

More than models and muses: The women of John Everett Millais' domestic circle and their contributions

ASANO Naoko

I. Introduction

This paper will trace how the female members of Millais' domestic circle were involved and played a crucial part in the artist's creating process. Women in the artist's family and relatives — from his mother to his own daughters — had been continuously engaged in and supported his picture-making through what Jan Marsh describes as “‘back room’ work”^[1] from simply preparing props and models to even negotiating with potential clients for commissions. While the intimate relationship between Millais and his family has been often discussed in preceding studies and exhibitions,^[2] they tend to focus on their roles as his models and muses just like other women associated with the Pre-Raphaelite circle and little attention has been paid to their individual, specific engagement in his art. As indicated in sources such as the artist's journal and correspondence, their roles presumably extended to those of artistic collaborators who not only assisted the artist but also inspired and occasionally advised him. Particularly focusing on the works from the mid-1850s to the 1870s where both his art and private life saw many changes^[3], this paper will examine to what extent female family members were associated with the artist's production and affected the development of his art, and simultaneously, rediscover Millais as an artist deeply connected to his family, many of whom were greatly intertwined with multiple aspects of his artistic process.

Studies on women around the Pre-Raphaelite artists and associates in general have been limited to those who were mainly featured as faces on their canvases, some who were producing works under their influence and instruction, and their wives such as Elizabeth Siddal, Fanny Cornforth and Jane Morris. Attention towards those women, often labelled as ‘Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood’ in scholarly works, had not been paid until quite recently. Led by feminist scholars such as Marsh, the recent studies since 1980s shed light on long-forgotten female counterparts of the Pre-Raphaelite brothers. Meanwhile, the women in Millais' own inner circle have yet to receive such attention and spotlight. The only exception is Effie Gray, mostly due to her court fight for a marriage annulment as well as relationships with her first husband, John Ruskin, and second husband, Millais, of whom a considerable volume of studies have been done regarding her life and family affairs. Biographical works such as Mary Lutyen's series of writings on the Grays, the Ruskins and the Millais, looked closely

at the domestic aspect of the lives of Effie and Millais and narrated their private stories with the help of various voices rendered from the correspondence exchanged among the three houses and their friends. Lutyens has been followed by other biographical studies mostly focusing on Effie by researchers such as Suzanne Fagence Cooper. Unlike Effie, other women in Millais' domestic circle such as Effie's sisters and Millais' own daughters, and their various roles in his art production, however, have not yet been thoroughly discussed and more detailed examination of their contribution is long overdue.

II. In the house of his parents: His mother, Emily Mary Millais

The first woman in his family who poured a great amount of time and energy and had considerable influence on his artistic life was, most likely, his mother, Emily Mary Millais (née Evamy). As Lutyens notes, it was her who taught the young Millais at home as he was expelled from the nursery at four and "too delicate to go to school"^[4]. The artist's son and biographer, John Guille Millais, calls her "Millais' truest and most helpful friend", describing how she "undertook the greater part of his education, and [...] grounded him in history, poetry, literature, etc., knowledge of costume and armour"^[5]. Her knowledge in armour surely had a certain influence on her precocious son as observed in his *Book of Armour* (1845) for which he examined "a series of studies of armoury at the Tower of London"^[6].

Having discovered his budding talent, Emily, together with her husband, dedicated her life to educate her young gifted son and guided him into the direction to pursue a profession in art. One of his early works where Emily is said to have been involved is *Christ in the House of His Parents (The Carpenter's Shop)* (fig.1). As in his other paintings, many of the Millais household cooperated with the production of this work by modelling for the figures, including his father for the head of Joseph and Mary Hodgkinson, his sister-in-law, for Mary; but what should be noted here is that the composition and details of the painting were procured by not only Millais but also his parents. According to Edward Benest, the artist's cousin, every part of the work was

fig.1
John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents ('The Carpenter's Shop')*, 1849-50, Oil paint on canvas, 86.4 x 139.7 cm, Tate, Photo © Tate, CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported), < <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-christ-in-the-house-of-his-parents-the-carpenters-shop-n03584#3> >



“discussed, considered, and settled upon by the father, mother, and Johnnie [Millais] before a touch was placed on the canvas, although sketches ha[ve] been made”^[7]. This sort of background, perhaps, sheds light on a certain aspect of this painting which has rarely been discussed: while this work is significant as one of the earliest Pre-Raphaelite works of a biblical theme by Millais and also for the disapprobation it had faced by contemporary critics and viewers such as Charles Dickens, this is a portrait of a family first and foremost. With a change of costumes and setting, this could be a picture depicting a scene from Millais’ household. The mother is holding and consoling her young child who has just wounded his hand, while the father and other members including the young St John the Baptist who can be identified with a bowl of water in his hands are anxiously looking over the two. The protectiveness of the parents represented here seems to overlap that of Millais’ parents. Proud of the genius of her young son and fully aware of him as “a future breadwinner”^[8], she and her husband truly placed the young artist as a central figure in the household just like the little Christ on Millais’ canvas.

Another example where the collaborative relationship between Millais and his mother can be found is *A Huguenot, on St. Bartholomew’s Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge* (1851-52, The Makins Collection, Washington D.C.). Produced around the same time as *Ophelia* (1851-52, Tate, London), *A Huguenot* depicts an intense moment between two lovers; the young Catholic woman, fearful of the danger awaiting her lover, is begging him to wear a white armband to escape from a tragic fate. To portray this “historical tableau”^[9], Millais paid meticulous attention to every detail on canvas and depicted it while following the Pre-Raphaelite principle of “truth to nature”. He spent months to draw the ivy-covered brick wall after the actual wall he found in the back garden of Worcester Park Farm in Ewell where he and William Holman Hunt worked together. As for the costumes, he sought help from his family and friends, borrowing a piece of lace from an unknown lady through his patron-friend, Martha Combe, for the said armband, and it was his mother, again, who was in charge of the rest of clothes worn by the lovers. He sent her to the British Museum for research on historical costumes so that he could pictorially fabricate the elaborate garments of the couple from the late sixteenth century.

As seen in the above examples, Millais’ early works are not simply the result of his own thorough investigation, but in fact a fruit of his occasional collaboration with his parents^[10], with his mother in particular, undertaking various tasks for her son’s art. Emily surely contributed to the development of his artistry and she also established her position as his partner which would later be filled in by Effie and her daughters.

III. The encounter with Effie Ruskin

Let us then move on to another significant woman in Millais' career, Euphemia Chalmers Gray known as Effie. The first official introduction of Effie into Millais' life was through her first husband, John Ruskin. Fascinated with this precocious talent, Ruskin encouraged his wife to sit for his work in a production based on the Scottish history, *The Order of Release 1746* (fig.2). The painting turned out to be the railhead of his "lifelong love of Scotland, its literature and landscape"^[11] and so it

fig.2
John Everett Millais, *The Order of Release 1746*, 1852-53, Oil paint on canvas, 102.9 x 73.7 cm, Tate, Photo © Tate, CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported), · <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-the-order-of-release-1746-n01657> ·



was for the lifelong partnership between the artist and his future wife, Effie. It is striking in its representation of a man and a woman as it reverses "the usual Victorian model of male heroism and female weakness"^[12]. Effie sat for the female figure who takes a central position in this painting, handing the order of release to the British gaoler while carrying her young child in her arm and firmly holding the hand of her wounded husband. Among all figures including a dog on the canvas, she is the only one facing upwards and her expression is a mixture of determination, exhaustion and perhaps, pride. She certainly supports — even liberates — her husband in suffering as all Victorian wives were expected to do as the 'Angel[s] in the House'; yet, in her independent mind and proactiveness,

which are far from the ideal Victorian female attributes such as vulnerability and gentleness, she differs herself from the conventional mother figure seen in the Christian iconography and the delicate wife as highly idolised by Coventry Patmore. Originally modelled after Anne Ryan, this Scottish wife reveals a great resemblance to Effie in her facial features, suggesting her undeniable influence over Millais in his art-making. It is truly ironic and even appears poignant that she sat for this particular subject who represents a reliable mother and wife, considering that in her real married life with Ruskin, she had neither a child to carry in her arm nor a husband who depended on her. Whether she liked the modelling role which was quite unsuitable for the women in her class or not, Effie certainly found the subject matter of the painting and its final result as "quite Jacobite and after my own heart" as she describes in her letter^[13].

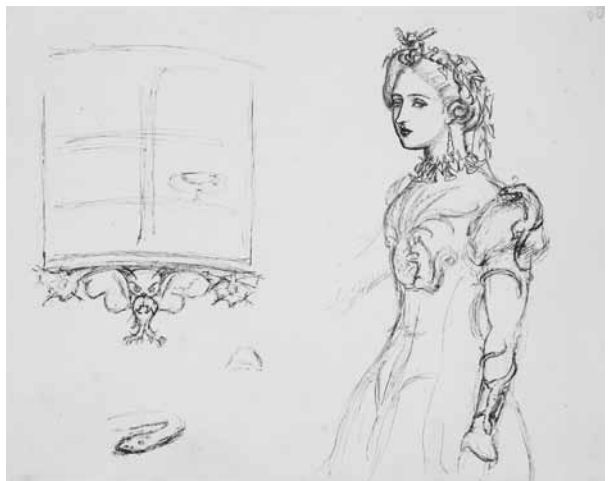
The elaborate details in the garments worn by the subjects are another feature where Millais' strong interest in the Scottish tradition and Effie's possible influence can be observed. For the textile of the remarkably Scottish clothes on the family, the artist consulted *Highland Clans* (1845), the illustrated ethnography by James Logan and Robert Mclan, and adopted two tartans, the Gordon and the

Drummond. The latter is associated with Perth where Effie was born and Millais himself later frequented after their marriage. The bond shared by the two in the production of the Scottish work was strengthened through the trip to the north and Scotland planned by the Millais brothers and the Ruskins in 1853. This is when Millais' budding infatuation with Scottish landscapes and history grew larger and Effie, even before falling in love with the artist, played a considerable part in nurturing his interest. "Exceedingly learned" in the history of her homeland^[14], she taught various tales from "the thrilling adventures of Robert Bruce" to those of "the Crusaders, and of all the heroes of Highland chivalry"^[15]. Such an education was influential enough for Millais to later develop the idea for the series of illustrations of the life of Bruce as recorded by John Guille Millais. During this influential trip, Effie instantly became Millais' favourite model. As "a willing and ideal subject often consumed by the inordinately still activity of stitching"^[16], she went on to appear in several oils, *Waterfall in Glenfinlas* (1853, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington) and the two portraits, *Effie Ruskin* (1853, Private collection) and *Euphemia 'Effie' Chalmers Gray, Mrs John Ruskin (1828-1898), later Lady Millais, with Foxgloves in her Hair (The Foxglove)* (fig.3), as well as numerous drawings. In these paintings, we can observe Effie in her hand-sewn linsey-wolsey dress occupying herself with needlework, and the elaborate details of the natural background in the former as well as her profile in the latter seem to suggest the mutual trust between the two.

Finally, Effie seems to have played another significant part in Millais' experiment with design. *Sketches of 'Natural Ornament'* (1853, Private collection) and *Effie Ruskin Wearing a Dress Decorated with Natural Ornament* (fig.4) are another series of works he produced during this trip. Suggested by Ruskin and perhaps inspired by the discussion on natural science with the physician and the amateur geologist Dr Henry Acland, Millais created a number of sketches where he incorporated "natural phenomena" into costumes and architecture. There appears Effie as a central figure in decorated costumes

fig.3
John Everett Millais, *Euphemia 'Effie' Chalmers Gray, Mrs John Ruskin (1828-1898), later Lady Millais, with Foxgloves in her Hair (The Foxglove)*, 1853, Oil on millboard, giltwood, 22.5 x 20.5 cm, Wightwick Manor, © National Trust Images/Derrick E. Witty

fig.4
John Everett Millais, *Effie Ruskin Wearing a Dress Decorated with Natural Ornament*, 1853, Pen and brown ink on paper, 18.5 x 23.3 cm. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, © Birmingham Museums Trust



of embroidered gowns and jewellery with natural motifs, with Smith describing her as “a queen presiding over the unruly realm of nature”^[17]. Effie herself fostered her love of nature through upbringing in grand Scottish landscapes and nurtured a taste in fashion through this unhappy marriage with Ruskin which helped her win popularity in the societies of Venice and London. What is quite clear from these oils and drawings is that already at this point, even before their marriage, Effie with her taste and knowledge had a certain influence over the artist and was a great source of inspiration for Millais. Along with these works that were conceived during their trip, it also seems that the platform for their future partnership where Effie served in various roles from a model to a manager had begun to take shape at this point.

IV. Friendship with the Gray sisters: Sophie and Alice Gray

A friendship with Effie soon led an acquaintance with her younger siblings, Sophie (known as ‘Sophy’ among her family) and Alice Gray. As well as their eldest sister, Sophie and Alice had become the artist’s favourite models and their presence remains inseparable in his works after the 1850s. Specifically, Sophie, who was the closest to Effie during her first marriage and the following strife with the Ruskins, frequented not only her sister’s house in Herne Hill but also Ruskin’s parents’ home. In the midst of the stressful period of Effie preparing for the trial, young Sophie accompanied her sister back and forth between London and Perth and even served as a messenger among the two households. It is believed that Effie had her little sister deliver a message to Millais on behalf of herself after the trial to avoid public attention, with Sophie becoming an emotional stay for the young artist as a sole connection to Effie. Susceptible and artistic as they both

were, it did not take long for Millais and Sophie to get along well and their friendship grew.

Sophie spent her transitioning time from childhood to adolescence among adults including Effie, Ruskin and Millais, and her physical and emotional change and growth were captured by the artist in multiple works. First sketching her in 1854, the artist used her as one of the models for *Autumn Leaves* (fig.5) with her younger sister, Alice, and two local girls spotted by Effie. As Rosenfeld notes, the work is significant in its style marking Millais’ departure from the early Pre-Raphaelitism to a more symbolic style which predicts the arrival of aestheticism^[18]. Believing that the faces of children were the most beautiful as was “the subdued, gently melancholy” expression on their faces^[19], Millais captured the

fig.5
John Everett Millais, *Autumn Leaves*, 1856, Oil on canvas, 104.3 x 74 cm, Manchester Art Gallery, © Manchester Art Gallery, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND



subtle expressions on four girls in this autumnal work signalling the ephemeral beauty and innocence of youth. Among all four, Sophie is the only one facing straightforwardly to the beholders and the pensive look in her eyes together with her movement of throwing leaves into the bonfire add a symbolic mood to the whole canvas. While the other three appear childlike and innocent in their own ways, Sophie appears rather mature and wistful. Having seen and heard so much at a young age through her elder sister's fraught marriage, the then-twelve-year-old Sophie was already on the verge of womanhood and her presence certainly had an effect on Millais who was experimenting with new styles and themes.

Subsequently, Millais produced several paintings with Sophie, one of which is an enigmatic portrait of her at the age of fourteen (1857, Private collection). While some try to read what is behind this portrait and suggest the possible secret courtship between Millais and Sophie, what will be focused on here is her overwhelming presence and compelling power it exudes on the canvas. In terms of the composition and impression, the portrait echoes *The Bridesmaid* (1851, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), the early Pre-Raphaelite portrait of a woman with an otherworldly expression. Additionally, its format and theme anticipates those in subsequent paintings by the artist including *Only a Lock of Hair* (c.1858, Manchester City Art Gallery, Manchester) and *Meditation* (1859, Domus Bursar's Office, King's College, Cambridge)^[20]. Differing in style and themes, Millais' series of depictions of Sophie Gray foreshadows his series of fancy pictures and portraits in later years where he subsequently depicted his own daughters who were also undergoing the transitioning period from childhood to adolescence. Having observed and consistently captured the blooming of the two, Millais had prepared himself to depict the series of pictures of children in his later career.

Sophie's sister Alice was likewise favoured by Millais to a similar extent. Fascinating the artist with their beauty and amiable characters, the two were deeply involved in the artist's private and professional lives throughout the 1850s as his company and sitters.^[21] For the holiday season of 1856, Millais and Effie, now married, went to Brig-o'-Turk in Glenfinlas, accompanied by Sophie and Alice^[22]. During this stay, he painted a work featuring Alice and a local child, *Pot-Pourri* (1856, Private collection). Millais' attachment to these two had not ceased even after the completion of the above-mentioned works. He used them again in *Spring (Apple Blossoms)* (fig.6) which was initially produced as a pendant work to *A Dream of the Past: Sir Isumbras at the Ford* (1857, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool), as part of a series of seasonal works such as *Autumn Leaves*. Here, he used them with other girls and highlighted the shift from girlhood to budding womanhood. Having been accustomed to the art making of their brother-in-law,

fig.6
John Everett Millais, *Spring (Apple Blossoms)*, 1859, Oil on canvas, 113 x 176.3 cm, Lady Lever Art Gallery, © Lady Lever Art Gallery, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND



the sisters served as ideal sitters while one of the other models who sat for the girl in red, for instance, troubled Millais by “being difficult while modelling”^[23]. While Sophie only modelled for the girl on the left pulling back her long, dark hair, Alice sat for several figures including the one in yellow lounging on the ground with a blade of grass between her lips. Her stare is “hypnotic”^[24] and evocative as if she inherited it from her sister, Sophie, whose stare in the portrait also reveals her inner maturity and sexuality. Yet again, in terms of composition and poses of figures, the work foresees his later works with his own children such as *The Wolf's Den* (1863, The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo) and *Sisters* (1868, Private collection), and with these two Gray sisters, Millais seems to have acquired the knack of precisely depicting children and capturing their ephemeral beauty on his canvases.

V. Effie re-enters: Effie as wife, assistant and manager to Millais

Having distanced herself from Millais and his family for a while after the annulment of her marriage to Ruskin was finally granted, Effie was finally reunited with him and they married in July 1855. As Smith describes, Effie became “a key force in promoting Millais’ career, designing and fabricating costumes for his productions, researching subjects and assisting with correspondence”^[25]. Unlike the previous time when her involvement with his art was mostly through modelling, in her married life with Millais, she now promoted herself and served as his most reliable business partner.

While her engagement in Millais’ art extended to multiple spheres, the modelling practice had also continued after their marriage and her first appearance as a sitter was for the topical-themed, *The Peace Concluded*, 1856 (fig.7). In *The Order of Release 1746*, for which she modelled for the first time, she was presented as an exhausted wife and mother who was situated in a difficult position. Meanwhile, in

this post-marital work, though Millais depicted her again as a wife and mother, the family — a husband and two daughters — she looks after is much more harmonious with a sense of content. Unlike the earlier couple where the husband completely relies on the wife, the two in this composition appear to support and trust each other and the expression of the wife's face is of calmness and warmth. Intentionally or not, as discussed earlier, these two works respectively reflect what each marriage provided Effie; the first one with Ruskin brought her loneliness and agony while the second one with Millais offered hope and content.

One of her biggest contributions to Millais' art was made through her role as his assistant which involved procuring models and props. For the aforementioned *Autumn Leaves* and another work conceived around the same period, *The Blind Girl* (fig.8), she ventured out to the local town to find models for the girls standing next to her sisters. A pupil at the School of Industry called Matilda Proudfoot became a model for the third girl with downcast eyes and she 'discovered' another local sitter, Isabella Nichol, through an unexpected occasion: Effie was visiting to nurse a bed-ridden lady in the local house where she found Isabella, who happened to be a granddaughter of the patient. It is notable that she was particular about the hair of these young models. She was especially attracted by the red hair of Matilda and even instructed Isabella to wash and plait her hair overnight to bring out the waves to frame her face as depicted on canvas^[26]. This seems to suggest that Effie not only fully understood the subjects and themes of her husband's art but most importantly, shared the aesthetic Millais aspired to bring into his own canvases and the direction he tried to pursue after his separation from Pre-Raphaelitism. This was not the only case where Millais owed to Effie's keen attention and intuition for

fig.7
John Everett Millais, *The Peace Concluded*, 1856, 1856, Oil on canvas, 116.84 x 91.44 cm, The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund, Minneapolis Institute of Art.

fig.8
John Everett Millais, *The Blind Girl*, 1854-56, Oil on canvas, 80.8 x 53.4 cm, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, © Birmingham Museums Trust



fig.9
John Everett Millais, *The Ransom*,
1860–62, Oil on canvas, 134 ×
115.9 cm, 72.PA.13, The J. Paul
Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



procuring appropriate props. The coppery orange skirt worn by the main figure in *The Blind Girl* was modelled after the worn-out linsey-wolsey skirt Effie borrowed for a shilling from an old lady on the street of Bridgend^[27]. This is yet another example of the couple's collaborative process.

Skilled in sewing, Effie not only procured props as mentioned above but also did research at the library and often crafted with her own hands to bring Millais' idea and vision to life so that they could be perfectly drawn on canvases. When Millais was working on *The Escape of a Heretic, 1559* (1857, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico), she derived the costume on the figure from woodcuts of 'condemned prisoners of the Inquisition' kept at a friend's house^[28]. Likely, for *The Ransom* (fig.9), the historical painting where multiple figures are depicted to exacting detail, she not only borrowed a book of designs from her friend, Lady Eastlake, for research, but also crafted the actual costumes based on those designs to be modelled after by the painter^[29]. This practice had continued even in the late 1860s, and for *Sisters* (1868, Private collection), a group portrait of her daughters, Effie, Mary and Alice Caroline (known as Carrie among family members), it is most likely that she "made, or at least embellished" the costumes in white and blue with some help from the girls^[30].

Not every model was willing to sit for Millais' works despite his growing reputation and status as an artist and that was also when Effie's ability and intuition saved his work. The anecdote that she went to persuade the man who had initially turned down Millais' request to sit for *The North-West Passage* (1874, Tate, London) is one example which comically recounts her proactiveness and persuasiveness. The man in question, Edward John Trelawny who was a writer and adventurer known for the semi-fictional biographies of his Romantic friends, Shelley and Byron, proposed Effie to accompany his niece to take six

Turkish baths in exchange of his six sittings for Millais. Unfamiliar with the Turkish bath as she was, she kept her promise to secure the model for her husband's work^[31].

In addition to this negotiating skill, her innate sociability as well as the social connections she gained and expanded through her social life in her first marriage, Effie also served as an artist manager. At the party she attended in May of 1869, London, she successfully persuaded William Cunliffe-Brooks, the Mancunian banker and the Conservative MP for East Cheshire, to commission a large portrait of his daughter, Amy, the future Marchioness of Huntly (1870, Private collection). She described the result of her successful negotiation to secure the new commission in London society in her letter to her husband:

I had an opportunity of speaking to Brooks & it is all settled that you paint Miss Brooks immediately you return for G. [guineas] 2,000 full length a regular Chef D'oeuvre in the Sir Joshua size & either in her Court or Bridal dress. Brooks charmed and very grateful indeed if you will do it thought the price just what you ought to have & said he didn't hesitate a moment between a half length at G. 1,000 or a full length to hand down in the family for 2,000 as he thought it much more important & worth double the money so that is settled.^[32]

This is a remarkable example which suggests that Effie's engagement in her husband's art was not limited to the tasks of procuring models and preparing props and costumes, but actually extended to the practice of negotiating with potential clients and arranging deals.

As a manager, she regularly checked on the progress of his works and reminded him of the deadlines when there was little progress or he was behind schedule. She revealed her concerns regarding this in a letter to her mother in March 1863:

[H]e was not getting on fast at all just now although he works very hard. I wish he would not put off his time painting Susan Anne [for *Esther* (1865, Private collection)] just now, as he is so far behind with St. Agnes' Eve & it is quite impossible how I think he can do either and a pity to send only 2 Pictures of children however he may do wonders yet.^[33]

Owing to her time-management or not, the artist managed to complete the said work on time. This also illustrates how Millais' art-making had become the family business with Effie serving as a manager who not only provided props for his works but also oversaw and organized his commissions and schedules.

Millais himself was pleased with and impressed by her talent and intuition and he was well aware that she filled in for what he was lacking and her presence was essential for him to further establish his career and reputation. He expressed his amazement to Hunt that Effie was wonderful about "going into strange habitations and seizing adults

and children without exception, and dragging them here, and sending them back to their homes with a sixpence, when I should have been doubtful between a sovereign and thirty shillings”^[34]. Their partnership as artist and manager continued as long as their private one as husband and wife. On 29th July of 1865, he wrote to Effie reporting the current status of his artworks and the progress he had made:

I am working very hard. Have commenced the duplicates of Esther, and commenced the Romans [*The Romans Leaving Britain* (1865, Private collection)] to-day. ‘Joan of Arc’ is gone, and I am hourly expecting Agnew to send for Alice [*Swallow ! Swallow !* (1864, Private collection)].^[35]

From such correspondence, we can observe that their business partnership was as complementary and well-balanced as their marriage, and Effie had grown into an essential part of Millais’ life as an artist.

VI. Sisters: The artist’s daughters, Effie, Mary, Alice and Sophia

Children had always found their way in to Millais’ works after the 1850s, as Smith states, and the births of his own children heightened his interest in the themes of childhood, leading him in this direction when he explored the genre of fancy pictures. All of his eight children appeared in at least one of his pictures, but particularly his daughters — Effie Gray (born in 1858), Mary Hunt (1860), Alice Sophia Caroline (known as Carrie in a family, 1862), and finally, Sophia Margaret Jameson (known as Tottie, 1868) — were his greatest contributors in establishing their father’s reputation in the genres of fancy pictures and child portrait. The series of works where the daughters sat for — Effie for *My First Sermon* (fig.10), *My Second Sermon* (fig.11), and then *The Minuet* (1866, Elton Hall Collection, Elton), Mary for *Waking*

fig.10
John Everett Millais, *My First Sermon*, 1863, Oil on canvas, 92 x 77 cm, Guildhall Art Gallery, © City of London Corporation

fig.11
John Everett Millais, *My Second Sermon*, 1863-64, Oil on canvas, 97 x 72 cm, Guildhall Art Gallery, © City of London Corporation



(1865, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth), and Alice for *Sleeping* (1865-66, Private collection), later followed by Sophia in *A Flood* (1870, Manchester Art Gallery) — paved the way for Millais to enter a popular market where child portraits were favoured by a newly rich clientele and promoted his name among new potential patrons. This father-daughter collaboration turned out to be a financial success and consistently brought fortune to the Millais household: For example, *My First Sermon* brought him £620 and *Waking* and *Sleeping* were sold for 1,000 guineas each. As Cooper describes, the daughters were “essential” in the business trajectory Millais had been taking^[36].

While none of them willingly played their parts as models in the beginning as recorded by the youngest brother, John Guille^[37], that does not mean that they had been uncooperative; and in fact, they soon became accustomed to the attention brought by the popularity of these paintings, even taking on additional work other than modelling to raise their father’s reputation. During holiday season, they were sent to Millais and Effie’s friends’ parties wearing “the costumes made famous by their father’s paintings”, and as Cooper describes, young Effie in her recognisable red cloak was truly “a walking advertisement”^[38]. In this sense, the artist’s daughters were actively though unintentionally involved in his art business from production to promotion. Young Effie’s pictures, *My First Sermon* and *My Second Sermon*, likely brought in new commissions from such new clientele as seen in, for instance, *Leisure Hours* (1864, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit), portraits of two daughters of Sir John Pender, a textile merchant from Glasgow.

As they gradually familiarised themselves with modelling for their fathers, they became not only readily available sitters but also professional ones who thoroughly understood the production process and the importance of patience. This is especially highlighted when comparing their modelling experiences to those of other children. It is recorded that the two boys Millais employed for *The Princes in the Tower* (1878, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham), despite their radiant appearances, caused quite an annoyance to the artist by constantly nibbling “packets of these delicacies” and dropping crumbs on the floor of his studio^[39]. Meanwhile, his own children were much more adept models. For the aforementioned *The North-West Passage*, John Guille and Alice sat, or rather, stood for two children playing with the globe. Though completely erased from the canvas after all, John Guille notes that he and his sister kept turning “that wretched globe” day after day for about two weeks^[40].

Millais’ interest in his children had not decreased even as they grew up; rather, the fascination of childhood and the transition to adolescence certainly kept attracting the artist. Following the works featuring them solo, the elder sisters Effie, Mary and Alice together sat

fig.12
John Everett Millais, *Sisters*,
1868, Oil on canvas, 108 x 108 cm,
Private collection, © Christie's



for *Sisters* (fig.12), the triple portrait, standing in front of the azalea bush in a rather static pose. This is a significant work among those produced in the same period considering it was the artist's response to aestheticism. The daughters were involved in this work not only as models but also as costume makers. As already mentioned, their mother, Effie, and these three collaboratively created the lacy costumes of white frills and blue sashes. While their poses and overall atmosphere are static and formal, their faces, especially their eyes, perhaps tell us of their unique personalities as recorded in family letters and journals. Effie, the eldest, here appears matured compared to the other two and full of confidence as she was used to the public attention while Mary, who grew into the adventurer and traveller at heart, pays no attention to the beholders with her mind wandering about somewhere not here. Alice, a precocious musical talent, on the other hand, shows her artistic and susceptible sides by giving a sharp yet curious gaze to the viewers. Captured by their differences in characters and appearances, Millais portrayed them in identical clothes to subtly highlight and draw the viewers' attention to their faces. The girls' engagement in their father's work was not limited to the role of modelling. Just like their mother, they also helped him to find an ideal sitter. The following anecdote is one such example of their contributions: In the winter of 1880-81, one of the girls (though unclear exactly which one) spotted a lovely girl on stage at St. James' Theatre, and immediately suggested to Millais that he see and hire her as his model. The girl in question was Beatrice Buckstone, the granddaughter of the actor and playwright, John Baldwin Buckstone, and she ended up appearing in *Cinderella* (Private collection), *Caller Herrin* (Private collection) and *Sweetest Eyes Were Ever Seen* (National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh), all painted in 1881.

While the bond of the Millais family had remained strong, the children eventually left their parents, finding their lives out of the home. So, as they grew older, the occasions of their involvement with their father's art naturally decreased. After the 1880s, the modelling roles were taken up by their own children as seen in *Bubbles* (1886, Lady Lever Art Gallery)



fig.13
John Everett Millais, *Portrait of the Artist's Daughter, Mary*, 1875-76, oil on canvas, 59.7 x 45.7 cm, Private collection. © Christie's

with the artist's grandson, Willie James, and *The Little Speedwell's Darling Blue* (1891-92, Lady Lever Art Gallery) with Phyllis, a sister of Willie. Hence, his daughters' engagement in his art had gradually shifted to other roles. Mary, however, widely known as Millais' favourite, never married and remained at the heart of the family, and both Millais and Effie had grown more and more dependent on this second daughter. The works such as *Portrait of the Artist's Daughter, Mary* (fig.13), *The Bridesmaid (Mary Hunt Millais)* (1879, Private collection) and *The Last Rose of Summer* (1888, Private collection) depict her in her womanhood and she looks pensive as she does in *Sisters*, yet also, thoughtful and certainly mature as someone who is in charge of a household and partly, her father's art business — later taking over Effie's responsibility as Millais' manager as well. Growing old, Effie suffered from deterioration of eyesight, a symptom she had always struggled with since her early twenties; hence, Mary, on her behalf, dealt with correspondence from family, friends and clients. In this way, the engagement in Millais' art, or the part of the professional partnership of Millais and Effie gradually passed down to their daughter. Mary, plausibly took pride in this engagement with family affairs throughout her lifetime, and intentionally or not, she served as a family archivist, collecting family photographs and compiling letters, to which today's studies on the artist and his family greatly owe.

VII. Conclusion

As seen in the works produced from the mid-1850s to the late 1870s — the period where many changes took place in both his art and private life —, female family members in particular, had remained an important part of his art, with their presence becoming essential to the development of his artistry and art business. This paper has explored several women who were the closest to Millais including his mother, wife, sisters-in-law, and daughters, and the various roles they played in their engagement in his art. Simultaneously, we have considered the plausible influence and effects they had on specific works by the artist. This paper first looked at the artist's mother, Mary Emily Millais, who

most likely had an immense influence on young Millais. This was followed by the introduction of Effie Gray (then Ruskin) into his life and which was briefly examined for her early contributions to his artwork as a model and a guide to Scottish nature and history. Millais' close friendship with Effie's younger sister, Sophie and Alice, and their influence on his style were then discussed focusing on several works they sat for as key figures. Shifting to the artist's own family, the various roles Effie (now Millais) served such as his assistant, collaborator, and manager were first examined. Having delved into Effie's contributions in her partnership with Millais, we finally explored the roles of his daughters — especially the elder three of Effie, Mary and Alice — not only as his models but also as 'advertisements' for commercial success as he ventured into the new genres of fancy pictures and child portraits. Fragmentally mentioned in the biographies and studies of Millais, the female members discussed in this paper played crucial parts in his artistic career, and their varied facets of involvement with his productions eventually paved the way for new styles in his art. In this sense, Millais can be considered a man deeply attached to his family, not only for their constant portrayals in his work, but also for their active engagement and influence in his art-making.

The author hereby would like to express her sincere gratitude to Mr Peter Dustan who had kindly looked over the manuscript and I am truly grateful for his generosity and invaluable comments.

[1] Marsh, Jan, "Not simply passive Cinderellas' — rediscovering the Pre-Raphaelite women". *Apollo*. 28 Oct. 2019. Accessed: 26 Nov. 2020. < <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/pre-raphaelite-sisters/> >. The recent exhibition, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisters* (17 October 2019 – 26 January 2020, National Portrait Gallery), curated by Marsh, has shed light on not only the central female figures related to the Pre-Raphaelite movement including as Elizabeth Siddal, Fanny Cornforth and Jane Morris, but also some lesser-known figures such as Fanny Eaton. Its focus has extended from their involvement in the movement as models and muses as widely known to their more active and creative engagement. It has also argued the unconventional duties and tasks undertaken by the women in the artistic households of the Pre-Raphaelites in the chapter, "Model Wives & Mistresses". Exh. cat., *Pre-Raphaelite Sisters*. London, National Portrait Gallery, 2019.

[2] Malcolm Warner in the catalogue of *Millais: Portraits* discusses the importance of Millais' children in nurturing his interest in childhood and producing child portraits, and points out that one common characteristic among some of his child portraits is "sense of loss" (114). Jason Rosenfeld in his monograph of the artist revisits his close relationships with the family members from his mother, "who remained a key influence and a string persona throughout his life" (14), to his own children and grandchildren, and further discusses their respective involvement and contributions to his artistic life. Mary Lutyens, as introduced in this paper, has archived the private lives of the Millais, the Grays and the Ruskins from their correspondence, uncovering the closeness in the artist's domestic circle, while Suzanne Fagence Cooper, following the footsteps of Lutyens, highlights the lives of his wife, Effie, and their children as key elements to Millais' art. Exh. cat., *Millais: Portraits*, London, National Portrait Gallery, 1999; Rosenfeld, Jason, *John Everett Millais*, London, Phaidon, 2012; Lutyens, Mary, *Effie in Venice: Effie Ruskin's Letters Home 1849–1852*, London, John Murray, 1965; Lutyens, Mary, *Millais and The Ruskins*, London, John Murray, 1967; Cooper, Suzanne Fagence, *Effie: The Passionate Lives of Effie Gray, Ruskin and Millais*. London, Duckworth Overlook, 2010.

[3] Rosenfeld describes the 1850s as "the most thematically rich and artistically challenging period of [the artist's] career", stating that the portrait of John Ruskin in 1853-54 was "the summit of Millais's Pre-Raphaelitism". It was followed by more symbolic pictures such as *Autumn Leaves* and *The Blind Girl* which signaled Millais' gradual departure from the Pre-Raphaelitism. In the next decade of the 1860s, the period of "searching pictorial enquiry and ambitious exploration of the widest gamut of pictorial genres" as Rosenfeld puts, he worked strenuously growing both his business and family as well as establishing his studio in London. Rosenfeld, *op. cit.*, p.83; Rosenfeld, Jason, "Chapter 2. Family Man: 'The Wolf's Den' and John Everett Millais's Expressions of Paternal Affection in the 1860s", *Sir John Everett Millais, Bt., PRA (1829-1896), The Wolf's Den*, London, Martin Beisly Fine Art, 2020, p.14.

- [4] Lutyens, *Millais and The Ruskins*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
- [5] Millais, John Guille, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais: President of The Royal Academy*. 2 vols. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2012 (1899), I, p.3.
- [6] "Sketches of Armour – Frontispiece," *Pre-Raphaelite Online Resources*, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, 26 Nov. 2020. <<http://www.preraphaelites.org/the-collection/1967P48/sketches-of-armour-frontispiece/>> .
- [7] Millais, *op. cit.*, I, pp.76-78.
- [8] Lutyens, *Millais and The Ruskins*, *op. cit.*, p.35.
- [9] Exh. cat., *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*. London, Tate, 2012, p.61.
- [10] His father, likewise, assisted his son as a reliable researcher in his early works such as *Isabella and Ferdinand Lured by Ariel*. As widely known and discussed, Camille Bonnard's *Costumes Historiques* (1829) was a predominant source of inspiration for Millais when portraying the historical characters in Keats and Shakespeare. Upon producing these works, the artist possibly asked his father to conduct a research of this collection of fashion plates. The four tracings of the four figures in medieval clothing — three women and a man — now housed at the Royal Academy of Art in London, are, according to Malcolm Warner, by the hands of his father rather than the artist himself and this could be another example of family support in his early works. While he later admitted to his son that he borrowed the copy from his then-Pre-Raphaelite peer, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he could have also asked his father to carefully study the book and picked out some plates for future reference.
- [11] Exh. cat., *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*, *op. cit.*, 2012, p.64.
- [12] *Ibid.*
- [13] Cited in Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women: Images of Femininity*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987, pp.71-72.
- [14] Millais, *op. cit.*, I, p.211.
- [15] *Ibid.*, p.212.
- [16] Exh. cat., *Millais*, London, Tate, 2007, p.79.
- [17] *Ibid.*, p.80.
- [18] Rosenfeld states that the symbolic paintings such as *The Blind Girl* and *Autumn Leaves* "anticipate the strands in British Aestheticism" and they were signaling Millais' eventual departure from the Pre-Raphaelite style. Rosenfeld, *John Everett Millais*, *op. cit.*, p.51.
- [19] Exh. cat., *Millais: Portraits*, *op. cit.*, p.107.
- [20] Exh. cat., *Millais*, *op. cit.*, p.134.
- [21] In July, 1858, he insisted Effie to bring back Sophie "blooming, to be painted in his picture" in the letter when the sisters were staying in St. Andrews, Fife. Additionally, on his journey to his parents' in Kingston-on-Thames, he again took Sophie and Alice as his companies though they were feeling unwell. Millais, *op. cit.*, I, p.327.
- [22] *Ibid.*
- [23] Exh. cat., *Millais*, *op. cit.*, p.136.
- [24] *Ibid.*
- [25] Exh. cat., *Millais*, *op. cit.*, p.73.
- [26] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p.211.
- [27] *Ibid.*, p.144.
- [28] *Ibid.*, p.145.
- [29] Millais, *op. cit.*, I, p.365.
- [30] Rosenfeld, Jason, "Lot essay for *Sisters*", Christie's, July 2013, 26 Nov. 2020, <<https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/sir-john-everett-millais-pra-1829-1896-5701815-details.aspx>>
- [31] Millais, *op. cit.*, II, pp.51-52.
- [32] Rosenfeld, *John Everett Millais*, p.149.
- [33] Exh. cat., *Millais*, *op. cit.*, p.142.
- [34] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p.145.
- [35] Millais, *op. cit.*, I, p.386.
- [36] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p.181.
- [37] Millais, *op. cit.*, II, p.395.
- [38] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p.182.
- [39] Millais, *op. cit.*, II, p.91.
- [40] *Ibid.*, p.52.

浅野菜緒子

ラファエル前派および周辺の研究において、芸術家たちをとりまく女性たちと彼女らが作品に及ぼした影響は、長らく見過ごされてきた。しばしば「ラファエル前派姉妹団」と総称される女性たちへの関心が高まり、その功績が評価されるようになったのは、1980年代以降のことである。しかしながら今日もなお、関心の主たる対象は、エリザベス・シダルやファニー・コンフォース、ジェイン・モリスらが中心で、その関わり方もモデルやミューズとしての役割にとどまっている。こうした研究動向を背景に、本論は1850年代後半から1870年代にかけて制作された作品を対象に、ミレイ家（およびグレイ家）の女性たちによるミレイの画業への寄与を明らかにし、19世紀当時「家庭人」として知られたミレイ像と家族との関係を再考するものである。

1850年代後半から1870年代は、ミレイの画業と私生活の両方において変化に富んだ時期にあたる。作品の様式と主題は、ラファエル前派から徐々に離脱するに伴い、来る唯美主義を予見させるものへと変化し、また私生活は、1855年のエフィ・グレイとの結婚を機に家庭中心となった。加えて、8人の子供たちを授かり、一家の大黒柱として、より商業的な成功を求め、制作活動の転換を図った時代でもあった。こうした転換期において、画家の母親エミリーにはじまり、妻エフィ、グレイ家の姉妹たち、そして娘たちに至るまで、一族の女性たちの面々は、様々なかたちでミレイの制作に関わり、寄与した。その役割は、一般的に知られるモデルとしてのみならず、資料収集やモデルや小道具を調達する制作助手、ひいては依頼主と交渉する代理人まで、多岐にわたる。なかでもエフィの献身的な役割は、先行研究においても度々言及されているが、彼女が持ち前の話術や交渉能力、そして前夫ジョン・ラスキンとの結婚生活を通じて磨いた知識や審美眼を余すことなく活用し、度々ミレイの制作を助け、並々ならぬ影響を及ぼした点については、未だ深く論じられていない。本論では、時代とともに作品におけるエフィの役割が多様化し、ビジネス上のパートナーとして、ミレイとの関係が築かれたことを提示した。また娘たちについては、1860年代以降に精力的に制作された作品に多く登場したことから、主にモデルとしての寄与が言及されてきたが、実際にはそれ以上の役割を果たし、成長するにつれ、母エフィの役割を受け継ぎ、ミレイの画業後期において欠かせない存在となったことを指摘した。

本論末尾では、こうした家庭内の女性たちとミレイの関係についてまとめ、そして彼女たちが、ミレイの作品の様式や主題選択に影響をおよぼしただけでなく、19世紀英国を代表する画家へと成長を遂げるうえで、その商業的成功に貢献したと結論付けた。そのうえで、「家庭人」と称されるミレイ像の背景には、家族をモデルとした多数の作品だけでなく、女性陣を中心にミレイの作品制作における家族の積極的なかわりと寄与があると付言した。