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Paul Barlow

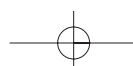
Imagining Intimacy: Rhetoric, Love and the Loss of Raphael

This essay is concerned with intimacy in nineteenth-century art, in particular about an imagined kind of intimacy with the most admired of all artists – Raphael. I will try to demonstrate that this preoccupation with intimacy was a distinctive phenomenon of the period, but will concentrate in particular on three pictures about the process of *painting* emotional intimacy, all of which are connected to the figure of Raphael. Raphael was certainly the artist who was most closely associated with this capacity to ‘infuse’ intimacy into his art. As his biographers Crowe and Cavalcaselle wrote in 1882,

Raphael! At the mere whisper of the magic name, our whole being seems spell-bound. Wonder, delight and awe, take possession of our souls, and throw us into a whirl of contending emotions ... [He] infused into his creations not only his own but that universal spirit which touches each spectator as if it were stirring a part of his own being. He becomes familiar and an object of fondness to us because he moves by turns every fibre of our hearts ... His versatility of means, and his power of rendering are all so varied and so true, they speak so straightforwardly to us, that we are always in commune with him.¹

It is this particular ‘Raphaelite’ intimacy that I shall be exploring here, within the wider context of the transformations of History Painting in the period. The importance of intimacy has often been recognized in the dominant models by which nineteenth-century art has been understood, but I want to argue that its meaning has not been fully understood. In particular, the specific functions of intimacy in relation to the tradition of History Painting have not been explored in detail. This is partly because some of the models by which intimacy has been articulated have been denigrated within the twentieth-century critical tradition, in particular the transformation of History Painting itself into ‘anecdotal narrative’ art which often stressed domestic or apparently trivial incidents in the lives of significant figures.² A talismanic example of this process is the relative failure of the Arundel Society’s attempts to circulate reproductions of the actual works of Giotto, though their anecdotal engraving depicting Giotto with Dante in the Arena Chapel proved popular.³

In other words, the story of art in the nineteenth century is, in part at least, the story of the *failure* of History Painting. For artists since the Renaissance, the organization and codification of narrative had been central to the purpose and value of painting as a fine art. Since the nineteenth century their encounter with the conditions of visibility has been the dominant concern, though articulated in different ways in so-called Modernist and Post-Modernist phases.



This atrophy of narrative, though widely recognized as a significant fact of the period, is still more commonly taken as 'given' than explored in any detail. This essay seeks to find a way to address this fact obliquely, by bypassing dominant accounts of the progress of Western art towards the goal of visual modernity. It will do so by taking as its theme the figure of Raphael himself and the kind of Raphaelesque intimacy claimed by Crowe and Cavalcaselle. Though he has never lost his status as a canonical 'great artist', it is common to acknowledge that Raphael's status has dropped more dramatically than that of any other major Renaissance master. In this respect, the decline of Raphaelism is tied to modern inability to respond to the master's work in the way that was possible for Crowe and Cavalcaselle.⁴ They claim for Raphael a fusion of intimacy and pictorial rhetoric. This intimacy was certainly not possible for Victorian viewers of the 'primitive' art of Giotto, though it was mimicked in the depiction of Giotto and his own contemporary Dante in the act of *contemplating* the artist's work. This paradoxical process of simultaneously distancing and domesticating historical experience is typical of the anecdotal narrative genre.

I wish to suggest that this process articulates a notion of intimacy that is crucial to an understanding of the relationship between historical art and the claims that increasingly begin to be made for the specific *locatedness* of experience and of its representation. This preoccupation with locatedness is a characteristic of the nineteenth century, concerned, as many writers came to be, with the mapping of experience onto the conditions of its emergence.⁵ In other words, the *meaning* of cultural phenomena were understood in terms of how they *came into being*. For the artists I will examine, the figure of Raphael comes to represent a kind of fantasized negotiation of this relationship between History Painting and the new aspiration to intimacy.

Turner, Ingres and the 'mechanics' of Raphaelism

In order to address this issue I shall look initially at two very well-known paintings that portray the figure of Raphael, and three very little-known ones by the artist and anti Pre-Raphaelite polemicist Henry O'Neil. The well-known paintings are by canonical artists – J. M. W Turner and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres. Though these artists are canonical, their work does not fully occupy the still-dominant narrative of art in the nineteenth century, a narrative that stresses the collapse of the traditional hierarchies of the genres and the triumph of forms of art that both problematize and seek to articulate the *experience* of image making.

This collapse is in part due to the failure of the 'academic' model that Raphael is deemed to epitomize. The Pre-Raphaelite movement in British art adopted its name precisely because of the artists' perception that Raphael represented a phase in the mechanization of artistic production, a process that required the reactivation of the 'primitive' qualities found, for example, in Giotto. These very qualities were typically ones that threatened the sense of intimacy identified in Raphael by his admirers. Pre-Raphael art was seen as hard in colour and line, characterized by ugly, stiff, grimacing figures.⁶

This rejection of a perceived mechanization process has been central to later models of artistic authenticity and value in the period. The vivifying of the *processes* of painting and of perceiving has been central to the ways in which Turner's art has been valorized, along with the art of the Impressionists after it. For the purposes of this essay the important point is that this valorized art rejects narrative precisely because it is understood to represent an alienating act of analysis and ordering on the part of the artist. The art that is admired is an art of ordering *from* chaos, the complex and unresolved exploration of the relationship between unintelligible method and its realization in the final work. This art is certainly intimate in one sense. It claims psychological territory determined by experience, by the fusing of the artist's and the connoisseur's own engagement with the work.

While this implies intimacy, it is an intimacy that is quite distinct from ordinary human experience. It is an intimacy with the act of making the work. However, the anecdotal model of intimacy runs counter to this, emerging from the *style troubadour* of the early nineteenth century. The 'mechanical' Raphael envisaged by the Pre-Raphaelites seems to be the very antithesis of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's intimate Raphael, associated with the depiction of maternal love, of personal romance and of pictorial charm. During the nineteenth century this intimate Raphael is typically recreated and valorized in paintings that depict the personal life of the artist himself. Both the life and the death of Raphael were popular subjects in nineteenth-century art. In this respect, Raphael's life and a particular interpretation of his art are intertwined in this period. One of Turner's most concerted attempts to adapt his own very un-Raphaellesque style to the requirements of History Painting is the grandiose but mysterious *Rome, from the Vatican: Raffaele, Accompanied by La Fornarina, Preparing his Pictures for the Decoration of the Loggia* of 1820 (Tate Britain). Raphael and his lover Margherita Luti, known as La Fornarina ('baker girl'), are shown on a balcony contemplating a number of his artworks, while the viewer is treated to a spectacular but anachronistic view of Bernini's colonnade.

Raphael's mistress also appears in many other contemporary tributes to the painter, most famously in Ingres' paintings depicting the couple. Other artists depicted Raphael at work on his most famous paintings, or in scenes that combined episodes in his art and his life. Henry O'Neil's *Last Moments of Raphael*, discussed later in this article, was one of several images that depicted the famous scene of Raphael's death, when the dying painter asked to see his incomplete final work, *The Transfiguration* (1520; Vatican, Rome).

All these paintings relate to the image of Raphael later described by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, an image that was very widespread and which existed in varying but interrelated forms across Europe. For Ingres he was the ideal artist. For the German founders of the so-called Nazarene Brotherhood, his work represented an aesthetic purity towards which artists should aspire, a view that was commonplace within Germanic art criticism at the time.⁷ As one commentator stated, Raphael's work was 'like water', seemingly colourless and flavourless but characterized by its perfect adaptability to human and pictorial requirements.⁸ Both Hegel and Nietzsche singled out paintings by

Raphael when they sought visual models for their philosophical positions. For Hegel and other contemporaries the *Sistine Madonna* was Raphael's paramount work. For Nietzsche it was *The Transfiguration*. In Britain a different tradition existed in which Raphael was identified as the model of rational and well-ordered artistic practice, the epitome of enlightened aesthetic gentility.⁹

This adulation is far more powerful than the commonplace point that Raphael is the fount and epitome of academic capacity to sift and discriminate between diverse pictorial traditions and to reconcile luminous purity of colour with harmonious modelling of form. Certainly that view lay behind many of the attacks on Pre-Raphaelites for rejecting Raphaelism. It is evident, for example, in the Raphael-esque painter Charles Eastlake's comments shortly after he was elected to the presidency of the Royal Academy. He attacked the principles of the controversial Brotherhood in his annual lecture to students, drawing on this very tradition of aesthetic thought. It was precisely the provocative rejection of Raphael in the title of the Brotherhood that seemed so disturbing to him. But like other writers, it was not simply rejection of Raphael's technical qualities that he found objectionable. For Eastlake it was Raphael's power to *combine* the experience of intimacy with the logical ordering of pictorial space that made him the perfect embodiment of Renaissance humanist culture.¹⁰

Perhaps this perceived double quality in Raphael explains the fact that despite his status as the model History Painter, all the paintings in which Raphael himself plays such a significant role are characterized by their own paradoxically uncomfortable position in relation to the very tradition they commemorate and sanctify. The paintings that concentrate on Raphael's relationship to La Fornarina celebrate a 'bohemian' domesticity at variance with the public values of History Painting itself. Portrayals of Raphael's death displace the artist's own theologically complex image, *The Transfiguration*, depicting Christ discoursing with Patriarchs while divine grace is withheld from the apostles. They concentrate instead on the personal drama of the artist and his friends.

Why is this? In order to explore this point we need to look in more detail at how specific paintings play public and private dramas off against one another, and how this tension between the intimate and the public is tied to the way we experience the images themselves. That is one reason why O'Neil's paintings are so significant. They are detailed explorations of the act and meaning of *looking*. Nevertheless, it will be useful to begin by looking at two different, but equally complex, examples of this tension between private and public cultures: Turner's and Ingres' Raphael paintings.

In Ingres' painting *Raphael and La Fornarina* of 1814 (Fogg Art Museum) the physical and emotional intimacy of the couple is set against the pictorial integration of the most famous of Raphael's Madonnas, the *Madonna della Sedia*, and with the artist's incomplete portrait of his lover. La Fornarina, sitting on Raphael's lap, mirrors the pose of the Madonna while Raphael holds her tightly, looking across at his own nude version of her body, while she stares out towards the viewer, respectably dressed. The whole image is painted with

Ingres' characteristically flattened modelling, precisely delineated contours and preoccupation with spatial geometries. This well-known painting, I suggest, set an important precedent for O'Neil's two 1857 Raphael paintings and for his examination of the pictorial logic of the Pre-Raphaelite threat to Raphaelism as he understood it.

Turner's Raphael work differs profoundly from Ingres', while demonstrating similar preoccupations. An elongated, panoramic image, painted with Turner's usual fascination with the spatially disruptive power of light, it is nevertheless as fully preoccupied as Ingres' picture with perspectival geometries and the flattening of forms. In the foreground, the musing Raphael holds a painting, while looking up at the Vatican loggia – visible to the viewer as a perspectively receding corridor. La Fornarina, standing nearby, contemplates a religious procession in the courtyard below. She appears to be close to Raphael, but the pattern of light crossing the balustrade interferes with our perception of pictorial space – a strong diagonal being created that marks an apparent split in perspectival recession. The confused *mélange* of paintings and other objects that wholly occupy the foreground further distort perception, as does the flat band of wall to the left that does not seem possible to reconcile with the arc of the archway that curves up beyond the pictured space as it stretches up from the more 'conventional' perspective depicting the corridor. Indeed the whole painting seems to be built from Turner's preoccupation with the relationship between his own inclination to define space by light and the Raphaellesque tradition of constructing ordered and harmonious geometrical spatial recessions materialized in the arches, right angles and repetitive patterns of classical architecture. The broken and weirdly distorted central arch in this painting seems to refer to the most famous of Raphael's own ordered patterns of receding archways and carefully controlled movements between levels in *The School of Athens* (1510–11; The Vatican Palace). The conflict between Raphael's careful gaze up to one of his painted ceilings and La Fornarina's gaze down to the barely discernible courtyard points to the straining of vision and of space, as evidenced by other oddities such as the little genre-like scene being played out behind two canvases depicting strangely Turner-like landscapes, purportedly by Raphael.

At the centre of this scene of strained and stretched geometry is Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia* once more, set leaning against the balustrade, flat to the picture plane, its circular shape repeated in the spiralling arms of the Bernini colonnade. While many other circles and semicircles are to be found throughout the image, the circle of the painting set in the square of the frame is the one still and perfect geometric point in this distorting, twisting and spiralling visual world.

It seems, then, that Turner's Raphael presides over a visually over-weighted universe which he seeks to master with difficulty, as he ponders his options. Once again, it is in the personal experience of the mythic hero and heroine of the drama that the order is maintained. It is Raphael and La Fornarina who literally live in their art, and it is only with them that both geometrical and human intimacy is achieved.

O'Neil's Raphaelism and the denial of History Painting

I am suggesting, then, that in these paintings the particular kind of intimacy found in the figure of Raphael allows for an exploration of the values that have come to be attached to the Raphaelesque pictorial tradition itself. To explore this point in more detail I will pass on to the discussion of three paintings by the now little-known figure of Henry O'Neil, an inveterate enemy of Pre-Raphaelitism and defender of the Raphaelesque tradition. Despite his current obscurity, O'Neil is important for several reasons. His own position as a defender of the legacy of Raphael against the attacks of the Pre-Raphaelites coincided with his aspiration to modernize History Painting. His most famous and most popular attempt to achieve this was his *Eastward Ho!* (1858; private collection), which depicted troops departing for India to quell the so-called Indian Mutiny. The painting portrays the gangplank and ladder of a large warship on which soldiers and their relatives are kissing one another goodbye. At the centre of the composition the most physically and emotionally intimate moments are depicted. As the painting moves towards its margins the characters are increasingly separated, their gestures become more theatrical and their bodies become visible only as fragments or accessories – waving arms, hats, handkerchiefs. This painting reveals O'Neil's own deep preoccupation with the relationship between rhetoric and intimacy. Its composition is organized around a complex series of increasingly dramatic gestures defined by the gradual loss of close emotional contact between lovers and relatives. In other words, it is about the *transition* between intimacy and rhetoric brought about by the move from private to public realms.¹¹

This theme is also central to O'Neil's three pictures that directly comment on Raphael's legacy and the assault on it by Pre-Raphaelitism. These paintings were *The Pre-Raphaelite* (1857; private collection), *The Post-Raphaelite* (1857; Patrick Allan-Fraser Trust, Arbroath) and *The Last Moments of Raphael* (1866; Bristol City Art Gallery). None of these images are very well known today. Though they are defences of the tradition of academic History Painting, they imply a relationship to it as uncertain as Turner's and Ingres' paintings. By portraying the last moments of Raphael himself, O'Neil seems to be describing also the last moments of the 'Raphaelite' model of History Painting that had dominated Western art for three hundred years.

The first two paintings, exhibited together at the British Institution in 1857, explicitly satirize the 'fad', as he saw it, of Pre-Raphaelitism. Nine years after the foundation of the Brotherhood itself, Pre-Raphaelitism was becoming quite well established by the time that O'Neil decided to show his two paintings. By the late 1850s, a significant number of painters unconnected with the original Brotherhood had begun to exhibit work clearly influenced by them. Many of these paintings had characteristics that can be traced to aspects of the work of both Ingres and Turner, but that took it in a very different direction. Though the influence of Ingres was more obvious, the writings of Ruskin insisted on the importance of Turner.

Millais' painting, *A Huguenot* (1852; Makins Collection) had proved most influential. Like O'Neil's later *Eastward Ho!*, this painting explored the tension

between rhetoric and its annihilation in pure intimacy. It depicts intertwined lovers gazing into one another's eyes. However, the intensity of their intimacy is threatened by a barely discernible violence, as one figure pulls against the actions of the other, who attempts to tie on an armband. Again this represents the *intrusion* of public experience into a private moment. History alienates the lovers from the condition of 'genre', as the armband, identifying religious allegiance, signals the upcoming drama of the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day.¹²

The composition of Millais' picture was clearly influenced by Ingres' *Raphael and La Fornarina*. Though Millais' descriptive interest in the dynamic patterns of growth and decay in surrounding plant life was alien to Ingres' simplified geometrical world, the complex intertwined poses of the central characters are similar. Both play on tensions between controlling strength and the delicacy of intimate freedom. However, Millais' narrative refers to a moral struggle absent in Ingres' idyllic and ordered world. His lovers are rendered tragic by the power of historical forces working to separate them.

After this initial success Millais had exhibited several other similar works depicting young couples in frustrating or alienated emotional entanglements, caught between their desires and the need to repress them. The tangled and dynamic complexity of the pictorial surface in these images typically mirrored the intense but constrained emotional drama. Arthur Hughes had copied the theme in *April Love*, and many others had begun to paint works characterized by the detailed observation of natural forms in growth and decay, realized in finely applied traceries of pigment. Often, as in Hughes', and increasingly in Millais' work, these would incorporate Turnerian effects of light, dissolving forms into glowing planes.

Such paintings were developing a distinctively British variation on the tradition initiated by Ingres and the Nazarenes, though displaying a new fascination with angularity, restless abundance of detail and awkwardness in the articulation of pictorial space. This, of course, is the 'pre'-Raphaelite aspect of the images, derived from the perceived difference between Quattrocento and High Renaissance styles. This is what makes Pre-Raphaelitism so distinct from its Continental precursors and which breaks the continuity with the High Renaissance tradition still claimed by Ingres and the Nazarenes. It is also what O'Neil found so disturbing about Pre-Raphaelite art and what occasioned both his written and his painted comments on it.

The painted commentary came first, but its significance is illuminated by the later writings in which he articulated his views on both Pre-Raphaelitism and the legacy of Raphael. The latter were within an established tradition of British commentary on Raphael, one that sought to dissociate him from the Catholic culture within which he worked. For O'Neil, Raphael was the embodiment of the rationalizing values of the Renaissance, but was compromised by the Catholic culture of which he was a part. He portrayed 'spiritual beings' and theological concepts in his art, something against which the 'solemn and serious' spirit of Protestantism 'revolts'.¹³ Pre-Raphaelitism, however, negated the positive aspects of Raphael's achievement in a self-destructive 'materialism', obsessed with the meticulous documentation of irrelevant physical detail.

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These ideas found pictorial form in the two 1857 paintings, exhibited as a pair under the title *The Two Extremes: the Pre-Raphaelite and the Post-Raphaelite*. They were almost certainly identical in size, though it's not known whether O'Neil had designed them to be placed in any particular position in relation to one another on the wall. The exhibition numbers would suggest that *The Pre-Raphaelite* was shown to the left of *The Post-Raphaelite*, but this is far from certain. After their exhibition both paintings were lost until *The Pre-Raphaelite* surfaced for sale at Christies in 2003 (see Figure 1). *The Post-Raphaelite* has been identified with a painting now at Hospitalfield House in Arbroath, one of a series of self-portraits by members of the Clique, the group of artists of which O'Neil was a member (see Figure 2). The owner of Hospitalfield at the time, Patrick Allan-Fraser, was a former art student and friend of the group. Having married into money, he had commissioned portraits of his old friends for his new residence far away from London.¹⁴ Receiving the commission in 1859, O'Neil seems to have added some extra panel to his unsold 1857 painting,

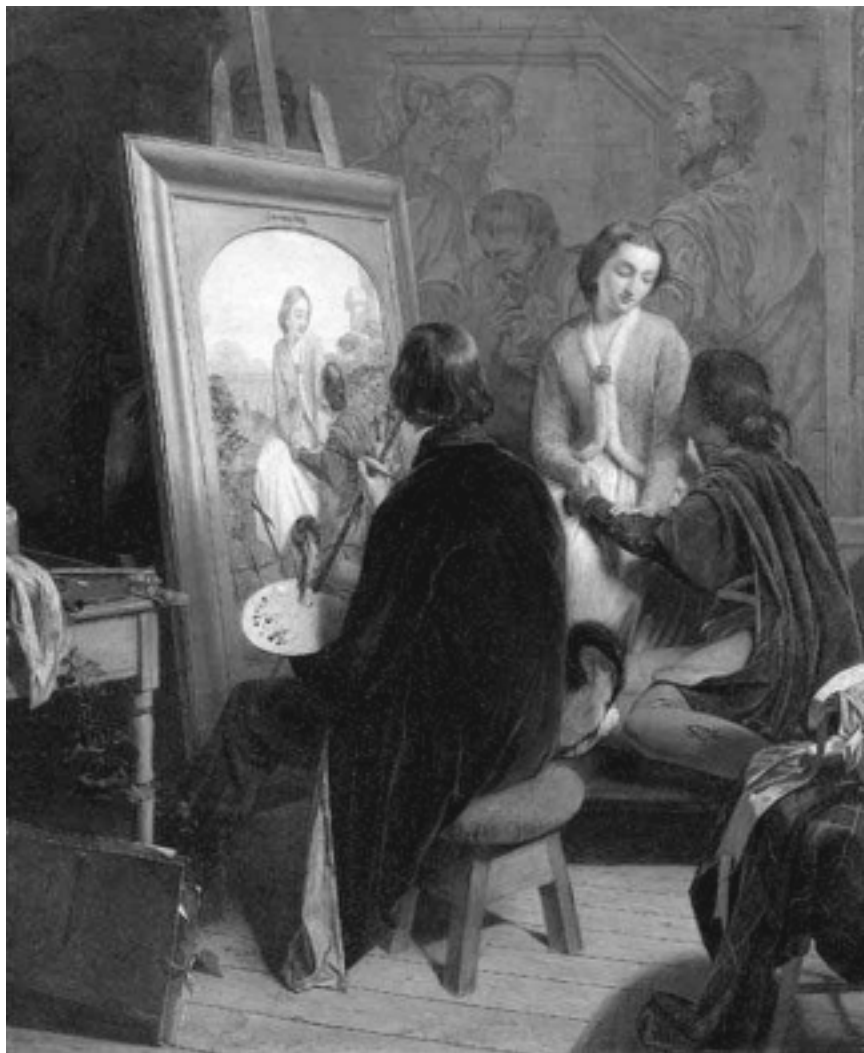


Figure 1. Henry O'Neil, *The Pre-Raphaelite*, 1857, oil on canvas. Private collection

Figure 2. Henry O'Neil, *The Post-Raphaelite*, 1857, oil on canvas. Patrick Allan-Fraser Trust, Hospital Field House, Arbroath



slightly modified it, and forwarded it to Allan-Fraser as his self-portrait, accompanying the completed self-portraits of his colleagues John Phillip and Augustus Egg. In his letter to Allan-Fraser he re-titles the picture *Painting con amore*.

The increase in size was probably intended to bring the painting roughly in line with the size and shape of Egg's and Phillip's works. Nevertheless, the original size of the panel can still be seen, as can a number of the alterations, notably the increase in the size of the stool on which the artist is sitting and of the portfolio of drawings open at his feet. There is no reason to believe that its companion piece has been altered in any way. So the original appearance of *The Pre-Raphaelite* and *The Post-Raphaelite* can be reconstructed with some confidence. It may also be regarded as certain that O'Neil had depicted himself as the 'Post-Raphaelite'. There is no evidence that the physiognomy of the artist has been altered at all. It corresponds to descriptions in contemporary reviews and to photographs of the artist.¹⁵

The two pictures both depict artists at work in their studios. In *The Post-Raphaelite*, O'Neil is at work on the portrait of a pretty young woman. This, he wrote to Allan-Fraser, was why he had decided to call it 'Painting con amore', since 'artists always do [paint with love] when they have a pretty girl before them'.¹⁶ Like Ingres' *La Fornarina*, O'Neil's subject is respectably dressed, but her painted equivalent is semi-nude. However, while Ingres has emphasized the disciplined drawing with which Raphael had outlined his lover's form, O'Neil is working on a painting in the so-called Keepsake style, characterized by the blurring of edges and soft transitions of tone. It was a style particularly reviled by the Pre-Raphaelites for its alleged sloppiness and imprecision. Here it allows the painter to apparently wipe away with his brush the ultra-prim attire of the model, revealing her head and naked shoulders draped with a thin chiffon scarf and caressed by the artist's brush. In contrast, the 'Pre-Raphaelite' is portrayed with his back to the viewer, his hair hanging over his shoulders long and straight, in a parody of 'medieval' styles familiar from caricatures of the time. He is at work on a narrative painting entitled *Love and Duty*. Unlike *The Post-Raphaelite's* unframed canvas, this is already enclosed in a large, tight frame, complete with label. This is presumably a reference to the fact that Pre-Raphaelites, Hunt in particular, considered the frames to be integral parts of their paintings, often having them made to their own designs and including moral texts inscribed across them.

However, the frame is just one of many cross-referenced motifs between the two paintings. These are organized around an opposition of constraint and freedom. Just as the Post-Raphaelite painter undresses his model as he paints her, so too is his own canvas open and 'undressed' by a frame. Likewise, the image within it is not contained by contours, but flows freely across the surface of the canvas, the form of the woman's ambiguously semi-naked body dissolving into hazy clouds of colour. In contrast, the Pre-Raphaelite's painting, built up from tiny detailed points of pigment, is already fully designed and packaged. Near both artists is a portfolio of drawings. The Post-Raphaelite's is open and spilling out in disarray; the Pre-Raphaelite's is tightly closed and tied shut with ribbon. The management of light also differs dramatically between the two pictures. The Post-Raphaelite deploys a dramatic chiaroscuro, illuminating the canvas, along with the face and blue-white dress of the model, against the dark background of the studio. The space of the Pre-Raphaelite's studio is far more evenly lit and is blocked at the back by what one reviewer described as a 'monster fresco'.¹⁷ This occupies the whole of the back wall. It appears to be in a dilapidated state, as part of the plaster is cracked and crumbling. The subject is not clear, and is probably not intended to be specific. But it is in a classical style of the kind that derived its ultimate authority from Raphael's *Cartoons*, the most famous of his works in Britain and the basis for much British commentary on the legacy of Raphael.

This High Renaissance image is in *grisaille*. It defines form by economical use of line and shade, but mostly by outline drawing. It depicts a number of classically draped figures adopting poses and expressions of suitable *gravitas* standing before some generalized architecture. They are apparently conversing, while some are gazing down at an object in the lower left of the

composition, which is concealed by the Pre-Raphaelite painter and his canvas. As a result, they appear to be pondering in some perplexity the painting of *Love and Duty* itself. Of course this is an aspect of O'Neil's satire – the 'Raphaelite' figures look in bemusement at the bizarre 'Pre-Raphaelite' ones that have apparently replaced them in the affections of the artist. O'Neil was not alone in making this visual joke, nor in setting up three styles against one another. Classical 'Raphaelite' figures and their 'pre' and 'post' counterparts were also to appear in Florence Claxton's slightly later and rather more caricatured image entitled *The Choice of Paris: An Idyll* (1860; see Figure 3) which depicted Millais as Paris offering the prize of beauty to a deformed medieval woman, to the amazement of her rivals, a Raphaelesque woman in classical drapery and a modern one dressed in crinolines.¹⁸

O'Neil's principal source for such satirical commentary on stylistic differences is likely to have been Hogarth, whose *Marriage à la Mode* also contains a scene in which action is presided over by a large fresco, partly obscured by paintings hung in front of it. Other works by Hogarth also explored the relationship between Classicism, modern Naturalism and



Figure 3. Florence Claxton, *The Choice of Paris: An Idyll* (detail), *Illustrated London News*, 2 June 1860

caricature. O'Neil's appropriation of a Hogarthian tradition in opposition to Pre-Raphaelitism is hardly surprising given the debates within British art during his youth, in particular the pro-commercial strand of thinking that saw Hogarth as the model for a modern, popular and anti-rhetorical form of painting adapted to communicate and valorize common and domestic concerns.¹⁹ There are detailed aspects of both *The Pre-Raphaelite* and *The Post-Raphaelite* that explore these concerns with great delicacy and which also indicate the extent to which O'Neil's own view of Raphaelite History Painting was informed by the paradoxes examined by Ingres and Turner.

I have already noted the subtle play on repression and expression that runs between the two paintings. This is most evident in the painting of *Love and Duty* itself, evidently intended as an example of the type of picture inspired by Millais' *A Huguenot*. It appears to depict a young man in 'medieval' costume kneeling in supplication beside a woman who sits on the wall of a graveyard, gazing down at him haughtily. The two models strain to maintain their poses, which are being carefully copied by the painter.

Both subjects, then, deal with situations that are filled with potential sexual significance but that are organized by the boundaries of respectable social interactions. Artists and models remain separated without any direct sign of personal response to one another, but in one painting the artist eroticizes the woman in the act of painting her while in the other the artist emulates and exaggerates the very constraint experienced by his models, valorizing it in a narrative of thwarted love.

Such concerns derive from longstanding traditions in genre painting dating back to Dutch seventeenth-century art. While the Post-Raphaelite 'undresses' his model, he does so in a very limited way, far more so than Ingres' Raphael does to La Fornarina. The undressing is also set against the excessively prim attire that the model wears. In *The Pre-Raphaelite* the situation is reversed. The model wears a soft furred mantle held together at her breast. Her chest is seemingly bare beneath it, although in *Love and Duty* the top of a white dress is carefully depicted, covering her breasts. While the Post-Raphaelite's model is alone, the Pre-Raphaelite's is accompanied by the male model, posed as the suppliant admirer, kneeling before her and gazing up in devoted adoration. In other words, if the Post-Raphaelite seems to depict a *personal* isolation transformed by equally personal reinvention on canvas, the Pre-Raphaelite portrays two professional models forced into *impersonal* postures mimicking the rhetoric of romantic submission and adoration. The Pre-Raphaelite artist copies these poses and gestures faithfully. In doing so, he creates a *mimicry* of romantic intimacy from set postures. In contrast, the Post-Raphaelite brings intimacy into being in the very process of making the image. He *experiences* it in the act of painting. The woman as she appears in the portrait is not simply loosely dressed; she smiles welcomingly and directly at the viewer, opening up our psychological engagement with her.

For the Pre-Raphaelite things are very different. His face of his female model seems almost identical to the woman in *The Post-Raphaelite*, though her hair is reddish-brown in contrast to the black hair of the latter. In his painting *Love and Duty*, the Pre-Raphaelite has depicted her hair much redder, in line

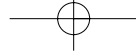
with the Pre-Raphaelites' famous preference for vivid red hair. While the living model smiles slightly at her professional lover, her pinch-faced pictorial version looks down at his painted equivalent with a disdainful expression. He bends his neck upwards towards her with strained intensity.

These poses are fairly obvious parodies of the contorted attitudes evident in the works of several artists who had imitated Millais' and Hunt's exhibits of the early 1850s. The postures of the couple closely resemble Alexander Munro's sculpture *Paolo and Francesca* (1851; Wallington Hall), which was one of the most familiar of Pre-Raphaelite works, having been very widely reproduced after it was shown at the Great Exhibition in 1851. O'Neil would almost certainly have seen the original and would have had access to several engravings of the work. Like the male model in the Pre-Raphaelite's painting, Munro's Paolo adopts a languorous, passive pose with his legs bent limply under his body. His feathered cap lies beside him and he looks up, neck exposed to his beloved who gazes down at him with an expression of haughty indifference. Comparable poses are found in several other works of the mid-1850s, most obviously in Noel Paton's *Hesperus* (1857; private collection), in which two lovers are posed in a remarkably similar manner to the models in *The Pre-Raphaelite*, holding hands while the young man gazes up at the woman, whose eyes are veiled by their drooping lids. The open sky in the background of *Hesperus* also resembles O'Neil's imaginary Pre-Raphaelite's painting *Love and Duty*.

A significant difference between *Love and Duty* and *Hesperus* is the fact that the former is set in a graveyard. This might be a reference to Rossetti's *Found*, in which the two main characters are standing beside a graveyard, but it is unlikely that O'Neil would have seen this incomplete and unexhibited work. Bowler's *The Doubt: 'Can these Dry Bones Live'?* (1855; Tate Britain) is a more likely source for this macabre setting, since this depicts a young woman leaning over a gravestone, pondering the physical detritus of extinct human life. Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1854; Tate Britain) may also have suggested it. The heroine looks through a window to a garden, seen reflected in a mirror. Though the garden is no graveyard, a contemporary cartoon parodying the painting transforms it into one, observed with horror by the painting's heroine.²⁰

It seems clear, whatever the specific source, that O'Neil placed *Love and Duty* in a graveyard to add to the contrast with 'painting con amore' in *The Post-Raphaelite*. The graveyard setting allows O'Neil to set up a series of irregular and angular motifs, such as the twisted metal cross that cuts over the girl's white dress. The curious recession through flat planes that block off space is also characteristically Pre-Raphaelite, as is the intrusive foliage that apparently grows from the pictorial surface of the image and further obscures recession to depth. The castle in the background adds a suggestion of the medieval to the scene, though the costumes seem to be of unclear historical specificity. The man's clothes are vaguely sixteenth-century, but the woman's mantle seems at least as Victorian as Renaissance in style.

Whether such anachronisms were deliberate on O'Neil's part is impossible to say, since most painters of this period were equally cavalier about such



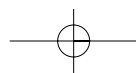
details. Nevertheless, O'Neil has gone out of his way to emphasize that the costume worn by the male model is old and cheap. Rips in the man's hose are clearly visible. The female model's dress shows no such wear and tear. Instead, her attire remains ambiguously 'modern', a fact emphasized by the presence of her own bonnet and shawl lying on the stool in the right-hand corner of the composition. There is no sign of any other clothing beyond this outdoor dress, leaving open the possibility that the model is actually wearing her own clothes.

This striking distance between the clothing of the female model and the male model is exaggerated by other devices. In order to keep his neck bent up at a suitably implausible Rossettisque angle, the unfortunate male model is depicted wearing a neck-brace, forcing his head back. His hair is also tied back. Pose, costume and accessories, then, all conspire to associate the male figure with a failure to occupy the stereotyped persona constructed for him, in contrast to the female figure who holds an ambiguous position between her identity as a modern model and as a character in the painting devised by the 'Pre-Raphaelite'.

O'Neil's painting plays a series of games around the distinction between fictive and lived experiences of intimacy, in particular around that between the rhetorical conventions identified in the painting and the actual relationship between the models. It is notable that this is reversed from models to painting. The female model adopts a comfortable pose in contrast to the suffering in bondage experienced by the male. But the female character in the painting is distorted by the style in which she is painted and by the angle at which the image is seen. Her body and face are elongated and flattened, her arm straightened. Most evidently her mouth is stiffened and turned down in an exaggeratedly sour expression. Again, all this is familiar from the many caricatures of Pre-Raphaelitism published since 1850, in which the emaciated, unhealthy and pained look of Pre-Raphaelite women was generally stressed.

Once more this conception of a distorting and dehumanizing form of painting is set against the liberating, psychologically engaging art of the Post-Raphaelite, whose painted figure faces the viewer gazing directly out of the canvas in such a way that her form is freed from the constraints of two-dimensionality – moved away from the fictive surface of the canvas by the fact that the image floats freely within its space. The Post-Raphaelite, conceived of by O'Neil, works *without* pictorial precedent, while Pre-Raphaelite's art is self-consciously preoccupied with it in the self-alienating fashioning of an endlessly elaborated pictorial surface and equally endlessly blocked experience of the figures who sit before him. Intimacy exists – between the two models – but is forcibly restricted. They don't even touch. The man holds the woman's hand while wearing gloves.

These paintings, then, are squarely within the tradition identified by Ingres and Turner. They are preoccupied by the pictorial exploration of the question of how intimacy itself is experienced. The pictorial logic of these works is drawn to this concern. They are about how we look at people and how people look at images of themselves. They are paintings defined by the prospect of the intimacies they repress. This repression might be understood as 'conventional



respectability', but it can as easily be seen as a way in which intimate experience is both allowed and contained – through the very acceptance of conventions that make it meaningful. *The Pre-Raphaelite* and *The Post-Raphaelite* are both paintings about the dynamic between intense intimacy and respectful distance that Victorian commentators saw in Raphael's own work.

This tension is most evident in *The Pre-Raphaelite*, the painting in which characters are forced into such constrained physical proximity. In the classical fresco, characters maintain an 'aristocratic' emotional distance. The most prominent figure adopts a stiff pose and gazes away to the right. Others whisper. Some look on with mere curiosity. Their literally black-and-white world is alien to the human warmth evident in the soft smile of the living model who sits before them. The Pre-Raphaelite painter, however, hides his face from the viewer. He becomes nothing more than a collection of accessories – defined by his affected dress, long cloak and long hair. His identity is a series of exterior signs. This stress on clothing is consistent with a recently published attack on Pre-Raphaelitism written by Edward Young, in which he complained that 'everything lives and moves – I had almost said thinks and feels: coats, hats, trowsers [sic], instinct with sensibility – all but the faces'.²¹ It is O'Neil who concentrates on the faces. The smile of the model is a modern moment of respectful intimacy, alienated from the mechanical, emotionless Raphaelism of the fresco and the 'thinking and feeling' accessories of the Pre-Raphaelite's own painting, which encodes its own kind of death. As opposed to the hard edges and hard feelings of the fresco, and the sharp, bright, hard colours of *Love and Duty*, O'Neil's soft tonal transitions identify the power of art to make emotional intimacy visible. Insofar as this harks back to Raphael himself, it is to the manner of his Madonnas not of his Cartoons. Pictorial rhetoric and materialistic detail are both violations of intimacy, a closing up of our interaction with the image and its characters, a turning away. In contrast, the Post-Raphaelite shows his face to both his model and to us, and loosens her tight clothing in his art. Again it is the responsive expression of the figure looking out towards us that is crucial. Though her clothing is loosened, there is no explicit sexual exposure of her body, but rather a dissolution of circumstantial irrelevancies.

In both paintings the relationship of chiaroscuro to colour and to outline is constantly shifting, and is connected to this central theme. In the classical fresco the only point at which colour appears is in the cloak of the most emotionless of all the figures. It blushes a slight pink just behind the warm face and figure of the modern model. In *The Post-Raphaelite* the model's pure white dress is enlivened by a sharp red neck-ribbon, but is slowly suffused with increasingly intense shots of blue as it moves down and closer to the artist. Cloudy glazes of blue and pink hover around the hazy figure on the canvas. Both paintings continually explore these visual and emotional warmings and coolings as part of O'Neil's central concern to demonstrate that Post-Raphaelite art brings us intimacy by dissolving the alienating effects of rhetoric.

In these works, then, O'Neil has characterized the distinction between Pre-Raphaelite and 'Post-Raphaelite' styles as that between the entrapment by

pictorial surface and the penetration of it, a distinction directly connected to that between the giving and withholding of intimacy. It is the duty of the Pre-Raphaelite to penetrate the surface of the image and to open it up to intimacy that the artist seeks to experience. Unlike Ingres and Turner, who ascribe intimacy to the artist's own personal life, O'Neil identifies the role of art itself as the dissolution of the mechanisms that *repress* the viewer's relationship to the figures. For O'Neil, art post-Raphael is characterized by its capacity to equate representation with its object. For art to deal with that which cannot be represented, it must, as it were, confess its own failure.

The death of Raphael

These themes are explicit in O'Neil's most ambitious Raphael painting, *The Last Moments of Raphael*, in which the dying artist himself is seen in bed surrounded by his pupils and Catholic clergymen (see Figure 4). On the right, one pupil unveils the *The Transfiguration*, as Raphael gazes up at the figure of Christ. Here the relationship between 'Pre-Raphaelite' artifice and 'Post-Raphaelite' violation of the pictorial surface is displaced onto Raphael's own work, which is envisaged as a pictorial battleground between these two conditions. This is evident from the way in which O'Neil has depicted *The Transfiguration* itself. The upper part of Raphael's painting, representing the actual transfiguration of Christ, is invisible to the viewer; it is only the lower half that can be seen. Even part of this section is hidden. The left-hand side, depicting the apostles gesticulating helplessly in the absence of Christ, is

Figure 4. Henry O'Neil, *The Last Moments of Raphael*, 1866, oil on canvas. Bristol City Art Gallery



shown. But the figures at the right, who surround a demonically possessed child, are also invisible, hidden behind the curtain. Thus both demonic and divine influences, depicted by Raphael, are left unseen by O'Neil. Only those apostles who, like the characters surrounding the dying Raphael, are mere witnesses to the spiritual drama enacted before them are seen.

The idea that only this part of the painting, which lays no claim to portray spiritual beings, can be seen to blend with the real world beyond the image, is implied by the ways in which the edge of the canvas is hidden so that the internal space of *The Transfiguration* is never established as wholly independent from O'Neil's painting as a whole. The upper edge of *The Transfiguration* is beyond the frame of O'Neil's work. The right-hand portion is hidden by the curtain. The bottom edge is invisible behind one of the monks. The left side is hidden by the edge of an open window. This encloses the canvas, so that the terms of its internal space are obscured. The visible fragment of *The Transfiguration* appears to exist in wholly different terms from the painting as a whole. Systematically distorted by virtue of the angle at which the canvas is placed within the space of the room, the means to rectify the distortion has been rendered inaccessible. The fragment is effectively made to belong to the space of the image as a whole, but has not been corrected to merge with that space, as O'Neil had done with the Post-Raphaelite portrait. Here systematic distortion invades reality. The normal pictorial space of the room in which Raphael is dying is apparently pulled apart at the point where his own painting, *The Transfiguration*, appears.

The significance of this process becomes evident once the role of *The Transfiguration* is considered. Raphael's painting, by juxtaposing in two distinct halves, the material and spiritual worlds, signals the distortion of the apostles' mission in the absence of Christ. Both the apostles and the possessed boy are slaves to rhetoric, consequent on their inability to expel the demon which rages within. They gesture wildly and helplessly. Such gestures are hopelessly empty, abstracted from their intended function, because completely without effect. Christ, in the upper half of the composition, possesses the power to resolve the distortion and to restore normality. But the radical division between the material and spiritual worlds produces the vicious circle of rhetoric, which condemns the figures in the lower half of the painting to absolute separation from the power of the Holy Spirit.

The significance of this distinction for O'Neil's purposes is that it is the unseen upper half of Raphael's *Transfiguration* at which Raphael gazes as he dies (see Figure 5). Raphael either sees through his own painting to the spiritual reality that lies beyond it, or imagines it in his mind. It is the intimacy of *Raphael's* experience that validates his representation of a spiritual condition. Raphael's own art is justified by Raphael's vision. In effect, the visual distortion evidenced in the lower part of the painting has itself been restored to normality through Raphael's gaze on the unseen upper part, and its transformation, in that gaze, into reality. The viewer cannot see this particular instance of the move from image to lived experience because it is inseparable from bodily death. The representation of the spirit employed by Raphael is impossible for O'Neil, because it implies conventions inconsistent

Figure 5. Engraving after Raphael, *The Transfiguration* [1517–20, Vatican Museum], Published by Colgi and Co., c. 1880



with O'Neil's referential naturalism. O'Neil's opposition to the portrayal of spiritual beings in art is justified by his 'editing' of *The Transfiguration*. He places the upper part of Raphael's canvas beyond the space of his own painting because the spirit is literally outside the limits of his own art.

This idea had already been articulated by Robert Browning in his poem *Andrea del Sarto* (1855), which was Browning's own attempt to examine what it means to be a 'Post-Raphaelite' painter, possessed of perfect technical skill but in thrall to the past-master who had won this perfection. The poem was intended as a companion to Browning's earlier work *Fra Lippo Lippi*, which was about a highly imperfect, but endlessly creative, artist of the generation before Raphael. So like O'Neil, Browning explores the relationship between

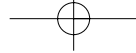
the conditions of a 'Pre-Raphaelite' and a 'Post-Raphaelite' artist. Browning's approach is somewhat different, since his main concern is to stress the *anxiety* of the Post-Raphaelite condition, and to attack the Medievalist critic Alexis François Rio's negative image of Lippi as a morally corrupt figure representing modern scepticism.²²

Browning's poem is also about a sought-after moment of intimacy. It is in the form of a monologue in which Sarto attempts to explain his feelings about his own art to his emotionally blank but superficially beautiful wife. Her lack of engagement provides a domestic equivalent to the alleged lack of feeling in Sarto's own too-perfect art. Again the implication is that Sarto cannot paint *con amore*, because his wife Lucrezia has no interest in her husband's artistic aspirations and insecurities. Lucrezia fails the test of intimacy that would make her his 'La Fornarina'.²³ Raphael, as described by Sarto, painted works that no verbal description can properly encompass. His achievement can only be understood in terms of distortion, errors and absence. Sarto complains that he could easily correct these 'errors' in Raphael's painting; but he knows that in doing so he would lose the indefinable qualities that raise Raphael's art above his own. Raphael's achievement can never be articulated because it is always beyond the mere skilful deployment of technique, which Sarto commands. It is perpetually evasive. It is in this space that Raphael reaches out to that which lies beyond the grasp of representation. Only in the process of reaching is Raphael's genius displayed. Thus, for Browning, Raphael's art functions through its own failure. His description of this process could be appended to O'Neil's painting:

Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art, for it gives way.²⁴

This is just the moment represented by O'Neil. The distortion of material space reaches beyond it and 'gives way' to something that cannot be described or properly represented. Hence the significance of the visible part of the canvas of *The Transfiguration*. Those parts dealing with the presence of the spirit lie beyond O'Neil's compass, but the part concerning its absence functions as a sign of the rupture of normal space consequent upon the reaching towards it. This is of course precisely what the apostles in Raphael's painting are doing, albeit helplessly. O'Neil, by his exclusions and distortions of Raphael's work, has reconstituted its structure in terms of his own Post-Raphaelitism.

In fact this process extends to the portrayal of Raphael and his companions, who correspond to figures in *The Transfiguration* itself so that, for the viewer, the spiritual part of the painting, though invisible, is reflected in terms of the limits of pictorial naturalism. The imagery used in *The Transfiguration* to portray a spiritual event is treated as literal fact and returned to material reality. The spiritual facts to which it refers are those towards which Raphael himself 'reaches', as his own body 'gives way'. *The Transfiguration* has been split apart into two component realities, each referred to its origin prior to the act of pictorial depiction. Just as Raphael's death splits his soul from his body,



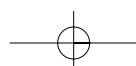
so O'Neil's painting of that event involves the return of representation to its origins in invisible spirit and in visible matter.

The two groups surrounding Raphael's bed correspond to the two parts of Raphael's painting. Cardinal Bibiena and his companions relate to the apostles in the lower half of the canvas.²⁵ Bibiena, in his red garment, is explicitly compared to the apostle who points upward towards the spiritual half of the canvas. Bibiena's downward gesture is the antithesis of the apostle's. The grey-clad monk to the left of the canvas corresponds to the apostle behind him, also wearing grey. The brown-clad monk to the right cannot be so neatly equated with a single figure in *The Transfiguration*, but he most closely resembles the apostle represented directly behind him, who wears an orange garment. The role of the figure drawing back the curtain is similar to that of the apostle, whose head can just be seen in the visible segment, who holds the text of the scriptures. Both figures are, in effect, opening to view, without being able to use, the revelation of the spirit.

The figures at the other end of the bed clearly correspond to those of the apostles who are with Christ in the upper part of *The Transfiguration*. Raphael himself, illuminated by the light from the open window and dressed only in a white nightshirt, lying on white sheets, corresponds to Christ himself. The three pupils behind him are of course the apostles who, in the upper part of *The Transfiguration*, shade themselves from the light of the spirit. The third figure from the left actually repeats the gesture of St John in Raphael's painting. Giulio Romano, as the pupil closest to Raphael, is a combination of the prophets who share Christ's transfiguration with the patron saint visible at the left of Raphael's canvas, who, unlike the apostles, can gaze on the transfigured Christ. Romano's special position is signalled by his grasp of Raphael's arm.

If the figures in the room correspond to those in *The Transfiguration*, the absent space of Raphael's canvas, rather than its contents, is mirrored by that of the window, the light coming from which provides the earthly counterpart to the illumination of Raphael's spirit in death. The open window is thus a means to refer to transcendence without resorting to symbolism. Raphael died on Good Friday, 1520. The approach of spring is indicated by the presence of blossoms, blown in through the window. The gust of wind that blows in the blossoms is a characteristic Romantic image of transcendence, consequent on the loss of the forms of symbolic language used by Raphael.

The idea of the loss of a symbolic language relates to the theological implications of O'Neil's painting. The fact that the realm of the spirit is present in the image only in the mind of Raphael and is construed as visual absence, defining rhetoric as distortion, relates to O'Neil's attacks on Pre-Raphaelite rhetoric. In other words, *The Last Moments of Raphael* is an attempt to revivify Raphaelite History Painting by developing the techniques of O'Neil's much smaller 1857 exhibits. It redirects the proto-Mannerist gesturing of *The Transfiguration* into the far more discreet gestures of Raphael's companions, comparable to the much-admired delicate postures of Raphael's Madonnas. Like *The Pre-Raphaelite*, it centres on the act of gazing intensely into a person's face. Raphael's own art is split into its 'pre' and 'post' components, as O'Neil



refigures the nature of history as the attempt to enter the mind of one of its protagonists.

This attempt to redefine what History Painting is about is, of course, explicitly characterized by the rejection of the very values that had formerly defined it – of public visual language and narrative. It is as much a privatized History Painting as Millais' *A Huguenot*, or the imaginary *Love and Duty*. In contrast to these images, however, it seeks to maintain a continuity with the tradition it radically reworks. It creates a new kind of relationship to that tradition, one characterized by the development of the 'anecdotal' mode that has since been so regularly dismissed as the nadir of the tradition.

Notes

- 1 J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle, *Raphael: His Life and Works*, London: J. Murray, 1882–85, p.1.
- 2 P. Drury, 'Art Institutions, Academies, Art Training and Museums', in S. West, ed. *Guide to Art*, London: Bloomsbury, 1996, p.89.
- 3 See Matthew Plamplin's article '"A Stern and Just Respect for Truth": John Ruskin and the Arundel Society' in this issue of *Visual Culture in Britain*.
- 4 In 1983 David Thompson's book on Raphael contains the following apologetic passage: 'Raphael has now been out of fashion for the larger part of our century ... [When discussing his work] we are led ... towards words and attributes which have lost their power to convince us. Balance, harmony, grace, facility, naturalness, beauty are no longer pervasive virtues. They are bound up with what has been understood by "classical" values and ideals, but our own century has never come to terms with them' (*Raphael: The Life and the Legacy*, London: BBC Publications, 1983, p.243). For a rather more extreme statement of the same view see Norman Bryson's comment – in his discussion of Ingres – that Raphael's 'reputation is currently in such dark eclipse that it tends to make Ingres' own dependence on Raphael largely incomprehensible'. (*Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p.171).
- 5 In a sense this is a commonplace of the nineteenth century, articulated by Taine, Carlyle, Marx and other writers. The term 'historicism' is sometimes used to speak of this particular preoccupation with locatedness, but it can also be seen in widespread cultural phenomena such as the historical novel, notions of 'national' styles in the arts, the 'absorptive' landscape and the emphasis on genre painting – in both avant-garde and traditional form. The nature of this particular network of kinds of locatedness has not yet been fully explored.
- 6 Giotto himself was not a significant figure to the early PRB, who were familiar with Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Marriage* in the National Gallery and engravings after Quattrocento works, notably by Gozzoli. See W. H. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, London: Macmillan, 1905, pp.20–25.
- 7 See M. B. Frank, *German Romantic Painting Redefined: Nazarene Tradition and the Narratives of Romanticism*, London: Ashgate, 2001.
- 8 J. Cundel, ed., *The Great Works of Raphael Sanzio of Urbino*, London: Bell, 1866, unpaginated.
- 9 This is most evident in Jonathan Richardson's comments on Raphael in which he attempted to argue that the Cartoons are free of superstition; see his *Works*, London: Davies, 1773. Reynolds also presents Raphael as the epitome of reasoned artistic production, though rather more reluctantly; see J. Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. R. R. Wark, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988, pp.xxvi–xxxi, 284–319. The presence of the *Sistine Madonna* in Dresden accounts in part for its importance to German Romantic aestheticians. Nietzsche's choice of the schizoid *Transfiguration* in his *The Birth of Tragedy* parallels his rejection of the model of classical Greek culture articulated by the Romantic generation.
- 10 Accounts of Eastlake's views on the PRB vary. He did not mention the group by name, but attacked their principles obliquely, by criticizing both 'caricature' and sharp detail. Eastlake claims that 'uniform hardness, or universal distinctness, tends to indistinctness'. Such uniform precision suggests the 'inactivity of mind' associated with 'mere manual labour'. Caricature, or 'violent exaggeration in a serious or a comic sense', is acceptable when following Hogarth's comic works, but it is offensive to 'indulge' in caricature 'from an inability to make the truth interesting'. Artists should learn Raphael's breadth of treatment (C. L. Eastlake, *Discourse Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy* (10 December 1851), London: Clowes, 1852, p.20). See D. Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, c.1978, p.355. Lady Eastlake, herself an art critic, also made extremely disparaging remarks about PRB paintings.
- 11 The theme is repeated in several of O'Neil's other works. The compositional devices in this and other O'Neil paintings seem to be drawn in part from Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1819; Louvre, Paris), in

which the 'intimacy' is of a very different kind, characterized by oppressive physicality from which the figures seek to free themselves as they aspire to be recognized by the distant ship. The connection between genre traditions, modernity and the History Painting tradition can also be traced by reference to this talismanic work, very familiar to British artists. Its relationship to the emergence of melodrama and of public popular visual culture represents another strand in the troubled relationship between History Painting and wider cultural developments.

- 12 For a more fully detailed account of this see my book *Time Present and Time Past: the Art of Sir John Everett Millais*, London: Ashgate, forthcoming.
- 13 H. N. O'Neil, *Lectures on Painting*, London: Bradbury, Evans & Co., 1866, p.58.
- 14 Allan-Fraser also commissioned portraits from W. P. Frith, Augustus Egg, John Phillip and E. M. Ward. O'Neil's commission was an afterthought, added at the insistence of Augustus Egg. Allan-Fraser was a close friend of John Phillip, a portrait bust of whom he also commissioned from a local sculptor. Through him he had met the other members of the Clique. The commission required that the artists 'introduced' a portrait of themselves into the composition, implying that Allan-Fraser was not expecting conventional self-portraits, but rather narrative paintings in which the artists depicted themselves as characters in a drama. Egg and Phillip, who quickly completed their paintings, followed this suggestion by creating narrative subjects connected to aspects of their lives. Phillip depicted a Spanish scene, in which he shows himself sketching a gypsy, who shrinks back in the belief that he is giving her the Evil Eye. Egg portrayed himself as an actor performing the role of an imaginary eighteenth-century poet in the play *Not So Bad As We Seem*. The two paintings were identical in size. O'Neil finished his alterations to *The Post-Raphaelite* shortly thereafter, misleadingly implying in his letters to Allan-Fraser that it was a new painting. Ward and Frith were much tardier in fulfilling the commission. See MS letters, Patrick Allan-Fraser Trust, Hospitalfield House, Arbroath.
- 15 See J. Maas, *The Victorian Art World in Photographs*, London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1984, p.47.
- 16 MS, Patrick Allan-Fraser Trust, Hospitalfield House, Arbroath.
- 17 *Illustrated London News*, vol.30, 1857, p.156; see also *The Athenaeum*, 14 February 1857, p.217.
- 18 According to the reviewer 'the principal group is that of Mr. Millais presenting the apple to a Pre-Raphaelite *belle idéal* [sic], whom he prefers to a figure of Raphael's (from the well-known picture of "The Marriage of the Virgin")', and to a pretty, modern, English girl, dressed in the *mode* of the day, with plaited hair and crinoline complete' (*Illustrated London News*, vol.36, 2 June 1860, pp.541-2).
- 19 See C. Trodd, 'Representing the Victorian Royal Academy: The Properties of Culture and the Promotion of Art', in P. Barlow and C. Trodd, eds, *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London*, London: Ashgate, 2000, pp.56-68.
- 20 The cartoon appeared shortly after the exhibition of the painting in the same year, 1857. It was in a book written under the pen-name 'Tennyson Longfellow Smith', *Poems Inspired by Certain Pictures at the Art Treasures Exhibition, Manchester* (Manchester, 1857). For a discussion of the significance of the graveyard motif in the cartoon, and its relation to earlier commentaries on Pre-Raphaelite art, see J. Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004, pp.1-7.
- 21 E. Young, *Pre-Raphaelitism, or a Popular Enquiry into Some Newly Asserted Principles Connected with the Philosophy, Poetry, Religion and Revolution of Art*, London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1857, p.240.
- 22 Alexis François Rio, *De la Poésie Chrétienne (or, The Poetry of Christian Art)*, translated from the French, London: T. Bosworth, 1854 (first publ. 1836), pp.71-6. For a more detailed discussion see Matthew Pamplin's article in the present issue of *Visual Culture in Britain*, in which he explains that Rio thought of Lippi as 'the corrupted monk guilty of having "sown the first seeds of decadence in the Florentine school"'. The relationship of Browning's poems to Pre-Raphaelitism and other movements in contemporary art is very complex. In many ways Lippi is presented as a proto-Hogarthian figure, and Sarto as the prototype of the sclerotic academic. Browning inverts Rio's ascription of decadence to Lippi, seeing him as the healthy exposé of the corruption around him. Lippi violates the conventions he has inherited in order to reveal living truth, while Sarto is compromised by a moral corruption he constantly avoids confronting. Browning's view is also the antithesis of O'Neil's in important respects, since O'Neil ascribes abnormality, evasion and anxiety to Pre-Raphaelitism, while Post-Raphaelitism is given confidence, health and a power to violate pictorial and social convention of the kind Browning ascribes to Lippi.
- 23 The poem starts with his Sarto responding to his wife's attempt to squeeze money out of him to subsidize one of her ne'er-do-well relatives. He attempts to draw her into an emotional intimacy that could, it is implied, warm his own 'coldly' perfect art, which currently mirrors his wife's blank beauty. But she fails to respond. See P. Honan, *Browning's Characters: A Study in Poetic Techniques*, London: Archon, 1969, pp.141-2, 156-8.
- 24 R. Browning, *Poetical Works*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940, p.433. In the *Poetical Works* Browning's poem on Sarto appears immediately after *Fra Lipp Lippi*.
- 25 One of Bibiena's patrons, Bibiena was said to have intended marrying Raphael to his 'niece'. The subject of Bibiena introducing Raphael to his niece had also been painted by Ingres.