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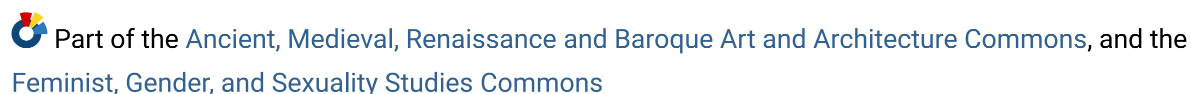

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"MY LADYS SOUL": THE SUCCESSES OF ELIZABETH SIDDAL & JANE MORRIS, & THE RISE OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITE SISTERHOOD

by

Alyssa Grady

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the History

Florence Boos
Thesis Mentor

Spring 2021

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History have been completed.

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“My Ladys Soul”: The Successes of Elizabeth Siddal & Jane Morris, & the Rise of the Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood

Alyssa Grady

Honors Thesis in History

Fall 2020

Advisor: Florence Boos

Abstract:

This thesis demonstrates that Elizabeth Siddal and Jane Morris, two muses of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, used their creative talent, writing, and direct and indirect actions to combat the Victorian notions held by the Brotherhood and inspire other female artists. The Brotherhood was begun in England in 1848, with aspiring artists Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman-Hunt, John Everett Millais, and four others redirecting their output against the teachings of the British Royal Academy. Rather than upholding the High Renaissance artist Raphael as the ultimate painter and role model, Rossetti and his cohorts set out to prove the Academy wrong, basing their art on what came before Raphael, using ballads, poems, murals, and more as a source of inspiration. Despite receiving praise for paintings like *Ophelia* (1852) and *Bocca Baciata* (1859), the men conformed to the patriarchal society of their day, presenting beautiful faces that were impassive and in need of rescue. This same dynamic came to life within the Brotherhood's studios, with their models being considered damsels in distress while the male artists donned the role of knight in shining armor. Initially models to Rossetti, Holman-Hunt, and Millais, Siddal and Morris took it upon themselves to break out of the mold of Victorian muse through paint, pen, and needle. This thesis contends that Siddal and Morris demonstrated their own agency through their art and words, recruiting other women within their community to create the Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood. In drawings like *The Lady of Shalott* (1853) and poems like "True Love," Siddal would insert a female-driven narrative into the Pre-Raphaelite sphere while Morris, in presenting embroideries like *The Homestead and the Forest* quilt (1890) and private letters, would circumvent the idea that only the Brotherhood could be artistically successful. Overall, both women redefined themselves and what it meant to be a Pre-Raphaelite.

Introduction:

In England, 1848, seven aspiring young men felt disaffected from the artistic dictates and teachings of the British Royal Academy. Finding the Academy's approach formulaic and dull, painters Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, and their four companions set out to diverge from the teachings of the Academy in their own artwork, upholding such doctrines as "to study Nature attentively" and "to sympathize with what is direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art, to the exclusion of what is conventional and self-parodying and learned by rote."[1] By doing thus, they would establish the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB), taking their inspiration from the artwork that came before Raphael, alongside medieval manuscripts, Italian frescoes, and ballads and poetry.

Over time, the Brotherhood expanded to include other painters, art critics, poets, and designers, including William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Arthur Hughes – and a fair number of women. Yet, the majority of the women involved with the Brotherhood only earned the admiration of the men as models and muses: for example, Annie Miller would pose for Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1853, Figure 2) and Fanny Cornforth for Rossetti's *Bocca Baciata* (1859, Figure 3) amongst other paintings.[2]

However, not all of the women within the PRB circle were content to only be admired and used based upon their looks. In retaliation against the men, they would form what has been called the Pre-Raphaelite *Sisterhood*. Choosing to break the model system, muses Elizabeth Siddal and Jane Morris took it upon themselves to create, write, and achieve both direct and indirect success during their lifetimes, destroying patriarchal Victorian notions held by the

[1] Stephanie Chatfield, "What Is Pre-Raphaelite Art?", Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood, http://preraphaelitesisterhood.com/what-is-pre-raphaelite-art/.

[2] Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (London: Quartet Books Limited, 2019), 59, 153.

Brotherhood and encouraging other creative females within their circle to follow the same path. In the end, the Sisterhood would expand to include painters Marie Spartali Stillman and Evelyn de Morgan, poet Christina Rossetti, Jane's daughter May Morris, Lady Georgiana Burne-Jones, and a host of other women inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic.

"Without Force": The Brotherhood's Ideal:

The primary challenge toward Elizabeth (commonly known as Lizzie) and Jane came in the form of the letters and artwork of the Brotherhood, where both women were presented as two-dimensional, beautiful faces, with frail constitutions and little ability to achieve the same professional success as the men. Rossetti, Millais, and others painted and wrote of an ideal – their ideal woman was silent, but gorgeous; sickly, but divine; a princess who ultimately needed their protection.

In one letter, artist Walter Deverell, for whom Elizabeth posed as Viola for his painting *Twelfth Night*, described her in the following manner: "She was tall and slender, with red coppery hair and bright consumptive complexion, though in these early years she had no striking signs of ill-health. She was exceedingly quiet, speaking very little. She had read Tennyson, having first come to know something about him by finding one or two of his poems on a piece of paper which she brought home to her mother wrapped in a pat of butter … Her drawings were very beautiful, but without force."[3] John Ruskin, who became Elizabeth's patron, went even farther in another letter to Rossetti, dramatically lamenting over Elizabeth's "health" and

[3] Jan Marsh, ed., *The Illustrated Letters and Diaries of the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Pavilion Books Company Ltd, 2018), 22.

recommending certain “cures”: “I mean, she might be able, and like, as the weather comes finer, to come out here sometimes to take a walk in the garden and feel the quiet fresh air….you seem to me to let her wear herself out with fancies, and she really ought to be made to draw in a dull way sometimes from dull things.”[4] When put together, the words of both men demonstrate that they believed Elizabeth did not have the skill to become as talented as they – as further injury, she was seen as delicate and her social status viewed as much lower than theirs, despite the gap between their class status actually not being very wide.[5] Throughout her relationship with Rossetti, she never escaped the label of damsel in distress: “Lizzie [played] the part of his unchaperoned lover in need of protection and Rossetti [assumed] the role of her chivalric knight, willing to leave friends and family behind in order to be with her.”[6] More or less, the Brotherhood treated Elizabeth as a tender invalid, a girl with promise, but not enough to “save her,” as if her talent was too overwhelming for her own constitution.

The most famous painting of Elizabeth – John Everett Millais’ *Ophelia* (1852, Figure 1), for which she posed in a cold bath – also worked against her, boxing her into the stereotype of a silent, doomed beauty, casting her in real life as Shakespeare’s heroine. One observer of *Ophelia*, Anne Thackery, had the following remarks to give upon recounting it later in life: “I gazed, charmed and bewildered. Was it fairyland, or was it all real? That shining glen, that floating, radiant figure? I knew now what I saw, but the picture took hold of my imagination, as some pictures do; and after years and years, when I saw the ‘Ophelia’ again, it was not less beautiful than I remembered it.”[7] Such reminiscences, letters between the Brotherhood, and other

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[4] Ibid, 80.
[5] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 18.
[6] Lucinda Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal: The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel* (London: André Deutsch, 2017), 84.
[7] John Guille Millais, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1899), 411.

recollections of Elizabeth mounted into a tidal wave of labels that overshadowed her own vibrant and creative personality: she was not only radiant and beautiful, but also a victim, vehicle, star, and the personification of Dante's Beatrice.[8] In the end, Elizabeth wasn't even herself anymore – she was only as others painted her, a mere shade. Christina Rossetti, her sister-in-law, put this aptly in her poem, "In an Artist's Studio," concluding with the line: "Not as she is, but as she fills his dream."[9]

Jane Morris did not evade similar treatment. In one letter, Rossetti's brother, the art critic William Michael, recalled, "My brother was the first to observe her. Her face was at once tragic, mystic, passionate, calm, beautiful and gracious – a face for a sculptor, and a face for a painter…."[10] Author Henry James issued the following after meeting Jane for the first time: "A figure cut out of a missal – out of one of Rossetti's or Hunt's pictures – to say this gives but a faint idea of her, because when such an image puts on flesh and blood, it is an apparition of fearful and wonderful intensity. It's hard to say [whether] she's a grand synthesis of all the pre-Raphaelite pictures ever made – or they a 'keen analysis' of her – whether she's an original or a copy. In either case she is a wonder."[11] Like Elizabeth, Jane's beauty became a curse she bore throughout her lifetime, as evidenced by both men's attention solely fixated upon it. James' words are especially haunting – they point to the fact that Jane never left Rossetti's shadow and that the paintings of her – rather than her own flesh and blood, her creativity, her spirit – ultimately defined who she was. There was no "real" Jane Morris, just like there was no "real" Elizabeth Siddal: both were replaced by paint upon canvas.

[8] Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal: The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel*, 27-28.
[9] Christina Rossetti, "In An Artist's Studio," in *Lizzie Siddal: The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel* (London: André Deutsch, 2017), 33.
[10] Marsh, *The Illustrated Letters and Diaries of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 113-115.
[11] Henry James to Alice James, March, 1869.

Even with Rossetti's passing in April 1882, Jane was not allowed any peace. For the most famous painting of her by Rossetti – *Proserpine* (1874, Figure 4), with Jane cast as the queen of the Grecian underworld – factored into his obituary and came to be seen as a highlight of their love affair: "Apart from this Mr. Rossetti had realised a very high type of female beauty, which, albeit somewhat monotonous, could never fail to rouse the admiration of those not satisfied with the prettiness and cleverness of conventional modern art. Such a picture as the 'Prosperine,' one of the artist's latest works, although consisting only of a single figure, is instinct with all the pathos of antique legend…."[12] In the wording of the obituary, Jane was boxed in just as Elizabeth was, evolving into an idealized version of herself. As lasting damage, her face simply became a part of Rossetti's legacy, a bolstering of his creative genius.

Obituaries written for Elizabeth and Jane did nothing to dispute the claims of the Brotherhood. Elizabeth's included the following – "But alas! the mental labour and anxiety to do credit to her most liberal and honourable patron had been too great for her feeble constitution; it induced a secret habit which has proved fatal to many, and her premature death has only added another proof of 'how frequently the fairest prospects fail'"[13] – and Jane's was hardly improved upon – "All the world knows the masses of dark hair, the ivory complexion and exquisite features, the beautiful hands and the great grey eyes, which were so unique and so overwhelming in their beauty."[14] Thus, with their passing, it appeared that the Brotherhood and their ideal had ultimately won out, preserving "the sweet, weak heroine of Pre-Raphaelitism"[15] for all time.

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[12] "Obituary," *The Times*, April 12, 1882, 5.
[13] William Ibbitt, "The Death of Mrs D. G. Rosseta," *Sheffield Telegraph*, February 28, 1862.
[14] "Obituary," *The Times*, January 28, 1914, 9.
[15] Jan Marsh, *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal* (London: Quartet Books Limited, 2010), 51.

Figure 1: John Everett Millais. *Ophelia*. 1852. Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 111.8 cm. Tate Britain.

Figure 2: William Holman-Hunt. *The Awakening Conscience*. 1853. Oil on canvas, 76 x 56 cm. Tate Britain.

Figure 3: Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Bocca Baciata*. 1859. Oil on canvas, 32.1 x 27 cm. Museum of Fine Arts.

Figure 4: Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Proserpine*. 1874. Oil on canvas, 125.1 x 61 cm. Tate Britain.

"Hopeful And Brave": The Artwork and Poetry Of Elizabeth Siddal

In more recent years, Elizabeth Siddal has been rebranded as a creative figure in her own right, as both an artist and a writer. Pre-Raphaelite scholar Jan Marsh has pointed out that "latterly, in the 1980s, a new version of Elizabeth Siddal has been emerging, who is partly victim of masculine oppression and partly a rediscovered proto-feminist, as fits the age….Implicit in this new approach is a determined effort to detach Elizabeth Siddal's story from that of Rossetti and the PRB, with which it has been historically entwined, and present her with a biography of her own."[16] In creating Siddal's own biography, many authors and scholars have turned their attention to her trove of artwork and poems, both of which have either been overshadowed by her husband or used as evidence to support the myth of her melancholy. By erasing such constraints, one finds in Siddal's output an expression of intense imagination and individuality, as well as a pioneering example of the creative contributions of women who were usually silenced by Victorian society, including other Pre-Raphaelite artists.

From the start, it should be noted that Elizabeth was an exception to the rules of Victorian society. As stated by Jan Marsh in her book *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, "There were many obstacles between Lizzie and art; She did not grow up in a world where young ladies drew and painted as part of their education… It was generally assumed that women could not be serious painters and thus in terms both of class and gender Lizzie was at a disadvantage; her readiness to challenge accepted views distinguished her from the usual forms of female passivity and imitativeness – although these characteristics were frequently ascribed to her."[17] By striving to be a professional artist and not just a model, Elizabeth went further than her female

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[16] Jan Marsh, "Imagining Elizabeth Siddal," *History Workshop,* no. 25 (1998): 78.
[17] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 45.

contemporaries Annie Miller and Fanny Cornforth. She opened up a new sphere within her artistic circle: choosing to actively engage with the men on their own ground, that of the paintbrush and canvas, as the first female Pre-Raphaelite artist. It was a major stepping stone at the beginnings of the Sisterhood – others would eventually follow in Elizabeth's trailblazing wake, a wake Rossetti, other members of the PRB, and later authors cast doubt upon.

While it is true that Siddal drew from similar sources of inspiration as her fellow male artists, such as contemporary poets and medieval ballads,[18] her own artwork "is particularly interesting for a study of Pre-Raphaelite drawing because she had escaped all of the formal training undergone by the Pre-Raphaelites; instead, her emphasis is almost completely upon imaginative composition…."[19] Key to Elizabeth's artwork was bold use of color, inspiration from Gothic and medieval artwork, and fluid lines.[20] As evidenced by her *Lady Clare* watercolor (1857, Figure 6) and her *Sister Helen* drawing (1854, Figure 5), she was one of the very first artists to portray medievalism, pushing the PRB in that direction in the 1850s, and in portraying witches and enchantments, another theme that was also picked up by the PRB over time.[21] Thus, Siddal anticipated the works of the PRB and other women that followed in her footsteps, her own artistic themes visually inspiring later drawings and paintings to come, amongst them Edward Burne-Jones' *The Knight's Farewell* (1858, Figure 7) and Evelyn de Morgan's *Medea* (1889, Figure 8).

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[18] Ibid, 45.
[19] Colin Cruise, "Pre-Raphaelite drawing," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 56.
[20] Deborah Cherry, "Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall (1829-1862)," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 183.
[21] Ibid, 185.

Figure 5: Elizabeth Siddal. *Sister Helen*. 1854. Pencil on paper, 23.4 x 29.8 cm. Ashmolean Museum.

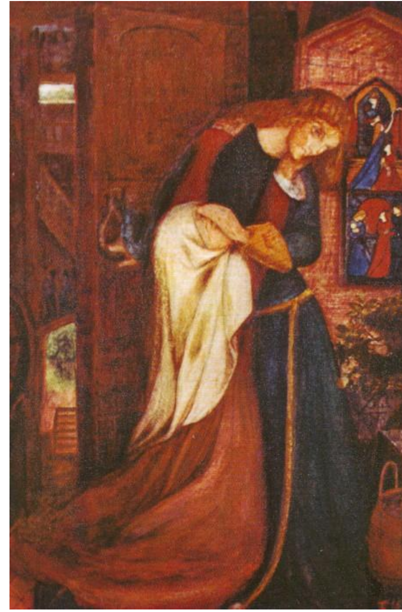

Figure 6: Elizabeth Siddal. *Lady Clare*. 1857. Watercolor on paper, 33.8 x 25.4 cm. Private collection.

Figure 7: Edward Burne-Jones. *The Knight's Farewell*. 1858. Pen and ink on vellum, 15.9 x 19.1 cm. Ashmolean Museum.

Figure 8: Evelyn De Morgan. *Medea*. 1889. Oil on canvas, 148 x 88 cm. Williamson Art Gallery.

One significant demonstration of Elizabeth's ingenuity and feminist outlook can be seen in her 1853 drawing, *The Lady of Shalott* (1853, Figure 9), where she rewrote Tennyson's epic poem to fit her own passions. Based in Arthurian legend, the poem tells of an anonymous lady who resides in a tower on the island of Shalott. Day after day, she works at her loom, a mirror being her window to the outside world – for if she dares to glance out the window, she is fated to die. Being the romantic tragedian, Tennyson writes of the Lady looking upon Lancelot as he rides to Camelot, unravelling the curse and ultimately meeting death.[22]

Siddal's drawing was and still is in conflict with the imagery surrounding "The Lady of Shalott" presented by the male Pre-Raphaelites[23] and others inspired by them: William Holman-Hunt envisioned the Lady trapped amidst her weaving, lost to the depths of sin[24] (1905, Figure 11), while John William Waterhouse's famous version depicted the Lady upon her boat, floating to her demise (1888, Figure 10). However, "[Siddal] refutes the poem's narrative drive, providing instead a vision of artistic activity."[25] With her sole focus on the Lady's weaving, Siddal reversed Tennyson's melancholy words, showing the Lady not as a victim but an artist, at peace with herself and her choice as she gazes upon Lancelot.[26] She seemed to suggest the Lady was content with defying whatever authority kept her locked away – a woman glad to disobey in a similar vein to Siddal herself. As noted by Elaine Shefer in her article on Siddal's drawing, "If read as a self-portrait as suggested, and if one imagines the loom replaced by a canvas, the

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[22] Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott," in *Alfred Lord Tennyson: Selected Poems*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), 8-12.
[23] Cherry, "Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall (1829-1862)," 188.
[24] Helen Nina Taylor, "'Too individual an artist to be a mere echo': Female Pre-Raphaelite artists as independent professionals," *The British Art Journal* 12, no. 3: 54.
[25] Cherry, "Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall (1829-1862)," 188.
[26] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 46.

drawing takes on a revolutionary character,"[27] in that Siddal found a role model in the Lady and made her one for others as well, a Lady who is industrious and defiant.[28]

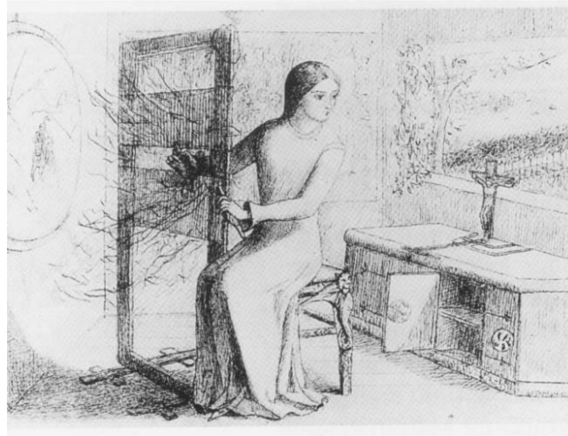

Figure 9: Elizabeth Siddal. *The Lady of Shalott*. 1853. Pencil on paper.

Figure 10: John William Waterhouse. *The Lady of Shalott*. 1888. Oil on canvas, 183 x 230 cm. Tate Britain.

Figure 11: William Holman-Hunt. *The Lady of Shalott.* 1905. Oil on canvas.

[27] Elaine Shefer, "Elizabeth Siddal's "Lady of Shalott," *Woman's Art Journal* 9, no. 1 (1988): 26.
[28] Taylor, "'Too individual an artist to be a mere echo': Female Pre-Raphaelite artists as independent professionals," 55.

A different work of Siddal's – her 1857 watercolor, *Clerk Saunders* (1857, Figure 12) – was also based in the written word and offers a demonstration of how she took direct action to showcase herself as a professional. "Clerk Saunders" itself is a ballad, with the tragic storyline centering on two lovers: Clerk Saunders and Maid Margaret. The pair are discovered attempting to sleep together before their marriage and Saunders is killed by Margaret's youngest brother in retaliation. Appearing as a ghost to Margaret the following night, Saunders is released to heaven by her[29] – the touching moment put on canvas by Siddal.

While the watercolor "is…exemplary of Pre-Raphaelite art in taking its inspiration from art before the High Renaissance,"[30] more importantly it was the first piece of art Elizabeth sold outside of her artistic circle and was one of the first pieces by a female Pre-Raphaelite artist to be displayed to the public. According to Jan Marsh in her book *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, "[Ford Madox] Brown was busy organizing a small, private Pre-Raphaelite exhibition, to be mounted in Russell Place, where Lizzie's work was to be shown in public for the first time. It was an important event in her career… Her watercolour, *Clerk Saunders*, was bought by Harvard professor Charles Eliot Norton…."[31] Here, one can see Siddal paving the way for later female artists to also reap the rewards of professional success: by having her art displayed and purchased alongside her male contemporaries, she was pushing them to be more inclusive. Furthermore, the public display demonstrates that Elizabeth took herself seriously as an artist – she was not content to remain invisible, so she took the necessary steps (such as paying part of

[29] "Clerk Saunders," in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Francis James Child (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1882-1898).
[30] Cherry, "Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall (1829-1862)," 183.
[31] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 112.

the exhibition's expenses) to ensure that she was seen. This same determination would blossom in later female Pre-Raphaelite artists as well, such as Jane Morris' daughter, May.

Figure 12: Elizabeth Siddal. *Clerk Saunders*. 1857. Watercolour on paper, 28.4 x 18.1 cm. Fitzwilliam Museum.

While written and kept private from the public till after her death,[32] Elizabeth's poetry intersected with her art in various ways, most notably by centering exclusively on the female voice. Here, Siddal made women not seen, but rather heard. In her poems, the grieving female, the deserted female, and the dying or dead female found a place[33] where silence tended to be the Victorian norm. This was a wild stretch from much of her husband Rossetti's poetry, from which such voices were excluded and the fancies of eroticism reigned supreme.

It should be noted from the beginning, that while Siddal was surrounded by a vast array of artists, the only female poet role model she knew was her sister-in-law, Christina Rossetti,[34] famous for "Goblin Market" and "The Prince's Progress." Despite their rocky relationship, many similarities are evident in their poetry: "[Siddal]…demonstrates a Pre-Raphaelite interest in colour, shape and form, as well as a simple medievalized style, but like Christina Rossetti she presents these from a woman's perspective; many of the poems offer the sadness of loss, but with an awareness of the fickleness of masculine love for the muse or model; some use bitterness, while others suggest passive acceptance."[35] Playing with the same themes and ideas on the page, Elizabeth and Christina further expanded the creative scope of the Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood to include poetry, taking after Ford Madox Brown's first wife, Elizabeth Bromley,[36] and engaging the men, yet again, on their own ground, notably Dante Gabriel Rossetti himself. It also appears that the sisters-in-law did have some mutual respect for one another: the narrative of Christina's poem "The Prince's Progress," in which a prince arrives too late for his dead

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[32] Serena Trowbridge, ed., *My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited, 2018), 18.
[33] Ibid, 16.
[34] Ibid, 15.
[35] Ibid, 15.
[36] Angela Thirlwell, "Into the Frame: The Four Loves of Ford Madox Brown," https://angelathirlwell.co.uk/portfolio/into-the-frame-the-four-loves-of-ford-madox-brown/.

princess, could be read as an indirect commentary on Elizabeth's long-postponed marriage and eventual passing.[37] Both explored uncharted waters in their writing and used poetry as a form of resistance: "Siddal's ballad work clearly indicates several complex, if subtly-screened, layers of protest against the task of performing as the kind of female subject (and object) she had been recruited to be within a particular kind of community."[38] Through their poetry, Elizabeth and Christina developed their own voices, using it as a platform to express what the Brotherhood tended to avoid.

One poem of Siddal's, "Ope not thy lips thou foolish one" (titled "Love And Hate"[39] by her brother-in-law, art critic William Michael Rossetti), demonstrates how Siddal's work was reminiscent of Christina's and how her poems have been read as autobiographical:

1

Ope not thy lips thou foolish one
Nor turn to me thy face
The blasts of heaven shall strike thee down
ere I will give thee grace

2

Take thou thy shadow from my path,
Nor turn to me and pray
The wild wild winds thy dirge may sing
Ere I will bid thee stay

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[37] Marsh, *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal*, 11.
[38] Jill R. Ehnenn, ""Strong Traivelling": Re-visions of Women's Subjectivity and Female Labor in the Ballad-work of Elizabeth Siddal," *Victorian Poetry* 52, no. 2 (2014): 273.
[39] Marsh, *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal*, 209.

3

Lift thy false brow from the dust,

Nor wild thine hands entwine

among the golden summer leaves

To mock the gay sunshine

And turn away thy false dark eyes

Nor gaze into my face

great love I bore thee now great hate

Sits grimly in its place

All changes pass me like a dream

I neither sing nor pray

and thou art like the poisonous tree

that stole my life away[40]

At a first glance, the poem can easily be seen as lines written by Siddal based on the sometimes estranged relationship she had with her lover and husband Rossetti.[41] Yet, if one digs deeper, one can see that, like Christina, Elizabeth reshapes silence so that it is a form of agency[42]: the female narrator, caught in emotional pain, refuses to concede to her lover – she will not "sing nor pray," she will not "give thee grace." Similar to Siddal's refusal to be labeled by the Brotherhood, the narrator refuses to back down from the cold silence she has adopted. By steeping herself in Siddal's "imagery…with that of fire and burning for passion and anger,"[43] the

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[40] Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall, "Ope not thy lips thou foolish one," in *My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall*, ed. Serena Trowbridge (Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited, 2018), 80.
[41] Trowbridge, *My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall*, 83.
[42] Ibid, 83.
[43] Marsh, *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal*, 210.

narrator will not submit to returning to the docile creature she once was. As noted by Jan Marsh in her book *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal*, "These verses attempt no narrative explanation or justification; their feeling is rendered stronger by the lyrical simplicity and the blend of literary language with fierce and unexpected imagery."[44]

In another poem of Siddal's, "True Love" (Date Unknown, Figure 14), the only poem to which she gave a title,[45] one can see her poetry's relationship with her artwork, establishing an intersection between the female voice, romance, tragedy, medievalism, and other Pre-Raphaelite themes:

Farewell Earl Richard,
Tender and brave:
Kneeling I kiss
The dust from your grave.

Pray for me Richard,
Lying alone
With hands pleading earnestly,
All in white stone

Soon I must leave thee,
This sweet summer tide,
That other is waiting,
To claim his pale Bride.

[44] Ibid, 209.
[45] Trowbridge, *My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall*, 93.

Soon I'll return to thee,
Hopeful and brave,
When the dead leaves,
Blow over thy grave,

Then shall they find me
Close at thy head
Watching or waking,
Sleeping or dead.[46]

The poem itself is indebted to medieval ballads in its construction and content – the female narrator is a lady grieving over the tomb of her fallen knight.[47] Once again, one sees Siddal taking a marginalized figure and amplifying her voice, giving them a space where the majority of Victorian society would tend to ignore her. Steeped in gloom and death, the poem is less fiery than the previous one, but there are hints that the narrator intends to subvert her fate and not be conquered. The concluding lines beginning with "Soon I'll return to thee" give the impression of someone willing to defy "That other" by any means, perhaps even through suicide. The lines create an intense atmosphere when paralleled alongside Siddal's drawing *The Woeful Victory* (1848?, Figure 13), for which it might have been intended,[48] both with medieval roots and an ill-fated conclusion.

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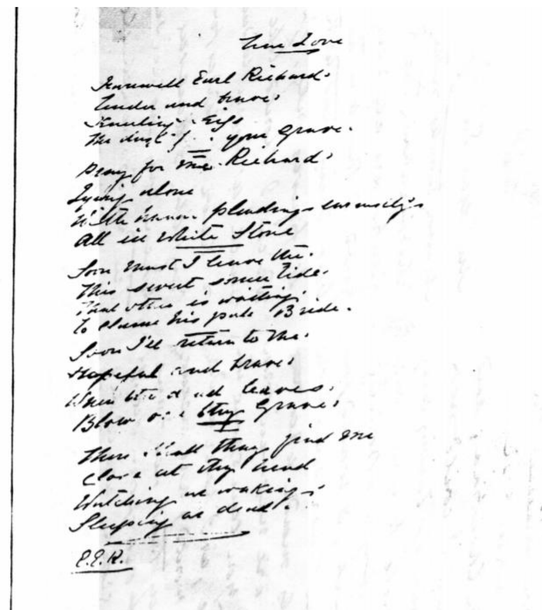
[46] Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall, "True Love," in *My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall*, ed. Serena Trowbridge (Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited, 2018), 92.
[47] Trowbridge, *My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall*, 93.
[48] Ibid, 93.

In her art and poetry, Elizabeth rose above the words that framed her in death. In current art history, the shadows and labels that once rendered her solely as Beatrice have been removed, revealing a woman who has become an inspiration to many, as per the words of Pre-Raphaelite scholar Stephanie Chatfield: "When we champion Elizabeth Siddal, we as women are cheerleaders for our *own* creative endeavors, fighting in a way she couldn't against those who disappoint us…"[49]

Figure 13: Elizabeth Siddal. *The Woeful Victory*. 1848?. Pen and pencil on paper, 17.7 x 14 cm. Cecil Higgins Art Gallery.


True Love

Farewell Earl Richard
Tender and brave
Kneeling I kiss
The dust of your grave
Pray for me Richard
Lying alone
With hands pleading earnestly
All in white stone
Soon must I leave thee
This sweet summer tide
That other is waiting
To claim his pale Bride
Soon I'll return to thee
Hopeful and brave
When the dead leaves
Blow over thy grave
Then shall they find me
Close at thy head
Watching or waking
Sleeping as dead

E.E.R.

Figure 14: Holograph of Elizabeth Siddal's poem "True Love." Ashmolean Museum.

[49] Stephanie Chatfield, "I know her face as well as my own," Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood, http://preraphaelitesisterhood.com/i-know-her-face-as-well-as-my-own/.

“Often Successful”: The Embroidery and Letters Of Jane Morris

Jane Morris’ contributions to the Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood could be termed as hiding in plain sight, where one is forced to look hard to uncover the agency demonstrated. Unlike Elizabeth Siddal, Jane’s individuality and creativity can be viewed as the backbone that allowed for the success of others – most notably her husband William Morris and her daughter May – to flourish. As noted by scholar Wendy Parkins in her book, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, “Moving from a working-class family in Oxford into the semi-bohemian milieu of the Pre-Raphaelite circle as well as the comfort of middle-class affluence, Jane Morris acquired a way of being-in-the-world that would have been marked by profound dislocation but which also provided opportunities for agency….”[50] Among Jane Morris’ “opportunities for agency” were the direct and indirect actions she took toward equality with her husband, William Morris; the cultural activities she immersed herself in, with a strong focus on her own social improvement; and her serving as a role model and active assistant in the career of her daughter May.

In a similar vein to Elizabeth Siddal, Jane’s embroidery was the first of its kind, with the Morris family introducing the craft into the Pre-Raphaelite sphere. The Morrises lived from 1860 to 1865 at what is known as Red House, designed for them by architect Philip Webb,[51] the name based upon the structure’s red brick exterior. It was there that Jane, alongside her husband, began the flowering of the Arts & Crafts Movement, her embroidered contributions part of the spark that ignited a late-Victorian revolt against industrial production in home and church furnishings.[52] One such contribution was the *Legend of Good Women* tapestries, inspired by Chaucer’s poem of the same name: a three-panel screen featuring Lucretia, Hippolyta, and Helen of Troy (1860, Figure

[50] Wendy Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 15.
[51] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 185.
[52] Ibid, 186.

15), now residing at Castle Howard but originally intended for Red House, was made by Jane and her sister Elizabeth in silk and gold thread.[53] By sharing a love for beauty with her husband and incorporating such passion into her own creative output,[54] Jane Morris deserves the right to be considered a co-founder of the Arts & Crafts Movement, especially given that her work is evidence of "remarkable technical skill as well as an expert eye for color,"[55] a stunning feat for a woman originally from the working class.

The fact that Jane became the head of the embroidery department of Morris & Co.[56] after leaving Red House also attests to her husband's faith in her skills and demonstrates the equilibrium the pair established. True, Jane was not credited for her work, but William depended strongly upon her when it came to the construction of altar cloths, fire screens, and other domestic or church items. Outside of the partnership she shared with William, Jane executed commissions for associates and close friends,[57] such as the embroidered purse (1878, Figure 16) currently at the Victoria & Albert Museum in England. Such "material objects signified, in part, their capacity to re-present the self who had made the object by constructing, arranging, embellishing…in a new context of her own design and decoration"[58] – proving that Jane did, occasionally, make beautiful objects to illustrate her own creative agency which were not completely dictated by her husband's ideas. Furthermore, Jane's friendships with Lady Georgiana Burne-Jones, author Mary de Morgan, and artist Marie Spartali Stillman[59] demonstrates how she took action to widen the Pre-Raphaelite

[53] Eeyan Hartley, "Morris & Co. in a Baroque Setting," *The Journal of the William Morris Society* 11, no. 2 (1995): 8-9.
[54] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 145.
[55] Frank C. Sharp and Jan Marsh, eds., *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 6.
[56] Ibid, 6.
[57] Ibid, 31.
[58] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 165.
[59] Ibid, 159.

Sisterhood, either inspiring their own art – Stillman went on to paint numerous artworks depicting the Morris' home of Kelmscott Manor (Date Unknown, Figure 18) – or taking pride in their accomplishments – as stated by Jane in a letter to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt: "I had been staying a week at Rottingdean very happily with Lady B.J. – her book [*Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*] (1904, Figure 17) has been well received as it deserves to be, every post brought letters of congratulation from friends and others. I am so glad you praise it as a literary work and feel that it is done in the right tone – it has made exactly the impression she meant it to make, which is a great triumph."[60] Through these actions, Jane took her own initiative and ran with it, proving to herself that she could be successful on her own terms.

In creating such a community "with women who supported themselves as artists or writers"[61] and by helping to run Morris & Co. through "overseeing outworkers, providing materials and patterns, paying wages and keeping accounts,"[62] Jane adopted the lifelong role of textile artist and businesswoman. These achievements are slowly making their way into current art history, revealing Jane to have a much more three-dimensional character and demonstrating "how her life was embedded with the lives of others, whether through expressions of sympathy for their sorrows, delight in their achievements, or intense interest in their thoughts and feelings."[63] By peeling away the painted layers of *Proserpine*, one comes to understand that Jane did have more to offer and share with the art world than her face.

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[60] Jane Morris to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Lechlade, December 20, 1904, in *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, eds. Frank C. Sharp and Jan Marsh (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 382-383.
[61] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 104-105.
[62] Rowan Bain, Jenny Lister, and Anna Mason, "Wallpapers and Embroidery," in *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017), 58.
[63] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 146.

Figure 15: Jane Morris and Elizabeth Burden. *Three-fold screen with embroidered panels depicting heroines*. 1860. Wooden surround, woollen ground with wool and silk, each panel 135 x 71 cm. Castle Howard.

Figure 16: Jane Morris. *Bag*. 1878. Embroidered silk, metal mount, 220 x 245 x 45 mm. Victoria & Albert Museum.

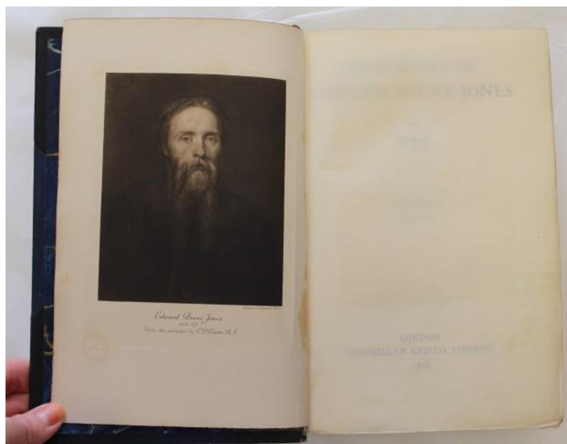

Figure 17: Georgiana Burne-Jones. *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*. 1904. Book, 22 x 15 x 5 cm. William Morris Gallery.

Figure 18: Marie Spartali Stillman. *The Long Walk at Kelmscott Manor, Oxfordshire*. Date Unknown. Watercolor and gouache paint, 34 x 52 cm.

One stunning example of William's confidence in Jane can be seen in the *Daisy* wall hangings (1860, Figure 19) they made for Red House. Jane, by luck or chance, came across the blue wool serge used for the hangings while out shopping: a small event that proved monumental, for her choice of wool evolved into it being the sole fabric used for Morris & Co. embroideries.[64] Hence, one can see how Jane's creative intuition resulted in her husband's success as a businessman, especially given that the hangings´ floral pattern later resulted in a successful wallpaper design.[65]

The *Daisy* embroidery was inspired by one illustration from a copy of Froissant's *Chronicles*,[66] signifying and paying homage to the Pre-Raphaelite medievalism first undertaken by Elizabeth Siddal. William executed the design while Jane was responsible for the embroidery – a demonstration of how husband and wife combined their talents with mutual respect towards one another. This was later recognized by one friend of their daughter May's, Mary Lobb, and yielding May with a combination of the two: "You see William Morris could design embroideries but he could not embroider, anyway not as well…Mrs [Jane] Morris could embroider but couldn't design, Miss [May] Morris could and did both design as well as William Morris and embroider as well [as] any one…and her colour arrangements were unapproachable and original."[67] As if in recognition of William and Jane's respectful partnership, the hangings potentially could have been one of the embroideries that garnered the Morrises an award at the 1862 International Exhibition in London.[68] However, the hangings prove, at best, that Jane was essential to William's career –

[64] Sharp and Marsh, *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, 30.
[65] Imogen Hart, "The designs of William Morris," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 214.
[66] Ibid, 214.
[67] Jan Marsh, "A Well-Crafted Life," in *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017), 31.
[68] Sharp and Marsh, *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, 423.

not as his wife, but as his collaborative partner, someone whose ingenuity and skill pushed him to new heights.

Figure 19: William Morris and Jane Morris. *Daisy* wall hangings. 1860. Couched wools on wool serge. Kelmscott Manor.

Another example of Jane's role as collaborator can be seen in *The Homestead and the Forest* cot quilt (1890, Figure 20) that she made with her youngest daughter, May, in 1889-1890. The Morrises had two children: Jenny, the oldest, who suffered from epilepsy throughout the majority of her life,[69] and May, who went on to have a successful Arts & Crafts career. May exercised more creative freedom than either of her parents, practicing crafts such as jewelry and watercolors,[70] neither of which Jane nor William attempted. Upon succeeding to the role of head of the embroidery department at Morris & Co. in 1885,[71] May took on a leading role, more or less filling the shoes of her father once he was deceased: she contributed publications, taught embroidery practice and design, and founded the Women's Guild of Arts, further expanding the Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood in the Guild's inclusion of artists Evelyn de Morgan and jeweler Georgie Gaskin.[72] By allowing her own creativity to run free, May was able to circumvent the words of her own mother: in one letter to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Jane stated, "Why should there be any special record of me when I have never done any special work?"[73] Yet May, being an exemplar of "the New Woman of 1890-1910, with freedom of movement, independent choices and egalitarian pursuits,"[74] had this to say in a later letter to George Bernard-Shaw: "I'm a remarkable woman – always was, though none of you seemed to think so."[75]

The quilt, designed by May and embroidered by Jane for May's potential children (she had none), testifies especially to the two women's breaking out of the shadow of William Morris and demonstrates that both had talent that did not depend solely upon him. The wide variety of stitches

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[69] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 312.
[70] Anna Mason et al., *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017).
[71] Marsh, "A Well-Crafted Life," 14.
[72] Ibid, 21-24.
[73] Jane Morris to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Lechlade, December 20, 1904, in *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, eds. Frank C. Sharp and Jan Marsh (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 382-383.
[74] Marsh, "A Well-Crafted Life," 17.
[75] May Morris to George Bernard-Shaw, May 5, 1936.

used – amongst them darning stitch, satin stitch, herringbone stitch, and French knots[76] – offers a prime example of the development of Jane's accomplishments as a needlewomen over time – leagues beyond the Daisy hangings made for Red House. Furthermore, in a parallel to the earlier hangings potentially receiving an award, the quilt was exhibited at the third Arts & Crafts exhibition in 1890 and received praise in the press,[77] perhaps in a sly nod to the words of William Rothenstein regarding Jane: "Women married to famous men are over-shadowed by their husbands; but when they survive their husbands, there comes sometimes a late flowering, previously, perhaps, held in check."[78]

Figure 20: May Morris and Jane Morris. *The Homestead and the Forest* cot quilt. 1890. Silks on a linen and silk mix ground, 153 x 126 cm. Kelmscott Manor.

[76] Rowan Bain, Jenny Lister, and Anna Mason, "Wallpapers and Embroidery," 118.
[77] Ibid, 118.
[78] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 93.

Similar to Elizabeth Siddal's poetry, Jane's letters (Figure 21) were a private matter, but reveal her to have a far more complex personality than any painting of her by Rossetti. Her writing demonstrates not only her adaptability in her marriage to William Morris, but also reflects her cultural interests – especially towards books, travel, and politics – including her personal influence upon William's socialism.[79] It should be highlighted that, here, Jane was determined to speak out on topics that interested her – rather than remaining silent and demure. Furthermore, her letters prove how she came to succeed on her own terms, overcoming the poor education she received when young.

One such letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti points to Jane's "love of reading…a significant commonality with autodidactic working-class men and women for whom reading was a highly-valued means of transcending the limitations of their situation and contributed to a lifelong learning process"[80]:

To Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Tuesday

[September 1878]

My dear Gabriel

I return the verses of Cristina's, they seem very funny as far as I can understand them, I still find difficulties with poetry, as you can imagine – I should be delighted with the 'Vita Nuova' you speak of, I have not one of my own, the one I use here is a little Florentine copy printed 1863, very small type, and trying to the eyes – I have had some trouble with my eyes lately, which has kept me from using them in any way, but they are suddenly better today.

I will see to anything more of yours you wish before I leave, the gilt chandelier is still where you left it on the staircase, and also that comic clock belonging to George Hake, the

[79] Sharp and Marsh, *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, 17, 21.

[80] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 95.

embroideries were all sent before, if you remember, the washstand is safe, but I see not the little table you mention.

What is the paper you cut the engraving from? I see there is a story of intensely sensational character at its back, for I still keep up my old habit of reading every scrap that comes in my way, the hero seems to be one Boddlebak, which name would be enough to excite one's curiosity without the picture.

I am going to walk out a little way, the day is fine, and sunshine is rare.

Your affectionate

Janey[81]

In the act of "reading every scrap that comes in my way" – not to mention the verses of Christina Rossetti – one sees Jane exhibiting a strong passion for literature. The overall tone is one of enthusiasm, erasing the cold, frail image many have painted and replacing it with a woman full of curiosity, wit, and warmth.[82] Furthermore, one sees Jane acting upon the opportunities given to her – here, receiving a copy of Dante's *Vita Nuova* – to expand upon her originally limited education and accomplish what neither of her illiterate parents were capable of. This should be considered a big achievement for a woman at first destined to be a domestic maid,[83] highlighting Theodore Watts-Dunton's claim "that Jane was 'superior to [William] Morris intellectually, she reached a greater mental height than he was capable of, yet few knew it.'"[84] This stands in sharp contrast to Jane's poor upbringing and demonstrates that she was living proof of how those from the working-class could redefine themselves upon given the necessary cultural tools to do so.

[81] Jane Morris to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, September, 1878, in *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, eds. Frank C. Sharp and Jan Marsh (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 77.
[82] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 63.
[83] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 119.
[84] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 93.

Jane's reading habit also had a direct impact upon her husband William's socialism: "At their core, Morris's beliefs were based on the premise that working people could be reformed or empowered through education, leisure, and exposure to beauty."[85] Through reading – her book selection covering "Aeschylus to Tennyson"[86] – and using it as a transformational tool, Jane established herself as a dominant presence in William Morris's own socialist prose. For example, the character Ursula in William's *The Well at the World's End* begins the story as a yeoman's daughter, but becomes queen alongside the hero Ralph by its end, the tale being a nod to the Morris' marriage[87] and how Jane "embarked on a process of the re-making of *habitus* that involved both the acquisition of new skills and knowledge and the related development of an altered sense of self."[88]

Later in life, Jane would also contribute historical knowledge to her daughter May's lectures, sharing her recollections of earlier embroidery to a second generation, as evidenced in another, fragmented letter:

To May Morris
[1909?]

… I think you have not quite given enough prominence to the revival of old embroidery. This was entirely due to him [William Morris]. Its not easy to imagine now the great difficulty we had then in hunting up material for starting anything. There were no lessons to be had, everything had to be laboured at for a time often successful, often not but the failures were amusing too.

The first stuff I got to embroider on was a piece of indigo dyed blue serge I found by chance in a London shop such as can be bought now in any shop in any street. I took it home and he was

[85] Sharp and Marsh, *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, 24.
[86] Ibid, 21.
[87] Ibid, 198.
[88] Parkins, *Jane Morris: The Burden of History*, 91.

delighted with it, and set to work at once designing flowers. These we worked in bright colours in a simple rough way. The work went quickly and when finished we covered the walls of the bedroom at Red House to our great joy. On leaving these hangings were afterwards given to the Burne-Jones' and are now at Rot[tingdean].

Another scheme for adorning the house was a series of tapestries for dining room, twelve large figures with a tree between each two Flowers at the feet and a pattern all over the background 7 of figures were completed – and some of them fixed on their background.. During the slow progress of this gigantic work we were making experiments in silk and gold wools afterwards to bloom into altar cloths etc. In Queens Square when we left Red House in 1865 emb. silks difficult to find of a good colour gold thread of a good quality which would not tarnish had to be found, we adopted the plan of lacquering it afterwards which gave it a beautiful rich tone – all these things were set going by the one master spirit and carried out under the master eye chiefly by myself and my sister. Miss. F. helped in Q. Sq. days and Mrs. Campfield helped make up pieces of work.

I have only described em: after I came on the scene but really he started experiments before he knew me. He got frames made had worsteds dyed to his tastes by an old French couple and began a piece of work with his own hands. This was the celebrated "If I can" bird & tree hanging of which I still have a piece at Kelmscott Manor. He must have started this as early as 1855. He taught me the first principle of laying the stitches together closely so as to cover the ground smoothly and radiating them properly afterwards. We studied old pieces and by unpicking &: we learnt much but it was uphill work fascinating but only carried through by his enormous energy and perseverance. Years afterwards somewhere in the seventies Mrs. H …[89]

This letter was written during May's North American lecture tour of 1909-1910, with Jane assisting her daughter in providing "historical knowledge of embroidered textiles and techniques."[90] Here, Jane steps into the role of teacher, providing May with her Red House memories while also ensuring that the Morris legacy would continue into the future and remain intact after William's death. Beyond such recollections being used in May's lectures, Jane and her daughter sought to commemorate William through editing his manuscripts and setting up memorial exhibitions, such as the one held at the New Gallery in 1899.[91] Furthermore, the contents of Jane's letter provide insight into May herself and the strong bond the two shared: "As

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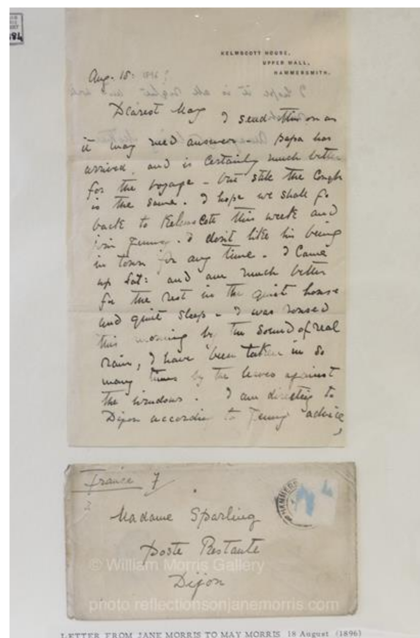
[89] Jane Morris to May Morris, 1909, in *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, eds. Frank C. Sharp and Jan Marsh (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 422-423.
[90] Marsh, "A Well-Crafted Life," 22.
[91] Sharp and Marsh, *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, 287-288.

an accomplished needlewoman, May also shared her parents' commitment to reviving historic stitch; Her comments on its development and technicality, born of in-depth study of old examples in museum collections and church treasuries across Britain and mainland Europe, [ranked] her among the leading instructors in the field."[92]

In her embroidery and letters, Jane created her own legacy, rather than simply acting as an aide to Rossetti's or her husband's. Analysis of her creative work and writings in Pre-Raphaelite scholarship has defined her as a woman with "aspiration, ambition, determination and strength of character."[93] No longer is Jane simply the stunning face of Proserpine or Rossetti's muse – she is the mother, the businesswoman, the friend, and the teacher, leaving behind a heritage of success.



KELMSCOTT HOUSE,
UPPER MALL,
HAMMERSMITH.

Aug. 18 [1896?]

Dearest May I send this on as it may need answer — Papa has arrived, and is certainly much better for the voyage — but still the cough is the same. I hope we shall go back to Kelmscott this week and join Jenny. I don't like his being in town for any time. I came up Sat: and am much better for the rest in the quiet house and quiet sleep — I was roused this morning by the sound of real rain, I have been taken in so many times by the leaves against the windows. I am directing to Dijon according to Jenny's advice,

France 7

Madame Sparling
Poste Restante
Dijon

© William Morris Gallery
photo reflectionsonjanemorris.com

LETTER FROM JANE MORRIS TO MAY MORRIS 18 August (1896)

Figure 21: Jane Morris's letter to May Morris. 1896. William Morris Gallery.

[92] Lynn Hulse, foreword to *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017), 7.
[93] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 351.

Conclusion:

Since the deaths of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, their muses and models have been viewed as "silent, enigmatic, passive figures, not individuals engaged in activity but objects to be gazed upon by painter and spectator."[94] Such notions of Elizabeth Siddal, Jane Morris, Annie Miller, and Fanny Cornforth, including the countless other women who posed for the Brotherhood, have only eroded bit by bit, with "the resurgent interest in women's history…nudging [the Pre-Raphaelite women] towards a position as protofeminists, stressing their oppression, imperfect achievements and demands for independence."[95]

Elizabeth Siddal and Jane Morris will, perhaps, always be seen as pretty faces by some, but their lives are also being redefined in creative works like Dawn Marie Kresan's poetry book, *Muse*,[96] and Dutch artist's Margje Bijl's photography on Jane Morris.[97] Through these projects and the continuation of Pre-Raphaelite scholarship, old opinions, are being transformed, such as scholar Jan Marsh's – "I no longer believe the legend that Elizabeth Siddal was 'discovered' in a bonnet shop, but that she showed her amateur drawings to tutors at the Government School of Design (which became the Royal College of Art), and then modelled for Walter Deverell as a way into the world of art,"[98] – and appreciation for Elizabeth and Jane's creative output has grown.

True, the opinions of Rossetti, Deverell, and their cohort will remain, but the voices of their marginalized muses, wives, sisters, daughters, and cousins have gained a stronger foothold

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[94] Ibid, 1.
[95] Ibid, 348.
[96] Dawn Marie Kresan, *Muse* (Toronto: DK graphic design, 2018).
[97] Margje Bijl, "Reflections on Jane Morris," https://www.reflectionsonjanemorris.com/.
[98] Jan Marsh, "'Not simply passive Cinderellas' – rediscovering the Pre-Raphaelite women," *Apollo Magazine*, October 28, 2019, https://www.apollo-magazine.com/pre-raphaelite-sisters/.

over time – a foothold that continues to grow with every new book written,[99] every new letter discovered, every new artwork found.[100] The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood will be remembered for their artistic genius, dramatic poetry, and complex love lives, but the Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood will also be remembered for being "active, positive agents in the choice and definition of their own futures."[101]

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[99] Stephanie Chatfield, "Barely Clare," Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood, http://preraphaelitesisterhood.com/barely-clare/.
[100] Maev Kennedy, "Pre-Raphaelite mural discovered in William Morris's Red House," The Guardian, August 18, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/aug/18/hidden-mural-william-morris-house.
[101] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 351.

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