The Pre-Raphaelites

An overview

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

“Arthur's Tomb: The Last Meeting of Lancelot & Guinevere” (1854)
PART I

First Generation of the
Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P. R. B.)

- Dante Gabriel Rossetti (painter & poet)
- William Holman Hunt (painter)
- John Everett Millais (painter)
- William Michael Rossetti (scribe & historian)
- Thomas Woolner (sculptor)
- James Collinson (painter)
- F. G. Stephens (artist & critic)
INSPIRATION #1

pre-Renaissance paintings
(as engraved by Carlo Lasinio)
after the frescoes,
by Benozzo Gozzoli & others,
of the Campo Santo at Pisa

Carlo Lasinio
etching after fresco by Giotto
INSPIRATION #1

pre-Renaissance paintings
(as engraved by Carlo Lasinio)
after the frescoes, by Benozzo Gozzoli & others, of the Campo Santo at Pisa

Carlo Lasinio’s engraving of a Florentine Fresco (1789)
INSPIRATION #2

the Nazarenes
(the “German Pre-Raphaelites”)

• Peter von Cornelius
  (1783-1867)
• Johann Friedrich Overbeck
  (1789-1869)

Peter Von Cornelius
detail from “The Three Marys
at the Grave” (1852-65)
OBSTACLE #1

Raphael Sanzio

“The Small Cowper” (1505)
OBSTACLE #1

Raphael Sanzio

Raphael Sanzio’s
“The Three Graces” (1504)
OBSTACLE #1

Raphael Sanzio

Raphael Sanzio’s “Saint George Fights the Dragon” (1505)
OBSTACLE

#2

The Royal Academy of Arts

Sir Joshua Reynolds’s “King George III” (1779)
OBSTACLE
#2
The Royal Academy of Arts

William Beechey’s
“The Oddie Children” (1789)
OBSTACLE #3

hostile critics like Robert Buchanan and his essay “The Fleshly School of Poetry” (1871)
a pamphlet in the Contemporary Review

- **Targets**
  - Dante Gabriel Rossetti
  - Algernon Swinburne
  - William Morris

- **Accusations**
  - “weary wasting, yet exquisite sensuality”
  - “nothing virile, nothing tender, nothing completely sane”
  - contains a “superfluity of extreme sensibility”
  - in a nutshell: overtly sexual, lacking in moral didacticism
Friends of the P.R.B.

Ford Madox Brown

detail from “Work” (1852-65)
Friends of the P. R. B.

John Ruskin

John Everett Millais
“Portrait of John Ruskin” (1854)
Friends of the P. R. B.

Christina Rossetti

Dante Gabriel Rossetti
“Goblin Market” illustration
Influences on the P.R.B.

- vol. 2 of Ruskin’s *Modern Painters* (1846)
- the poetry & opinions of John Keats
- medieval novels of Sir Walter Scott
- poetry of Blake & Coleridge
- old ballads
- early poetry of Tennyson (e.g. “The Lady of Shalott”)

William Holman Hunt
“The Eve of St. Agnes” (1848)
Shared Characteristics of early P.R.B. Paintings

- **Theme**
  - moralistic and didactic
  - Christian subject matter

- **Style**
  - definiteness of contour
  - avoidance of *chiaroscuro*
  - novel use of simple colors on a luminous ground
  - minute fidelity to the sighted object, regardless of placement
  - fidelity to nature; they often painted outdoors
John Everett Millais (1829-96)

- 1848-51: member of first flowering of Pre-Raphaelism

“Mariana in the Moated Grange” (1850-51)
John Everett Millais (1829-96)

• 1848-51: member of first flowering of Pre-Raphaelitism
• 1853: elected to Royal Academy

“Portrait of Effie Ruskin” (1853)
John Everett Millais
(1829-96)

- 1848-51: member of first flowering of Pre-Raphaelitism
- 1853: elected to Royal Academy
- 1856: married Effie Ruskin after her marriage to John was annulled

“Apple Blossoms”
(springs 1856-59)
John Everett Millais (1829-96)

- 1848-51: member of first flowering of Pre-Raphaelitism
- 1853: elected to Royal Academy
- 1856: married Effie Ruskin after her marriage to John was annulled
- 1885: became a baronet

“Trust Me” (1862)
John Everett Millais
(1829-96)

- 1848-51: member of first flowering of Pre-Raphaelitism
- 1853: elected to Royal Academy
- 1856: married Effie Ruskin after her marriage to John was annulled
- 1885: became a baronet
- served as President of Royal Academy briefly
- died very successful

detail from “The Eve of St. Agnes” (1863)
William Holman Hunt
(1827-1910)

- took 4 trips to the Holy Land to paint

“The Light of the World” (1851-53)
William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

• took 4 trips to the Holy Land to paint
• some consider his paintings too detailed, even atomistic.

“The Shadow of Death” (1871-73)
William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

• took 4 trips to the Holy Land to paint
• some consider his paintings too detailed, even atomistic.
• Hunt criticized the new Impressionistic style in painting

“The Lost Child” (1861-62)
William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

- took 4 trips to the Holy Land to paint
- some consider his paintings too detailed, even atomistic.
- Hunt criticized the new Impressionistic style in painting
- failing eyesight leads to cessation of painting

“The Lady of Shalott” (1886-1905)
William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

- took 4 trips to the Holy Land to paint
- some consider his paintings too detailed, even atomistic.
- Hunt criticized the new Impressionistic style in painting
- failing eyesight leads to cessation of painting
- 1905: his autobiography, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelites*

“Dante Gabriel Rossetti” (1882)
PART II
Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s Female Models

- 1840s: Christina Rossetti (DGR’s sister)
- 1850s: Elizabeth (“Lizzie”) Siddal (fiancée, wife)
- 1860s: Fanny Cornforth (housekeeper, mistress)
- 1870s: Alexa Wilding (friend)
- 1870s: Jane Burden Morris (friend, wife of W. Morris, mistress)
Christina Rossetti

- 1845: health problems begin at age 15
- 1848: engaged to James Collinson, a minor Pre-Raphaelite (engagement ends when he becomes a Catholic)
- 1848: pb. “Hearts Chill Between” in *Anthenaeum*
- 1853: begins (short-lived) day school w/mother to support family after father’s health & eyesight fail
- 1860-70: works at Highgate House of Charity for “fallen” women
- 1862: *Goblin Market & Other Poems*
- 1866: declines marriage offer from non-Christian Charles Cayley
- 1870s: writes for *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*
“Lizzie” Siddal

- 1849: 22 yrs old; working as a lower-class milliner; discovered by Deverell
- 1850: D.G.R. meets Lizzie; feels his “destiny was defined” in her
- 1851: engagement to sickly and pale, introverted Lizzie, whom he wishes to care for in chivalric fashion
- 1855: Ruskin begins paying 150 pounds/yr for her drawings to encourage her
- 1861: marriage finally occurs after series of broken engagements; Lizzie depressed
- 1861: Lizzie gives birth to stillborn girl
- 1862: Lizzie dies by laudanum overdose
- 1862: remorseful DGR throws poem manuscripts in coffin with Lizzy
- 1869: DGR exhumes poems
Fanny Cornforth

- 1858: meets DGR; she becomes his mistress while Lizzie is in Europe
- 1860: marries Timothy Hughes for short period
- 1862: moves in w/ DGR after Lizzie’s death, as “housekeeper”
- relationship w/ DGR continues through to his death at the age of 53; she is never accepted by the family
Jane (Burden) Morris

- 1857: noticed by DGR and Burne-Jones while attending play in Oxford
- Limited education until engaged to Morris; became voracious reader
- 1859: marries William Morris
- 1861: first daughter, Jane Alice
- 1862: second daughter, Mary
- 1870s & 80s: models for DGR; affair
- 1887-94: affair w/ poet & activist Wilfrid Scawen Blunt
- 1896: William Morris dies
- 1914: Jane dies
PART III
Second (Loosely Defined) Generation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P.R.B.)

• William Morris (painter & poet)
• Edward Burne-Jones (painter)
• Dante Gabriel Rossetti (painter & poet)
• Charles Algernon Swinburne (poet)