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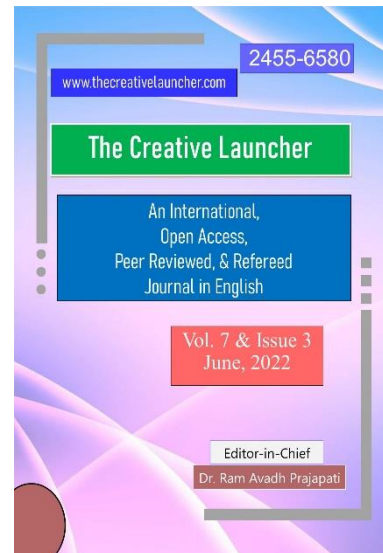
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☞ Research Article



Painting in Poetry and Poetry in Painting: Aesthetic Reflections in D.G. Rossetti

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Abstract

Bright eyed and bushy-tailed poems and paintings are very rare, so are their past masters who create them. The history of the world literature is often brimming with such rare authors as are the unparalleled amalgamator of paintings and writings. In this field, the names, which are counted highly with boundless esteem, are of William Blake, Lewis Carroll, Hans Christian Andersen, Elizabeth Bishop, Leo Tolstoy, Lorraine Hansberry, Victor Hugo, Sylvia Plath,

George Sand, Jack Kerouac, Herman Hesse, Gunter Grass, Charles Bukowski, Henry Miller, William S. Burroughs, E.E. Cummings, Tennessee Williams, Carlo Levi, J.B. Priestley, and R.N. Tagore. Undisputedly, D.G. Rossetti is one such figure. When the world literature is deconstructed, two clusters of the authors appear on the literary landscape. The first cluster consists of those authors who are painters and writers as well. The painters who have painted the literary pieces of the authors fall into the second cluster. D.G. Rossetti somewhere stands in-between. He is painter (especially illustrator) as well author-poet. But the flabbergasting certitude is that his elite poetry is found in his pieces of mural, and his elite mural in his pieces of poesy. His all creations, be they paintings, or poems, fall in three categories. In the first faction fall such pieces of his poems as are only poems—without any illustration, in the second faction fall such pieces of his paintings as are without poems, while in the third faction fall such pieces of his paintings as are with poems, or with mythical illustrations, or on certain literary pieces. Nothing to say about these groups, but one thing is clear that all of them possess aesthetic reflections. Keeping this very fact in mind, the present article aims at exploring, analyzing, and presenting the three-dimensional view in Rossetti painting and poetry with the help of the textual analysis, visual methods, and descriptive and explorative approach.

Keywords: *Kathopanisad*, Aesthetics, *fin-de-siecle*, *Naivete*, *Quattrocento*, Intellectual-Inertia, Modicum

None can forget John Keats, one of the cardinal florets embedded in the garland of the romantic poets of younger generation. None can forget his timeless sensible line—BEAUTY IS TRUTH, AND TRUTH IS BEAUTY (p.346), which seems to be an aesthetic, poetic as well as philosophic adaption of a captivating line from *Kathopanisad*—SATYAM SHIVAM SUNDARAM (Web.). None can forget its existence, relevance, and timeless sensibility till the doom's day. For it's one of those eternally enchanting lines which support the universe. For it teaches the taught the supreme values of the cosmos—TRUTH, GODLINESS, AND BEAUTY from where arise the cascades of camaraderie, concupiscence, calmness, contentment, and aesthetes for aesthetic pleasure *vice-versa*. It deals with ART FOR ART'S SAKE (Web.) in the same way as it deals with ART FOR LIFE'S SAKE (Web.).

Aesthete, aesthetics or esthetics, and aestheticism are such correlated terms without their understanding one can neither grasp, nor judge any piece of poesy. The first stands for a man who has a great affection and understanding for art and beautiful things, i.e., it is a philosophical study of beauty and taste concerned with the nature of art with the aim of interpreting and evaluating of a certain piece of fine art whether it's painting or poesy. While the second stands for such a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of art, beauty, and taste along with its creation and appreciation. Both are the part of the third called Aestheticism (1860-1900), which is based on such doctrines of the existence of art as affects its field predominantly. Despite of being an interdisciplinary term, it's often annexed to British Aestheticism in the field of English literature. Its existence is perpetual, but it comes to its prime as a European Movement of Arts and Cultures disguised as Pre-Raphaelites, Decadence,

or *fin-de-siecle* in the late of 19th century. Mostly all of these movements are characterized by extreme aestheticism and obstinacy in both style and subject matter. As a whole, it continues nearly for thirty years from 1850s to 1880s adoring the single slogan of ART FOR ART'S SAKE (taken from Gautier's novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, translated by Victor Cousin, but highly advocated by Pater and Oscar Wilde) encountering the slogan of ART FOR LIFE'S SAKE (highly advocated by Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin). Where the former advocates that art exists only for the sake of beauty without pursuing and preserving any political, didactic, or economic purpose, there the latter advocates for exploring morality underlying art and literature. The members of the PRB heartedly embrace the philosophies related to former, but they suppress the narrative or didactic content in the favor of the formal qualities of a work of art. It is Kant who besides giving it a philosophical edge, postulates its autonomy. Setting it apart from the considerations of morality, utility or pleasure, he gives it aesthetic standards—a realm in which and in where one finds interest, pleasure, and emotion at the presence or absence of beauty in a particular thing. For the primacy of the viewer's aesthetic experience of art, in the book *Studies in the History of Renaissance* (1873) Walter Pater argues: "Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality of your moments as they pass, and simply for these moment sake" (p. 213).

When one tries to have the glimpses of the journey that aestheticism covers, one becomes aware of the fact that it is Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe who later on amplifies this thought in Germany, whereas S.T. Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle do the same in England, and *Pierre Jules Theophile Gautier* in France. No doubt, Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle amplify it in England, but it is the trio of PRB—William Holman Hunt, the British artist; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, one of the major precursor of the Aesthetic movement; and John Everett Millais, an English painter and illustrator—who plants its saplings in the yard of England which later on causes the flowers and fruits not only of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, not only of the Decadent movement—specially in literature and painting, but also of the social reform which is known well by the name of Chartism.

When a scholar goes through the history of English literature and painting, s/he finds that Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, often called Pre-Raphaelites, is a countercultural movement. It's a group of such seven renowned poets, painters, and critics as famously disparage Sir Joshua Reynolds, the founding president of the Royal Academy. Being a countercultural movement, it seeks to introduce the thematic seriousness, high coloration, and attention to detail into the contemporary British art and literature. All the members (even though Christiana and her train) of this brotherhood are consumed with the idea of female beauty which is rooted in heteronormative beliefs which is not oriented towards sexual, but sensuous orientations. To them, as it seems, there is nothing in this world like a BEAUTY! The sublime beauty, the natural grandeur! All are unparalleled. This brotherhood wishes to deliver its message to the world through a monthly literary and artistic magazine called *The Germ* (1850) which, undoubtedly, is something like Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballad*, a manifesto for their artistic concerns. But rip! It runs only for four issues, but with a fruitful existence and essence. About

all the numerations of this Brotherhood, the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* describes (it) as:

A group of artists, poets and critics—John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, William Michael Rossetti, Thomas Woolner, Fredric George Stephens and James Collinson—who first met as a group, led by the first three, in 1848. Various derivations have been assigned to the term ‘Pre-Raphaelite’, which indicated the group’s admiration for the Italian *quattrocento* and its defiance of the authority both of Raphael as a master and of 19th century academic painting (p.801).

In the same context, enumerating the characteristics of this school, in *A History of English Literature*, Arthur Compton Ricketts writes:

In 1848 an association was established by three young painters—Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, and William Holman Hunt—called the “Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.” As the name suggests, this brotherhood identified themselves artistically with the painters before Raphael, the early Florentine –e.g. Giotto, Bellini, and Fra Angelico—for they found in the work of artists an individuality and sincerity alien to the art of Raphael’s successors. Even the faults of this earlier school had for the brotherhood a special charm, and the crude drawing and faulty perspective enchanted them as the *naivete* and roughness of the old ballads enchant the scholar (p.441).

It is what it’s. But there is certitudity of the fact that no school exists without merits and demerits and without cause and effect as well, i.e., the theory of the ‘Cause and Effect’ is also common with its coming into existence. As in the field of painting, it revolts against the Mannerists—Luigi Lanzi, Michelangelo, and Albrecht Durer etc. dating 1520 to 1620—with the aim of purifying the art of its time by imitating Medieval and early Renaissance paintings, i.e., to restore simplicity and naturalness in art, against the growing artificiality, materialism, and moralism of the running age. In the field of poesy, it revolts against the worldly over-concerns of a few poets be they Victorian, or Pre-Victorian, or of any other age. They disdain the mingling and jingling of the sordid reality as well as the mundane issues of the day which most of the Victorian poets like. To achieve their targeted destination, they enlist the ‘immortal poets’ of distant countries and distant ages. Although John Keats’s poetry is a windfall for them, Tennyson’s poetry, which despite of their dislike of the most of the Victorian writers, becomes an object of inspiration for them.

When one glances over the field of the paintings of Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, one finds that being inspired by Italian art of the 14th and 15th centuries, it reacts against the Romantics and established conventions of the day drawn from Italian artists before Raphael—especially against their idealization of the subject—besides revolting against the triviality of the ‘Genre Painting’ which depicts the scenes of mundane life of the 19th century. Additionally, they react against the unimaginative and artificial historical painting of the Royal Academy. The solo aim of this countercultural movement was to reform the Victorian art and writing. Its painting style contains bright colours, but with flat appearance. It has precise representation of even most humble objects, but with detailed brush work incorporating magic and symbolism as used in the Middle Age, in the Bible, and in the classical mythologies as well as making

Shakespeare, Tennyson and John Keats as their subjects, i.e., they emphasize the theme of medievalized eroticism and pictorial techniques which produces a moody, often penumbral atmosphere.

But intellectual *inertia* demonstrates that the poetry of this Brotherhood is always engaged in glorifying art escaping (from) the darkness along with the ugliness of contemporary Victorian society. There is a great, but continual glimpse of romantic poetry—especially of Keats, Shelley and Blake, but in its early poesy—while its later poesy is never without complexity interlinking thoughts and feelings. The poets and painters of this brotherhood give a strong conception of scenes and situations with precise delineation along with lavish shower of images and imageries—simile or metaphor. Their principal themes are initially religious, but they also use subjects from literature such as plays and poesy—chiefly dealing with love and death. In this context, Compton Rickett writes:

The Pre-Raphaelites painted their pictures as in frescoes or mosaic work, finishing each portion with elaborate care. “Every Pre-Raphaelite landscape background,” Declared Ruskin, “is painted to the last in the open air from the thing itself. Every Pre-Raphaelite figure, however studied in expression, is a true portrait of some living person. Every minute accessory is painted in the same manner.” This unflinching realism characterizes the earlier work of Rossetti, but later on he gave fuller scope to his imagination (p.441).

What is common in Rossetti, is also in common with the rest members of this Brotherhood. They also are realist to the core of their heart in their earlier career, but they turn toward imagination in the later phase of their career. Whenever one naturally glimpses the characteristics of this school, one finds what Arthur Compton Rickett writes:

The art side of the movement has no immediate concern for us, since it belongs to the history of painting, not of literature; but one of two characteristics common to both the pictorial and literary side of their work may be commented upon. The first is the extreme attention to the realistic detail...another...was its love symbolism (p.441/442).

Additionally, one should never miss the synaesthetic imagery, which is paramount in Keats, is also paramount in PRB. It is such a quality that is infused in their poetry with the aim of appealing the five senses— of gustation, olfaction, haptic perception, visual perception, and auditory perception—to the human beings. Undoubtedly, like Keats’ poesy, the poesy of PRB—especially of Rossetti—is rich in it for the vivid blending of musical imagery besides the blending of human experience and the natural world together. Rarely, the poems and the paintings of PRB differ in representing the principle on which it exists. Although Rossetti and Christina are its best example, rests are not null and void. Where his poetry embodies the ideas of paintings, despite of being medieval in nature, there her poetry does not fit this mentioned mold being over in details and sensuality. “Goblin’s Market” is its everlasting witness. But before going to have a telescopic Vision of Rossetti’s poesy and painting, there is need to have a glance over the facts what John Milton, the blind Puritan poet of England said about poetry. In this context, Rickett writes:

Milton's postulate that poetry should be simple, sensuous, and passionate has never been bettered. All the greatest poetry is simple, because the elemental things of life are simple; it is sensuous, because its appeal must needs be made through the scenes, how else can rhythmic beauty be realized? It is passionate, because it deals with the primal instincts. In two of these requisites Rossetti's verse is assuredly not lacking. He is both sensuous and passionate. (p.443).

What Milton postulates about poetry, must be postulated about paintings as both are good and great in its natural form, i.e., when they are simple, sensuous, and passionate. Artificiality, be in poetry, or in painting, begets shallowness as well as unnaturalness which is not good for the world of *RASA* which deals with the primal instincts. This is the reason why in the short narrative "Hand and Soul," Rossetti favours simplicity. In it, a woman representing soul, visits a 13th century Italian painter named Chiaro dell' Erma for a painting of her own. Hitherto, the poet through the mouth of the visiting woman opens the secret of his own painting saying: "Paint me thus, as I am...so shall thy soul stand before thee always and perplex thee no more (Web.)." About his realistic fervor, Rickett writes: "This unflinching realism characterizes the earlier work of Rossetti, but later on he gave fuller scope to his imagination (p.441).

When a scholar talks about poetry is painting and painting is poetry, s/he can't remain without missing Leonardo da Vinci and Horace. In this context, the former says: "Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen (Web.)," while the latter in *Ars Poetica* says: "*ut picture poesis* (L. 361)" which is translated as "as is painting so is poetry." It must be kept in mind that all the denizens both of the world of painting and poetry are not with such a modicum of talent that they can do both painting and versification for painting is not a natural form of expression, as it is one of the rarest tasks. It is exceptional. The tangible marks that they (both poetry and painting) leave on the world, are urged only to create and communicate. Not all, but a few hall markers are adept in it. They feel easy in it. They are SAVYASACHI—ambidextrous. To them, art and composition are same. When Poets do their work, they do it by the virtue of their mind's effort. They are in rapport with such painters, as do their job respectfully to the problems of form and colour. The history of the world literature as the history of the world painting rarely proves that artists have become writers, and writers, artists. There are a few, who like Rossetti, are the denizens of the both worlds. His best painting resides in poetry, and his best poetry in painting. The reason behind it is that most of his poetry is often seen rather than felt, and his most painting is felt rather than seen. A few are paralleled. Rossetti is both painter—but fairly illustrator—and poet. For, he is an illustrator or portraitist rather than painter. He is a man with two passions—one for poetry, and other for portraiture. For them, he lives and dies. But the world of painting is dearer to him rather than the worlds of poesy. His abandoning of versification in 1852 proves it.

When one goes behind the historical curtain of the painting and poesy of D.G. Rossetti, one finds that his painting as well as his poesy is modeled mainly after three models named Alexa Wilding, Jane Morris, and Lizzie Siddall. They're the ethereal muse of this brotherhood. These models inspire his vision for the new standard of beauty in both. Although his gallery of painting, covering from 1840s to 1880s, is full of many time beating paintings such as *Girlhood*

of Mary Virgin (1849), Proserpine (1874), The Day Dream (1880), Lady Lilith (1868), The Beloved (1866), Bocca Baciata (1859), Venus Verticordia (1868), The Bowe Meadow (1872), Dante's Dream (1871), etc., his versification faces famine after his earlier career, i.e., after 1852.

But before exploring, and analyzing the glimpses of aesthetic reflection in the pieces of painting and poesy of D.G. Rossetti, there is need to present the classification of his creations. The deep study of his all creations demonstrates its three factions. In the first faction, fall such pieces of his poems as are only poems without any illustration. In the second, fall such pieces of his paintings as are without poems, but only illustration. In the third fall, such pieces of his illustrations as are with poems, or proverbs; with mythical illustrations, or on a literary piece, be it of other else. All—all of them clear the fact that he is never without his missions, visions, and provisions of reflecting aesthetic glimpses in them well. He never fails in it.

Here, owing to the delimitations of the present article a few of Rossetti's paintings belonging to each and every group are being presented through the telescopic vision along with its visual illustrations. In the first canon, there are presented five selected literary pieces (in) which each contains a painting with a minute literal and aesthetic description. 'The Blessed *Damozel* (1850)' painted from 1875 to 1878,' 'Proserpine (1874),' 'The Day Dream (1880),' and 'A Sea-Spell (1877)' is with a sonnet separately, while 'Girlhood of Mary Virgin (1849)' is with two sonnets.' '*Ramoscello* (1865)' alternately titled as *Bella e Buona*' is with a poem titled as "Plighted Promise," 'Found (1881)' with a sonnet of same name,' 'Pandora (1871)' accompanying a sonnet,' '*Astarten Syriaca* (1877)' accompanying a sonnet,' and '*Venus Verticodista* (1864-1868)' accompanying a poem' vice-versa are the gems of this group.

The first and foremost notable piece of this clan is "The Blessed *Damozel*." Its content like the content of "A Last Confession" is linked to DGR's relationship with his beloved muse Elizabeth Siddal. The painting of this literary piece is such a representative that presenting the gentility of the Brotherhood, presents its all visions along with its provisions of presenting the artistic module of the selected literary pieces such as of Shakespeare, Keats, Goethe, Scott, Byron, Poe, Blake, and even though of Tennyson, and its missions of promoting simplicity and naturalness in art and literature. In it, the telescopic vision of the minute description of all the concerned things along with the theme of undying love (of lover), which is separated by death, is praise-worthy. Here, on one side, one can see the *Damozel* leaning out from the heaven, while on the other side, one can see a smaller painting of her lover gazing heavenward, but divided by a row of angel in-between. The present painting serves as a three—the *Damozel*, the lover, and the angels—in one full of complexity and detail fusing earthly and ethereal bliss. Poet's cry for social reform is visible everywhere be it in this painting, or in this poesy. He preserves wholesome virginity aesthetically beautiful and desirable. It is another thing that the best poet in Rossetti resides in his painting, and the best painter in his poesy. The Blessed *Damozel* is the witness of this paradox. Here is god's plenty in both in painting and versifying. One fact that gently comes on the altar of the proofs is that what is true with PRB is also true with DGR. Owing to this, describing the silent features of PRB, Arthur Compton Rickett says:

Rossetti was the most distinguished representative. The extreme fondness for elaboration of detail, and the outlook upon nature, not as a rhythmic pageant of colour, but as a study in still life, is especially noticeable in the paintings of this school. It has been well said that the Pre-Raphaelite arranged “images and impressions as the Japanese arrange flowers, so that each may keep the perfect independence and colour (p.444).

About his poetry and portraiture further Arthur Compton Rickett writes: “The pictorial element



is more insistent in Rossetti than in Keats is obviously due to the fact that Rossetti’s outlook on the world is essentially that of the painters. Who, but a painter would have given us lines like these:

“The blessed *damozel* leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven

... ..

She had three lilies in her hand
And the stars in her hair were seven.”

“And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.”

“Where the long cloud the long wood’s counterpart
Sheds doubled darkness up the laboring hill.” “Thine eyes gray lit in shadowing hair above (p.444).”

Fig.01: Painting of *The Blessed Damozel*—By Rossetti

It can be said that the aesthetic reflections that we see in the painting as well as in the

verse of “The Blessed Damozel” is an attribution to each other. This is why Rickett writes: “This is not merely the verse of a pictorial artist, but of a Pre-Raphaelite artist (p.444).”



Fig.02: The Illustration/Painting of Proserpine (1874)-By Rossetti

In this queue of DGR’s literary portraiture, next comes the painting of Proserpine (1874) which is painted by him nearly eight times over the decade. It is a mythical portraiture of Proserpine which is modeled after Jane. Here, She is figured as the Goddess Proserpine, whose legend closely mirrored the pairs own relationship. In myth, Proserpine travels to the underworld leaving behind her, her true lover

Adonis (Rossetti). She unknowingly consumes six pomegranate seeds while in the underworld (as seen in the picture), forcing her to live with Hades (Morris) for six months of the year in the underworld as his wife. She can only visit Adonis during the six summer months when it is sunny above. Like Proserpine, Jane had felt bound to her marriage; nonetheless, she and Rossetti spent the summer at Kelmscott Manor, where they were free to pursue their love affair while Morris was remodeling their home. Rossetti has inscribed a sonnet on the frame of the piece that describes his suffering feelings for Jane Morris. The sonnet follows as:

Afar away the light that brings cold cheer
 Unto this wall,- one instant and no more
 Admitted at my distant palace-door.
 Afar the lowers of Enna from this drear
 Dire fruit, which, tasted once, must thrall me here.
 Afar those skies from this Tartarean grey
 That chills me: and afar, how far away,
 The nights that shall be from the days that were.



Afar from mine own self I seem, and wing
 Strange ways in thought, and listen for a sign:
 And still some heart unto some soul doth pine,
 (whose sounds mine inner sense in fain to bring,
 Continually together murmuring.)
 “woe’s me for thee, unhappy Proserpine!”

(Web. Oil on Canvas—
 Collection of the Tate United Kingdom)

Fig. 03: The Girlhood of Virgin Mary (1849) By Rossetti]

The painting of ‘The Day Dream’ and ‘A Sea-Spell’ is also with pieces of sonnet separately while ‘The Girlhood of Mary Virgin’ is with two sonnets explaining the containing symbolism. *Astarten Syriaca* also accompanies a piece of sonnet. All of them reflect poetry in painting and

painting in poetry, but ‘The Girlhood of Mary Virgin (1849)’ is special for dealing with mythical as well as Biblical themes with a definite appeal to the members of religious community—Christian. Being a common subject in the medieval as well as in the renaissance art, it usually demonstrates Virgin Mary with a book on her lap as her mother Anne teaches her how to read. Despite it, Rossetti depicts Mary embroidering a lily under her guidance and supervision. Her father named Joachim is shown pruning a cross shaped vine in the background of the illustration which signifies the arrival of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. His pruning of the vine prefigures Christ’s passions. It is modeled chiefly after his kith and kin. Anne is modeled after DGR’s mother Frances; Mary after his sister Christiana; and Joachim after a family servant, while angel’s face is modeled after Thomas Woolner’s half sister. This is the painting for which he writes two sonnets with the aim of explaining the consisting symbolism. The first is on the bottom of the original frame, while the second on the in the catalogue of Free Exhibition. Although the myth lying behind it, is of no mean importance, aesthetically sparkling spirituality and the naturalness of the canvas can’t be neglected.

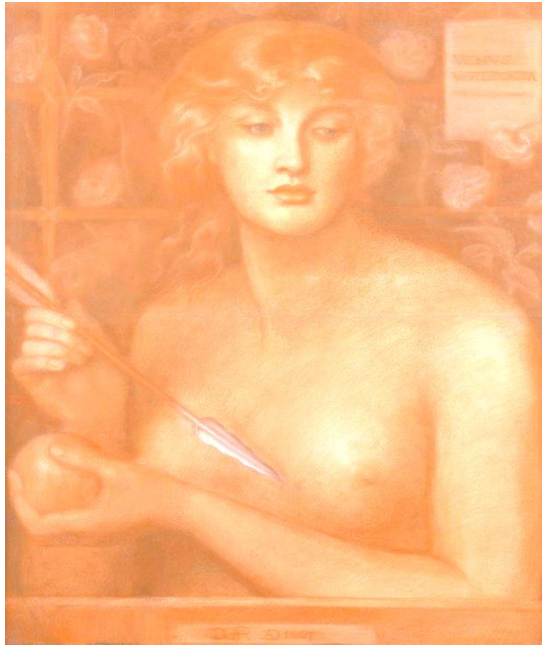
The portraiture of “*The Found (1881)*” by Rossetti is the only portraiture in which he tries his hand at a contemporary Victorian subject of social moral—prostitution. It too is a literary painting—painting with poem. Although it remained incomplete due to his sudden



death, it is often considered his magnum opus. This painting is often linked to a sympathetic poem which Rossetti writes about a prostitute named Jenny in 1870. In this mural, he depicts a man, a woman, and a calf. The role of the calf is two folded. First of all, it explains why the farmer has come to the city. Whether he is entrapped like the innocent trapped calf. Secondly it puts a question on the woman’s state of mind whether she is rejecting, or accepting, or repenting her destiny. Everything depends on the eyes and the souls of the on-lookers. It reminds the scholars the fourth stanza of Keats’ “Ode on a Grecian Urn” where a lowing heifer is carried towards the altar for sacrifice. Here all—man, woman, and calf—are for sacrifice. Awakening the people’s conscience, aesthetically, it proves art to be worth of millions words.

~~~~~Fig. 04: The Painting of *Found* (1881)—By Dante Gabriel Rossetti~~~~~

*Venus Verticordia* (1864-1868) which stands for ‘Venus, The Changer of the heart’ referring



to ‘her ability to change women’s hearts towards virtue,’ “is a semi-nude mythical literary portrait of the goddess Venus. In which, DGR depicts her in her prime of life; with a golden halo and flowing auburn hair, surrounded by pink flowers in a dark, lush green garden. Her breasts are visible, the right obscured by the golden apple which she holds in her left hand. In the right hand she holds an arrow, the point directed towards her own heart, and on which rests a small yellow butterfly. Other similar butterflies ring the halo surrounding her head, and another sits on top of the apple she holds” (Web-Wikipedia).

**Fig. 05: Illustration of *Venus Verticordia* (1864-1868)—By D.G. Rossetti**

It is modeled after an unknown woman whom D.G Rossetti sees in a street. To accompany it, “He composes a verse indicating his own interpretation of the term- as Venus turning men’s hearts from fidelity to lust (Web).” This illustration may be obscene for few, but one must neither forget the reality of the mortals, nor ‘Roberts Buchanan’s attack on Rossetti in *The Fleshy School of Poetry* which is wide of the mark, because Rossetti’s sensuousness is something other than sensuality. Indeed Buchanan came to realize he had condemned without justice, and years afterwards made a frank and unreserved retraction (p.444).’

After having a glance over the first group, there is need to have a little glance over the second group which contains such pieces of painting as are without poems. Generally, Beatrice, Bower Meadow, Woman in Yellow, Beata Beatrix, Dante’s Dream, Roman Widow, Joan of Arc, the Seed of David, The Adoration, The Wedding of St. George and Princess Sabra, Blue Bower, Annie Miller, Ecce Ancilla Domini, and How They met, etc., are the cream of the crop of this group. All of them are the pieces of verses in the shape of painting. They reflect all the characteristics of the aesthetic movement whether it is related to the art of versification, or to the art of making a painting. Be it literal qualities, or design qualities, or expressive qualities, all directly appeal to the senses with a hallmarking effect. None of them is without visual components. They have colour, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value which have made them a thing of fixture with fixity.

The Painting of *Beata Beatrix* (1871-72) is one of the dominating paintings of this clan. It has been oft' linked with Dante's Beatrice Portinari. The title of the painting is translated into English as 'Blessed Beatrice.' It is the very piece that Rossetti models after his dead spouse



called "Lizzie" Elizabeth Siddal. It is a piece of funerary painting which is sketched in her honour. In it, she is painted in a state of sudden "spiritual transfiguration (web.)," like an ethereal figure crouching in a state of ecstasy with closed eyes and upward tilted head. It is the painting which he tries to complete with the aim of attaining perfection in several versions with the passage of time. It is modeled after late spouse. There is plenty of symbolism in it. For instance, the red dove stands for a messenger of love, the white poppy for laudanum standing for her death, her green and gray dress signify hope and sorrow side besides signifying love and life. The painted dove is with private symbol, as it was his nickname for the departed soul—Elizabeth. Aesthetic discourse is calmly visible hitherto.

Fig.06: *The Painting of Beata Beatrix* (1871-1872) —By Dante Gabriel Rossetti "Dove"

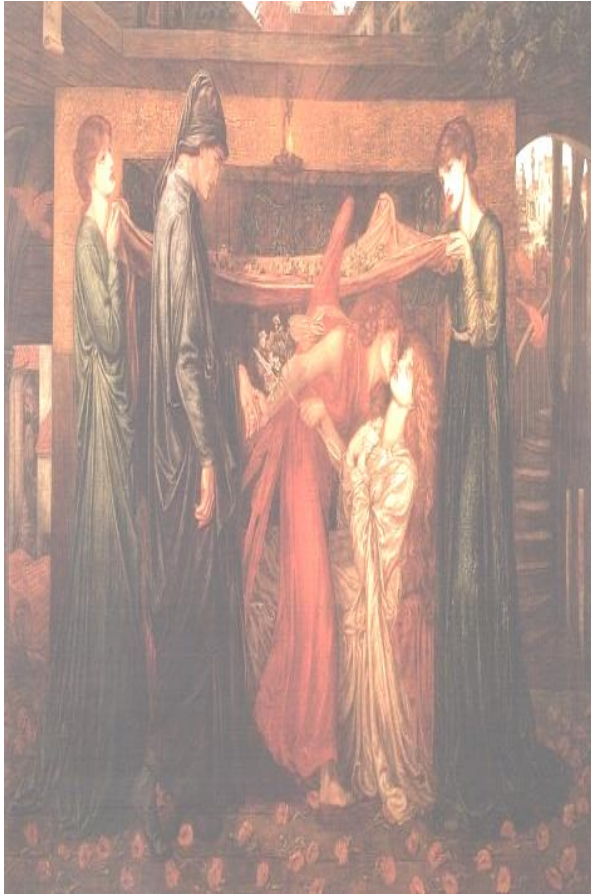


Fig. 07: Illustration of *Dante's Dream at the Time of the Death of Beatrice* (1856)—By Rossetti

Belonging to the second group of DGR's paintings, "*Dante's Dream at the Time of the Death Beatrice* (1856) is one of his most eminent creations. It is modeled after Jane Morris and is the result of his interest in the Italian art and poetry—especially in Dante. It is Dante's poem "La Vita Nuova" which is the cause of the inspiration for this painting. In it, Rossetti, the illustrator, depicts Dante in dreaming condition which may be a dream, or a reverie. In his dream, he is led to the death-bed of his dear beloved Beatrice. There are five persons in number in this painting. The man in black robes is none but Dante who is depicted standing looking his dying beloved. There are two female figures in green. They are holding a canopy over dying Beatrice—probably suggesting the adage that 'one should die in peace. Besides them, there is another second sex in red, but it is an angel, not a human being—woman. She is depicted holding Dante's hand with a bending head in leaning condition forwards to kiss the rosy or coral lips of Beatrice—Dante's love-lorn. Undoubtedly, this painting depicts immortality of death, mortality of the world and its beings. The noted fact about it (this painting) is that it signifies DGR's visionary world along with the complexity of the symbols. The symbol of the colours, be it of clothes or of flowers, is rich here. Although the literal meaning of the painting is elegiac, its appearance is true to its discourse.

Next comes Rossetti's most popular painting—the painting of *Joan of Arc* (1882). This painting is painted on such a legendary persona whose name is written in the history of the world in golden letters. Although like George Bernard Shaw, he does not write a play on her, and like Robert Southey, he does not compose a verse on her, but what he does, does only with brush and colours. Such a painting of his own proves him to be a true painter who performs his duty painting all the respected content honestly. In the gallery of his painting, he gives a good place and position to a few historical figures like King Arthur, Dante, and Joan of Arc, etc., but

with great blending of aesthetic reflections for the poet in him wakes in his painting, and the painter in him wakes in his poesy. His this painting proves the fact.

Joan of Arc is a national heroine of France who lived (there) in the early of 15<sup>th</sup> century. She was born in a tenant farmer family, but remembered for her leadership in many important French victories of the Hundred Years' War. She is said to have had heavenly visions and was oft'n visited by the angels named St. Catherine, St. Margaret, and St. Michael. It is also said that these angels told her to expel the English out of France. Pity is that she was charged of heresy and put on trial. The selfish authorities like Socrates found her guilty and burned her at stake. All this happened in 1431, when she was hardly of nineteen. What to say about the cosmic absurdities! What to say about the paradoxes of this world! It has condemned its Socrates to death for teaching his taughts questioning. It has put its Galileo under house arrest for saying the earth revolves round the sun. It has burned its Giordano Burno for saying the earth is round. How could Joan of Arc escape (from) these absurdities and paradoxes of the world? Rip! She was sent to Stake for her visions and perceptions.



This painting by his brush and colour which is modeled after Jane Morris, the wife of William Morris, but the beloved of his own soul, presents the pleasing features of the design. It is painted in a bold and strong manner based on watercolour oil on panel painting. The typical framing of the upper half of the body is praise-worthy. The colouring of the painting, the sparkling boldness and the valour presented on her face, her handling of the sword, the ambiguous background with four shapes rising like smoke representing the hell of the war increase the beauty of the painting. The noticeable thing of this painting is that it indirectly reflects and represents the chaos and havoc of 'the Hundred Years' War' which was fought between Britain and France in her leadership. It is not a painting, but an epic in the form of painting full of visual aesthetic reflections.

Fig. 08: Painting of *Joan of Arc Kissing the Sword of Deliverance* (1882)—By D.G. Rossetti



In this row, next comes his painting of *La Ghirlandata* (1873) which stands for ‘The Garlanded Lady’ or ‘The lady with the Wreath,’ differs from his earlier pieces of portraiture. It is considered as an embodiment of love and beauty as well. Despite of belonging to his strongly aesthetic and sensual phase, it is a fine example of his balanced and nearly symmetrical creation. In this painting, he depicts Alexa Wilding as a woman playing a harp, while May Morris is as both the angels heading in the top of the corners of the painting. She is headed by vivid fresh flowers such as honeysuckles and roses as well as by luscious green foliage or leaves which mingles into her lavish green robes. It issues “a new aesthetic of painting in the whole cult of beauty (Web).”

**Fig. 09: Painting of *La Ghirlandata* (1873)—By Dante Gabriel Rossetti**

Having a cursory glance over the second group of Rossetti’s creations, there is need to go through the third group which contains such a pieces of paintings which are with poems, or with myth, or with a particular literary piece which does not belong to Rossetti, but belong to



others. For *instance* the painting of “Lady Lilith” which is based on a poem by Goethe; “The Beloved” on a song of Soloman; “Bocca Baciata” on a Italian poem which is translated by P.B. Shelly; “Paolo & Francesca da Rimini” on Dante’s *Inferno* (Canto V); “Arthur’s Tomb” on a passage from Malory’s *Mote d’ Arthur*; “Blue Closet” on a poem by Morris; “The Solution of Beatrice” on a sonnet by Dante; “Goblin Market” on Christiana Rossetti’s *Goblin Market*; “Aurelia” on Fazio’s mistress; “The First Madness of Ophelia” on Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*; and “Helen of Troy” on Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* etc. Besides it, others are on biblical proverbs, myths, stories and anecdotes. All of these pieces of his paintings, attributing his poems, are reflecting the discourse of his aesthetic consciousness.

**Fig. 10: The Painting of *Bocca Baciata* (1859) —By Dante Gabriel Rossetti**

Another striking fact that is found in Rossetti's painting is that he was fond of changing a literary piece into a piece of portraiture. This is why he produced many pieces of literary portraiture. For instance, the painting of "*Bocca Baciata*" is based on a Boccaccio's sonnet from *Decameron*. In this painting the framing is tight, but with flat decorative background. The central point of the attraction of this portrait are her pink lips which are slightly parted symbolizing love and lust, her red hair which are loose symbolizing loose morality, and her unbuttoned blouse symbolizing merely flesh. Apple put on the table before her reminds the religious symbol of the Eden garden. Here, aesthetic sensuality is showered but symbolically.



Next comes Rossetti's painting of "Goblin Market" which is based on DGR's dear-dear sister Christiana Rossetti's narrative poem of the same name. Present poem presents the tale of Laura and Lizzie who are tempted with fruits by the merchants of the mentioned market. It's brimming with sexual imagery. The goblin men's fruit symbolizes different kinds of desires and temptations. For Laura, it stands for such desires as are forbidden, exotic, and sensual, but for Lizzie, it is a warning. The painting presents the goblin men as a variety of fauna with same desire of lust. Besides reminding the Ben Jonson's play *Volpone*, It reminds the scholars the story of Adam and Eve. In the context of aesthetic discourse, it can be said that its sensuousness and literariness transform the experience.

Fig.11: Illustration for *Goblin Market* (1862)-Based on Rossetti's Painting-By W. Margaret



In this queue, next comes the painting of *The Tomb of Arthur* or *The last Meeting of Launcelot*



and Guenevere (1855). This illustration of D. G. Rossetti is related to the historical myth of King Arthur, who is a legendary British leader, defends his country from the Saxon invaders. It illustrates a passage in Malory's *Morte d' Arthur*, BK. XXI. It deals with the subject of illicit love of queen Guinevere and Sir Lancelot. Here Rossetti paints her last meeting with Lancelot. He heightens the effect of the painting by setting the scene over King Arthur's tomb with the aim of suggesting the catharsis of illicit love. Although the queen becomes a nun after the revelation of her adultery, she brings doom for the king. This piece of painting tells lots not about the character of the queen but also about his fascination with the subject of King Arthur and his knights. Finally, this figure defines the sense and sensibility in aesthetic style telling a

long tale of about the told.

**Fig. 12: The Illustration of *The Tomb of Arthur* (1855)—by Dante Gabriel Rossetti**

In short, in the context of D.G. Rossetti's painting, it can be said with the help of a Chinese proverb that his "One picture is worth ten thousand words," and a piece of poesy has an exhibition of paints. No doubt, both his pen and brush tell his hearts tales, his minds saga, his imagination's soar. But none should forget that in his world where a paint tells a thousand words, there a literary piece a thousand paints. In Rossetti they attribute each other. What lacks his painting, fulfills his poesy. What lacks his poesy, fulfills his painting. It is plenty of God that he possesses double blessings—of painting and versifying. Whatever it is, but one thing is clear that both of them have the store of aesthetic reflections. They are imitational for imitating past through present, formal for emphasizing on the design, and emotional for arousing an emotional response in the lookers on. They stir feelings, moods, and emotions. They have literal qualities—appearance in the subject of the work, design qualities—adeptness in the performance of the work, and expressive qualities—manner and method of conveying the ideas and the moods. In both—be it painting, or poetry— one finds, as David Daiches writes: "Freshness and simplicity in the handling of details went side by side with a deep sense of the significance of details, the symbolic and sacramental meaning of objects, such as we find in the symbolism of medieval religion and painting (p.1017)." Over all, in Rossetti, painting resides in poetry, and poetry in painting besides the wind fall of aesthetic reflection in both.

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