images entirely anew: they saved energy and they could sell their work twice over. Conversely, several of the artists engaged in a reverse synergy, using the illustrations as visual ideas they could work on a larger scale as watercolors or oils. Rossetti did a watercolor version of *Sir Galahad* in 1857–59, directly after the publication of the *Poems* (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery); painted in lurid, hallucinatory tones, it slightly remodels some of the details in the illustration (fig. 4.9). He also exploited his illustration of "St Cecily" (fig. 4.10), reversing her enraptured pose to create the attitude of the main figure in *Beata Beatrix* (1864–70, Tate Britain, London), his devotional treatment of love in memory of his wife. Holman Hunt fared even better, painting between 1886 and 1905 two large oils of *The Lady of Shalott* (Manchester City Art Gallery; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT), which magnified his highly distinctive image in the pages of the Moxon Tennyson (figs. 4.4, 4.5).[86]

This cross-fertilization and borrowing, shifting from painting to illustration and back again, exemplifies the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary visual culture and places the *Poems* within a complicated nexus of reusable imagery and commercial production. The deployment of painterly language in the context of book art had the primary effect, moreover, of enhancing the illustrations' legibility for the mid-Victorian audience. Earlier readerships had read the comic grotesques of Cruikshank and Phiz as versions of eighteenth-century cartoons in the manner of Gillray; in the 1850s, likewise, the Moxon illustrators cast their designs in a semiotic that was generally familiar to bourgeois readers, enabling them to decode their interpretations in the same way that paintings could be read. With the exception of Rossetti, who at this time was relatively unknown to middle-class consumers, all of the artists employed on the Moxon scheme were familiar to anyone interested in the contemporary art scene, and reading an illustration by Horsley, for instance, was essentially the same as interpreting one of his narrative paintings exhibited at a London venue. The protocols of interpretation, like the styles of representation, were interchangeable: as Thomas

demonstrates in *Pictorial Victorians,* painting and illustration of the period converge and intermingle as a series of intersections and overlaps, a Victorian version of the tradition of the Sister Arts.[87] And this development was given further impetus by contemporary developments in the late 1850s.

One of these was the Art Treasures Exhibition held in Manchester from May to October 1857. According to Kooistra, this event boosted the book's popularity by encouraging "middle-consumers who purchased the Moxon Tennyson . . . to see themselves as modest collectors [purchasing] a portable art gallery."[88] Indeed, the Manchester exhibition was especially significant because it displayed a number of works by several of the book's contributors: a visitor to the exhibition could see paintings by Creswick (3), Millais (1), Maclise (7) Stanfield (6), and Mulready (3), and in reading these images s/he was well prepared for reading the illustrations.[89] The exhibition not only created an event that allowed bourgeois visitors to gain access to the elite cultures of fine art but also provided a template for those who looked at the paintings *and* purchased Moxon's extravagant miniature gallery: visitors could study, say, the style of Maclise at the exhibition, and study it afresh in the pages of Tennyson's volume.

This understanding was more generally underpinned by the flourishing interest in painting and illustration, a movement promoted by *The Art-Journal.* Founded, as *The Art-Union,* in 1840, the *Journal* carried a wide range of material intended for the middle-class public; by the end of the fifties it was considered the essential periodical for every home of taste and was widely read. Connoisseurship and the educational value of art were its prime concern; it reviewed the first edition of the *Poems* in 1857, and it provided a framing influence—encouraging those in pursuit of self-improvement to attend exhibitions, learn about contemporary and old masters, and buy fine books of the sort exemplified by Moxon's volume. The fact that articles on painting and illustration freely intermingled on its pages further promoted the notion of their parity and interchangeability.

How then was this shared painterly language put to the service of illustration? As noted earlier, critics of the late Victorian period constructed a model in which Pre-Raphaelite design was presented as a new, interpretive approach to the text, superseding the previous one, which was supposedly a matter of visual repetition of the words. We have seen how the distinction was a false one, with both sets of artists practicing both "illustration" *and* "interpretation." The artists visualizing the *Poems* partook of both, sometimes moving between the two and sometimes shifting along a continuum in the course of picturing a single poem. How they achieved this synthesis as they stretched the illustrative potential of painterly language is explored in the following chapters.

# 2

## Painting, Time, Light, Landscape

Although he apparently had only a very limited interest in the visual arts,[1] Tennyson is often described, in the words of William Allingham, as a "painter's poet" or "painter in words" who deploys an intensely visual technique embodying color, light, materialized details, expressive space, figures arranged or "composed," and a strong emphasis on the dynamics of looking.[2] Though he uses incantatory devices, he was more interested in showing than telling, structuring his verse as a dense montage of pictorial tableaux made up of dramatic situations in the manner of genre paintings, landscapes, and intricate scenes drawn from history.

This preoccupation is found throughout his oeuvre, irrespective of its subject or occasion, and is it especially visible—quite literally—in the selection of verse included in the *Poems*. Though of uneven quality, with some poems embodying a peculiarly early Victorian mawkishness which does not appeal to modern readers, its written imagery is striking, exemplified in a series of static, ekphrastic scenes: rich with visual detail, it is nuanced with light of "gleaming," twinkling, or "spangling" effects, submerged in the atmosphere of the evening or nighttime, fixated on landscapes and seascapes, obsessed with neomedieval details, focused on the heroics of Ulysses or Arthur or the sufferings of Edward Gray, and immersed in the daydreams of the Arabian Nights. In each of his poems, Tennyson creates a visionary experience, a reading transaction conceived as an act of hypnotic in/

sight, a waking dream or wide-eyed scrutiny of motifs arranged for us to "see" in our mind's eye. The opening stanza of "Mariana" epitomizes this approach:

> With blackest moss the flower-plots
> Were thickly crusted, one and all:
> The rusted nails fell from the knots
> That held the peach to the garden-wall. (7)

In these pictorialized lines Tennyson catalogues the elements in a list of "moss," "nails," and "knots" while animating the scene with a palette of contrasted colors that includes the blackness of the lichen, the orange of the rust, and the redness of the peaches. Our encounter with the verse is analogous to the scrutiny of a still life in which the natural imagery is a concomitant of a state of mind, with moss suggesting mental stagnation and the peach Mariana's ambiguous status as an unclaimed bride (in reference to the time-honored convention of women being fruit, to be picked by men); the "rusted nails" further convey her psychological malaise while implying the sufferings of Christ.

Such imagery constitutes a huge body of data to inspire and guide a visual artist whatever the quality of the verse, and it is not surprising to find, as Leonée Ormond has recently demonstrated in *Tennyson and Visual Culture,* that his writing was the subject of numerous paintings.[3] Perhaps the foremost source of literary artwork after Shakespeare, his poems were illustrated in paint before they appeared in black and white; and in projecting Tennyson's work the publisher reaffirms the connection between the "painter's poet," the literary registration of painterly effects, and the physical mark-making of visual art. Tennyson's pictorialism was ready-made material for visualization, and Moxon conceived the book as a sort of pictorial album, believing that illustrating a visual poet would create a bimodal text which, if not a *Gesamtkunstwerk,* was at least another expression of the mid-Victorian taste for hybridity, with painterly signs inscribed in both word and illustration, interacting in a complicated dialogue. In this arrangement Tennyson poems are matched with painterly designs, and to a large extent the poet's rich effects are literally reinscribed in the illustrations' pictorialism: color cannot be reproduced, but fine art in black and white becomes an equivalent which complements and mirrors the writer's approach to his subjects, as one critic observes, "as a painter works upon his canvas."[4]

This interchange has several dimensions. One obvious point of linkage is the visualization of detail. Tennyson is often described as a "Pre-Raphaelite poet," and there is a natural interaction between the writer's intense particularization of the "real" world and the verisimilitude of Holman Hunt, Rossetti, and Millais. This is sometimes an exact match, with the details registered in some of the

poems being revisualized in the illustrations. In "The Miller's Daughter" (fig. 3.14), Millais re-creates the narrator's direction that his wife should "fill my glass" and "give me one kiss" (87), and in "Godiva" (fig. 4.3) Holman Hunt visualizes accoutrements such as the "wedded eagles of her belt" (283), a stained-glass window, and carvings on pieces of furniture. All reappear with miniature specificity. It is not only the Pre-Raphaelites, however, who represent the texts' pictorial detail; on the contrary, all of the illustrators respond to what contemporary critics of literary painting described as "characteristic accessories" or "telling details." For example, Maclise re-creates Excalibur's "myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work" (193) in his showing of the mystic sword as it rises from the lake (fig. 2.1). Stanfield's "Oenone" (fig. 2.2) similarly depicts an important moment, reinscribing the heroine's communion with classical nature as she leans on "fragment twined with vine" (100).

FIGURE 2.1.
Daniel Maclise, "Morte d'Arthur" (The Finding of Excalibur). Engraved by John Thompson, 120 × 91 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 191.


FIGURE 2.2. Clarkson Stanfield, "Oenone." Engraved by William James Linton, 85 × 90 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 99.

The illustrators' focus on the replication of textual detail also focuses on Tennysonian light. The gloom of Arthur's passing eerily under the moon is re-created in Maclise's treatment of the drama abroad the funerary barge (fig. I.4), infusing the scene with an uncanny combination of brightness and the crepuscular. Stanfield likewise captures the "frosty skies," in brittle tones, above the "shadows of the convent-towers" (310) for "St Agnes' Eve" (fig. 1.10). Following the poet's emphasis on changing, expressive effects of light and shadow, both illustrators materialize the poet's atmospheric illumination.

The poems' visuality is further emphasized by the images' outlines, which encourage the reader to "look" at the poems as if s/he were engaging with a work of

visual art. Kooistra has argued that the borders enclosing some of the designs act to separate the illustration from the text,[5] but in my view the reverse is the case: the framing of the designs does not stress their status as separate works but converts the reader into a viewer who is encouraged to read Tennyson's painterly effects as if s/he were literally scanning the discrete surface of an image on canvas. We scan the illustration, it is implied, as we *should* scan the "pictures" within the poems' montage. On the other hand, the vignette format focuses the idea of "looking" at the verse as a matter of fluid scanning, replicating the cognitive processes involved in glancing at the intricate surface of a painting. As Le Men observes in her penetrating analysis of French illustration, which also applies to the English school, this "floating shape"[6] mirrors the *changing* perceptions of a work of art and suggests, once again, that we should engage with the visual images inscribed within the verse as if we were viewing, gazing, or glimpsing at the parts of a painting, a process the critic also likens to the flickering effects of a magic lantern. Fitted into the text as miniature works of art, the illustrations act, in short, to forge a perceptual link, based on notions of looking between three types of pictorialism: Tennyson's painting in words; the cuts' engraved replication of painterly effects; and the surfaces of "real" paintings. Word painting, painting in black and white, and painting for oil or watercolor are thus linked in an interdisciplinary continuum which negotiates and is put at the service of representing the writer's messages.

Several commentators have viewed these visual responses as arbitrary and uncoordinated. Kooistra describes the illustrators' treatment of Tennyson's themes as a "mishmash,"[7] and others have condemned the interpretive content as just as uneven as the aesthetic discordance, with its mixing of a range of style that runs from hard-edged Pre-Raphaelitism to Creswick's sub-Constable idylls. Yet these miniature paintings are remarkably unified in their approach to Tennyson's primary concerns and provide a coherent interpretation of key aspects of the verse. Foremost among these are Tennyson's obsession with time; landscape and rural life; nature, both benign and hostile; and his treatment of the interconnections of nature and human nature.

## VISUALIZING TENNYSONIAN TIME

"Tennyson's most impassioned subject," so Christopher Ricks observes, was time, and Ricks quotes Humphrey's House's well-known claim that the temporal weighed on the poet's consciousness "like a burden."[8] Of course, he was not unusual in being preoccupied with the process of change. The Industrial Revolution had meant that time itself was industrialized, with the new chronologies of commerce, manifested in railway timetables and the strict deadlines imposed

by production and delivery, impinging on all aspects of life; the evolutionary discoveries of paleontologists, culminating in Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 (published just later than the *Poems*), also challenged the fixedness of the temporal by introducing the notion of vast chronologies and the mutability of species. Responding to these developments, Tennyson, like Dickens and Eliot, articulates a mid-Victorian anxiety about the meaning of time and especially the relationship between objective chronology—time measured by science, the ticking of a clock—and the subjectivity of individual perceptions.[9]

The Moxon selection articulates this focus: time present, past, and yet to come are central concerns, with free movement between them. Indeed, Tennyson obsessively explores the territories of memory, regret, crisis, the suspended moment of experience, the possibilities of what might happen, and the endless need for renewal. He is especially concerned with evolutionary improvements in society while at the same time speculating on history. In "Locksley Hall," for instance, he negotiates the vicissitudes of the "glass of Time" (269) as they move, like a locomotive, "down the ringing grooves of change" (279), taking us from the banality of the present at the railway station in Coventry to the heroics of the past (281–82); and in "The Death of the Old Year" (172) we wait for the present to be dissolved in anticipating the emergence of the New.

These inflections give much of the verse a dynamic instability, and Tennyson underpins his philosophical position with the semantics of temporality. Bound by the clock, he mentions hours, minutes, night and day, "the breaking of the light" (12), evening, seasons and years, while using pronounced temporal markers—now, then, later, earlier—to chart transitions between the parts of extended narratives. Exploiting these structures, Tennyson creates a series of rich tableaux which present a difficult task for a visual interpreter who is compelled to work within the plastic constraints of the static moment.

The representation of time in a visual medium is of course a complex issue, and Tennyson's illustrators must have approached their work with an awareness of the divisions of the arts. According to Lessing in *Laocoon,* a book first published in 1766 but reprinted on several occasions in the mid-nineteenth century,[10] poetry and visual art were entirely distinct, with verse acting as a temporal medium used to represent process and change while the plastic arts were limited to a single frame in time. "Painting," Lessing claims, and Gombrich reports, can "only represent [a limited aspect] of an action,"[11] while the poet is free to extend the moment and explore events chronologically. However, Lessing's proclamations were barely an obstacle in an age when the arts were progressively dissolved into each other. All of the contributors had produced narrative and literary painting in which the "single moment," or what Hodnett calls the "moment of choice,"[12]

was part of a larger sequence, and few artists were constrained by *Laocoon*'s arguments; as Thomas explains, Lessing's theories were fundamentally at "odds" with the temporal "events" of Victorian painting and illustration.[13] Proficient in the process of storytelling, the illustrators of the *Poems* interpret the diachronic and synchronic aspects of Tennysonian time by using a series of well-structured strategies.

The diachronic approach involves the visualizing of a sequence to match and focus the author's temporal tableaux. This procedure involves two and sometimes three sequential images, diptychs and triptychs depicting the beginning, middle, and end of the narrative, moving in each case from a key event to a climactic moment, an unexpected or impressive encounter, or, more characteristically, a death or series of deaths. Acting, in the terms of Leighton and Surridge, as proleptic and analeptic designs,[14] the images embody the crucial events and the contrast between them.

Holman Hunt's two designs for "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" exemplify this visual time-telling, opening with the narrator's dreamy exposition (fig. 2.12) and concluding with the revelatory arrival of "the Good Haroun Alraschid" (fig. 5.12). The two illustrations which lead from the opening of the battle at the beginning of "The Ballad of Oriana" (figs. 2.8, 2.9) to the consequence of the fatal arrow likewise navigate the movement through time, and so do Maclise's illustrations for "Morte d'Arthur," this time mapping history from the finding of Excalibur to the king's demise (figs. I.4, 2.1); Horsley's twin illustrations for the poem "Circumstance" (62–63), with its fatalistic movement from romance to the grave, and his three-part montage for "The May Queen" (131, 134, 137), also follow the same trajectory. In each case, the illustrations reinforce the poetic storytelling, guiding the reader/viewer from the exposition through the consequences of time, while acting as links between key scenes.

In "Circumstance" (figs. 2.3, 2.4), Horsley structures the movement of time in the form of a diptych which starts with romance and ends with the lovers' death. In the first image, delicately cut by Thompson, we see a courting couple at the beginning of their relationship: the male looks coyly at his beloved, the woman looks downward with equal coyness, and the two figures are linked by their hands and by the rhyming of their outlines. These "Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall" at the right of the composition are then projected forward in time, reappearing to the left as the "two lives bound fast in one with golden ease" (62), transformed into parents: the orchard tree (the sign of fertility) has been replaced by a child and a dog (the emblems of stability and fidelity), and the family looks forward into a field of "healthy leas" (62) where children emblematize the continuing generations.


FIGURE 2.3. John Callcott Horsley, "Circumstance" (1). Engraved by John Thompson, 94 × 75 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 62.

This optimism, rendered in terms of sentimental genre pieces of the period, is countermanded, however, in the second scene. The first design highlights an Arcadian notion of time passing which is somehow arrested in the form of the English idyll, but the second design visualizes Tennyson's depiction of the inevitability of the passing of time and its only end in death, a process embodied in contrasted pairings. We have, first of all, the "two strangers" who become "two lovers" and "two lives," but in the closing image we see "two graves" with another


FIGURE 2.4. John Callcott Horsley, "Circumstance" (2). Engraved by William James Linton, 65 × 68 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 63.

funeral taking place, observed—in symbolic continuation of the notion of pairings producing new lives—by "two children" (62–63) and two mourners following the latest coffin as it proceeds through the church door.

This seems a schematic arrangement, and Horsley's two designs are apparently a literal match with Tennyson's binary oppositions of the two conditions of man/woman, life/death, youth/age, time's flow / the ending of time. Yet the illustrations point to a greater sense of interconnectedness and circularity by adding temporal details not contained in the poem: the woman's empty glove in the first

design could prefigure later losses, while the tree in the second engraving is a yew, the enduring churchyard sign of eternal life and perpetual regeneration. In other words, the diptych expresses time but conflates and intermingles movement from the present into the future and from the future into the past. Horsley's visualization of what is essentially an unexpansive and undeveloped text might thus be viewed as an interpretive reading which uncovers Tennyson's concern with a version of time that is ultimately circular rather than linear; as the poet suggests in "The Palace of Art," and reaffirms in his title of his two-stanza lament, human experience, caught in the temporal, is a not a matter of time's arrow but a "hollow orb of moving Circumstance / Roll'd round by one fix'd law" (125).

Horsley's triptych of "The May Queen" is similarly concerned with the working of a time both linear *and* a conflation of past, present, and future. In the first instance, his illustrations seem no more than a literal representation of three stages or types of "New" years. In the first illustration (fig. 2.5), he re-creates the bucolic imagery of "knots of flowers" (132), surrounded by

FIGURE 2.5. John Callcott Horsley, "The May Queen." Engraved by William James Linton, 95 × 82 mm (vignette.) Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 131.


FIGURE 2.6. John Callcott Horsley, "New Year's Eve." Engraved by William James Linton, 92 × 78 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 134.

admirers as the character is invested, for a year, as Queen; in the second (fig. 2.6), on "New Year's Eve" (134) she is shown chair-bound, with the setting sun shining through the window; and in the third (fig. 2.7) she contemplates her final moments, when "the weary are at rest" (140) and the only "new" experience is death, yearning to "pass to Him that died for me" (138). This sequence underscores Tennyson's narrative, carefully reproducing the stages in the character's decline from child of nature to deathbed invalid; but the artist also points to

the poet's writing of temporal interconnectedness by fusing and overlapping the three designs.

In the first illustration, depicting "the happy time" (133), the artist combines Tennysonian flower symbolism with emblems of mortality which are not included in the poem but prefigure the Queen's decline. The children and young people are contrasted to an old couple, and in the background the artist positions a church, a signifier of death already familiar from "Circumstance."

Deploying these signs proleptically, Horsley also strengthens the poem's fatalistic prescience by making a series of visual connections which read analeptically. In the opening passage Tennyson describes her "all in white," a virgin for the spring who appears, in the view of her lover Robin, a veritable springtime bird, as a "ghost," and Horsley privileges this whiteness in the second and third illustrations. Robin, we might surmise, senses her demise—a notion grimly foreshadowed by his "dying all for love"—and Horsley plays on the idea of a heart "breaking" (132) for her affections while already grieving for her death. The white dress pulls this thread together, and the artist compels the reader/viewer to read backwards and forwards, suggesting that even at her most vital or "merriest" (131), dressed in her pure white gown, the Queen is in the process of dying. Her white costume, apparently an ornamental device, is thus refigured as a sign of innocence, a sickbed dress, and ultimately her shroud.

Horsley further inverts time by manipulating the notion of enthronement. Viewed in the first illustration, the Queen's coronation seems a joyful event; if it is read backwards, however, we see that the throne becomes an invalid's chair, while the canopy formed by the tree's branches is ultimately linked to the canopy of her deathbed. The significance of each of these is forged together to suggest the interchangeability of the moments of flexible time, and other small details add to the effect of temporal indeterminacy: for example, the May Day hat held by a figure in the foreground of the opening illustration is hanging on the wall in the last, while the intense light of the first design is matched by bright illumination in the other images, a light which, like the guttering candle in the third engraving, will soon be extinguished.

So Horsley explores the tension between the linear forward movement of time and its capacity, according to Tennyson, to loop back: time may be inexorable, an inescapable journey to death, but Horsley highlights the poet's speculations about the omnipresence of past, present, and future in single moments. His focus in materializing this idea is worth noting because he is often disparaged as the weakest of the Moxon artists; contemporaries remark only on the poorness of his drawing or the weakness of his interpretation,[15] and others writing more recently have condemned him as the epitome of the "old school," supposedly lacking both

FIGURE 2.7. John Callcott Horsley, "Conclusion." Engraved by William James Linton, 96 × 88 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 137.

imagination and technique. My own, informal conversations with scholars in the field have been equally negative, with colleagues pointing once again to the mistakes in some of his figure drawing and their cliché-ridden blandness, points forcefully made by George Landow of the Victorian Web. Nevertheless, and despite his formal shortcomings, Horsley's approach to Tennyson's texts is penetrating, especially in his response to "The May Queen." It preserves Tennyson's fairy-tale telling of a pastoral theme by replicating the sentimental imagery of

rural genre in the manner of William Collins and the artist's own paintings, such as his oil of 1865, the anodyne *A Pleasant Corner* (Royal Academy, London); yet it visualizes the threatening presence of destructive time, reaching back and forward, in free flow, in the very texture of everyday life. Tennyson's treatment of the temporal echoes through the poem's lines, but Horsley crystallizes its essentials; in the middle of life, no matter how "glad" (131), we are in death, caught in time which is unexpectedly unstable.

Tennyson's ambivalent writing of temporal is reinscribed elsewhere. Holman Hunt revisits time negative in his two illustrations for "The Ballad of Oriana" (figs. 2.8, 2.9), and Millais explores time eternal in "The Death of the Old Year" (fig. 2.10). These designs work, once again, as semiotic schemes which privilege and expand the author's concern with the movement of events.

In "The Ballad of Oriana," Hunt foregrounds Tennyson's fatalism, emphasizing the inevitability of the heroine's death as if she were foredoomed to arrive

FIGURE 2.8.
William Holman Hunt, "The Ballad of Oriana" (1). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 94 × 80 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 51.

FIGURE 2.9. William Holman Hunt, "The Ballad of Oriana" (2). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 80 × 95 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 55.

at a particular point in time. The narrative sequence, amplified by the Dalziels' hard-edged cutting within discrete, black-outlined frames, is simple, and painfully direct. In the first illustration Oriana is shown as dynamic figure embracing her hero and in the second as if she were an effigy on a tomb, the fatal arrow still projecting from her breast. The movement of the tragedy, from the knight's preparation for war to the consequences of his deflected "bitter arrow" (53), is reinforced in a binary opposition of life/death which brutally asserts the vagaries of chance and its inescapable result.

Yet, as in Horsley's opening design in "The May Queen" (fig. 2.5), which prefigures the Queen's fate, Hunt foreshadows Oriana's future in the symbolic details of the ballad's first image (fig. 2.8). Tennyson does not describe a scene of the knight stringing his weapon, but Hunt includes the event as a blunt assertion of what will happen. The hero's archery will be the cause of her death, and to

reinforce the point he places her stooping body in deadly symmetry with the arc of the bow, creating a narrative link which ironically points to her demise as a result of the arrow (fig. 2.9). Pursuing the time-driven pattern, Hunt further manipulates aspects of Tennyson's narrative. The text specifies the knight's departure at night, but the artist places the initial scene in broad sunlight, the time most associated with the immediacy of the present; however, the forthcoming darkness in the form of a journey through a "yew-wood black as night" (52) is signaled by a branch of yew (fig. 2.8).

Time is thus figured, once again, as a doom-laden present, with the first illustration acting as a proleptic emblem of events yet to come and which, by their very immanence, it seems, *must* come: time's arrow becomes the arrow of death. Nevertheless, the narrative remains unfinished. Oriana may have been killed, but in the second illustration Hunt foregrounds the notion of the unfinished nature of many of Tennyson's stories. Though the hero kisses his beloved farewell, he is shown in earshot of the "roaring of the sea" (55), with a tiny detail of a ship in the background preparing to take him away. Time has not come to an end with Oriana's death, and Hunt offers only a suggestive near-conclusion to what Ricks has called Tennyson's "art of the penultimate,"[16] of time as an unresolved flux of uncertainties.

On the other hand, time can be generative, a theme explored in Millais's reading of the "Death of the Old Year" (fig. 2.10). In this illustration, Millais reaffirms Tennyson's idea of the circularity of time, but figures it in his own terms, drawing upon but not providing a literal mirroring of the text. He *does* reproduce some of the textual detail—re-creating with poetic intensity the bitter cold of "winter snow" and the chilly glimmer of the bell (172)—but his approach is otherwise one of editing and rearrangement in which he presents his own understanding of Tennyson's theme.

Notably, he discards Tennyson's personification of the old and new year as Dickensian types, at once a "corpse" and a "new face" (174). No such figures appear in his illustration. Rather, Millais takes one scene, the bell tower, and converts it into a symbolic expression of rebirth and continuity. In his reading, the bell is not ringing but acts as an emblem of eternity, a bell that will toll a marriage, a christening, and a funeral, time in endless renewal. The wheel on which it turns (an extratextual invention) similarly suggests the wheel of life or perhaps the medieval wheel of fortune, a sign of circularity to match the roundness of the curving lines in Maclise's image of Arthur's regeneration on the death barge (fig. I.4). Millais adds another sign, an owl, an emblem of eternal life and suggestive, perhaps, of the wisdom of ancient knowledge.

Praised for its draftsmanship and evocation of the cold,[17] and beautifully cut by the Dalziels, who capture the subtle effects of light, the illustration has a

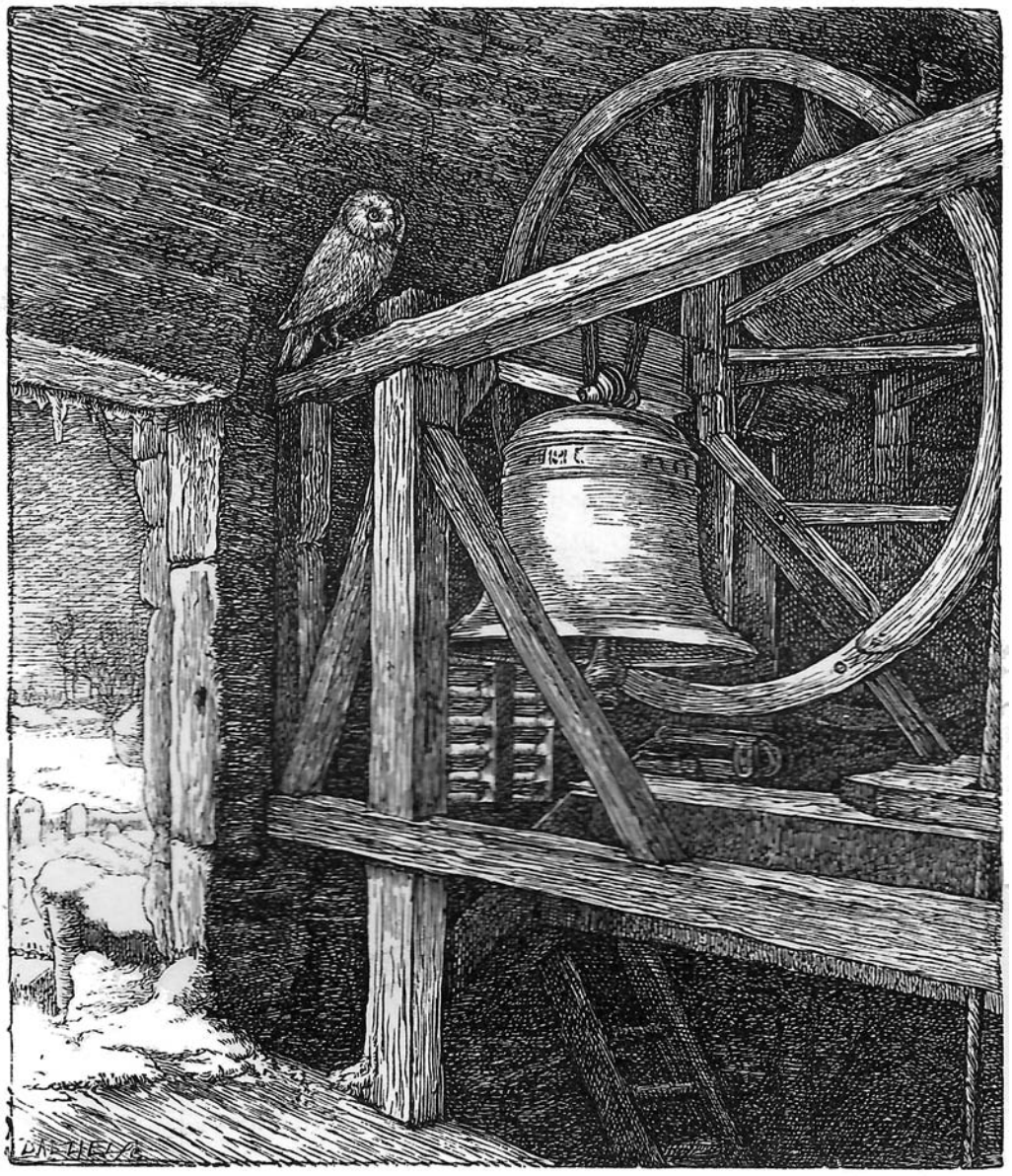


FIGURE 2.10. John Everett Millais, "The Death of the Old Year." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 98 × 83 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 172.

haunting intensity, of time suspended while time is considered. It is, more especially, a profound response to the text, using the writer's semiotic to create a parallel semiotic of Millais's own. Curiously, Forrest Reid could not see the connection between the poem and the image, claiming it was mismatched and should have been placed next to another verse, "Song—The Owl," which, he says, is missing from this edition; in fact, it appears on page 22.[18] However, the

illustration for "The Death of the Old Year" was clearly intended to visualize this source material, and takes its place as another pictorial reading of the poet's writing of the flux and flood of time, tracing Tennyson's obsession with the diachronic in detail and with great understanding.

What, then, of the synchronic? Tennyson is fascinated by the process of temporality, insisting in "The Golden Year" that "all things move" as "The Sun flies forward" (261), but he is equally concerned with ephemeral time, the Romantic epiphany of emotional crisis, insight or revelation contained in a highly charged, suspended moment, "ever at a breath" ("Godiva," 283). His characters are enmeshed in these significant instants of feeling, of time taken *out* of time, and the illustrators repeatedly encode the *now* in distinctive forms. The prime strategy involves showing the characters in a dramatic pose, at the very minute of the experience. Maclise, for example, encapsulates Arthur's enrapture as he is about to take Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake (fig. 2.1). Though condemned by some as melodramatic and artificial,[19] his gesture, with its clasped hands and intense gaze, signals intense perception, and for this moment, and this moment alone, he realizes the implication of being offered this Christlike authority. The same approach is found in the work of Holman Hunt and the other Pre-Raphaelites, all of whom depict the human body as a malleable site of expression, a frozen attitude in which inner nature is for a moment crystallized. In Hunt's "Beggar Maid" (fig. 1.8) the king's moment of instantaneous decision, of deciding to marry the girl on sight, is vividly conveyed by showing his holding of the crown over her head as they walk up a flight of stairs; and in Millais's first design for "Dora" the artist depicts the "short" (fig. 3.6), agitated instant of William's refusal to obey his father. Time ticks in the background, as it does in "The Miller's Daughter," but emotionalized time is arrested, felt only in the instant of angry gestures and stares.

The illustrators foreground the importance of the immediate by privileging other textual elements as well, focusing *the moment* in images of transience. The most striking of these is Millais's "St Agnes' Eve" (figs. 2.11, 5.5). This engraving is a subtle encapsulation of the crucial instant as the martyr goes to meet Christ, depicting, probably uniquely in Victorian art, and cut with delicate expertise by the Dalziels, the character's frozen breath. Figured in the verse as an image of her emotional fragility, it is converted in the illustration into quivering instantaneousness: "My breath to heaven like vapour goes / May my soul follow soon!" (309). The glittering candle flame, existing only for the moment, also works to reinforce the poem's emphasis on experience as ephemeral as flickering light, "sparkling," "glittering" and "starry" (308–9). The effect is one of psychological immediacy, foregrounding the author's perception of his characters' lives as segments of

FIGURE 2.11. John Everett Millais, detail of "St Agnes' Eve." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 50 × 60 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 309.

minutely focused experience, epiphanies in the form of a Romantic crisis not unlike Wordsworth's emotionally freighted "spots of time" in *The Prelude*.[20]

An essential part of the ephemeral *now* is light, and its significance is explored throughout the bimodal text. Tennyson's illumination is complex and all-enfolding. In addition to numerous allusions to the sun and moon, he specifies broad daylight, moonlight, midday, afternoon, dawn, dusk, and a more generic gloom. These details specify a time of day and symbolize time itself. The present can be a moment of flickering chiaroscuro, as in "St Agnes' Eve" (fig. 2.11), but is also represented as bright light, while the past, associated with memory, is usually nocturnal, or dusk time. This formulation has some inconsistencies, but the illustrators revisualize these terms in detail, providing a graphic reinforcement of the poet's contrasts.

This match is epitomized by the linkage between Tennyson's description of St. Cecily in "The Palace of Art" (118) and Rossetti's reimagining (fig. 4.10), both

of which insist on the immediacy of the moment by highlighting the effects of brilliant illumination. In a suggestive examination of time in Victorian art, Steve Dillon notes how the artist depicts the sun dial "poised at high noon" when there is barely any shadow[21]—with the only shade appearing in the space between the saint's folded legs and the underside of the organ; moreover, the same brightness characterizes Hunt's "Godiva" (fig. 4.3) and "The Beggar Maid" (fig. 1.8). All such images, Dillon suggests, are "a moment's monument," of illuminating instants literally expressed,[22] where the characters "see the light" or "throw light" on their understandings of their situations, or realize they have been "enlightened."

Light means emotional clarity, but gloom connotes the more reflective process of memory. Tennyson employs this convention to traditional effect, and the same can be said of the landscape artists' deployment of nocturnes or dusk in their landscape treatments of melancholy subjects. Mainly concerned with memory and regret, Creswick and Stanfield's landscapes are largely immersed in gloom or fading light, a device featuring in Mulready's "The Deserted House" (fig. I.2). Tennyson specifies an absorbing darkness, "dark as night" (43), but the artist illumines his scene in a play of shadow, caught between day and light and again suggestive of a sort of perpetual stasis. Millais likewise employs significant gloom, especially in "Mariana" (fig. I.1). Of course, the text is overpowered with the imagery of time, but Millais reduces this excess with a simple metaphor of light arrested. If St. Cecily thrives in the rapture of high noon, of time as it happens, then Mariana, sitting in her gloomy chamber as evening sets in, is absorbed by the darkness of memory and regret, of time perpetually locked.

At the same time, the illustrators' use of light to connote the temporal provides another link between the verse, the engravings, and painting. Significant illumination is essentially a painterly trope: bright light as a metaphor of the immediate features throughout Victorian art, while the reflective shades of dusk or darkness are signs of the past in many "atmospheric" paintings of the period. The illustrators transfer this convention to the printed page, and there are several examples, once again, of similarities between their image-making on canvas and their illustrations. Hunt's sharply illuminated engravings recapture the eye-peeling intensity of light in his paintings of *The Awakening Conscience* (fig. 1.7) and *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Priest from the Persecution of the Druids* (1850, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford),[23] while Millais's crepuscular *Vale of Rest* (1858–59, Tate Britain, London) bears direct comparison with the artist's fading light in "The Death of the Old Year" (fig. 2.10).[24] Signifying the present and the present, perception and memory, light is a distinctive visual sign. Familiar to the art-savvy audience, it acts as another conventional code which enabled contemporary readers to interpret the poems.

## THE PATHETIC FALLACY AND THE SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE

The illustrations read in another context as visual representations of the poet's writing of the "pathetic fallacy," a term coined by Ruskin in volume 3 of *Modern Painters* (1856) to describe and critique the poetic device of writing the physical world as a symbol of the human mind. Tennyson characteristically writes nature "seen through the medium [of] emotion," and so do the illustrators. His approach is perhaps best summed up by Lewis Gates in an essay of 1900, who notes how Tennyson "has done more than perhaps any other single poet . . . to spiritualize nature in the sense of making it subservient to the needs of the human soul and of forcing it to become symbolical of human moods and passions. He had done even more than Wordsworth to give a new meanings to nature . . . using [it to express] a range of complex [feelings]."[25]

Many could disagree with this judgment (is Tennyson's writing of nature more "symbolical" than Shakespeare's, for instance?), but Gates's general point is sound, and his illustrators respond in detail to Tennyson's strategy. In so doing, they affirm another Ruskinian precept, as voiced in his *Lectures on Landscape* (1876): "the interest of a landscape," he argues, "consists wholly in its relation [to its figures],"[26] and is meaningless if it does not act as a mirror of human feeling. This idea runs in strict parallel with the pathetic fallacy of the poetry, and if we link the two we can see how visual art, infusing the natural world with "passionate" evidence of 'human existence,"[27] can be put at the service of Tennyson's poetic animism.

In the illustrations, as in the text, the phenomenal world is animated by human emotion: Tennyson inscribes a range of feelings in his detailed descriptions of landscapes, their climate and light effects, and the illustrators reinforce his emphasis on this mode by offering a parallel reinscription. In the classic act of reading a bimodal text, the reader/viewer's eye is compelled to move between Tennyson's mental topographies and their visual equivalents, tangible signs of the emotionalized world to match, confirm, and extend the implications of the poet's pantheism; oscillating in symbiotic interchange, the two sets of signs create a powerful sense of setting, *landscape* as *mindscape.* In the words of John Rosenberg, the landscape "is highly charged" with emotion and becomes a "spatialization . . . of consciousness."[28] The illustrators focus on three distinctive types: one involves representations of languor and sensuality; another is concerned with serenity; and a third, in complete contrast, with the turbulent sublime, symbolizing torment and energy in convulsive, impressive settings.

The dual text of "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" (13–19) exemplifies the idea of nature as a sign of luxurious somnolence, an emblem of the narrator's mind as he drifts "adown the Tigris," surrounded by the sensuous "sheeny summer morn." Tennyson encodes this smooth idleness in dense catalogues of

FIGURE 2.12. William Holman Hunt, "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" (1). Engraved by Thomas Williams, 81 × 91 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 13.

succulent imagery, and Hunt captures the poem's dreamy indolence by representing emblems of stillness and reverie, which he shows, in contrast to the verbal text, in broad daylight rather than nighttime.

Placing the narrator in the foreground, the artist surrounds him in the manner of Victorian painting with significant details working as an index of a mood: the stillness of the river, Tennyson's "clear canal" (15) or "smooth level" (14), occupies the background along with "solemn palms" (16), while the "fragrant . . . deeps" and "fragrant marge" (14–15), revisualized as water lilies, are placed next to the picture plane, creating a veritable "realm of pleasance" (17). The impression is one of harmonious unity; Tennyson's poem is calculatedly overladen with the images of excess, and Holman Hunt immerses his character, who seems to struggle to stay awake, with his hand placed over his face in drowsy languor, at the heart of a natural world that both reflects his state of mind and creates it. Tennyson captures the process of the narrator's dreaming of his journey, and Holman Hunt captures the

slumbering event in a single frame. The interactions of nature and human nature are exemplified in this shared imagery, and embodied in the fusions between the poem and its illustration. Indeed, there is a smooth consonance between the two parts of the dual text in terms of their structural echoing and replication. Tennyson combines his lush imagery with sensuous alliterative patterns to underscore the sinuous movements of water and mind, the "forward-flowing tide of time" and "sheeny summer-morn" (13); and Holman Hunt finds a visual equivalent to these rhythms in the form of the undulating arabesques of the impossibly curvaceous boat, the narrator's feminized clothes and outline, the patterns made by the trees, and the sinuous, serpentine stems of the lilies.

Hunt's illustration is figured, in short, as the visual encapsulation of Tennyson's writing of the pathetic fallacy. His approach is sophisticated, more easily read by contemporaries than modern observers. But others achieve parallel effects. Tennyson's fascination with the languid is treated with comparable intensity by Mulready in his illustration for "The Sea-Fairies" (fig. 2.13).

FIGURE 2.13. William Mulready, "The Sea-Fairies." Engraved by John Thompson, 80 × 95 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 31.

Holman Hunt's indolent figure implies a sort of contained eroticism, and Mulready's visualization of the setting amplifies the erotic allure of the sirens who tempt the mariners to land on the "green brink" (31), where nature is a supercharged emblem of the women's sexuality. This connection is achieved partly by paraphrasing and accentuating the textual directions. In both texts, visual and verbal, the poem's emphasis on natural plenty is pictured in a lush Arcadian scene: Tennyson provides a semantic field of natural excess, a place of "blissful downs and dales," a "clover-hill" and luscious "lea" (32), and Mulready envisages a paradise, with floral coronets worn by the sirens and a vase spilling fruit, all framed by delicate flowering saplings. None of these items is mentioned in the poem, but each acts as an equivalent to the written description. The illustration also intensifies the sense of languid excess by privileging some details and developing others. Mulready particularly stresses the link between the "rounded arms and bosoms" and the setting. Taking up on Tennyson's lexicon of arabesques that swell, "curve," "billow," and "furl" (31–32), he figures the landscape as an image of female sexuality by rhyming the curvaceous outlines of the women's bodies with the curved outline of the vase and fruit in the foreground. This connection foregrounds the textual interplay between the sirens' offers of "sweet kisses" and "sweet words," the workings of a perfect nature of rainbows, "coves and caves," and the action of the erotic "poising wave" (32). In the illustration, as in the poem, women and nature are fused into one idea, with female sexuality depicted as a force of nature. However, as an accomplished painter of the female nude, Mulready extends far beyond the poet's conception of this time-honored equation. Tennyson gives the sirens some human status in the form of their "sweet faces" (31); but Mulready makes them into impersonal types viewed from behind and faceless. In his reading, women are converted into a natural objects, aspects of the instinctive, and driven forward only by their sexuality.

In complete contrast is the interplay between landscapes and calm and reflective states of mind. Tennyson deploys the semiotics of the English idyll, encoding the characters' serenity in the picturesque language of peaceful landscapes, rustic villages, framing trees of a recognizably English variety, long vistas, atmospheric skies, floral displays, and contented countryfolk. His imagery is traditional, and Creswick and Stanfield provide a series of illustrations in direct equivalence to the writer's Romanticism. In practice, Tennyson's Wordsworthian interactions of landscape and human experience are matched by practitioners in the painterly traditions of Gainsborough, Constable, and Palmer, and their effects are greatly assisted by the delicate engraving of Williams (who specialized in landscapes) and Green. Creswick provides telling responses to the graveyard poems, "Claribel" (fig. 2.14) and "A Dirge" (fig. 2.15).

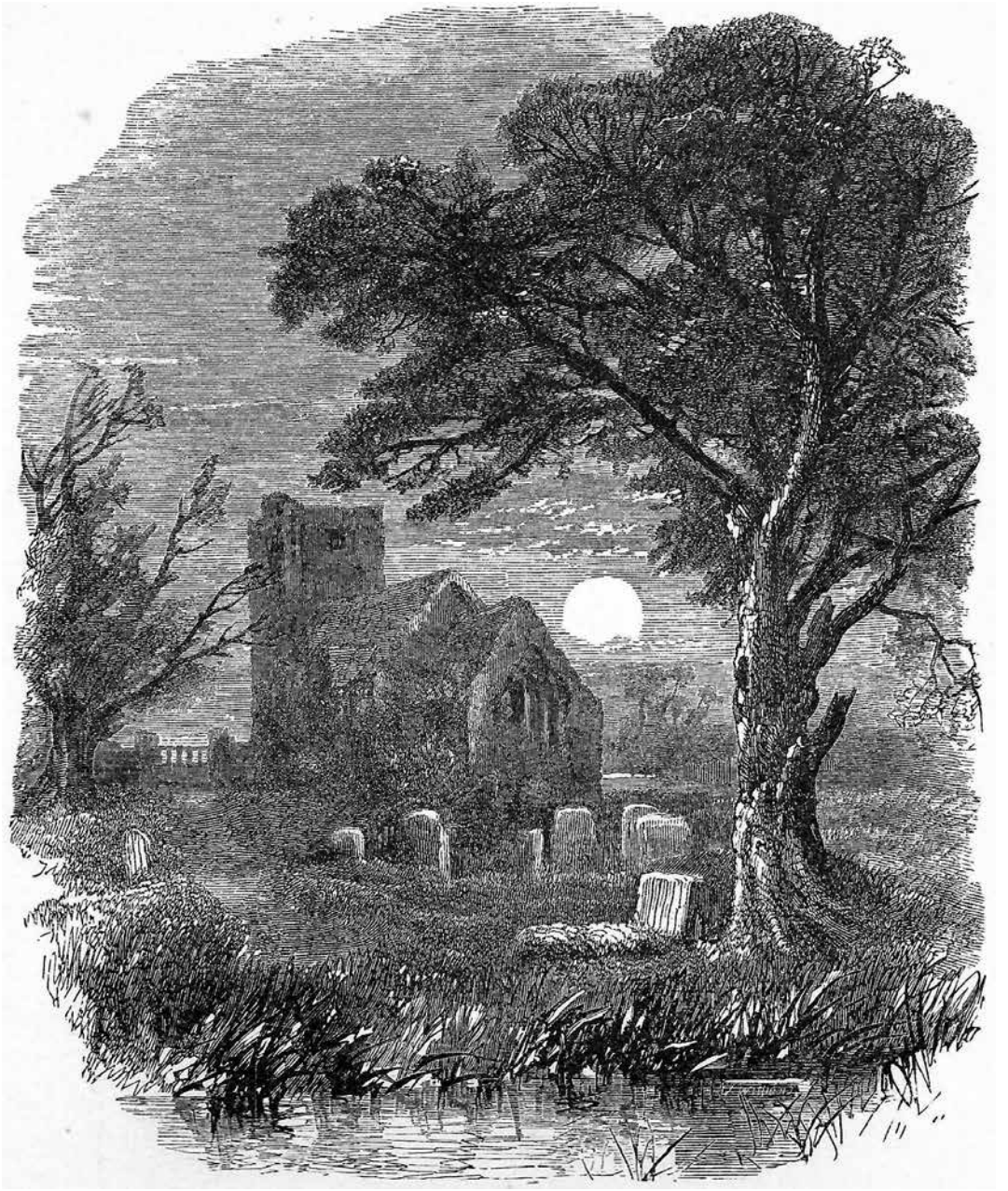


FIGURE 2.14. Thomas Creswick, "Claribel." Engraved by Thomas Williams, 100 × 80 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 1.

FIGURE 2.15. Thomas Creswick, "A Dirge." Engraved by William James Linton, 97 × 81 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 47.

In both designs, the rustic settings suggest the serenity of the departed, with no figures present and no human presence except for well-marked graves; each is presented as an observed scene, as if in the memory of the narrator, and each focuses on mood rather than narrative. In "Claribel" the artist underscores the poet's focus on the character's "slumberous" rest by re-creating an "ambrosial scene" (2) in which the "solemn oak," "moss'd headstone," and "babbling" stream (1–2) are highly conventionalized emblems of her release from the travails of living; like Wordsworth's Lucy in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), she has been reabsorbed into a (just) pre-Darwinian paradise of Nature Serene. In "A Dirge," similarly, the churchyard of picturesque trees and verdant undergrowth denotes calming rest and freedom from a life marred by anguish, a contrast, as Tennyson explains, in the juxtaposition of "grave / Let them rave" (47). The grave, enclosed by the signs of nature's endless process, is advocated in the poems and literally foregrounded in the illustrations. In each response, Creswick's treatments are in strict accordance with Tennyson's very English notion of release, of freedom from toil embodied in the home countryside. Praised by contemporary reviewers and among the most popular illustrations at the time of publication, these conventionally "lovely landscapes,"[29] as one notice writer described them, stress the plea for perfect rest, an effect accentuated by their form as vignettes which are placed above the opening stanza and dominate the letterpress. Seeming to merge with the page as they dissolve around their edges, the illustrations suggest a sort of dreamy passing into unconsciousness, the perceptual emblem of seeming to fuse with or be absorbed into the tranquil scene. If the hard-edged, framed illustrations imply immediacy and the here and now, these vignettes are rather like images of glimpsed possibilities, tranquil states removed from harsh realities in a slumbering dream.

However, there are other complexities at work in this visual-verbal interaction. In each text the setting expresses the deceased's restfulness, but it is also possible to read both writing and design as the expression of the narrator's, and perhaps Tennyson's, ambivalent attitude towards death. The gloom of the nocturne in the written text of "Claribel" implies an unspoken grief, and in "A Dirge" the contrast between the refrain "Let them rave" and "grave" could suggest both recognition of relief and a repressed anger, a frustrated vacillation between two unappealing alternatives. In particular, Tennyson's emphasis on the cataloguing of natural phenomenon seems to suggest a more elemental fear of absence, as if the objects described in his poems were somehow filling the space left by the departed; indeed, the poems and illustrations are characterized by a horror vacui, describing objects and natural phenomena in a sort of defiant opposition to the emptiness of extinction. The effect is intensified by the particularization of these

objects: in "Claribel" the oak tree is "thick-leaved" and the thrush described by its redundant synonyms "throstle" and "mavis" (2), and in Creswick's illustration the graves, rushes by the brook, and textures of the trees are carefully detailed in finely cut lines and highlights (an effect probably owing as much to Williams's engraving as the artist's drawing). Likewise, in "A Dirge" the text specifies "bramble-roses, faint and pale," "gold-eyed kingcups fine," and "long purples of the dale" (48–49), while the engraving offers an architectural study of the church and a botanical reproduction of the birch or "silver birk" (47).

The illustrations act, in short, to buttress the poems' exploration of a void that has to be (re)filled with the matter of the natural world. The beloved is absorbed back into nature, and the absence of any figures in each of the designs stresses the

FIGURE 2.16. Thomas Creswick. "Ode to Memory." Engraved by William James Linton, 95 × 86 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 24.

idea that the deceased characters are now only parts of a world made up of *other* physical phenomena; all that is left for the bereaved. Working in subtle interplay, the words and illustrations explore a complex response to the workings of death and grief, and the complications of confronting loss where only nature survives.

Other pairings examine parallel material, with landscape being used to represent the workings of reflection. In "Ode to Memory" (fig. 2.16) nature symbolizes "the dewy dawn" (24) of dim recollection, an idyllic scene visualized by Creswick as another perfect English landscape; and in "Move Eastward, Happy Earth" (fig. 3.1) the artist embodies the narrator's contentment, in anticipation of his "marriage morn" (372) in a picturesque paradise, a new Eden of contentment. Other nuances are added by "A Farewell" (fig. 2.17), in which the bare autumnal trees and wintry sky are the visual signs of melancholy.

FIGURE 2.17. Thomas Creswick, "A Farewell." Engraved by Thomas Williams, 100 × 80 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 347.

In every case, Creswick's readings are charged with emotion. Though he points to tensions in the writer's approach, his ability to exemplify mood is a functional equivalent to the work of a poet whose nature descriptions were said by one contemporary to combine the "truthful ideality of Claude [with the] the homely richness of Gainsborough."[30] Though dismissed as purely conventional by modern critics as no more than painterly designs brought into random juxtapositions with the verse, Creswick's illustrations elucidate key aspects of Tennyson's Romantic writing and appealed to a large cohort to contemporary readers who preferred his conservative style, manipulating the tropes of a long-established pastoralism, to the more radical styles of Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites.

Stanfield, conversely, engages with Tennyson's epics—presenting landscapes which visualize his characters' grand sensibilities. This strategy is embodied in the sublime rather than the picturesque, inscribing the heroes' intense feelings in land and seascape. The classical scale is registered in his illustration for "Oenone" (fig. 2.2), with the heroine's communication with Ida framed by a colossal panorama that defines humankind in terms of its diminutive status measured against the vastness of the pantheistic divine. The same epic world is explored in "Ulysses" (fig. 2.18), in which the artist registers the hero's unsettled feelings of frustration and disappointment by visualizing in gray tones the poet's dour landscape of "barren crags" (264) and sea. However, Stanfield primarily focuses on the representation of a natural scene that symbolizes the hero's choices, alternating between the settled life of the "still hearth" (264) and the pursuit of adventure and renewal in the pursuit of the "newer world" (266). The first of these is embodied in details which do not appear in the poem but give material form to the character's life of responsibility: the city appearing to the right of the composition signals his role ruling a "savage race" (264), and his status as an authority figure is represented by the port-side castle. The sea, however, personifies both fear and desire. As in the poem, it is both "dim" and "vext" (265) with movement, while also offering the promise of release; though, apparently, no more than a piece of marine drawing, it mirrors the narrator's state of mind as he vacillates between the two ways of living, active or passive, introspection and endeavor.

The choice is dramatized by the two vessels animating the bay. One, a rowing boat in dark tones, goes inland, the emblem of submission to the life of emasculated domesticity; while the other, going out to sea, with a white sail and dynamic rigging of flags, symbolizes his desire to venture the

> untravell'd world. . . .
> Yearning in desire . . .
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought. (265)

FIGURE 2.18. Clarkson Stanfield, "Ulysses." Engraved by W. T. Green, 96 × 100 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 264.

The two overlap along the center line, a fulcrum in the balance between two modes of living, on land or on the high adventure of the sea, although the prominence of the ship going out to sea powerfully affirms Tennyson's famous insistence on the need for undying ambition, "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" (266). Stanfield was described by a contemporary as a "poet" who expressed "the power, the strength, the passion [and] all the moods of the changing ocean,"[31] and his anthropomorphic vision is well matched to Tennyson's vision of an animistic nature.

A parallel fusion of text and illustration is evident in Stanfield's picturing of "Break, Break, Break" (fig. 2.19). As in "Ulysses," some details are a direct transfer from the verse: the boy and his sibling are represented, and so are the "crags" (374) in the form of a sublime cliff. The "fisherman's boy" with his


FIGURE 2.19. Clarkson Stanfield, "Break, Break, Break." Engraved by W. T. Green, 93 × 78 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 373.

"sister at play" (374) are included to suggest the omnipresence of death as they await their fisher father's return, or it could be that they are as yet unaware of the anguish of mortality and act as a means of accentuating the poem's central concern with the narrator's loss. The artist's main emphasis, however, is on the stormy seascape, which he uses to materialize the speaker's lament for a dead

friend. He foregrounds the desolate setting of "cold gray stones" (373) as a symbol of grief; the crashing seas become a powerful sign of his psychological collapse; and the breaking waters act as a metaphor for emotional "breaking," an effect highlighted by the expressionistic striations of rain and the vignette's ragged left-hand margin.

Stanfield's apparently literal design therein provides an evocative image to buttress the writer's deployment of the pathetic fallacy. Yet, as in Creswick's explication of the poet's ambivalent attitude towards death in "Claribel" (fig. 2.14) and "A Dirge" (fig. 2.15), Stanfield's design adds another dimension to our understandings. Tennyson's inner torment is externalized in the form of the weather, but Stanfield's visceral treatment simultaneously suggests an *indifferent* nature: the sea is full of the dynamism of life, with its thrashing energy, while the beloved has gone to inert oblivion. In part a representation of grief, the illustration also suggests the poet's anguish as he contemplates nature's unthinking selection of what is to live, and what to pass. This is of course very much the agonized contemplation of "In Memoriam" (1851), and Stanfield's design, I suggest, is a coded version of the writer's unresolved feelings about humanity's position in what seems both a sympathetic mirror of emotions *and* an unfeeling force over which we have no control.

We can see, then, how significant settings are deployed by the illustrators to privilege Tennyson's writing of an emotionalized nature. Practically all of the verse anthologized in the *Poems* is informed with this magic, pantheistic consciousness, and the illustrators' choice is telling in its range, highlighting the author's complicated movement from languor and eroticism to a serene acceptance of death which is immediately contradicted by grief and existential anguish. These messages are reencoded, materialized, and amplified. It is interesting, moreover, to consider the illustrations where the artist chooses *not* to represent the author's natural settings, or to take aspects of that information to create an image that entirely revises the original verse in its own terms. This approach is adopted by Millais, especially in his illustrations for poems of extreme female emotion, "Mariana" (fig. I.1), with its glimpse of gloomy nature, and "The Sisters" (fig. 2.20).

The most powerful equation of troublesome thoughts and turbulent nature, however, is the illustration for "The Sisters" (fig. 2.20). Narrated by one of the siblings, the text describes the romance between "the Earl" and the "fairest" of the siblings, her death at his hand as he throws her from the "turret," and the narrator's revenge by stabbing him with a "dagger sharp and bright," "thro' and thro'" (109–10). Cast in the form of a ballad, with two sets of refrains, Tennyson's lurid story of murder and revenge echoes the neurotic excess of Browning's "Porphyria's

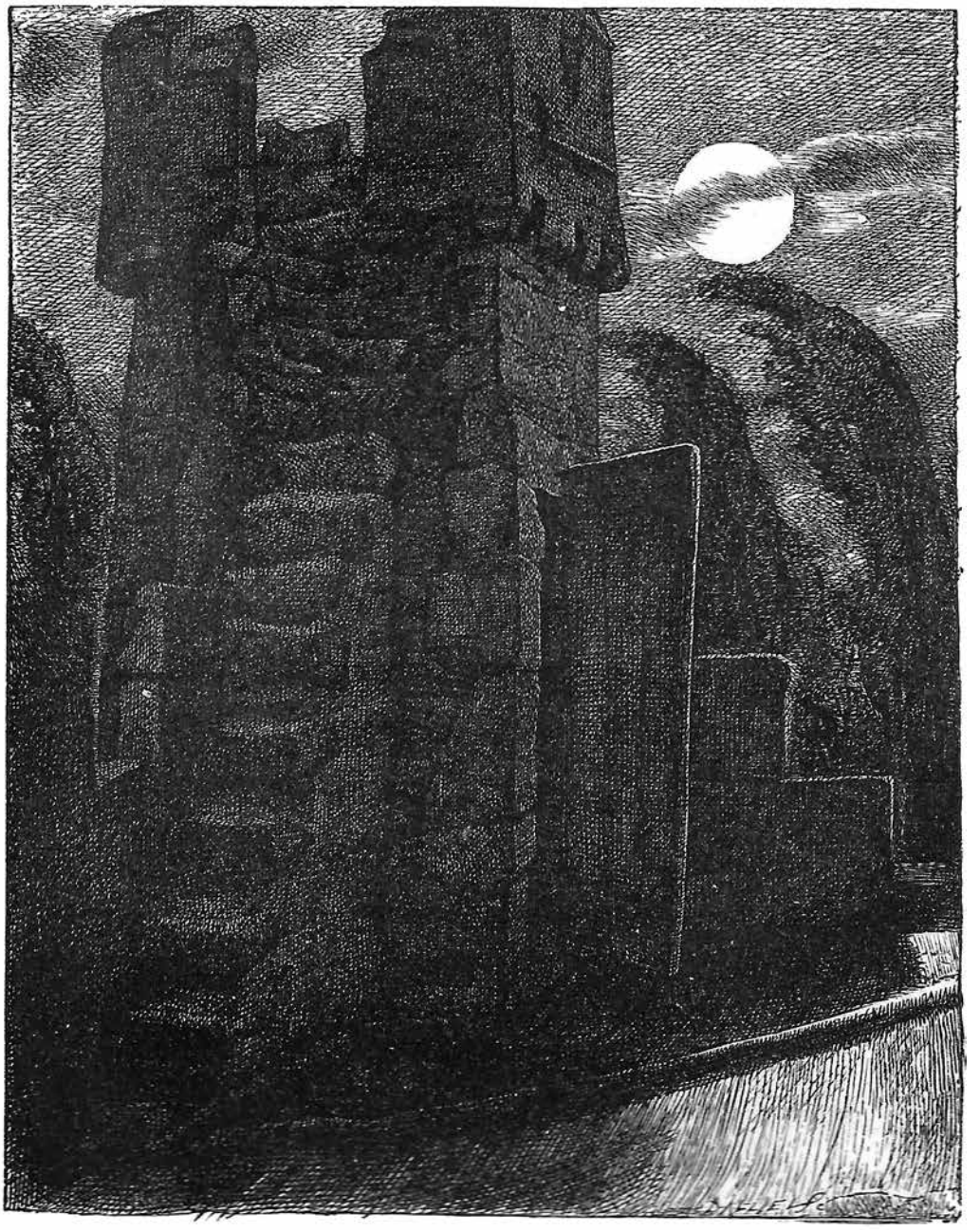


FIGURE 2.20. John Everett Millais, "The Sisters." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 95 × 74 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 109.

Lover" in the 1842 Moxon edition of *Dramatic Lyrics,* and Millais, mindful of its graphic nature, produced a series of studies in which he experimented with a Gothic vocabulary. Two preparatory drawings in Birmingham City Art Gallery track his thinking: one shows the revenger combining the dead earl's hair ("I curl'd and comb'd his comely head," 111), pushing down as if she were strangling him despite the fact that he is already dead; and a second, of an "Angry Woman," perhaps an experiment on how to visualize the infuriated narrator.[32] This design, in keeping with Hunt's "Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.4), charts an explosive assertion of individuality, with the character taking control of a situation and reaching far beyond the passive female as she breaks through into transgressive mental territory.

But this narrative does not appear in the published illustration; instead, Millais refigures the turret, privileges the details of the trees and "howling" wind, and presents them as the menacing signs of the narrator's deranged state of mind. The building is treated as an exaggerated piece of fantasy architecture with ragged outlines, while the trees in the background thrash around in violent movement, materializing her "raging" and "raving" (110) as she executes her revenge. As Alison Smith explains, "Millais relays the macabre nature of the subject not by representing actual persons, but by suggesting the motivation of the unseen narrator through sinister tomb-like towers whose illuminated monolithic forms stand firm against the wind that blows the surrounding trees."[33]

These Gothic elements—perhaps influenced by Poe's symbolic landscapes in stories such as "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839)—are part of an expressionistic visual interpretation; the effect, as noted in *The Westminster Review,* is "finely imaginative,"[34] a visual concomitant of an unhinged mind. Its impact is greatly heightened by the Dalziels' manipulation of darkness, in which the heavily blocked parts of the architecture are defined against a gray sky.

This design takes us to an absolute extreme, and a comparison between Millais's image and Holman Hunt's reflection on dreaming in "The Arabian Nights" (fig. 2.13) suggests the epic sweep of Tennyson's mapping of the mind. It especially points to the ingenuity with which his illustrators promote and interpret his subjects in a variety of styles and idioms.

# 3

## Englishness, the Modern, Copying from Nature

Tennyson, like Shakespeare, is often described as the quintessentially English poet, a bard of Albion whose writing enshrines the values and attitudes traditionally associated with England and Englishness in a period when the British Empire was the most powerful in the world and transmitted Anglo-Saxon culture throughout the globe.[1] His status as a mouthpiece of the English is symbolized by his appointment as poet laureate (1850), a post requiring him to write patriotic verse enshrining the attitudes of the conservative establishment. Strident works such as "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854) encapsulate this celebration of imperial power, constructing a vision of nobility despite the tragedy of military incompetence that led to many deaths, and elsewhere he offers a coded version of the (purportedly) English virtues of honorable conduct, generosity, and an all-embracing integrity.[2] Indeed, these constructions of cultural identity resonate throughout his verse—notably in *Idylls of the King* (1859–85)—and several critics view his oeuvre not only as a reflection of Victorian values but as a formative influence in their construction. According to Marion Sherwood in her recent study of *Tennyson and the Fabrication of Englishness* (2013), the poet is positioned as one of the creators of the Anglo-Saxon sense of self, offering a "domestic poetry" which "reflected, shaped [occasionally] subverted [but mainly] established emerging ideas of Englishness in the nineteenth century."[3]

This emphasis was privileged in his work post-1850, although it is important to point out that Tennyson's nationalistic focus was already in place in the work predating his elevation to the role of "official poet." Though made up of reprints first collected in 1842, the Moxon Tennyson is projected as a patriotic text: out of date in 1857 and revivified as a hot property in the form of an illustrated gift book retrofitted with engravings, it positions its author as a sort of national hero, one of an elite who embodies the best of Englishness in a period of national expansionism and self-confidence.

This branding is another of the publisher's selling strategies, appealing to the bourgeois values of the target audience. Moxon promotes the author's status by including his address to the Queen; first published in 1851 and reproduced as the frontispiece, Tennyson's encomium to Victoria foregrounds his role as a faithful servant to the crown, one of those who act in obedience to the monarch as she works to protect England's "ancient worth," the leader of a people graced by liberty and their land of natural beauty, bound in by the "inviolate sea" (v–vi). Tennyson's credentials are also stressed by alluding to other, more famous dedications, recalling Spenser's submission to Gloriana (Elizabeth I) in his preface to *The Faerie Queen* (1590) and John of Gaunt's famous hymn to the "blessed plot" in Shakespeare's *Richard II* (2.1.31–68).[4] The *Poems* are thus set up as a type of patriotism aimed at patriots, and the poet's authority to speak is underlined by the dignified profile, photographed from Thomas Woolner's medallion—another contribution, rarely noted, made by a Pre-Raphaelite to match the work by Rossetti, Millais, and Hunt—positioned as a pictorial frontispiece (frontispiece). Cast in plaster for the Tennyson family in 1856, when Tennyson was forty-seven,[5] it represents the poet as a youthful hero both classical and bluff, the author of a collection offering all that is supposed to be gainful and productive about the national culture.

Though it contains several medievalist pieces which allegorize aspects of the English psyche, the collection is especially concerned with the assertion of *modern* Englishness. The meaning of English masculinity, gender roles and the status of women, the nature of power, domesticity, and other important themes are explored in a contemporary voice which focuses on the lives of characters of the present living in a recognizable version of England in the mid-nineteenth century. Tennyson's personae breathe "English air" ("Eleänore," 76) of the here and now, have conversations as they go "Walking to the Mail" (224), and discuss current affairs and issues. The poet himself is enmeshed in the life of the times when, in advance of his contemplation of Godiva's very English sacrifice for the greater good,[6] he is stranded (as noted in chapter 2) at the railway station in industrial Coventry, where he rubs shoulders with "grooms and porters on the bridge" (281) in the momentarily classless manner of the Victorian urban experience. He similarly reflects on the many technological developments of the age and repeatedly

contemplates the nature of progress brought on by the industrialization of time, which, as he famously notes in "Locksley Hall," might "spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change" (279). The "grooves" refer mistakenly to railroad lines, but more important is Tennyson's citing of the train as an emblematic sign of the tireless pace of mid-Victorian life as it responded to the impact of the machine.

Such modernity is anatomized in the Moxon edition. Tennyson's writing of contemporary themes is both explicit and contradictory, lucid and paradoxical, providing rich fields of interpretation; and these written texts are interrogated in diverse styles by the illustrators. Their interpretive project is a multidimensional task, a matter of visualizing Tennyson's ideas for the contemporary reader in ways that are nevertheless largely invisible to reader/viewers of our own "modern age." This chapter explores the illustrators' elucidation of Tennyson's writing, focusing on the connections between landscape and nationhood, marriage and domesticity, psychological drama and mid-Victorian ways of reading contemporary life.

## ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH

Tennyson's writing of modern Englishness is inscribed in England's landscape and in its rural population. Although he engages with urban experience, his principal signs of nationhood, derived from Wordsworth and Shakespeare, are pastoral. This focus closely accords with the attitudes of his metropolitan audiences and crystallizes the mid-Victorian view that the "real" England was essentially a preindustrial paradise of contented peasants and beautiful landscapes. In this reading, the national character is symbolized by and fused with the serene countryside; landscape painting flourished, and the visualization of "Old England" presented an emblematic sign which was more resonant than the national flag or more official representations.

Tennyson images this paradisiacal vision in his description of Arthur's Avalon, a surrogate for the English idyll where all may rest in a landscape "deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns / And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea" ("Morte d'Arthur," 201). Infused with Blake's concept of "the green and pleasant land" in "Jerusalem" (1801), Tennyson's imagery continues a Romantic tradition which defies the impact of economic change. It is also, of course, deeply inaccurate, an idea, as critics such as Christopher Wood have observed, unconnected with any physical reality.[7] Marion Sherwood puts it bluntly: "Tennyson fabricates a myth of rural Englishness which ignores the contemporary reality of rural deprivation and depopulation. His exemplary figures, set in an idealized, pre-industrial landscape, represent an England that is more imaginary than real."[8]

In an age of rapid industrialization, the rise of the great cities, and the impact of technology, it would seem reasonable to construct the national character in more dynamic terms than those offered by Tennyson. Nevertheless, most of his

readers identified Englishness in these unrealistic terms, and his escapist poetry reinforced a preexisting corpus of belief: a trope still employed today.

Tennyson's writing of this patriotic idyll is reaffirmed by Creswick's illustrations, which are closely linked to his "landskips" and genre pieces. Engaged as a ruralist whose bucolic vision broadly corresponds with the poet's naturalism, Creswick's six designs materialize the writer's idealized landscapes; not only symbols of memory and passing time, as argued in chapter 2, they also read as types of Englishness and re-create specific details such as English trees, villages, and panoramas.

The artist's approach is exemplified by his vignette (fig. 3.1) accompanying the untitled poem, which opens with the words "Move eastward" (371–72). This is in part a sentimental romance, equating married love with the cosmos as the narrator awaits his "marriage-morn" (272), and the illustrator visualizes the notion of a serene contentment by showing if not a sunset then at least a risen moon above a pastoral idyll. This could be a generic image of paradise, but it is noticeable that Creswick makes it into an English heaven, visualizing the open-ended text

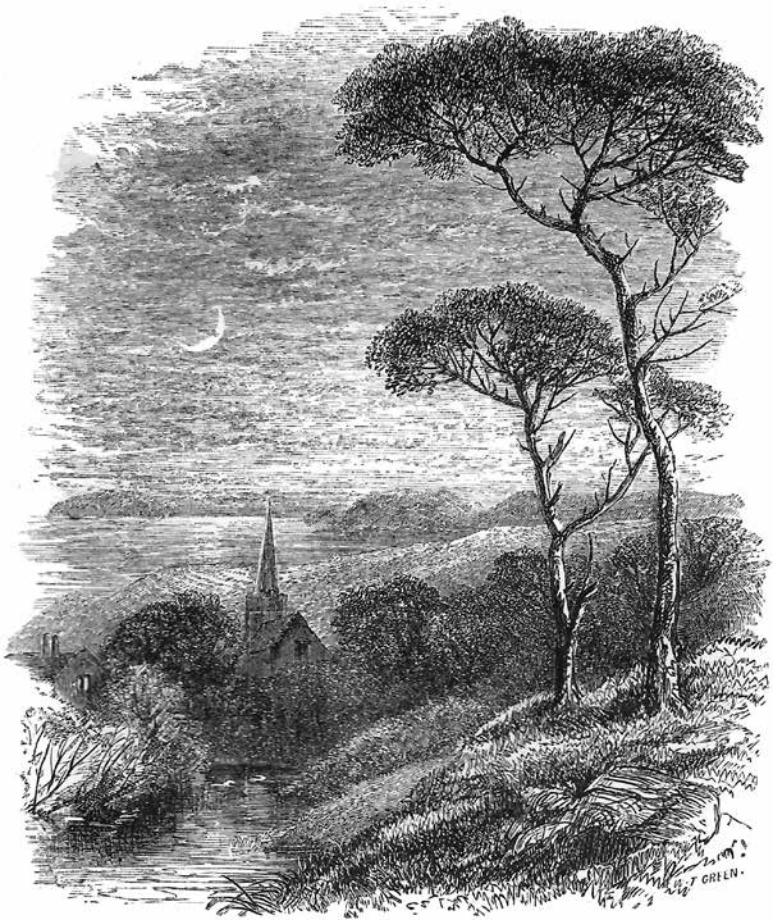


FIGURE 3.1. Thomas Creswick. "Move Eastward, Happy Earth, and Leave." Engraved by W. T. Green, 95 × 75 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 371.

in a specific, familiar semiotic of tall framing trees, a center ground occupied by a flowing stream, a distant horizon, and the tower of an English country church. These emblems are substituted for the lovers, who not appear. All that is needed to signal the narrator's state of mind is to recast his description as a picturesque vision, a site of serenity and contentment. The lover might imagine paradise, but as an Englishman he can only imagine an *English* paradise, a dim nocturne in which the edges of the vignette fade in imitation of fading light, England as the subject of sentimental dreaming. Once again, the land is both a place and an idea, a beautiful domain exemplifying the best of all human experience and figured here as a new version of John of Gaunt's Anglocentricity: "this earth, this realm, this England" (*Richard II,* 2.1.50).

Creswick takes the formulation at little further in "The Golden Year" (fig. 3.2), although here, as noted in chapter 1, the landscape is not so much English as Welsh. It doubles up, nonetheless, as an attribute of Englishness in a period when the railways facilitated access and Wales was seen by mid-Victorian tourists as a region of the home country. As such, the image figures another nationalistic paradise; although threatened by industrial progress in the form of the "blast" from the "steep slate quarry" (263), its sublimity symbolizes the greater moral vision of an epic sense of identity, rooted in history and landscape, and stands as an emblem of a heroic land ruled by an heroic people. As one of the characters concludes, "This same grand year is ever at the doors" (263).

In a period of uncertainty and change, Tennyson's original readers are offered a reassuring iconography. As in the paintings of Constable, who specified the Suffolk landscape as means of asserting national character during the period of the Napoleonic wars,[9] Creswick creates metaphors of English identity to match and extend the poet's aestheticizing of nationalism.

This idealism materializes the poet's lines, forging a clear link between the verse and Tennyson's status as a patriot. The illustrators similarly reinforce his writing of England as a nation of harmonious living symbolized by the lives of a contented peasantry, a "land reposed" ("To the Queen," vi) where the people are products of the natural world, united with its rhythms in pantheistic accord. Horsley gives a sense of this (albeit unrealistic) idea in the opening illustration of "The May Queen" (fig. 2.5), where pastoral simplicity is asserted before it is destroyed by individual tragedy, and returns to the notion of the child of nature in "The Gardener's Daughter" (203–12, fig. 3.3). Responding to a dense catalogue of visual material, which is explicitly arranged as "pictures," Horsley refigures Tennyson's curious writing of beauty-worship, with the beloved described by her painter-admirer in purely pictorial terms. The key moment is when the woman is viewed (or framed) in the doorway:

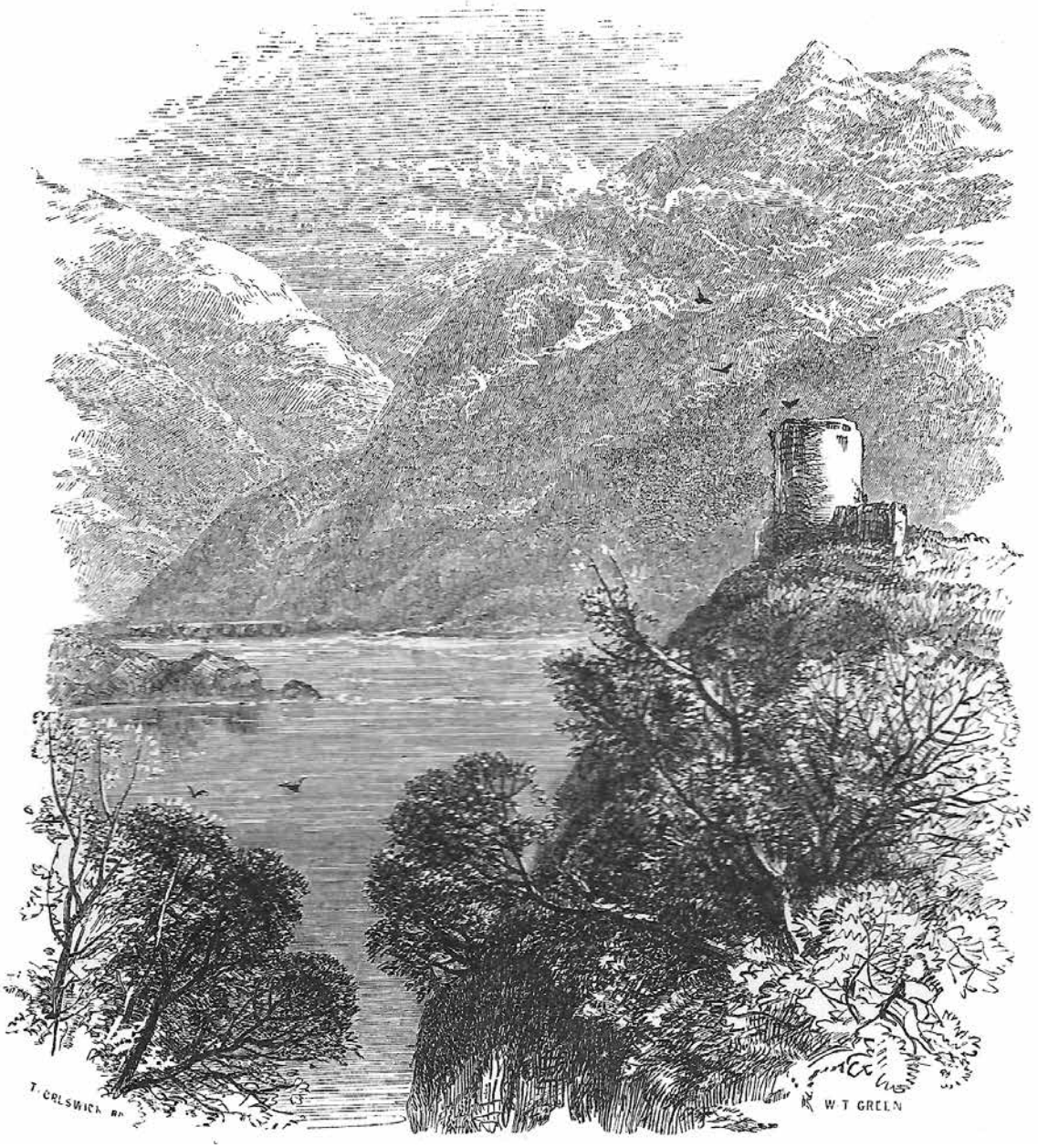



FIGURE 3.2. Thomas Creswick, "The Golden Year." Engraved by W. T. Green, 82 × 83 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 260.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side; the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering,
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade. . . .
. . . . . .
. . . Half-light, half-shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young. (207–8)

Tennyson's female, "painted in words," is practically dissolved in light ("Half-light, half-shade"). All that matters is the concept of harmony with nature: she places a flower back into place and is herself a personified ("Eastern") rose, with hair like a bouquet of blossoms "poured" in a "single stream." Horsley registers these details to affirm Tennyson's, and extends the notion of her connection with the natural world by rhyming the outlines of her form with the enclosing outline of the bower. Presented as a type rather than a person, she is figured in both texts as the exemplification of the passive, good-natured type of national character living in a version of Eden: sentimental nationalism in image and word.

The English idyll is, however, only one aspect of national identity. Another element is social observation, presenting the reader/viewer with what at the time of publication was known as the "manners and customs" of the English, with satirical commentary appearing in *Punch* and numerous comical and humorous books by Cruikshank and Doyle which satirized national character.[10] Tennyson's focus is threefold: registering class as a key signifier of Englishness, he explores the tragic experiences of the middle classes, who act as the emblematic good citizens of England (notably in "The Miller's Daughter" and "Edward Gray"), while finding drama in the sufferings of rustics, whose lives may be a part of a harmonious nature but who are still subject to the vagaries of fate. "The May Queen" (131–40) and "Circumstance" (62–63) exemplify this Wordsworthian valuing of the English poor. A third ingredient, and one barely noticed, is Tennyson's celebration of English eccentricity and humor, which are privileged as important constituents of the English. This lighthearted exploration of social mores is exemplified by "The Goose" and "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue."

Both are illustrated by Mulready, projecting Tennyson's mockery in a comedic style which is in broadly in line with the humor of *Punch*—especially the

FIGURE 3.3. John Callcott Horsley, "The Gardener's Daughter." Engraved by John Thompson, 97 × 85 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 203.

broad burlesque of artists such as John Leech—and also recalls the arch comedy of some of Mulready's genre paintings, such as mocking image of a schoolroom in *The Last In* (1834–35, Tate Britain, London).[11] In his image for "The Goose" (fig. 3.4), Mulready creates a series of graphic equivalents to the poet's dynamic sense of the absurd: the poem recounts the story of the goose that lays the golden egg but brings chaos, and the illustration shows the climactic moment when the bird "flew this way . . . and that / And filled the house with clamour" (186). Mulready composes the design as a dynamic, angular intersection of silly-looking characters involved in a melee of movement, amplifying the written emphasis on sound as the personae thrash around: the dog barks, the cat "yawl[s]," the goose "cackle[s]," and everything is caught up in a "clatter" (185–86) of domestic disorder. The effect is one of broad farce visualizing in a moment of discord the characters' stupidity; as Hodnett remarks in one of the few assessments of this design, the illustration realizes the "turmoil . . . perfectly."[12]

Taken together, the verbal and visual texts provide a satirical side glance at the behavior of the peasantry, which is shown, for once, not in terms of sentimental idealism but in terms of greed informed with superstition as the "Stranger,"


FIGURE 3.4. William Mulready, "The Goose." Engraved by John Thompson, 82 × 96 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 184.

perhaps the "Devil" (186), comes to take the goose away; playing with perceptions, Mulready places a dim figure bedecked with horns in the background. These rural characters might be children of nature, the dignified and timeless representatives of place, but here the text and image show them as figures of fun, the exemplification of a certain type of ignorance and stupidity. In the words of *The Art-Journal,* the paired texts are "lively and humorous," but informed with the social awareness of Hogarth, that biting chronicler of English vanity and avarice.[13]

Another form of absurdity is celebrated in "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue," the tale of a drunken poet addressing the waiter at the Cock, a setting based on a real-life prototype, one of Tennyson's favorites, and a typical English pub.[14] The poem is broad burlesque in which the conventions of the dramatic monologue are ironically deployed to reveal the inebriated writer's wandering speculations, rooting them in a series of comedic juxtapositions.

This world is enshrined in the design, providing a realistic representation of the poet, pen in hand, thinking of the muse, while the waiter arrives with his dish (fig. 3.5); however, the artist adds imaginative touches to crystallize Tennyson's messages. The movement between the poet's ideas and the prosaic everyday is symbolized in

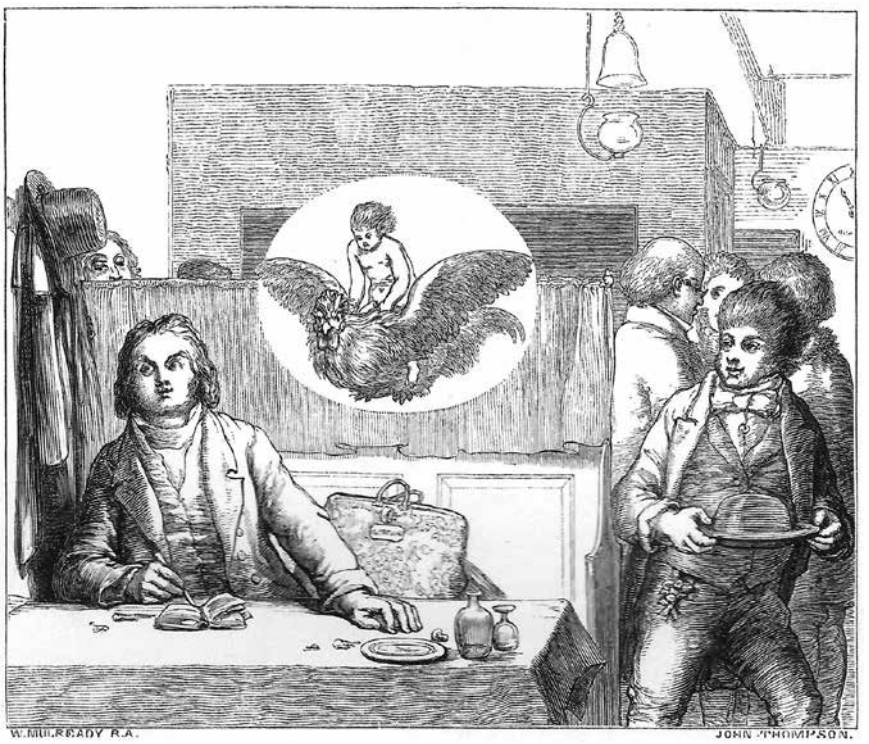


FIGURE 3.5. William Mulready, "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue, Made at the Cock." Engraved by John Thompson, 82 × 100 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 330.

the symmetry between the writer and the waiter, and the interaction of the muse and its alcoholic stimulation is amusingly depicted in the form of a roundel—literally a comic-strip thought bubble—depicting the classical god of poetry arriving in the writer's mind on the back of a rooster: the booze, served in the Cock, delivers the muse. Mulready carefully depicts the writer's thoughtful expression in parody of portraits of the Romantic poets, and is a perfect match to his wondering as to whether (or what) further drinks will bring the inspiration he needs:

> Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest
> Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,
> The pint, you brought me, was the best
> That ever came from pipe.
> But tho' the port surpasses praise,
> My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
> Is there some magic in the place?
> Or do my peptics differ? (333)

Surely a mock-heroic reflection on the poet's own practice, the poem injects a note of levity. Mulready completes the scene by specifying the particulars of the interior in the form of costumes (including a hat and coat hung up on a peg), part of a clock, plates and eating utensils, a patterned bag, lamps, and a group of drinkers. This is the quintessential English setting, an inn to match the cottage interior of "The Goose" (fig. 3.4), asserting once again the value of the prosaic and ordinary.

Mulready's illustrations act, in short, to focus Tennyson's playful writing of Englishness. Though generally ignored or derided, his contributions provide an interesting contrast with the idealism of the nature writing and the intensity of the pictured landscapes. Indeed, if we read the illustrations as a montage we can see how Creswick's treatment of the countryside, Horsley's genre scenes, and Mulready's satires are part of a distinctive movement which points to the poems' oscillation between realism and idealism, Romantic notions of England as Eden, and the low plot of small-minded characters of dubious morality. This is unashamedly a hotch-potch, and the patchy effect has been reviled by generations of critics as evidence, once again, of Moxon's cynical attempt to appeal to every taste. Yet the mash-up of visual messages is emblematic of Tennyson's Englishness, stressing his membership of an established tradition that includes Chaucer, Dickens, Shakespeare, Philip Larkin, and John Lennon. Like these writers, Tennyson is adept at moving between the high and the low, the elevated and the everyday, the serious and the vulgar, and if we read his poems in conjunction with the illustrations we are left in no doubt that he is indeed the product and proponent of his national culture, with its "streaky bacon" hybridity and unexpected juxtapositions. Alternating between Gainsborough and Hogarth, the

illustrations underpin the mingling of the profane and sacred which, as Jean-Michel Ganteau remarks, is a "fundamental component" of English art and literature, and of English culture as a whole.[15]

## MODERNITY AND MILLAIS

Horsley, Mulready, and Creswick provide a distinct vision of Englishness which buttresses the writer's own. Their notion of national identity is a generic one, typical of the entire Victorian period. When it came to representing the edition's immediate context, however, their cuts look out of date, more like the scenes from the earlier part of the century than the dynamic here-and-now of 1857; derived from genre painting and the landscapes of the English school, they seem anachronistic. It was for this is specific reason, perhaps, that Moxon engaged the Pre-Raphaelites; mindful of the accusation of recycling old material derived from the edition of 1842, the publisher engaged the principal members of the Brotherhood, whose art was absolutely of its time, to refresh and modernize Tennyson's poems, to frame them in the zeitgeist of 1857, to make new, topical connections between the verse and contemporary issues, and to make a direct appeal to the (primarily metropolitan) readers of the period.

Essentially disguising a reprint in a new format, Moxon deployed the Pre-Raphaelites to make the *Poems* seem relevant to the concerns of the "modern" bourgeois readership. Some of these issues have been explored at some length by Kooistra, who notes how the illustrations reflect racial attitudes at the end of the 1850s.[16] It is equally interesting to take a wider perspective, positioning the Pre-Raphaelite designs, as William Gaunt observed in the 1940s, as part of a mid-Victorian concept of modernity.[17] Pre-Raphaelitism was of course the dominant visual style of the 1850s, embodying in its canvases some of the prominent issues of the day. The Pre-Raphaelites' emphasis on verisimilitude and their attempts to depict the "truth" of "reality" by anatomizing the physical world in intense detail was closely linked to the scientific codification of natural phenomena, exemplified in 1859 by Darwin's *Origin of Species*; the artists' perception of the "real" was also matched by other "modern" concerns, notably the exploration of the (pseudo)science of physiognomy, the working of psychology and aberrant mental states, the representation of the complexities of the urban experience, and the emergence of new social structures.[18]

These issues feature throughout Pre-Raphaelite paintings and find parallel expression in the service of Tennyson's verse. A contemporary approach to psychology is evident, for instance, in Rossetti's treatment of "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7) and Holman Hunt's "Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.4), both pieces of neomedievalism informed with mid-Victorian understandings of female hysteria and

mental collapse. Holman Hunt's "Godiva" (fig. 4.3), illustrating a scene from the eleventh century, is depicted as if it were a domestic event of the mid-nineteenth century, shown with an intense focus on detail; and other designs by Rossetti and Hunt convey a distinct sense of the dynamism of urban crowds and the mixing of the classes, especially in the illustrations for "The Palace of Art" (fig. 4.10) and "The Beggar Maid" (fig. 1.8). In both engravings, ordinary people are juxtaposed with the special personages, an invention missing from the poems which reminds the contemporary reader of the social mixing of the urban experience. Rossetti's teeming figures in the background to his design are likewise another sign of the metropolitan scene at the end of the 1850s, connecting Tennyson's medieval scenes with the immediate facts of contemporary living.

But this updating and recasting are primarily achieved by Millais, who by the mid-1850s was regarded by critics as one of the most up-to-date practitioners, the exponent of a new immediacy and topicality whose paintings made a vital connection with everyday life and whose illustrations reinvigorate Tennyson's poems by representing their mise-en-scène in naturalistic terms; as Paul Barlow observes, his art focuses on "social comment on modern life" and always reflects an "engagement with [the] contemporary."[19] His journalistic approach, so evident in paintings such as *The Blind Girl* (1856, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery) and *The Rescue* (1855, National Gallery of Victoria),[20] is notably applied in his engravings for Tennyson's domestic dramas "Dora" (figs. 3.6, 3.7), "Locksley Hall" (figs. 3.8, 3.9), and "Edward Gray" (fig. 3.10). Though none of these reflects the interest in class embodied in the paintings, they do encapsulate the artist's fascination with the journalistic here-and-now, visualizing the characters and their settings in terms of a modern bourgeois milieu.

In the first instance, Millais updates Tennyson's characters by dressing them in the clothes of the mid-fifties.[21] Tennyson does not specify his creations' costumes, but the artist ensures their modernity by specifying the fashions of the period. He presents the women in flowing dresses, as in the first illustration for "The Miller's Daughter" (fig. 3.10), and gives them hair nets or bonnets; one is worn by the mother in the second image for the same poem, which bears close comparison with the type of headgear, with long ribbons and lace, in contemporary photographs and especially in the popular cartes-de-visite of the period.[22] He likewise specifies ribbons and sleeves in the visualization of "Edward Gray" (fig. 3.10), and in the opening treatment of "Locksley Hall" (fig. 3.8) the beloved wears one of the pleated dresses favored in the mid-1850s. Much simpler than the elaborate radiating crinolines that became popular in the 1860s, the costumes worn in the illustrations are entirely up to date; and the same is true of the masculine tailoring. Once again, the artist details the dress of the time, showing the miller, Edward Gray, the narrator in "Locksley Hall," and the men in "Dora" in

the latest or most familiar fashions, cataloguing in each case their frock coats, waistcoats, and broad-brimmed hats, the buttons on their coats, and even the styles of their shoes. The effect is one of journalistic factuality; as one critic observes of his approach in all of his illustrations, Millais overcomes the "problems" of "modern costume" and its implied ugliness, giving it a vivid currency.[23] Millais even specifies contemporary coiffure: the women have the braids and plaits of the time, while the men display apparently over-long and unruly hair combined with the beardless faces typical of the period before the 1860s, when heavy hirsutism, in the form of beards and mustaches, became popular.[24]

Visualizing Tennyson's characters in the terms of a recognizable "look," Millais projects the poems by re-creating their personae in the image of their readers, establishing a vital, emotional bond between text and interpreter by materializing the poet's messages in contemporary terms. Millais further modernizes by updating the poems' interiors, which are converted into signs of the tangible now, and frame the verse in the prosaic modern. Mulready and Horsley site their poems in the nonindustrial past of cottages and firesides (fig. 2.6, fig. 3.4), but Millais shows his interiors as realistic catalogues of everyday objects. This inventory includes, among many other objects, mass-produced furniture, an inkwell, a grandfather clock ("Dora," fig. 3.6), hair brushes, a cheval glass, a perfume bottle, and a pincushion ("The Talking Oak," fig. 5.4). As in the visualizing of costume, this Pre-Raphaelite approach is not illustration but invention: Tennyson makes no mention of any of the minutiae of domestic living, but Millais encodes the poem's settings in familiar terms. Drawing on Pre-Raphaelitism's commitment to verisimilitude of the "real" world, he adds his own "facts," making a tangible place where Tennyson's characters can enact their dramas and readers can link those settings to their own domestic interiors.

Important too is the arrangement of space and viewpoint, which create an impression of spontaneity. Unlike Maclise and Mulready, whose subjects are framed traditionally at right angles to the picture plane, Millais's spatial schemes are baroque invitations to engage with the scene; cropped and edited, with large figures positioned within a series of diagonals, his illustrations represent the distinctly modern experience of entering into a dynamic scene as it unfolds within a changing space, often intrudes into the space of the viewer, and invites the spectator to be a participant in what is recognizably an "actual" scene. This effect is especially facilitated by his deployment of vignettes which merge with the white spaces of the page and contradict any sense of enclosure, as in the flexible margins surrounding the first design for "Dora" (fig. 3.6). In particular, Millais's domestic dramas re-create the complicated spatial scenes of Pre-Raphaelite painting to invoke the notion of a "modern life" subject which is (supposedly) not a motif in art but a tangible event, a fingerprint of nature. His use of space

in the Moxon Tennyson echoes the spatial organization of Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1856, fig. 1.7), which places the viewer within the painting, and as in Hunt's composition the effect Millais creates is always one of physical and emotional involvement; it is also the technique of viewer involvement featuring in paintings of his own, especially *The Rescue* (1855, Victoria Art Gallery), where we are placed at the top of a burning staircase. Such techniques amplify the emotional impact of the verse by making it seem physically immersive.

At the heart of this modernity, however, is Millais's focus on psychology (a theme considered at length in chapter 4). This interest matches Tennyson's exploration of complex mental states and extreme emotions, and Millais illustrates the poet's analysis by creating visual equivalents to the poems' emotional content in the terms of contemporary modes of representation. His medium is the human body, which becomes a malleable site of expression deploying what I have elsewhere called "significant gesture" and which William Vaughan explains as "the physical embodiment of emotion."[25] This approach, inscribing the psychological in the physical, is central to Pre-Raphaelite representation and is radically different from the treatments of previous illustrators who externalized emotion by using the melodramatic codes of acting: Cruikshank's characters in *Oliver Twist* (1838) are conceived, Catherine Golden has recently demonstrated, as attitudinizing actors,[26] and Maclise does the same in the Moxon Tennyson with his figure of Arthur (fig. 2.1), whose recoil from Excalibur, though moving, is essentially artificial and derived, George Landow points out, from the notations of theater.[27] Millais's gestures, on the other hand, are realistic rather than theatrical, a matter, in the words of Adam Kendon, of using posture and attitude as an idiom of "deliberate expressiveness," "visible action as utterance" embodying a plastic equivalent to Tennyson's written utterances.[28] Drawing from observation rather than borrowing from the stage, Millais visualizes gesture as an articulate, legible signifier. It is also, crucially, an addition to the verse. Tennyson rarely mentions either the gaze or the dynamics of the body, but the illustrator encapsulates emotions in a gestural language that expresses the writer's range of meanings and enriches it with his own understandings. Fusing nature and human nature, he presents the reader/viewer with a cast of figures whose gestures allow us to read their emotions within a running montage of attitudinal tableaux, merging them seamlessly with the naturalistic surfaces of his "modern" settings and realistic details. These signs thus encode his readings of the verse, allowing us to decipher Tennyson's messages by decoding the artist's intricate schemes.

Millais exploits naturalistic gesture in his response to "Dora," a narrative poem charting William's defiance of his father's (Allan's) choice of the eponymous woman as wife, his father's rejection of his child following William's death,

and his father's repentance and final acceptance of his grandson. Millais encapsulates the conflict of parent and son in his opening design (fig. 3.6), visualizing the antagonism of Allan's proclamation as he declares how he

> ". . . wish'd this marriage, night and day,
> For many years." But William answer'd short:
> "I cannot marry Dora; by my life.
> I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
> Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
> "You will not, boy! You dare to answer thus!
> But in my time a father's word was law. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Consider, William: take a month to think
> And let me have an answer to my wish;
> . . . . . .
> [Or] never more darken my doors again." (214)

Tennyson invests these lines with belligerent energy, and Millais converts the power of the exchange into a series of gestural equivalents to the written style. In part this is a matter of paratextual reinscription: the "doubled up" hands are visualized as raised arms with clenched fists, and the implication that the characters face each other down is literally reproduced. But Millais's main focus is on visualizing the psychological anguish inscribed in the written structures. The syntax of short phrases, punctuated by exclamation marks, embodies the characters' inner tension, and Millais materializes these staccato rhythms in the form of the figures' opposed contrapuntal poses and especially in the angular, foreshortened lines of their limbs and other expressive distortions. William's blunt denial ("answer'd short") is denoted by the hatchet outline of his chin, with his face projecting forward in strained contortion, while his anger is embodied in his hands, clenched in echo of his father's, but taken to a claw-like extreme.

Tennyson's melodramatic lines are thus illustrated in naturalistic but loaded gestures in which the space itself becomes an important constituent: William's peering face, projecting toward his father, suggests his denial of respectful distance, while his pose, half-turned to leave, dramatizes the idea that he is willing to depart and "never more darken" (214) his patriarch's doors. Tennyson's angry confrontation between a father and son is one repeated throughout Victorian literature, and Millais shows it, quite literally, as an explosive moment. The design itself seems to be on the point of disintegration, with both characters tensed against each other but moving apart. The space between them, mapped in the whiteness of the table, adds to the viewer's involvement in the scene as the

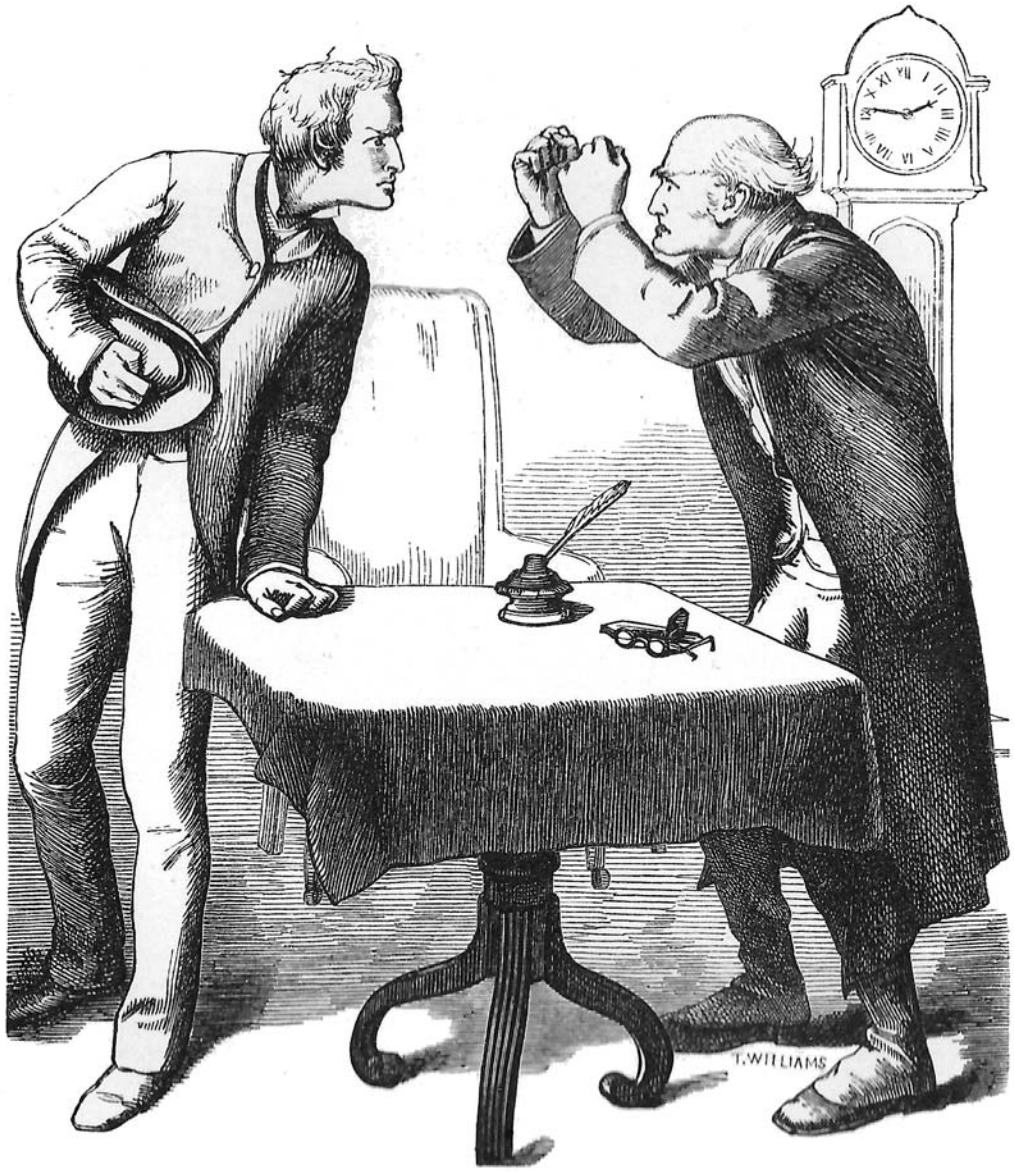



FIGURE 3.6. John Everett Millais, "Dora" (1). Engraved by Thomas Williams, 94 × 85 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 213.

reading eye is forced to alternate, to scan the space between the two of them, so creating a physical concomitant to the idea of separation.

This is a destructive act, destroying the family, and the illustration is appropriately discordant. However, Tennyson's poem is about reconciliation as well as transgression, and Millais's second design symbolizes Allan's reintegration, following his dismissal of his son and rejection of his grandchild, back into the circle of family life.

FIGURE 3.7. John Everett Millais, "Dora" (2). Engraved by John Thompson, 80 × 82 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 219.

This closing image (fig. 3.7) shows the moment when Allan, "broken with remorse" (218), realizes the cruelty of his behavior and asks for forgiveness. Tennyson writes a tableau in which Mary, Dora, and the child "clung about / The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times" (218), and the illustration intensifies the moment by compressing the figures into a dense grouping. The first engraving expresses breaking apart in a moment of *divergence;* and in the second the reconciliation is expressed in *convergence,* with the characters fusing together, their arms interlocked and the outlines of their forms harmonized into a centripetal

pattern. If the first image can only threaten to come apart, then this design, the gestural sign of togetherness, is knotted in a complex interlace, anger replaced by unanimity: "So those four abode / Within one house together" (219). The effect is underpinned, moreover, by small details: the confronted faces in the first illustration are brought into close physical proximity, while the clenched hands of the earlier designs are open and extended or eloquent of deep emotion, with the child (a portrait of Tennyson's son Hallam)[29] pulling on his grandfather's knee as the patriarch's hand is placed in remorse against his forehead. Taken together, Millais's two designs exemplify the poem's narrative progression from anger to remorse, from apartness to regret and harmony, emotions he symbolizes compositionally. The movement between separation and unity is the prime structure underpinning Tennyson's tragic storytelling, and the artist explores this idea in other interpretive designs.

In his illustrations for "Locksley Hall" (figs. 3.8, 3.9), Millais visualizes the narrator's bitter reflection on his relationship with his beloved Amy. It opens with togetherness but is subsequently broken apart by her parents' intervention. The two polarities respond to specific lines, but Millais reimagines them in terms uncovering the narrator's depth of feeling. The opening image depicts the lovers' meeting at the seashore: "Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships, / And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips" (269).

Tennyson's couplet is an abstract description of an embrace, with their "spirits" uniting in a kiss, but Millais greatly intensifies the dramatic and psychological impact of the moment by showing the characters wrapped in a passionate clasp. The faces are not shown, the kiss is invisible, and the focus on emotional absorption, almost literally becoming one, is visualized by the fusion of the two bodies, arms, and hands. The effect, again, is naturalistic, with passionate nature, the psychology of love, externalized in a physical pose; Allan Life remarks how the "drawing analogically embodies a spiritual union which achieves an immutable permanence,"[30] although the image is only the experience of a moment and the relationship anything but permanent (fig. 3.8).

Though we never see the lovers later in the courtship, the destruction of their love is represented by the pairing of Amy and her mother. The lines explain why she could not marry her lover: "Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung, / Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!" (270).

This is the melodramatic iconography of parental intervention and untruthful love, but Millais provides his own interpretation. In his illustration the girl is threatened only by her mother; the father is edited out and Amy is depicted not as deceitful, but as timidly afraid of her parent (fig. 3.9). Millais invents new devices

FIGURE 3.8. John Everett Millais, "Locksley Hall" (1). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 91 × 38 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 267.

FIGURE 3.9. John Everett Millais, "Locksley Hall" (2). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 91 × 82 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 274.

to articulate this reading: the mother is presenting (we assume) a letter from her lover while Amy stands before her writing desk, a quill still in her hand, as she is stopped from writing new correspondence to him. This arrested action is a tense, awkward moment, and Millais creates gestures to express the power asymmetry: the mother's wagging finger is raised in threat, while the hand holding the letter intrudes into Amy's space; she in turn moves away from her mother in the form of a stooping gesture in divergence from the vertical created by her parent's figure. Antagonistic and strained, the group is the very reverse of the passionate embrace. In the first design togetherness is visually expressed by a unified pose which fuses

two into one, and in the second the discord between the characters is exemplified in a series of jagged overlaps (as in "Dora"), again replacing convergence with divergence. In both images the emotion is amplified, infusing the poem with a more nuanced reading of the characters' psychology than is represented by the narrator's declamatory speculations about his life and circumstances.

Equally resonant is Millais's reading of "Edward Gray" (fig. 3.10), another tale of lost love, where the main character, overcome with grief, relates the narrative of his beloved's death. Millais illustrates two elements: the meeting of Edward with "Sweet Emma Moreland" (340), to whom he recounts his loss, and the poem's bleak declaration of his suffering. The characters' encounter is visualized in the straightforward gesture of shaking hands, the outward signs of social etiquette. Tennyson makes no mention of the greeting beyond the detail that Emma "met

FIGURE 3.10. John Everett Millais, "Edward Gray." Engraved by John Thompson, 81 × 80 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 340.

me" (340), and the artist materializes the event by showing it in a conventional form. However, he deploys this ordinary pose only as a means of accentuating Edward's gesture, "Bitterly weeping [as he] turn'd away" (341). The turning provides a simple direction, but Millais invests it with intense emotion; the head and torso are directed downward and locked into a closed pose, while the stick is pointed away, partly as a support, partly in frustrated anguish and partly as an emblem of his repentance.

These gestural elements represent Edward's "despair" (341) and focus in a dynamic form the poet's semantic field of suffering. Tennyson's lexicon ranges from the repeated "bitterly weeping" to "dying," "love," and "heart" (341–42), and Millais encapsulates the character's emotional turbulence in the awkward constrictions of his body. Most resonant of all is Edward's concealment of his face; he turns not only from Emma but from the viewer. His emotion is symbolized by his gestures, but his face, the implication runs, is too terrible to see, and all we can do is look at his tormented pose, an effect heightened by Emma's gaze, also half-averted.

The design's overall effect is again one of emotional intensification. Tennyson's lament could be viewed as another example of Romantic hyperbole, at least in its sentimental recounting of the grave and Edward's putting his "face in the grass" (341), but Millais amplifies the experience by showing it in an economical and uncompromising way. In keeping with paintings such as *The Order of Release* (1852–53; Tate Britain, London)[31]—in which the male character's emotion is similarly intensified by concealing his face—it condenses the crisis of the moment. At the time of publication, certainly, the image was regarded as one of the best and most imposing of the Moxon illustrations. Stripped of all extraneous information, it was described in *The British Quarterly Review* as "good and truthful,"[32] a gnomic declaration of intense feeling free from conventionalities and registered in the language of common understanding. As Goldman remarks, it encapsulates a "deeply felt disquiet" and "seems entirely up to date" in the artist's journalistic "modern style."[33]

"The Lord of Burleigh" (fig. 3.11) follows a similar trajectory. Millais's composition is particularly dense in the manner of his painting, exploring a scene of intense pathos and grieving. A beloved wife has died, and "her people," following her husband's instructions, are about to dress her in the clothes "she wore when she was wed" (356), with one of the characters, a nurse, holding her baby. The situation is somewhat odd to modern eyes, but Millais converts the moment when the first character is about to remove the sheet from her dead mistress into one of genuine tenderness. The action is presented as a delicate movement, while three other servants look on reverentially; although

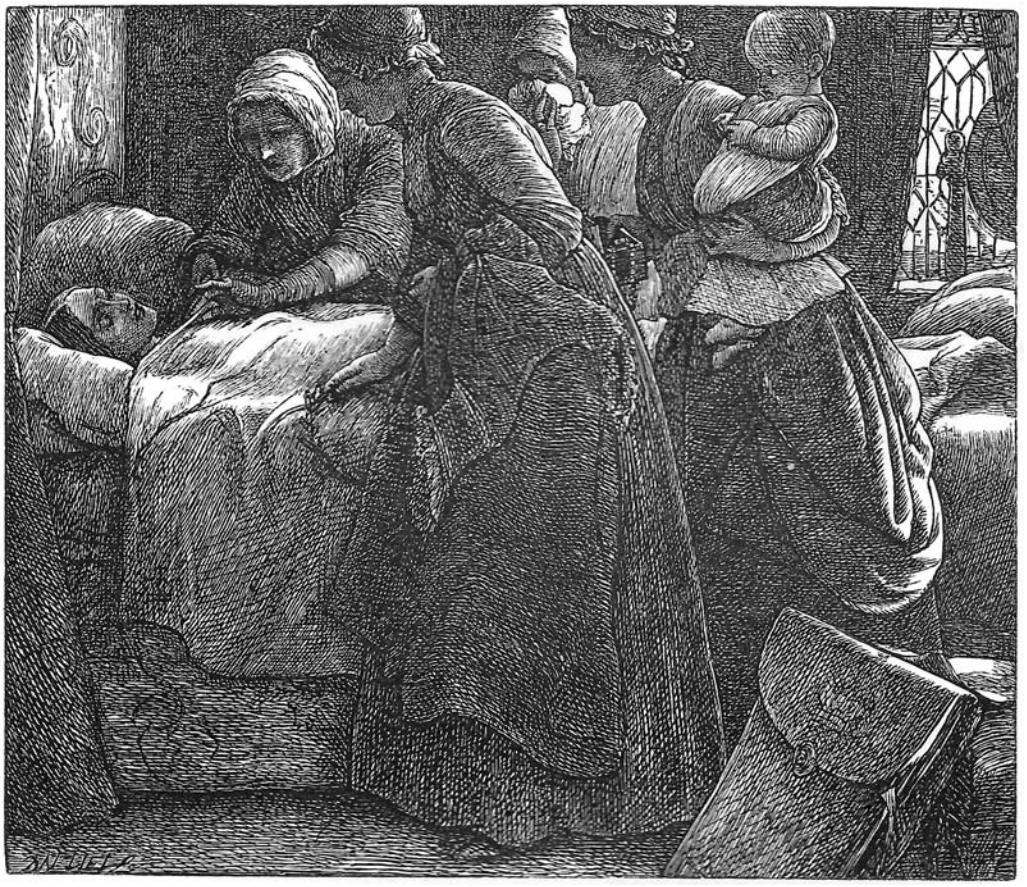


FIGURE 3.11. John Everett Millais, "The Lord of Burleigh." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 83 × 96 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 353.

the artist-husband exacts this ritual, he does not appear, only being given a symbolic presence in the form of a *closed* portfolio, the symbol of his occupation and his grief-stricken frame of mind as his life, metaphorically speaking, is canceled out and shut down. What Millais emphasizes, instead, is the implied intimacy between the dead mistress and her retainers. The composition, in line with the usual accordance between physical and emotional closeness, is organized as a tightly knit group, and Millais once again deploys his gestural language to suggest unanimity, oneness in painful emotion as in the image of reconciliation in "Dora" (fig. 3.7).

Indeed, this stratagem, or fusing of the physical and the psychological, features throughout Millais's illustrations, and it is interesting to compare his Moxon designs with some of his others. His fascination with open and closed designs features especially in his illustrations for Trollope. Two illustrations from

*Orley Farm* (1862) exemplify the technique. In one we have the concordance of the characters in "Farewell" (fig. 3.12), and in the other the frosty discordance of the Furnivals, who are markedly disunited (fig. 3.13), with Mr. Furnival frostily kissing his daughter while his wife ignores him. These later configurations develop out of the experiments made in the Moxon Tennyson, endowing Trollope's novel with precisely the sense of contemporaneity so characteristic of Millais's illustrations for the *Poems.*

FIGURE 3.12. John Everett Millais, "Farewell." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 175 × 112 mm. Anthony Trollope, *Orley Farm,* 2 vols., vol. 2 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862), facing 314.

FIGURE 3.13. John Everett Millais, "Mr Furnival's Welcome Home." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 175 × 112 mm. Anthony Trollope, *Orley Farm,* 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862), facing 87.

Millais deploys these gestures as a montage, a running series that enables us to read the poems' emotional content in arrested motion. They are also, as we have seen, one element within a modernizing approach, framing them in the context of contemporary costume, realistic décor, and a dynamic, involving use of space. The most effective synthesis, arguably, is achieved in his visual responses to "The Miller's Daughter" (86–96). This poem is primarily a nostalgic, celebratory reflection on the endurance of love as the narrator reminisces contentedly on his romance with his wife and his unanimity with his "other dearer life in life" (95). The relationship is a romantic ideal, and Millais again deploys a gestural group to suggest their oneness, drawing specifically on the husband's admonition that she should "look though [his] very soul" to link with hers, and her arms "entwine" his heart (95). Both of these textual details are given a powerful visual registration in the opening design (fig. 3.14) of the couple in old age: their eyes meet in unspoken intimacy, and their arms and hands suggest a deep understanding, with one of hers placed on his forearm and one of his under her chin.


FIGURE 3.14. John Everett Millais, "The Miller's Daughter" (1). Engraved by Thomas Williams, 92 × 83 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 86.

Though described by a contemporary critic as "poor and hard . . . a kiss . . . very awkwardly managed,"[34] it crystallizes an emotional attachment while casting it in a form appropriate for an old couple; it is not the passionate embrace of eros as in the opening design for "Locksley Hall" (fig. 3.8), but the agape of many years of marriage. Millais does not respond to the many stanzas symbolizing their engagement in florid nature imagery, but focuses instead on the stable, prosaic contentment of domestic love embodied in a single moment of unity. It forms a marked contrast with the flashback depicting Alice's first encounter with his mother. Tennyson describes her feeling "ill at ease," nervously "apart," but Millais shows her when she rises and is taken into an accepting matriarchal embrace, a moment of "silent grace" with the two women about to be "press'd . . . heart to heart." Millais gives visual shape to the "flutterings" (92) of the situation (with Alice's face looking downward uncertainly and one hand still placed on her chair), and the mother's lovingness as she places one hand on Alice's back as she rises while holding her other hand in her new daughter's (fig. 3.15). The effect is psychologically penetrating, visualizing the two women's distrust by showing it at the very moment when suspicion becomes generous acceptance. What is initially one of Millais's conflicted groups is arrested just as it converts into a gestural sign of emotional unity, conflating into a single image the binary pattern we have already seen in his other Moxon designs.

FIGURE 3.15. John Everett Millais, "The Miller's Daughter" (2). Engraved by John Thompson, 110 × 95 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 93.

Wider implications are added by costume and décor. In both of the "Miller" illustrations Millais amplifies the depth of emotion by focusing on everyday décor, clothes, and contemporary hairstyles. This journalism, as noted earlier, creates a strong link between the text and the mid-Victorian audience. In particular, it insists on the *value* of the ordinary; Tennyson dignifies the emotional lives of the prosaic, and Millais provides an antiheroic treatment in which the appearance of the characters insists on the depth of their affection by making it look commonplace. Millais's declaration, amplifying Tennyson's, is simple: true love is not the reserve of the elevated but of a man and the miller's daughter. He especially builds on the idea of love as an integral part of everyday routine. It is noticeable, for instance, how he shows their kiss taking place at the same time as she reaches to a bottle, perhaps of port, to pour him a drink; his other hand is holding the base of the glass in readiness. Once a romantic lover, she is also a "darling wife (87) in the patriarchal, conventionalized sense of the term, the wife as man's support in orthodox confirmation of Victorian mores. Their embrace, a sign of love as life continues, is radically different from the suspended moment of rapture in "Locksley Hall" (fig. 3.8). In "The Miller's Daughter" Tennyson asserts the interplay of small lives and grand passions, and Millais formulates an exact mix in his integration of gesture, everyday objects, and the mise-en-scène of the commonplace life of the rural middle classes.

Small details have another function as a means of underpinning the poem's emphasis on continuity. The verse is centrally concerned with contented reflection. The narrator contemplates the past and how the couple have arrived at the stasis of the present, and Millais suggests the interconnectedness of now and then by linking items of domestic décor. This effect is ingeniously achieved in the opening illustration as the narrator remembers Alice's father, "Three fingers round the old silver cup" (87); Millais does not represent the past but reinscribes it in the gesture of the present, showing the narrator with *his* hand, a surrogate for the miller's, upon a glass. The illustration therein conflates the past and the present, conveying the character's well-being by repeating the actions of the affectionately remembered paterfamilias. The harmonious fusing of memory and the present is similarly suggested by the repetition of the narrator's chair: this is the very chair from which Alice rises to embrace his mother in the second illustration, the validating gesture that makes their marriage possible. Simply by repeating the same details, Millais encodes the passage of unchanging time connecting the beginning of the couple's contented life with its continuation in the present. "Where Past and Present wound in one / Do make a garland for the heart" (94) is Tennyson's formulation, and Millais provides a telling equivalent in the telling "facts" of the mundane.

## MODERN WORLD / MODERN DETAIL

Millais's realism is part of the process of modernization, of representing the verse in the highly particularized style of the Pre-Raphaelites, itself a version of the very latest scientific empiricism. Yet Millais never allows detail to overwhelm his central figures. As often observed, this is the strategy deployed by all three of the Pre-Raphaelites, each of whom creates compositions containing a large central figure or group, drawn with economical directness and placed at the center of the design with other subsidiary objects, defined in obsessive detail, arranged around them. The combination of powerful characters and material "facts" is transferred from painting to graphic art, and there is a close relationship between oils such as Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1853, fig. 1.7) and "Godiva" (fig. 4.3), Millais's *The Blind Girl* (1856, Birmingham) and the illustrations for "The Miller's Daughter" (figs. 3.14, 3.15); Rossetti's watercolors, notably *The Marriage of St George and Princess Sabra* (1857, Tate Britain), are likewise linked to "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7). This is essentially the "modern" style of the period, combining expressive figures with teeming, microscopically detailed settings extrapolated from the quasiscientific study of phenomenal reality.

Indeed, the illustrations replicate the material specificity, the "thing-ness" or "this-ness" of the modern world that is so much a part of Pre-Raphaelite cataloguing. The list, totted up, is impressively comprehensive, an inventory of brushes, a perfume bottle, a pincushion, and oak leaves (Millais, "The Talking Oak," fig. 5.4), as well as bells, candles, tiny ships, a sundial, a dove, and an apple (Rossetti's "St Cecily," fig. 4.10). Repeating the focus on natural "facts" depicted in their paintings, the Pre-Raphaelites visualize Tennyson's verse in strict accordance with the idea of the image as a mirror of nature; in the words of F. G. Stephens in "The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art," published in *The Germ* in 1850, their illustrations represent "the thing and the whole of the thing, [aiming to] reproduce as far as possible, nature herself."[35] Though Millais and Rossetti had started to diverge from this aesthetic in their easel work, in their illustrations all three practitioners are still bound by the naturalism of first-stage Pre-Raphaelitism, with many of the objects appearing among the accessories derived from real-life observation or based on visual sources which give an exact representation of the item; it is well known, for instance, that Millais based the belfry in "The Death of the Old Year" (fig. 2.10) on studies of the bells in Winterton Church by John Luard,[36] while Holman Hunt's detailed treatment of the setting in "The Arabian Nights" (fig. 2.12) is derived from nature studies in the Middle East, the geography of several of his paintings. Not only miniature paintings in black and white which convert the Moxon Tennyson into a portable exhibition, the Pre-Raphaelite designs offer an art gallery of the very latest style

in visual representation, compressing into its Lilliputian spaces the avant-garde of the 1850s, the most modern and up-to-date showing of the "real" world. Tennyson's verse, the epitome of traditional values, is refigured through the lens of the daring new idiom of the day.

To some extent, the application of detail is a logical step, reaffirming the painterliness of the verse. Tennyson's pictorialism, with its emphasis on the physicality of objects, is matched by the Pre-Raphaelites' materialism. The illustrators' task, both Pre-Raphaelite and non-Pre-Raphaelite, is to encode the text in a concrete form, a mediation between the viewer's mind's eye, the poet's, and the artist's tangible marks in black and white. What makes the Pre-Raphaelites' illustrations significantly different from others, of course, is their *extreme* physicality. We only have to look again at Rossetti's "St Cecily" for "The Palace of Art" (fig. 4.10) to see this process at work. Each of the objects in this highly worked design inscribes physical information, making it possible for us to construct a fantastical scene; the keys of the keyboard are minutely detailed, and so are the textures and patterns of the clothes, from the angel's gown to the soldier's chain mail, the stones, the veins on the solder's hand, and even the stone archways of tiny portals. Here, and in all of the Pre-Raphaelite designs, the "modern" is conceived as reconstruction of the world, built anew from the tiniest item in the manner of Van Eyck. Each detail is assembled, and by looking at these designs the reader/viewer is convinced of the physical integrity of Tennyson's verse.

Nevertheless, the relationship between the Pre-Raphaelites' details and the poet's is complicated and unstable. Though the three artists provide a visual map of Tennyson's dream-like scenes, it is not always the case that they visualize the *same* objects as the writer; sometimes they ignore them entirely, and where they attempt to replicate his details the catalogue is sometimes inaccurate or modified. Rossetti, especially, is often accused of ignoring the specifics of the writing. For instance, in "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7), the character appeals to the Virgin Mary; in the illustration, by contrast, she kisses a crucifix. As generations of critics have observed, the interaction between the visual and verbal texts is problematized by this sort of slippage, and is often cited as an example of the illustrators' lack of respect for the source material.

Verisimilitude, the idea of showing the items in Tennyson's poems, is further complicated by the idea of "symbolic realism,"[37] of apparently natural "facts" connoting an inner meaning. This approach converts "real" objects into emblems, a code or codes designed to represent the internal externally. The process is of course a central tenet of the original aims of the Brotherhood when it was first formed in 1848. In the words of William Michael Rossetti, writing in the 1901 introduction to *The Germ,* Pre-Raphaelite realism was always both observational

and a means to show higher, nonmaterial "truths": they always aimed, he says, to present their own thoughts combined with "direct study of Nature and harmonized with her manifestations,"[38] achieving an "intimate intertexture of a spiritual sense with a material form; small actualities made vocal of lofty meanings."[39] This approach pervades the Pre-Raphaelites' interpretation of Tennyson's verse as it informs the treatment of subjects in their paintings, and to some extent the approach is again appropriate to the poems because they too work on a principle of symbolic realism. In "Mariana" the intensely materialized details of stagnant water and moss are simultaneously emblematic of the character's psychological distress (7); likewise, in Maclise's "Morte d'Arthur," an illustration similar in style to the Pre-Raphaelites', the jewel-encrusted hilt of Excalibur is far from the merely decorative (fig. 2.1), and connotes an idealized notion of chivalry.

Sometimes the Pre-Raphaelites respond to Tennyson's symbolic realism, and sometimes they apply codes of their own, depicting emblematic objects which are not necessarily in the verse but work, nevertheless, to nuance and enrich the source material. Complex and shifting, the visualization and application of these symbolic codes, enshrined in apparently real objects, are complicated issues. The semiotics of psychology and gender are considered in the following two chapters.

# 4

# Psychology, Dreaming, Medievalism

Tennyson's prime interest, according to contemporaries, was "human nature" and the workings of emotion. There are many occasions, however, when his fascination with personality goes well beyond strong feeling as such and engages with the intricacies of the mind, focusing on unconscious desires, fantasies, the strange, and the aberrant. It is well known that Tennyson was fascinated by the emergent science of psychology and the relationship between the mind and the soul. Generations of critics, such as Gregory Tate, have traced this interest in "Maud" (1855) and "In Memoriam" (1850), and others have considered his longer poems, especially *Idylls of the King* (1855–85).[1] Yet his psychological portraiture was already in place in his earliest poetry, and was noted by his contemporaries. Writing in a review of *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* (1830) in *The Westminster Review,* W. J. Fox observes how Tennyson's verse is distinctly "modern" in its emphasis on psychodrama, exploring a "new world" in which the poet offers a distinctive "analysis of particular states of mind," and "gain[s] entrance" into mental states as "he would make his way into a landscape";[2] and writing in 1855, a contemporary "alienist," John Bucknill, remarks on the poet's "wonderful psychological insight."[3] As these observers noted, Tennyson excels in exploring the mental states of those on the point of psychological collapse, typically the dynamics of the female psyche as his heroines are forced to negotiate damaging experiences and navigate the narrowest of lines between sanity and the unknown territories of mid-Victorian "madness," as they were popularly defined, in what we would regard as sexist terms, in relation to women.[4]

This emphasis is preserved in the Moxon collection, characteristically in the psychological profiles of Godiva, the Lady of Shalott, Mariana, and the narrator of "The Sisters." Modern *literary* criticism has explored these challenging subjects at some length.[5] There is no such thoroughness, however, in readings of the illustrators' treatment of Tennysonian psychology. Richard Stein suggests the Pre-Raphaelites privilege this aspect of the verse, and for once it is accurate to note how visual interpretation is dominated by Holman Hunt, Rossetti, and Millais. But Stein does not enter into a systematic analysis of the picturing of these mental "undercurrents,"[6] only suggesting the artists' insights on the basis of piecemeal commentary; Allan Life likewise provides some provocative observations,[7] but does not achieve a coherent view.

A better approach to the process of visualization is to analyze the illustrators' response in terms of a series of strategies and areas of concern—ways of showing in which they foreground elements of the verse, interpret them in their own terms, and provide suggestive representations of the troubled mind. Fox notes Tennyson's capacity to create a "graphic delineation" of madness and obsession,[8] but the process of showing is taken much further in the form of the Pre-Raphaelites' cramped, intricate, intimate, and ultimately unsettling sets of images: visual metaphors for the unhinged and delusional.

## DREAMS AND STATES OF MIND

Tennyson may have been influenced by contemporary texts exploring the mental issues such as Robert Macnish's *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1827–34), an early study which attempted to codify "reverie" and "trance." The poet was unquestionably interested in the dynamics of the half-awakened mind, and his writing of confused states typically makes the characters, usually women, into dreamers—or at least daydreamers—who are literally asleep or otherwise becalmed in a zone between consciousness and sleeping. This is the condition Victorians described as a "waking dream" or "fit"; re-creating Silas's episodes in Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1861), Alice's doziness in Carroll's fantasy (1865), and the girl's strange reveries in Oliphant's "The Library Window" (1896),[9] the personae in Tennyson's verse are placed in a liminal space. This has its own, idiosyncratic imagery. Tennyson usually writes his figures as medieval types, casting them as knights or ladies moving in arcane landscapes and fantastical interiors which act as a symbolic language of the unconscious. Practicing their own "weird medievalism" to match the writer's allegories,[10] the illustrators accordingly depict the characters' somnambulism. Tennyson's persona are trapped in symbolic architecture with their strange anxieties, moving between the real and the unconscious, and each of the Pre-Raphaelite illustrations dealing with this experience creates a distinct sense

of interior perception, eliding the objective and subjective and collapsing the distinction between dream and reality. Mariana, caught in a "dreamy" (10) state, half-asleep or torpid, is not able to distinguish between the two, and the artists' readings develop this unsettling experience for the reader/viewer.

Millais playfully experiments with perceptual uncertainties in his images for "The Day Dream" (figs. 4.1, 4.2), Tennyson's retelling of the Sleeping Beauty, as those at court begin to awake. Millais captures the oddness of this experience in his two designs, in each case suggesting the characters' confusion as they struggle to make the psychological transition from coma to a new perception of reality. In the first design (fig. 4.1), the two states are delicately balanced: the Sleeping Beauty is not shown, but a maid of honor and a page are shown in suspended animation in a kiss prefiguring the more important one (318), while the hero, "lighter-footed than the fox," arrives dynamically (321). Wakening and sleeping are dramatized in the oscillation between the beau's energetic pose as he bounds up the stairs and the frozen immobility of the other characters. This is a powerful evocation of the dreamlike, fusing a nature that "droops," time suspended in the manner of "old portraits" (318), with nature "quick and quicker" (322); figuring the apparently dead *and* alive, the illustration is essentially an image of the strange paralysis of sleeping, caught in the anomalous time of "faint shadows" (317), but able to observe the movement of others in the dream.

FIGURE 4.1. John Everett Millais, "The Day Dream" (1). Engraved by William James Linton, 83 × 95 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 317.

Indeed, Millais intensifies the feeling of disjuncture in the form of an incongruous menagerie; some animals (all of his invention) are asleep (the doves, the dog) in the manner of Tennyson's arrested house martins, whose chicks are "stay'd" (318), while the peacocks and birds in the background seem to be animate. The effect is one of perceptual confusion; is the hero awake in the land of sleepers, where everyone is "tranced" (320) and all "droop sleepily" (318), or is he the product of the dreamers' fantasy? Tennyson's narrative suggests the first explanation, but Millais interrogates its logic; accentuating the poem's narcoleptic tone, he immerses the viewer in a dream zone and does not engage directly with the moment when the "charm was snapt" (322).

Nor does he foreground this event in his second illustration (fig. 4.2). This image of the awakening of the king surrounded at table by his followers (323) does little to express the arrival of awareness, or "hubbub" (322) of revival. Rather, Millais stresses once again the complexities of the in-between; although the characters are shown waking up, the scene has the strangeness of a dream, with the staring faces of three animals—a dog, monkey, and falcon—injecting a note of nightmarish uncertainty. Not mentioned in the poem, these additions again interrogate the boundaries of waking and sleeping, immersing the viewer in a confused state to match the bafflement of the characters as the artist constructs them, in far from "perfect rest" (320). Millais also expands the sense of dreaminess by showing

FIGURE 4.2. John Everett Millais, "The Day Dream" (2). Engraved by William James Linton, 84 × 95 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 323.

the complex gestures of the characters as they stretch and yawn; though awake, their facial expressions range from astonishment—particularly the king's as he bemusedly contemplates his overgrown beard—to the butler's intentness as he struggles to awake while others peer uncertainly around them as they try to establish what has happened and regain their bearings in the waking world.

However, Millais most powerfully evokes this confusion by manipulating Pre-Raphaelite verisimilitude, which on this occasion stands in sharp counterpoint to the poem's "slumbrous light" (320). Although the scenes are muddled perceptions as the characters emerge from their catalepsy and the world is a supposedly seen in "faint shadows" and "soft lustre" (317–18), Millais visualizes events in multitudinous and sharp-edged detail, as if they were being seen with the acuteness of vision associated with the heightened awareness of being wide awake. In contradiction of the poppy stalks appearing in the first design (fig. 4.1), symbols of the dreaminess associated with opium, Millais subjects every object in this world to the type of analysis typical of Pre-Raphaelite aesthetics, specifying the individual hairs on the dog's back, the lank hair of the page delivering the kiss, and even the crinkled leaves of the poppies' foliage. This calculated misapplication compounds the merging of dream and reality, again proposing a series of questions: Is this real? Or is it the hyperrealism of dreams, the curious effect of Pre-Raphaelite painting of the first stage in its development, such as Millais's treatment of *Ophelia* (1850, Tate Britain, London), where the detail is so developed that the scene is subjectivized, and seems *unreal* rather than *real*? Paradoxically applying the style more normally associated with the clear vision of consciousness, Millais amplifies the ambiguities of Tennyson's verse, converting it from an opposition of sleeping and not sleeping into a meditation on dreaminess, the curious moment when an "after-dinner's nap" seems like a "hundred years" (323–24). Playing with the notion of the (day)dream, the artist extends the poem's visionary nature, focusing attention not on the narrative or moral (a conventional assertion of the paternalistic power of love), but on its psychology, its dislocations, and its mapping of a collective malaise.

## SEMIOTICS AND INTERPRETATION

Though absent from scholarship on the Moxon Tennyson, Millais's diptych is one of his most experimental and suggestive works, greatly enhancing the verse and engaging the reader/viewer in a complex, interpretive transaction. Other responses to Tennyson's writing of the dreamlike manipulate the same or parallel techniques—notably the use of detail—while focusing on the uses of symbolic realism combined with distortions of space. Tennyson presents narratives of

madness, anxiety, and mental dislocation, and the Pre-Raphaelites picture their readings of these subjects in the form of dense, complicated cuts animated by suggestive signs.

Holman Hunt explores the applications of detail in his picturing of "Godiva" (fig. 4.3) and "The Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.4). Both deal with dislocated experience, and each visualizes the dreamlike as we are drawn into the viewpoint of the two characters. At one extreme is Godiva, who is apparently wide awake but

FIGURE 4.3. William Holman Hunt, "Godiva." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 95 × 80 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 281.

possessed with anxiety as she contemplates her disrobing, and at the other is the complete mental collapse, moving between fantasy and the real, of the unstable incumbent of Shalott. In both of these designs the central characters, as Lorraine Kooistra observes, are typical examples of the overlarge figures dominating the compositions with their gestures,[11] but the workings of their minds, in accordance with this arrangement, are most suggestively inscribed in the fabric of the symbolic emblems positioned around them.

In "Godiva," Holman Hunt creates a dense iconography expressing the character's anguish as she prepares to win concessions for the people of Coventry by displaying herself "naked thro' the town" (282). This symbolic scheme is a biblical or typological code,[12] and its signifiers have been read by Engen and Life as emblems of her status as the embodiment of Christian sacrifice.[13] To the left of the composition is a carved representation of the pelican, feeding its young from the blood of its own breast, a symbol of Christ which defines Godiva's giving of herself for the citizens' benefit in the form of physical immolation; above this relief is a crucifix, with Godiva's crown placed in obeisance in front of it; below it is a demonic figure suggesting the evil Godiva must overcome; while the arrow slit positioned behind her in the form of a cross further contributes to the notion of Christian goodness. These items visualize the extremes she has to embrace: like Christ, she must face up to the "hard condition" (283), the psychological demands of selfless giving. A martyr, she is a figure whose sacrifice will win "an everlasting name" (284).

This sort of suffering, projected in symbolic realism, links directly to the typological imagery of Hunt's *Shadow of Death* (1870–73, Manchester City Art Galleries) and the dense symbolic codes of *The Awakening Conscience* (1853, fig. 1.7).[14] All three images depict figures in emotional conflict as they struggle with questions of faith and morality. In "Godiva," Hunt anatomizes the territories of indecision and fearfulness. Though not obviously dreamlike, the illustration provides an interior image of Godiva's mind as she tries to make the correct decision, a situation lifted from the verse:

> So left alone, the passions of her mind,
> As winds from all the compass shift and blow
> Made war upon each other for an hour,
> Till pity won. (282)

This conflict is embodied in a calculated deployment of paired objects, alternatives in the form of a medieval bestiary. Within this scheme, the demonic figure contrasts with the pelican, while other ornithological imagery suggests mental extremes. Godiva wears a belt of "wedded eagles" (283), literally binding

her to the predatory way of life exemplified by her husband's rapacious behavior, but chooses to become a dove; real birds sit in the background and carved ones on the capitals. Choosing between modes of being is also embodied in the two roundels of the loom, versions of the wheel of fate, and in the paired doves in the background. Underscoring this choice, however, is the mental anguish created by indecision. Tennyson insists that the "passions of her mind . . . Made war" (282), and Holman Hunt reinscribes this information in the anachronistic (impossible pre-Conquest) detail of the chevrons around the arches,[15] a pattern of tensioned zig-zags to convey her "fear" and "horrors" (283) as she struggles to accommodate her inner conflict. Read in these terms, in other words, Godiva is projected as a psychodrama as much as a Christian allegory. Life suggests that the whiteness of her figure endows her with the status of a "living monument" defying time,[16] but a close reading of the emblems shows that Hunt privileges the idea of instability, focusing not on her lasting achievement but on the mental uncertainties, the "winds" and "creeping sunbeams" (282) of a changing psychological condition as she makes her choices.

This dense symbolic inscription materially adds to Tennyson's portraiture and stresses the need to decode the images' surfaces. The approach is sophisticated, playing with the reader/viewer's perceptions by obfuscating the obvious source of information—Godiva's face is turned away and displays no features—while deploying an eclectic mix of codes and suggestive signs. Hunt's approach exemplifies the Pre-Raphaelite strategy of writing inner thought into outer nature; here, especially, W. M. Rossetti's "small actualities" express "lofty meanings."[17] At the same time, the Pre-Raphaelites extend the poems' range of possible meanings by using purely connotative signs which do not easily yield to singular interpretations. Their development of open texts to match Tennyson's verse is most enriching of the reader/viewer's experience when it is applied to the reading of his female psychotics, immersing the interpreter in the dream condition as s/he is compelled to engage with unstable sets of polysemic signs.

In "The Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.4), Hunt examines the implications of Tennyson's psychological portrait, manipulating the material to highlight what he views as its prime constituents. The process is initially a matter of selection and focusing. He ignores the symbolic landscape: Tennyson inscribes the Lady's state of mind in the flat monotony of the "silent isle" with its implications of mental disturbance embodied in the fragile aspens that "quiver" (68), but the artist does not register any of these details, showing only a tiny glimpse of the greater world. Instead, he represents the Lady in her chamber, illustrating the setting of parts II and III and focusing on the dramatic climax when, having seen Lancelot, she "left the loom" (72). The scene illustrated is the final stanza in part III:

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
    She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
    The Lady of Shalott. (72)

Hunt's response to this information is again selective, mediating between the purely paratextual and the interpretive. He preserves some of the physical details and elides others: we see the web and loom, the mirror (which does not crack), the helmet, and the plume, but not the water lily. These selections moor the illustration in the poem's mise-en-scène, but it is otherwise conceived in terms of the artist's reading of the Lady's mental crisis. Tennyson does not describe her physical appearance, but Hunt imagines her as a Rossettian beauty (an image curiously prefiguring his painting of Jane Morris in the 1870s);[18] her facial expression, in particular her gaze, suggests some sort of collapse, as do her awkwardly contorted gestures, with clenched hands, downcast face, and fluid pose in echo of the curved postures of Gothic sculpture and Quattrocento painting. These features are grafted onto Tennyson's direction, that she takes "three paces thro' the room" (72), animating the design as she walks uncertainly from left to right.

More telling, however, is Hunt's manipulation of the accessories, focusing on the web as it floats "wide," and his own invention, the Lady's billowing hair, which frames the top edge and rhymes with the spreading arabesques of her handiwork. These elements are deployed as visual metaphors, unraveling threads to symbolize her unravelling mind; the hair, Stein observes, is a visual pun, a sign of "coming undone."[19] Tennyson suggests psychological crisis in the image of the cracked mirror, but Hunt's coiffeur gives her anxiety a visceral intensity, embodying her mental disintegration in a distinct, suggestive form. The sense of endless movement, so characteristic of anxiety, is also reinforced by other elements; the supports of the loom are twisted stanchions, and her figure is itself contrapuntal, wrapped in threads. All of this movement suggests disorder and a collapse of psychological certainties; not even the presence of Christ, imaged in another addition to the text, can help her to face her despair.

Hunt's representation of the Lady's crisis is thus figured in terms of symbolic items which complement the typological iconography of "Godiva" but are essentially subjective in their range of associations. At once tightly focused and a significant improvement on earlier versions, which depict the lady in the mode of conventional history painting and are far less radical than the artist's solution

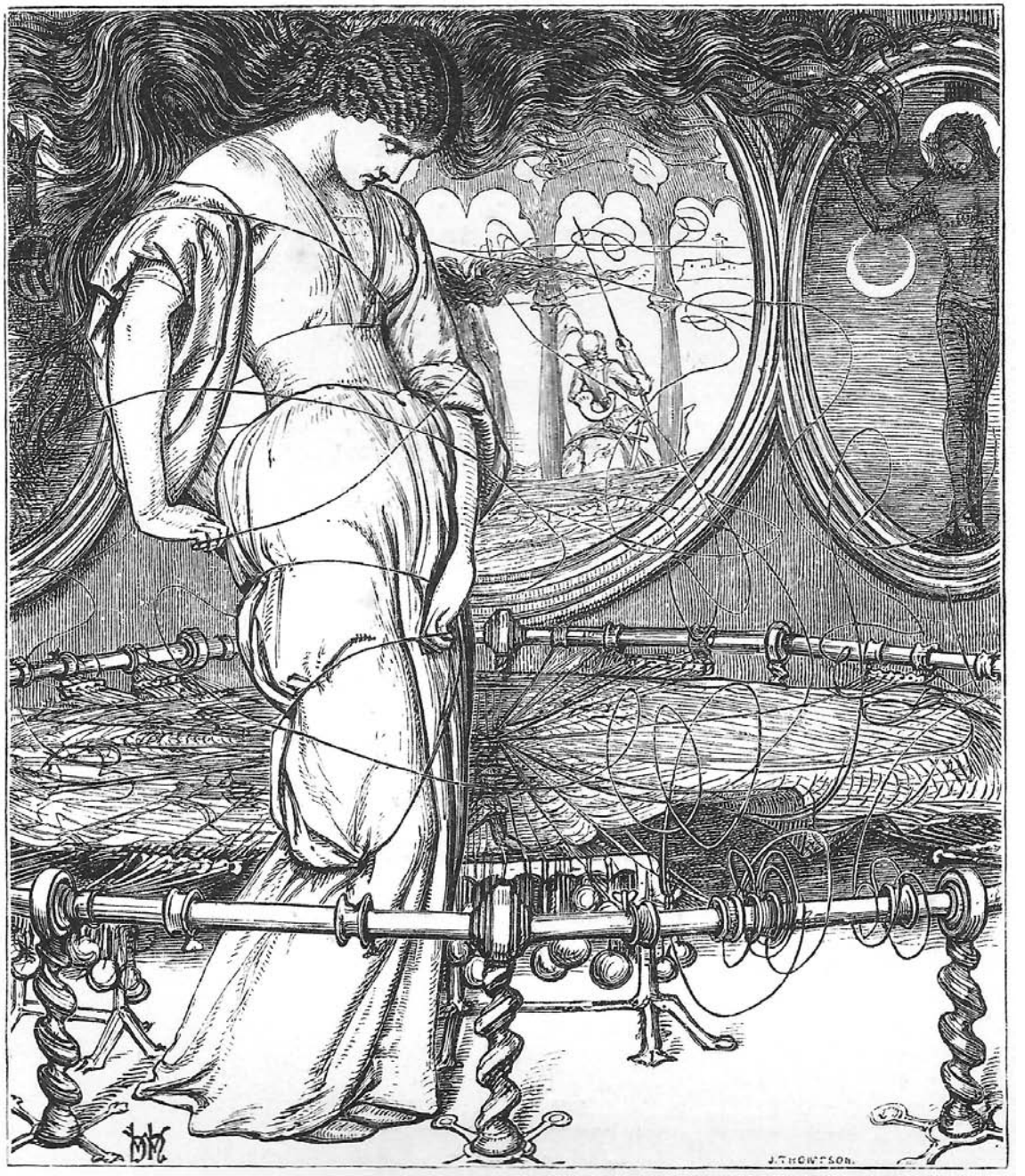



FIGURE 4.4. William Holman Hunt, "The Lady of Shalott" (1). Engraved by John Thompson, 94 × 86 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 67.

in print,[20] the illustration is both powerfully dramatic and psychologically resonant. Holman Hunt interprets the subject in what are essentially his own terms, remaking the subject in a visual equivalent, extending its range of meanings; it was not always the case, however, that readers were appreciative of this manipulation. His design was the second-most controversial of the series (the first being Rossetti's "St Cecily"), and although "Godiva" was easily interpreted and generally admired, "The Lady of Shalott' was regarded as muddled and self-indulgent rather than evocative. This response is typified by a critic writing in *The British Quarterly Review,* who viewed it, as noted in the introduction, as a "child's scribble";[21] clearly, Holman Hunt's expressionistic distortion of the image, with its weighted accessories, was completely lost on this reader. More damagingly, it baffled the author, whose comments Hunt recorded in his *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood:*

> After some general talk he said, "I must now ask you why did you make the Lady of Shalott, in the illustration, with her hair wildly tossed about as if by a tornado?"
>
> . . . I replied that I had wished to convey the idea of the threatened fatality by reversing the ordinary peace of the room and of the lady herself; that while she recognised that the moment of the catastrophe had come, the spectator might also understand it.
>
> "But I didn't say that her hair was blown about like that. Then there is another question. . . . Why did you make the web wind round and round her like the threads of a cocoon?"
>
> "Now," I exclaimed, "surely that may be justified, for you say—
>
> Out flew the web and floated wide. . . ."
>
> But Tennyson broke in, "But I did not say it floated round and round her." My defence was, "May I not urge that I had only half a page on which to convey the impression of weird fate, whereas you use about fifteen pages to give expression to the complete idea?" But Tennyson laid it down that "an illustrator ought never to add anything to what he finds in the text."[22]

This situation reminds us of the provocative experimentalism of much of the Pre-Raphaelites' interpretations. Holman Hunt's enhancement of the Lady's hair, converting it into a sign of turmoil, is a typically creative move, one that not only intensifies the reader's experience of the poem but designates the illustration as an independent piece in its own right, drawing its motifs from outside the literary source. The artist finally exploited its potential in his oil version of 1905 (Manchester City Art Gallery, fig. 4.5), another example of the interchangeability of mid-Victorian painting and graphic art.

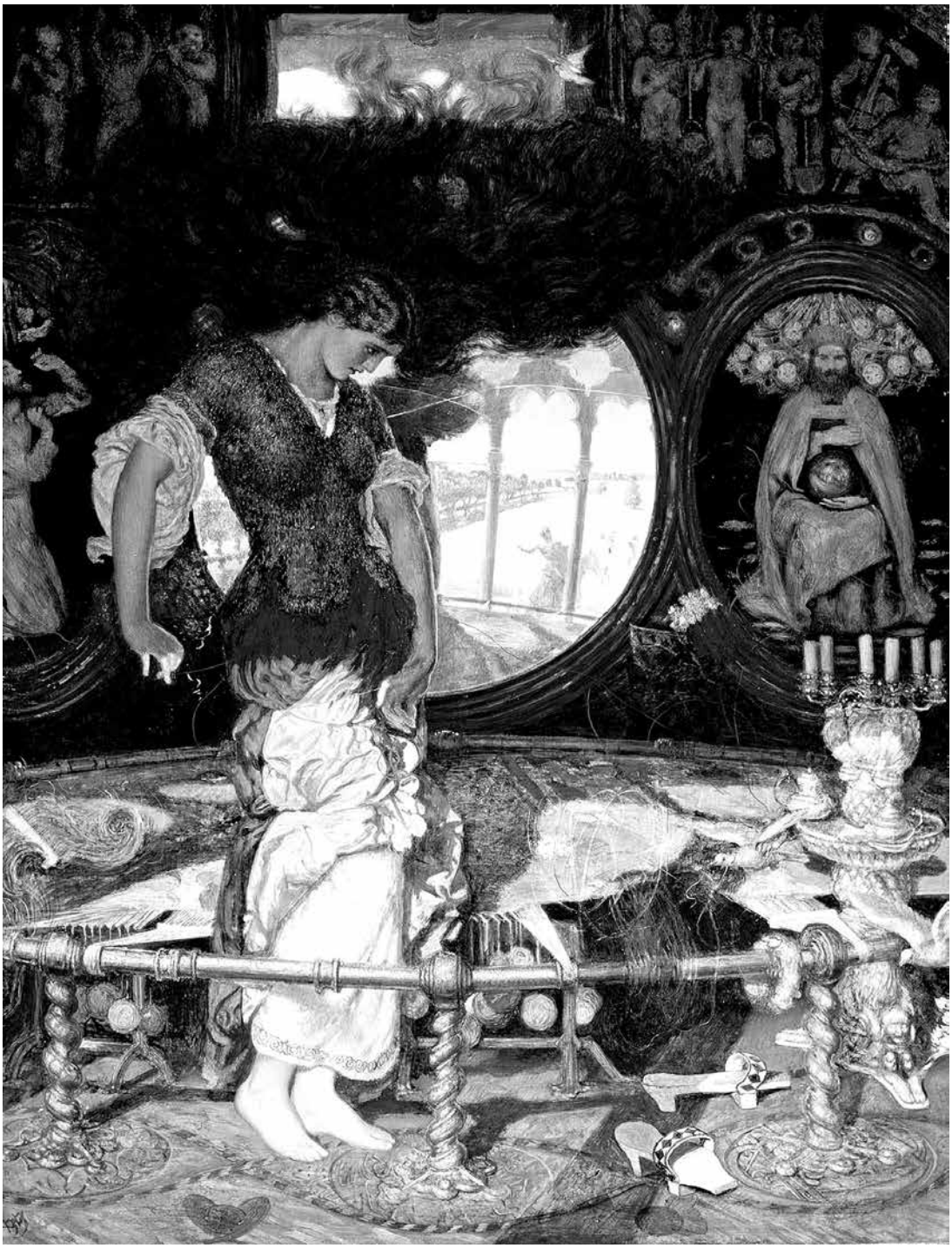


FIGURE 4.5. William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott,* 1905. Oil on panel, 444 × 341mm. Manchester Art Gallery UK / Bridgeman Images.

The dreamlike use of detail and the development of ambivalent and suggestive signs are of prime importance in the Pre-Raphaelites' visualization of anguished and unfamiliar states of mind. Another key element is the treatment of space for expressive rather than descriptive purposes. Millais, Rossetti, and Holman Hunt experiment with unusual treatments, in each case embodying a psychological condition in a spatial form.

This experimentalism is sometimes a matter of amplifying the viewer's sense of crisis by deploying a baroque arrangement, dissolving the distance between the figures and the viewer. Holman Hunt immerses the interpreter in his characters' experiences by moving his personae close to the picture plane, eliding elements within the compositions so they appear to flow out of the design. In "The Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.4) the critical moment is accentuated by diminishing the frame and making the character too large for the space: her hair is not contained within the enclosing border, nor is the circle of the loom. The scene bursts out of its pictorial unit and occupies the viewer's space, so compelling us to partake more directly in the charged moment. Millais likewise engages the reader in this intimate spatial transaction in his first image for "The Day Dream" (fig. 4.1). Here he places the subject in deep recession; seeming to tip it towards the picture plane like an overworked version of Quattrocento perspective, he invites us, as it were, to step into the composition. The illustrator also deploys this type of involving scheme elsewhere. In "St Agnes' Eve" (fig. 2.11) the transformative moment is intensified by engaging the reader with the saint's contemplation of the spiritualized landscape of "snowy towers" (310) as she hesitates on her journey to martyrdom. Preparatory sketches (BMAG) indicate that the artist experimented with the composition's space, deciding finally on a device in which the turn of the spiral staircase is used to position the reader directly behind the character, seeing what she sees and experiencing her moment of insight;[23] and in the second illustration for "The Day Dream" (fig. 4.2) he fixes the viewer's position very close to the table.

At the same time, Millais uses space as a direct index or symbol of the prime characters' mental malaise. Paul Barlow has noted how in his paintings the artist is centrally concerned with "the relation between bodily presence and restriction, or restraint,"[24] and in his illustrations he is similarly focused on the dynamics of confined space as a metaphor for his female characters' overwhelming sense of frustration. "Mariana" (fig. I.1) exemplifies this approach. Tennyson inscribes her state of mind in the many oppressive details of the surrounding landscape and house, but Millais crystallizes her anguish not only

in her gesture but in the claustrophobic space around her. Mariana's sense of mental and confinement is physically exemplified in the shallow box entrapping her; steep recession, depicting both floor and ceiling at the same time, and the repeated oblong shapes of panels and windows narrow the enclosure even more. Distorted space therein exemplifies a distorted mind, a mental coffin from which there is no escape: the classic signs of anxiety and despair. Visualizing a "dreamy" state (10), Millais uses a dream image explicable in Freudian terms as an example of the correspondence between female psychology and a room,[25] with the enclosed space as a symbol of the mind and (often) as a sign of repressed sexuality. Holman Hunt's designs are similarly configured, with the physical space signaling mental confinement. In "Godiva" (fig. 4.4) his spatial scheme suggests the choices the heroine has to make; the open window with the symbol of the cross connotes the possibility of spiritual withdrawal, while the other (in doubtful shade rather than light) leads to the streets of Coventry. With the elbow of one arm directed towards the window but her face towards the door, Godiva's moment of choice is inscribed in the organization of the space. Contained, in Barlow's terms, in "perspectivally distorted or too-small-frames,"[26] Tennyson's heroines are imprisoned in the niches of Pre-Raphaelite illustration as women who are waiting for something to happen or forced to take the initiative for themselves.

Expressive space is taken to another level of sophistication by Rossetti, who adopts and complicates the emotionalized schemes of his Pre-Raphaelite collaborators. In his illustrations, as in his paintings, the spatial arrangement is a resonant sign and is systematically deployed to convey Tennyson's mental focus. For Rossetti any void was precious, and any loss a detriment to the illustration's power. It is telling, for example, to recall the anecdote, recounted in the introduction, of his raging over the loss of space in the engraving of "St Cecily" (fig. 4.10). He had only lost a sixteenth of an inch, but he insisted that such an error would make a significant difference: he could "get a whole city in there,"[27] or anything else. In each of his designs the smallest unfilled gap is weighted with possibilities.

His treatment of space is especially inventive (and controversial) in his illustrations for "The Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.6) and "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7). In both of these designs Rossetti exploits the familiar baroque techniques, with the two female figures and the looming figure of Lancelot pressed to the picture plane in frames apparently too small to contain them: prisoners in minuscule voids. However, he places the same emphasis on deep recession, using the backgrounds and the objects they contain as symbols of the characters' mental disintegration.

The Lady of Shalott's psychological tumult is paradoxically suggested after her death by the cramped middle and far distance, with tiny swans positioned in the middle ground (the emblems of romance and lifelong fidelity, and literally her "swan song"), and the milling figures in the far background, the signs of mental restlessness. Once again a Freudian reading is useful, applying the notion of the passageway from the conscious into the workings of the unconscious mind, the "manifest" into the "latent."[28] These spatial and emblematic devices are fresh inventions, only peripherally linked to lines in the poem, and Rossetti reimagines the concept of psychological collapse in his own terms: Tennyson deploys the imagery of the unraveling thread and the "crack'd" mirror (72), but the artist conveys the notion of fragmentation or coming apart in the seething movement

FIGURE 4.6. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Lady of Shalott" (2). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 95 × 80 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 75.

FIGURE 4.7. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Mariana in the South." Engraved by William James Linton, 96 × 82 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 82.

of figures pressed into impossibly cramped spaces. In "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7), conversely, he manipulates recession to suggest not madness but tedium, a strategy in direct contrast with Millais's treatment of the same subject (fig. I.1).

This approach is another reworking of the poem's focus on Mariana's despair; Rossetti does not attempt to visualize the imagery of a sterile landscape but embodies her state of mind in the spaces of her room. In particular, he creates visually the sense of dragging boredom embodied in the mechanical variations of the poem's refrain:

"Is this the form," she made her moan,
"That won his praises night and morn?"
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn." (83)

The half-rhymed couplets "moan," "morn," "alone," and "forlorn" sound drearily throughout the poem, and Rossetti materializes this ennui in the tiny details of the rounded portals appearing four times in the background—the arched head of the mirror, the fireplace, the opening above it, and the door. Tennyson traps Mariana, as it were, in the incantatory repetition of the refrain, and Rossetti ensnares her in a series of repeated forms that act as false doorways and blocked exits, as blank and imprisoning as the mirror, which seems like a portal but only serves to stress her containment. The locked and barred shutters at the furthermost point of recession add to this feeling and greatly intensify the poem's impact. Here, as in all of the Pre-Raphaelites' designs, the image presents what Life describes as "a claustrophobic subjective space,"[29] a mind-space rather than a "real" one.

## ROSSETTIAN RESPONSES: DETAIL, SYMBOLISM

Rossetti's manipulation of space exemplifies his stretching of Pre-Raphaelite style as an interpretive medium. He applies the same expansive strategy in his treatment of the other elements of the Pre-Raphaelite idiom, exploiting intense detail and a combination of legible codes and personal symbolism to create his own version of the dreamlike. His participation in these discourses is important to note, because many critics have explained his contribution to the book in purely idiosyncratic terms: personal it certainly is, but it is best understood, as his treatment of space suggests, as a variation on a wider style.

Rossetti's use of detail evokes the same sense of dislocation as that appearing in Millais's visualization of "The Day Dream" (fig. 4.1), applying the language of verisimilitude to the representation of a visionary perception. The discovery of the Lady of Shalott exemplifies this approach (fig. 4.6) and makes a close visual match with Tennyson's use of vivid imagery for dreamlike effects; Tennyson particularizes the Lady's perceptions of the physical world, and Rossetti uses detail to represent an inner world, infusing a dream with the specificity of the real. The analogy can be traced in a comparison of a representative stanza, where the Lady sees Lancelot, and Rossetti's design:

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror. (72)

Tennyson specifies the physical parameters of the Lady's supercharged perception, labeling its components in a list of nouns ("brow," "curls," "helmet," "river," "mirror," "war-horse") and evocative verbs and adjectives ("glow'd," "burnish'd," "coal-black," "flash'd"). This, in other words, is a perception in which everything—or at least the object of fascination—is registered in terms of a dense field of cloying things to evoke the hallucinatory particularization of a dream.[30]

Congested with a sort of information overload as the character struggles to make sense of what she has seen, the stanza conflates inner and outer vision, a technique in strict parallel with Rossetti's approach. Focusing on the climax of the story, Rossetti does not re-create the same details, but he does create a close equivalent to the poet's all-seeing eye in the form of faux-medieval paraphernalia and other apparently incidental objects. Lancelot's costume is a densely figured surface of patterns; the Lady wears intricate clasps holding her cloak together; the grain on the wooden bridge is specified; and it is even possible to see the crosses on the shields of tiny figures in the far distance. The poem's spell is caught in the detail and recast in the artist's own terms, an approach he applies throughout his Moxon illustrations. Crammed with objects and jewel-like in effect, Rossetti's designs reinscribe the poet's horror vacui, seeing the world through the disturbed inner eye of the unsettled dreamer.

These crowded objects populate visual schemes of emblematic detail, and in Rossetti's illustrations, as in Millais's and Hunt's, symbolic realism is an important element. Rossetti sometimes deploys the typological imagery of the sort featuring in Hunt's "Godiva'" (fig. 4.3); but unlike Hunt, he combines a recognizable imagery, Life explains, with "an essentially private symbolism . . . as challenging" as Blake's.[31] In "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7), for instance, he unites a crucifix with locked panels, and in "The Weeping Queens" (fig. I.3) he combines a series of crosses (on the women's crowns) with the artist's own reading of the "greens," showing them as a writhing field of stalks and flowers. The crosses connote the presence of God, but Rossetti gives equal emphasis to the abundant flora, symbolizing the king's resurrection by likening his life and death to the perpetual death and rebirth of the vegetable world: "Merlin sware [Arthur] would come again" (192).

These elements signify alongside the artist's manipulation of space, in each case providing an imaginative reworking of the verse. Rossetti's strategy as a whole can be explained by focusing on his two most evocative designs—"Sir Galahad" (fig. 4.8) and "St Cecily" (fig. 4.10). "Sir Galahad" takes as its starting point the stanza describing the finding of a "secret shrine":

When down the stormy crescent goes
    A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
    I hear a noise of hymns;
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
    I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
    The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
    The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
    And solemn chaunts resound between. (306–7)

Rossetti's initial response to these lines is to reproduce their details. Galahad is shown arriving at the shrine in a forest, embodied in the altar's rustic construction of "dark stems"; the tapers are burning and a bell is being sounded; a sparkling vessel appears to the left and a "light" emanates from the sacred space. These visualized objects link the illustration to the text, but Rossetti otherwise takes Tennyson's dreaminess as an opportunity to create a private image. The details, as in his other readings, are projected as strange hallucinations in which even the tiniest item is specified. The ties holding the wicker-like branches together, the heads of screws holding the candle brackets to the wooden wall, and even the threads of the rope pulling the bell are shown in a moment of sensory overload, a seeing of everything. Rossetti thus amplifies the psychological implications of this "dreaming" (307) event, endowing it the overparticularized intensity of the visionary, the curiosity-cabinet strangeness of his Arthurian watercolors of 1850 and the early 1860s.[32]

He further amplifies the poem's psychological resonance by manipulating its narrative and reorientating its situations. Tennyson describes Galahad's finding of the shrine as part of a montage of places he *observes* on his quest, but Rossetti engages the character, whom he endows with refined features, as the ideal "faithful knight" (308), *with the site itself,* stressing its importance as a moment or place of special insight, another metaphor of a mood or mental condition. His Galahad does not just look, but drinks from a vessel; his exhaustion, suggested by the light that "swims," is represented by his stooping stance leaning against the altar, and his facial expression suggests fatigue. Engaged in reverie, he is immersed in an inner perception. This focus highlights the notion of Galahad's dreaming: is what he sees real, or is it a projection of an exhausted mind seeking comfort? Rossetti only poses the question rhetorically, there being little doubt in his reading of the text, with its unrealistic space and strange, brooding light, that Galahad is immersed in a dreamscape.

FIGURE 4.8. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Sir Galahad." Engraved by William James Linton, 96 × 80 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 305.

FIGURE 4.9. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Sir Galahad at the Ruined Chapel,* 1857–59. Watercolor, 290 × 345 mm. Birmingham Museums and Art Galleries. Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0.

The scene's hypnotic dreaminess is accentuated by Rossetti's additions and distortions. Though he erases some details, there being no "snowy altar-cloth" and only grainy boards, he adds others which can only be the product of the sleeping mind. Principal among these are the women positioned below the altar: they sound the bell, but (in contrast to the textual information) are not singing hymns. Crammed into an impossible void suggestive of a hidden recess in the hero's mind, they are shown only in shadow as the symbols of his desires, yearning, perhaps, for companionship and the love of "sweet" ladies (306), or for the guardianship of angels who protect the grail as he journeys through a deserted landscape. Tennyson describes the knight's progress as a "lonely" (307) series of encounters with sights and odors that "haunt [his] dreams" (308) as he "float[s]" and "swims" (306–7) through his visionary quest, and Rossetti focuses the character's somnambulism in a single moment of melancholy dreaming.

So the illustrator foregrounds the poem's interiority, representing its psychological ambivalence as much as its physical settings. Its reception at the time of issue reflects its complexity, mediating between illustration and interpretation. At least one critic, writing in *The London Daily News,* praised its fidelity to the poem's spirit as a "fitting" interpretation; the same anonymous reviewer, sensitive to Rossetti's approach, remarked on a "certain affectation," validated, nevertheless, by his "great power of imagination."[33] Yet others were less approving. The conservative critic writing in *The British Quarterly Review,* generally so hostile to the Pre-Raphaelites' contribution, approves Rossetti's characterization of Galahad as appropriately heroic. "It is the very man—so frank and pure, so saintly and steadfast." But he entirely fails to understand the artist's focus, bringing forth a spluttering condemnation of his imaginative additions. "Who," he demands "are these people underneath, praying and ringing the bell? Are they angels? If so, we must suppose . . . phosphorescence to be one of the properties of the angelic form."[34] This sort of facetiousness, sarcastically playing to the *Quarterly*'s readership, typifies the "literalist" school of criticism, but Rossetti (so often upset by negative criticism) was confident of the illustration's impact as an evocation of the inner life. Having manipulated the image in obsessive detail during the proof stage, he went on to produce a watercolor version (1857–59, fig. 4.9). This image is perhaps even stranger and more suggestive than the wood-engraved original; enriched with a palette of livid tints, its colors evoke the sickliness of fatigue and mental dislocation, adding another layer of oddness to the impression created by the cramped space.

Psychological instability is explored at still greater length in Rossetti's first illustration for "The Palace of Art," his complex and challenging design of "St Cecily" (fig. 4.10). This strange, interior image, the most famous and reproduced

FIGURE 4.10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Palace of Art" ("St Cecily"). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 94 × 79 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 113.

of the series, is also the most contentious. William Michael Rossetti noted how Tennyson approved of his brother's design, but (as in the case of Holman Hunt's "Lady of Shalott"), "the illustration of *St. Cecilia* puzzled him not a little, and he had to give up the problem of what it had to do with his verses."[35] Studied skepticism was also the line taken by contemporary reviewers, particularly the caustic *Quarterly* writer, who, as noted earlier, thought the design a piece of childish absurdity.[36] Again, mockery replaces criticism, and other, more modern critics have put levity in advance of analysis. Several observe the strange incongruity of the angel's apparent *biting* of the saint's forehead; Layard argues that the

image is a "deception," a betrayal of literary trust in which the artist mocks the source material by showing the divine personage not as an angel but as "a man masquerading" as one,[37] whose unrealistic wings make the figure seem as if he were dressed in a wax-and-paper costume as one might encounter in a play or a pantomime. Harold Nicolson's approach is equally strange, suggesting the angel is "something sinister,"[38] transforming the scene into a seduction. Such bizarre interpretations have skewed critical assessment, and even critics of the present day have struggled to make sense of this most ambiguous of designs, speculating on intertextual jokes and an imagined ridicule of the verse without engaging in a detailed examination of what is actually in the composition. But "St Cecily" can be understood more gainfully in terms of Rossetti's approach to the writing as an opportunity to illustrate and interpret, once again manipulating detail, symbolic realism, and space as a means of reimagining a mental domain.

The first question, of course, is *whose* psychology is being visualized? The strategy in other Pre-Raphaelite illustrations has been to materialize the main character's state of mind; Holman Hunt inscribes Godiva's struggle in her physical setting, and Rossetti deploys the enclosed room in "Mariana in the South" to signal her predicament. Here, though, the approach is different: the scene, as Martin Meisel argues, is not a projection of St. Cecily's mind, but of the narrator's or, more specifically, the narrator's personified psyche.[39] Imagined as one of the scenes contemplated by the soul, it is often forgotten that the illustration is intended to be one of series of pictorial tapestries. These images, "All various . . . for every mood" and "change" of the "still soul" (116), are written as projections of human experience and the soul's perception of them, and Rossetti's design fits within an imagined pattern of psychological possibilities.

Rossetti's design is figured, in other words, as a vision of the soul's innermost contemplation of life: a dream image manifested in some private space of endless, inward recession in the form of an illustration containing an image of a tapestry, which is itself contained with the borders of a wood engraving contained within the oblong shape of the printed page. An endlessly receding example of *mise en abyme,* an image within an image or a lens within a lens,[40] its ontological ambiguity figures the inward journey into the abyss of the mind. As the space in "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7) connotes an image of the character's mood, so too in this design the reader/viewer is conducted through a series of concentric compartments leading from the outermost perception (seeing the engraving on the page) to the innermost point, reimagining it as a tapestry that acts as a symbolic mirror of the soul's dreams. Centrally focused on perception and materializing the abstract, Rossetti plays with the process of seeing and the workings of an imagined world, emphasizing the idea of penetrating ever further inward

or into the mind by showing tiny objects in the distance as we contemplate the image's steep recession, with its combinations of the very near (the guard's hand, holding the apple, the dove) and the very far (a fluttering flag, a tower with a pointed roof). Peering at these items, we are compelled to see the materialized signs of contemplation and what life might signify.

The next question concerns the representation of this charged iconography. Rossetti's approach is in one sense entirely straightforward; though complicated by being placed four pages before the relevant passage—surely an unhelpful error, and probably the result of the book's not having an editor—his illustration is on the face of it a mirror image, or at least a close approximation, of Tennyson's details:

> Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,
> Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
> Wound with white roses, slept St Cecily;
> An angel look'd at her. (118)

The "clear-walled city" is presented in the form of the curving wall, complete with well-defined crenellations and a smooth inner surface; the sea is signaled by ships; the "organ pipes," accentuated in quaintly naïve misperspective, direct the eye inward; and even the tiniest details, the "white roses" in the saint's hair, are microscopically reproduced in her floral coronet. The only divergence from Tennyson's catalogue is the angel and saint's embrace; Tennyson says the male figure "look'd at her" (118), but the illustration shows them engaged in a kiss.

Taken as a whole, however, this interconnectedness is more than enough to contradict the idea, so often voiced, that Rossetti's design is purely extratextual. On the contrary, he roots his design in the words in ways both specific and general. He re-creates Tennyson's pictured event and he manipulates a series of signs to crystallize the poem's theme as a whole, or at least a version of it; as Laurence Housman explains, he sums up the "drift" of Tennyson's verse within the space of a "single picture."[41] Meisel notes how the Palace, a metaphor for human experience, is "rendered as a compendious image of all life, natural, social, imaginative and intellectual," and this is at least a part of what Rossetti sets out to do in his illustration. "All life," as Meisel has it,[42] is embodied in the small oblong of the wood engraving, 3¾ inches high by 3 inches across. First we have life "social" (the tiny figures collaborating as a team, pulling a line which docks a ship); "natural" is implied in the character of the soldier, who does not feature in the text, eating an apple; and "imaginative and intellectual" in the visionary forms of the angel and saint. Jostling together in a series of incongruous juxtapositions, the characters and situations contained in the illustration embody all of life's plenty. Rossetti's take on Tennyson's imagery thus discharges his duty to underscore the writer's

information, elucidating the soul's weird, God-like fantasy in an equally bizarre and unsettling illustration.

But this approach is only part of the equation. The key issue is how he reads these possibilities, suggesting a number of alternatives. Not only an illustrator, and mindful of his responsibility to buttress the author's ideas, he also distorts Tennyson's text to articulate his own interpretation, using the poem as an inspiration and proceeding to diverge from his source material. Tennyson shows the soul in anguish, "contemplating all," but falling into a despair of "horrible nightmares" because it has "no form of creed' and suddenly regards the world as a Godless space of horror and decay, a "crumbling tomb" with "no comfort anywhere" (123–26). Rossetti, conversely, visualizes none of this existential dread; as Meisel observes, he evades the "terrible disenchantment"[43] and in this sense undercuts the poem's moral purpose to show how experience without faith is spiritually void. Instead, he focuses on a parallel sort of spiritual malaise, the workings of a mind consumed with angst. In his treatment, the soul is satiated with its contemplation of the teeming world and all experience is reduced to the level of appetite, of *glut* overpowering the consciousness. This notion is partly visualized in the form of the swarming activity of ships and figures, but it is crystallized in the analogy between the angel's kiss and the soldier's eating of the apple; the soldier "munches" on the fruit while the angel is munching on the forehead of the beloved. Playing with visual rhymes, Rossetti conflates the spiritual and the physical, the metaphysical and the sexual, reducing all experience to a matter of cloying consumption. Tennyson's soul is overwhelmed with a sense of spiritual emptiness, but Rossetti rewrites this experience as a matter of existential weariness, of contemplating a world in which the anguished mind can consume everything but is ultimately unable to find satisfaction and is left, like the eroticized St. Cecilia, as if on the point of orgasm, in a moment of suspended desire—an image he was later to rework in the form of his painting of *Beata Beatrix* (1866–70, Tate Britain).[44]

In short, Rossetti's reading of the poem is a parallel, analogical interpretation which matches the soul's feeling of emptiness but explains it in nontheological terms, purely as a matter of the individual's perceptual engagement with the given world; what matters in the illustration is not the absence of God, but the excessiveness of things and experiences and their overwhelming effect on the mind. This essentially secular take on human experience is half-realized in criticism which notes how the spiritual is evoked in a materialistic idiom. Layard probably takes the idea too far in identifying the angel as a man in disguise, but others have commented on the intermingling of what is supposed to be divine with the matter of the corporeal world. For William Sharp the angel's ragged

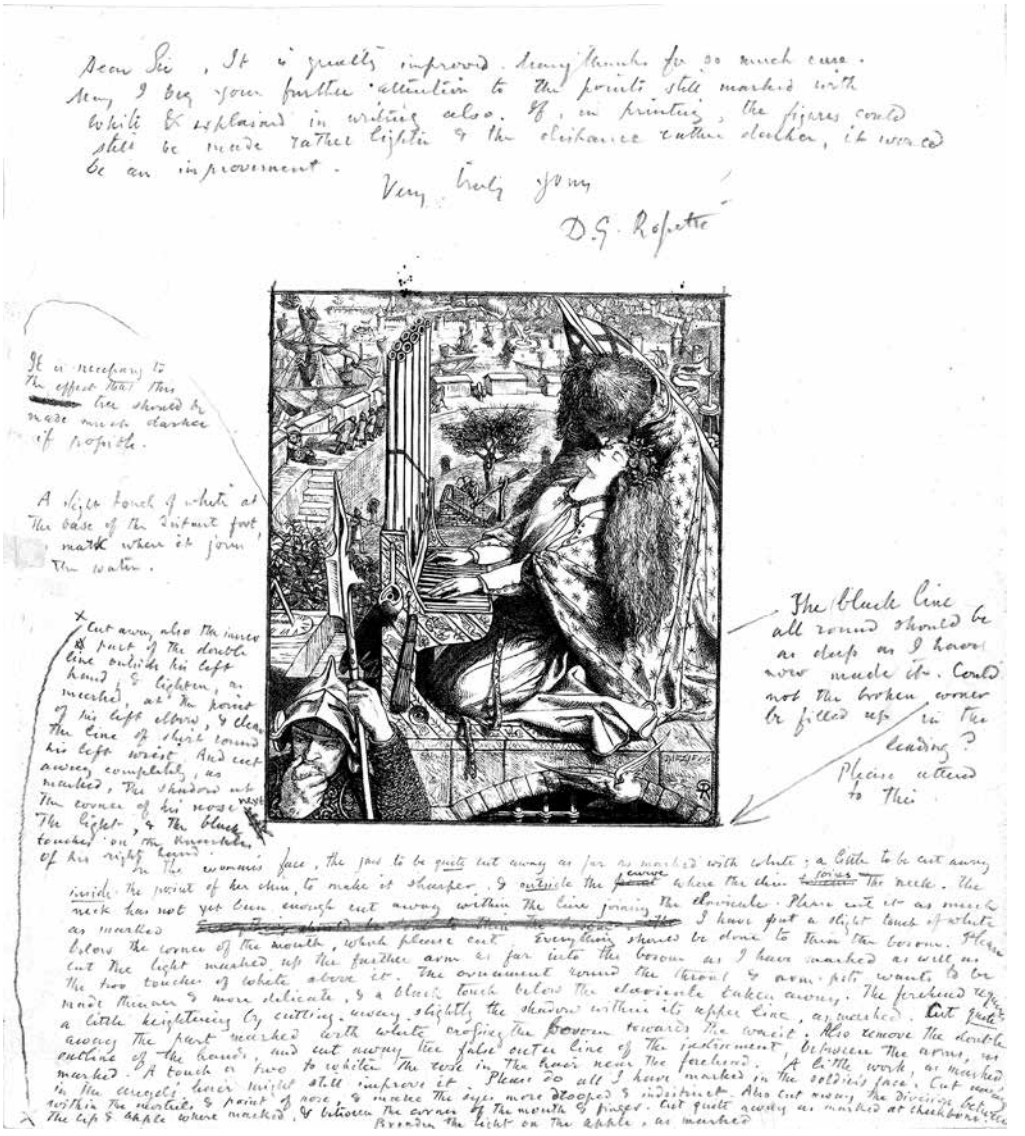


FIGURE 4.11. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Palace of Art" ("St Cecily"), 1857. Wood-engraved progress proof with pencil annotations. Dimensions of sheet 200 × 178 mm. © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

hair is "very dishevelled,"[45] and Harold Nicolson's choice of verb, the colloquial "munching" of St Cecily's forehead,[46] which I have used here, is both odd and revealing, as if he were describing a *Punch* cartoon rather than an arcane piece of psychological medievalism.

Nicolson's judgment implies the rapid turnaround of *Punch* cartoons, and it is important to recognize that Rossetti's design may owe its final appearance,

with the biting angel, to a fortuitous accident. The original drawing shows the figure *looking* at St. Cecily in strict accordance with the text, while the progress proof cut by the Dalziels and submitted to the artist (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, fig. 4.11) shows the celebrated bite.[47] Rossetti, a stickler for accuracy—applying the same approach elsewhere—annotated the print in detail, with directions as to how it could be improved. Arrows point to lines in need of thinning or thickening, and he specifies how lights might be heightened or darkened. Yet he makes no comment at all on the bitten forehead, though clearly a significant mistake. Did he realize at this stage that the engravers' error added a layer of meaning to his design? We can be certain the scrupulous Rossetti, who despaired of the Dalziels' cutting, would have complained and demanded revision if he thought they were at fault. On this occasion he allowed the error to stand. The kiss or bite became a central part of his reading of Tennyson's verse, the focus of sex and spirit, all life in one, and significantly complicates the poem's psychological theme.

The same enhancement is true of all of the Pre-Raphaelite responses considered in this chapter. Acting as faithful illustrators who maintain the "spirit" of the verse, they significantly enrich the reading experience, projecting Tennyson's psychological portraits into ever stranger, more challenging territory. Contemporaries noted this symbiosis, and among positive reviewers the range and complexity of the artists' readings were applauded. Writing in *The Westminster Review,* George Meredith notes how "they have each, in [their] own way," re-created the letter of the words, while "never failing from want of depth" to add their own, suggestive nuances.[48] His comments are an apt summary.

# 5

# Relationships, Gender, Androgyny

Tennyson was writing in a period when sexual politics were bound by an extremely conservative view of gender, and in many ways his treatment of this theme was entirely conventional, reflecting what at the time was regarded as the orthodox or "natural" emphasis on heterosexuality. Seemingly espousing a patriarchal order, he typically writes men and women in terms of the idealized stereotypes familiar to mid-Victorian readers, dividing the sexes into a binary opposition between the strong, questing, active male and the passive female: on the one hand are the heroic champions—Arthur, Ulysses, the knights in *Idylls of the King* (1859–85)—and on the other a series of submissive women, bound by domesticity, who are essentially his own versions of Patmore's angels or Dickens's dolls in doll's houses.[1] In *The Princess* (1847), he defines an (apparently) immutable law:

> Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
> Man for the sword and for the needle she:
> Man with the head and woman with the heart:
> Man to command and woman to obey;
> All else confusion.[2]

This position, Donald Hall observes, argues for a "masculinist Tennyson."[3] Yet *The Princess* enshrines a suggestive debate, and many critics, working from this important text—with its extended consideration of the need for female education—have argued that Tennyson's treatment of gender politics is far from straightforward, and is often ambivalent and fissured with uncertainties.[4] Marion Shaw points to the nature of these tensions, arguing that his poetry embodies a movement over time from "early romantic aspirations," with men and women cast as singular creatures engaged in harmonious synergy, but arrives in a "maze of contradictions" which "fracture [the] idealism" of clear gender boundaries and identities."[5] Indeed, Shaw's comments are revealing, for much of Tennyson's writing of gender can be read not so much as a straightforward endorsement of conventional gendering but as an interrogation of polarized roles. As Rebecca Stott explains, the writer sometimes takes the "orthodox" view but is perpetually "worrying away at binaries, at the rigid gender [divisions] set in place by Victorian culture," while writing about the oscillating "duality" of gender classifications.[6]

Assembled from earlier work and representative of the poet's oeuvre, the Moxon Tennyson preserves these contradictions and seems in many ways a workshop embodying the author's thoughts as he explores several possibilities. Veering, in Hall's terminology, between affirmation of "Victorian patriarchy" while seeming to act as a "subversive feminist,"[7] his characters affirm *and* deny conventional roles, sometimes conforming to what is expected of them and sometimes not. Ulysses and the hero of "Locksley Hall" are projected as emblematic types of masculine resolve, yet others are far from the machismo they seem to embody. At the same time, his women are weak objects of desire *and* self-determined and powerful. Lady Godiva, the faithful wife of Leofric and embodiment of male notions of chastity, is willing, nevertheless, to take control of her own body for the greater good, asserting a complex brand of what Judith Halberstam calls "female masculinity";[8] the Lady of Shalott, usually described, in highly sexist terms as "hysterical" or "demented," still takes control of her destiny, breaking out of her trap at the expense of her sanity; and even ornamental women such as Lilian exert their sexual power and are far from the "girly" status contemptuously ascribed to them by Christopher Ricks.[9] In short, Tennyson's characters are either bound by gender or stretch gender boundaries. They may seem purely conventional types or they may be defined in terms of an identification which is not as traditional or limiting as it is supposed to be, and both are placed in a nexus ranging from a normative sexual identity to the sexually indeterminate. Androgyny underpins these representations, and Tennyson grapples anxiously with a series of blurred outlines. In the telling words of Carol Jacobi, whose comments on Millais's sexually charged paintings are equally applicable to Tennyson's verse, the "presence of the masculine in depictions of the feminine and the feminine in

constructions of the masculine suggests that there is potential to think beyond the binary altogether."[10]

There is a further contradiction in that while Tennyson stretches ideas of gender identity, he does not question the value of heterosexual relationships. In his later work, principally *Idylls of the King,* there are more betrayals than happy couplings, but in his earlier work in the Moxon edition the romantic arrangements are purely conventional. Echoing the work of his contemporary Robert Browning, whose *Men and Women* (1855) focuses on romance, Tennyson highlights the importance of courtly love, the dynamics of sexuality, and marriage. In this selection, as in the writing of Browning, Christina and D. G. Rossetti, Arnold, the Brontës, and every other late Romantic, men and women are two halves of the Jungian equation, a pairing of *anima* and *animus:* women are defined by men and men, despite the power asymmetry, by women. This focus is of course in strict accord with the value systems of mid-Victorian England, and though the Moxon Tennyson anatomizes gender roles, it is paradoxically a conservative reaffirmation of heterosexual coupling as a matter of social expectation.

In this respect, the *Poems* might again be described as a curious blend of contradictions, seemingly both orthodox and radical at the same time. The illustrators' part in projecting these mixed messages is equally ambivalent, although it is surprising to find how little critical interest has been directed at their negotiation of such complex material. Making sense of their approach is facilitated by Jacobi's suggest analysis of the painting of female characters,[11] and in a recent study I analyzed the Pre-Raphaelites' reading of Tennysonian masculinity.[12] But there is (thus far) no detailed examination of the treatment of men *and* women in the Moxon illustrators' work as a whole.

Their visual strategies are considered here, focusing on the ways in which they buttress, extend, amplify, and challenge the author's writing of romance and gender. This necessarily involves a reconsideration of some of the illustrations from an unusual perspective, reading some of the material already explored in other contexts as *gendered* visual texts. This is a tentative process which uncovers another stratum of interpretive possibilities, and my aim is only to suggest readings which could be developed at greater length and in more detail.

## ROMANCE AND MARRIAGE

Tennyson's writing of heterosexual love is focused in his treatment of courtship and marriage. His presentation of romantic love conventionally highlights the notion of its centrality in the lovers' emotional lives, with a series of youthful characters yearning for, missing, or lamenting the loss of a beloved who is invested with transcendent values in the manner of devotional or courtly love. The concept of

the lover's all-importance is visualized throughout the illustrations, although it is interesting to note that in each case the response is gender-free in the sense of both genders experiencing the same sort of yearning. The focus of these visual responses is often loss through death or absence, situations in which it is possible to dramatize the impact of confounded love by concentrating on the effect on one of the lovers.

Millais amplifies the anguish of this loss, which he powerfully conveys in gestures. "Mariana" (figs. I.1, 5.1) depicts the character's despair, awaiting Angelo's arrival. Millais also focuses on her loneliness, accentuating her isolation as a single character by placing her in a room too small to accommodate anyone else but herself. In a literal, material sense, her lover is edited out of her space and, as in the aching void implied in the verse, it seems impossible that he ever could. Rossetti's "Mariana in the South" (figs. 4.7, 5.2) is similarly defined by absence, singularity as a sign of being single. Placed in isolation in a cramped space and forgotten in her *oubliette,* she visualizes the refrain, "to be all alone / To live forgotten, and love forlorn" (83). Rossetti plays on the ironic disjuncture between her physical beauty and her situation: "'Is this the form,' she made her moan / 'That won his praises night and morn?'" Her "form," the object of adoration, is here reduced to an awkward pose as she kisses the feet of Christ, the only male to receive her devotional love.

Christ's presence, substituted for "Our Lady" in the poem (83), reminds us of Mariana's attitude to Angelo, who is literally her god, and in both versions of "Mariana" the artists highlight the character's isolation by including signs of her lover's absence. In Rossetti's image the "old letters" (84) surrounding the character in the foreground (fig. 4.7, 5.1) are metonyms for the missing male, and in Millais's the incompleteness of the heroine's life is embodied in a double relief carved into the paneling, with Angelo in one panel and Mariana in the other (fig. I.1, 5.2). These visual additions paradoxically extend the feelings of aloneness: "She felt he was and was not there," a "cruel love" (84–85) confining the unbeloved to a narrow existence.

Equally intense is Holman Hunt's treatment of "The Ballad of Oriana" (figs. 2.8, 2.9). In part a representation of passing time (as suggested in chapter 2), Hunt's two designs map the process of infatuated love and its destruction in death. The first focuses the lovers' unanimity in the form of intimate gestures; their enlarged figures overlap and intertwine in an expression of physical and emotional connection, with Oriana fixing a scarf on her hero's helmet in readiness for battle while the male turns slightly towards her as if to share another endearment. This grouping encapsulates their relationships in a material form, the embodiment of the narrator's "I to thee my troth did plight . . . my life, my love, my bride" (52–53). The intensity of their love is countermanded, of course, by the second illustration (fig. 2.9), of Oriana in death, and visualizes the narrator's anguish as the one inadvertently responsible for her violent end:

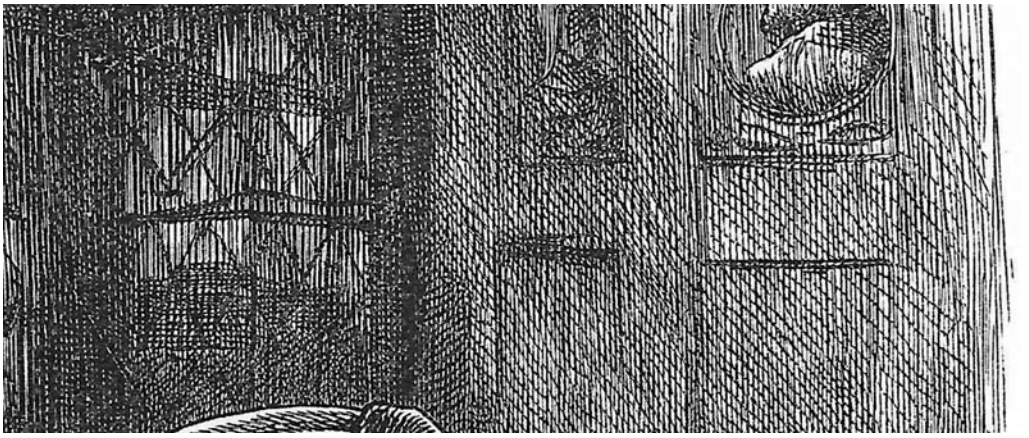


FIGURE 5.1. John Everett Millais, detail of "Mariana." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 23 × 30 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 7.

FIGURE 5.2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, detail of "Mariana in the South." Engraved by William James Linton, 95 × 25 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 82.

O cursed hand! O cursed blow!
    Oriana!
O happy thou that liest low,
    Oriana!
All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
    Oriana.
A weary, weary way I go,
    Oriana. (54)

The movement between the two polarities of the poem—love and loss—are refigured in the two designs, and in the second Holman Hunt makes some interesting choices in his representation of the narrator's "utter woe" (54). Tennyson focuses on the hero's anguish in the form of his repeated declarations of angst, and in the semantic fields of violence and damnation, a rich excess of "breaking," "damned," "cursed," the repeated "stabb'd," and the Tennysonian neologism "deathful" (53–54). Hunt, conversely, provides a more modulated imagining of the situation, focusing on the brutal necessity of the hero's acceptance of her death.

Tennyson specifies Oriana's lying, like Claribel, "beneath the greenwood tree" (55), but Holman Hunt ignores this information and its implications of pastoral rest and shows the body of the dead Oriana as if on the mortician's slab, with her lover about to depart on the "roaring sea" (54). Hunt concentrates, in other words, on the *farewell,* forcing the knight to acknowledge her passing in the physical form that is so unequivocally presented to him, shifting the emphasis from the rawness of bitter emotion to the necessity of acknowledging her passing: not closure, it is still a refocusing to emphasize the need to move from traumatized grief to long-standing regret, a realization greatly accentuated by Hunt's showing of the tender kiss and embrace. As the heartbroken hero laments, he "dare not think of thee, Oriana" (55); curses and despair have been replaced by emotional emptiness. All that remains is the emotional void symbolized by the glacial, empty landscape in the background.

Some contemporaries thought both engravings ugly, no doubt reflecting on the incongruity of the second one; but others recognized their psychological resonance. George Meredith, writing in *The Westminster Review,* thought both designs were "noble," infused with genuine feeling, and "the best of the illustrations."[13] Indeed, Hunt extends the implications of Tennyson's poem, converting it from a neomedieval ballad, bound by the conventions of its form, into a wider, more universal reflection on loss and the sufferer's relationship to the dead. As one critic remarks, Hunt highlights and extends the ballad's "deep pathos,"[14] a feeling of universal loss similarly explored in Millais's design for the lament "Edward

Gray" (fig. 3.10). These images are powerful symbols of raw grief, and the interactions between the illustrations and the texts create a powerful resonance.[15]

Conversely, Tennyson's treatment of *gainful* love focuses on infatuation and the intensity of physical attraction. These issues are considered in Hunt's "The Beggar Maid" (fig. 1.8). The artist strips this material down to its bare essentials. The verse provides details of the maid's physical appearance which the artist ignores; the "bare feet" and "ancles" do not feature, her arms are not "laid" "across her breast," and although we see her "dark hair" and her "sweet face," it is only in profile. What we do see, however, is the emotionally charged moment when the king decides she "shall be my queen" (359–60); essentially a snapshot of youthful romance, its idealism contrasts with the pairings discussed so far and establishes the sentimental valuing of marriage.

Marriage is the normative state in Tennyson's verse and is "thought of," Shaw explains, as a "potentially the main source of personal happiness and fulfilment and also as a central, stabilizing social institution."[16] Millais's treatment of the old couple's devotion to each in the first illustration for "The Miller's Daughter" (fig. 3.14) underscores this position. This tender composition focuses the depth of feeling between the long-married couple—enshrining in a single pose Tennyson's sentimental account of a relationship which, like the remembered love song, is a "measured strain" (89) of "blessings which no words can find" (96). But elsewhere Millais suggests alternative readings which uncover the tensions in the poet's conventional vision. He deploys this approach in the illustrations for "The Talking Oak" (figs. 5.3, 5.4), using them to confirm the poem's messages while simultaneously deploying ambivalent accessories or symbolic items to reveal concealed subtexts related to sexuality.

The images for "The Talking Oak" encapsulate the (bizarre) conversation between a besotted male lover and the personified tree, which reassures Walter as to the sincerity of Olive's feelings and allows him to anticipate his "marriage-morn" (254). The poem is a lengthy narrative, but Millais crystallizes the two polarities of Walter's feelings as he doubts his lover's feelings. His fear that they might be superficial is visualized in the first design, an image symbolizing shallow love-making as the tree recalls "a group / Of beauties" from the eighteenth century, when romance, for the upper classes at least, was conventionally considered a matter of empty display driven forward by dynastic considerations, a situation where Cupid is present, "And shrill'd his tinsel shaft" (245).

This modishness is captured by showing a group of periwigged and elaborately costumed gentlefolk. Though Tennyson does not specify their dress beyond noting that they are from the period when "the patch was worn" (245), Millais extends the idea of fashionable superficiality by specifying the clothes' patterns,

FIGURE 5.3. John Everett Millais, "The Talking Oak" (1). Engraved by John Thompson, 82 × 84 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 242.

at the same time accentuating other aspects of shallow display by endowing the faces with beauty spots. Millais also highlights the notion of false love by showing the two men affectedly worshipping the woman who looks disdainfully to the left; one has his hand over his heart in mock adoration while the other kneels behind her. In keeping with this usual practice, Millais deploys gesture to connote emotion, and here again the attitudes are an index of a state of mind; the woman's blank indifference is another unambiguous sign. Millais further enshrines his theme in a symbolic frame in the manner of Victorian narrative paintings: the shuffled and falling cards suggest the lovers are interchangeable, a matter of chance, while the elaborate movements of a dance in the background imply the ritualistic nature of this sort of courtly extravagance; deer (harts for hearts) look curiously at the activities of the lovers hunting each other's affections in an elaborate mating game; dead oak leaves lie on the ground in the right foreground to represent the ephemerality or deadness of this sort of romance; and on the left the lovers are juxtaposed with some ferns—signs, often used in Victorian painting, of longevity, the eternal love that their romance, doomed to transience, will never attain.

These emblems connote the type of "affection," here interchangeable with "affectation," Walter does *not* want from his beloved. His model of faithful, genuine love is represented in the second illustration (fig. 5.4). This arrangement is set up to provide a calculated alternative.

Millais takes his textual information from a single stanza:

> And when my marriage morn may fall,
> She, Dryad-like, shall wear
> Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
> In wreath about her hair. (254)

These details are re-created in the illustration, but more telling is the contrast with the first design. Instead of the flamboyant showiness of the costumes, we now have plain rusticity; the floral patterns of the dress in the opening illustration are replaced with the bride's simple leaf motif; the gestures, with the bride's assistants helping her to prepare, are functional rather than rhetorical, and suggest

FIGURE 5.4. John Everett Millais, "The Talking Oak" (2). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziels, 85 × 86 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 255.

a straightforward intent. This is the sort of authenticity that Walter needs from his bride, and Millais provides a clear alternative to the earlier display.

He also focuses Tennyson's writing of the tree as a linking motif. In the poem, the oak is the source of honesty and integrity; it ironically points to the fake lovers who have sat under its leaves, and it informs the narrator of Olive's fidelity. The central symbol, however, is the acorn and its foliage. In the first design, the affected characters are juxtaposed, as already noted, to some dry oak leaves; placed in the foreground, their lifelessness suggests the emotional deadness of such "beauties" (245). In the second, in absolute opposition, the "leaf and acorn-ball" (254) are displayed as signs of gainfulness as the attendants construct the oak wreath in the bride's hair; another acorn sprig is placed in the foreground, and her dress, with its floral pattern, forms another link with the radiating seeds of the tree. The bride is described as a "Dryad" (254), a spirit occupying an oak wood, and Millais presents her, in strict accordance with the verse, as the pure and honest wife, as solid and unchanging as oak. Indeed, in this joint text we have once again what Shaw describes as the "narrative of marriage" as it develops;[17] both artist and writer feature this progress as a "natural" event, symbolized by its framing within nature imagery, and especially by its linkage to the "baby-oak" (253). Not only a sign of integrity and timelessness, the inclusion of the acorn is a metaphor connoting the idea of love as an eternal, developing condition: from tiny acorns the mighty edifice of marriage will grow.

Millais's illustrations serve Tennyson's writing of this emotional narrative, but it is important to point out that the artist's representation of romance and marriage was generally far less conservative than the poet's. In this poem, as elsewhere, Tennyson is mainly concerned with the notion of romantic love transforming into emotional commitment, eros turning into agape. Millais, conversely, is an artist whose work embodies what Jacobi calls "serious sexual poetry" and often presents in coded systems the sexual tensions at work within relationships.[18]

Jacobi argues that some apparently innocuous items featuring in his paintings are phallic symbols. In her analysis of Millais's *The Bridesmaid* (1851, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge),[19] she develops Tim Barringer's Freudian notion of the shape of the sugar caster acting as a surrogate penis, anticipating future sexual experience; and she further identifies the threaded needle in the painted version of *Mariana* (1851, Tate Britain, London) as a sign of the abandoned lover's desire to be penetrated by Angelo; in a Victorian vulgarism, to be "pridded" or "pricked." Jacobi's psychosexual interpretation is intriguing, and it is possible, with this sexual iconography in mind, to return to the second illustration of "The Talking Oak" (fig. 5.4). The bride's preparations are figured as a rustic epithalamion, but her dresser features a pincushion (not mentioned in the text) with pins sticking

out of it: is this a purely naturalistic detail to flesh out the domestic scene, or is it, as Jacobi might argue, a sign of her sexual longing, in echo of Mariana's? There is always a danger in overinterpreting the details, and it could be no more than what it appears to be; nevertheless, it does read in relation to *Mariana* and other Millaisian works, and it *might* be a deliberate inclusion to suggest Olive's desire, or at least to focus attention on the dress, now being assembled with pins, which will be removed with urgency (one assumes) on the lovers' wedding night. Indeed, it can be argued that in visualizing this small detail Millais distills the characters' implied eroticism, a level of meaning implied throughout the poem. There is, particularly, a discernible erotic charge in the tree's description of Olive's kisses, directed at her lover's carving of her name. She uses the oak as a surrogate for her lover, and the personified tree responds as if it were speaking for the male beloved:

> "Her kisses were so close and kind,
> That, trust me on my word,
> Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
> But yet my sap was stirr'd:
> And even into my inmost ring
> A pleasure I discerned." (249)

The sexual imagery employed here is surely intended to prefigure connubial eroticism ("sap was stirr'd," "A pleasure I discerned"), and Millais's pincushion, taking up on the implication of sexual transaction, could well be the subtlest of suggestions, promoting on a tiny scale the author's extended writing of sexual desire in the weird manifestation of a talking oak. But the nexus of pins/pincushion is specifically figured as phallocentrism: Tennyson might be an exponent of the spiritual harmonies of marriage, but Millais injects a subversive note, suggesting that wifely duties include sex with the male as the dominant partner, equipped with his phallus in the domesticated form of a pin.[20]

The woman's position within marriage is similarly explored in Millais's illustration for "St Agnes' Eve" (fig. 5.5), embodying the narrative of St. Agnes, a Roman martyr who chose death and marriage with Christ rather than serve the pagan gods. Criticism of the image has focused on its intense visualization of the opening stanza:

> "Deep on the convent-roof the snows
> Are sparkling to the moon:
> My breath to heaven like vapour goes:
> May my soul follow soon!" (309)

Millais captures the atmosphere of the moment in a simple pose, showing Agnes as she goes to her death/meeting with her supernatural "husband." The details of the composition are brilliantly realized by the Dalziels, whose cutting of her frosty breath, as noted earlier, has often been admired; intensely beautiful, it is regarded by Engen as a "delicate study in light and shade" and by Reid as "the most perfect thing in the book."[21] On the face it, it reads as an affirmation of the imminent encounter. Yet, though the image is magical in effect, and apparently in accordance with Tennyson's focus on the forthcoming spiritual transformation, Millais uses his dreamlike design to elaborate on the character's uncertainties as she fantasizes about the process of becoming Christ's bride. He makes no attempt to re-create Tennyson's elaborate imagery of "golden doors' and "starry floors" but focuses on her hesitation, stopping on the stairs as she hopes her soul will follow her breath, "like vapour goes" (309). The emphasis here is on nervous contemplation; she looks wistfully at the snow in recognition that it will be one of the final scenes she sees on earth, her hand placed on the sill, experiencing an earthly cold. These small inflections highlight the idea of her savoring what is *known* before she is overtaken by death or transcendence. Tennyson balances corporeal imagery with her fearful anticipation of the "golden doors" and the "Heavenly Bridegroom" beyond, but Millais arrests her at a moment of final longing for the material facts of "snowy sward," "frosty skies," and the "pale taper's earthly spark" (310). At the same time, he intensifies the inevitability of her marriage with the incomprehensible, focusing on the suspended moment before she goes to salvation—or to her martyr's doom.

This ambivalence is highlighted by Millais's showing of St. Agnes as a vulnerable girl, caught between alternative modes of being. Her lack of sexual experience is signaled by his emphasis on conventional emblems of virginity, her white nightdress and the overpowering whiteness of the snow. More tellingly, the illustration reframes the scene in distinctly modern terms. Though a Roman martyr, Agnes is dressed in the contemporary nightclothes of the 1850s, making her way up a medieval stair—another anachronism—as if she were carrying a candle to bed in preparation for an encounter with a mid-Victorian rather than a divine husband. Millais's version of "St Agnes' Eve" is in this sense a contradiction or at least a challenge to the literary source material, recasting the tentative but faith-driven saint as a frightened young woman of the 1850s as she contemplates consummation with her spouse. This approach accords with Millais's focus on sexual anxiety, as Jacobi has argued,[22] and Tennyson's verse provides him with another opportunity to offer a nuanced interpretation of the verse while serving his own corpus of interests.

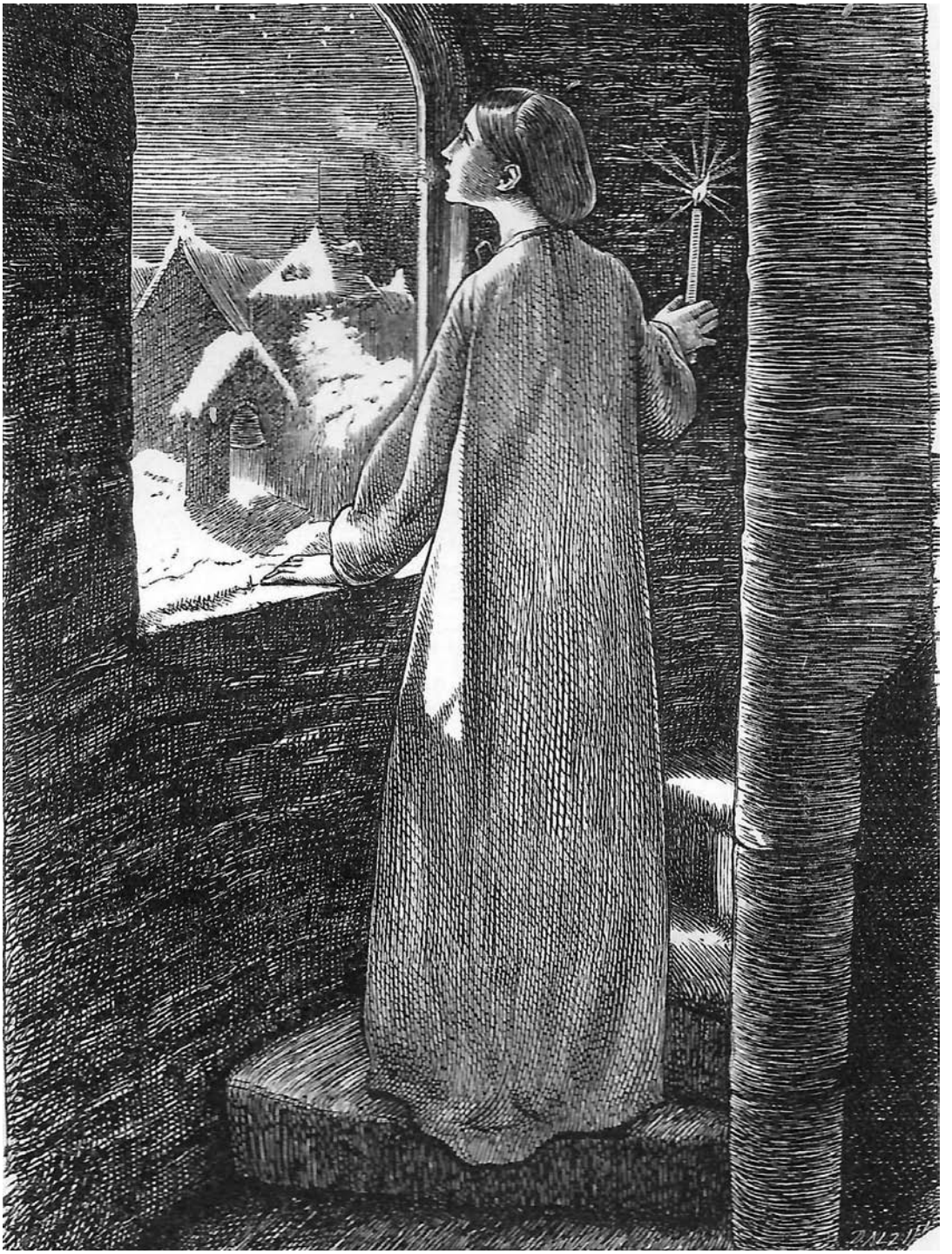


FIGURE 5.5. John Everett Millais, "St Agnes' Eve." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 98 × 74 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 309.

## WOMEN

Tennyson's women oscillate between weakness and strength, and these polarities are mapped by the illustrators. Sometimes they are depicted as entirely dependent on or defined by men, as in the case of Mariana (figs. I.1, 4.7); and sometimes, as in "Oenone" (fig. 2.2), as a courageous figure challenging male authority. The bimodal representation of men's control over women takes several forms, but is focused on the notion of objectification.

Tennyson's passive females are explicitly set up for male delectation, voyeuristically controlled through the application of the masculine gaze. Lilian (3), Madeline (20), Isabel (5), Adeline (36), and Eleänore (76–81) are speechless figures described principally in terms of how they are *seen,* and many of his females are figured as dense catalogues of stereotypical features. These are anodyne creations, but even those of more psychological depth are controlled by the male "look." Horsley takes this approach in "The Gardener's Daughter" (fig. 3.3), reducing the beauty to a series of conventional attributes, and Rossetti's focus in the second illustration for "The Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.6) is Lancelot's intent gaze as he looks directly into the character's face, converting her into a simplified sign, an aesthetized object which only exists as a signifier for passive femininity. Dead, her death is emblematic of female powerlessness:

> But Lancelot mused a little space;
> He said, "She has a lovely face;
> God in his mercy lend her grace,
> The Lady of Shalott" (75)

The objectification of the beloved is taken to another extreme in Holman Hunt's second illustration for "Oriana" (fig. 2.9). Here the artist adds his own detail of the narrator kissing farewell to another dead body which has the pallor of marble and could be read as an effigy rather than her corpse, a person who is *literally* turned into an object. Again, possession is only finally realized in the form of looking at an unchanging image. In Laura Mulvey's famous terms, which she applied to the representation of women in melodramatic films of the 1940s but has a much wider application, the beloved is defined by her "be-looked-at-ness," celebrating a (male) idea of beauty rather than a living individual.[23]

These visual and verbal treatments interact to create an extremely orthodox view of male superiority and female subservience. As Tennyson himself explains in the words of the chauvinistic Edward Bull in "Edwin Morris," one view is that "God made the woman for the use of man" (232). In some of their engravings the illustrators buttress and expand the writer's patriarchal treatment of women, and reinforce his notion of women's duties; as Shaw remarks, in mid-Victorian

culture, women were cast as men's supporters, who bore "the responsibility' for the "safe conduct of men through [a world] of perilous natural forces"; a duty nevertheless "impossible to discharge."[24]

This trope is serviced in the writer's and artists' treatment of Arthurian themes, specifically in their representations of female behavior during the king's decline. In "The Palace of Art" Tennyson provides a small clue, noting how "Uther's deeply-wounded son" is "watch'd by weeping queens" (fig. I.3). Grieving is a traditional womanly role, and Rossetti enhances our sense of the queens' suffering as well as pointing to their conventional function as a support for men. To quote the title of Edgar Hicks's painting of 1863 (Tate Britain, London),[25] the image embodies the idea of "woman's mission" as the "companion of manhood," offering a visual registration of the female as nurse, healer, and mother. Rossetti's picturing of femininity thus reinforces one aspect of Tennyson's stereotypical writing of women as the "gentler sex."

However, the illustrators also point to other aspects of his treatments where conventions are stretched. Holman Hunt's vivid and unsettling portrait of the Lady of Shalott (figs. 4.4, 5.6) greatly extends the idea of the imprisoned, passive female. Taken, first of all, by the idea of the lady as a victim, his earlier drawings show her as dreamily lifeless and inert. However, the published design promotes a more active, complex version of femininity, and it is interesting to compare the thrashing hair (fig. 5.6) in the final cut with an early design of the lady sitting down to weave (fig. 5.7).[26]

FIGURE 5.6. William Holman Hunt, detail of "The Lady of Shalott." Engraved by John Thompson, 48 × 80 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 67.


FIGURE 5.7. William Holman Hunt, preparatory sketch of "The Lady of Shalott." 98 × 82 mm. Photograph of an original graphic design in Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,* 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1905), 2:99.

Working from ambiguous material, Hunt privileges the Lady of Shalott's torment and despair, driven forward by the psychological pressure of yearning. But Tennyson also writes types of unconventional women who play on male anxieties. He provides suggestive material in "A Dream of Fair Women" (149–62), in which a male narrator dreams of versions of femininity in the form of a catalogue that extends from Helen of Troy and Joan of Arc to Henry II's mistress, "Fair Rosamund"; Edward I's wife, Eleanor of Castile; and Cleopatra. These characters figure possibilities: Cleopatra (fig. 5.8) is based on Tennyson's definition of the queen as a threatening femme fatale, whose dominating personality, informed with "all passion" and "liveliest utterance" (156), is detailed at some length. The author deploys a lexicon of melodramatic excess, describing her as a queen of "haughty smile" (155) with "bold black eyes / Brow-bound with burning gold" (156). More especially, he reverses the conventional play of power by asserting her sexuality: not to be controlled by men, it is Cleopatra who manages the "wild kiss" with Mark Antony as *he* leaps into *her* arms (156). These descriptions are

interpreted by Millais, whose illustration is one of the more controversial of those created by the Pre-Raphaelites.

Millais crystallizes the emphasis on her bold sexuality by focusing the moment when she reveals the cause of her death:

> (With that she tore her robe apart, and half
> The polished argent of her breast to sight
> Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
> Showing the aspick's bite.) (156)

FIGURE 5.8. John Everett Millais, "A Dream of Fair Women" ("Cleopatra"). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 96 × 81 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 149.

This is a startling episode, given the context in which it operates. The character affronts conventional mid-Victorian propriety in a direct challenge to male authority, and Millais presents the event in faithful detail: as in the text, she points to her breast, even displaying a nipple, while her laugh is reproduced, most unusually in contemporary illustration, as an open smile. Moreover, the artist highlights her power as a female "sublime" (155), accentuating her threat to the masculine consumer by emphasizing her control of the gaze: it is she who reveals herself, and it is she who exercises the power by looking directly at the male spectator; in Tennyson's terms, "She raised her piercing orbs" (156). In so doing she projects her own eroticism and negates the viewer's: she controlled Anthony sexually (who dies, in the time-honored euphemism for orgasm, in her embrace), and she reverses the voyeur's authority by displaying herself with pride rather than shame. None of the other female characters in the book look directly outward as she does—for example, Godiva turns away, the Lady of Shalott glances down or has closed eyes—and her pose stands out. In an age when women were the recipients of looked-at-ness, Millais matches Tennyson's outspokenness in the form of a purely visual device.

However, other elements complicate the effect. In particular, Millais distances the figure from any sense of contemporary discomfiture by emphasizing the character's "swarthy cheeks" (155), turning her into a black woman. This conversion changes her from a self-willed, dominant female into an ethnic type, a version of sexual otherness which is compounded by stressing her racial difference. The image can be read, as Kooistra remarks, as an "entrenched stereotype," and to modern eyes Millais's figure is decidedly offensive, looking like a Caucasian in blackface, in the manner, as Kooistra also suggests, of contemporary variety acts on the London stage.[27] But in another sense it allowed the Victorian reader to dismiss Cleopatra's sexual challenge by explaining it as the behavior of a subhuman foreigner acting, it seems, well below the polite moral standards of (English) bourgeois femininity. As George Meredith observed, Millais shows her pointing with "a black finger to a black breast," which is so horrible that "no sensible aspick would touch [it],"[28] let alone a man. Deflecting its radical treatment of sexual power and female assertiveness, Millais countermands the poet's critique of feminine stereotypes by replacing it with another. The blackness of the cut, expertly engraved by the Dalziels, adds another dimension by endowing it with a Gothic intensity and recalls the menacing darkness of "The Sisters" (fig. 2.20); in both cases underillumination is associated with psychological disorder.

If this image stretches contemporary expectations, the artist and writer are on safer ground in the presentation of the heroic queen of Edward I, Eleanor of Castile, who saves the king's life by sucking poison from his arm with her "balmy breath" (161). This woman, in contrast to the swarthy Cleopatra, is presented

FIGURE 5.9. John Everett Millais, "A Dream of Fair Women" ("Eleanor"). Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 83 × 95 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 161.

as the Anglo-Saxon ideal, who serves her husband by risking her own life. In a familiar trope that links women to nature, Tennyson likens her to "new buds in Spring" (161), the bringer of new life, while Millais, finding his own equivalent (fig. 5.9), shows her as a medieval beauty in an act of self-sacrifice that looks like an act of obeisance. Other items denoting fidelity and service—the knight bringing a cup, the emblematic wolf-dog, the servant holding the bowl—are crowded together to reinforce the idea of service and selflessness. Linked to this iconography, Eleanor is another version of "man's comforter": but unlike the weeping queens who grieve for their male hero, this woman takes control over events, and is ultimately more like Godiva than the emotionalized women of Rossetti's and Maclise's designs (figs. I.3, I.4). The Moxon illustrators therein provide a visual montage of Tennyson's ambiguous writing of women. Figured as a siren or a heroine, as dutiful support for men and as a femme fatale, looked at or looking, the females appearing in the illustrations define a series of contradictions.

## MALES

If women are presented ambivalently, so are men. Tennyson's women have changing identities, and the same is true of the males, whose authority is both affirmed and challenged. The situation is well explained by Linda Shires, noting how Tennyson "simultaneously collapses and retains the patriarchal order," creating a curious movement between the "homosocial" and the "asexual"; on the one hand are the strivers and heroes, while on the other are a series of "weak men" embedded in a "discourse of weakness,"[29] a point also noted by Shaw.[30] In practice, in Tennyson's treatments some male characters conform to orthodox expectations of masculinity as conquerors of the world, while others are feminized, or simply weak or passive in the stereotypical sense of being effeminate. This gender iconoclasm is explored by the artists, whose interpretations point to the many fault lines in the author's writing of mid-Victorian masculinity.[31]

Tennyson's inscription of machismo, a coded version of the efforts enacted by mid-Victorian captains of industry and the soldiers of colonial expansion, is materialized by Stanfield's imagery of heroes engaging with the hard practicalities of ambition and conquest. His design for "Ulysses" (fig. 2.18) foregrounds the notion of energetic activity, and he adopts the same strategy in his response to "The Lotos Eaters" (fig. 5.10). In both cases the artist suppresses any hint of inactivity: in "Ulysses" he elides Tennyson's writing of the "idle king" (264), and in "The Lotos Eaters" he simply ignores the main body of the poem, which charts the seductions of the somnolence of "dreamful ease" (145), immersed in memory, fantasy, and isolation from the hard struggles of reality. Rather, he illustrates the single moment of heroic assertion as the mariners approach the isle, visualizing the captain's presence in the form of a tiny pointing figure, about to engage with an unknown territory:

> "COURAGE!" he said, and pointed towards the land,
> "This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon." (141)

Tennyson's verbs—"mounting," "pointed," "roll"—are materialized in the turbulence of the sea, and Stanfield contradicts Tennyson's languor by showing his scene not as a land "in which it seemed always afternoon" (141), but places the sun directly overhead and foregrounds the details of cliff and cascading stream. In this rereading, the focus is on discovery and conquest, celebrating masculine strength rather than its disablement; in "The Lotos Eaters," as in "Ulysses," the message is one of perseverance, not surrender, the need always "to strive" (266), conducting life in the Smilesian terms of *Character* (1871) as a matter of "actions" and "energetic conduct."[32]


FIGURE 5.10. Clarkson Stanfield, "The Lotos-Eaters." Engraved by William James Linton, 111 × 87 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 141.

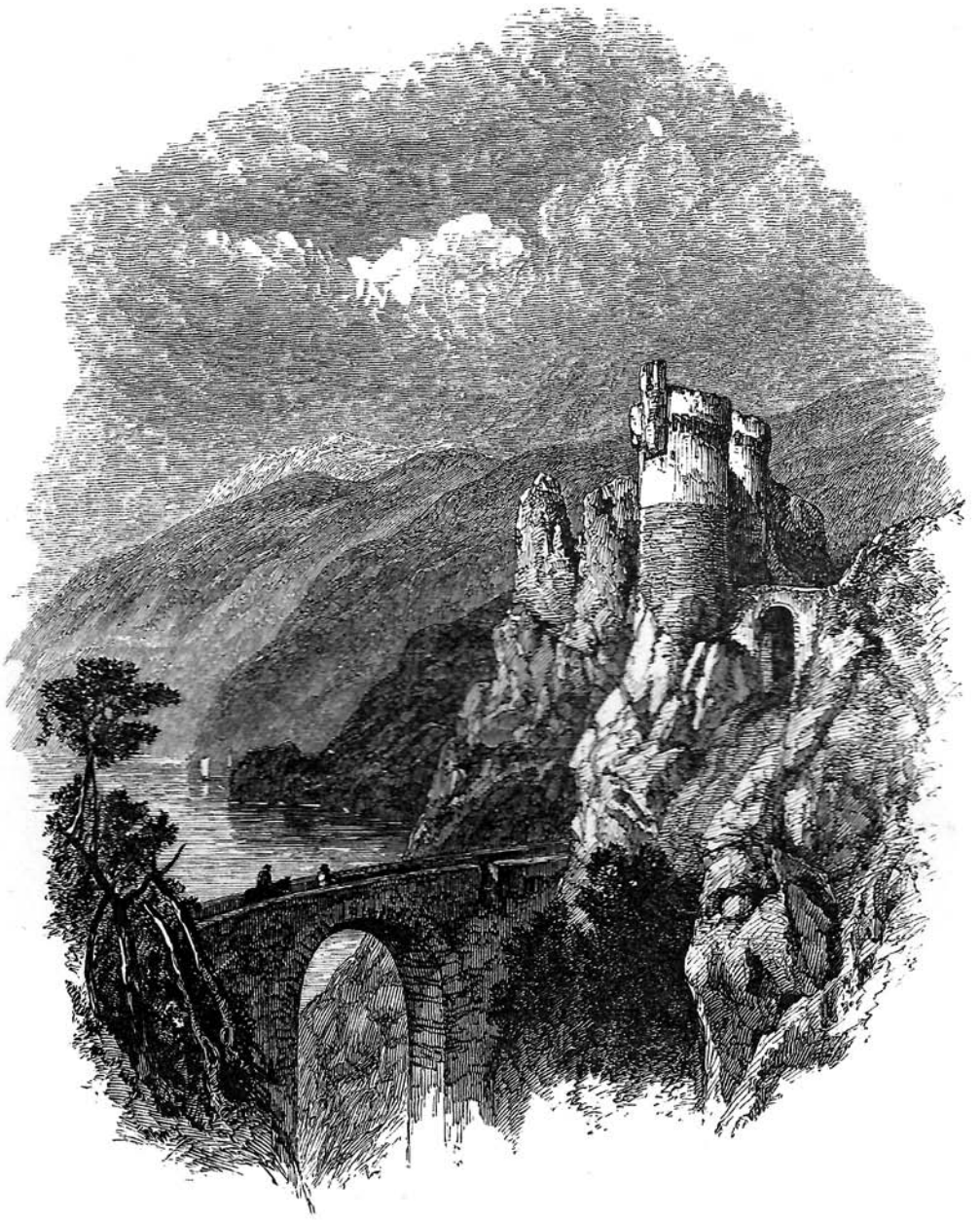


FIGURE 5.11. Clarkson Stanfield, "Edwin Morris." Engraved by William James Linton, 112 × 83 mm (vignette). Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 228.

Stanfield's imagery of heroes' encounter with landscapes is given a final twist in his illustration for "Edwin Morris" (fig. 5.11). This poem is essentially a light-hearted reflection on romance in the form of a conversation between alternating views, with the poet as one of the participating voices. However, the illustrator focuses only on Morris's "love for Nature" (229), discounting its primary argument

and converting it into a pantheistic celebration of the characters' voyage through an imposing Welsh landscape, so it becomes another idealized domain of conquest and adventure. Though the narrators are bourgeois intellectuals, Stanfield converts them into heroic voyagers, crossing a bridge before an imagined castle in direct echo of the mariners' toiling towards the cliff in "The Lotos Eaters" (fig. 5.10). Denying the notion of maleness as anything but assertiveness and toil, Stanfield images the narrowest definition of Tennysonian masculinity.

Notions of male authority are similarly treated in Holman Hunt's second illustration for "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" (fig. 5.12), which visualizes Tennyson's patriarchal model, the "good Haroun Alraschid" (18–19). Stanfield's version of masculinity is embodied in landscape and physical accessories, but Hunt inscribes his hero's maleness in his physique. Positioned as a monumental figure in a niche, he is endowed with the traditional attributes of gender-marked authority, notably the beard, well-defined facial features, and dynamic pose: a picture of "kingly pride" (19):

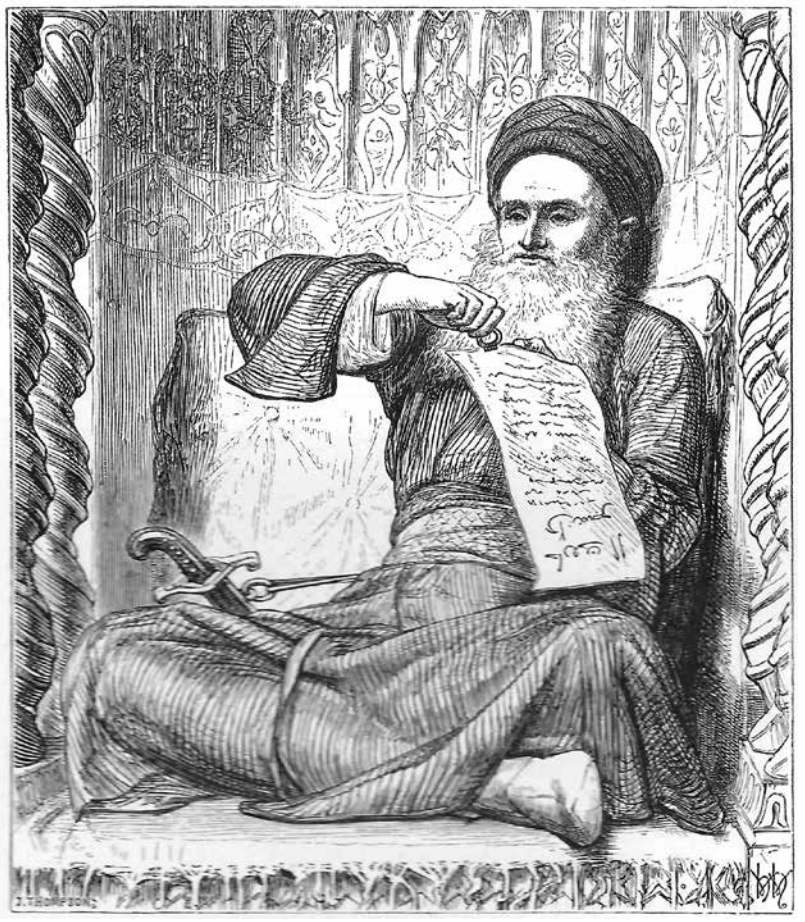


FIGURE 5.12. William Holman Hunt, "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" (2). Engraved by John Thompson, 94 × 81 mm. Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1857), 19.

Power here is expressed not in action but in the representation of the older man as sage or benign ruler, and the very type of patriarchal rule. Millais similarly explores the notion of the father figure in his illustrations of the well-meaning senior in "The Miller's Daughter" (fig. 3.14), in the all-controlling character of Edward I served by his wife in "A Dream of Fair Women" (fig. 5.9), and by the newly awakened king in "The Day Dream" (fig. 4.2). The physical presence of each of these characters symbolizes their authority, dominating the compositions as they dominate those around them; each, significantly, is literally or metaphorically enthroned with even the husband in "The Miller's Daughter" sitting on a chair.

These images serve Tennyson's patriarchal constructions, yet the illustrators are widely concerned with Tennyson's other version of manhood, with its emphasis on frailty. Shires notes how Tennyson is fascinated with the "lifeless male body," dead, emasculated, or weakened,[33] and there are several occasions when the illustrators rewrite the masculine characters in terms of the physical weakness conventionally associated with women. The artists repeatedly challenge gender identities by showing the heroes as ill, helpless, or languid, at least as floppy as the hapless Mariana or the dying May Queen. Rossetti's treatment of the supine Arthur exemplifies this approach, and so does Maclise in his reading of the same shattered figure (figs. I.3, I.4); Mulready's dead male in "The Deserted House" adds another dimension (fig. I.2). These characters contrast with energetic men, and in one group of designs the illustrators postulate a gender swap, materializing the author's ambivalence by making the men seem as if they were women.

Rossetti, Millais, Maclise, and Holman Hunt refocus the writer's emphasis on feminized men by eliding male and female signifiers to create a series of androgynes. In sharp contrast to his second illustration of the patriarch Haroun Alraschid, Holman Hunt's first design (fig. 2.12) of the narrator depicts him as an androgynous semifemale rather than a questing male. The elongated curvaceous legs are feminine rather than masculine signifiers, and the roundness of the figure is expanded in the form of the impossibly curved boat in which he reclines; endowed with small feet placed in delicate shoes like slippers, he melodramatically places his hand over his face and seems more like a middle-class lady reclining on a chaise longue than an adventurer. This gender ambivalence is especially marked in one of Holman Hunt's preparatory drawings, which emphasizes the softened outlines of the face.

The mingling of genders is stressed by the manipulation of portraiture, applying female features to men and eliding the signs of gender as they were codified in the writings of Lavater and numerous other physiognomical textbooks of

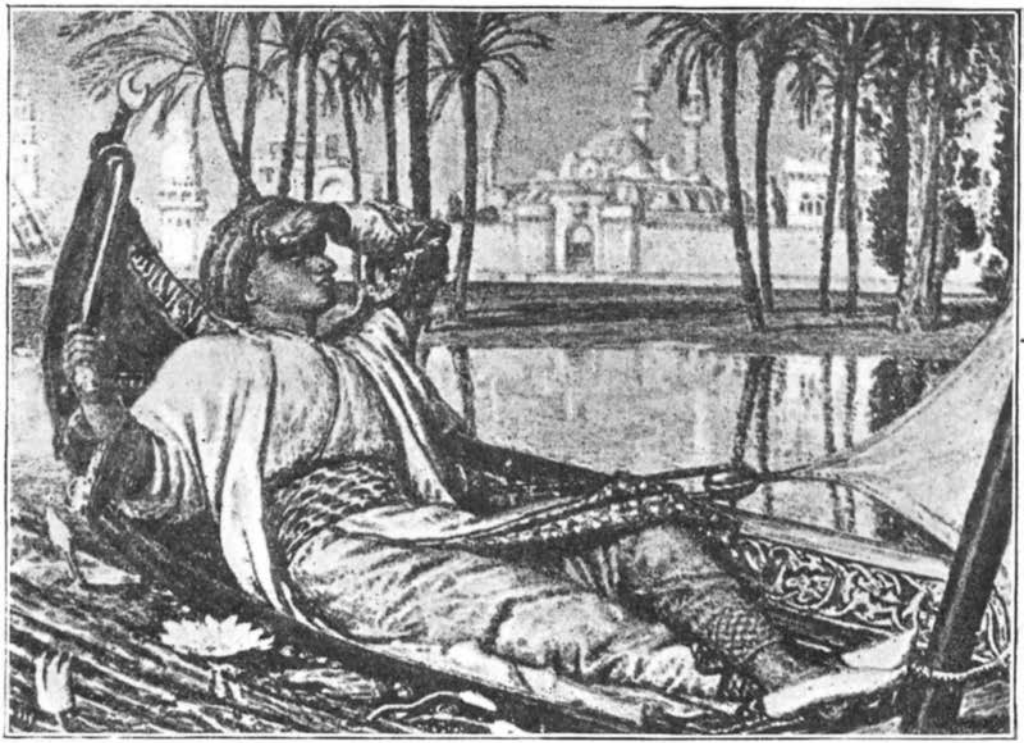


FIGURE 5.13. William Holman Hunt, photograph of a detailed preparatory drawing for the first illustration of "Recollections of the Arabian Nights." 74 × 100 mm. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,* 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1905), 2:102.

the period.[34] Hunt endows his Arabian narrator with a feminized face, and the process of feminization is equally evident in the treatment of the male narrator's portrait in "Oriana"; despite the mustache, the hero's physiognomy is distinctly feminine, with the curved jawline, long eyebrows, and small mouth being virtually indistinguishable from those of his beloved (fig. 2.8).

In these designs the artists provide a critique of contemporary notions of patriarchy, putting in place of the musclebound a fallible, feminine, or effeminate man who is bound by what mid-Victorians typically understood as the "female weaknesses" of deep feeling and emotional sensitivity. The illustrators uncover a deeper stratum of meaning as well: by showing the male characters as still and reflective, they endow Tennyson's heroes with the sort of inwardness most Victorians would attribute to women rather than men, emphasizing the poet's idea of masculinity as a matter of mind rather than action. This visualization gives vivid form to Tennyson's writing of what Richard Stein describes as "introspective" and "static" males who, in contrast to Ulysses and his desire for physical action, are realized as Romantic creators and thinkers, supercharged with female sensitivity.[35]

Holman Hunt's regendering of the male in "The Arabian Nights" (figs. 2.12, 5.13) continues in the form of the character's languid stance, which suggests he is not so much experiencing his journey as dreaming it in the form of a sensuous fantasy. This emphasis accords with the poem's vivid somnambulism and distills its tone in the single figure of the male as thinker; as one contemporary observed, the curvaceous drawing of the character and boat, surrounded by slow-flowing water, is deeply suggestive of the "dreamy" poem.[36] Others focus on the notion of the "sensitive," feminized man. Maclise's much-maligned illustration of Arthur's recoiling from Excalibur can be better read as the response of a man of deep feeling (fig. 2.1), a situation also explored in Millais's reading of the painful sensitivity of Edward Gray (fig. 3.10), whose emotions overcome him, at odds with stereotypical writing of masculinity.

These figures are the embodiment of Tennyson's refiguring of the masculine, giving visual form, as Shires remarks, to "the reception of the male body by a feminine principle."[37] Running in parallel to the more conventionally macho types, they offer new, thoughtful definitions of the sort the author develops at more length in *In Memoriam* (1850) and *The Princess* (1847). We can see, in short, that Tennyson's illustrators provide the reader/viewer with a sort of interpretive montage exploring the ambiguities at the heart of his writing of gender. Offering a miniature gallery of male and female portraits, the artists uncover the poet's underlying tensions as he, and they, negotiate changing ideas of what constitutes "male" and "female."

# 6

# Reception, Influence, Afterlife

The Moxon Tennyson was published to limited, mixed reviews in 1857, with more extensive notices appearing in 1858. Though complimented in America by a *Putnam's* reviewer as a "volume of monumental beauty,"[1] in Britain it was largely viewed, we should remember, as a book marred by inconsistencies. "On the whole," George Meredith notes with only lukewarm and carefully qualified enthusiasm, it was "a good gift-book for those who love pictures—*even those* who love the poet" (my italics).[2] The edition, however, was ultimately extremely influential, changing book design in some fundamental ways. Its development of interpretive design combined with painterly styles was a novel move, setting new standards in aesthetics; it also redefined the role of the artist. While the Moxon Tennyson had limited impact in 1857, its "afterlife" was considerable.

## ILLUSTRATION/TEXT

As we have seen, a significant number of early commentators pointed to an alleged mismatch between the illustrations and the text. As arbiters of taste the reviewers expressed uncertainties which probably reflected the confusion of members of the book-buying public; but the illustrators' imaginative reading of

the text was viewed even more harshly in private. Holman Hunt records how Tennyson berated him for his bold interpretation of "The Lady of Shalott" (see chapter 4), and his notion of the artists' dereliction of duty or disobedience was taken up by the writer's family. Tennyson's brother Frederick thought the volume a dead failure, an act of impertinence, and claimed "the Artists" treated his sibling "vilely" by not providing a literal mirroring of the text.[3] Emily, the poet's wife, was equally disparaging, noting in her correspondence how "for the most part" there was "some departure" from the "letter of the poems," and denigrating individual designs. Millais's "The Miller's Daughter" ("I positively loath[e]") and "Locksley Hall" ("I like not") are singled out, and in the same "scolding mood" she highlights what she sees as the discordance of the artist's "Lord of Burleigh" (fig. 3.1): "what has the Lady to do when she is a cottage surrounded by peasants instead of at Burleigh with her own weeping Lord by her side? Her face is beautiful and the group altogether good, it seems to me—if it had the remotest connection with the poem."[4]

Mrs. Tennyson's choice of words highlights her (and her husband's) sense of having ceded power: the "connection," she insists, has been lost, and all that is left is a "departure" only remedied by applying a "little more attention" to what (she believed) was *actually* written.[5] We can imagine the Tennysons' frustration and anger: the poet, who shook like a "jarred string on a harp" when he spoke of the edition,[6] had probably feared the process of illustration would challenge his authority, and the couple's response indicates that for them at least his worst anxieties had been realized. Though he generally approved of Rossetti's efforts, he was baffled by the image of St. Cecily (fig. 4.10),[7] and believed the engravings as a whole were at odds with his writing.

In short, the collection of poems known as "the Moxon Tennyson" was *not,* as the author had wished, an anthology of work in which he controlled its meanings, but was transformed into a compendium—a visual and verbal site of multiple exchanges between the writing and the images, generating a number of messages that went far beyond the writer's intentions. The poet's hegemony was dissolved into this collaborative, bimodal artifact, and once it was published, he could do nothing about it; Tennyson the writer of verse became Tennyson the writer whose work was mediated, navigated, interrogated, reconstructed, enhanced, extended, and even contradicted. He did not grasp the enriching effect of this process, and at this point may have reflected on the wisdom of allowing the illustrators to choose their subjects and visualize the poems in any way they thought appropriate. His disappointment and annoyance may have also persuaded him to distance himself from any subsequent responses to his work, and he was far from enthusiastic about Maclise's designs for the reissue of *The Princess* in 1860.[8]

Tennyson's irritation was countered, however, by another private utterance. In a letter to the poet written in July of 1857, Ruskin supplies a far-reaching and insightful assessment of the situation; though finding some fault with the engraving, he emphasizes the illustrations' enhancement of the reading experience. The images, he says,

> are very noble things, though not, it seems to me, illustrations of your poems.
>
> I believe, in fact, that good pictures never can be; they are always another poem, subordinate but wholly different from the poet's conception, and serve chiefly to show the reader how variously the same verses may affect various minds. But these woodcuts will be of much use in making people think and puzzle a little; art was getting quite a matter of form in book-illustrations, and it does not so much matter whether any given vignette is right or not, as whether it contains thought or not.[9]

Ruskin acutely identifies the difference between the two sets of texts in a bitextual publication; Tennyson wanted the cuts to be a sort of neutral transference from one medium to another, but Ruskin shows how the illustrators add inferences and layers of meaning of their own, essentially creating another (visual) poem growing out of the first, to "serve chiefly to show the reader how variously the same verses may affect various minds." All that matters, Ruskin insists, is "thought," the interpretive possibilities generated in the process of visualization, and not a matter of repeating the author's information. This judgment was noted rather less eloquently by other contemporaries, but in the years following the book's appearance it developed a reputation as a trend-setter—a volume demonstrating what illustration could do, how it could interact with the written text, and how it might enrich its source material. It was, as Walter Crane remarks, "quite distinct in feeling, and original,"[10] and established new standards for subsequent practitioners. In particular, the Moxon Tennyson modeled a radical approach in terms of the relative power of the author and artist, a situation which links it to complex developments in the earlier and middle of the Victorian period and forms a background to the *Poems*.

Throughout the first part of the period, from the late thirties to the mid-fifties, the collaborations between a writer and his interpreter(s) were generally open-ended and informal, especially in relation to illustrated poetry. As John Buchanan-Brown demonstrates in his comprehensive study of early Victorian illustration, artists sometimes responded to a text while writers sometimes responded to an image, a model especially deployed in keepsake books and annuals of the 1830s and 1840s; the collaborative model was further complicated by the contributions of engravers whose control of their medium had a huge impact of the final image.[11]

Hierarchies were dissolved in a free sharing of visual and written texts, with no real sense of one partner having control over the other as each catered to the intensive demands for illustrated material.

However, this situation was eroded by the impact of changes in illustrated fiction. In place of the fluid interchange of poetry and image, a new, dominance model was established; the author, the originator of the material, came to be seen as the primary partner, while the illustrator was viewed as the secondary contributor and subject not only to the text but to the writer's instructions. This arrangement was established in the late thirties by Dickens, who specified what Hablôt Knight Browne (Phiz) should illustrate and how he should represent key elements of the text, and by Thackeray, who regarded his illustrators, Doyle and Walker, as a type of visual amanuensis, pictorial copyists whose task was supposedly to buttress his authorial effects by repeating them in a graphic form. There were, of course, inconsistencies in this arrangement: the artists may have been told what to do, but they did not always comply. For example, Cruikshank and Phiz added their own inflections in visualizing *Oliver Twist* (1837) and *Bleak House* (1851), while Doyle's rereading of *The Newcomes* (1855),[12] a work produced under great pressure, is partly a matter of Thackeray's emphases but foregrounds many of the artist's own. The authors strove to retain power, but by the mid-fifties this model of working, as Du Maurier puts it, "in harness . . . within the limits imposed by others than ourselves," was beginning to lose its currency, with many artists asserting their individuality.[13]

Unknowingly, Tennyson contributed to what was effectively a revival in the illustrators' fortunes. Though he wanted his artists to be neutral translators of his messages, his lack of control meant that he validated or helped to reassert the sort of freedoms that had earlier characterized Romantic illustration of poetry as it was exemplified by Turner's highly imaginative picturing of verse by Rogers (1830) and Scott (1841).[14] The illustrator's unique contribution had already been brought back into the frame by Rossetti in his idiosyncratic response to Allingham's poems in *The Music Master* (1855, fig. 1.6), but the development of the artist's autonomy was greatly extended by the fifty-four elaborate designs for Moxon. Of course, much has been written about the Pre-Raphaelites' individual, enriching responses, but in reality *all* of the illustrators were released, as noted earlier in this study, to work as they pleased. The effect was to redefine the artists as coauthors of the text, new participants in the Romantic project that elevated them from their status as servants and inferiors to the writer, to equals in the process of authorship.

The return of the Romantic model was not straightforward, however. Some writers resisted the idea of artistic equality, with several doing their best

to reapply the Dickensian strategy as it might be applied to fiction *and* poetry. Lewis Carroll tried to control Tenniel's illustration of *Alice's Adventures* (1865) by giving him his own drawings to "professionalize," and Christina Rossetti sent feeble sketches to Arthur Hughes as guidance for his illustrations of her poems in *Speaking Likenesses* (1874); Trollope, later an advocate of Millais, complained about the quirkiness of his designs; Charles Reade took dictatorial control over Robert Barnes's work for "Put Yourself in His Place" (*The Cornhill Magazine,* 1869–70); Eliot struggled to impose her authority over Leighton's reading of "Romola" (1861–62);[15] and a recent study by Richard J. Hill has shown how R. L. Stevenson insisted that "good illustrators" should be "loyal."[16] However, these were all vain attempts at imposing the writers' authority, with none of the artists doing as they were told: Leighton, Tenniel, and Hughes disregarded the author's directions; Millais created an imagery that Trollope came to admire; the sundry artists visualizing Stevenson's work cast it in their own terms; and even the downtrodden Barnes ultimately presented his own version of Reade's Sensational novel.[17]

Each of these invigorated responses owed a debt to the Moxon Tennyson, which was a workshop of new, creative attitudes. Laurence Housman views the Pre-Raphaelite designs as a "struggle for personality," a matter of "personal thought and temperament,"[18] and this emphasis on independence ultimately went even further than the practice in the earlier part of the century, and revolutionized Victorian illustration. It cleared the way for the visual interpretations of the Sixties, exemplified by the work of Houghton, Walker, Pinwell, and Sandys, and it extended well into the nineties, finding expression in Housman's fantastical designs for Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* (1893), Beardsley's reading of Wilde's *Salomé* (1894), and Woodroffe's *Songs from the Plays of Shakespeare* (1898). Championed in critical writing by Housman and Du Maurier, the historical significance of Tennyson's tome was clearly recognized by later Victorian illustrators, who viewed it as a piece of radical rethinking, a landmark signposting the way to a multiplicity of expressive possibilities.

## STYLE AND THE SIXTIES

Previous discussion has shown how all of the illustrators borrowed from their paintings, collapsing the distinction between the imagery of fine art and the engravings, printed in black and white, on the pages of the Moxon Tennyson. Painting and illustration were merged in a creative synergy, with some of the Tennyson designs being converted into works of fine art while the engravings appropriated the formal language of painting. In these ways, as we have seen,

painting imitated illustration, while illustration was conceived as a small painting in service of a text.

This interchange between painting and illustration focused a key ingredient in contemporary visual culture of the late fifties and sixties. Most importantly, the Moxon Tennyson promoted a new idiom, allowing painterly imagery to replace the caricature and comedic traditions of Cruikshank, Browne (Phiz), Doyle, Crowquill, and Leech; it defined a new relationship between the artist and the author and the illustration and the text, and it helped to define the illustrative style known as "the Sixties."

Champions of the book have claimed that the application of a painterly style to the problem of illustrating a text was a radical improvement on the comic grotesque, which was often dismissed as a superficial form of illustration. Pennell described the work of earlier practitioners as "abominations,"[19] and others drew a sharp line between the sophistication of the designs inspired by the Moxon Tennyson and the alleged crudity of illustrations by Cruikshank, Leech, Phiz, or Doyle. Of course, these judgments now seem naïve; no reasonable modern observer would claim that Rossetti's "St Cecily" (fig. 4.10) is more sophisticated than, for example, Cruikshank's illustration of "Fagin in the Condemned Cell" (fig. 6.1) in his series for Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837). Both are psychologically penetrating and explore their subjects in different ways; describing one as *better* than the other is misleading and unhelpful.[20]

Nevertheless, the Moxon illustrations were influential, especially those by the Pre-Raphaelites. They superseded the caricature traditions exemplified by Cruikshank and his contemporaries and established what Forrest Reid describes as "poetic realism." Their impact was multifaceted: the bold draftsmanship of illustrations such as Holman Hunt's "Godiva" (fig. 4.3) and Millais's "Death of the Old Year" (fig. 2.10) marks a significant change from the febrile scratchiness of Cruikshank's etchings, and the emphasis on realism combined with deep feeling, the equation of nature and human nature, was radically different from the arch humor of Leech and Doyle. Injecting a note of high seriousness, the Pre-Raphaelites deepened the resonance of the art of illustration. These elements—realism, intense feeling, and academic drawing—became the defining features of the Sixties school, and were carried forward by artists such as Du Maurier, Sandys, Watson, Lawless, Walker, Hughes, and Burne-Jones.

The Pre-Raphaelites' influence on the Sixties was intensified, moreover, by their direct participation in the discourse they were helping to shape. Millais, especially, went on to exploit the psychological realism of his images for "Dora" (figs. 3.6, 3.7) and "The Miller's Daughter" (figs. 3.14, 3.15). The significant gestures and modern dress he deploys in these designs he reused to visualize the bourgeois intrigues of Trollope's novels (figs. 3.12, 3.13), enabling him to create

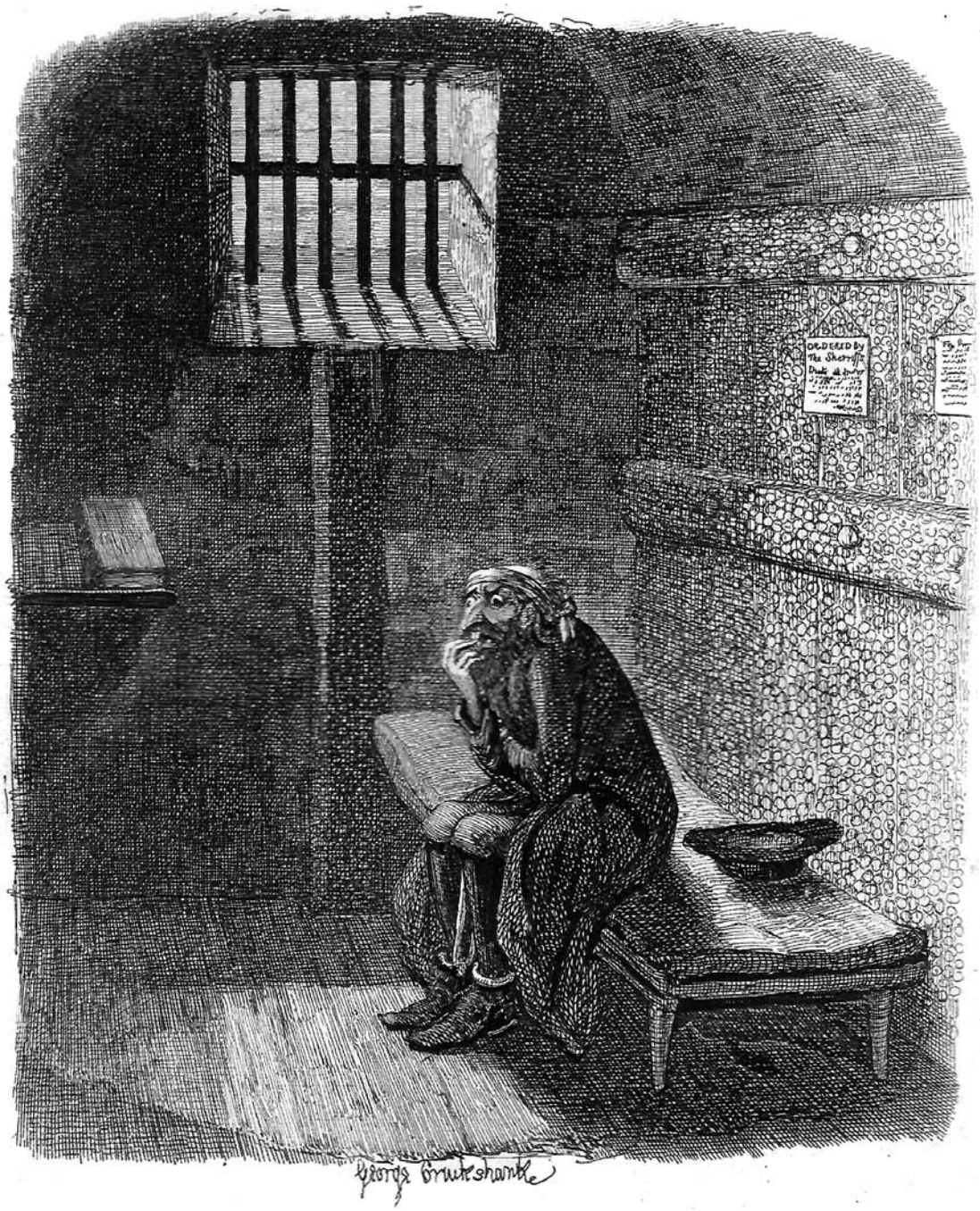



FIGURE 6.1. George Cruikshank, "Fagin in the Condemned Cell." Steel-plate etching by Cruikshank, 120 × 110 mm (vignette). Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist: or, The Parish Boy's Progress,* 3 vols., vol. 3 (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), facing 296.

the focus on domestic drama that became the mainstay of illustrated fiction and was emulated, among others, by Frederick Walker and Robert Barnes. Walker's indebtedness to Millais's Moxon designs is especially marked, and can be seen in the realism and gestural intensity of illustrations such as "Thanksgiving," one of his series for Thackeray's "Philip" in *The Cornhill Magazine* (1862, fig. 6.2).

Rossetti, likewise, drew heavily on his existing hoard of images. His fantastical designs for Christina's *Goblin Market* (1862) and *The Prince's Progress* (1866)

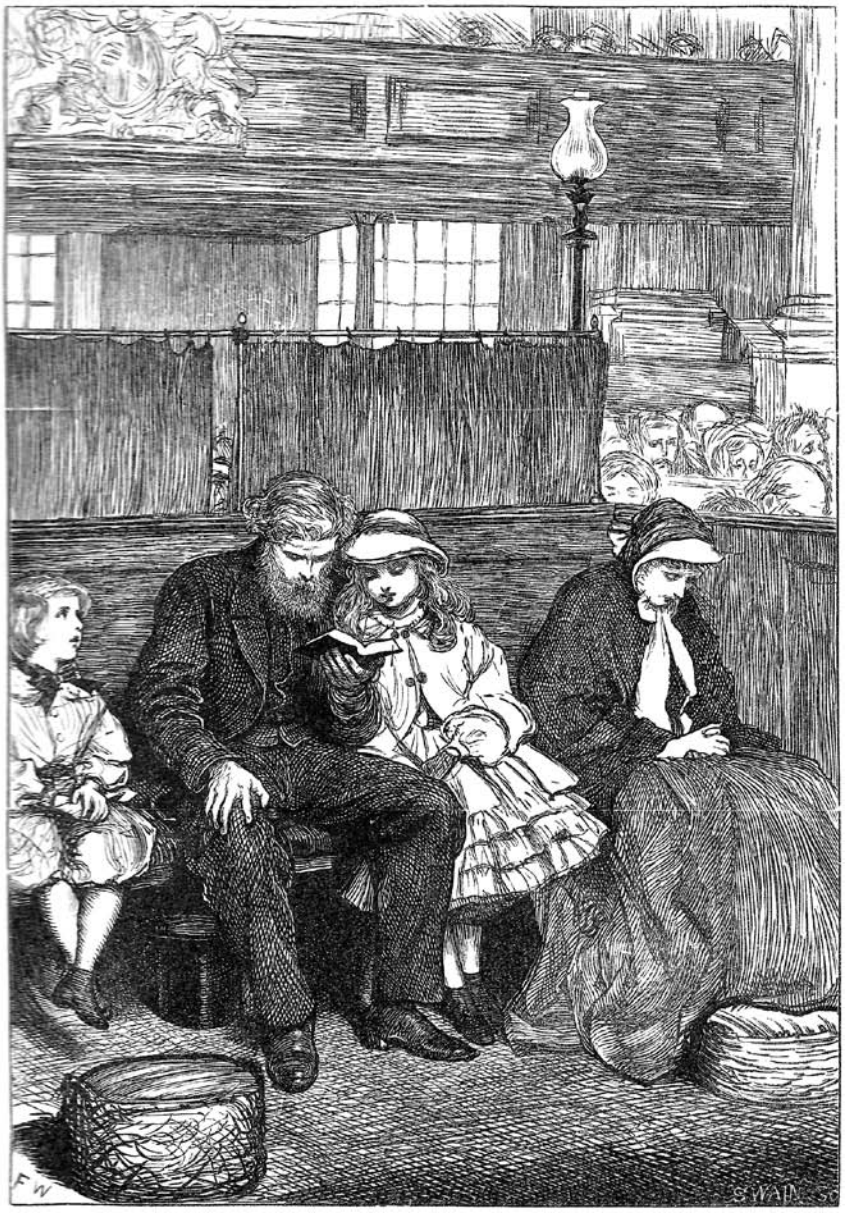


FIGURE 6.2.
Frederick Walker, "Thanksgiving." Engraved by Joseph Swain, 177 × 125 mm. W. M. Thackeray, "Philip," *The Cornhill Magazine* 6 (August 1862): facing 217.

are closely linked to the weird dream worlds of "The Palace of Art" (figs. I.4, 4.10); figured as a combination of intense particularization, idealized beauty, psychological ambivalence, and claustrophobic, timeless settings, his medievalist fantasies for Tennyson also had a significant impact on the illustrations of Sandys and Burne-Jones. Indeed, several of Rossetti's designs provided a template for subsequent illustrations, which were often quoted and imitated. "Rosamund, Queen of the Lombards" (*Once a Week,* 1861, fig. 6.3), by Sandys, treads this ticklish path between homage and plagiarism, re-creating an image of a kneeling woman in direct echo of Rossetti's figure in "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7).

FIGURE 6.3. Frederick Sandys, "Rosamund, Queen of the Lombards." Engraved by Joseph Swain, 133 × 119 mm. Illustration for an anonymous poem (CJE?), *Once a Week* (November 30 1861): 631.

FIGURE 6.4. George Du Maurier, "A Time to Dance." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 145 × 115 mm. Illustration for an anonymous poem (CE?), *Good Words* (1861): 579.

Sandys replaces the love letters with assorted other paraphernalia (a skull, tiny scissors, a bowl radiating flames), but in all other respects he appropriates the Rossettian language, notably reproducing the idealized beauty with her masculine jaw, flowing hair, and self-absorbed expression. Du Maurier's "A Time to Dance" (*Good Words,* 1861, fig. 6.4) is similarly derived from the kneeling female figures shown in "Mariana" and "St Cecily." These monumental figures, with

their huge radiating dresses and yearning faces, are the very type of Sixties femininity; filched from Rossetti, they epitomize the transmission of imagery that runs directly from the Moxon Tennyson to the wood engravings appearing in serial fiction, gift books, and periodicals. In short, the Moxon illustrations established a currency, a visual language to be exploited by other artists: projecting its multiplicity of signs, the *Poems* became a sourcebook, and was ransacked for specific exemplars. These became the grammar of the Sixties.

It is also worth noting its wider stylistic influence. Although the Pre-Raphaelites' art was influential, some of the non-Pre-Raphaelites had an impact on the style of the Sixties as well. Creswick's sensitive landscapes were an influence on Birket-Foster's *Pictures of English Landscape* (1863, fig. 6.5). This elaborate gift book counterpoints nature scenes with poems, and Creswick's example, with

FIGURE 6.5. Myles Birket Foster, "The Green Lane." Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, 183 × 142. *Birket Foster's Pictures of English Landscape* (London; Routledge, Warne and Routledge, 1863), plate 1.

its intense focus on atmosphere, must surely have provided the later artist with a visual model.

The Moxon Tennyson had another impact on the development of the Sixties insofar as it helped to establish the idiom of the illustrated gift book. This mode, as noted earlier, had appeared in the thirties and forties as a keepsake or annual, with elaborate cloth cover, gilt ornamentation, and steel-plate engravings. But the appearance of the Moxon Tennyson in 1857 and 1858 helped to redefine the gift book as a monumental publication illustrated by diverse hands, deploying the printing technique of wood engraving rather than copper or steel. It could not be claimed to be the first to present this formula, but it was certainly part of a new emphasis on quarto-sized books enriched with "drawings on wood," and was part of the vanguard in developing what became known as "the illustrated Sixties gift book." Critics have noted the diversity of artists in the Moxon Tennyson, but viewing it historically we can see how it was part of a general movement towards multiplicity, with practically every book of its kind presenting a medley of styles. The nearest volume, and a direct competitor, was Willmott's *Poets of the Nineteenth Century.* Published in the spring of 1857, Willmott's volume combines work by Tenniel, Gilbert, and (as in the *Poems*) by the "new men," this time in the form of Ford Madox Brown and Millais. This book forms a pendant with the Moxon Tennyson, and taken together they are the most typical of the new movement which was embodied in publications such as Buchanan's *Wayside Posies* (1867) and *A Round of Days* (1866), with exquisite designs by Pinwell, North, Houghton, and Gray. In this role it fulfilled its promise as an agent for the democratization of taste, setting aesthetic standards that were hard to match while stimulating the development of a series of rivals which set out to challenge its excellence.

## AFFIRMATION AND PARODY

The Moxon Tennyson's afterlife was largely (though not entirely) characterized by respectful acknowledgment, with several artists paying homage to its illustrations. Housman's aforementioned introduction to his collection of work by A. B. Houghton (1896) sets the tone with his astute analysis of the Pre-Raphaelites' sophisticated reading of the texts; and in "The Illustrating of Books from the Serious Artist's Point of View" (1890), Du Maurier presents a touchingly personal view of the images' imaginative power. Again, it is the Pre-Raphaelites who fire his memory:

> I still adore the lovely, wild, irresponsible moon-face of Oriana, with the gigantic mailed archer kneeling at her feet in the yew-wood, and stringing

> his fatal bow; the strange beautiful figure of the Lady of Shalott, when the curse comes over her, and her splendid hair is floating wide, like the magic web; the warm embrace of Amy and her cousin [in "Locksley Hall"] . . . ; the queen sucking the poison out of her husband's arm; the exquisite bride at the end of the Talking Oak; the sweet little picture of Emma Morland and Edward Grey [*sic*], so natural and so modern . . . ; the chaste Sir Galahad, slaking his thirst with the holy water, amid all of the mystic surroundings; and the delightfully incomprehensible pictures to the Palace of Art, that gave one a weird sense of comfort, like the word "Mesopotamia," without one's knowing why.[21]

Du Maurier's childlike perceptions reaffirm the illustrations' aura and recapture, perhaps, a sense of the responses of the original audience when the book first appeared: the artists intended it to be a treasure trove of imaginative adventures, and to a large extent it was. Certainly, in the intervening period between the late fifties and the end of the century the volume had enchanted generations of reader/viewers and achieved modest popularity; though it was a failure in 1857, Routledge's intervention ensured its success. It was reprinted on numerous occasions (1858, 1859, 1861, 1862, 1864, 1866, 1867, 1893) and passed, as a valuable commodity, to Macmillan.

As a measure of its influence, some of its illustrations appeared in new compilations alongside other engravings. *Gems from Tennyson* (1866),[22] an American imprint by Ticknor and Fields, juxtaposes a number of the original designs with American reinterpretations and new poems. Reproducing the mixed-bag approach of the Moxon Tennyson, it combines several of the Pre-Raphaelite group and works by Maclise, Mulready, and Stanfield with imagery by the Americans Hennessy, Darley, Sol Etynge, Hart, and Homer. Taken as the prototype for the American album, the Moxon Tennyson extended its influence from Britain, where it defined the visual heterogeneity of gift books, to the luxury illustrated imprints of the emergent publishing trade in the New World. It is also interesting to note how much the British designers influenced the Americans, often in unpredictable ways; there is a marked difference, for example, between Hennessy's opening illustration for "Locksley Hall" (fig. 6.6), which is completely unlike Millais's treatment of the poem (fig. 3.8), but an obvious *correspondence,* with its emphasis on an introspective pose, to Millais's deeply emotional design for "Edward Gray" (fig. 3.10).

At the same time, the patterns of influence projected by the Moxon illustrations are sometimes unusual, turning up in unexpected settings. That claim is especially true of the book's influence on the photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, Tennyson's neighbor on the Isle of Wight and an experimental artist

FIGURE 6.6. William James Hennessy, "Locksley Hall" (for U.S. version). Engraved by Orr, 105 × 93 (vignette). *Gems from Tennyson* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), 1.

engaged in defining the expressive possibilities of the new art of the calotype.[23] Though responsive to other photographers, Cameron drew heavily on the visual language encoded in the *Poems*' engravings. This intertextual project was sometimes a matter of creating photographically some of the illustrations' focus, compositions, and arrangements, but Cameron was often directly inspired by single images. "The Passing of Arthur," with its congested stage-like ship and dramatic attitudes,[24] is essentially a photographic reworking of Maclise's intense design (fig. I.4), and Cameron often re-creates the *Poems*' monumental figures, contained in claustrophobic spaces and pressed close to the picture plane. "The Parting of Lancelot and Queen Guinevere" similarly reasserts the huge forms of Rossetti's "Mariana in the South" (fig. 4.7) and Millais's "Mariana" (fig. I.1); as in the two illustrations, the impression is one of physical and psychological constriction, of bodies and minds clamped into overwhelmingly difficult situations.[25] Cameron also emulates the small details and archaic paraphernalia featured in Rossetti's "Weeping Queens" (fig. I.3) and Hunt's "Godiva" (fig. 4.3). Above all else, Cameron recaptures the solemn melancholy of the illustrators' reading of Tennyson. Her introspective faces echo those of characters such as Millais's "St Agnes" (fig. 2.11) and Rossetti's "St Cecily" (fig. 4.10) while reflecting the influence of Maclise's glum portraits in "Morte d'Arthur" (fig. I.4).[26] Further, the *Poems* were the inspiration for Cameron's *Illustrations to Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" and Other Poems* (1875);[27] though technically innovative in terms of lighting and darkroom manipulation, the photographs presented here are again the light-defined equivalents of the original prints.

So Cameron's work closely reflects the multitextuality of Tennyson's verse, lending itself to interpretation in wood engravings which are transformed into the new medium of photography. In an age when the arts traditionally intersected—paintings interacting with literature, music with painting, illustrations with the written word—the relationship between the Moxon Tennyson and Cameron's prints in light adds another stratum of inference and suggestiveness, endlessly expanding the poet's messages by reinscribing them in the most ethereal of visionary photographs.

Cameron's solemn acknowledgment was only one part of the equation, however. Another response was voiced in the form of Du Maurier's parody, *A Legend of Camelot*. First published in *Punch* in 1866 and reissued as a cartoon book in 1898, Du Maurier's satirical series ridiculed the author-artist's verse and illustrations, retelling the Arthurian myth as the absurd tale of naked Braunighrindas, who is persuaded, as Ormond explains, "to have her hair woven into a more permanent garment."[28] Du Maurier effectively parodies the conventions of Tennysonian and Pre-Raphaelite verse, but in the cartoons he most amusingly hits at the intricate

conventions of the "Pre-Raphaelite cut." This process involves the parodic techniques of exaggeration, distortion, and misquotation, in each case mocking the seriousness of the original.

The first design, as Ormond has shown, is the funniest (fig. 6.7). On the left of the composition is Sir Galahad, a copy of Rossetti's austere, spiritual creation (figs. 4.8, 4.9), here converted into a posing aesthete with question marks on his garment. Lancelot, from Rossetti's illustration of "The Lady of Shalott" (fig. 4.6), is similarly mocked, Ormond observes, by dressing him in a pair of up-to-date "check trousers."[29] Rossettian idealism, with its combination of spiritualized, ascetic masculinity, androgynous features, and neomedieval accoutrements, is thus reduced to absurdity: vanity replaces heroism, spiritual contemplation becomes a pose. The other main figure, of Braunighrindas, is similarly conceived as mockery, this time parodying Holman Hunt's treatment of the Lady of Shalott (fig. 4.4). The thrashing hair of Hunt's anguished heroine is exaggerated into a veritable billow of black lines, and Du Maurier underscores the humor by showing her coiffure, as in Hunt's design, as if it were trying to break out of the frame. The comedic effect is completed by a calculated misquoting of the spatial schemes

FIGURE 6.7. George Du Maurier, "A Legend of Camelot: Part 1." Engraved by Joseph Swain, 131 × 171 mm. *Punch* (March 3 1866): 94.

used in the *Poems,* reducing them to a sloping foreground, distortions of scale, and tiny architecture. Finally, a very modern group of street urchins populates the scene, laughing out loud and pointing at the ridiculous medievalist characters who parade in front of them: aestheticism as comedy, medievalism as farce.

Cameron's reverential approach to the Moxon Tennyson is thus challenged and overturned by Du Maurier's mock-heroic travesty, transforming the grand Romanticism of the Pre-Raphaelites' illustrations into subjects for ridicule. For once, the high seriousness of the Moxon Tennyson was anatomized through a satirical lens. Du Maurier, though an advocate and admirer of the book, could still regard it as a very large and pretentious balloon, in need of puncturing.

## THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AND BEYOND

The Moxon Tennyson's reputation, we have seen, was largely the product of critics writing in the 1890s. After a period of neglect, interest revived in the later part of the twentieth century, though only in the terms earlier defined as a fascination with the Pre-Raphaelites. The other illustrations were mainly edited out, and at the time of writing the present study (2019), there is currently no modern reproduction of the book as it originally appeared. Looking at it this way, we can see that appreciation of the Moxon Tennyson has always been uneven, with only three attempts being made to make it available to a modern readership, and then only in a partial form. Sidelined for most of the twentieth century and out of fashion, it was overtaken by modernism and its subsequent formulations. In the 1960s especially the book was regarded not just with indifference but with distaste, a trend exemplifying a wider disdain for Victorian art and poetry. The only Victorian illustrator to appeal to audiences in the period between 1960 and the 1980s was Beardsley, whose erotic style made even the Pre-Raphaelite contributions to the *Poems* seem archaically "High Victorian." The Moxon Tennyson, once regarded as part of a vital avant-garde, seemed decidedly old-fashioned, especially as it does not conform to late Victorian notions of the "book beautiful." It was always a book of shreds and patches, but for many connoisseurs and scholars its very hybridity has hampered the development of clear-sighted perspectives.

This situation is reflected in the paucity of academic work from the turn of the century and the earlier part of the 1900s. G. S. Layard published his study in 1894, and Forrest Reid includes analysis of the work in his important monograph on the Sixties (1928), but the field was otherwise relatively undeveloped for the next fifty years. William Fredeman's monumental bibliography of Pre-Raphaelite criticism (1965) tellingly records the lack of critical analysis, listing only E. L.

Cary's essay on Rossetti as an illustrator, Martin Hardie's article of 1907, and another, by Albert Friedman, in 1948. Nothing new is offered in any of these studies, and there was no progress, critically speaking, until recent times, when it was analyzed by critics such as Thomas and Kooistra, with support from general works by Muir, de Maré, Engen, Goldman, and Suriano; academic essays by Stein, Harris, and Bentley, the most recent contributor (2018), have progressed the cause.

Yet a book's survival as an artifact of continuing interest is not confined to the activities of scholars based in the English or art history departments of universities. The volume's continuing currency as an important publication has also been in the hands of collectors and bibliographers. Identified by early commentators as a significant part of any library of Victorian illustration, the Moxon Tennyson is a trophy on every collector's shelves; many copies survive in private hands and in the rare book departments of university and specialist libraries.

The outlook is not so optimistic, though, for new collectors; once fairly commonplace on the antiquarian book market, the book is now increasingly rare, especially in first and early editions. The main issue is not the limited supply, as such, but the fact that many copies are now in poor condition. Though sewn rather than stuck together in a perfect binding secured with gutta-percha in the manner of most gift books of the period, it is defectively assembled and far too heavy for its cloth casing; the binding collapses and the pages fall out, a fault Burne-Jones noted as early as the 1890s.[30] Its fragility means complete books in good condition, the only state serious collectors will accept, are now hard to find, and those worth acquiring are becoming increasingly expensive. At the time of writing in 2019 the Advanced Book Exchange on the Web lists nineteen copies, with the most expensive, a first, being sold for $2,500, while the lowest price for a reprint is $250. A few others add to a narrow field, which probably means that in the future the edition will only be known in substandard or repaired condition. Its visual splendor will have been compromised and its aesthetic qualities undermined; no one wants an illustrated book where the finesse of the images is ruined by foxing, ripped pages, or annotations, or (worst of all) where the illustrations are colored in, the work of imaginative (or naughty?) children who had access to Mama and Papa's library. I recently viewed a first edition in exactly this state, a book much loved, for sure, but useless for a connoisseur. What is needed for its survival is the most careful conservation, a project not always observed by libraries, where the spines have catalogue numbers painted on them and the pages are disfigured by the stamped image of the university's coat of arms.

It has survived piecemeal. "Broken" copies, which have fallen apart, regularly feature in online sales forums such as eBay with individual illustrations having

been detached from the book and framed, so creating a fine print. Others have been scanned and reprinted in poster form. The most popular are Rossetti's designs along with Holman Hunt's "Oriana," "The Lady of Shalott," and "The Beggar Maid." Removed from their contexts as literary illustrations, these images, both originals taken from the book and scans, have achieved a new currency as domestic decoration. Conceived as small paintings in black and white to illustrate a literary text, they have paradoxically achieved a new status as self-referring designs which function as works of art in their own right, or at least as decorative objects. Indeed, the tension between illustration and the autonomous image, so marked in the period, has resolved itself in the form of a new commodity aimed at modern consumers. The original audiences wanted to enjoy fine art and fine illustration in conjunction, engaging in a process of interpretation that cast those fireside readers as reader/viewers; those of today, by contrast, prefer the images without their illustrative function, and would probably be hard-pressed to identify their literary inspiration. The Moxon Tennyson was immersed in a zeitgeist of interconnectedness, of intersections between the arts; our own time, the age of fragmentation and rapid consumption, reframes the book as just another source of commodified imagery, stripped of its original meanings. As with all such revisionism, the artifact known as the "Moxon Tennyson" is rewritten to suit a new set of cultural expectations.

So how, finally, should we evaluate Tennyson's illustrated *Poems*? In this study I have emphasized the need to see it not as "the Pre-Raphaelite Tennyson," but as a more complete work of art than the bias suggests. Many critics, building on commentaries of the 1890s, have completely dismissed the so-called older school of artists as worthless, but I have tried to show how *all* of the illustrations are an integral part of an extended visual montage designed to complement and enrich the writer's messages in the form of a binary or dual text. This project is shared by the entire cast of contributors who made the book as a material object, and as in the best illustrated books the artists become cocreators in authoring its ideas. This kaleidoscopic effect, as a prismatic shimmering of profound and challenging themes, mediated through an unstable but productive dialogue between the arts, is the book's central achievement. Of great historical importance, the Moxon Tennyson was, and remains, a memorable volume.

# Appendix 1

*The Illustrator Who Never Was: Lizzie Siddal*

Moxon and Tennyson selected their artists by the end of 1854, but a few others were briefly considered. We have seen how Ford Madox Brown and Landseer were turned down. It was also rumored in the press that the comic illustrator Charles Collins would become one of Tennyson's illustrators, although his name may have been confused with that of the Pre-Raphaelite painter James Collinson.[1] These artists remained at the periphery, and it is hard to see what Landseer, Collins, or Collinson would have contributed. Only Brown would have been an asset. His illustration for Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon" appeared in *Poets of the Nineteenth Century,* published at the same time as the Moxon edition,[2] and his particular blend of realism and high emotion might have been used to strong effect in the service of Tennyson.

Elizabeth Siddal was another possibility. Though only an amateur whose interest in art was encouraged by Rossetti, in the mid-1850s she was developing a considerable reputation: Ruskin considered her to be talented, and Brown believed her a "real artist,"[3] another Pre-Raphaelite practitioner whose neomedieval drawings and watercolors were in the same expressive register as Rossetti's. Equipped with this visual lexicon, Siddal seemed a candidate for inclusion in the project of illustrating Tennyson, whose work she knew well. Nominated by Rossetti, she seems to have believed she would become part of this team and prepared a number of illustrative drawings in anticipation of being engaged. She did two versions of "St Cecily" for "The Palace of Art," two treatments of "Sir Galahad"—one in pencil and one in watercolor—and a watercolor illustration for "St Agnes' Eve." Jan Marsh suggests she worked on other illustrations for "The Lady of Shalott," "Morte d'Arthur," and "Jephtha's Daughter" for "A Dream of Fair Women."[4] These drawings were probably seen by Ruskin, and according to Lucinda Hawksley the critic presented them to the publisher, noting how "within days of the critic first glimpsing her paintings Siddal was asked by Moxon . . . if she could provide some illustrations as well."[5]

This sounds like a smoothly evolving situation, but in reality there is no evidence to suggest Ruskin was involved or that Moxon had any intention of commissioning the inexperienced artist. Rossetti is far likelier than Ruskin to have acted as an advocate, and may have urged the contents of her portfolio. Emily Tennyson, as noted earlier, also liked Siddal's work.[6] However, Moxon's response was unequivocal: he turned them down. Considerable claims have been made for the qualities of Siddal's art, but Moxon's judgment is understandable: put bluntly, her work was far too weak, too derivative of Rossetti and too lacking in consistency to feature in a volume containing illustrations by some of the leading practitioners of the time, and would only have created an embarrassing disparity between high expertise and her extremely limited talent. She was better considered a naïve or folk artist than a professional, and trained only insofar as she received some instruction from Rossetti, and her illustrations are far short of the standard required in the preparation of an elite tome.[7]

Nevertheless, Siddal's designs for the Moxon Tennyson *did* have an impact on the book's visual content. Although her work was derived from Rossetti's medievalist watercolors of the 1850s and closely resembles them, she did influence two of her companion's designs—"Sir Galahad" and "St Cecily." Her treatment of "Sir Galahad" seems only obliquely related to his version, but both of her designs introduce the idea of the knight's engagement with angels, or at least with otherworldly beings. Rossetti does not re-create this situation directly, but he does include idealized beauties in the lower part of the design. The poem only specifies Galahad's hearing "solemn chaunts" (307), but Rossetti seems to have understood that he could intensity the psychological effect by including these figures, perhaps responding to the example of Siddal's designs. We can be certain, however, that Rossetti appropriated some of his partner's ideas for his version of "St Cecily." H. C. Marillier suggests that he adapted her work for his design,[8] and comparison of the images clearly points to the impact of Siddal's originals. In both of her designs (Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton), she represents the organ as a curious miniature assemblage of pipes, and this is how it appears, foreshortened in faux medieval perspective, in Rossetti's illustration (fig. 4.10). He also appropriated the pose of St. Cecilia. In Siddal's image the saint recoils from the angel's gaze ("An angel look'd at her," 118); her back is arched and her face turned up, eyes closed, in rapture. The effect has some visual impact, and in Rossetti's illustration we find exactly the same pose. The only fundamental difference is his rearrangement so that the angel stands behind her and holds her in an embrace; as Marsh observes,[9] Siddal places her figures apart, while Dante always brings them together in compact dramatic units. It is also possible, however, that Siddal was the source of the composition, which places one figure behind

the other. A drawing attributed to the artist in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, deploys this arrangement and could be the source of Rossetti's unusual grouping. The only complication here is one of authorship; Marsh believes it to be a misattribution and assigns it to the sculptor Alexander Munro.[10]

These uncertainties aside, Siddal clearly influenced Rossetti's design. Though technically poor, with no real sense of modeling, perspective, or the representation of detail, her art does make an appearance, if only by proxy, in the pages of the Moxon Tennyson. This situation, feminist critics might observe, closely reflects the patrimony of art production in mid-Victorian Britain.[11] It is also, far more troublingly, an example of Rossetti's exploitative treatment of his "Pre-Raphaelite supermodel,"[12] and perhaps her greatest impact was not in the form of whatever her art might bring to the equation but in her partner's drawing of her face, which appears with obsessive intensity, in all of his designs. In the final equation, it is very characteristically the situation that how Lizzie *looked* remained far more important than what she could *do*.

# Appendix 2

*The Makers of the Moxon Tennyson*

**Thomas Creswick** (1811–69) enjoyed a successful career as a painter of English landscape. His serene, highly idealized imagery was a natural extension of the traditions of Gainsborough and Constable; in an age when industrialization was having a significant impact on the countryside, Creswick's painting offered an idyllic, preindustrial vision of England as a bucolic paradise. He also contributed rustic illustrations to a wide variety of books, and many of his works on canvas were converted into engravings.

**The Dalziel brothers,** principally **George Dalziel** (1815–1902) and **Edward Dalziel** (1817–1905), were the most important wood engravers of the period. They engraved a large number of books and illustrations for magazines; working with the publisher George Routledge, they were responsible for the development of the mid-Victorian gift book. They also provided a detailed account of the rise of wood engraving: *The Brothers Dalziel: A Record of Fifty Years' Work* (1901). This book is an invaluable source of information about artists and working practices.

**W. T. Green** was a prominent wood engraver of the mid-Victorian period.

**William Holman Hunt** (1827–1910) was one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (1848) and the quintessential painter of moralizing narrative. His sometimes garish paintings combined intense detail with contemporary subjects; inspired by Ruskin's insistence on the need to copy nature and show the "truth" of the real world, Hunt was the only Pre-Raphaelite to continue working in this manner following the disbanding of the Brotherhood in the early 1850s. Hunt was an important chronicler of the lives and work of his colleagues, publishing an extensive memoir, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,* in 1905.

**John Callcott Horsley** (1817–1903) is best known as a genre painter of historical, domestic, literary, and romantic scenes. Horsley designed the first Christmas

card in 1840 and went on to become a highly successful member of the Royal Academy. He was a member of the Cranbrook colony of painters specializing in rural subjects and produced many sentimental paintings of country life. His opposition to nude painting made him the object of ridicule; *Punch* dubbed him "clothes horsley" (a pun on the clotheshorse, or frame, on which models placed their clothes as they disrobed).

**William James Linton** (1812–97) was the second-most influential engraver of his period. His delicate engraving, which stresses the linear qualities of a drawing, stands in contrast to the Dalziels' emphasis on blocking and contrasts of light and dark. Linton was involved in radical politics; he and his wife were writers and poets, and the couple later emigrated from England to America.

**Daniel Maclise** (1806–70), an Irish painter of historical and literary themes, usually on an impressive scale. His canvases depicted scenes from Irish and British history as well as subjects drawn from Shakespeare and the German poets. Maclise was also a productive illustrator; he coillustrated several of Dickens's Christmas books and following his contributions to the Moxon Tennyson produced an elaborate series for Tennyson's *The Princess* (1870), also published by Moxon.

**John Everett Millais** (1829–96) was a precocious talent, one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the most successful and popular artist of his age. His early Pre-Raphaelite canvases, with their characteristic combination of dramatic compositions and minute particularization, were replaced in the 1850s by a looser style, although his emphasis on psychology and deep feeling never changed. Millais became president of the Royal Academy and in this role produced work in the manner of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the sentimental and showy painter the Pre-Raphaelites had reviled. Millais's marriage with Ephemia Gray, who divorced Ruskin in an acrimonious dispute, is another of the scandalous stories of its age. He was a celebrated illustrator, producing outstanding designs for the novels of Anthony Trollope

**Edward Moxon** (1801–58), known popularly as "the poet's publisher," published work by Browning, Barry Cornwall (Bryan Waller Procter), and Thomas Hood, as well as editions of Shelley and Keats. Moxon's greatest asset was Tennyson, and he played an important role in establishing the poet's reputation. A poet himself, Moxon seemed to have been motivated by a genuine interest in poetry, and (as argued in this study) was ill-equipped to cope with the ruthless business environment of mid-Victorian publishing. His death in 1859, supposedly

the consequence of Rossetti's problematic behavior, was probably the result of ill-health intensified by financial worries.

**William Mulready** (1786–1863) was the Moxon Tennyson's second Irish contributor, along with Maclise. Mulready was a genre painter with a talent for social observation and droll humor; his paintings show a deep sympathy for his cast of bucolic characters and although sentimental have psychological depth. Mulready was extremely popular with a large Victorian audience, providing bourgeois consumers with an essentially indulgent view of rural life. He was also an accomplished etcher and illustrated several books.

**Gabriel Dante Rossetti,** more usually known as Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82), was a leading talent. Born into a gifted family of Anglo-Italian stock, he was one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (1848) and later practiced as a translator, painter, poet, illustrator, critic, and designer, creating a range of artifacts for William Morris and Co. Rossetti's turbulent personal life, disrupted by drug addiction and mental illness and scarred by the tragic suicide of his wife, Elizabeth Siddal, is well documented. His influence on the development on mid-Victorian poetry, painting, applied art, and illustration was substantial; the inventor of artworks focused on love and loss, he inspired the so-called second generation of Pre-Raphaelites and invented the "Pre-Raphaelite beauty," a type of yearning womanhood which dominated Victorian aesthetics from the 1860s to the end of the century.

**George Routledge** (1812–88) was one of the foremost Victorian publishers. A specialist in illustrated poetry and gift books, he dominated this element of the market in the mid-nineteenth century. He was known for his astuteness; his talent for business was matched by his good taste, and he was responsible for the rise of many of the outstanding designers of the period known as "the Sixties."

**Clarkson Frederick Stanfield** (1793–1867) achieved prominence as a painter of marine subjects. His work included battle scenes, depictions of coastal scenery, and impressive combinations of mountainous landscapes and turbulent seas. His emphasis was always on the sublime and the spectacular, effectively conveying the power of the natural world, in which humankind is diminished to insignificance. He experimented with the moving diorama, one of the forebears of cinema, and his paintings focus on the process of movement and change. Though partly inspired by Dutch marine painting, his mature art is akin to Turner's, at least insofar as he too offers a pantheistic notion of nature.

**Alfred Tennyson** (1809–92) was the foremost poet of the Victorian age. He was appointed poet laureate in 1850 and endowed with a peerage in 1884, when he became Baron or Lord Tennyson. Tennyson's poetry embodied Victorian values: focusing on themes of love and loss, he wrote eloquently of the passage of time and the dynamics of change in a period of anxious uncertainty. His great poems engaged with contemporary ideas, anatomizing, in his best-known poem, *In Memoriam* (1850), the clash between religious faith and the notion of a godless universe; an epic storyteller and master of the narrative form, he also wrote delicate idylls and lyrics in the Romantic tradition of Wordsworth and heroic narratives enshrined in *Idylls of the King*. Tennyson's greatest achievement was to bridge the gap between high and low culture, writing elevated work that appealed to a large middle-class audience. Endlessly reprinted, his work appeared in numerous anthologies, of which the Moxon Tennyson was the most celebrated.

**John Thompson** (1785–1866) was one of the first generation of engravers who built on the tradition established by Bewick. His best illustrations appeared in a variety of publications produced during the 1830s and 1840s; he also engraved the figure of Britannia on mid-Victorian banknotes.

**Albert Henry Warren** (1830–1911) was a versatile designer. Proficient as a painter in watercolors and oils, he was also an architectural draftsman, a chromolithographer, an expert on book illumination, an art instructor, and a freelance practitioner whose work included the design and making of picture frames. His most enduring achievements, however, are in the field of bookbinding, where he made a significant contribution to the design of cloth casings of the middle of the century.

**Thomas Williams** was a well-known wood engraver of the middle of the century.

# Notes

## INTRODUCTION

1. The term "bitextual" was coined by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra in *The Artist as Critic: Bitextuality in Fin-de-Siècle Illustrated Books* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995). The term "bimodal" has appeared in illustration studies in recent scholarship, though I am uncertain of its origin. Other terms include "intermediality" and the more prosaic "visual/verbal texts."

2. Criticism of Victorian illustrated books has tended to focus on *periods* (early Victorian, the Sixties, the Nineties), rather than provide an overarching view of how the idiom developed. Percy Muir's generalist account, *Victorian Illustrated Books* (London: Batsford, 1971; rev. ed., London: Batsford, 1985), provides a reasonable account of the century as a whole; another useful overview is Edward Hodnett's *Five Centuries of English Book Illustration* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), 107–224. The most scholarly treatment of the unfolding tradition is Catherine J. Golden's *Serials to Graphic Novels: The Evolution of the Victorian Illustrated Book.* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017), which focuses on the transmission of caricature, comedic, and theatrical discourses.

3. Published in London by Chapman and Hall, Dickens's serialization (1836–37) defined the new genre. Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*, illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley, was published in London by Elkin Mathews and John Lane and set the tone of the Decadence.

4. Alfred Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Edward Moxon, 1857). All page references hereafter are given in the form of in-text citations.

5. According to Thomas J. Wise in *A Bibliography of the Writing of Alfred, Lord Tennyson,* 2 vols. (Printed for Private Circulation, 1908), the "Moxon Tennyson" is a reprint of the tenth edition of Tennyson's *Poems,* first published in 1842, itself made up of poems from the early thirties, "though some of the pieces are arranged in a different order" (1:98). The only omission is "The Skipping Rope," a mock-comedy about a frustrated suitor and his beloved, which ends with the unappealing lines "There take it, take my skipping rope / And hang yourself thereby." It was suppressed in 1850.

6. Martin Hardie, "The Moxon Tennyson: 1857," *The Book-Lover's Magazine* 8 (1907); reprinted in *Edwardian Illustration: Reprinted Pieces from "The Book-Lover's Magazine"* (London: Imaginative Book Illustration Society, 2005), 10.

7. This term recurs throughout early criticism: see, for example, "Reviews," *The Art-Journal* (1857): 231.

8. Forrest Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties* (London: Constable, 1928; repr. [as *Illustrators of the Eighteen Sixties*], New York: Dover, 1975), identifies this feature throughout his readings of illustrators of the sixties; his approach to the period is analyzed in Allan Roy Life's "'Poetic Naturalism': Forrest Reid and the Illustrators of the Sixties," *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* 10, no. 2 (1977): 47–68.

9. Walter Crane, *Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1901; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 152.

10. Gleeson White, *English Illustration: The Sixties, 1855–70* (London: Constable, 1897; repr., Bath: Kingsmead, 1970), 105.

11. G. S. Layard, *Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators* (London: Elliot Stock, 1894); Julia Thomas, "'Always Another Poem': Victorian Illustrations of Tennyson," in *Tennyson Transformed: Alfred Lord Tennyson and Visual Culture,* ed. Jim Cheshire (Farnham: Lund Humphries), 20–31; Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011); Kooistra, "The Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event: 1857, Wood-Engraving, and Visual Culture," *Branch* (January 2013), http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=lorraine-janzen-kooistra-the-moxon-tennyson-as-textual-event-1857-wood-engraving-and-visual-culture.

12. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

13. D. M. R. Bentley, "'Allegoriz[ing] on One's Own Hook': Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Illustrations in Moxon's Tennyson," *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 27 (Spring 2018): 23.

14. Henry Vizetelly, *Glances Back through Seventy Years,* 2 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1892), 1:127.

15. Details of all of the contributors are given in appendix 2.

16. Kathryn Moore Heleniak, *William Mulready* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 253.

17. Review of *Poems*, by Alfred Tennyson, *The Examiner* (July 4, 1857): 421.

18. Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties,* 43.

19. Alfred Tennyson, *Some Poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London: Freemantle, 1901), xxiii.

20. Layard, *Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators,* 8.

21. Georgina Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones,* 2 vols. in 1 (London: Macmillan, 1896), 157.

22. Jack T. Harris, "The Pre-Raphaelites and the Moxon Tennyson," *Pre-Raphaelite Journal* 3, no. 2 (May 1988): 26.

23. Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Christina Rossetti and Illustration* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 60–61.

24. Rodney Engen, *Pre-Raphaelite Prints* (London: Lund Humphries, 1995), 96.

25. Muir, *Victorian Illustrated,* 131.

26. Hardie, "Moxon Tennyson," 10–11.

27. George Du Maurier, "The Illustrating of Books from the Serious Artist's Point of View," *Magazine of Art* (1890): 351.

28. William Emory Smyser, "Romanticism in Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators," *The North American Review* 192 (October 1916): 505.

29. Richard L. Stein, "The Pre-Raphaelite Tennyson," *Victorian Studies* 24, no. 3 (Spring 1981): 278–301; William Vaughan, "Incongruous Disciples: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Moxon Tennyson," in *Imagination on a Long Rein: English Literature Illustrated,* ed. Joachim Möller (Marburg: Jonas, 1988), 148–60; Becky Wingard Lewis, "A Conflict of Intentions: Tennyson versus Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators," in *Collecting the Pre-Raphaelites: The Anglo-American Enchantment,* ed. Margaretta Frederick Watson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 175–84; Gregory Suriano, *The Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2000), 35–36.

In addition to those mentioned earlier, other commentaries include Albert B. Friedman, "The Tennyson of 1857," *More Books* 23 (January 1948): 15–22; Eirene Owen, "The Golden Age of Book Illustration," *The Sphere* (November 1950): 38–39, 51–56; Joel M. Hoffman, "What Is Pre-Raphaelitism, Really? In Pursuit of Identity through *The Germ* and the Moxon Tennyson," in *Pocket Cathedrals,* ed. Susan P. Casteras (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1991), 43–54; Simon Cooke, "The Pre-Raphaelites as Illustrators: Rossetti, Millais, Holman Hunt and the 'Moxon Tennyson,'" *Review of the Pre-Raphaelite Society* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 29–39; Cooke, "The *Other* 'Moxon Tennyson,'" *Studies in Illustration* 49 (Winter 2011): 5–14.

30. George Du Maurier, "True Humility, or The Curate's Egg," *Punch* 108 (November 9, 1895): 222.

31. Vaughan, "Incongruous Disciples," 152.

32. William Sharp, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study* (London: Macmillan, 1882), 108.

33. Laurence Housman, *Arthur Boyd Houghton* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1896), 13.

34. Du Maurier, "Illustrating," 374.

35. [Dante Gabriel Rossetti], *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham,* ed. George Birkbeck Hill (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897), 97.

36. [Dante Gabriel Rossetti], *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters; With a Memoir by William Michael Rossetti,* 2 vols. (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895), 2, 189.

37. Review of *Poems,* by Alfred Tennyson, *British Quarterly Review* 27 (January–April 1858): 274.

38. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly Review,* 275; review of *Poems, Examiner,* 421.

39. "Literature," *London Daily News,* August 6, 1857, 2.

40. "Literature," *London Daily News,* 2.

41. Review of "*Poems,*" *British Quarterly Review,* 275.

42. [Samuel Lucas], "Illustrated Books," *The Times,* December 24, 1858, 10.

43. "Reviews," *The Art-Journal* (1857): 231.

44. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly Review,* 276.

45. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly Review,* 276.

46. "Furniture Books," *Fraser's Magazine* 59 (January–June 1859): 98.

47. Hardie, "Moxon Tennyson," 11.

48. Stein, "Pre-Raphaelite Tennyson," 298.

49. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly Review,* 274.

50. Cooke, "*Other* 'Moxon Tennyson,'" 12.

51. W. M. Rossetti, in [D. G. Rossetti], *Family-Letters,* 2:189.

52. Julia Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 57.

53. There is a preliminary contract document drawn up between Moxon and Tennyson which indicates that he will be responsible for organizing procurement of the illustrations, but it does not specify a responsibility to direct the artists' responses. Tennyson Research Centre, Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln. See Harold G. Merriam, *Edward Moxon: Publisher of Poets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 183.

54. "Our Library Talk," *The Athenaeum* 1544 (May 30, 1857): 693.

55. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

## CHAPTER 1

1. George Dalziel and Edward Dalziel, *The Brothers Dalziel: A Record of Fifty Years' Work* (London: Methuen, 1901), 83; Engen, *Pre-Raphaelite Prints,* 85–115; Geoffrey Wakeman, *Victorian Book Illustration: The Technical Revolution* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), 70–73; Vaughan, "Incongruous Disciples," 148–60; Eric de Maré, *The Victorian Woodblock Illustrators* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1980), 7; Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

2. Jim Cheshire, *Tennyson and Mid-Victorian Publishing: Moxon, Poetry, Commerce* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 63–100; Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing;* Suriano, *Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators,* 35–36; Paul Goldman, *Victorian Illustration* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996; new ed., London: Lund Humphries, 2004), 1–50; Goldman, *Victorian Illustrated Books* (London: British Museum, 2004), 77–79; Hoffman, "What Is Pre-Raphaelitism, Really?"

3. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

4. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

5. Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians,* 3–12.

6. John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 1, vol. 3 of *The Works of John Ruskin,* ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903), 87.

7. This term recurs throughout Victorian art criticism and is used interchangeably in fiction as a synonym for "emblem" or "symbol"; see for example, chapter 10 of Dickens's *Bleak House* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1853), 79–88.

8. This terminology is commonplace in contemporary reviews of each of these writers and is part of a distinct tradition of assessing works of literature in pictorial terms.

9. John Buchanan-Brown, *Early Victorian Illustrated Books: Britain, France and Germany, 1820–1860* (London: British Library, 2005), 17.

10. For discussion of this idea see Simon Cooke, "Illustrated Gift Books of the 1860s," *Private Library,* 5th ser., 6, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 118–38; Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event"; Kooistra, "Poetry in the Victorian Marketplace," *Victorian Poetry* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 49–76.

11. Dalziel and Dalziel, *Record,* 30.

12. Edward Moxon (1801–58) has been the subject of a number of studies. Jim Cheshire's recent account, *Tennyson and Mid-Victorian Publishing,* explores his relationship with the poet in detail. The earliest account is Harold G. Merriam's *Edward Moxon: Publisher of Poets* (1939). Merriam provides a detailed analysis of the troubled dealings relating to the Moxon Tennyson (181–87); June Steffensen Hagen traces the same ground in *Tennyson and His Publishers* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 100–111; see also Henry Curwen, *A History of Booksellers: The Old and the New* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 350–52.

13. Hagen, *Tennyson and His Publishers,* 105.

14. Layard, *Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators,* 4–5.

15. Joseph Pennell, preface to A. Tennyson, *Some Poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson,* x.

16. The complexity of mid-Victorian readerships is the subject of considerable analysis. A useful introduction is provided by Alan Sinfield's account of "The Laureate in the Market Place," in *Alfred Tennyson* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 155–85. Kooistra also explores aspects of Tennyson's audience in "Poetry in the Victorian Marketplace" and throughout her "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

17. Holman Hunt, introduction to A. Tennyson, *Some Poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson,* xx.

18. Ford Madox Brown, *The Diary of Ford Madox Brown,* ed. Virginia Surtees (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 172.

19. [D. G. Rossetti], *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham,* 97.

20. William Michael Rossetti, ed., *Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelitism: Papers, 1854 to 1862* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1899), 34.

21. [Alfred Tennyson], *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson,* ed. Cecil Y. Lang, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987), 1:89.

22. See introduction, n. 54.

23. For an interesting discussion of the French vignette tradition, see Ségolène Le Men, "Book Illustration," in *Artistic Relations: Literature and the Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century France,* ed. Peter Collier (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 94–100.

24. Merriam, *Edward Moxon,* 183.

25. [D. G. Rossetti], *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham,* 97.

26. [A. Tennyson], *Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson,* 1:89.

27. Hagen, *Tennyson and His Publishers,* 106.

28. Merriam, *Edward Moxon,* 185.

29. Merriam, *Edward Moxon,* 185.

30. Simon Cooke, "Notable Books: *The Poets of the Nineteenth Century,*" *Private Library,* 6th ser., 8, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 42.

31. "Gossip: Literary and Artistic," *The Shrewsbury Chronicle,* June 20, 1855, 3.

32. N. N. Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 8.

33. Feltes, *Modes of Production,* 3–12.

34. Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son,* 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1897), 1:43.

35. Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians,* 54.

36. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

37. Amy Woolner, *Thomas Woolner, R.A., Sculptor and Poet: His Life in Letters* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1917), 108.

38. William Michael Rossetti, *D G Rossetti as a Designer and Writer*, 2 vols. (London: Cassell, 1889), 1:28.

39. Simon Cooke, "Notable Books: The *Dalziels' Bible Gallery,*" *Private Library,* 5th ser., 10, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 61–66.

40. William James Linton, *Memories* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1895), 128.

41. Merriam, *Edward Moxon,* 89.

42. For interesting discussion of the role of advertising in the Victorian book trade, see Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

43. See, for example, *The Athenaeum* 1537 (April 11, 1857): 458 and (April 18): 490; and the *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser,* July 11, 1856; *The Morning Post, The Cornish Telegraph,* the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph,* and the *Hertford Mercury and Reformer* all carried advertisements in this period.

44. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

45. Walter Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences* (London: Methuen, 1907), 60.

46. Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing.*

47. Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties,* 41.

48. "A Statement of Facts Respecting the Illustrated Edition of My Poems, 31 November 1858," in [A. Tennyson], *Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson,* 1:210.

49. [D. G. Rossetti], *Family-Letters,* 1:189.

50. Dalziel and Dalziel, *Record,* 30.

51. "Illustrated Books," *The Evening Mail,* December 24, 1858, 8.

52. Information taken from the microfilm of the *Archive of George Routledge and Co.*, 1853–1902 (Bishop's Stortford: Chadwyck Healey, 1973).

53. Albert Henry Warren (1830–1911) was a versatile designer. Warren's life and art are yet to be the subject of a detailed monograph, but further details of the his book cover designs can be found in Edmund King's *Victorian Decorated Trade Bindings, 1830–1880* (London: British Library, 2003), 257–64; see also Douglas Ball, *Victorian Publishers' Bindings* (London: Library Association, 1985), 162–66.

54. Routledge's attempts to make the illustrations appeal to as wide an audience as possible are matched by his manipulation of the book's cover. Using the binding as packaging, he issued the edition in a series of liveries. The remaindered copy (1858–59) was bound in a casing designed by Warren, and the same binding, with different lettering for the title, followed soon after; it was also issued in ornamental morocco. The last of these, of which a number have survived, was probably intended as an even more luxurious issue than the one with a cloth casing, and was sold at the price of 47 shillings rather than a guinea and a half (31 shillings and sixpence). See "Books for Presents," *The Athenaeum* 1573 (December 19, 1857): 1595. Later editions issued by Routledge were sold at 21 shillings for the cloth and 33 shillings for the morocco, as specified in advertisements in *The Athenaeum* for 1862. It had another refit in 1864, this time in a rather undistinguished, generic gift-book casing by an unknown designer, with Woolner's medallion frontispiece replaced by an anonymous steel engraving of Tennyson in middle age. There may have been others; part of Routledge's business strategy was to freshen up his products by changing their external appearance, passing them off as new imprints even when they were out of date. Numerous other copies have survived in leather boards in diverse styles, often quite extravagantly blocked in gold; these are rebinds undertaken by owners once the original packaging came apart. The variety of these new liveries suggests how much the book was treasured.

I am indebted to Leonard Roberts and Graham Dry for information and advice on this aspect of the book's history, but much remains uncertain; more detailed research, outside my present scope, is needed.

55. Wilkie Collins, *Basil* (1852; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 61.

56. "Furniture Books."

57. For discussion of this issue, see Maroussia Oakley, "Thomas Bolton and Photographic Transfer," *Print Quarterly* 36 (2009): 278–79.

58. Photographs of several of the Pre-Raphaelite illustrations have survived before cutting; for example, Holman Hunt published photographs of his preparatory sketches in *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,* 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1905), 2:98–103, 107.

59. The named engravers were of course the supervisors of the work. The cutting itself was done by mainly anonymous, highly skilled workers who toiled to produce images using this most arduous of techniques, a matter of cutting with the utmost precision into the extremely hard surface of boxwood. Work was labor intensive; in some cases, parts of an image were divided into two or more parts, shared among the technicians and bolted together once the engraving was completed. For example, "The Weeping Queens" by Rossetti (fig. I.3) was cut in two sections (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) and engraved by at least two hands.

To meet deadlines, the "wood-peckers" may have worked into the night, toiling under gas or magnified table lamps. Errors were surprisingly few, though some engravings failed and had to be redone. The complexities of this process, especially as they concern the anonymity of the engravers, are explored in detail by Bethan Stevens in

"Wood Engraving as Ghostwriting: The Dalziel Brothers, Losing One's Name, and Other Hazards of the Trade," *Textual Practice* 33, no. 4 (2019): 645–77.

60. A. Tennyson, *Some Poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson,* 1901. As noted earlier, this edition only reprints the Pre-Raphaelite designs.

61. Letter from Millais to the Dalziels, November 30, 1856, reproduced in Jan Marsh, "Hoping You Will Not Think Me Too Fastidious: Pre-Raphaelite Artists and the Moxon *Tennyson,*" *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 2 (1989): 12.

62. Dalziel and Dalziel, *Record,* 86.

63. Mary Lago, ed., *Burne-Jones Talking: His Conversations, 1895–1898, Preserved by His Studio Assistant Thomas Rooke* (London: John Murray, 1981), 78.

64. This dense composition, painted in water and bodycolor, is a bizarre assembly of detailed and apparently unrelated objects: a range that extends from the tiny bells played by angels who stand in a recess, to the brushes positioned on a chair, the tiny, modern-looking scissors with which the princess cuts some of her own hair, and the dragon's head, drawn up in what appears to be a commonplace box.

65. Lago, *Burne-Jones Talking,* 79.

66. Dalziel and Dalziel, *Record,* note 86.

67. Marsh, "Hoping You Will Not Think," 13–15.

68. Marsh, "Hoping You Will Not Think," 16.

69. W. M. Rossetti, *D G Rossetti as a Designer and Writer,* 29.

70. Lago, *Burne-Jones Talking*, 79.

71. W. M. Rossetti, *D G Rossetti as a Designer and Writer,* 29.

72. Quoted in Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties,* 41.

73. The transmission of Rossetti's designs from preliminary drawings to printed engravings is in itself a rich and complicated field of study. Preparatory studies of "The Weeping Queens," "The Lady of Shalott," "St Cecilia," and two of "Mariana in the South" are held by Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG), UK; proofs for "St Cecilia," with obsessive annotations, two proofs for "The Weeping Queens," and a touched proof of "St Galahad" are held in the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK; and another proof of "St Galahad," again with detailed notes for improvement, is held in the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington. Some aspects of the journey from drawing to print are considered by Colin Cruise in *Pre-Raphaelite Drawing* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011), 149–54.

74. W. M. Rossetti, *D G Rossetti as a Designer and Writer,* 28–29.

75. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

76. I am again grateful to Leonard Roberts for advice on this aspect of the book's production.

77. Charles Tomlinson, *Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts,* 2 vols. (London: Virtue, 1854), 1:159.

78. Tomlinson, *Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts,* 1:159.

79. *Chambers's Encyclopaedia,* 10 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1871–72), 2:226.

80. Tomlinson, *Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts,* 1:159.

81. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

82. Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians.*

83. Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing*.

84. Stanfield painted numerous versions of Mont St. Michel in the early 1830s, taken from varying viewpoints; see, for example, versions in the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia and another in the collection of the National Trust, United Kingdom. However, the painting engraved by Heath is apparently untraced.

85. Creswick painted several versions of this picturesque subject and produced numerous Welsh landscapes. One version of *Dolbadarn* was engraved as a fine print in 1840 (National Library of Wales).

86. The relationship between the engraved and painted versions is considered in more detail in chapter 4.

87. The interchangeability of painting and illustration is discussed at length by Thomas in *Pictorial Victorians,* 1–20, and explored by Kooistra throughout *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing.*

88. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

89. Detailed in the *Catalogue of the Art Treasures of the UK Collected at Manchester, 1857* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1857).

## CHAPTER 2

1. The extent of Tennyson's interest in visual art has been debated in some detail. It was commonplace at the time of publication to describe him as a "painter's poet," but according to William Michael Rossetti his understandings were limited: "he had not any particular insight into matters of pictorial art. . . . I did not observe him to be at all a 'connoisseur'" (in [D. G. Rossetti], *Family-Letters,* 1:190). His response to the Moxon Tennyson was generally negative, and he always regarded visual art as secondary to poetry. His reaction to the book is explored in more detail in chapter 6.

2. William Allingham, *A Diary* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 331.

3. Leonée Ormond, "Tennyson and the Artists," in Cheshire, *Tennyson Transformed,* 42–61. For an earlier account, see John Dixon Hunt, "'Story Painters and Picture Writers': Tennyson's *Idylls* and Victorian Painting," in *Tennyson,* ed. D. J. Palmer, Writers and Their Background (London: G. Bell, 1973), 180–202.

4. Alfred Lyall, *Tennyson* (1914; repr., New York: Haskell, 1977), 17.

5. Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing.*

6. Le Men, "Book Illustration," 103.

7. Kooistra, *Christina Rossetti,* 60.

8. Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson,* 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 292, 281.

9. Time as a philosophical concept informs practically all of the multiplot novels of the period, with their intercutting of events, their interplay of individual perceptions of time and history, and their vast chronological span over the characters' lifetimes. New,

industrialized notions of time are also anatomized, to give just one example, in Dickens's treatment of the impact of the railways in *Dombey and Son* (1847–48), a narrative initially driven forward by Mr Dombey's impatience for Paul to grow up.

10. G. E. Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry,* trans. E. C. Beasley (London: Longman, 1853). This edition typifies the many reprints that appeared throughout the century; two earlier editions (1836 and 1853) would have been available to artists working on the Moxon Tennyson.

11. E. H. Gombrich, "Moment and Movement in Art," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964): 294.

12. Edward Hodnett, *Image and Text* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1982), 6; see also Lessing, *Laocoon,* 16–17.

13. Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians,* 5.

14. Terms used by Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surridge, "The Plot Thickens: Toward a Narratological Analysis of Illustrated Serial Fiction of the 1860s," *Victorian Studies* 51 (2008): 65–102. Though concerned with illustrated fiction, Leighton and Surridge provide a methodology that is also applicable to the illustration of narrative poetry. The authors' ideas are developed at greater length in their provocative full-length study *The Plot Thickens: Serial Fiction from Dickens to Du Maurier* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2018).

15. It would be tedious to note how many times contemporaries either dismiss the artist or say as little as they can about him, and a couple of examples suffice: "Literature," *The London Daily News*; [George Meredith], "Belles Lettres and Art," *The Westminster Review* 68 (July–October 1857): 335.

16. Ricks, *Tennyson,* 131.

17. "Literature," *London Daily News,* 2.

18. Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties,* 39.

19. Stein, "Pre-Raphaelite Tennyson," 280.

20. For interesting discussion of Wordsworth and the Romantic epiphany in *The Prelude,* see Jonathan Bishop, "Wordsworth and the 'Spots of Time,'" *English Literary History* 26, no. 1 (March 1959): 4–65.

21. Steve Dillon, "Illustrations of Time: Watches, Dials, and Clocks in Victorian Pictures," in *The Victorian Illustrated Book,* ed. Richard Maxell (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 69.

22. Dillon, "Illustrations of Time," 69. Dillon links his analysis to Rossetti's proclamation that "A Sonnet is a Moment's Monument" in *The House of Life* (1881).

23. This painting is illuminated with the eye-jolting brightness that characterized first-stage Pre-Raphaelitism; the costumes have a metallic, enamel-like hardness, and each nuance of detail, from strands of grass to the texture of the rickety wood construction, is minutely specified in strafing light, which accentuates the painful immediacy of events as they are perceived.

24. Millais's image anticipates his later manner, focusing on mood rather than the particularization of phenomena. The nun's unsettling outward gaze at the spectator

stresses the notion of darkness and reflectivity, inviting the viewer to partake in the atmosphere of the moment. For interesting discussion of this work, see Jason Rosenfeld, "Aestheticism," in *Millais,* by Jason Rosenfeld and Alison Smith (London: Tate, 2007), 138–39.

25. Reproduced in *Alfred, Lord Tennyson,* ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase, 2010), 147.

26. John Ruskin, *Lectures on Landscape,* vol. 22 of *The Works of John Ruskin,* ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1906), 14.

27. Ruskin, *Lectures on Landscape,* 1:12.

28. John D. Rosenberg, *The Fall of Camelot: A Study of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 69, 77.

29. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly Review,* 275.

30. "Alfred Tennyson" (1844), in *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage,* ed. John D. Jump (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 159.

31. "Clarkson Stanfield: Obituary," *Once a Week,* n.s., 3 (June 1867): 677.

32. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG). These sketches are discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

33. Alison Smith, "Poetic Image: The Art of John Everett Millais," in Rosenfeld and Smith, *Millais,* 19.

34. [Meredith], "Belles Lettres," 335.

## CHAPTER 3

1. For non-British readers the nomenclature of the United Kingdom has always been problematic. The "United Kingdom" was a political union developed over centuries (1707, 1800), and although this term was interchangeably used with "Great Britain" in the nineteenth century, "England" was also used to mean the British mainland as a whole. Tennyson was never described as a *British* poet in his own time, and the assumption was that he spoke very specifically for Anglo-Saxon culture rather than the cultures of Wales (Celtic) or Scotland (Celtic, a mixture of Nordic cultures). Nevertheless, his poetry was avidly read throughout the kingdom in a way that paralleled the huge popularity of Walter Scott, whose novels and verse promoted a notion of Scotland but was essential reading for all literate Britons.

2. This poem was not included in the *Poems,* although it is featured in *Gems from Tennyson,* an American imprint published in Boston by Ticknor and Fields in 1866 with selections for the Moxon Tennyson. The poem is illustrated in the Ticknor edition by Winslow Homer (148).

3. Marion Sherwood, *Tennyson and the Fabrication of Englishness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

4. Both texts were reprinted throughout the nineteenth century; Tennyson was very familiar with Shakespeare and had some familiarity with Spenser. For commentary on Tennyson and Shakespeare and his borrowing of *Mariana* from *Measure for Measure,* see Ricks, *Tennyson,* 46.

5. The medallion is reproduced as a steel-plate engraving cut by H. Robinson. Though rarely noticed in relation to the book, it is an essential part of its impromptu visual scheme.

Woolner later produced a full-scale bust of Tennyson (1873, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide), from which a number of bronze casts were taken (one survives in the National Portrait Gallery, London).

6. The eleventh-century Lady Godiva relieved the subjects of Coventry of a new tax her husband Earl Leofric was going to impose on them. She did this by sacrificing herself in the form of riding naked through the streets, though the citizens expressed their trust by not looking at her. Only Peeping Tom stole a glance, and was supposedly struck blind as a punishment. The origins of this strange voyeuristic tale are obscure: no doubt it is possible to analyze the folklore in Freudian terms as a "castration dream."

7. Christopher Wood, *Paradise Lost* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1988), 7–10.

8. Sherwood, *Tennyson and the Fabrication of Englishness*.

9. Constable's most characteristic landscapes were painted 1800–1815, as bold assertions of the character of English ruralism and English country life at a time when invasion from France seemed imminent and "Englishness" could have been destroyed by a foreign power. Though his paintings include some traces of industrialization, Constable's idea of English culture is essentially a matter of bucolic escapism; it still has currency today.

10. The notion of English "manners and customs" was travestied by Richard Doyle in his mock-medieval *Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1849). George Cruikshank's vast catalogue is likewise an intense, grotesque reflection on the behavior of early and mid-Victorian Britons.

11. *The Last In* (1834–35) typifies Mulready's ironic humor as a schoolteacher sarcastically doffs his hand to welcome a latecomer to his class.

12. Hodnett, *Five Centuries of English Book Illustration*, 134.

13. "Reviews," *The Art-Journal* (1857): 231.

14. John Batchelor, *Tennyson: To Strive, to Seek, to Find* (London: Vintage Books, 2014), 240.

15. Jean-Michel Ganteau, "Mongrelization and Assimilation: Peter Ackroyd and the Persistence of Englishness as Hybridity," in *Hybridity: Forms and Figures in Literature and the Visual Arts,* ed. Vanessa Guignery, Catherine Pesso-Miquel, and François Specq (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), 54.

16. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

17. William Gaunt in *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1942), 21–24.

18. There is of course a vast literature exploring the relationships between the Pre-Raphaelitism and its contemporary contexts. Particularly useful are Stephanie Grilli's "Pre-Raphaelitism and Phrenology," in *Pre-Raphaelite Papers,* ed. Leslie Parris (London: Tate Gallery, 1984), 44–60 (phrenology); George Landow, *William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979) (the relationship

between Pre-Raphaelitism and the Victorian obsession with the Bible); and the essays on the Pre-Raphaelites and contemporary notions of masculinity appearing in *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities,* ed. Amelia Yeates and Serena Trowbridge (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). This volume is particularly interesting in its emphasis on the relationship between gender and psychology. The relationship between Pre-Raphaelitism and scientific empiricism is explored in J. Holmes, "Pre-Raphaelitism, Science and the Arts in *The Germ,*" *Victorian Literature and Culture* 43, no. 4 (2015): 689–703.

19. Paul Barlow, *Time Present and Time Past: The Art of John Everett Millais* (London: Routledge, 2016), 19, 193.

20. Millais's two paintings exemplify his focus on contemporary life. *The Blind Girl* is a representation of two destitute characters, presumably sisters. In one sense the work is a straightforward piece of social observation, intended to pluck at the heartstrings of middle-class viewers; however, Millais infuses the work with a metaphysical dimension, contrasting the intensely detailed landscape, with its livid colors, with the girl's blindness. *The Rescue* is a celebration of heroism as a fireman is shown rescuing two children and presenting them to their mother against the background of a burning house. It too is unexpectedly nuanced, this time with a sense of the nobility of the working man and the interdependence of the classes.

21. Information for this section is taken mainly from Joan Nunn's *Fashion in Costume, 1200–2000* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2000). See also the wide-ranging information on the Victorian Web, http://victorianweb.org/art/costume/index.html.

22. Developed in France, cartes-de-visite photographs were essentially calling cards displaying an image of the person. Vast numbers were printed for private consumers from the mid-fifties onwards; usually albumen prints, they enshrine the changing fashions of the nineteenth century and are an invaluable source of information.

23. "Millais' *Parables,*" *The New Path* 1, no. 1 (March 1864): 149.

24. See Joan Nunn, "Victorian Men's Fashions, 1850–1900: Hair," Victorian Web.

25. Simon Cooke, "John Everett Millais as an Illustrator—Significant Gesture, Expressive Line, and Emblematic Detail," Victorian Web, www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/millais/cooke.html; Vaughan, "Incongruous Disciples," 153.

26. Golden, *Serials to Graphic Novels,* 50–91.

27. I am indebted to George Landow for reminding me of the theatricality of this illustration in an email of September 20, 2018.

28. Adam Kendon, *Visible Action and Utterance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15, 2.

29. H. Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson,* 1:380.

30. Allan Roy Life, "Art and Poetry: A Study of the Illustrations of Two Pre-Raphaelite Artists, William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1974), 286.

31. *The Order of Release* is again a complex composition in which gesture and looking connote the emotional content. It shows a Jacobite Highlander soldier being released from prison following the uprising of 1745. The narrative is efficiently shown as the wife

hands over the paper, but more significant is the tender gesture in which the husband lays his head on his wife's shoulder; as in Millais's illustrations for "Locksley Hall" (fig. 3.8) and "Edward Gray" (fig. 3.10), his face is not shown. The dense interlacing of their bodies is another version of physical togetherness connoting emotional togetherness, as in the first "Locksley" design (fig. 3.8) and the second illustration for "Dora" (fig. 3.17).

32. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly Review,* 275.

33. Paul Goldman, *John Everett Millais: Illustrator and Narrator* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2004), 12.

34. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly Review,* 275.

35. F. G. Stephens, "The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art," in *The Germ* (1850) (London: Elliot Stock, 1901; repr., Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1979), 59.

36. John Guille Millais, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais,* 2 vols. (London: Methuen, 1899), 1:288–89.

37. See Chris Brooks, *Signs for the Times: Symbolic Realism in the Mid-Victorian World* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984; repr., London: Routledge, 2017).

38. W. M. Rossetti, introduction to *The Germ,* 10.

39. W. M. Rossetti, introduction to *The Germ*, 18.

## CHAPTER 4

1. Gregory Tate, *The Poet's Mind: The Psychology of Victorian Poetry, 1830–1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23–58, 122. Other studies include David Goslee, *Tennyson's Characters: "Strange Faces, Other Minds"* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989); and Rosenberg, *Fall of Camelot,* a study of key aspects of Tennyson's psychological writing in *Idylls of the King.*

2. W. J. Fox, review of *Poems Chiefly Lyrical,* by Alfred Tennyson, *Westminster Review* 14 (January 1831): 210–24; in *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage,* ed. John D. Jump (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 21–33.

3. Quoted in Tate, *Poet's Mind,* 122.

4. The term is used carefully, since definitions of insanity in the Victorian period were heavily gendered: men were afflicted by one sort of madness, women by another. These differences, embodied in writings of theoreticians such as Henry Maudsley, have been the subject of a vast critical literature which explores female psychology; the starting point is of course Susan Gubar and Sandra M. Gilbert's classic study of representations of female mental illness in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); another, more rooted in science, is Sally Shuttleworth's *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

5. See, for example, Abigail Joseph, "Impressions of Weird Fate: Revision and Crisis in 'The Lady of Shalott,'" *Journal of Victorian Culture* 22 (June 2017): 183–203.

6. Stein, "Pre-Raphaelite Tennyson," 282.

7. Life, "Art and Poetry."

8. Fox, review of *Poems Chiefly Lyrical,* 26.

9. For discussion of Oliphant's tale, see Simon Cooke, "Margaret Oliphant's 'The Library Window' and the Idea of Adolescent Insanity," *Victorians Institute Journal* 34 (2006): 243–49.

10. Smyser, "Romanticism in Tennyson," 514.

11. Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing*.

12. The authoritative study of the Pre-Raphaelites' manipulation of typographical codes is George Landow's *William Holman Hunt and Typographical Symbolism.*

13. Engen, *Pre-Raphaelite Prints,* 100; Life, "Art and Poetry," 232–34.

14. *The Shadow of Death* nominally shows Christ stretching in the sun. However, the details of the naturalist scene doubly connote, in the manner of symbolic realism, as temporal signs. Though a highly optimistic sign of new life and greeting the day, his gesture prefigures his pose on the cross; the sharp-looking chisels in the background also anticipate the nails of crucifixion. On the other hand, some signs reach backward: the star-shaped light signals the star followed by the Magi, and opening a chest Mary rediscovers the kings' gifts.

Famously championed by Ruskin in *The Times, The Awakening Conscience* is constructed as a complicated text in which each item is a realistic emblem. The bird mauled by the cat symbolizes the lover's treatment of the woman, and Ruskin saw degeneracy in the very shininess of the veneered furniture. Often overlooked is the fallen glove—a sign of moral degeneracy. One of the key Pre-Raphaelite paintings, the composition has been endlessly analyzed.

15. There are no instances of Anglo-Norman decorative sculpture appearing in the period before 1066; Leofric and Godiva ruled Mercia from 1032 to his death in 1057. However, in the Victorian age it was commonplace to confuse the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, with the two being intermingled. The more modern term "Romanesque" is a more useful as a type of labeling. There are many examples of historical anachronism in Victorian illustration.

16. Life, "Art and Poetry," 232.

17. W. M. Rossetti, introduction to *The Germ,* 18.

18. Holman Hunt's idealized beauty curiously prefigures Rossetti's half- and full-length portraits, abstracted images based on Jane Morris. These appeared at the end of the sixties and continued until the end of his life in 1882; *Proserpine* (1874. Tate Britain) and *The Day Dream* (1880, Victoria and Albert Museum, London) are typical examples. Hunt experimented with other physical types before he arrived at the woman with flowing, crimped hair shown in the final design.

19. Stein, "Pre-Raphaelite Tennyson," 294.

20. For images of preparatory drawings, see Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,* 2:99–100. For consideration of the development of the image, see Alison Inglis and Cecilia O'Brien, "'The Breaking of the Web': William Holman Hunt's Two Early Versions of *The Lady of Shalott,*" *Art Bulletin of Victoria* 32 (1992): 32–50.

21. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly,* 276.

22. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,* 2:124–25.

23. Millais also used these drawings to experiment with posture and positioning. One sketch, perhaps the first in the series, shows the character apparently groping her way up the steep spiral (1906P662); another has Agnes leaning out of the window (1906P596); and the final one shows her sitting on the stairs (1906P595). In each of these the heroine's state of mind is subtly different: sitting on the stairs seems too casual, for example, while peering out of the casement diffuses the sense of anticipation. Millais's final, published design is a clear improvement on all three, maintaining the psychological tension while suggesting an inexorable upward movement.

24. Barlow, *Time Present,* 24.

25. This is a familiar Freudian trope: "Rooms in dreams are usually women (Frauenzimmer)." Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams,* Pelican Freud Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 4:471.

26. Barlow, *Time Present,* 24.

27. Burne-Jones, *Memorials,* 157.

28. Freud's division into the "latent" and "manifest" content, essentially a division between signifiers and signified, is elaborated in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and developed throughout his case studies.

29. Life, "Art and Poetry," 187.

30. Brooks, *Signs for the Times.* Used throughout the book, Brooks's neologisms usefully give the sense of Pre-Raphaelite (over)particularization, the cloying specificity and obsessive minuteness so often noted by contemporaries.

31. Life, "Art and Poetry," 11.

32. As noted earlier in this study, Rossetti's medievalist watercolors of the middle period are closely linked to the Moxon series; essentially, they come from the same image hoard. The painted and engraved compositions are interchangeable, especially, in terms of their use of space, private symbolism, quaint details, and figure drawing, in each case embodying a sort of reflective melancholy. The illustration of "Sir Galahad" is most closely linked to the watercolor *How Sir Galahad, Sir Bors, and Sir Percival Were Fed with the Sanc Grael; but Sir Percival's Sister Died by the Way* (1864, Tate Britain, London); *The Tune of Seven Towers* (1857, Tate Britain), *The Blue Closet* (1857, Tate Britain); and *The Wedding of St George and the Princess Sabra* (1857, Tate Britain) are part of the same group. As indicated by the date (1857), Rossetti was working on three of these compositions in the same period (1855–57) as he was illustrating the *Poems.*

33. "Literature," *London Daily News,* 2.

34. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly,* 274.

35. W. M. Rossetti, in [D. G. Rossetti], *Family-Letters,* 1:189–90.

36. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly,* 276–77.

37. Layard, *Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators,* 58.

38. Harold Nicolson, *Tennyson* (London: Constable, 1923), 176.

39. Martin Meisel, "'Half Sick of Shadows': The Aesthetic Dialogue in Pre-Raphaelite Painting," in *Nature and the Victorian Imagination,* ed. U. C. Knoepflmacher and G. B. Tennyson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 338–40.

40. The implications of this concept are far-reaching and complex. See L. Dällenbach, *Le récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abyme* (Paris: Seuil, 1977).

41. Housman, *Arthur Boyd Houghton,* 13.

42. Meisel, "'Half Sick of Shadows,'" 339.

43. Meisel, 340.

44. *Beata Beatrix* (Tate Britain) nominally depicts Beatrice's spiritual transition from earth to heaven. Shown seated rather than kneeling, *Beatrix* is nevertheless little more than a version of "St Cecily" with the main figure reversed; the shimmering golden light of the painting is of course radically different from the engraving's hard outlines. Both images are portraits of Elizabeth Siddal, combining long hair and closed eyes with a pronounced jawline that suggests androgyny. *Beata Beatrix* is usually read as a sort of memento mori, commemorating Lizzie (who died in 1862) by remembering her in an intimate moment. But is it poetic grieving, or is it pornographic? The printed version, embodied in "St Cecily," was endlessly reproduced, and the notion of the painting's intimacy is undermined by Rossetti's production of a series of poor duplicates. A botched version, completed by Ford Madox Brown, is in Birmingham City Art Gallery, United Kingdom.

45. Sharp, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti,* 110.

46. Nicolson, *Tennyson,* 176.

47. There are two other versions of preliminary drawings, neither of which shows the "munching," only kissing (Bancroft Collection, Delaware Art Gallery, Birmingham Museums and Art Galleries).

48. [Meredith], "Belles Lettres," 324.

## CHAPTER 5

1. The phrases are taken from Coventry Patmore's hymn to female submissiveness, *The Angel in the House* (London: Parker, 1854), and from Dickens's *Little Dorrit,* where the term is applied to Bella Wilfer. For discussion of Dickens's writing of passive femininity, see Michael Slater's *Dickens and Women* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), especially 283–84.

2. Tennyson, *The Poetical Works* (London: King, 1875). 4:110–11.

3. Quoted in Anna Barton, *Tennyson's Name: Identity and Responsibility in the Poetry of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

4. See Clinton Machann, *Masculinity in Four Victorian Epics: A Darwinist Reading* (London: Routledge, 2016). See especially chapter 2 on Tennyson's "Manly Codes of Behaviour," 31–56.

5. Marion Shaw, *Alfred Lord Tennyson* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), 6–7.

6. Rebecca Stott, introduction to *Tennyson,* ed. Rebecca Stott (London: Longman, 1996).

7. Quoted in Barton, *Tennyson's Name.*

8. Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

9. Ricks, *Tennyson,* 48.

10. Carol Jacobi, "Sugar, Salt and Curdled Milk: Millais and the Synthetic Subject," *Tate Papers* 18, https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/18/sugar-salt-and-curdled-milk-millais-and-the-synthetic-subject.

11. Jacobi, "Sugar, Salt and Curdled Milk."

12. Simon Cooke, "Interpreting Masculinity: Pre-Raphaelite Illustration and the Works of Tennyson, Christina Rossetti and Trollope," in Yeates and Trowbridge, *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities*, 127–50.

13. [Meredith], "Belles Lettres," 335.

14. Smyser, "Romanticism in Tennyson," 512.

15. The evolution of this drawing can be traced in a set of three varying postures, drawn in graphite on a single sheet, 1855–56 (BMAG, 1906P630); illustrated in Cruise, *Pre-Raphaelite Drawings,* 157.

16. Shaw, *Alfred Lord Tennyson,* 37.

17. Shaw, 56.

18. Jacobi, "Sugar, Salt and Curdled Milk."

19. *The Bridesmaid*'s sexual symbolism is further explained by Alison Smith, who notes how the "golden hair" recalls Magdalene's "extravagant tresses," the phallic sugar caster carries an erotic charge, while the orange blossom is a "traditional symbol of purity." As one of Millais's "entranced young women," the image is a powerful psychosexual emblem, visualizing the girl's repressed, perhaps fearful, thoughts (Rosenfeld and Smith, *Millais,* 58).

20. Aspects of Pre-Raphaelite inscription of male sexuality are considered at several points in the essays featured in Yeates and Trowbridge, *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities.* Especially interesting are Ingrid Hanson, "William Morris's *Sigurd the Volsung* and the Parameters of Manliness," 35–54, and Sally-Anne Huxtable, "In Praise of Venus: Victorian Masculinity and Tannhäuser as Aesthetic Hero," 169–88. See also Cooke, "Interpreting Masculinity," 138–44.

21. Engen, *Pre-Raphaelite Prints,* 101; Reid, *Illustrators of the Sixties,* 36.

22. Jacobi, "Sugar, Salt and Curdled Milk."

23. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 6–18, in *"Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, 1975,"* by Laura Mulvey and Rachel Rose (1975; London: Afterall Books, 2016). Deborah Cherry's *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists* (London: Routledge, 1993) provides valuable frameworks for this approach, especially her chapter on "Differencing the Gaze," 113–19.

24. Shaw, *Alfred Lord Tennyson,* 54.

25. George Elgar Hicks's painting is one of a series of three on the theme of woman's mission. The others are *Guide of Childhood* and *Comfort of Old Age.* The focus in each case is on women as the mainstay of men, with no identity of their own and defined by their role as carers and nurturers. *Women's Mission—Companion of Manhood* shows a bourgeois couple at home; the man has just received a letter informing him of dreadful

news and claps his hand over his eyes; his wife holds his arm comfortingly while gazing into his face.

26. Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,* 2:124–25.

27. Kooistra, "Moxon Tennyson as Textual Event."

28. [Meredith], "Belles Lettres," 335.

29. Linda Shires, "Patriarchy, Dead Men, and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King,*" in Stott, *Tennyson*, 162. For a similar reading, see Benedick Turner, "A Man's Work Must She Do: Female Manliness in Tennyson's 'Gareth and Lynette,'" *Victorian Poetry* 52, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 483–507.

30. Shaw, *Alfred Lord Tennyson,* 72–87.

31. See Cooke, "Interpreting Masculinity," 130–38. The classic study of Victorian masculinity in visual art is Joseph Kestner's *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995).

32. Samuel Smiles, *Character* (London: John Murray, 1871), 10. Smiles's earlier *Self Help* (London: John Murray, 1859) was hugely influential as a primer of "masculine behaviour," which defined manhood as part of a rigid patriarchy in which the main emphasis was on effort conducted with the famed stiff upper lip of the indomitable British male.

33. Shires, "Patriarchy, Dead Men," 162.

34. There is a vast literature of physiognomical textbooks which differentiate between male and female features. The origin of all of these is John Caspar Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (London: Tegg, 1850), 400–402. Mary Cowling's *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) explores the implications of physiognomy in the visual arts.

35. Stein, "Pre-Raphaelite Tennyson," 289.

36. Review of *Poems, British Quarterly Review,* 275.

37. Shires, "Patriarchy, Dead Men," 167.

## CHAPTER 6

1. "Literary Intelligence and Gossip," *Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science, and Art* 5 (July–December 1857): 270.

2. [Meredith], "Belles Lettres," 335.

3. Ann Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson: The Poet's Wife* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 322.

4. Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson,* 322.

5. Thwaite, 322.

6. Thwaite, 322.

7. W. M. Rossetti, in [D. G. Rossetti], *Family-Letters,* 1:190.

8. See Kooistra, "Poetry in the Victorian Marketplace," 53.

9. Letter from Ruskin to Tennyson, dated July 24, 1857, a few months after the first edition was published in May 1857; reprinted in H. Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson,* 1:420.

10. Crane, *Of the Decorative Illustration,* 152.

11. Buchanan-Brown gives numerous examples of this collaborative model throughout *Early Victorian Illustrated Books.*

12. The troubled relationships between Doyle and Thackeray and Dickens and Phiz are introduced in John Harvey's classic study *Victorian Novelists and Their Illustrators* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1970), and there is a vast literature exploring the battle for control in early and mid-Victorian illustration.

13. Du Maurier, "Illustrating of Books," 374.

14. Again, there is a vast literature exploring illustration of Scott and Turner's contribution more generally. The Romantic Illustration Network provides a bibliography of key essays, and Richard Hill provides telling analysis of Scott and the development of Romantic illustration in the novel in *Picturing Scotland through the Waverley Novels* (London: Routledge, 2010).

15. The collaborations between Trollope, Eliot, and Reade and their illustrators are considered by Simon Cooke in *Illustrated Periodicals of the 1860s,* 119–62.

16. Richard J. Hill, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Pictorial Text* (London: Routledge, 2017), 6.

17. Simon Cooke, *Illustrated Periodicals of the 1860s: Contexts and Collaborations* (Pinner: Private Libraries Association; London: British Library; Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2010), 123–36.

18. Housman, *Arthur Boyd Houghton,* 15.

19. Joseph Pennell, *Pen Drawing and Pen Draughtsmanship* (London: Macmillan, 1897), 186.

20. Golden's *Serials to Graphic Novels* implicitly reflects on the dangers of making false contrast between the alleged superficiality of the caricature style and the "poetic realism" of the Sixties. This is a distinction I overplayed in *Illustrators of the 1860s,* 19, 28.

21. Du Maurier, "Illustrating of Books," 351.

22. This curious book (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866) is an amalgam of British and American illustrators, jumbled together with little respect for quality or uniformity and fleshed out with a number of poems that do not appear in Moxon's original. Rossetti's "Sir Galahad" is reprinted (105), along with Holman Hunt's first design for "The Arabian Nights" (42), "The Lady of Shalott" (78), "Godiva" (126), and "The Beggar Maid" (134). Maclise's two Arthurian designs (32, 39), Millais's "Mariana" (18), "The Eve of St Agnes," here retitled "St. Agnes" (76), and "The Day Dream" (92) are also reprinted along with "Mulready's "The Deserted House" (132) and Stanfield's "Ulysses" (109) and "The Lotos Eaters" (140). Horsley—his reputation as an illustrator probably fatally damaged by the negative comments by British reviewers—is left out, and some of the poems are reillustrated by American artists: "The Talking Oak" (formerly illustrated by Millais) is reinterpreted by C. A. Barry (55), while Hennessy provides *four* new readings of "Locksley Hall," also Millais's in the original (1–13). Perhaps the most important and interesting new design is Winslow Homer's image for "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (148), a disturbing subject noticeably missing from the Moxon *Poems:* if Moxon always aimed for the middle ground and avoided

controversy, the American publisher, Ticknor and Fields, had no such constraints as it catered to a new audience.

Less than a quarter of the length of the massive original, *Gems* closely reflects the development of Anglo-American gift books, which ran in parallel to the British originals and combined reprinted illustrations with new ones. *Poets of the Nineteenth Century* was similarly part of this process, although in this case the book was reissued with the same title and a new introduction while combining British reprints and American originals. For discussion of this aspect of the Anglo-American publishing trade in the 1860s, see Cooke, "Notable Books: *The Poets of the Nineteenth Century*"; and Cooke, "Tennyson in America," *Studies in Illustration* 52 (Winter 2012): 7–12. Neither of the American books mentioned here is well printed: the illustrations are more lightly printed than the British ones, and the modeling is generally muddy. This lower quality suggests that the American illustrations were printed from well-worn electrotypes or copies struck from the originals.

23. Cameron's relationship to the imagery of the Moxon Tennyson is discussed throughout Michael Bartram's *The Pre-Raphaelite Camera: Aspects of Victorian Photography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, [1985]). See also Colin Ford, "'More Fair than Words Can Say': Tennyson and Julia Margaret Cameron," in Cheshire, *Tennyson Transformed,* 32–41. Aspects of the poet's and photographers' personal relationship are explored at many points in Ann Thwaite's *Emily Tennyson.*

24. Reproduced at http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/58950/julia-margaret-cameron-the-passing-of-arthur-british-1875/.

25. Bartram, *Pre-Raphaelite Camera,* 176.

26. Bartram, 167, 176.

27. London: Henry King, 1875; now a book of extreme rarity.

28. Leonée Ormond, *George Du Maurier* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 175.

29. Ormond, *George Du Maurier,* 176.

30. Lago, *Burne-Jones Talking,* 78.

## APPENDIX 1

1. Advertisement, *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser,* July 11, 1856, n.p.

2. Robert Aris Wilmott, ed., *The Poets of the Nineteenth Century* (London: George Routledge, 1857), 111.

3. Brown, *Diary,* 101.

4. Jan Marsh, *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal* (London: Quartet 1989), 184.

5. Lucinda Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal: The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel* (London: André Deutsch, 2017), 102.

6. W. M. Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelitism: Papers, 1854 to 1862* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1899), 34.

7. Lizzie Siddal's tragic status is an ongoing subject of fascination, with advocates arguing for her importance as an artist in her own right. The website LizzieSiddal.com

reproduces most of her artwork. Another strand of promotion focuses on her activities as a poet. Serena Trowbridge, ed., *My Ladys Soul* [*sic*] (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2018), is a collection of her verse with an astute commentary by the editor, who "notes a satisfying trend towards the recognition of her art" and insists her poetry deserves to be rediscovered too (12). Many of Siddal's drawings were shown at "Beyond Ophelia: A Celebration of Lizzie Siddal, Artist and Poet" at Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, UK, March 1–December 24, 2018, which owns several of her designs; others can be found in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

8. H. C. Marillier, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: George Bell, 1890), 57.

9. Marsh, *Legend of Elizabeth Siddal,* 185.

10. Marsh, 236.

11. For detailed analysis of the gendering of Victorian art production, see Paula Gillett, *The Victorian Painter's World* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1990), 133–57; and Nunn, *Victorian Women Artists.* The Victorian Web also contains extensive material on female artists.

12. Hawksley's term is gratingly anachronistic, although it does reflect attempts by modern commentators to raise Siddal's status and relate her tragic life to modern feminism. However, describing her as a "supermodel" surely has the reverse effect, reducing her to just another female body subjected to the male gaze. In Lizzie's case the viewing began in 1850 and will continue for as long as Pre-Raphaelite art exists.

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Preparatory material related to the Moxon Tennyson has been preserved in a number of institutions. Birmingham City Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG) has many of the original drawings and studies produced by Rossetti, Millais, and Holman Hunt. Several of Millais's designs are reproduced and discussed in Goldman's *John Everett Millais* (26–30), and Rossetti and Millais are considered in Cruise's *Pre-Raphaelite Drawings* (149–57). The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, has three annotated proofs by Rossetti—"St Cecilia," with elaborate instructions, and two of "The Weeping Queens"; and the Bancroft Collection in the Delaware Art Museum has a preparatory drawing for Rossetti's second illustration of "The Lady of Shalott." An annotated proof of Rossetti's "Sir Galahad at the Ruined Chapel" is held in the Lilly Library, Indiana University. The British Museum, London, has the Dalziel proofs, but the largest collection of this sort of work, assembled by the eminent English collector Harold Hartley, is held in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: this consists of work by the three Pre-Raphaelites and a proof of Maclise's "Morte d'Arthur." The work of the other academicians—Horsley, Mulready, Creswick, and Stanfield—does not appear to have survived: a situation barely surprising, given the emphasis on Pre-Raphaelitism and the discrediting of the more traditional contributors. Further details are mentioned in the notes where relevant.

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