



— WORLDWIDE —
PRE-RAPHAELITISM

EDITED BY THOMAS J. TOBIN



Worldwide Pre-Raphaelitism



SUNY series, Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century

Pamela K. Gilbert, editor

WORLDWIDE PRE-RAPHAELITISM



Edited by
Thomas J. Tobin

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“The hieroglyphics in question are ‘P. R. B.,’ and they are the initials of the words ‘Præ-Raffaelite Brotherhood.’ . . . A glance at some of the minor exhibitions now open will prove what really clever men have been bitten by this extraordinary art-whim, of utterly banishing and disclaiming perspective and everything like rotundity of form. It has been suggested that the globe-shape of the world must be very afflicting to the ingenious gentlemen in question.”

A[ngus] B[ethune] R[each], “Town Talk and Table Talk.”
Illustrated London News (20 April 1850), 306.

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INTRODUCTION



This volume, *Worldwide Pre-Raphaelitism*, is a distinctive collection of fourteen essays by scholars from around the globe who examine for the first time the lasting impact of the Pre-Raphaelite movement on global culture. Previously, scholarship on the movement focused on its place in English (or at most, continental European) art and literature during the nineteenth century. The contributors to this volume chart a new direction for scholarship about Pre-Raphaelitism, arguing for the movement’s significance throughout the world, its affinity with various systems of thought, and its enduring effects even today.

Worldwide Pre-Raphaelitism puts to rest the traditional view of Pre-Raphaelitism—a brief, reactionary, and narrowly English artistic movement during eight years of the mid-nineteenth century that was outside the “mainstream” development from Romanticism to Aestheticism. Instead, historians, theorists of art, and literary scholars will discover in these essays a wide-ranging, vibrant, enduring, and globally significant Pre-Raphaelitism, informing and informed by feminism, cultural studies, postcolonialism, deconstruction, socialism, Orientalism, medieval textuality, and legal scholarship.



What is Pre-Raphaelitism? In 1850, this question would have been answered easily enough. Pre-Raphaelitism was a stunt cooked up by three students at the Royal Academy of Art in order to distinguish themselves from their peers and thumb their noses at the establishment. The three students—child genius John Everett Millais, Gabriel Dante Rossetti

(son of Italian expatriates) and the poor but talented William Holman Hunt—formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P. R. B.) in 1848 with four other young men: William Michael Rossetti, James Collinson, Thomas Woolner, and Frederic George Stephens. The members of this new secret society drew up several documents attesting to their aims and ideals, among which were the faithful representation of nature in art; the superiority of Italian and Flemish painting before the era of Raphael; the interdependence of the literary, plastic, and painterly arts; and the need for art to instruct its audience. The early paintings of the Brotherhood adhered to these principles, and although their mannered presentation was likely to catch the attention of the critics, the “movement,” such as it was, seemed fated to be little more than a footnote in the progress of the arts.

The critical press in the 1850s also had little difficulty in defining “Pre-Raphaelitism”: it was an extension of continental European Romanticism. The Pre-Raphaelites took many of their subjects and painting styles from Romantic literature and painting from England, France, Germany, and Italy. There were in their canvases several characteristics of earlier Romantic and Neoclassical paintings: a “hard” finish crammed with minute detail and characterized by scant differentiation of highlights and shadows, a preference for subjects from European literary texts of the medieval and Renaissance eras, and overtly didactic intent in the compositions. The Pre-Raphaelites were connected easily to the paintings of their predecessor and mentor Ford Madox Brown, as well as to the earlier Nazarene movement of the 1830s, whose religiosity, preference for Italian painting before the 1400s, and moral-subject paintings prefigured the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Brown was beginning his painting education on the continent. In his work, we can see the development of some principles that would be fully expressed by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. As a young man, Brown studied in Bruges and Ghent under Albert Gregorius, who himself had been a pupil of Jacques-Louis David; Brown’s early works fit well with the 1830s revival of neo-classical sentiment in European art. Brown moved to the Antwerp Academy in 1837 to study under Baron Wappers, from whom Brown learned the ages-old “wash and varnish” techniques of the Dutch schools, a technique that produced muddy, hazy paintings. Most important to the story of Pre-Raphaelitism, Brown next traveled to Rome and met the Nazarenes, a group of expatriate German painters led by Peter Cornelius and Friedrich Overbeck, who intended to purify German painting by returning to religious and cultural archaism, the result of which was an adherence to Roman Catholicism and to the painting techniques of quattrocento German and

Italian masters. The “clean line” and “simple faith” of the quattrocento were by no means the exclusive province of eccentric German painters. Many English painters on the “Grand Tour” were influenced by the painting techniques and subjects of fifteenth-century paintings. By the late 1840s, there was a general interest in late-medieval design—so much so that the Arundel Society was formed in 1848 to disseminate engravings of important works.

Given this background, why has the Pre-Raphaelite movement come to be seen as an insular and particularly English phenomenon? Part of the answer may lie in the way in which the movement laid claim to a reactionary English identity in several media at the same time as it was mining foreign influences during its early years. Early criticism of the movement often inaccurately dubbed them the “Young England” school,¹ mistaking the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with a group of literary reactionaries whose aims were indeed markedly xenophobic and Anglocentric. Over time, the mislabeling became gospel, especially in light of the early canvases from the Brotherhood and their associates depicting contemporary English scenes, such as Holman Hunt’s *Our English Coasts* [*Strayed Sheep*] (1853) and Brown’s *The Last of England* (1855).

During the remainder of the nineteenth century, the concept of Pre-Raphaelitism rapidly took on new meanings, new adherents, new detractors, and new theoretical directions. For example, in 1850, the Brotherhood began its own literary magazine, *The Germ*, in adherence to its adoption of the Horatian ideal of *ut pictura poesis*, which holds that painting and poetry are sister arts. *The Germ* lasted only four issues but served to expand the possible media in which one could be thought a Pre-Raphaelite: the literary contributors to *The Germ* were a mix of members of the original Brotherhood—Dante Rossetti, William Michael Rossetti (who was not a painter), Thomas Woolner, and William Holman Hunt—and new voices from outside the original movement. Jerome McGann’s ideas about *The Germ* help to support the idea that Pre-Raphaelitism began as a loosely defined movement:

There are strong circumstances to suggest that the magazine was not strictly representative of the aims and ideas of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which had been meeting since 1848. For instance, although the Brotherhood itself was rigorously opposed to expanding beyond its original seven members, *The Germ* featured numerous articles by non-members, such as Christina Rossetti, Coventry Patmore, and Ford Madox Brown. None of the poetic works reviewed in the four issues of *The Germ* were produced by Pre-Raphaelite writers, yet the reviews (written by William Rossetti) were,

as a matter of policy, highly favorable. All of this points to an ethos of inclusion associated with *The Germ* uncharacteristic of the P. R. B. to that point. In addition, William Rossetti was later to emphasize repeatedly that the various theoretical pieces in *The Germ* were at best incomplete expressions of Pre-Raphaelite ideas. Most significant was the fact that *The Germ* never mentioned, in its contents or on its wrappers, the term “Pre-Raphaelite.”²

Early on, Pre-Raphaelitism thus came to typify a literary style as well as an artistic one. Thomas Woolner’s later sculpture and poetry, along with the literary and art criticism penned by William Michael Rossetti and Frederic George Stephens, expanded the idea of Pre-Raphaelitism even further in terms of media and theoretical stance so that by the end of the nineteenth century, Pre-Raphaelitism encompassed not only a style of painting, but an entire theoretical apparatus supporting many sister arts.

Almost as soon as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood became known to the larger English art-appreciating public, the Pre-Raphaelite movement began to grow beyond the original seven members of the Brotherhood. As noted, the establishment of *The Germ* expanded the number of artists and authors considered to be Pre-Raphaelites. John Ruskin, on learning that the Brotherhood had based many of their precepts on his own *Modern Painters* (1843), offered support to the fledgling movement with letters to the editor of the London *Times*, and, after a while, a pamphlet entitled *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851), in which he argued that the Pre-Raphaelites and John M. W. Turner were among the vanguard of English painting because both the Pre-Raphaelites and Turner discarded the false progress of English art since the Middle Ages and began afresh, building their art on the last “true” art characterized by particularly English principles: namely, Ruskin’s principles.³

In the 1860s, after the Brotherhood had effectively disbanded, two students, William Morris and Edward Jones, made contact with Dante Rossetti and initiated the “second wave” of Pre-Raphaelitism, one that differed radically in its aims and methods from those of the first Brotherhood. The members of what is sometimes termed the Early Aesthetic movement focused on the development of English culture as a part of the early origins of pan-European culture during the Middle Ages. Morris translated several Icelandic sagas, and Burne-Jones, as he eventually styled himself, found subject matter in Greek myths and the Grail legends of continental Europe as well as England.

Nineteenth-century writers on Pre-Raphaelitism also minted “new” members of the Pre-Raphaelite movement because of their literary or

artistic similarities to the works of the established Pre-Raphaelites. Two examples may serve to illustrate this trend, which was sometimes based on thin evidence. The poet William Bell Scott, although he knew many of the members of the original Brotherhood during its ascendancy, did not identify himself as a Pre-Raphaelite poet until he was retrospectively dubbed one by George W. Thornbury, who, in the *Athenaeum* for 24 February 1855, “revealed” Scott’s *Poems* to be a Pre-Raphaelite work.⁴ In a similar vein, the French critic Henri Viel-Castel conjured a “new” member of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in June 1855:

MM. Schaw, Millais et Hunt représentent l’école de réalisme tel que le comprennent nos alliés d’outre-Manche, et comme ces trois artistes forment une exception dans l’exposition anglaise, nous croyons devoir commencer par leurs œuvres l’examen de l’art britannique. [Messrs. Schaw, Millais, and Hunt represent the school of realism such as it is understood by our friends of the outer-Marches, and as these three artists form an exception in the English gallery, we believe it right to begin our examination of British art with their works.]⁵

As for the identity of the mysterious Monsieur Schaw, the *Art-Journal* critic clears up the mystery some weeks later:

All this time many of our readers . . . may be lost in perplexity as to the identity of this new leader of the pre-Raffaelites—this *Monsr. Schaw*: we confess to have ourselves been for some time in the same predicament, until having . . . eliminated the Teutonic c from the name, we found a most estimable artist, Mr. Shaw, known, as we have just intimated, to the literary as well as the artistic world, before Young England had learned to lisp the names of Van Eyck or Perugino, as a most skilful archaeologist—a retrospective reviewer of the old monkish illuminations; some of the choicest of which he gave with a singularly faithful pencil to the public, and who little dreamt that he was becoming the apostle of the new and true school of painting while making facsimiles of those quaint curiosities, wherein the infant struggles of Art are so conspicuous, and in which the suggestions of perspective both of line and tint are so unceremoniously dealt withal. Mr. Shaw will probably be as much surprised as any of us at the paragraph commencing in the Parisian periodical with the words “*MM. Schaw, Millais et Hunt represent l’école de réalisme.*”⁶

During the nineteenth century, Pre-Raphaelitism expanded out of England, as well. Thomas Woolner emigrated to Australia and began to sculpt and write poetry there; the “American Pre-Raphaelites” set up

a magazine in emulation of *The Germ*, named the *Crayon*; and French art critics began to proclaim the similarities between the Pre-Raphaelites and the new French Realist school of painting led by Courbet. Criticism and theory about Pre-Raphaelitism appeared in England, Wales, Scotland, Canada, Australia, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary, and even Japan⁷ and Russia,⁸ most of which described the Pre-Raphaelite movement in terms of its relation to and influence on the arts in the critics' own countries. Thus, Pre-Raphaelitism was a typically Japanese movement to the Japanese, and the French saw the Pre-Raphaelites as having espoused French ideals.

Later in the nineteenth century, Pre-Raphaelitism even moved beyond being a men-only movement. Critics began reclaiming women painters from the 1850s and 1860s as having been Pre-Raphaelites, and Christina Rossetti's poetry was seen increasingly as equally representative of Pre-Raphaelite poetry along with the poetry of Dante Rossetti, Algernon Swinburne, and William Morris.

Pre-Raphaelitism moved beyond its original didactic aims, as well, beginning with the overt didactic morality of Holman Hunt's *Awakening Conscience* (1853) and finishing with the decorative and aesthetic qualities of Dante Rossetti's *Astarte Syriaca* (1877), for example. The movement came to be defined and redefined throughout the nineteenth century in terms of which artists and authors were "really" Pre-Raphaelites, what qualities of their work made them so, and why the movement's embrace of new figures and theoretical stances was consistent with the original Brotherhood. Often this was difficult, if not impossible, to do, since the original Brotherhood lasted for so short a time (it broke up around 1854) and consisted of such diverse members, each of whom applied the nebulous ideals of the movement in his or her own way. Further muddying the definition of Pre-Raphaelitism is the sheer multivalence of the term by the end of the nineteenth century. One could talk about Pre-Raphaelite painters, sculptors, poets, essayists, and critics: Pre-Raphaelites were men and women from several different countries, some of whom came before and some after the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in England between 1848 and 1854. Pre-Raphaelitism included realistic, didactic genre painting about contemporary social evils; fancifully medieval-looking history painting about the Briar Rose legends; highly mannered and detailed translations of Icelandic sagas; religious paintings of Christ whose backgrounds and models were taken directly from Palestine; essays about the connection between spiritual and physical love; poetry about the need to renounce physical desires in order to obtain a "better resurrection";

hand-crafted wallpaper; and newspaper articles about the need to protect ancient buildings from destruction. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Pre-Raphaelite movement had become broad enough to accommodate many different and sometimes contradictory media, artists, and theories about art. These layers of signifying each expand what the umbrella term “Pre-Raphaelitism” can contain, reaching further and further beyond the movement’s supposedly Anglocentric nineteenth-century origins.

Over the course of the twentieth century, the idea of Pre-Raphaelitism in relation to subsequent developments in literature, art, and cultural theory underwent several waves of revision. During the 1900s and 1910s, after the last of the original Brotherhood had died, scholars of the movement returned to a narrower definition of what the Pre-Raphaelite movement was, who its members were, and whether it was properly its own movement or merely a holdover from Romanticism. Scholarship tended to be biographical, enumerative, and historical, rather than theoretical.

For example, several biographical studies⁹ appeared before the first World War on individual figures and their relationship with the movement, arguing for their inclusion in or exclusion from Pre-Raphaelitism, depending on individual biographers’ opinions about the desirability of belonging to a school at once “uncompromising, assertive, childlike in its naïve charm, [and] childish in its incompetence.”¹⁰ After the war, scholarship on the movement dwindled until the mid-1930s, due in part to the ascendancy of Art Nouveau, Expressionism, Dada, and Surrealism, movements that purposely positioned themselves against the traditional aims of Pre-Raphaelitism and other Victorian-era art movements.

The period between the 1930s and the late 1950s saw little scholarship about Pre-Raphaelitism. A few influential reports of Pre-Raphaelitism’s effects on world culture did appear, but they tended to be based on older research, such as Lafcadio Hearn’s posthumously published lectures on Pre-Raphaelitism from when he was a professor in Japan during the *fin de siècle*.¹¹ The year 1948 marked the centennial of the founding of the movement: the Tate Museum and the Birmingham City Museum & Art Gallery dutifully put on shows and published catalogues of their Pre-Raphaelite paintings, but relatively little scholarship attended the hundredth anniversary of the P. R. B. Only one dissertation on the Pre-Raphaelites was published between 1942 and 1962.¹² Three representative works from this period demonstrate how narrowly the Pre-Raphaelite movement had become defined. Lelio Luxardo edited a collection of “critical notes” on Pre-Raphaelitism in 1929, which consisted of biographical

sketches liberally summarized from nineteenth-century newspaper articles.¹³ A second work from this period is a self-published book on *The Influence of British Literature Upon Pre-Raphaelite Painting*,¹⁴ which recapitulates the traditional argument that the Pre-Raphaelites took their subjects from Shakespeare, the Bible, and from favorite Romantic poets. One of the major works to appear in this period is William Gaunt's *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy*,¹⁵ an account of the history of the movement's members told through a narrative based on Gaunt's examination of diaries, letters, and other archival materials that were then in private hands. By 1960, however, Pre-Raphaelitism was considered in many scholarly circles to be, at best, an eccentric choice of subject, and the field of Pre-Raphaelite studies languished. However, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, scholarly interest in the movement began to wax again, based on the rediscovery of primary and secondary documents as they became available through auctions, sales, and bequests to academic collections.¹⁶ This era also marked a growing transatlantic critical and academic interest in the Victorian era and in Victorian studies as a discipline, fueled largely by Jerome H. Buckley's *The Victorian Temper* (1951), which refers, against the fashion of the time, to the Pre-Raphaelite movement as a significant element of nineteenth-century art and literary history.

Pre-Raphaelitism as it is studied in the current sense would likely not exist without the bibliographical scholarship of William E. Fredeman. Fredeman's *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* (1965) nearly single-handedly re-energized the field of Pre-Raphaelite studies. His work touched off a revival of Pre-Raphaelite scholarship, and his framework has set the boundaries of the movement, with few exceptions, since 1965. Fredeman's bibliography was notable for several reasons, chief among them his generously inclusive policy about minor figures loosely associated with the movement. The inclusion of minor figures such as Thomas Gordon Hake and Arthur O'Shaughnessy helped boost them into the accepted canon of Pre-Raphaelitism. Also, of several bibliographies on Pre-Raphaelitism written in the early 1960s, Fredeman's was the only one to appear in print.¹⁷ It is instructive to note his bibliography as a founding document of the modern scholarly examination of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, from which much scholarship has since extended.¹⁸ Interestingly, although Fredeman cites in his bibliography several non-English-language pieces of scholarship and criticism from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that place Pre-Raphaelitism in a worldwide frame, his introduction perpetuates the narrower, more Anglocentric view of the movement, in keeping with the widely held view of the Pre-Raphaelite

movement as an anomaly apart from the progression from Romantic thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the Aesthetic movement at its end. Thus, Fredeman's work simultaneously gave new vigor to the field of Pre-Raphaelite studies while strengthening its focus on the English qualities of the movement, a stance that would not be significantly challenged until the late 1990s.

During the 1970s, scholarship about Pre-Raphaelitism concentrated largely on filling out the corpus of primary documents; editions of diaries, journals, and reprints of *The Germ*¹⁹ and nineteenth-century critical works appeared. The *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies (JPRS)* was established in 1977 by an interdisciplinary group of editors (including Fredeman), and early articles in *JPRS* largely covered the relationships among the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the members of the movement's second flowering. Several primary documents from the movement were reissued, often as part of critical editions,²⁰ and the original Brotherhood became a renewed source of interdisciplinary scholarly inquiry.²¹ The field of Pre-Raphaelite studies was, in a sense, being reinvented whole, especially in light of the new vogue for Marxist, feminist, and deconstructive inquiry.

The 1980s saw scholarship on Pre-Raphaelitism continue in its applications of academic theory but expand away from the original members of the movement to incorporate comparative studies²² and deeper inquiry into the roles of women (in addition to the consistently-studied Christina Rossetti) in the movement.²³ The appeal of the Pre-Raphaelites was reflected in rising auction-house prices for original works of art and first editions of books, and the Pre-Raphaelite Society was founded in Birmingham in 1988, providing a bridge between the scholarly treatment of the movement and the lay appreciation of Pre-Raphaelite poetry and art. By the end of the 1980s, the definition of Pre-Raphaelitism had broadened to include women artists as well as followers and minor associates of the original members of the Brotherhood. Several academic theories had been applied to the movement with some success, but the one area of Pre-Raphaelitism that had actually narrowed was its perceived geographic scope: Pre-Raphaelitism was considered to be an exclusively English phenomenon. As Quentin Bell reported in 1982,

The original Brotherhood, although it may have looked abroad for some of its ideas, was essentially an English movement. It had very little commerce with Europe. The second generation gradually attained an international character. The arts and crafts movement became known in Belgium and

Central Europe, the influence of Ruskin was felt, and late in his career Burne-Jones excited the attention of the French Symbolists. Thus the movement as a whole may be regarded as a withdrawal from, and then a gradual *rapprochement* with, the art of the Continent.²⁴

After more than 150 years, the question with which this introduction opened, “what is Pre-Raphaelitism?” now takes on a complicated cast.

If the publications of the 1990s and the early years of the twenty-first century are a reliable measure, the scope of Pre-Raphaelitism seems still to be expanding. Recent scholarly works by Elizabeth Prettejohn²⁵ and the editing team of Alicia Craig Faxon and Susan Casteras²⁶ evince a willingness to continue to broaden the movement in terms of its members, ideologies, and influences on and from other movements in literature and art. Recent titles on Pre-Raphaelitism demonstrate the desire to add to the canon by many means: since 1990, scholarship on Pre-Raphaelitism has gone “beyond the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood”;²⁷ it has been “read,”²⁸ “re-viewed,”²⁹ “re-framed,”³⁰ placed into its larger “European Context,”³¹ “collected,”³² and “haunted.”³³ It has been looked at in terms of gender,³⁴ sexuality,³⁵ ethics,³⁶ and has even been implicated in an “Ecclesiastical Crisis.”³⁷ The critical reaction to Pre-Raphaelitism has become a legitimate topic of study in itself, with bibliographies³⁸ and theoretical studies³⁹ on the subject appearing recently. It is becoming increasingly important, however, that scholars define the terms under which such expansion takes place.

The essays in this collection set a new direction for Pre-Raphaelite scholarship: they reveal that because of the broad and deep reach of the movement during the lifetimes of its practitioners, Pre-Raphaelitism encompasses several thought systems, scholarly approaches, and avenues of inquiry. Because of the risk of diluting the term’s definition to the point of its dissolution, scholarship on Pre-Raphaelitism is obliged to reexamine and redefine both the term itself and the movement to which it is attached. Different theoretical approaches and ideologies permit terminological multivalence and canonical expansion in several directions simultaneously. Instead of a single movement with several practitioners and characteristics, there are now several competing Pre-Raphaelitisms, each informed by a different school of thought, theoretical stance, or disciplinary set of rules. We have passed the point where a widely accepted and well-bounded Pre-Raphaelite movement acts as the ground for the inductions of critics and scholars investigating an unambivalent single history of “what was.” Rather, the essays in *Worldwide Pre-Raphaelitism* demonstrate

hermeneutical echoes, traces, and affinities between the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and later artists and writers. It is like the difference between finding the charming details in an old house one has inherited and shopping for an old house based on one's idea of what an old house should look like. To carry the metaphor slightly further, when one takes together all of the elements of the House of Idea(l)s—including cultural theory, gender theory, nationalism, deconstruction, and Orientalism—one sees a multi-faceted Pre-Raphaelitism. The essays in this volume achieve a necessary historical and theoretical distance from the movement itself, so that it can now be traced in relation to larger movements in global history, literature, and art.

This collection redefines Pre-Raphaelitism in a new way: the movement is diverse in terms of ideology, gender, and geography, and in the act of mapping the extent of Pre-Raphaelitism's influence and reach, this volume tests the boundaries of the movement. These essays also suggest what Pre-Raphaelitism was not and did not, exploring the development of the trope of the term "Pre-Raphaelitism," which became freighted with national, ideological, and gendered ideas as it passed from age to age, country to country, and through different scholarly thought-systems.

The signifier "Pre-Raphaelitism," as it has been passed down, has been diffused into and has incorporated other discourses, creating texts "haunted" by the idea of Pre-Raphaelitism. Pre-Raphaelitism indeed began narrowly, as an extension of the continental Romantic school of thought. It transformed itself throughout the lives of its early practitioners, the better to reflect the literary and artistic currents of an increasingly global perspective, mirroring the increasing rapidity of communications technology and the opening of trade on the world markets during the late nineteenth century.



In the second half of the twentieth century, "Pre-Raphaelitism" became a useful signifier for theorists who put it to use as representing ideas at times reactionary, nationalistic, and theoretical. This collection brings together several different theoretical stances in order to present a wide range of thinking on the subject of what Pre-Raphaelitism currently signifies and where it is headed. Pre-Raphaelitism has come to be a touchstone for artistic and literary thought and discourse, often in places, media, and times far removed from the origins of the movement in 1848 London. The essays in this collection trace the development of Pre-Raphaelitism as

a global phenomenon, beginning with its roots in continental European art history and moving away from England in time and geography.

During the first years of the movement, for example, we can trace the influence of the early-Renaissance Italian, Flemish, and German “Primitives” on the new Pre-Raphaelite movement: Béatrice Laurent’s essay, “An Inventory of the Pre-Raphaelite Mental Museum, October 1849,” explores the continental art tour undertaken by Dante Rossetti and William Holman Hunt before the formation of the Brotherhood; Laurent demonstrates that, rather than rising *ex nihilo* to challenge the established artistic canons of the day, Pre-Raphaelitism had its foundations in the very exhibition halls against which it originally railed.

The early influences on Pre-Raphaelitism were not limited solely to European ones. William Holman Hunt traveled extensively in Palestine during the mid-1850s, and his contact with Islamic and Jewish cultures created reciprocal influences in Hunt’s paintings as well as in the communities in which he sought models and suppliers of paint, canvas, and sundries. Francesca Vanke Altman argues in “William Holman Hunt, Race, and Orientalism” that on his return to England, Hunt maintained his ties to the Jewish and Islamic communities, becoming involved with fundraising and charitable events for Middle Eastern groups in London.

Not all of the influences of Pre-Raphaelitism were so deliberate, as can be seen in Christopher M. Keirstead’s “Rossetti’s ‘A Last Confession’ and Italian Nationalism,” an essay on the manner in which Italian nationalists enlisted an unwilling Dante Gabriel Rossetti to represent their cause, and in Linda Groen’s essay, “A Dutch Lady of Shalott,” on a Dutch artist whose only (but significant) connection to the Pre-Raphaelite movement was his choice of subject matter. Pre-Raphaelitism served in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as an antithesis against which to set new works, as argued in Tatjana Jukić’s essay on the early twentieth-century Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža. Susan Casteras also finds that Pre-Raphaelite tropes appear (and are refashioned) in the Symbolist movement at the turn of the twentieth century.

Academics have long argued about whether the second wave of Pre-Raphaelitism epitomized by Morris, Burne-Jones, and Swinburne comprises the beginning of the Aesthetic movement, the protorumblings of the Arts and Crafts movement, the end of the High Gothic trend, or some other phenomenon entirely. Despite this debate, the influence of this phase of the movement, too, can be seen worldwide. Florence Boos examines “William Morris’s Later Writings and the Socialist Modernism of Lewis Grassie Gibbon,” while Margaret D. Stetz explores the relationship

between later Pre-Raphaelitism and travel monologues by Westerners about “exotic” locations such as colonial India in her “Pre-Raphaelitism’s Farewell Tour.” Even Hungary seems to have received the Pre-Raphaelite gospel in the late nineteenth century, and Éva Péteri relates in “Pre-Raphaelitism in Hungary” the story of how Walter Crane brought it there.

Pre-Raphaelitism did not always provoke direct reaction, however. In “Pre-Raphaelitism in Colonial Australia,” Juliette Peers examines how the impact of Thomas Woolner and Bernhard Smith on Australian art came indirectly, after their own generation had mostly ignored the work of these two English artist emigrants, only to have their cause taken up in the early decades of the twentieth century. Pre-Raphaelitism’s second wave reached across the Atlantic, as well; Paul Hardwick’s essay on the relation between Morris and the Christian Socialist movement in the United States is balanced by the contribution from David Latham on the aestheticism and socialism of Francis Sherman, the “Canadian Pre-Raphaelite.” Sarah Wootton contributes an examination of the Pre-Raphaelite influence on American artists’ representations of subjects from Keats’s poetry, which brings the volume full circle in a reconsideration of the relationship of the original Pre-Raphaelites to the Romantic movement, now filtered through the viewpoint of early twentieth-century American painters.



Taken together, the essays in this volume demand that Pre-Raphaelitism be viewed in a worldwide frame, a frame which changes our understanding of Pre-Raphaelitism’s involvement in and influence on global nineteenth-, twentieth-, and now twenty-first-century art and literary history. This collection is written by art historians, scientists, literary scholars, fashion historians, women’s studies professors, and independent scholars. The essays raise issues of commerce, marginality, Orientalism, imperialism, and national culture in relation to Pre-Raphaelitism. Brief essays on individual works or figures have been chosen to complement and challenge those essays that concern broader, more “national” subjects. Although the topics covered in this volume are spread out over many countries, time periods, and disciplines, the common thread is Pre-Raphaelitism, a movement that has to this day lasted as a core set of ideas: truth to nature, minuteness of detail, and sensitivity to the past. Pre-Raphaelitism began by borrowing its ideology from several continental art movements, and has become a literary, artistic, and historical trope

from which many cultures and theoretical systems have themselves borrowed. The essays in this volume speak to the multivalence of the Pre-Raphaelite movement and hint at the extent to which the current theoretical *weltanschauung* includes Pre-Raphaelitism as being an inclusively global movement whose traces bridge the concerns of Romantic European ideas and the global aestheticism of the *fin de siècle*, rather than merely an isolated English artistic movement that took place between 1848 and 1854.

These essays uncover a Pre-Raphaelitism which, rather than being a regressive movement working against the flow of developments in world events, is an extension of—an integral part of—the development not only of European thought at the end of the nineteenth century, but of the spread of aestheticism throughout the world, the echoes of which can be discerned in writings and artwork even into the twenty-first century.

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NOTES

1. See, for example, the following critical articles: [Frank Stone], “Royal Academy: The Eighty-Third Exhibition—1851,” *Art-Journal* 13 (1 June 1850): 153–63; Charles Dickens, “Old Lamps for New Ones,” *Household Words* 12 (15 June 1850): 12–14; R[alph] N[icolson] Wornum, “Modern Moves in Art. Christian Architecture. Young England,” *Art-Journal* (1 Sept. 1850): 270–71; “Fine Arts: Pre-Raphaelitism,” *Daily News* [London] 1629 (13 Aug. 1851): 3; and “French Criticism on British Art,” *Art-Journal* 17 (1 Sep. 1855): 250–52.

2. [Jerome McGann], “Introduction to *The Germ*.” <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/courses/ennc986/class/grpintro.html>.

3. This is perhaps one source of the notion that Pre-Raphaelitism was an insular English movement.

4. [George Walter Thornbury], “*Poems*,” *Athenaeum* no. 1426 (24 Feb. 1855): 229–30.

5. Henri Viel-Castel, “Exposition Universelle des Beaux-arts: Peinture.—École Anglaise,” *L’Athenaeum Français* 4.24 (16 June. 1855): 507–9.

6. “French Criticism on British Art,” *Art Journal* 17 (1 Sept. 1855): 250–52.

7. Two examples among many are Kaneko Umaji, “The Poetic Imagination of Rossetti, Distinguished Poet of Romanticism,” *Waseda Bungaku* [Tokyo

Magazine] 54 (Meiji 26 [Dec. 1893]): 105–8 and Koya Tozawa, “Annotated Review of English Poetry,” *Myojo* [*Morning Star*] 6 (Sept. 1900): 20–22.

8. V[ladimir] V[iktorovitch] Chuiko. “Dorafaelisty I Ikh Posliefodvateli eh Anglii,” *Vestnik Iziashchnykh Iskustv* 4 (1886): 271–304, 339–74.

9. Examples include Ralph Granger Watkin, *Robert Browning and the English Pre-Raphaelites* (Breslau: Fleischmann, 1905); Gabriel Moury, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti et les Préraphaélites Anglais* (Paris: Laurens, 1909); and A. M. W. Stirling, “A Painter of Dreams: The Life of Roddam Spencer Stanhope, Pre-Raphaelite,” in *A Painter of Dreams and Other Biographical Studies* (London: John Lane, 1916): 97–143.

10. Bernhard Sickert, “The Pre-Raphaelite and Impressionist Heresies,” *Burlington Magazine* 8 (May 1905): 97–102.

11. Lafcadio Hearn, *Pre-Raphaelite and Other Poets; Lectures* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1922). Hearn’s lectures were reissued in 1968, after the revival of the field of Pre-Raphaelite studies.

12. Elizabeth Mary Cottrell, *The Pre-Raphaelite Movement* (Dissertation, 1952).

13. Lelio Luxardo, *Preraffaelliti e Preraffaellismo in Inghilterra: Note Critiche* (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1929).

14. Veola Leona Bohnert, *The Influence of British Literature Upon Pre-Raphaelite Painting* (S. l.: Bohnert, 1933).

15. William Gaunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942).

16. For example, *The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: Catalogue No. 73* (Cheltenham: Alan Hancox, 1959) and *Fine Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Drawings and Paintings, Including a Group of Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite Works by Madox Brown, Frith, Holman Hunt, Hughes, Burne-Jones, Millais, and Rossetti, the Property of William Alwyn* [Catalogue] (London: Sotheby’s, 1962).

17. Two examples of other bibliographies are Rita Wiench, *Bibliographie der Nazarenischen und Präraffaelischen Kunst* (Dissertation, 1963); and Mary Elizabeth Cottrell, *The Pre-Raphaelite Movement* (Dissertation, 1962).

18. My own recent bibliography, *Pre-Raphaelitism in the Nineteenth-Century Press* (Vancouver: English Literary Studies, 2002) began as a reexamination of Fredeman’s entries for newspaper and periodical articles.

19. Robert Stahr Hosmon, ed., *The Germ: A Pre-Raphaelite Little Magazine* (1850; repr., Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970).

20. Such as William Rossetti, *The P. R. B. Journal*, William E. Fredeman, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); and Francis Hueffer, *The Troubadours* (1878; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1977). The AMS Press is famous for its reprint editions of out-of-print works, and many Pre-Raphaelite texts are well known today only because they came out in reissue through AMS in the 1970s.

21. Of several possible examples, some are Raymond Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design* (London: Studio Vista, 1970); Timothy Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970); James Sambrook, ed., *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976); Stanley Weintraub, *Four Rossettis* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1978). There was even a special issue of the *Burlington Magazine* (February 1973) devoted to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

22. For example, Maria Angela Cerdà i Surroca, *Els Pre-Rafaelites a Catalunya: Una Literatura i uns Símbols* (Barcelona: Curial, 1981) and Whitney Robert Mundt, *Pre-Raphaelitism in the Early Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Dissertation, 1981).

23. Jan Marsh is almost solely responsible for developments in this area of the field. See, for instance, her *The Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (London: Quartet, 1985); *Pre-Raphaelite Women: Images of Femininity* (New York: Harmony Books, 1988); and *Women Artists and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement* (London: Virago, 1989), co-authored with Pamela Gerrish Nunn.

24. Quentin Bell, *A New and Noble School: The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Macdonald, 1982), 10.

25. Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

26. Susan P. Casteras and Alicia Craig Faxon, eds., *Pre-Raphaelite Art in Its European Context* (Madison, NJ: London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; Associated University Press, 1995).

27. Debra N. Mancoff, *John Everett Millais: Beyond the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

28. Tim Barringer, *Reading the Pre-Raphaelites* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

29. Marcia Pointon, *Pre-Raphaelites Re-Viewed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

30. Ellen Harding, ed., *Re-Framing the Pre-Raphaelites* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1996).

31. Casteras and Faxon.

32. Margaretta Frederick Watson, ed., *Collecting the Pre-Raphaelites* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1997).

33. David Latham, ed., *Haunted Texts: Studies in Pre-Raphaelitism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

34. Jan Marsh and Pamela Nunn, *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999) and Christina Elmerfeldt-Böhner, *Das Weibliche in Werk und Leben der Präraffaeliten* (Egelsbach; New York: Fouqué Literaturverlag, 1999).

35. Rickie Burman, *From Prodigy to Outcast: Simeon Solomon—Pre-Raphaelite Artist* (London: Jewish Museum, 2001).

36. Kathryn K. Varness, *From Wickedness to Innovation: Three Victorian Reactions to Early Pre-Raphaelitism* (Dissertation, 2000).

37. Erika Lynne Szendrey, *William Holman Hunt's Our English Coasts, 1852 (Strayed Sheep): Victorian England's Ecclesiastical Crisis* (Dissertation, 2000).

38. Tobin, *Pre-Raphaelitism in the Nineteenth-Century Press* and Rachael Green, *The Brotherhood of Seven: A Select Bibliography of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, 1848–1914* (N. p.: n. p., 1995).

39. Examples include Jennifer L. Rinalducci, *The 1857–58 American Exhibition of British Art: Pre-Raphaelite Art and the American Critical Reception* (Dissertation, 2000); Rachel Barnes, *The Pre-Raphaelites and Their World* (London: Tate Gallery, 1998); Steve Rizza, *Criticism as Art: The Reception of Pre-Raphaelitism in Fin de Siècle Vienna* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1997); and Thomas J. Tobin, *The Critical Reception of Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Poetry: 1850–1900* (North Manchester, IN: Heckman, 1996).


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Chapter 1



AN INVENTORY OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITE MENTAL
MUSEUM, OCTOBER 1849

Béatrice Laurent

ysticism and Primitivism were recurrent aspects of the artistic production in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century. In England, these trends were observable in literature and architecture before they became in 1848 the founding elements of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P.R.B.), an association of artists similar to the ones that had existed in other countries of Europe since 1810: the Brotherhood of S. Luke (also known as the Nazarenes) in Germany, as well as the Brotherhood of S. John the Evangelist and the Brotherhood of the Blessed Angelico of Fiesole in France. The young Pre-Raphaelites had a second-hand knowledge of these movements, thanks to lithographs and to the reports they heard from elder friends such as William Cave Thomas and Ford Madox Brown, as well as from William Dyce and Charles Eastlake, their teachers at the Royal Academy. Brown recorded a vivid memory of his visit to Johann Friedrich Overbeck in 1846:

He was habited in a black velvet dressing-gown down to the ground and corded around the waist; on his head a velvet cap, furred, which allowed his grey curling locks to stray on his shoulders. He bore exactly the appearance of some figure of the fifteenth century. When he spoke to me it was with the humility of a saint.¹

The archetype conjured up in this description is that of the artist-saint of the quattrocento, probably inspired by Renaissance self-portraits and Giorgio Vasari's accounts. It reveals the origins of the name the seven chose for themselves: "Pre-Raphaelite" to indicate their affiliation to Renaissance

artists, and more particularly to the Italian school, “Brotherhood” to signal their membership in the contemporary European artistico-spiritual revival.

The simple fact that the early Pre-Raphaelite iconography was in major part religious and inspired by Renaissance masterpieces seems to have been understated in the scholarship of the last sixty years. However, if we restrict the scope of Pre-Raphaelitism to the twelve years between 1848 and 1860, and to the members of the original Brotherhood only, then the two characteristics—mysticism and primitivism—appear clearly in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. My purpose in this essay is to help us refocus on the Renaissance models that the Pre-Raphaelites sought to emulate in the early days of the Brotherhood, and to recall the fact that the primordial unity of the Brotherhood consisted in a shared admiration of the Italian and Flemish Old Masters, and a shared belief in the necessary revival of religious art. These two points have been partly forgotten because of the dilution of the concept and the term “Pre-Raphaelite,” but also because for a long time the visual culture of the young Pre-Raphaelites was either underestimated or taken for granted but not examined in any great detail.

In the 1940s, William Gaunt asserted that “with the Italian masters of the later Middle Ages, who provided its curious name, [the Brotherhood] had very little to do. . . . They were quite ignorant of the fourteenth century, which was to be their starting point.”² In the 1960s, the Penguin Dictionary of Art and Artists still held that the Pre-Raphaelites “knew very little about Italian painting earlier than Raphael.”³ These presumptions were supported in part by the account of the genesis of the group delivered by William Holman Hunt—or his wife Edith—in *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (1905), who claimed “we knew little of Michelangelo . . . while Tintoretto in his might was not known at all. Della Robbia, Donatello, Luini and Angelico were mere names in books.”⁴ The belief in the Pre-Raphaelites’ nearly total ignorance of Renaissance art was further enforced by a chronological misunderstanding.

Indeed, while Victorian observers stated that the Pre-Raphaelites drew their inspiration from the Primitives, a present-day critic of Pre-Raphaelite art would search in vain for influences of trecento artists such as Giotto or Cimabue—whom we now term Primitives—and this is probably what led Gaunt to his conclusion. The explanation for this apparent discrepancy is simply that in the nineteenth century, “Italian Painting before 1500 was generally located in the Middle Ages.”⁵ In fact, in the minds of many Victorians, “Pre-Raphaelite,” “early,” and “primitive” were quasi-synonymous adjectives, applied indifferently to the bulk of Western art produced between the end of the Hellenic period and the beginning of

the seventeenth century. Consequently, they included what we now call Renaissance art.

The scientific reassessment of Pre-Raphaelite models began in the 1970s thanks to the works of John Christian, Robyn Cooper, and especially George Landow who pinpointed in 1979 some borrowings of William Holman Hunt's from Flemish Renaissance masters. The pioneering research of these scholars enabled Jan Marsh to correct the misunderstanding concerning the P. R. B.s' affiliation, and to state rightly that the Pre-Raphaelites simply "dismissed all post-Renaissance art in the tradition of Raphael."⁶ This necessary rectification may clear the Brotherhood of some of its mystery, but it raises fresh questions. How much did the young Pre-Raphaelites know about the art of the past, and especially of the Renaissance? Which artists and which works were in their minds when they were painting?

Following André Malraux's assertion that the destiny of any artist is first nurtured by pastiche, I have tried to compile an inventory of the "mental museum" of the young artists, containing the paintings to which they had access at the moment they founded the Brotherhood in London in 1848.

Prints occupied a large part in the mental museum of nineteenth-century European artists, and of the Pre-Raphaelites in particular. The British Museum, where they spent much of their time, was a bountiful source: by the late 1840s, the Print Collection in the Department of Prints and Drawings would have numbered over 50,000 references, many of which were reproductions of Medieval and early Renaissance works. In addition, the Department of Manuscripts and the Department of Printed Books had colossal collections.⁷ Prints permitted a precise knowledge of the German school—indeed, many early German masters had been both painters and engravers—but the technique of engraving at that stage did not allow a fine rendering of Italian colors or Flemish precision. Thus, it seems that the first gallery in the Pre-Raphaelites' mental museum was dedicated to German painter-engravers, among whom Albrecht Dürer was granted special honor. It included many works, almost certainly the complete oeuvre, from the following figures:

*Pre-Raphaelite Mental Museum, 1848, German Renaissance Section.*⁸

Martin Schongauer (c. 1450–91)

Hans Holbein I (c. 1465–1524)

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)

Lucas Cranach I (1472–1553)