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**John Ruskin: Prophet of the Pre-Raphaelites**

Thesis

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## **John Ruskin: Prorok preraphaelitů**

Diplomová práce

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to trace the succession of Pre-Raphaelitism on the art development in the nineteenth century, mainly on the work of its most illustrious adherent and England's most influential art critic of that time, John Ruskin. Ruskin's career spans the greater part of the nineteenth century, much of his life being inextricably mingled with the fortunes of the three founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

All three main parts of the thesis identify each of these artists as an embodiment of a particular characteristic feature of Pre-Raphaelitism. This paper examines Pre-Raphaelite painting in connection with Millais, Pre-Raphaelite use of symbolism, whose Hunt was the most eager defender and finally, union of poetry and painting, which, in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, was most distinctly expressed in Rossetti's work. This thesis endeavors to prove that John Ruskin anticipated all these elemental manifestations of the movement.

## Souhrn

Cílem této práce je vysledovat návaznost hlavních projevů Preraphaelitismu na vývoj umění v devatenáctém století, zvláště pak na práci nejvýraznějšího přívržence preraphaelitů a v té době nejvlivnějšího Anglického kritika Johna Ruskina. Jeho kariéra pokrývá většinu devatenáctého století a značná část jeho života je nerozlučitelně spojená právě s osudem Bratrstva Preraphaelitů, nejvýrazněji s jeho třemi zakládajícími členy, Johnem Everettem Millaisem, Williamem Holmanem Huntem a Dantem Gabrielem Rossettím.

Každá z hlavních částí této práce identifikuje vždy jednoho z těchto tří zakládajících členů jako zosobnění určitého charakteristického projevu preraphaelismu. Je popsána preraphaelitská technika malby ve spojitosti s Millaisem, preraphaelitské užití symbolismu, jehož největším zastáncem byl Hunt a provázání poezie s malířstvím, což se v Bratrstvu preraphaelitů nejvýrazněji projevilo na díle Rossettiho. Tato práce se snaží dokázat, že všechny tyto základní projevy předjímal i John Ruskin.

## Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.....	3
3. John Everett Millais and Painterly Realism .....	17
4. William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism.....	27
5. Dante Gabriel Rossetti and "Ut Pictura Poesis".....	39
6. Conclusion.....	52
7. Resumé.....	54
8. Bibliography.....	59
Appendixes.....	62

## 1. Introduction

Not only their paintings is what attracts the scholars most on the group of English artists of the second half of the nineteenth century which called themselves Pre-Raphaelites. That is why next to monographs focused on reproductions there also exist studies dealing with the history of the Brotherhood, its individual members, their correspondence or the role of women in the group.

The idea underlying this thesis is that John Ruskin, the most remarkable art critic of the Victorian era anticipated most of the characteristic artistic expressions of Pre-Raphaelitism. Furthermore, Ruskin, through his principal work of art criticism, *Modern Painters*, acted as one of the most influential forces affecting the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, especially its founding members John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (for the portraits see Appendix 10).

This paper pays a close attention to them, for in work of each of the three there appeared a particular characteristic aspect of Pre-Raphaelitism in a greater degree than in work of remaining members of the Brotherhood.

After the first introductory part that deals with the situation in art in the nineteenth century Britain and the formation of the Brotherhood, a section is incorporated examining Pre-Raphaelite first most characteristic aspect, technique of painting. It is followed by a chapter concerning Ruskin's conception of art of drawing and the relationship he had with his first Pre-Raphaelite protégé, the most talented painter of the Brotherhood, Millais.



The fourth main part of this thesis focuses on the use of symbolism as another typical aspect of Pre-Raphaelitism, again owing much to Ruskin's example.

The last chapter begins with an explanation of the "ut pictura poesis" theory, the theory that painting and poetry are "sister arts." It's because the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood sensed the connection between poetry and painting exceedingly strong, which reflected most vividly in work of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

## 2. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

In Great Britain, Victoria's long reign from 1837 to 1901 was an age of expanding population and industry. It also was the age of great changes and of improvement in many areas of human activity, including painting. Peace at home, middle-class prosperity and increasing self-confidence, led to conditions in which painting flourished. The period saw substantial artistic production. The popularity of painting was largely due to the tastes and buying power of a new class of collectors that emerged in the early Victorian period (Treuhertz 40). By 1851 C.R. Leslie could write to his sister:

The increase of the private patronage of Art in this country is surprising. Almost every day I hear of some man of fortune, whose name is unknown to me who is forming a collection of the works of living painters; and they are all either men of business or who have made fortunes in business and retired. (as qtd. in Treuhertz 41)

As Treuhertz further stresses, the sources of their wealth indicate a transformation in the British art market during the 1830s and 1840s. The initiative in art collecting passed from the aristocracy to the rising middle class of manufacturers, merchants and businessmen, newly enriched by the Industrial Revolution, enfranchised by the 1832 Reform Act and endowed with shrewdness and independence of judgment that had brought them success in business. They invested some of the large amounts of the capital they had amassed from industry and commerce not in Old Masters but in the work of living artists. (41) To this, Rachel Barnes adds, that these patrons liked recognizable subjects rather than remote allegory and preferred signed modern paintings whose authenticity could

be proved to dubious Old Masters, which were extensively faked at that period (29).

Another reason contemporary paintings were admired was for their workmanship. Concerning this, Treuherz says that the middle-class work ethic can be discerned in the appreciation of technical skill in a picture, evidence both of the artist's labour and of "value for money" for the purchaser. John Gibbons, an Edgbaston ironmaster and patron of many early Victorian Artists, wrote in 1843:

I love finish-even to the minutest details. I know the time it takes and that it must be paid for but this I do not object to. (Treuherz 35)

In order to attract this new, expanding group of potential buyers, the artist had to make them aware of his works, and this he could do only by exhibiting them in public. Such public display of paintings began in England with the first annual summer show of the Royal Academy in 1769. In his *Pre-Raphaelites*, Hilton points out that throughout most of the nineteenth century this exhibition remained the major event of the art world; if an artist wished to establish his reputation and command good prices for his creations, he usually had to make his mark at this show. (28) In addition, artists could also make use of exhibitions in Manchester, Liverpool, and other cities of the industrial north, while in London they could send pictures to the various watercolour societies, the British Institution, the Society of Female Artists, and, later in the century, private galleries, such as the Grosvenor, which became increasingly important as ways to reach the public.

Next to the growing number of the galleries exhibiting contemporary artists, there are other indications that painting was acquiring far larger audiences than ever

before. For example, as Barnes maintains, the practice of making engraved reproductions of important contemporary paintings contributed to the fact, that by the 1850s, the audience for art was significantly increasing. A growing number of books, newspapers and periodicals gave plenty of coverage to the fine arts with long exhibition reviews, describing paintings in considerable detail. But above all it was the improvements in reproductive techniques, especially that of steel engraving, that broadened the public for art. (35)

As a consequence, periodical exhibitions gave rise to criticism and art reviewing, the practice standing at the beginning of John Ruskin's involvement in the artistic life of that time. It was his criticism of Turner — Ruskin's artistic hero — published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, to which the starting point of the professional career of this great critic of art and society, this "arbiter elegantiae" of Victorian era relates. Though the *Modern Painters* was the work of an "Oxford Graduate" the essay that contained its germ was written in the week before Ruskin matriculated.

Concerning the style of his essays, George P. Landow emphasizes that Ruskin's middle and working-class audience was more than open to his conception of the art critic as a combination of sage, satirist, and prophet. To his readers, Ruskin's use of argument, method, and tone, which derived from the Puritan tradition of preaching and scriptural interpretation, made a great deal of sense. Ruskin's elaborate biblical rhetoric, allusions to prophetic texts of Scripture, and his formal, ornate diction all struck particular notes in the minds of his contemporaries. In fact,

Ruskin self-consciously assumed the mantle of the Old Testament prophet. Ruskin's acts of interpretation, therefore, formed one of his most powerful means of gaining the attention and allegiance of his audience. (*How to read Ruskin* 11)

One of the most influential of such Ruskinian acts of interpretation occurs in the second volume of *Modern Painters*, where Ruskin sets out to show how to see, experience and understand Tintoretto's *Annunciation* (for the picture see Appendix 1) in the Scuola di San Rocco, Venice. Not surprisingly, this passage had a great influence on the forming of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and especially on Hunt's own conception of art as will be later dealt with.

As already mentioned, the Royal Academy, together with its Summer Exhibition, played an immense role in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century artist's life and was (till mid-century) the only place where the artist could make his fortune.

According to Hilton, the Academy was found in 1768, its first president being Sir Joshua Reynolds. His *Discourses*, together with the pronouncements of successive presidents and professors, constituted the only body of art theory in England before publication of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*. Such pronouncements enshrined and propagated the whole idea of the post-Renaissance tradition of academic art (48). Moreover, this was not simply a matter of theory, because the Royal Academy Schools were practically the only place where an aspiring painter could learn the elements of his art. Hilton reports that until 1853, the course of training was regarded to last for ten years, several of which the student would spent on laborious exercises in the Antique School, drawing from casts of classical statues, before

ever getting to the stage where he encountered real paints and real people to paint from (49).

It was in and around the Royal Academy Schools that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was formed. A kind of preparatory establishment for the R.A. itself was Sass's Drawing School, where young artists learnt preliminary skills that would enable them to qualify for the Academy. There, in 1841, Gabriel Dante Rossetti began his life as an artist. He left school at the age of thirteen and went to Sass's, where he remained for the next four years. In 1839, two years before Rossetti arrived in this small art school, a brilliant child from the Channel Island had begun his attendance. This was John Everett Millais, born in 1829. This young painter scampered through the course at Sass's, and, in 1840, at the unprecedentedly early age of eleven, became a probationary student of the Royal Academy. Unlike Millais, Rossetti lingered at Sass's, perhaps apprehensive that he did not have the ability to go on to the next stage in the career of a young artist. However, in the summer of 1845, he too was made a probationary student of the R.A. William Holman Hunt was born in 1827, a year before Rossetti, and his early ambitions to become an artist had been strongly opposed by his father. Hunt, therefore, did not go to Sass's, but studied independently. When he entered the Royal Academy Schools, he did so without preconceptions (Hilton 51). What is more, he had, unlike the other two, studied Ruskin's *Modern Painters*. Hunt says, in describing his student years:

One day, a fellow-student, one Telfer, spoke to me of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, and ended by lending it for a few days. ... To get through the book I had to sit up most of the night more than once, and I returned it before I had got half the good there was in it; but of all readers, none so strongly as myself could have felt that it was

written expressly for him. When it had gone, the echo of its words stayed with me, and pealed a further meaning and value in their inspiration whenever my more solemn feelings were touched in any way. (as qtd. in 3:xliii)<sup>1</sup>

Mary Bennet explains that Rossetti and Hunt would already have known each other by sight, but it was only now that they became firm friends. Then Rossetti met Millais, who was already a friend of Hunt's. Millais agreed with Hunt that Reynolds's teaching had led to harmful tendencies in English art, and that Raphael, the most respected of academic artists, had produced in his *Transfiguration*

a painting that should be condemned for its grandiose disregard of the simplicity of truth, the pompous posturing of the Apostles, and the unspiritual attitudinising of the Saviour. (Bennet 21)

The Rossetti Archive declares, that in late August these three were poring over Lasinio's engravings of the Campo Santo frescoes in Pisa (for a sample see Appendix 2) (*Pitture a fresco*), the same frescoes about which Ruskin had three years before written to his father:

You cannot conceive the vividness and fullness of conception of these great old men. In spite of every violation of the common confounded rules of art, anachronisms and fancies ... Abraham and Adam, and Cain, Rachel and Rebekah are all there, real, visible, created, substantial, such as they were, as they must have been; one cannot look at them without being certain that they had lived. (4:xxx)

Ruskin was maintaining that these paintings, however different they were from official, accomplished post-Renaissance painting, had the qualities of great art, and especially of great religious art. In his *Memoir* of his

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<sup>1</sup> All such citations refer to the electronic version of the Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin, eds. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, 39 vols. London, 1903-12

brother's life, William Michael Rossetti quotes Holman Hunt as follows:

The companionship of Rossetti and myself soon brought about a meeting with Millais, at whose house one night we found a book of engravings of the frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa. (as qtd. in *Memoir*)

This book proved the catalyst for the founding of The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. As William Michael went on to point out, the engravings were important to the three young men for giving:

some idea of the motives, feeling, and treatment, of the paintings of Gozzoli, and of those ascribed to Orcagna and other mediæval masters. (as qtd. in *Memoir*)

Rossetti was not quite prepared beforehand to believe in these very olden painters, but as his brother pointed out:

I well recollect the enthusiasm with which, subsequently to seeing the engravings, Dante spoke to me on the subject. (as qtd. in *Memoir*)

Another reference of the story is given in Hunt's *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*:

"It was the finding of this book at this special time," says Holman Hunt, "which caused the establishment of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Millais, Rossetti, and myself were all seeking for some sure ground, some starting-point for our art which would be secure, if it were ever so humble. As we searched through this book of engravings, we found in them, or thought we found, that freedom from corruption, pride, and disease for which we sought." (as qtd. in 12:xliv)

This book is important for bringing into focus the mutual interests of the early Pre-Raphaelite circle, especially Rossetti, Millais, and Hunt. It contains Carlo Lasinio's engravings from the fifteenth-century paintings attributed to Giotto, Memmi, Gozzoli, and other early Italian masters.



Clark declares, that the spare style and linear simplicity appealed to the three Pre-Raphaelites as marks of a pictorial attitude wholly unlike the reigning academic canons, in particular what they called the "slosh" they saw promoted by Sir Joshua Reynolds (31).

Hunt, Rossetti and Millais were bound together not only by their friendship, but also by their dissatisfaction with the art establishment, and by their own indefinite aspirations. It was Rossetti who had the idea of consolidating and crystallising these discrete elements into a secret Brotherhood. They held their initial meeting in Millais's studio and

We can be almost sure that the Brothers laid claim to some kind of bond between themselves and the Italian painters of the Quattrocento, in purpose if not the technique; and that they determined to approach nature with a freshness and directness of technique that was absent from academic painting of a conventional sort ... They would also have discussed their dislike of the classical and baroque traditions. Hunt would surely have talked about the principles behind *Modern Painters* and Rossetti about the poetic content of painting. (Hilton 33)

Therefore, if their paintings were to be great, they would never be so through following convention. It ought to be various, realistic and concerned with human emotion. It should also be clean and fresh and genuine. New pictures should look as if they were new, and they should be colourful.

The bright, highly coloured Pre-Raphaelite paintings were the result of a special technique that itself was the culmination of a fairly long process of change. It was the use of "wet white" ground:

At the opening of the nineteenth century, English Painting generally was extremely dark in colour, due largely to the admiration felt for seventeenth-century

masters, and to the discovery of bitumen, which although capable of warm dark contrasts, is always destructive of paintings and inevitably leads to blackening. It was just this sort of dark-cornered effect that Hunt condemned in his own painting called *Rienzi* and that Ruskin attacked in *Modern Painters*. (Bowness 34)

But, as proposed by the same author, for some years before the Pre-Raphaelite movement, paintings had been becoming lighter in colour, especially, of course, in the case of Turner. In the 1820s, the popular genre painter William Mulready was developing a heightened effect by painting colours very thinly over a white ground.

Luminosity is a relevant word for this technique, for the most brilliant effects of colour are in a stained glass, those of light itself passing through a coloured medium, and the use of transparent colours over a white ground was the nearest way in which painting could approach such an effect. (65)

This technique satisfied a demand for brilliance of colour and minuteness of observation, and for a time assumed the status of an article of faith within the Pre-Raphaelite circle.

It was already in 1849, with the first Pre-Raphaelite paintings, that not only the stylistic significance of this technical innovation was first noticed. The second specific feature of their paintings was the evenness of working over the whole surface of the canvas, so that subordinate parts of the picture are as fully detailed, as clearly seen, as the central subject. The third was the evenness of light, and the refusal to proceed from dark edges towards a light centre. The Pre-Raphaelites had in fact very little appreciation for the old-fashioned idea that a painting should have a "principal light", and that the colours

should be organized so as to proceed towards this central light from darker tones round it (Hilton 41).

The attacks on their paintings date largely from the time when the press first discovered the existence of the semi-secret society itself. In fact, Hunt and Millais individually had not fared at all badly at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1849. As a consequence, the confidence they felt at this stage led to an enlargement of their activities, and in particular to an involvement in literature. Rossetti, being more of a poet than a painter, proposed that the Brotherhood should publish a magazine.

In January 1850, the first number of *The Germ*, the organ of the Brotherhood, had appeared, its principle being declared in the preface "to encourage and enforce an entire adherence to the simplicity of nature" (as qtd. in 3:xliv).

Here also began a special development in the history of the idea of "ut pictura poesis" - the theory that poetry and painting are sister arts, fulfilling much the same function - and consequently that a text can illustrate a picture as much as a picture a text. Of the major Pre-Raphaelites, only Rossetti achieved greatness as both a painter and a poet, since from early childhood onward, he simultaneously practiced both arts with great distinction.

But the immediate effect of the activity surrounding *The Germ* was, as Hilton points out:

to bring the P.R.B out into the open. The Brotherhood had thus found and proclaimed its faith, and brought forth works illustrative of it.  
(46)

The attacks of the critics on the Pre-Raphaelite pictures of 1850 had been very severe. *The Times* led the way in a violent article, declaring that such work "deserved no quarter at the hands of the public" (as qtd. in). Since, in most cases, a painter's income still corresponded with his success at the Summer Exhibition, the members of the brotherhood were highly disconcerted:

"Our strongest enemy," writes Holman Hunt meaning this article, "advised that the Academy, having shown our works so far, to prove how atrocious they were, could now, with the approval of the public, depart from their usual rule of leaving each picture on the walls until the end of the season, and take ours down and return them to us." (as qtd. in 3:xlv)

The article in *The Times* filled Millais with alarm and indignation. Fortunately, the Brotherhood was well acquainted with Coventry Patmore, whose poems Rossetti had introduced to the others and whose first wife Millais had portrayed some years before. Millais knew that Ruskin was a friend of Patmore, and turned in his anger and vexation to the author of *Modern Painters* for help (Barnes 56). Patmore himself has recounted the story:

The day when *The Times* made its furious attack on Millais's picture of *Christ in the Carpenter's Shop*, Millais came to me in great agitation and anger, and begged me to ask Ruskin to take the matter up. I went at once to Ruskin, and the next day after there appeared in *The Times* a letter of great length and amazing quality, considering how short a time Ruskin had to examine the picture and make up his mind about it. (as qtd. in 3:xlv)

This letter was written quickly, as Patmore says, but it was not immediately printed. Letter from Ruskin to Patmore continues the story:

DEAR PATMORE,—I wrote to *The Times* yesterday; but the letter is not in it to-day; it went late, and might have been too late; but if it is not in Monday's, the letter shall go to the *Chronicle*, in a somewhat less polite form. My father has written to ask if the *Ark* picture be unsold, and what is its price. I wish Hunt would also let me know his price for *Valentine*. I may perhaps be of service to him. (3:xlvi)

In addition to the defence of the pictures in the press, Ruskin made inquiries with regard to Hunt's. These inquiries were made on behalf of Francis McCracken from Belfast, or with a view of suggesting the purchase to him (Treuhertz 60). To Hunt, Ruskin's intervention was a godsend. The artist wrote Patmore:

I am delighted to hear that Ruskin has taken the field in defense of Millais and myself, for I had almost despaired of overcoming the evident opposition to our style which the example of *The Times* and other influential papers were breeding. If they had merely confined their remarks to a just spirit of criticism it would have been all fair, but, when they endeavoured to ruin our interest with the Academy and the patrons, it was necessary that some notice should be taken, and to have that by Ruskin is of all things what I could most desire. (as qtd. in 3:xlvii)

In those unfortunate times, Hunt had written a letter, but could not tell, he says, "where to find a penny for the stamp" (as qtd in 3:xlviii). Ruskin's offer to buy Millais's *Dove* was made immediately, and before the first letter appeared in *The Times*. The picture had, however, already been bought by his friend and first patron, Thomas Combe.

The Pre-Raphaelites immediately sent their thanks to Ruskin through Patmore, as appears from the following letter:

DEAR PATMORE,—I am very glad your friends were pleased with the letter. I wrote a continuation of it, which I have not sent, because to people who did not know that there are not ten pictures in the Academy which I would turn my head to look at, it might have read carping; but I wish, *entre nous*, you would ask Millais whether it would have been quite impossible for him to have got a bit of olive branch out of some of our conservatories, instead of painting one on Speculation, or, at least, ascertained to some approximation what an olive leaf was like; and also whether he has ever in his life seen a bit of old painted glass, near; and what modern stuff it was that he studied from?

Pray tell Hunt how happy I shall be to be allowed to see his picture.

Yours ever faithfully,

J. RUSKIN.

(3:xlviiii)

Ruskin's intervention was a turning point in the fortunes of the Pre-Raphaelites. It encouraged the painters themselves, confirmed the wavering opinions of patrons and picture-dealers, and caused many of the critics to reconsider their opinions. Moreover, with Millais, Ruskin speedily formed a friendship.

Though Ruskin's letters to *The Times* were meant as a defence of the Brotherhood, it would not be Ruskin if he had not noted some errors concerning the execution of Millais's and Hunt's paintings. On the other hand, he admits, that:

they may, as they gain experience, lay in our England the foundations of a school of art nobler than the world has seen for three hundred years.  
(3:li)

In other words, he believed

these young artists to be at a most critical period of their career-at a turning point, from which they may either sink into nothingness or rise to very real greatness. (3:1i)

This passage inadvertently foretells the course of action for who else would fit better for the person leading them from this "turning point" to "very real greatness" than the author of *Modern Painters*, the most influential critic of art of that time, John Ruskin. This was soon about to happen, for, as previously mentioned, Ruskin had already chosen his first protégé: John Everett Millais, the most talented painter of the Brothers.

### 3. John Everett Millais and Painterly Realism

Before the account of Ruskin-Millais relationship is given, Ruskin's approach towards the art of drawing should be mentioned, because it is essential for a better understanding of this critic-painter relationship.

As to the formative influences on his thought, Ruskin attached the greatest importance to his long apprenticeship to Nature. That is why the beginning of all his own art work depended not on his love of art, but of mountains and sea:

I would pass entire days in rambling on the Cumberland hill-sides, or staring at the lines of surf on a low sand; . . . and through the whole of following life, whatever power of judgment I have obtained in art, which I am now confident and happy in using, or communicating, has depended on my steady habit of always looking for the subject principally, and for the art only as the means of expressing it. ()

The woods, which he had only looked on as wilderness, fulfilled then in their beauty the same laws which guided the clouds, divided the light, and balanced the waves. A passage from *Genesis* "He hath made everything beautiful, in his time," (as qtd. in 3:xxxiv) became for him thenceforward his interpretation of the bond between the human mind and all visible things:

"I returned along the wood-road feeling that it had led me far;—Farther than ever fancy had reached, or theodolite measured" (35:315).

He used to think a picturesque or beautiful tree was hardly to be met with once a month. He cared for nothing but oaks a thousand years old, split by lightning or shattered by wind, or made up for his



worship's edification in some particular and distinguished way (Robert Hewison 22). Later, thanks to one "discovery" he made, there was not a twig in the closest hedge that he could not admire, and wonder at, and take pleasure in, and learn from. He then thought one tree very nearly as good as another, and all a thousand times more beautiful than he once did his picked ones.

It was the experience gained in the year before the first volume of *Modern Painters* was published that should absolutely change his perception of nature. In his earlier period, Ruskin had sought, in sketching, for effects and views of specially romantic character. He had looked at nature through the eyes of Samuel Prout or Joseph Mallord William Turner, and had tried to compose in their way. In fact, Ruskin was, at an early age, fully able to reproduce the styles of both the minor and major artists of his day. He continued to exaggerate the forms of nature so as to make scenes especially impressive, but the turning point was at hand. Concerning this, Hilton says that

the circumstances, in which he renounced this ability to paint in any particular fashion, or like anyone else, are most significant. The imitations, or recreations suddenly stop. (20)

The moment at which this happened — it was clearly an ecstatic and revelatory experience — Ruskin later recalled as having been in 1842, on the road between Norwood and Peckham, south of London:

In the spring of this year I made by sheer accident my first drawing of leafage in natural growth. I noticed a bit of ivy round a thorn stem, which seemed, even to my critical judgment, not ill "composed" ... he made a scetch and remarked that ... When it was done, I saw that I had virtually lost all my time since I was

twelve years old, because no one had ever told me to draw what was really there! ... I never imitated anybody anymore after that one sketch was made; but entered at once on the course of a study which enabled me afterwards to understand Pre-Raphaelitism. (35:311)

The lesson thus learnt — the lesson of seeking beauty through truth — was re-enforced later, in the summer of 1842. Ruskin found himself at Fontainebleau, where, morosely displeased by all the usual tourist sights, he wandered into the surrounding countryside, eventually finding himself

lying on the bank of a cart-road in the sand, with no prospect whatever but a small aspen tree against the blue sky. Languidly, but not idly, I began to draw it; and as I drew, the languor passed away: the beautiful lines insisted on being traced, —without weariness. More and more beautiful they became, as each rose out of the rest, and took its place in the air. With wonder increasing every instant, I saw that they "composed" themselves, by finer laws than any known of men. At last, the tree was there, and everything that I had thought before about trees, nowhere. (35:314)

In his manual for the use of amateur artists, *The Elements of Drawing*, he explained:

Every line and colour is so arranged as to advantage the rest. None are inessential, however slight; and none are independent, however forcible. It is not enough that they truly represent natural objects; but they must fit into certain places, and gather into certain harmonious groups. (15:162-163)

The great artist, however, does not merely record the facts of appearance. Rather, he treats his subject differently,

giving not the actual facts of it, but the impression it made on his mind ... The aim of the great inventive landscape painter must be to give the far higher and deeper truth of mental vision, rather than that of the physical facts, and to reach a representation which ... shall yet be capable of producing on the far-away beholder's mind precisely the impression which the reality would have produced, and putting his heart

into the same state in which it would have been had he been at the scene. (6:35-36)

According to Ruskin, then, the greatest painting, like the greatest verse — both of which deserve the title "poetry" — reproduce the artist's impression of fact rather than the fact itself (Gordon 18).

In Ruskin's opinion, the painter's greater sympathies, sensibility, and imagination, make art particularly valuable to everybody; for the great artist, the man who sees farther and more deeply, makes the spectator:

a sharer in his own strong feelings and quick thoughts ... and leaves him more than delighted, — ennobled and instructed, under the sense ... of having held communion with a new mind, and having been endowed for a time with the keen perception and the impetuous emotions of a nobler and more penetrating intelligence. (3:134)

Therefore, art adds to the wealth of human knowledge by permitting us to see and feel with the faculties of another greater than ourselves. For this reason, truly imaginative paintings have an "infinite advantage" (5:186) over our actual presence at the scene they depict since they provide a "penetrative sight" and "kindly guidance"(5:187) that, like an imaginative lens, increases our powers of beholding nature and man. In other words, the great artist allows us to stand on the shoulders of a giant (Landow, John Ruskin).

Ruskin believes all truth is comprehended visually, and to this axiom he joins the corollary that to learn anything one must experience it — see it — for oneself. At the heart of Ruskin's aesthetic theories, practical criticism, and instructions to young artists lies a heartfelt conviction that one can only learn things, one can only know them, by experiencing them for oneself.

According to Ruskin, then, the fact that one only truly learns things, particularly ideas, by experiencing them simultaneously explains the human value of symbolic and visionary art, his own word-painting, and painterly realism.

For Ruskin the chief justification of realism as an artistic style thus resides in its forcing the artist to educate his eye and hand. Such a Ruskinian conception of realism as self-education furnishes the ultimate justification of his famous instruction to young artists to

go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remembering her instruction; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing ... and rejoicing always in the truth. (13:624)

He emphasizes that:

from young artists nothing ought to be tolerated but simple bona fide imitation of nature. They have no business to ape the execution of masters ... Their duty is neither to choose, nor compose, nor imagine, nor experimentalize; but to be humble and earnest in following the steps of nature, and tracing the finger of God. (3:623)

In fact, immediately after thus instructing the neophyte, Ruskin adds that when visual experience has nurtured the young artists' hand, eye, and imagination, "we will follow them wherever they choose to lead ... They are then our masters, and fit to be so" (3:624). Ruskin made such recommendations because he firmly believed "the imagination must be fed constantly by external nature" (14:288) or, as he put it in somewhat different terms:

I call the representation of facts the first end; because it is necessary to the other and must be attained before it. It is the foundation of all art; like real foundations, it may be little thought of

when a brilliant fabric is raised on it; but it must be there (3:138).

In defending Turner, Ruskin has looked back to his earlier works to reveal that in them the painter had created the necessary foundation that enabled him later to erect a "brilliant fabric".

Generally, in *Modern Painters* Ruskin explores the theoretical and formal aspects of great art and its informative, interpretative role in understanding the relationship between God, nature, humanity and society. The foundation of this rested upon Ruskin's conviction that all real and vital knowledge — hence truth — was revealed visually to the eyes and minds of only a few artists (Hewison 63). Turner, despite every charge on the contrary, was

the only man who has ever given an entire transcript of the whole system of nature, and is, in this point of view, the only perfect landscape painter whom the world has ever seen. (3:616)

According to Ruskin, Turner achieved this acclaim by realizing in his work, as much as was humanly possible, the impressions of tone, colour, chiaroscuro, and space, and the specifics of sky, earth, water and vegetation. To prove this achievement, Ruskin repeatedly compared Turner's works with those of popular Dutch, French and Italian masters. His conclusion was the same case after case, being that Turner was undeniably more factual than all others (2:273).

Turner died in 1851 and the light that Ruskin felt could lead his nation to glory was extinguished. Yet Ruskin has already begun his search for the next great luminary, identifying him as John Everett Millais.

Even if there was no real artistic relation between Turner and Millais, Ruskin was always ready to prove the

opposite and even to make some evidence of it. One such attempt was inviting Millais to accompany him to Switzerland, not surprisingly the country where Turner had spent so much time painting:

"I have dined and taken breakfast with Ruskin," wrote Millais to Mrs. Combe on July 2, 1851, "and we are such good friends that he wishes me to accompany him to Switzerland this summer ... We are as yet singularly at variance in our opinions upon Art. One of our differences is about Turner. He believes that I shall be converted on further acquaintance with his works, and I that he will gradually slacken in his admiration." (as qtd in 12:xliv)

Though Millais refused the first invitation to spend a summer with Ruskin, he accepted the second offer a year later. Ruskin invited his young protégé to join him and his wife, Effie, at Glenfinlas in Scotland for a holiday, which also led to the annulment of the Ruskin marriage a year later. It seems, from the correspondence of the time, that they were a merry party; and, in spite of constant rain, the days passed cheerily:

"Both Millais and I," wrote Ruskin to Miss Mitford, "came down here to rest; he having painted, and I corrected press, quite as much as was good for either of us; but he is painting a little among the rocks, and I am making some drawings which may be useful to me; and when either of us are tired we go and build bridges over the stream, or piers into the lake, or engage in the more laborious and scientific operation of digging a canal to change the course of the stream, where it is encroaching on the meadows." (12:xlvi)

Even though this note about their leisure activities is of no other considerable importance, it in some way foretells what was to happen soon. Ruskin speaks about "changing the course of the stream," which, however, is almost an accurate metaphor for what he did while supervising his own

portrait Millais was painting. He was changing the course of the stream of the painter's genius.

While both Ruskin and Millais went to Scotland for relaxation, they stayed to work on Millais' principal concern, the famous portrait of Ruskin (for the painting see Appendix 3). It was at Acland's (the residence of another member of the summer party) where the suggestion that this portrait should show Ruskin standing on the rocks, with the torrent thundering beside him (12:xlii). Ruskin rejoiced, seeing in this work the promise of such a loving and faithful study of wild nature as had never yet been accomplished:

"Millais," Ruskin writes to his father, "has fixed on his place, a lovely piece of worn rock, with foaming water and weeds and moss, and a noble overhanging bank of dark crag; and I am to be standing looking quietly down the stream; just the sort of thing I used to do for hours together. He is very happy at the idea of doing it, and I think you will be proud of the picture, and we shall have the two most wonderful torrents in the world, Turner's *St. Gothard* and Millais' *Glenfinlas*. He is going to take the utmost possible pains with it, and says he can paint rocks and water better than anything else. I am sure the foam of the torrent will be something quite new in art." (12:xliii)

In a similar mood is a letter to Furnivall:

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,—I have been living so idle a life for the last month or two that the laziness has become quite inveterate, and I can't so much as write you a letter—except to answer your kind questions. We have been since 5th July living in this kind of house, with a little garden, about eighteen feet long by ten wide, sloping down the bank in front, and part of Ben Ledi sloping up (among the writing) behind. A bog in front—a wonderful rocky dingle in the distance at A—where Millais is painting a picture of a torrent among rocks, which will make a revolution in landscape painting. (12:xliv)

Ruskin was privileged to watch Millais at work, something Turner would probably never have allowed. As an entry in his diary shows, during the progress of the work in Scotland, he sometimes very literally stood over Millais:

August 2.—Out with Millais at six, holding the umbrella over him as he worked, and watching the stream, looking down it, due south; the sun of course on my left (12:xlvi).

That is also why Millais's meticulous rendering of the rocky settings completely accords with Ruskin's advice to him and his Pre-Raphaelite colleagues to be exacting and faithful in their transcriptions of nature.

Another proof of Ruskin's influence is his own drawing of *Gneiss Rock, Glenfinlas* that may have been intended as a guide for Millais about the background of the portrait. Ruskin's *Gneiss Rock*, was probably made on July 19, for he noted in his diary:

GLENFINLAS, July 20, 1853.—Yesterday drawing on the rocks by the stream; Everett ill with headache. The skies all turquoise and violet, and melted in dew, and heavenly bars of delicate cloud behind Ben Venue in evening. (12:xlvii)

Considering the same picture, Gully explains that

It concentrates on the writhing rocky strata, encrusted by invading plants and attacked by the turbulent surging stream at the base. space is very compressed; the eye is allowed no rest; the sharp clarity accentuates the abrupt collision of rock and water, plant and stone. The implications of a vitalism within the stones and the ongoing destruction of matter in nature are constant themes in Ruskin's art. (162)

In fact, Ruskin made many drawings similar to *Gneiss Rock, Glenfinlas*, with its focus on a small segment of landscape. It is surprising that the smallest, seemingly most



insignificant portion of a scene could reveal many truths to him, for

a stone, when it is examined, will be found to be a mountain in miniature ... and taking moss for forests, and grains of crystal for crags, the surface of a stone, in by far the plurality of instances, is more interesting than the surface of an ordinary hill; more fantastic in form, and incomparably richer in colour. (6:368)

Elsewhere:

A piece of stone 3 in. in diameter, irregularly fractured, and a little worn by the weather, has precisely the same character of outline which we should find and admire in a mountain of the same material 6,000 ft. high. (1:48)

As a result, the sincerity in the study of nature, the element that Ruskin so much admired in work of J.M.W. Turner, was the most significant feature of Millais's *Portrait of John Ruskin*. In other words it carried out aforementioned Ruskin's advice to young artist contained in the first volume of *Modern Painters* — that they should go to nature "in all singleness of heart . . . rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing" (3:624).

#### 4. William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism

When Ruskin was defending the Pre-Raphaelites in the pamphlet of the same name, he stressed their sincerity in the study of nature by mentioning the fact that

Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute, uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything, down to the most minute detail, from nature, and from nature only. (12:157)

Not surprisingly, it is a sign of almost-an-obsession-with-the-depiction-of-detail that radiates from William Holman Hunt's record of his work on *The Light of the World*. The picture was begun at Worcester Park Farm near Kingston, where Hunt, together with Millais had spent the summer of 1851. The following passage is an exquisite example of the process of creation of a Pre-Raphaelite picture, and therefore is given in full:

"I had dwelt over and matured my design," writes Hunt, "enough to be able to paint the orchard background at the proper season in the grounds attached to the house. To paint it life-size, as I should have liked, would then have forbidden any hope of sale. It was one of the misfortunes of my position, which I have ever since regretted, but perhaps I should have had greater difficulty in the first work of the painting, which I did from 9 P.M. till 5 A.M. every night, about the time of the full moon, for two or three months. I sat in an open shed made of hurdles, and painted by the light of a candle, a stronger illumination being too blending. On going to bed I slept till ten, and then devoted myself for an hour or two to rectifying any error of colour, and to drawing out the work for the next night." Afterwards the work went on in his studio at Chelsea. "The window which had before served me for sunlight now monthly allowed me to receive moonlight upon the little groups of objects that were placed to help me paint the effect of the lantern-light mixing with that of the silvery night. The ivy I had

already painted, and the long grass and weeds were completed; but I had made up an imitation door with adjuncts, and had placed a lay-figure for the drapery, with the lantern to shine upon it duly; in the day I could screen out the sun, and at night I removed the blinds to let in the moon. I would sit at my work from 8 or 9 P.M. till 4 A.M. This went on for some months." (as qtd. in 12:331)

*The Light of the World* was exhibited at the Summer Exhibition of 1854, and by the time Hunt was heading for the Holy Land, was reviewed by John Ruskin. He wrote to *The Times* in May of the same year:

SIR,—I trust that, with your usual kindness and liberality, you will give me room in your columns for a few words respecting the principal Pre-Raphaelite picture in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy this year. Its painter is travelling in the Holy Land, and can neither suffer nor benefit by criticism. But I am solicitous that justice should be done to his work, not for his sake, but for that of the large number of persons who, during the year, will have an opportunity of seeing it, and on whom, if rightly understood, it may make an impression for which they will ever afterwards be grateful ... I believe there are very few persons on whom the picture, thus justly understood, will not produce a deep impression. For my own part, I think it one of the very noblest works of sacred art ever produced in this or any other age. (12:356)

Ruskin then gives a description and an interpretation of the painting and consequently clarifies the reason for doing so:

It may, perhaps, be answered, that works of art ought not to stand in need of interpretation of this kind. Indeed, we have been so long accustomed to see pictures painted without any purpose or intention whatsoever, that the unexpected existence of meaning in a work of art may very naturally at first appear to us an unkind demand on the spectator's understanding. But in a few years more I hope the English public may be convinced of the simple truth, that neither a great fact, nor a great man, nor a great poem, nor a great

picture, nor any other great thing, can be fathomed to the very bottom in a moment of time; and that no high enjoyment, either in picture-seeing or any other occupation, is consistent with a total lethargy of the powers of the understanding. (12:356)

Ruskin's interpretation in this review was that of Hunt's use of typological symbolism. By employing such symbolism, Hunt attempted to create art that could marry realism and elaborate iconography. He created a painting in which every detail was potentially meaningful. In his major typological works, Hunt expected the viewer to concentrate upon all the details of the painting, gradually coming to perceive its meaning by a process of meditation. Hunt's desire to create an art that requires and prompts a meditative response does much to explain another attraction that this form of symbolism held for him (Landow, Replete Meaning). Since he wished to make the spectator carefully consider the smallest points of interest in his canvases, he could spend great care on each one. Typology, in other words, justified a detailed realism. As Landow further describes, Hunt was worried that a realistic style would create an art that was materialistic, empty, literal, and dead, an art that would destroy the imagination of the artist and audience alike. That is why, throughout his career, he sought ways to endow realism with life and that the typological symbolism lay at the heart of his search. One effect of such symbolism was to justify the details which characterize realism, and an equally important function of this symbolism was to unify those details (Replete Meaning). In other words:

Hunt attempted an art that demanded both an immediate emotional response and one that was meditative and analytical. Through the refusal to relinquish any aspect of painting, he wanted to create an art that would be simultaneously intellectual and deeply moving. (Landow, Replete Meaning).

In the world of religious vision, which Hunt created in *The Light of the World*, all things necessarily bear higher meanings, so that the symbolical and the natural combine, so that both together make up "the real". The first recognizable aspect of Hunt's painting is the figure of Christ. He wanted to emphasize solidity and mass in order to avoid the implications of conventional religious art:

In England you know spiritual figures are painted as if in vapour. I had a further reason for making the figure more solid than I should have otherwise done in the fact that it is the Christ that is alive for ever more. He was to be firmly and substantially there waiting for the stirring of the sleeping soul. (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning)

Another thing Hunt also conceived in terms of its spiritual significance is the lighting. The figure of Christ, he explained, was

to be seen only by the light of the star of distant dawn behind, and of some moonlight in front with most of all the light "to guide us in dark places" coming from the lantern. This mixture of lights is all natural on the understanding that it is treated typically. (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning)

In another passage from his *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, Hunt gives a rather detailed explanation of other examples of symbolism in *The Light of the World* :

The closed door was the obstinately shut mind, the weeds the cumber of daily neglect, the accumulated hindrances of sloth; the orchard the garden of delectable fruit for the dainty feast of the soul. The music of the still small voice was the summons to the sluggard to awaken and become a zealous labourer under the Divine Master; the bat flitting about only in darkness was a natural symbol of ignorance; the kingly and priestly dress of Christ, the sign of His reign over the body and the soul, to them who could give their allegiance to Him and acknowledge God's overrule. In making it a night scene, lit mainly by

the lantern carried by Christ, I had followed metaphorical explanation in the Psalms, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," with also the accordant allusions by St. Paul to the sleeping soul, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning)

For the painter, it was a matter of great importance that the iconography of the picture "was not based upon ecclesiastical or archaic symbolism, but derived from obvious reflectiveness" (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning). According to Hunt, his symbols "were of natural figures such as language had originally employed to express transcendental ideas" (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning). In other words, he believed that *The Light of the World* created its symbolic language in precisely the same way that men had formed language to express abstract and spiritual ideas. The important point is that

since the symbolism derives from what he takes to be essential habits of mind, it would be immediately comprehensible to any audience, because such "natural" symbolism does not require any knowledge of iconographic traditions. (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning)

Still, since his method was unusual, he had worked with no confidence that his symbols would interest anyone else. The fact that *The Light of the World* has "in the main been interpreted truly" (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning) without any additional assistance from him, not mentioning Ruskin's contribution, convinced Hunt that his method had been successful.

The almost astonishing popularity of this picture in nineteenth-century Britain and America appears not only in the fact that many took it to be the single most important contemporary portrayal of Christ, but also in its influence upon popular poetry and book illustration. *The Light of the*

*World* succeeded in reaching a large audience, eventually becoming an element of popular culture. The picture became known beyond the narrow confines of the art world by means of its engraved version, and it was popularised even farther by sermons and devotional poetry (Allen 71). That is the reason why this painting was a turning point in Hunt's career because it demonstrated to him that he could combine a realistic style, imaginative vision, and religious iconography in a form accessible to others.

Not surprisingly, Hunt's inspiration for this ambitious and successful attempt to bridge realism and symbolism came directly from the second volume of *Modern Painters*, specifically from a passage where Ruskin interprets typological symbolism in Tintoretto's *Annunciation* (for the painting see Appendix 1) as an example of highly imaginative art. Describing *The Annunciation* in the Scuola di San Rocco, Ruskin emphasizes how,

startled by the rush of angel wings, the Virgin sits . . . houseless, under the shelter of a palace vestibule ruined and abandoned, with the noise of the axe and the hammer in her ears, and the tumult of a city round about her desolation. The spectator turns away at first, revolted, from the central object of the picture forced painfully and coarsely forward, a mass of shattered brickwork, with the plaster mildewed away from it, and the mortar mouldering from its seams; and if he looks again, either at this or at the carpenter's tools beneath it, will perhaps see . . . nothing more than such a study of scene as Tintoret could but too easily obtain among the ruins of his own Venice, chosen to give a coarse explanation of the calling and the condition of the husband of Mary. (3:653)

A viewer's first impression, Ruskin thus emphasizes, is of a powerfully realistic depiction of a desolate scene in which the separate details force themselves upon the consciousness of the beholder in all their coarseness and

brutality - mildewed plaster, rough brickwork, crumbling mortar. We have encountered, it would seem, little more than the painter's love of the picturesque (Landow, *The Aesthetic*). "But there is more meant than this," Ruskin warns the reader, for if the spectator examines the

composition of the picture, he will find the whole symmetry of it depending on a narrow line of light, the edge of a carpenter's square, which connects these unused tools with an object at the top of the brickwork, a white stone, four square, the corner-stone of the old edifice, the base of its supporting column. This, I think, sufficiently explains the typical [typological] character of the whole. The ruined house is the Jewish dispensation; that obscurely arising in the dawning of the sky is the Christian; but the corner-stone of the old building remains, though the builders' tools lie idle beside it, and the stone which the builders refused is become the Headstone of the Corner. (3:264-65)

The typological symbolism Ruskin thus explained came as a revelation to Hunt, since it solved the artistic problems that had been troubling him. Landow asserts symbolism, first of all, strikes the informed spectator as a natural language inherent in the visual details themselves and not as something laid upon the objects in some artificial manner. As Ruskin pointed out, the first clue to the meaning of *The Annunciation* comes from its composition, which guides the eye to those details whose comprehension releases one into a world of religious vision. The second aspect of this kind of symbolism is that it spiritualises the most brutal fact, allowing the painter to concentrate simultaneously upon painterly skills and his deeper message (*The Aesthetic*). Typology, in other words, allowed Hunt to reconcile his love of detailed realism with his need to make painting depict the unseen truths of the spirit.



The crucial importance of this section of *Modern Painters* for Hunt appears in the fact that "he twice mentions it in his *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, once quoting it in its entirety" (Landow, Replete Meaning). First, when describing the events that led up to the formation of the Brotherhood, he reconstructs a conversation he had with Millais, during which he related his encounter with the second volume of *Modern Painters*. According to Hunt, he told his friend that he had recently had great delight in skimming over a certain book, *Modern Painters*, by a writer calling himself an Oxford Graduate; it was lent to me only for a few hours, but, by Jove! passages in it made my heart thrill. He feels the power and responsibility of art more than any author I have ever read. (as qtd. in 3:lvi)

Ruskin's descriptions of Venetian paintings, he told Millais, make you

"see them with your inner sight, and you feel that the men who did them had been appointed by God, like old prophets, to bear a sacred message" (as qtd. in 3:lvi).

He went on to tell his fellow student that Ruskin's readings of Tintoretto

make one see in the painter a sublime Hogarth. The annunciation takes place in a ruined "house, with walls tumbled down; the place in that condition stands as a symbol of the Jewish Church ... and it suggests an appropriateness in Joseph's occupation of a carpenter, that at first one did not recognise; he is the new builder! (as qtd. in 3:lvi)

In addition, Hunt returned to Tintoretto's *Annunciation*, Ruskin's interpretation, and their effect upon his own conceptions of art when he recounted how he and Ruskin together visited the Scuola di San Rocco in 1869. According to Hunt, the first picture they stood before was *The*

*Annunciation*, and although he found the ruin and dilapidation greater than he had expected,

the image raised in my mind by the "Oxford Graduate," and retained ever since, was not so different from what I saw before me, as conjured-up scenes derived secondhand often prove to be at sight of the original. (as qtd. in 14:166)

More importantly, now that the painter finally had a chance to view the picture, which had long had such a major, if indirect, influence upon his work, he was surprised to discover the validity of Ruskin's interpretation. After examining the painting in detail, he concluded:

There could be no doubt that Tintoretto had the purpose to suggest the desolation that had come upon the existing Israelitish Church, and its replacement by a new edifice. (as qtd. in 14:166)

It was this occasion of his first inspection of *The Annunciation* that Hunt then used to set out his own theories of art, and in doing so, he joined his own cause with that of the great Venetian:

When language was not transcendental enough to complete the meaning of a revelation, symbols were relied upon for heavenly teaching, and familiar images, chosen from the known, were made to mirror the unknown spiritual truth. The forerunners and contemporaries of Tintoretto had consecrated the custom, to which he gave a larger value and more original meaning. How far such symbolism is warranted depends upon its unobtrusiveness and its restriction within limits not destroying natural beauty. There is no more reason why the features belonging to a picture should be distorted for the purpose of such imaginative suggestion than that the poet's metaphors should spoil his words for ordinary uses of man. Tintoretto's meaning was expressed with no arbitrary or unnatural disturbance of the truth. (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning)

In concluding this defence of a combination of realism and complex symbolism, Hunt practically merged himself with his great predecessor:

I thought what happiness Tintoretto must have felt when he had this illuminating thought presented to him, and of his joy in carrying it out on canvas, and was wondering how few were the men who had pondered over the picture to read it thoroughly, until in fulness of time the decipherer came and made it clear. (as qtd. in Landow, Replete Meaning)

Assuredly, Ruskin was the decipherer who came in the manner of John the Baptist to reveal the true meaning of old truths, but he also served to prepare for the culmination of these old truths, in this case Hunt's own painting. It is difficult to determine to what extent Hunt intended such a parallel to be drawn, for, when completed, it is likely to become rather outrageous. Nonetheless, since both he and Ruskin believed artists, at their best, to be inspired prophets, and neither would have found the general implications of such a suggestion disturbing (Landow, Replete Meaning).

Concerning the manner of Ruskin's interpretation, Hunt goes on to relate how Ruskin, who had lost the religious belief which had originally founded his interpretation of *The Annunciation* now dwelt

more on the arrangement of lines in the design and the technique displayed in the handling, than on the mysteries that he had interpreted five-and-twenty years before. (as qtd. in 14:166)

Ruskin's diary shows that this changed attitude led to a long discussion about faith, but before that, Ruskin, who had not looked over his interpretation for many years, stood before *The Annunciation* and read it aloud (14:166). Hunt quotes the entire passage from the second volume of *Modern Painters* adding, "The words brought back to my mind

the little bedroom, twenty-two years since, wherein I sat till the early morning reading the same passage with marvel" (as qtd. in 14:167).

According to Landow, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* reveals the importance Ruskin's criticism had for Hunt's ideas of art (Replete Meaning); but, in a letter he wrote in 1880, he explained the role it had had in his life as well. Hunt says that, before he encountered Ruskin's works, he had been

a contemptuous unbeliever in any spiritual principles but the development of talent, and Shelley and Lord Byron with Keats were my best modern heroes - all read by the light of materialism - or sensualism. (as qtd. in Landow, *Your Good Influence*)

Then, as already mentioned, a fellow student who was trying to convert him to Roman Catholicism lent him *Modern Painters*, under the mistaken impression that its author belonged to his faith:

It was high time that I got something, and this something thus strangely gained was what first arrested me in my downward course. It was the voice of God. I read this in rapture and it sowed some seed of shame. (as qtd. in Landow, *Your Good Influence*)

If the painter's fervent language sounds like that of an evangelical record of conversion, the resemblance is quite appropriate, for Hunt's words convey precisely the kind of response Ruskin had hoped to awaken in every young artist (Landow, *Replete Meaning*). Further, as Hunt told him in the letter of 1880, like a true believer he had converted others to the truth:

All that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had of Ruskinism came from this reading of mine. Rossetti was too absorbed with Dante and with French literature and still more, of course, English Romantic Rhyme to read what he decided to be too determinedly preaching, and Millais never read

anything altho" he had a real genius in getting others to tell him the results of their reading and their thoughts thereon[.] I have never yet read any book with blind submission but these first books of yours which I met with were a real treasure, and all of your later books have been the more precious from my remembrance of the benefit which you conferred on me at first. (as qtd. in Landow, *Your Good Influence*)

Hunt's outpourings reveal the central importance to his life and art of his encounter with *Modern Painters*, for it not only gave his painting new purpose and method, but also led him towards the faith which they required. Landow emphasizes *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* makes it clear that one of Ruskin's most important influences came in his explication of typological symbolism, which reconciled realism with elaborate iconography. In addition, Hunt's letter emphasizes how serious, how essential, was the entire Ruskinian message not only to him at this point in his career, but also to other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (Landow, *Your Good Influence*).

## 5. Dante Gabriel Rossetti and "Ut Pictura Poesis"

Throughout the Renaissance and eighteenth century, poetry and painting had been juxtaposed as a means of defending the prestige of the visual art. In Renaissance Italy, in eighteenth-century England, and in the England of 1843, when Ruskin published the first volume of *Modern Painters*, painting was the younger sister of poetry, trying to edge into social acceptability on the arm of an elder relation (Landow, *The Aesthetic*).

Aaron Kashtan explains, that since the Renaissance, artists had vehemently protested that their enterprise, like the poet's, was not merely a craft or trade but a liberal art requiring mental skills capable of providing great gifts for mankind. Painters of saddles and painters of fresco were often placed in the same guilds. Poetry, on the other hand, had no connections with trade; and although, as in the English Renaissance, literary arts occasionally had to be guarded against charges of triviality or immorality, it was generally accepted that poetry was a liberal art possessing a long history of service for intellect and soul. The defence of the painter's work and status was in a close alliance of the two arts that relied heavily upon support from the classics. Zeuxis and Simonides, Aristotle and Horace were summoned to the defence, and their illustrative comparisons became the basis of a widely held theory of the arts. This hardening of analogies produced the humanistic theory of painting which emphasized that painting had to depend upon poetry, both as model and source, for subject, content, and purpose. As poetry drew painting upward, it impressed its own nature on the sister art.

By 1856 the "ut pictura poesis" analogy, along with its associated traditions, had lost much of its former vigour, but John Ruskin revitalized it in order to formulate his own theory of the alliance of the sister arts (5:xxxii). In volume three of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin identified both painting and poetry as forms of imaginative expression:

Painting is properly to be opposed to speaking or writing, but not to poetry. Both painting and speaking are means of expression. Poetry is the employment of either for the noblest purposes. (5:289)

Not surprisingly, Ruskin drew the inspiration, as it was in many other cases, from Turner. This painter whose works Ruskin knew best when he began *Modern Painters*, believed in the principle of "ut pictura poesis", and the titles and epigraphs, which he gave his paintings, emphasize his own alliance of poetry and painting. As Hewison calculates, of the approximately 200 oil paintings that Turner exhibited in his lifetime, 53 have poetic epigraphs, and 26 of these the artist composed himself (29).

The author of *Modern Painters* early perceived how the poems that the artist appended to his works provide major clues to his intentions. He points out that the "course of his mind may be traced (13:125)" through the poetry he attached to his works.

In addition, as Professor of Perspective at the Royal Academy, Turner delivered lectures between 1811 and 1823 that often considered the relation of the two arts. In one of them, Turner included a passage demonstrating that he believed poetry and painting were interdependent:

Painting and poetry, flowing from the same fount mutually by vision, constantly comparing Poetic allusions by natural forms in one and applying forms found in nature to the other, meandering into streams by application, which reciprocally improve, reflect,

and heighten each other's beauties like ... mirrors.  
(as qtd. in Hewison 31)

In *Modern Painters* Ruskin drew an analogy between poetry and painting to advocate for the widespread recognition of the latter. At the time, poetry enjoyed much greater popularity than painting, a situation that Ruskin tried to rectify by favourably comparing the two. In his *John Ruskin*, Landow points out:

Art was gaining respectability, but painting had not achieved anything like the popularity or prestige of literature. Education of increasing numbers of people and new publishing practices had produced a sizeable reading public in England, and part of Ruskin's purpose in *Modern Painters* was to create and attract a similar audience among those, largely the middle classes, who were unaware of the art of painting.

As one component of this project of public aesthetic education, Ruskin implicitly argued that each of the two arts could attempt to imitate the typical qualities of the other. His technique of word-painting, as used throughout *Modern Painters*, employed language to mediate the experience of viewing visual stimuli in order to prove such imitation was possible. Although Ruskin wrote his word paintings in prose rather than in poetry, their effectiveness implied that in the hands of a skilled artist, the creative tools of one medium could recreate the effects of the other.

As was already pointed out in the part considering Ruskin's perception of art, he considered drawing to be of an eminent importance. In his opinion, by attempting to capture nature's beauties in drawing or painting, "one sharpens one's perceptions of both nature and art" (Newall 26). That is essential, since in the first place, art



possesses major value because it embodies the essence of past ages of greatness:

Whole eras of mighty history are summed, and the passions of dead myriads are concentrated, in the existence of a noble art. (18:170)

According to Ruskin, from such great painting, from such great poetry, we can learn more deeply than in any other manner the wisdom, beliefs, and feelings of men and societies now vanished into the darkness of time. Art, which has the power to release us from the limitations of our own time, can thus reveal truths which we have neglected or of which we are ignorant; and by so doing it furnishes us with a necessary perspective from which to view our own assumptions and complacencies (Hewison 60).

Ideally, Ruskin wanted the readers of *Modern Painters* to test his ideas by trying to draw the infinite variety of nature themselves, and in fact he wrote *The Elements of Drawing*, his manual for beginning artists, to promote such a desire. However, realizing that most readers would have to be convinced by his verbal arguments, Ruskin employs his great gift of word-painting to provide his readers with the kind of visual relation to the world he would like them to develop.

According to Landow's *John Ruskin*, in Ruskin's most elaborate form of word-painting, he develops his role of Master of Experience the most fully:

He sets us within the depicted scene itself, makes us participate in its energies, and here fulfils his own descriptions of imaginative art.

Several passages in *Modern Painters* explain that both the novice and the painter without imagination must content themselves with a simple depiction of visual fact. On the contrary, the great imaginative artist grants us the

privilege of momentarily seeing with his eyes and imaginative vision; "we experience his phenomenological relation to the world" (Landow, *John Ruskin*).

Ruskin achieves this goal in language by employing what we may anachronistically term a cinematic prose; that is, he first places himself and his reader firmly in position, after which he generates a complete landscape by moving his centre of perception, or "camera eye," in one of two ways. He may move us progressively deeper into the landscape in a manner that anticipates cinematic use of the zoom lens, or he may move us laterally across the scene while remaining at a fixed distance from the subject -- a technique that similarly anticipates the cinematic technique called panning. By thus first establishing his centre of observation and then directing its attention with patterned movement, Ruskin manages to do what is almost impossible - create a coherent visual space with language. He employs such procedure when describing not only works of art but also the natural world they depict. (Landow, *John Ruskin*)

Landow elsewhere suggests that such writing also serves to establish what the older rhetoricians called the speaker's ethos. The main problem for the Victorian sage is to convince others that he is worth listening to, that he is a man whose arguments, however strange they may at first appear, are the products of a sincere, honest, and above all reliable, mind. One of the first tasks of any speaker or writer is to establish himself before his audience as a believable, even authoritative, voice; and this Ruskin easily accomplishes by demonstrating that he has seen and has seen more than the critics who oppose him. His critics are blind, and he has vision (Landow, *How to Read Ruskin*).

The revitalization of the link between the painting and poetry, the so-called sister arts, formed also a key component of the Pre-Raphaelite project. In general, Pre-Raphaelite painters and poets employed two ways of

synthesizing the two arts. First was the complementary approach, in which, according to Ainsworth:

a work in one art form acted as a complement to a work in the other, resulting in a double artwork whose poetic and pictorial components produced a combined aesthetic effect. (66)

Later Pre-Raphaelites employed a digressive approach in which, a preexisting work in one medium served as the point of departure for a radically different work in the other art form. The shift from one approach to the other suggests not only the chronological evolution of Pre-Raphaelitism but also the equal viability of both approaches. (Ainsworth 66). A comparison of the Pre-Raphaelites' two modes of combining the sister arts shows that while they could imitate one art by means of the other, they could also produce derivative works whose effectiveness did not depend on faithfulness to their sources.

At the beginning of Pre-Raphaelite employment of "ut pictura poesis" stands their common admiration of John Keats, a poet Ruskin had much admired, for he wrote in the second volume of *Modern Painters*:

I have come to that pass of admiration for him now, that I dare not read him, so discontented he makes me with my own work. (4:452)

Whereas Ruskin's feeling for poetry of other artists fluctuated, his admiration for Keats was constant. In one of his last lectures at Oxford Ruskin told his pupils to "read as much Keats as possible (1:254)." In fact, Keats was the cornerstone of Pre-Raphaelitism in poetry especially at its beginning. His poetry enjoyed the approval of some major artists and critics, though it was unknown to the general public. Judging from Ford,

before the Pre-Raphaelites, a group of Cambridge undergraduates known as *the Apostles* had attempted to make Keats's work and style known to a wider audience in the lyrics and essays they dedicated to him. (as qtd. in Bottai)

*The Apostles* included Alfred Tennyson as well as the first biographer of Keats, Richard Monckton Milnes, later known as Lord Houghton. Coincidentally, he wrote the biography the same year the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood began.

Being the only true poet of the founding group, it was Dante Gabriel Rossetti who chose Keats as spiritual leader of the Brotherhood. Reading Lord Houghton's biography, Rossetti found several points of contact with the poet. He shared his enthusiasm with his brother William Michael in a letter dated 1848:

I have not yet had time to get quite through the first volume of Keats, which is exceedingly interesting. He seems to have been a glorious fellow, and says in one place (to my great delight) that, having just looked over a folio of the first and second schools of Italian painting, he has come to the conclusion that the early men surpassed even Raphael himself! (as qtd. in Bottai)

Keats comment was prompted by his looking at engravings in the house of his friend Haydon that reproduced frescos of a church of Milan. He was astonished by the richness and the creativity of decorations, "there was left so much room for the imagination!" (as qtd. in Bottai). What is more, Hilton considers the event described in the letter to be the reason for the name Pre-Raphaelite (33).

Among the poems Lord Houghton included in Keats's biography *The Eve of Saint Mark*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* together with *The Eve of Saint Agnes* and *Isabella* were the Rossettis' favourite, and their themes and pictorial details appeared in the works of his own as well as of his

Pre-Raphaelite brothers William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais.

Dante Gabriel, who had enormous admiration for these poems, declared:

*The Eve of St. Agnes* and the fragment *The Eve of Saint Mark* are in manner the choicest and the chastest of Keats' works (Nicol 74)."

In these verses he found the poet's most valuable quality, that of translating into words the highly imaginative sensual world. In Rossetti's mind Keats exhausted all possibility of this kind of poetry for the posterity. As he wrote to his friend and disciple William Morris, "the next Keats can only be a painter" (Nicol 74).

Next to Keats's poetry, there was another pleasure the Pre-Raphaelites shared with the great Victorian critic and which also much contributed to their later incorporation of poetry as a "sister art" of painting. In *Praeterita* Ruskin confesses:

But I had never cared for ornamental design until in 1850 or '51 I chanced, at a bookseller's in a back alley, on a little fourteenth-century Hours of the Virgin, not of refined work, but extremely rich, grotesque, and full of pure colour. The new worlds which every leaf of this book opened to me, and the joy I had, counting their letters and unravelling their arabesques as if they had all been of beaten gold,—as many of them indeed were,—cannot be told, any more than—everything else, of good, that I wanted to tell. (35:254)

The collection and study of illuminated manuscripts henceforth became one of the greatest of Ruskin's pleasures and the most constant of his pursuits, for he continues:

But now that I had a missal of my own, and could touch its leaves and turn, and even here and there understand the Latin of it, no girl of seven years old with a new doll is prouder or happier: but the feeling was something between the girl's with her doll, and

Aladdin's in a new Spirit-slave to build palaces for him with jewel windows. For truly a well-illuminated missal is a fairy cathedral full of painted windows, bound together to carry in one's pocket, with the music and the blessing of all its prayers besides. (35:254)

The precious old manuscripts, works of art combining both literature as well as images, were the favourite books for all Pre-Raphaelites. Conserved in great number and value in the Bodleian Library of Oxford and in the British Museum, the codex illustrations fascinated them with their enamelled varied colours and their archaic simplicity (Barnes 28). Not surprisingly, the British Museum was also the place where young Rossetti came across manuscripts of his future artistic hero, William Blake.

As the *Rossetti Archive* asserts, Blake's "composite art" (for a sample see Appendix 6), combination of poetry with images, had a profound influence on everything Rossetti did (*Rossetti's Double Work*). In the fall of 1848, Rossetti was working on his first major painting, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (for the painting see Appendix 7), also the first major oil painting carrying initials "P.R.B." for Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He wrote a sonnet (see Appendix 8A) to accompany the picture. He finished the painting in time to exhibit it at the Hyde Park Corner Free Exhibition in March 1849 and at that time wrote a second sonnet (see Appendix 8B) for the painting (*The Girlhood*).

Each sonnet composed of two stanzas, the poem explores Mary's childhood as well as the traditional symbols associated with the life of the Virgin. The first stanza of part one places Mary in geographical and temporal context and discusses her character. Rossetti does not visually describe Mary, her surroundings or her actions in the poem; instead, he reserves his adjectives for description of Mary's character. Her actions in the painting subtly reinforce some of the

poem's pronouncements, yet they do not blatantly convey the contents of the poem. (Newman)

Her kin she cherished with devout respect:  
Her gifts were simpleness of intellect  
And supreme patience.

These lines of the poem particularly express Mary's simplicity and lack of learning. Rossetti took issue with earlier painters' depictions of the subject that showed the Virgin engaged in reading, citing the historical inaccuracy of such depictions (Newman). In a letter to his godfather in November 1848, he wrote of *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*,

The subject is the education of the Blessed Virgin, one which has been treated at various times by Murillo and other painters -- but as I cannot but think, in a very inadequate manner, since they have invariably represented her as reading from a book under the superintendence of her mother, St. Anne, an occupation obviously incompatible with these times, and which could only pass muster if treated in a purely symbolical manner. In order, therefore, to attempt something more probable and at the same time less commonplace, I have represented the future Mother of our Lord as occupied in embroidering a lily -- always under the direction of St. Anne. (as qtd. in *The Girlhood*)

Thus, Mary's activity in the painting, though not explicitly suggested in the poem, is significant in that it depicts her engaged in the type of work she actually might have done. This also emphasizes her "supreme patience," apparent in the way she continues her embroidery, despite the fact that her gaze, directed straight ahead, rather than down at her needlework, indicates that her mind may be elsewhere. The painting does not make clear the subject of her contemplation. Since the poem describes her faith and her "grave peace," it seems likely that she may be

contemplating spiritual matters while accepting her current position without question. Indeed, she appears placid, serious and steadfast. Without the poem's clues to her character in the text, however, the viewer might find Mary's expression far more cryptic. (Newman)

The second stanza of the first sonnet describes the Annunciation in the barest, least symbolic terms, relying instead on the change this event produces in Mary's emotions.

So held she through her girlhood; as it were  
An angel-watered lily, that near God  
Grows and is quiet. Till, one dawn at home,  
She woke in her white bed, and had no fear  
At all,--yet wept till sunshine, and felt  
awed;  
Because the fullness of the time was come.

Rossetti depicts most of this stanza in another painting called *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (for the painting see Appendix 9). Analogous to the poem, in which Mary is described as a growing lily, rather than descriptive of the poem, Mary's completed embroidery of a lily hangs near the end of her bed in the painting. Her bed is white, as in the poem, and the light in the room suggests early morning. Rossetti does not depict her tears, however, perhaps for fear of resorting to sentimentality. Rather, Mary's pose and expression fill in the vague ideas suggested by her feeling of "awe." Her expression and hunched posture convey an intense hesitation, bordering on fear, although the poem states that she did not feel fear at all (Ainsworth 54).

The second sonnet contains an explication of the symbolism in *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, begun quite bluntly with the pronouncement "These are the symbols".

The symbolic explanations connect quite literally to the painting, and provide a kind of key to the painting's meaning, although they are not so much



visually described as explicated. For example, Rossetti explains that the cloth on which Mary embroiders a lily is unfinished, suggesting, "That Christ is not yet born". The poem concludes with the metaphorical transfer of responsibility of caring for Jesus, from God to Mary (Ainsworth 54-55).

When the painting was exhibited, the pair of sonnets was attached to the picture frame on a piece of gold-leaf paper as an accompanying textual component. This composite set of textual and pictorial materials on the subject of "*Mary's Girlhood*" (which was the title he gave to the first sonnet) defines what has come to be known as Rossetti's "double work of art".

Thus, the typical Rossettian double work develops in the manner of *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*. That means Rossetti executes a picture and then writes a poem, typically a sonnet or a pair of sonnets that comments and elaborates upon the pictorial work.

There was only one case when the textual work preceded the pictorial work and another one when the textual and visual elements were inseparably bound to each other in the manner of a Blakean illuminated work. Because the pictorial work is normally the determining element in the array of "doubled" materials, the textual elements typically organize themselves in relation to it both conceptually and physically. The commonest place for the doubled texts to appear is as inscriptions on the frames of the pictures. But texts can also appear within the space of the picture itself. Often the texts do not appear at all, but are only alluded to in the picture's title. In rare instances the texts are put on the back of the picture (*Rossetti's Double Works*).

The situation is defined in a notebook entry Rossetti wrote for a picture he projected but did not execute,

"Venus surrounded by mirrors, reflecting her in different views (as qtd. in Ainsworth 57)."

The idea defines what is involved in the Rossettian double work of art. Each part of the double work is a unique view of an ideal visionary reality whose existence is posited through the different incarnate forms. The whole of the double work becomes, then, a dynamic representation of the process by which the visionary imagination sustains and develops itself. (Ainsworth 57)

## 6. Conclusion

In 1877 John Ruskin wrote, "The teaching of Art, as I understand it, is teaching of all things (29:86)." Ruskin's thought on art was based on a fundamental premise that knowledge and understanding of nature and humankind's place in it is gained through the — indeed, the art — of seeing. He believed that his visual exploration gave him an understanding of physical and moral truths that were unseen, forgotten, or simply ignored by all but a few intuitive minds. The greatest of these minds, Joseph Mallord William Turner, was lost in 1851 and Ruskin, who insisted that every nation at every moment in history including his own, must be judged by art it produced, began his search for Turner's successors. He soon encountered the members and associates of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, who shared his ideas on being truth to nature and his anti-academic attitudes. As a consequence, he genuinely wished to nurture these promising young talents in order to initiate a renaissance in British art and society. From the examined materials it can be seen that Ruskin's influence upon them was eminent.

Firstly, their reading of *Modern Painters* encouraged in particular the Brotherhood's early penchant for detailed realism. However, Ruskin felt, that the finest art was much more than the mere transcription of physical reality. To him, it was the fullest expression of the relationship of humankind to nature and to God. In its shape, design and colour, any natural form revealed to him the innate beauty and harmony of creative power. This was the idea he had in mind when supervising Millais' work in Scotland, resulting in the famous *Portrait of John Ruskin*.

Secondly, in the second volume of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin demonstrated how each seemingly representational detail in Tintoretto's *San Rocco Annunciation* had symbolic meaning. It was a lesson that impressed all the Pre-Raphaelites particularly Hunt, for his *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* demonstrates he made symbolic realism a cornerstone of his art.

Finally, at the peak of his fame, Ruskin's criticism carried immense weight with a public eager to hear his views on all matters related to art. He was distinct from other critics and art journalists of his day in his ability to describe and interpret works of art in colourful and convincing language. In his "word painting" Ruskin proved the unity between literature and painting. In 1850 the Brotherhood brought out a journal, *The Germ*, and though edited by William Michael Rossetti, it was chiefly the initiative of his brother Dante Gabriel. It demonstrated his belief in the close links between painting and poetry, which was, for the first time, unequivocally reflected in the *Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, a typical example of Rossetti's "double works" of art.

To conclude, this paper proves that John Ruskin was not only a convinced defender of Pre-Raphaelism, but also the most significant driving force anticipating and affecting the movement. This contention has been proved on the example of its three most notable members John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

## 7. Resumé

Bratrstvo preraphaelitů bylo založeno v září roku 1848. Ačkoliv zakládajících členů bylo celkem sedm, pouze tři tvořili skutečné jádro skupiny. Byli to John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt a Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Tři různě, ale nadmíru nadaní malíři, kteří cítili, že Anglické umění se nachází na pokraji úpadku. Možná právě fakt, že všichni tři byli žáky Královské akademie je vedl k odmítnutí barokních a klasicistních tradic zosobněných právě touto institucí. Usilovně hledali svůj umělecký vzor mimo Akademii a posléze ho rozpoznali v Lasinioových rytinách podle fresek Giotta a dalších raně renesančních umělců v Campo Santo v Pise. Stročnost a lineárnost těchto reprodukcí se nakonec ukázaly jako jednoznačný impuls ke zformování Bratrstva. To jasně dokazují záznamy Rossetiho a Hunt, kteří považovali tyto rytiny za počáteční bod preraphaelismu.

Millais, Hunt i Rossetti silně cítili spojitost mezi jimi samými a italskými umělci rané renesance. Snažili se přistupovat k přírodě s čistotou a upřímností chybějící akademickému malířství, které vždy následovalo naučená pravidla. Uznali, že pokud má jejich malířství být dobré, nebude to skrze následování těchto pravidel. Jejich malby neměli zobrazovat klasická, dokola omílaná témata, měly být realistické, tedy přesně odpovídající přírodě, čistě provedené a měly se vyznačovat značnou barevností. Toho dosáhli malbou na mokrý bílý podklad, technikou, která už po nějaký čas byla mezi několika málo malíři v tehdejší době rozšířena. Tato technika uspokojila nejen záměr výrazné barevnosti, ale umožnila také vysoce podrobné rozpracování všech částí obrazu. Tomu napomohlo i rovnoměrné rozprostření osvětlení po celém prostoru obrazů

a ne jen po jeho hlavních, jak bylo v tehdejší malbě ustáleným zvykem.

Obrazy, s kterými Millais, Hunt a Rossetti obeslali výstavy roku 1848 měli i přes svou značnou odlišnost úspěch. V důsledku toho členům bratrstva, v té době ještě tajného společenství, stouplо sebevědomí. To vedlo k rozhodnutí vydávat jejich vlastní časopis. V roce 1850 začal vycházet *Zárodek (The Germ)*, mimo jiné ztělesnění preraphaelitského náhledu na literaturu a malířství jako na dvě navzájem se doplňující umění.

V důsledku vydání tohoto časopisu však skupina přišla o svou anonymitu. Jejich revoluční zásady vyšli najevo a reakce na ně nenechali na sebe dlouho čekat. Paradoxně i díky sžíravé kritice která se objevila v tehdejší tisku se o preraphaelity začal zajímat i jejich budoucí hlavní zastánce John Ruskin. Ten na jejich obranu napsal a do novin poslal dva dopisy, ve kterých vyvrátil všechna nařčení, jež byla proti nim vznesena. Ruskinova intervence byla zlomovým bodem v osudech preraphaelitů. Nejen že přiměla ostatní kritiky když ne změnit, tak alespoň přehodnotit jejich kritické názory na preraphaelity, ale na dlouhou dobu svedla dohromady osudy autora *Moderních malířů* a skupiny, která v jeho očích měla hrát hlavní roli při obrodě britského malířství.

Tato Ruskinova myšlenka byla založena na jeho pojetí umění jako prostředku k poznání základních vztahů v přírodě a role člověka v ní. Pro něj malířství nebylo pouhým otrockým zobrazením skutečnosti, ale zachycením prvotní myšlenky, která dala vzniknout celému vesmíru. Tato práce dokazuje nejen jak byla tato myšlenka pro Ruskina důležitá ale i jak se promítla do jeho vztahu s preraphaelity. Za největšího žijícího umělce schopného zprostředkovat divákovy zmíněnou zkušenost Ruskin považoval Josepha

Mallorda Williama Turnera. Po jeho smrti v roce 1851 Ruskin vrhl všechny své síly do obhajoby prerafaelismu, v němž viděl pokračování tradice Turnerovy malby.

Z rozboru *Moderních malířů* vyplívá, že John Ruskin nebyl pouze zapřísáhlým obhájcem prerafaelismu po většinu doby jeho trvání, ale ve své podstatě i jednou z hlavních postav tento směr předjímajících a na tento směr působících.

V této diplomové práci je skrze dané výtvarné dílo každý z trojice Millias, Hunt a Rossetti identifikován jako představitel jednoho z charakteristických znaků prerafaelismu. Millaisův portrét Johna Ruskina je považován za typický produkt prerafaelitské techniky malby, Huntovo *Světlo světa* ilustruje prerafaelitské užití symbolismu a konečně Rossettiho *Mládí panny Marie* je chápáno jako důkaz spojitosti mezi malířstvím a poezií.

Z těchto tří zakládajících členů bratrstva prerafaelitů si ze začátku u Ruskina získal největší sympatie Millais, nejnadanější malíř skupiny. Tento vztah vyvrcholil při jejich společné letní dovolené ve Skotsku roku 1852, po které Effie, Ruskinova manželka, požádala o rozvod, aby se za dva roky znovu provdala právě za Millaise. Hlavní náplní společně stráveného léta byl ale v první řadě Millaisův portrét Ruskina. Na jeho provedení kritik nejen dohlížel ale i ho, jak vyplývá z jeho vlastních deníkových záznamů, usměrňoval. Právě Ruskinova vlastní, vysoce realistická kresba rulového masivu může být pokládána za studii k tomuto obrazu, neboť skalní masiv na Millaisově malbě je způsobem svého provedení věrnou kopií Ruskinova provedení. Z tohoto faktu je patrné, jak důležité pro autora *Moderních malířů* bylo, aby jeho chráněncem dosáhl co nejvěrnějšího napodobení přírody. Pro Ruskina měl totiž i ten zdánlivě nejméně důležitý prvek obrovský význam, neboť v Ruskinově

pojetí byl i nejmenším kamínek utvořen tou samou silou jako ta nejvyšší hora.

Když Ruskin obhajoval preraphaelity v pamfletu stejného jména, zdůraznil, že preraphaelismus má jeden základní princip. Tím podle něj byla naprosto nekompromisní věrnost ve všem co dělá, dosažena prováděním všeho do nejmenších detailů a důsledným napodobováním přírody. Takový přístup je patrný i z práce Williama Holmana Hunta na *Světlu světa*. Vedle důsledného realismu je tu však ještě jeden typický preraphaelitský prvek, jímž se tato malba vyznačuje. Hunt namaloval obraz, ve kterém každá, zdánlivě nepatrná maličkost nese vedlejší význam. Hunt sám nevěřil v úspěch tohoto díla, ale snad i díky Ruskinovi, který ikonografii obrazu vysvětlil v novinovém článku, bylo Huntovo zobrazení Krista přijato nadmíru příznivě. Pro Hunta to znamenalo, že je možné skloubit realistickou malbu a náboženskou ikonografii způsobem pochopitelným i pro ostatní a proto se užití symbolismu stalo hlavní náplní jeho dalších děl. Tato práce ukazuje, že sám Hunt za nejdůležitější zdroj inspirace pro spojení realismu a symbolismu považuje *Moderní malíře*. Přesněji jejich druhý díl, kde Ruskin pospal Tintorettovo *Zvěstování* jako dokonalý příklad užití symbolismu v malířství.

Ruskinův výklad *Zvěstování* předjímal i další výrazný aspekt preraphaelismu. Jeho interpretace Tintorettova obrazu je dokonalým příkladem slovomalby (word painting), díky níž byl Ruskin schopen zprostředkovat svým čtenářům takový zážitek z obrazu, jako kdyby před samotným obrazem stáli. V této diplomové práci je slovomalba považována za Ruskinův vklad do vývoje spojení literatury a malířství. Analogie mezi těmito dvěma druhy umění má dlouhou historii, které dal už před Ruskinem nový nádech Turner. Ten věřil, že poezie a malířství jsou vzájemně na sobě závislá umění.



Takových pasáží jako je ta popisující *Zvěstování* Ruskin do svých *Moderních malířů* zahrnul nespočet. Věřil, že skrze v té době populární literaturu dosáhne stejné prestiže i pro malířství. Počet čtenářů se zvyšoval hlavně ve středních vrstvách obyvatelstva a Ruskinovým záměrem v jeho hlavním díle se stalo přiblížení malířství právě těmto nejpočetnějším vrstvám společnosti.

Uvědomění si spojitosti mezi poezií a literaturou tvořilo i jeden z hlavních rysů prerafaelismu. Na začátku tohoto propojení stála jejich obliba Keatse, jehož básně byly častými náměty všech tří hlavních prerafaelitů. V řadách bratrstva to byl právě Rossetti, spíše básník než malíř, komu se nejlépe podařilo dokázat spojení obou umění. V *Mládí panny Marie* vytvořil prototyp uměleckého dvojdíla (double work of art), které je pro jeho další tvorbu charakteristické a v němž se snoubí poezie a malířství za účelem zprostředkování dokonalého uměleckého zážitku.

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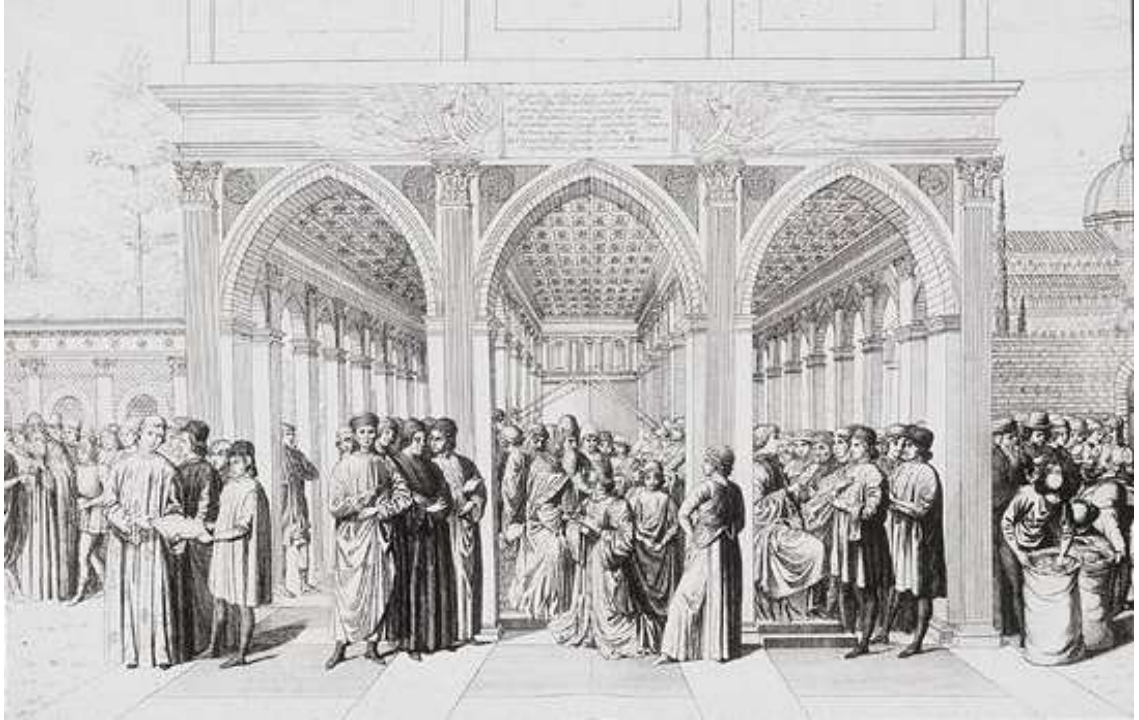
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Appendix 1 – Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto: *The Annunciation*



**Appendix 2** - Carlo Lasinio: *Joseph revealing himself to his brothers in Egypt*



Appendix 3: John Everett Millais: *Portrait of John Ruskin*



Appendix 4 – John Ruskin: *The Gneiss Rock, Glenfinlas*





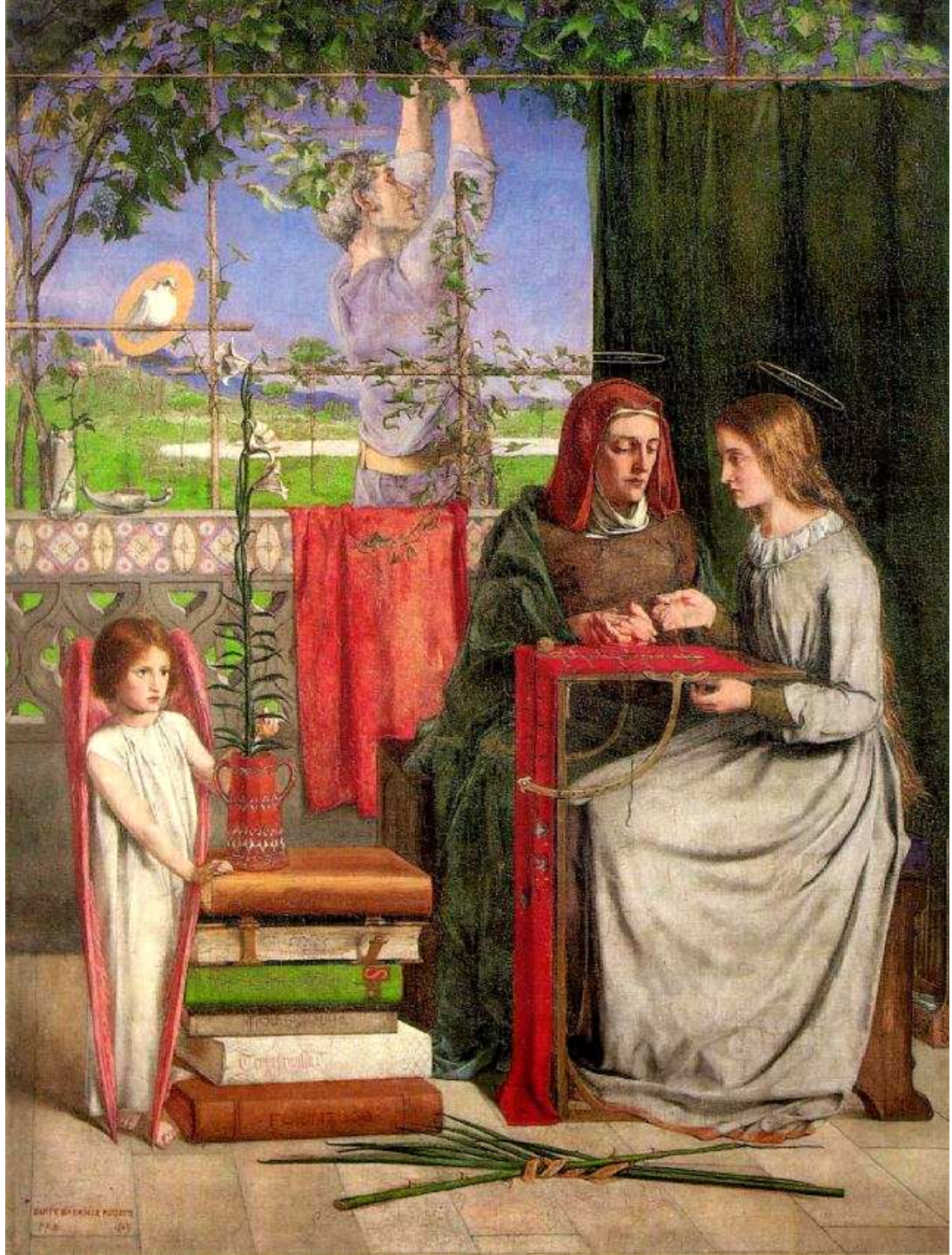
Appendix 5 – William Holman Hunt: *The Light of the World*



Appendix 6 - William Blake: *Infant Joy*



Appendix 7 – Dante Gabriel Rossetti: *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*



**Appendix 8A** – Dante Gabriel Rossetti: *The Girlhood of Mary  
Virgin (for a picture)- sonnet I*

This is that blessed Mary, pre-elect  
God's Virgin. Gone is a great while, and she  
Was young in Nazareth of Galilee.  
Her kin she cherished with devout respect:  
Her gifts were simpleness of intellect  
And supreme patience. From her mother's knee  
Faithful and hopeful; wise in charity;  
Strong in grave peace; in duty circumspect.  
So held she through her girlhood; as it were  
An angel-watered lily, that near God  
Grows, and is quiet. Till one dawn, at home,  
She woke in her white bed, and had no fear  
At all,—yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed;

**Appendix 8B** – Dante Gabriel Rossetti: *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin (for a picture)- sonnet II*

These are the symbols. On that cloth of red  
I' the centre, is the Tripoint,—perfect each  
Except the second of its points, to teach  
That Christ is not yet born. The books (whose head  
Is golden Charity, as Paul hath said)  
Those virtues are wherein the soul is rich:  
Therefore on them the lily standeth, which  
Is Innocence, being interpreted.  
The seven-thorned briar and the palm seven-leaved  
Are her great sorrows and her great reward.<sup>10</sup>  
Until the time be full, the Holy One  
Abides without. She soon shall have achieved  
Her perfect purity: yea, God the Lord  
Shall soon vouchsafe His Son to be her Son.

Appendix 9 – Dante Gabriel Rossetti: *Ecce Ancilla Domini*



Appendix 10 - Portraits



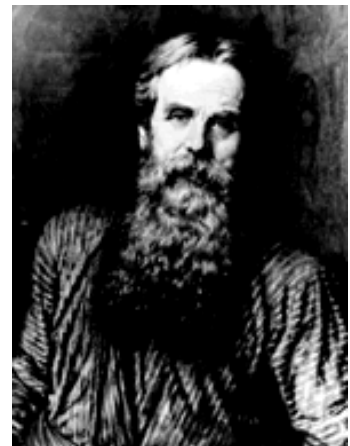
J. Ruskin



J. E. Millais



D. G. Rossetti



W. H. Hunt

## ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	John Ruskin: Prophet of the Pre-Raphaelites
Autor práce	Jan Šíblo
Obor	Učitelství Aj pro základní školy
Rok obhajoby	2005
Vedoucí práce	Michael M. Kaylor MA.
Anotace	<p>Každá z hlavních částí této práce identifikuje vždy jednoho ze tří zakládajících členů prerafaelismu jako zosobnění určitého charakteristického projevu tohoto uměleckého směru. Je popsána prerafaelitská technika malby ve spojitosti s Johnem Everettem Millaisem, prerafaelitské užití symbolismu, jehož největším zastáncem byl William Holman Hunt a provázání poezie s malířstvím, což se v Bratrstvu prerafaelitů nejvýrazněji projevilo na díle Danta Gabriela Rossettiho. Tato práce se snaží dokázat, že všechny tyto základní projevy předjímá i John Ruskin.</p>
Klíčová slova	<p>Malířství  Viktoriánská Anglie  Ruskin, John  Prerafaelité  Millais, John Everett  Hunt, William holman  Rossetti, Dante Gabriel</p>