

Anglais spé (3)

19 - 02 - 13

Charlotte RIBEYROL

The Pre-Raphaelites

- Part 1 : Realism -

Victorian area (1837-1901)

Pre-Raphaelites are considered in France to be chocolate-box artists. It shows how **provocative and original** these artists were. Burne-Jones has not much to do with the original brotherhood. He belongs to the second phase.

The Pre-Raphaelite movement was founded by three young royal academy students in 1848 and ended in 1853 :

- John Everett Millais
- William Holman Hunt
- Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Giotto painting the portrait of Dante* (1852), Coll. of Lord Andrew Lloyd-Webber : *The artist is also a craftsman : you can see the painting as being made and the tools.*

They collaborated with Collinson, Christine Rossetti (poet), Thomas Wooln (sculptor), Stephens.

Connection poetry-painting

They were rebels and fought the **artificial** (grand scale, narrative, moral) **genre** paintings exhibited at the Academy and defended by Joshua Reynolds "Sloshua" (because of the brush-strokes he was using and his **mannerism**). Reynolds was an admirer of Raphael, *Madonna of the Meadows* (1506), KHM, Vienna (oil on canvas)

They preferred **medieval and early Renaissance paintings**.

THE AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES OF THE BROTHERHOOD

William Michael Rossetti defined them in 1848 in the *Germ Magazine* (sort issue in the 1750)

- To have **genuine, authentic, original ideas** to express
- To **study nature** attentively, so as to know how to express them
- To sympathize with what is **direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art**, to the exclusion of what is **conventional and self-parading**
- And most indispensable of all, to **produce thoroughly good pictures and statues**

- John Everett Millais, *Isabella*, (1849), oil on canvas, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary* (1848), oil on canvas, Tate Gallery

Bright colours and lack of chiaroscuro. None of the figures is **idealized**. Colour is favored over perspective.

1 – Importance of **narrative subjects base on literary works and themes**

The title refers to **John Keats** (Romantic poet of the beginning of the 19th c. = 1840s) + influence by Boccaccio.

- **John Everett Millais**, *The Eve of St Agnes* (1862) oil on canvas, Royal Collection
- **William Holman Hunt**, *The Eve of St Agnes* (1848) oil on canvas, Walker Art Gallery

2 – Importance of **Romanticism** : breaking down Classicism (Racine)

- **Millais**, *Ophelia* (1851-52), 30 x 44, oil on canvas, Tate Gallery (Act IV, Scene VII, Gertrude)

It may also refer to **Edgar Allan Poe** (1846), according to whom the most beautiful subject in poetry was the **death of a beautiful woman** > there is an obsessive association of nature, water and feminineness.

“Je ne conçois guère de Beauté là il où n’y pas de Malheur.” → « The river is **weeping**. »

Elizabeth Siddal and **Jane Morris** were Pre-Raphaelite models, two key stunners, free, daring, provocative and liberated woman. Elizabeth was the muse of the group, and married Rossetti in 1860. She stayed in a bath tub for several hours for this painting. The figure reminds us of **reclining effigies** (“gisants”) in medieval Churches.

- **Arthur Hughes**, *The Lady of Shalott*, (1872), oil/canvas (poem by Lord **Alfred Tennyson**)
- **Alexandre Cabanel**, *Ophelia* (1883), oil on canvas, private collection

3 – Striking sense of **photographic realism infused with powerful symbolism**

Pre-Raphaelites mingle highly realistic and symbolic details. Each flower has a key significance = they all refer to the text : “the willow weeping”, symbol of **forsaken love**. The language of flowers was invented under the influence of **John Ruskin**.

4 – Importance of **religion and spirituality**

PUGIN rebuilt Westminster Parliament in Gothic manner. He converted to **Catholicism**, considering it as the **true religion** (it pre-dated the religious reformation). Many theologians and thinkers were obsessed with the Virgin Mary and with the saints, which was not very well understood by the critics.

- **Sir John Everett Millais**, *Christ in the House of his parents* (1849-50), Tate Britain, oil/canvas [The Carpenter’s Shop]
 - **1829** : Birth in Southampton
 - **1840** : Admission to the Royal Academy

CONCLUSION

Pre-Raphaelites combine **modernity, medievalism, strong symbolic realism** (typical characters and typical scenes), **moral subjects and social issues** of the Victorian Period.

Anglais spé (4)

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The Pre-Raphaelites

– Part 2 : Medievalism and Classicism –

The second generation associated closely with **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** although it was globally not connected with the 1st generation.

- **William Morris / Edward Burne Jones**, *The Oxford Union frescoes* (1857) founded in 1854

They met at Oxford in 1853, where they did not study art, but theology, as they initially contemplated becoming Anglo-Catholic priests. The **Working Men College** was founded by a socialist Christian, **F.D. Maurice**, to improve the artistic skills of the craftsmen attending to the courses of this college.

1 - **First collaboration** (1855) : **The cycle of Arthurian legends**

- **1855** : They read the cycle of **Arthurian legends** and were fascinated. They decided with a group of artists to paint the ceiling of the Debating Library at Oxford, with scenes from the life of Guinevere, Lancelot and everyone in Camelot.

This period of reappraisal of the **Gothic medieval** (MA) was called "**Merry England**".

- **Daniel MaLise**, *Robin Hood meets Richard Lionheart in Sherwood Forest* (1839), Nottingham Castle Art Gallery

End 18th c: Beginning of the **Romantic Movement**, which fights the neoclassical age and is drawn to spirituality and religious trends (**Radcliffe** and **Walpole**). Description of a cruel, dark and bleak world.

The early years completely changed the conception of the Middle-Ages : **Walter Scott** invented a new genre, much more colorful, and with interesting associations. This rediscovery banished all **historiographical negative visions**. The Catholic faith was seen as happiness as opposed to the **alienation** of lonely workers in factories, losing their humanity due to the development of **materialization** in a **modern industrial** and robotic England.

- *The House of Parliament* (Westminster, London) was rebuilt by **A.W.N. PUGIN** according to the **new Gothic craze**. **Charles Barry** converted to Catholicism.
- **A. Pugin**, *Glossary of ecclesiastical ornament and costume* (1844) : front page (Catholicism brought people together contrarily to the bleak and severe Reformed Church)
- **Morris**, *Queen Guinevere* (1858) Tate Britain

Morris strongly believed in the MA and created his own firm called **MORRIS MARSHALL FAULKNER AND CO** (1861). Collaboration on an international exhibition took place in London in 1862 (furniture, tapestries, everything was influenced by techniques and subjects of the MA).

- **Frederick Sandys**, *Morgan Le Fay* (1864) Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

This craze for **femme fatale** is specific to the 2nd generation.

- **Rossetti**, *Lucrezia Borgia* (1860) Tate Britain, graphite and watercolour

Rossetti takes after the great Renaissance colorists like **Titian**. In 1519, she washes her hands after killing her husband; the Pope Alexander IV, her father, is her accomplice.

- **Edward Burne Jones**, *Angels with harp and horn*, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, manufactured by William Morris and Co.
- **Rossetti**, *The Childhood of the Virgin Mary* (1848-49), Tate Gallery, as opposed to *Bocca Boccata* (1859), Boston (MFA), oil on panel (poem by Boccaccio)

It is “the mouth that has been kissed” (one of Rossetti’s mistresses, **Fanny Cornforth**, a prostitute that embodies **strong sensuality**. Loosen hair + dress open = loose morals and free sexuality)

Elizabeth Siddal was the model for Ophelia and *Beata Beatrix* (committed suicide in 1864-70) and Rossetti buried all of his poetry in her grave later on in 1862. Mystical trend (**Dante**).

2 – **CLASSICISM**

- **Lawrence Alma Taderma**, *Phidias showing the frieze of the Parthenon to his friends* (1860-68), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, oil on canvas : white and pure Antiquity, colorful archeology (**Charles Garnier**)
- **Edward Burne Jones**, *The Lament* (1865) : indebted to the western Parthenon frieze

He read **Ovid** and **Homer**, and illustrated the story of Pygmalion (like Jerome) : and then, from marble whiteness to colour.

- **Dante Gabriel Rossetti**, *Proserpine* (1874) Tate Britain, oil on canvas
- **Frederick Sandys**, *Medea* (1868) from *Jason and the Argonauts* : subversive antiquity.
- **Edward Burne Jones**, *Phyllis and Demophon* (1870) Birmingham, watercolour : influence of **Praxiteles’s Apollo Sauroctonos** : feminine posture (4th c. BC) + different type of masculinity

The second version of this painting was made as an oil painting (Liverpool) and entitled *The Tree of Forgiveness* : the man’s nakedness was hidden, but the woman’s feminineness (large breasts and big thighs) were uncovered. There is a different conception of sexuality here.

- **Edward Burne Jones**, *Laus Veneris* (1873-1875)

It was commissioned with *Le Chant d’Amour*, where Music is seen as a symbol of love and desire. The birth of Venus is depicted with a large use of colours.