

HUNT'S AWAKENING CONSCIENCE

Michael Hancher

William Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (Fig. 1) was seen to be a problem painting from the start. "Enigmatic in its title, it is understood by few of the exoteric visitors," commented the *Athenæum* in its review of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1854. "Innocent and unenlightened spectators suppose it to represent a quarrel between a brother and sister; it literally represents the momentary remorse of a kept mistress, whose thoughts of lost virtue, guilt, father, mother, and home have been roused by a chance strain of music."¹

The apparent need for explication was met to a large extent by John Ruskin, who wrote a detailed letter on the subject to the *Times*, part of his continuing campaign on behalf of Pre-Raphaelitism. "Assuredly it is not understood," he observed about the painting on exhibit; "people gaze at it in a blank wonder, and leave it hopelessly." Many later viewers have relied upon the eloquent inventory that Ruskin took of the things and meanings in this overfurnished picture; he showed the moral hidden in almost every object, symbolically selected though realistically rendered. "That furniture so carefully painted, even to the last vein of the rosewood--is there nothing to be learnt from that terrible lustre of it, from its fatal newness; nothing there that has the old thoughts of home upon it, or that is ever to become a part of home?"²

Though Ruskin explained much, he did not tell all; the painting's more private meanings he left out of account. He saw no need to mention that Hunt's model for "the poor girl" in the painting was Annie Miller, a vulnerable working-class beauty with whom Hunt had become infatuated. Hunt planned to protect Annie's morals and educate her social skills, and then, maybe, marry her: this idealistic and ambitious scheme was a staple of gossip in Pre-Raphaelite circles, which Ruskin must have known (Daly 112). Ruskin tactfully omitted to say that the social reformation that Hunt planned for Annie Miller closely resembled the spiritual reformation that takes place in the painting, as the fallen woman suddenly realizes the folly of her ways.

Hunt complicated his educational plan by attempting much of it *in absentia*. Immediately after he finished painting *The Awakening Conscience* he left both England and Miller for the Holy Land, where he would learn how to invest his Biblical paintings with a fresh realism (both *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* and *The Scapegoat* were begun there in 1854). He left instructions with his friends how Miller was to be treated: for which artists it was safe for her to model

(not Dante Gabriel Rossetti, evidently); how her manners should be schooled. The education of Annie Miller continued, off and on, after Hunt returned from his travels in 1856; but within three years their romance had cooled, partly because Annie found Hunt's moralism tedious. In 1865 they finally married other people.

A comprehensive account of the Hunt-Miller affair has been constructed by Jan Marsh in *The Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (61, 99, 228).³ She doubts that Hunt seduced Miller, thanks to his religious scruples. But she suggests that, nonetheless, he was almost as guilty as the man in *The Awakening Conscience*:

There is a mass of critical comment on the contents, treatment and reception of the picture; my only additional remark is to suggest that just as the artist reproduced the current notions of morality by showing the fallen woman to be in need of redemption rather than her seducer (who is shown as shallow and base but not in the same acute state of sin as the woman), so he effectively presented his own unconscious role in respect of Annie Miller. He was the agent of her temptation who was not himself to be blamed . . . ; he failed to perceive that the implications of his offer to educate Annie were identical to those of an immoralist who bought and paid for women in order that they should do as he desired. (61)

Marsh is right that the larger meaning of *The Awakening Conscience* places the painter in virtually the same position as the seducer. Apparently, however, Hunt himself did not miss the point: for he painted himself into the picture.

The best evidence of the identity between painter and painting is a drawing that John Everett Millais made of Hunt shortly before his departure for the East--at just about the time that Hunt was completing his picture (Fig. 3 and Fig. 2, a detail from the painting). The resemblance of this young man to the seducer in Hunt's painting is strong if not complete (the chin is a bit more rounded, and the nose more finely drawn, in the painting). The resemblance is marked enough to indicate that Hunt projected a version of his own appearance onto the canvas of *The Awakening Conscience*, even should it be shown that he used another man as a model. In fact, it is not documented that he did so, which makes this case unusual in the record of Pre-Raphaelite painting.⁴

A second drawing that Millais did of Hunt at about the same time only slightly weakens the resemblance between the painter and the "swell" in the painting (Fig. 4). Such contemporary evidence suggests that William Holman Hunt's painting is a portrait of the artist as a young man.⁵

The work of self-representation in this painting explains a striking aspect that early attracted comment and caused perplexity. "The complicated compound shadow in the mirror is . . . a mere piece of intricacy without any good or valuable effect," complained the critic for the *Morning Chronicle*.⁶ It is an intricate and complicated business, though it includes a strong and simple effect: the large mirror that occupies the upper-left-hand corner of the painting, itself heavily framed in gilt like the painting itself, reflects to the viewer the natural scene of trees

and light, framed in a casement window, at which the woman gazes at her moment of reformation (Fig. 5). Suddenly she "sees the light"; and what she sees is natural, antithetical to the cluttered interior of false culture in which she has all but lost her soul. She turns away from the dead and fatally polished rosewood piano--conventionally a site for middle-class intimacy and seduction--to the flourishing green tree outside.⁷ We see what she sees because of the mirror. In the mirror we also see her, from behind, looking out the window, almost in silhouette against the light. And we also see, at the bottom of the mirror, next to it, her seducer, gazing up not at the light but at her, smiling still with satisfaction even as he sings the song that has made her turn away.

In 1842 the National Gallery purchased a remarkable painting by Jan Van Eyck dated 1434 (Fig. 6). Now thought to commemorate the wedding of the merchant Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami--or their betrothal (see Edwin Hall)--it was at first identified simply as "A Flemish Gentleman and a Lady" (Maurice W. Brockwell 60). In 1847 Charles Eastlake, Keeper of the National Gallery, conjectured that the painting might represent "John Van Eyck and his wife" (185); the next year Ruskin agreed that the work was "probably" Van Eyck's self-portrait (12: 257; see also Hall 7). In 1854 Gustav Friedrich Waagen completed the conversion of conjecture to fact, describing the painting as "full-length portraits of Jan Van Eyck and his wife, standing in a room with rich accessories" (1: 348).⁸

The painting assumed an important role in the young Hunt's artistic education. In his autobiography Hunt would later recall its effect on his studies: such "unaffected work" encouraged a "taste for clear forms and tints, and for clean handling."⁹ As a young man he valued the work of Jan Van Eyck and his brother Hubert as "the first achievements of perfect realization of natural form and colour" (1:40). On a European tour with Rossetti he "studied attentively the works of John and Hubert Van Eyck; the exquisite delicacy of the workmanship and the unpretending character of the invention made us feel we could not overestimate the perfection of the painting, at least that of John van Eyck" (193).

Arguably the Van Eyck painting in the National Gallery contributed to leading features of style--compressed space, vivid colour, and patient detail--that came to characterize Pre-Raphaelitism.¹⁰ Linda Nochlin has noted its importance for *The Awakening Conscience* in general terms.¹¹ Certain details seem especially relevant to the present discussion.

Like *The Awakening Conscience* the Van Eyck painting appeared to represent an erotic couple--perhaps the artist and his bride--at the center of a close, window-illuminated chamber, monitored by a mirror placed on the rear wall.¹² Reflecting most of the interior space of his painting within the small convex mirror strategically placed in the middle of that wall, Van Eyck contrived to include tiny representations of two persons standing in an open doorway on the viewer's side of the picture plane, witnesses to the scene.

Hunt puts his mirror to a different use. Large and flat, not compact and convex, it is positioned sufficiently far off to the side so that no central witness of

the depicted scene would be reflected in it; furthermore, the reflection of the woman would block any central point of view. Instead of reflecting the viewer, Hunt's mirror reflects another gilt-framed mirror, filling most of the visible space beside the open window, giving an oblique view along the left-hand wall of this close and morally claustrophobic chamber (Fig. 5). Dominating that view is a small marble fireplace mantel carrying bric-a-brac and surmounted by yet another heavily framed mirror. This, seen almost side-on, withholds what it reflects.

These are too many mirrors--mirrors "utterly disproportioned to the size of the apartment," as a sympathetic critic remarked (Stephens, *Hunt* 34). Vulgar excess is part of the point. Though Ruskin may have intended rosewood more than silvered glass when he criticized the "terrible lustre" and "fatal newness" of the furniture in the painting, those terms apply as well to the overlarge gilt-framed mirrors that dominate the room, which were very much in fashion. Previously a harsh excise tax on glass had had the indirect effect of keeping such amenities to a modest scale; but the Peel administration lifted the glass tax in 1845, to encourage the domestic glass industry (the first and most urgent of many such excise reforms); and mirrors soon flourished along with windows.¹³ The most conspicuous result of this reform rose quickly in Hyde Park to house the Great Exhibition of 1851: some 400 tons of plate glass--almost 18,000 panes--assembled as the "Crystal Palace" (*Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue* 1: 52, 80). The thousands of items on display within included several imposing gilt-framed mirrors, one so outsized as to draw the ridicule of Ralph Wornum in an influential essay on the "taste" of the Exhibition (Fig. 8).¹⁴ The mirrors in *The Awakening Conscience* are more decorous than this object, but not much.

By insisting on multiple mirroring within his picture Hunt activates and at the same time jeopardizes the mimetic commonplace according to which the painting itself is a mirror. Within the gilt frame of the painting we see an imposing, similarly framed mirror, which reveals a smaller framed mirror, which in turn reveals, though only obliquely, yet another framed mirror. (Even the transparent glass panes of the open window casements function as bright mirrors, revealing only what they reflect.¹⁵) To a postmodern eye this maze of reflections threatens a deconstructive impasse. Indeed there is a problem further down the line: the multiple reflections are so densely presented and carefully calculated that one expects the brown patch shown in the second mirror as silhouetted against the marble fireplace to be yet another reflection of the back of the seducer's head; but that seems optically impossible in the implied space. (Perhaps this *aporia* is the particular "complicated compound shadow in the mirror" to which the critic for the *Morning Chronicle* objected.)

Nonetheless, whether the seducer's image appears in *The Awakening Conscience* three times or only twice, the painting's insistence on the process of mirroring requires that his reflection be taken into account. The painted seducer mirrors the painter; they look alike; they occupy the same subject position.

In her valuable essay on *The Awakening Conscience*, Caroline Arscott, too, scrutinizes the nest of mirrors in Hunt's painting, but to a different end; she would have them implicate the casual viewer in the sexual guilt on display. "Logically, since the mirror reflects the space outside the room, it ought to reflect the viewer peeping at the intimate scene. It threatens to expose the voyeur" (186-87). However, unlike the situation in the Van Eyck painting, the large mirror in *The Awakening Conscience* is just so positioned as to exclude the implied viewer from its reflection. The viewer enters this guilty scene not by direct reflection but by way of identifying with the seducer. For the painter himself, on the evidence of such contemporary images of him as survive, such identification was unavoidable.

The large mirror, like a Pre-Raphaelite painting, doubles Hunt's world by reflecting its matter precisely, exposing the moral dualism that informs it. For Hunt the issue dramatized in this painting is a matter of the woman's spiritual life or death. He celebrates her spiritual salvation, and satirizes the amoral complacency of her seducer. Since he himself is the woman's seducer, virtually, if not in fact, the satire has a bitter edge. No sooner did he finish the painting than he left for the Holy Land, where he painted his pitiless *Scapegoat*, in partial atonement. Not that the trip was a sudden decision; it had long been planned. Indeed, Hunt had had to postpone it, to seize the opportunity to paint *The Awakening Conscience* under a potentially lucrative commission (from the collector Thomas Fairbairn). Three references in his autobiography indicate how impatient he was with the delay (*Pre-Raphaelitism* 1: 347-48, 360, 365). His body was in England, with Annie Miller, in the flashy room he rented in St John's Wood (for authenticity's sake); but his spirit longed for the Holy Land.¹⁶ In his distraction from the present scene he identified with the woman in the painting as much as with the man.

So far as I know, no comment survives from Hunt's day to note that he is mirrored in his painting, and that his, too, is an "awakening conscience." Any public comment would have had to be indirect; Ruskin would no more implicate Hunt in such a disreputable scene than he would name Miller: the identities of both were best veiled. William Michael Rossetti, the second-most-important publicist for Pre-Raphaelitism, merely approached the question, in his review of the Royal Academy exhibition: "The man's face is not entirely right. You see that he is singing; but the play of feature is not quite easy enough, and the expression, as distinct from the action, not free from ambiguity" (241).

Hunt lacked neither precedent nor precept for including himself in *The Awakening Conscience*: the Pre-Raphaelite gaze often turned upon the Pre-Raphaelite artist, his friends, and his relatives, occasionally on principle. John Everett Millais's early group painting *Isabella* may not actually include the artist but it excludes so few of his Pre-Raphaelite brethren that he is implicitly there.¹⁷ Rossetti's obsessive renderings of his mistresses amount to an indirect self-portrait; so do the many drawings that Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti sketched of each other and of their Pre-Raphaelite associates. Sometimes the self-representation could be

direct. While Hunt was painting himself and Annie Miller into *The Awakening Conscience*, Ford Madox Brown was representing himself and his wife, Emma, as the emigrant husband and wife in *The Last of England* (1852-55), a much more stoic account of the circumstances of sexual relations (*Pre-Raphaelites* 124-26). Brown had recently exhibited at the Royal Academy *The Pretty Baa Lambs* (1852), a landscape dominated by a woman and infant modelled on his wife and daughter, Kate (*Pre-Raphaelites* 93-94). Most pertinently, from 1851 he had been at work on the major painting he never finished, *Take Your Son, Sir*, which incorporated a portrait of Emma and, after his birth in 1856, his infant son Arthur (Fig. 9). Reflected in the convex mirror that haloes Emma's head--which mirrors the mirror in the Van Eyck painting--is the man, recognizably Brown himself, to whom she hands the sprawling baby (Fig. 10)

A conspicuously unfinished painting, *Take Your Son, Sir* is especially open to interpretation. It can be read simply as a family self-portrait, but the fact that Brown dramatized the same models in *The Last of England* encourages a dramatic reading; and it has been easy to interpret the work as representing a mistress, her lover, and their bastard--the victimized woman triumphantly confronting the man with his responsibility. On this account *Take Your Son, Sir* becomes a close counterpart to--is a kind of averted sequel to--*The Awakening Conscience*.¹⁸

Before he began any of these works Brown theorized his practice in an essay he wrote for *The Germ*. "On the Mechanism of a Historical Picture. Part I. The Design," published in the February 1850 issue of this Pre-Raphaelite journal, was the first and only instalment of a projected series of essays, which came to a premature end even before the neglected publication in which it appeared.¹⁹ William Michael Rossetti later paid it the compliment of originality: although Brown "had studied art in continental schools," the article did not rehearse what he had learned there, but rather advanced "what he had thought out for himself, and had begun putting into practice" (W. M. Rossetti, "Critical Comments" 253).

Brown began with generalities: the painter had to establish in advance the dramatic sentiment of the painting, its structure, and its coloration. With those in mind he could begin to sketch: "the student will take pencil and paper, and sketch roughly each separate figure in his composition, *studying his own acting (in a looking-glass)* or else that of any friend he may have of an artistic or poetic temperament, but not employing for the purpose the ordinary paid models" (Brown 71; emphasis added). The trouble with hired models was that "they are stiff and feelingless, and, as such, tend to curb the vivacity of a first conception, so much so that the artist may believe an action impossible, through the want of comprehension of the model, which to himself or a friend might prove easy" (71).

When sketching from such a self-reflection or from the modellings of friends, the artist should

spare neither time nor labour, but exert himself beyond his natural energies, seeking to enter into the character of each actor, studying them one after the other, limb for

limb, hand for hand, finger for finger, noting each inflection of joint, or tension of sinew, searching for dramatic truth internally in himself, and in all external nature. . . . (71)

The equivocation here of outer and inner, objective and subjective, brings Wordsworth to mind, whose *Prelude* was finally published the same year. Though "inflection of joint" is observed from without, the "tension of sinew" is best felt from within: so the artist will search "for dramatic truth internally in himself," as well as "in all external nature." As often in Wordsworth, the endorsement of the real ("all external nature") sounds a bit like an afterthought: more urgent is the dramatization of subjective truth. For that reason, too, as well as to fulfill more readily the artist's intentions, the Pre-Raphaelite artist will be his own best model.

At least that is the case in the initial stages of composition; for Brown intends that, after he has prepared an oil sketch incorporating the figure studies of himself and his friends, the painter will secure "living models, as like the artist's conception as can be found," for use in preparing "outlines of the nude of each figure, and again sketches of the same, draped in the proper costume" (72). In a footnote he mentions the practical difficulties of working with models, which have to do with temporal and (by implication) financial economy. There are obvious benefits in making do with limited means, and it might be best to do without the luxury of hired models altogether. If Brown did not go that far in theory, he apparently would do so in practice, when he came to paint *The Last of England* and *Take Your Son, Sir*--as Hunt, working under similar economic constraints, seems to have done when he painted *The Awakening Conscience*.²⁰

The Van Eyck mirror repeated in *Take Your Son, Sir* had fascinated Hunt years earlier, when he enlarged it to become the mirror of the Lady of Shalott. Figure 11 shows one of his many sketches of that theme, which anticipate his renowned illustration for Moxon's illustrated edition of Tennyson's *Poems* (1857) and the elaborate oil painting that later he based on it (Timothy R. Rogers; Miriam Neuringer). The roundels that surround the Van Eyck mirror depict scenes from Christ's passion (see Fig. 7); Hunt reduces them to scenes from the Lady's passion, ranging clockwise from contentment in her craft to the sexual yearning provoked by the sight (at first mediated by the mirror, then direct) of Lancelot, to crisis (the roundel at the centre bottom is obscured by the Lady, but the scene is presumably identical to the whole drawing), to escape, and finally to death. As Judith Bronkhurst has pointed out (*Pre-Raphaelites* 249), the cinched shawl around her waist ties her figuratively to the woman in *The Awakening Conscience*, who stands in a similar posture, at a similar moment of crisis, her face to the window and her back to the mirror. The women's reflections in the mirrors are notably alike, especially in the seductive view of their long hair; but the crises, and the mirrors, have antithetical values. The woman in *The Awakening Conscience* rises to spiritual rebirth; the Lady of Shalott descends from her tower to physical death.

The Awakening Conscience is an allegory of the cave: the interior and its mirror, and the man who haunts them, are a world of deceptive shadows, from which the window opens, for the woman, to a world of natural light and spiritual redemption. But the Lady of Shalott is condemned to suffer a more difficult allegory. For her the mirror, though inadequate, indeed inhuman, is necessary. She would see Lancelot face to face; but, by the circumstances of her fatal curse, can live to see him only in a glass darkly.

Hunt's different valuing of these mirrors finds justification in the long tradition that overdetermines their aesthetic meaning. In the *Republic*, Plato famously rejected *mimesis* in general and painting in particular as a mere mirroring (326 [10.597]), but others have imagined mirrors that represent a heightened, idealized view of the world. Though not mentioning mirrors, Aristotle worked out the logic of mimetic improvement: besides showing things "the way they were or are," art may show things "the way they ought to be"--something made possible by the generalizing power of poetic *mimesis*, which is more philosophical than (merely anecdotal) history (67 [ch. 25], 32-33 [ch. 9]). Ultimately that logic became an available frame for the figure of the mirror. Many medieval and Renaissance texts announced in their titles that they were a "mirror" or "speculum"; such titles could denote an idealizing representation of "the way things should or should not be," or the realistic representation of "things as they are" (Herbert Grables 39). Closer to the Pre-Raphaelites, Shelley celebrated poetry as "a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted"; he explicitly preferred it to history, which he disparaged as a mere "story of particular facts. . . a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful" (10). The Lady of Shalott was committed to the idealizing mirror, indeed was condemned to it. The woman in *The Awakening Conscience* turns her back on the anecdotal, superficial looking-glass.

Large looking-glasses are supposed to do more than frame and flatter the interiors that contain them: they do the same for the inhabitants. They indulge narcissism. From that snare, too, the woman turns away. But one's looking-glass can also be didactic: it can *instruct*, not flatter, the self. The *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559) was turned on its audience, calculated to show magistrates not only their worst selves but their proper selves.²¹ Hunt's friend Frederic Stephens noted this didactic denotation when he commented on the title of *The Looking-Glass: A True History of the Early Years of an Artist* (1805), an edifying biography that William Godwin had prepared for his Juvenile Library. It was based on the early career of the painter William Mulready; eighty years later Stephens supplied an explanatory appendix for a facsimile edition. He noted that when it was first published the book carried an alternative title on its cover: "THE LOOKING-GLASS. A Mirror in which every Good Little Boy and Girl may see what He or She is; and those who are not yet Quite Good, may find what They ought to be" (Godwin 128).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, in the Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde explained that "The nineteenth century dislike of

Realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass." He added, "The nineteenth century dislike of Romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass"; and, synthesizing the two propositions, "It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors" (229-30). In turning the looking-glass of art on the spectator, rather than on the world, Wilde was less original than he let on, but he expressed a need to turn it away, even momentarily, from the artist, from himself. In painting *The Awakening Conscience*, William Holman Hunt, a more thoroughgoing Realist than Wilde, did not flinch from the surveillance of the looking-glass.²²

Notes

1. *Athenæum*, 6 May 1854, 561; slightly but significantly misquoted ("esoteric" or "exoteric") by Mary Bennett in her catalogue, *William Holman Hunt* 36. Though Bennett and other commentators regularly refer to the painting by the title under which it was first exhibited, *The Awakening Conscience* (as I shall continue to do here), Hunt changed the title to *The Awakened Conscience* in 1856, after he had repainted the woman's face. He did so at the request of the painting's owner, Thomas Fairbairn, who was disturbed by the extreme anguish of her original expression. Hunt made some additional changes in 1857 and 1879-89. See Judith Bronkhurst 588, 594. In his autobiography, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (1905), Hunt regularly calls it *The Awakened Conscience*.

The economic and gender implications of Hunt's repainting Miller's face to please Fairbairn are well scrutinized in Richard Leppert's recent account of the picture (189-211).

2. *Times* 25 May 1854; see Ruskin 12: 333-35. Hunt enhanced the authority of Ruskin's letter by quoting it in full, *Pre-Raphaelitism* 1: 418-19. Caroline Arscott and Kate Flint subject it to searching criticisms, shifting attention to the broader social and ideological context; Lynda Nead relates Ruskin's general analysis of the painting to Victorian constructions of female sexuality (36).
3. The first detailed account of the Hunt-Miller affair was provided by Diana Holman-Hunt.
4. Grilli, "Pre-Raphaelitism and Phrenology" 60. However, there is an equivocal phrase in an undated letter that Hunt wrote to John Lucas Tupper, which may refer to *The Awakening Conscience* (so his editor conjectures); Hunt mentions delays caused by "the fogs and irregularities of models." See Hunt, *A Pre-Raphaelite Friendship* 42.

The entry describing this painting in the Tate Gallery's *Illustrated Catalogue of Acquisitions* suggested that the model for the man had been "either Thomas Seddon. . . or Augustus Egg"; it added that "The man's face bears the strongest resemblance to that of the central figure of Rossetti's 'Mary Magdalene of at the Door of Simon the Pharisee' (1853-9)" (*Tate Gallery*, 1976-8, 2:7). Virginia Surtees reproduces the Magdalene painting in her Rossetti catalogue (vol. 2, pl. 156); the supposed resemblance is hard to see. As regards Seddon and Egg: both men, fellow artists, were closely involved with Hunt at the time; Egg indeed had helped Hunt to negotiate the commission for the painting with Thomas Fairbairn. Hunt published a comparable photograph of Seddon in the second edition of *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1913) (1: 265); recently Jeremy Maas published it (the same photograph, from Hunt's personal collection) in his useful survey, *The Victorian Art World in Photographs* (116), assigning it the date "c. 1853" (Seddon died in 1856). He also publishes a comparable photograph of Egg dated "c. 1855" (28). In these contemporary photographs neither Seddon nor Egg bears more than a general resemblance to the man in the painting; especially in the hairline, the Millais drawings of Hunt make a better match. Of course if he used a model Hunt's rendering need not have been photographically precise; he could vary the sitter's features as he chose. In any case the result, on the evidence of the Millais drawings, very closely resembled himself. R. Parkinson, who may have written the anonymous catalogue

entry quoted above, remarked in *The Tate Gallery*, 1976-8: Illustrated Biennial Report, that "It would be facile to suggest a connection between the couple in 'The Awakening Conscience' and Hunt's relationship with Annie Miller" (1: 29). The Millais drawings argue otherwise.

5. Bennett describes the circumstances in which Millais prepared this drawing and Fig. 3 above (*Millais: PRB-PRA* 90; "Footnotes" 52). The present location of Fig. 4 is unknown; it is reproduced here from Hesketh Hubbard, pl. 51.

The seducer in *The Awakening Conscience* also bears comparison to two self-portraits that Hunt painted some years earlier and later. The seventeen-year-old youth in the painting of 1845 has a similar hairline, no whiskers, and a blunter nose (City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham; reproduced in Bennett, *Hunt* pl. 1). The forty-year old man in Oriental dress, depicted in the self-portrait now at Florence in the Uffizi Gallery, shows a face half obscured by a flowing moustache and beard: it could be that of the man in *The Awakening Conscience*, some fifteen years later (reproduced by Landow, 647). The moustache and beard also obscure much of a portrait photograph taken about ten years after Hunt painted *The Awakening Conscience* (published by Holman-Hunt, frontispiece); but the resemblance is still strong. See also Maas 103, Fig. 195. Holman-Hunt mentions the young Hunt's sartorial vanity and "copper-coloured hair" (114), traits evident in the painting.
6. *Morning Chronicle* 29 Apr. 1854, quoted by Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism* 1: 406 (with the misprint "effort" for "effect").
7. Hunt dramatized this crucial choice with one of two Biblical quotations that he printed in the Royal Academy catalogue: "'As of the green leaves on a thick tree, some fall and some grow; so is the generation of flesh and blood.'--Ecclesiastes, xiv, 18" (Bennett, *Hunt* 35).
8. Though details of the painting continue to be disputed, it is generally understood to represent the Arnolfini-Cenami wedding (W. H. James Weale 114-19; Erwin Panofsky 1: 201-03, 438-39; Linda Seidel 16, 79), or betrothal (Hall--who provides an incisive critique of the history of interpretation of this painting).
9. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism* 1: 54, referring also to several other paintings, unspecified.
10. Ruskin had celebrated this painting while reviewing Eastlake's *Materials* in 1848 (394). Samuel J. Wagstaff (13) notes the importance of the Van Eyck to another painting of Hunt's, *The Lady of Shalott*. Arthur S. Marks (139) connects it to Ford Madox Brown's painting *Take Your Son, Sir*, discussed below. There are also strong affinities between the Van Eyck and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's influential work, *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (1850); these are most significant as regards the restricted interior space that came to characterize many Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Malcolm Warner identifies other aspects of the painting's influence (8-9). Hunt's friend Stephens invented a romance, "The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror," about details in the Van Eyck painting.
11. "Hunt turned to the precedent of Jan van Eyck, specifically to the *Arnolfini Portrait* in the National Gallery[,] for his inspiration in the setting and perhaps for a certain validation of Pre-Raphaelite authenticity, for a reassuringly primitive freshness of feeling, as well as a sincerity of execution" (145). See also Warner, who reads Hunt's painting in many of its details as "a sobering inversion of the earlier work" (9).
12. A contemporary press notice ridiculed what seemed to be the bride's state of advanced pregnancy (*Athenæum* 3 July 1841: 509). Brockwell quotes it, as well as two references by nineteenth-century French scholars to the apparent pregnancy (59, 63). Modern scholarship explains "the gravid outline. . . as an appearance due to the fashion of the dress at the time" (Martin Davies 33).
13. In an unsigned contemporary article, "Plate Glass," published in *Household Words* (1 February 1851), after mentioning the process that makes plate glass into a mirror, Charles Dickens and W. H. Wills devoted a long paragraph to celebrating "the great demand occasioned by the immediate fall in price consequent upon the New Tariff" (Dickens 1: 214; see also Stephen Dowell 4: 303 and Harry J. Powell 153-55).
14. Wornum commented, "The colossal gilt looking-glass frame and console-table by M'Lean in the western avenue, is an extraordinary piece of carving and gilding, were it only for size; but this appears to us its worst feature"; it was simply too much for the eye to take in all at once (xiv).

This exhibit, manufactured by Charles M'Lean of Fleet Street, was registered in the *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue* as "Large looking-glass and console table, ornamented and gilt" (2: 759); the wood engraving, by George Nicholls, takes up the whole of the facing page. (For an account of Nicholls see Rodney K. Engen 193.) Other large looking-glasses, only slightly less ornate, are depicted in full-page engravings opposite pp. 748 and 755, and in an engraving on p. 745; the British Plate Glass Company also displayed "Two specimen looking-glasses, each upwards of 12 feet high" (760). The *Catalogue* elsewhere drew attention to "New and patented processes of silvering glass, not with mercury, but with a deposit of pure silver" (2: 698), an enhancement that made mid-Victorian looking-glasses even more eye-catching.

- R. W. Symonds surveys pre-Victorian styles of looking-glasses, smaller in scale and less ostentatiously framed, concluding with a Ruskinian disdain: "in the second quarter of the Nineteenth Century looking-glasses were mass-produced by furniture factories and sold to shopkeepers. The craftsman was now no longer a seller of his own wares; his place was taken by a shopkeeper" who purchased his stock from a furniture warehouse. In the Victorian period large gilt glasses, which were placed over chimney-pieces and marble-topped console tables, became extremely popular. The coarse mouldings and the stucco flowers and ribbons and metallic gilding lacked all the quality of individual handwork, for the craft of furniture-making had now been caught up in the toils of the Industrial Revolution. (87)
15. Hunt took some pride in the way he captured reflected light in this painting. He specifically encouraged "artistic understanding of the effect" of "the reflection of the green foliage into the shining table"--an effect that Thomas Carlyle had misjudged, thinking the light to be "moonlight" (*Pre-Raphaelitism* 1: 355).
16. The address was an actual "maison de convenance," according to Judith Bronkhurst in her commentary on the painting, *Pre-Raphaelites* 121. Marsh acknowledges that "it is not known whether Annie posed 'on site' or in the studio" (61).
17. Michael Warner tentatively identifies many of the sitters--including F. G. Stephens, Walter Deverell, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and William Michael Rossetti--in his commentary on the painting, *Pre-Raphaelites* 69.
18. Mary Bennett surveys and casts doubt upon some of these interpretations in *The Pre-Raphaelites* 150-51; see also Marks 135. The title does tend to support a dramatic reading; Ford scribbled it on an unfinished part of the canvas below his signature. And the man in the mirror wears a hat, suggesting that he is not at home in this domestic scene. However, it is likely that Brown abandoned the painting for personal reasons, after the sudden death of his son Arthur.
19. According to Newman and Watkinson (53) three essays were planned.
20. Grilli, "Pre-Raphaelite Portraiture" 87-89, discusses Brown's essay, emphasizing how the use of friends as models enabled the Pre-Raphaelites to achieve what she calls "personalism" and "actualism." Julie F. Codell relates the practice to the anatomical empiricism that the physician Sir Charles Bell recommended in his treatise, *The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression as Connected with the Fine Arts* (1816), which Hunt recommended to Millais in 1848 (268-70).
21. In his editorial preface, addressed "To the nobilitye and all other in office," William Baldwin explained that "here as in a loking glas, you shall see (if any vice be in you) howe the like hath bene punished in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will be a good occasion to move you to the soner amendment" (Campbell 65-66).
22. I owe thanks to Andrew Elfenbein, Gordon Hirsch, Richard Leppert, and Karen Wadman for their help and encouragement in preparing this article.

Works Cited

- Arcsott, Caroline. "Employer, Husband, Spectator: Thomas Fairbairn's Commission of *The Awakening Conscience*." *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class*. Ed. Janet Woolf and John Seed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988, 159-90.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. Gerald F. Else. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1967.
- Bennett, Mary. "Footnotes to the Millais Exhibition." *Liverpool Bulletin* 12 (1967), 32-59.
- . *Millais: PRB-PRA*. Liverpool: Walker Art Gallery, 1967.
- . *William Holman Hunt*. Liverpool: Walker Art Gallery, 1969.

- Brockwell, Maurice W. *The Pseudo-Arnolfini Portrait: A Case of Mistaken Identity*. London: Chatto, 1952.
- Bronkurst, Judith. "Fruits of a Connoisseur's Friendship: Sir Thomas Fairbairn and William Holman Hunt." *Burlington Magazine* 125 (1983), 586-97.
- Brown, Ford Madox. "On the Mechanism of a Historical Picture. Part I. The Design." *The Germ*. Rpt. in Hosmon 70-73.
- Campbell, Lily B., ed. *The Mirror for Magistrates*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1938.
- Codell, Julie F. "Expression Over Beauty: Facial Expression, Body Language, and Circumstantiality in the Paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." *Victorian Studies* 29 (1986), 255-90.
- Daly, Gay. *Pre-Raphaelites in Love*. New York: Ticknor, 1989.
- Davies, Martin. *Early Netherlandish School*. London: National Gallery, 1945.
- Dickens, Charles. *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from "Household Words," 1850-1859*. Ed. Henry Stone. 2 vols. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1968.
- Dowell, Stephen. *A History of Taxation and Taxes in England*. 4 vols. 1884. Rpt. New York: Kelly, 1965.
- Eastlake, Charles Lock. *Materials for a History of Oil Painting*. London, 1847. Rpt. as *Methods and Materials of Painting of the Great Schools and Masters* 1. New York: Dover, 1960.
- Engen, Rodney K. *Dictionary of Victorian Wood Engravers*. London: Chadwyck-Healey, 1985.
- "Fine Arts: Royal Academy." *Athenæum*, 6 May 1854, 559-61.
- Flint, Kate. "Reading *The Awakening Conscience* Rightly." *Pre-Raphaelites Reviewed*. Ed. Marcia Pointon. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989, 45-65.
- Godwin, William. *The Looking-Glass: A True History of the Early Years of an Artist*. Ed. F. G. Stephens. Derby and London: Bembrose, n.d. [1885].
- Grabes, Herbert. *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance*. Trans. Gordon Collier. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.
- Grilli, Stephanie Jeanne. "Pre-Raphaelite Portraiture, 1848-1854." Diss. Yale U, 1980.
- . "Pre-Raphaelitism and Phrenology." *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*. Ed. Leslie Parris. London: Tate Gallery, 1984.
- Hall, Edwin. *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck's Double Portrait*. Discovery Series 3. Berkeley: U of California P, 1994.
- Holman-Hunt, Diana. *My Grandfather, His Wives and Loves*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969.
- Hosmon, Robert Stahr, ed. *The Germ: A Pre-Raphaelite Little Magazine*. Coral Gables, FL: U of Miami P, 1970.
- Hubbard, Hesketh. *Some Victorian Draughtsmen*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1944.
- Hunt, William Holman. *A Pre-Raphaelite Friendship: The Correspondence of William Holman Hunt and John Lucas Tupper*. Ed. James H. Coombs et al. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1986.
- . *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*. 2 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1905.
- . *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. London: Chapman, 1913.
- Ladies of Shalott: A Victorian Masterpiece and Its Contexts*. Providence, RI: Brown U, 1985.
- Landow, George P. "William Holman Hunt's 'Oriental Mania' and His Uffizi Self-Portrait." *Art Bulletin* 64 (1982), 646-56.
- Leppert, Richard. *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.
- Maas, Jeremy. *The Victorian Art World in Photographs*. New York: Universe, 1984.
- Marks, Arthur S. "Ford Madox Brown's 'Take Your Son, Sir!'" *Arts Magazine* 44 (1980), 135-41.
- Marsh, Jan. *The Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*. New York: St. Martin's, 1985.
- Nead, Lynda. "The Magdalen in Modern Times: The Mythology of the Fallen Women in Pre-Raphaelite Painting." *Oxford Art Journal* 7 (1984), 26-37.
- Neuringer, Miriam. "The Burden of Meaning: Hunt's *Lady of Shalott*." *Ladies of Shalott* 61-70.
- Newman, Teresa, and Ray Watkinson. *Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite Circle*. London: Chatto, 1991.
- Nochlin, Linda. "Lost and Found: Once More the Fallen Woman." *Art Bulletin* 60 (1978), 139-53.
- Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue: Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851*. 3 vols. London: Spicer, 1851.

- Panofsky, Erwin. *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1953.
- Plato. *The Republic*. Trans. Francis Macdonald Cornford. New York: Oxford UP, 1958.
- Powell, Harry J. *Glass-Making in England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1923.
- The Pre-Raphaelites*. London: Tate Gallery, 1984.
- Rogers, Timothy R. "The Development of William Holman Hunt's *Lady of Shalott*." *Ladies of Shalott* 50-60.
- Rossetti, William Michael. *Fine Art, Chiefly Contemporary: Notices Re-Printed, With Revisions*. 1867. Rpt. New York: AMS, 1970.
- Ruskin, John. *Works*. Ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. 39 vols. London: Allen, 1903-1912.
- Seidel, Linda. *Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait: Stories of an Icon*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "A Defence of Poetry." *Shelley's Critical Prose*. Ed. Bruce R. McElderry, Jr. Regents Critics Series. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1967, 3-37.
- Stephens, Frederic G. "The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror." *Crayon* 3 (1856), 236-39.
- . *William Holman Hunt and His Works*. London: Nisbit, 1860.
- Symonds, R. W. "English Looking-Glasses." *Connoisseur* 125 (1950), 9-13, 82-87.
- Tate Gallery. *The Tate Gallery, 1976-8: Illustrated Biennial Report and Illustrated Catalogue of Acquisitions*. 2 vols. London: Tate Gallery, 1979.
- Waagen, Gustav Friedrich. *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*. 3 vols. 1854. Rpt. London: Cornmarket, 1970.
- Wagstaff, Samuel J., Jr. "Some Notes on Holman Hunt and The Lady of Shalott." *Wadsworth Athenaeum Bulletin*, 5th ser. 11 (1962), 1-21.
- Warner, Malcolm. "The Pre-Raphaelites and the National Gallery." Malcolm Warner et al. *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context*. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1992, 1-11.
- Weale, W. H. James. *The Van Eycks and Their Art*. London: Bodley Head, 1928.
- Wilde, Oscar. *Literary Criticism of Oscar Wilde*. Ed. Stanley Weintraub. Regents Critics Series. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1968.
- Wornum, Ralph Nicholson. "The Exhibition As a Lesson in Taste." *The Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue: The Industry of All Nations, 1851*. London: Virtue, 1851, i-xxii.

Illustrations

- fig. 1. William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience* (1854), oil on canvas, 29 1/4" x 21 5/8"; Tate Gallery, London.
- fig. 2. Detail of Fig. 1.
- fig. 3. John Everett Millais, *William Holman Hunt*, (1854), drawing, 8" x 7"; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
- fig. 4. John Everett Millais, *William Holman Hunt*, (1854), drawing, 6 1/2" x 5"; location unknown.
- fig. 5. Detail of Fig. 1.
- fig. 6. Jan Van Eyck, *Jan van Eyck and His Wife*, (1434; thus G. F. Waagen, 1854), oil on panel, 32 1/4" x 23 1/2"; National Gallery, London.
- fig. 7. Detail of Fig. 6.
- fig. 8. George Nicholls, Looking-glass and console table by Charles M'Lean. Wood engraving, *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*. London: Spicer, 1851, 2: facing 759.
- fig. 9. Detail of Ford Madox Brown, *Take Your Son, Sir* (1851, 1856-57), oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 27 3/4" x 15"; Tate Gallery, London.
- fig. 10. Detail of Fig. 9.
- fig. 11. William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott* (1850), black chalk, pen and ink, 9 1/4" x 5 5/8"; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.



As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather,
so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.

fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4



fig. 5



fig. 6

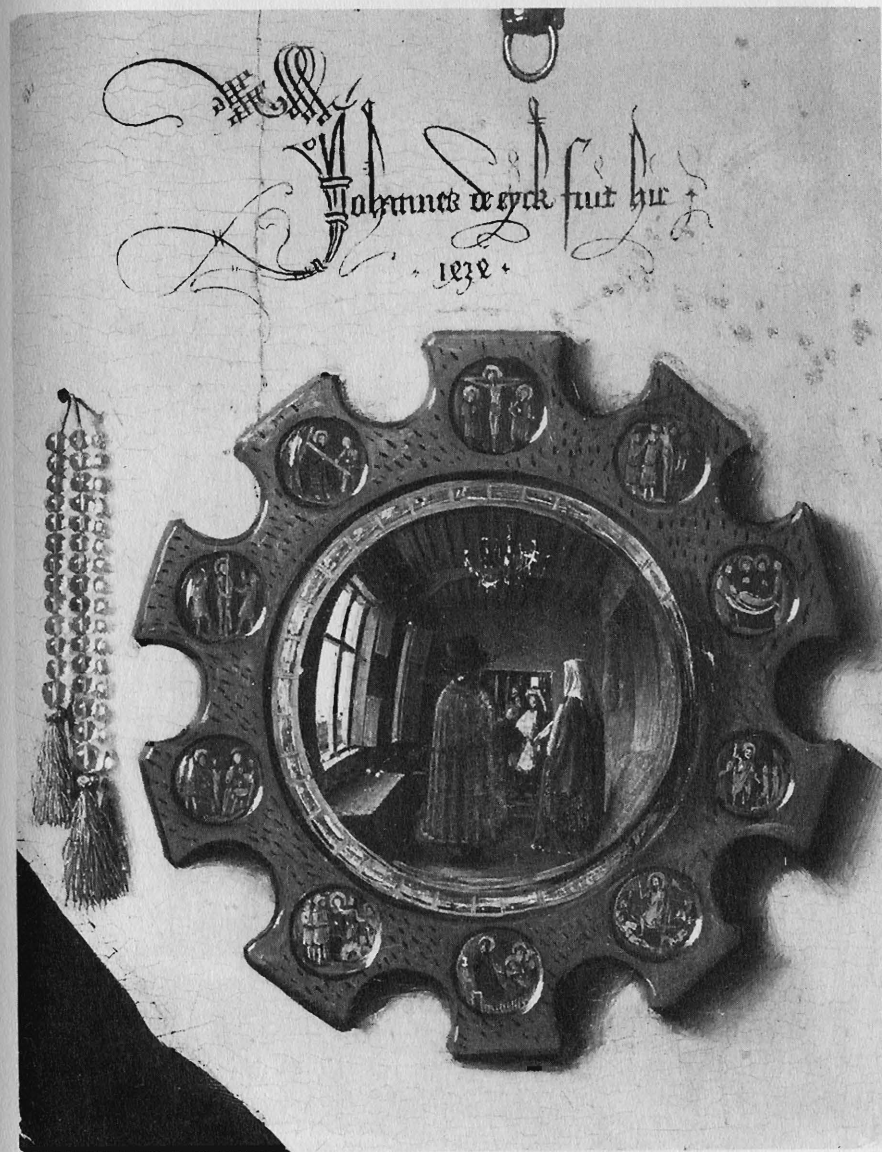


fig. 7

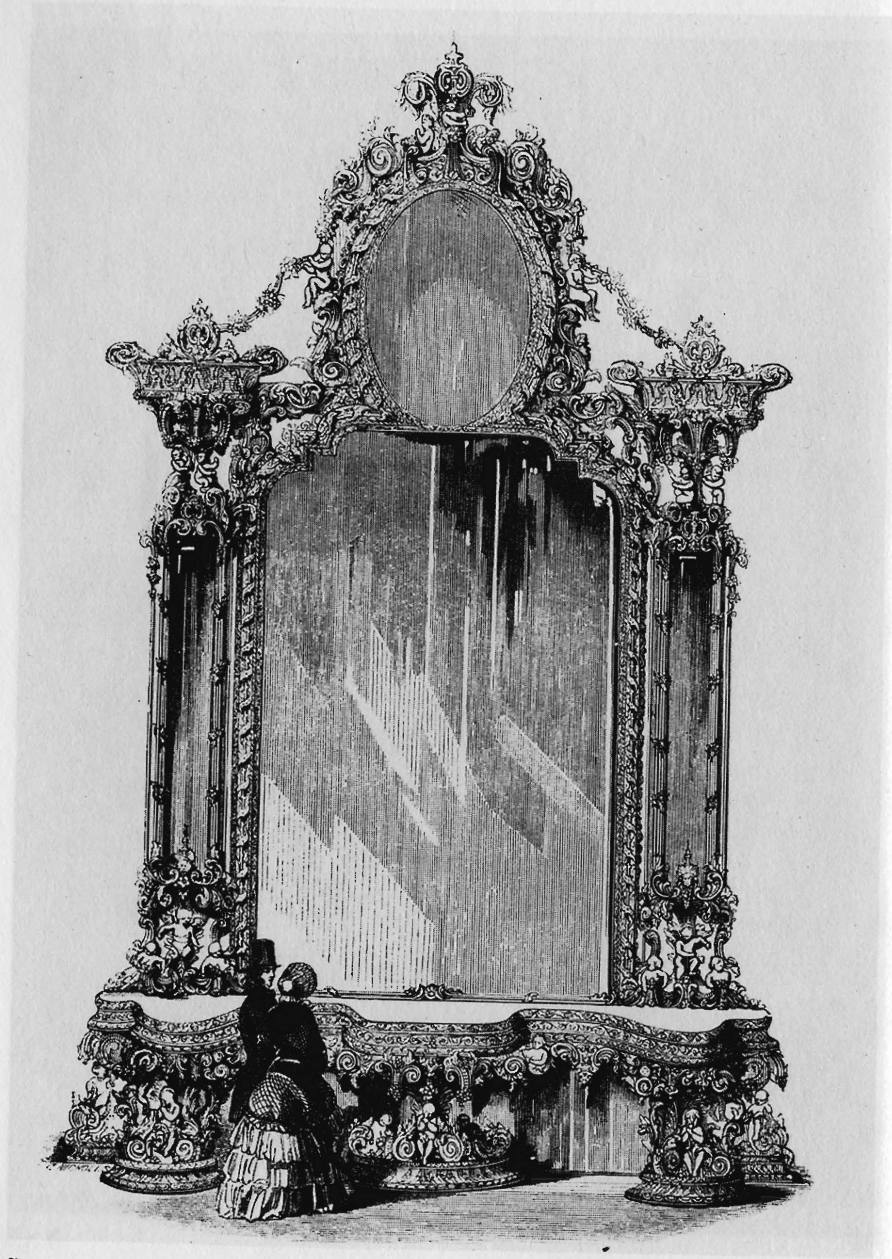


fig. 8



fig. 9



fig. 10

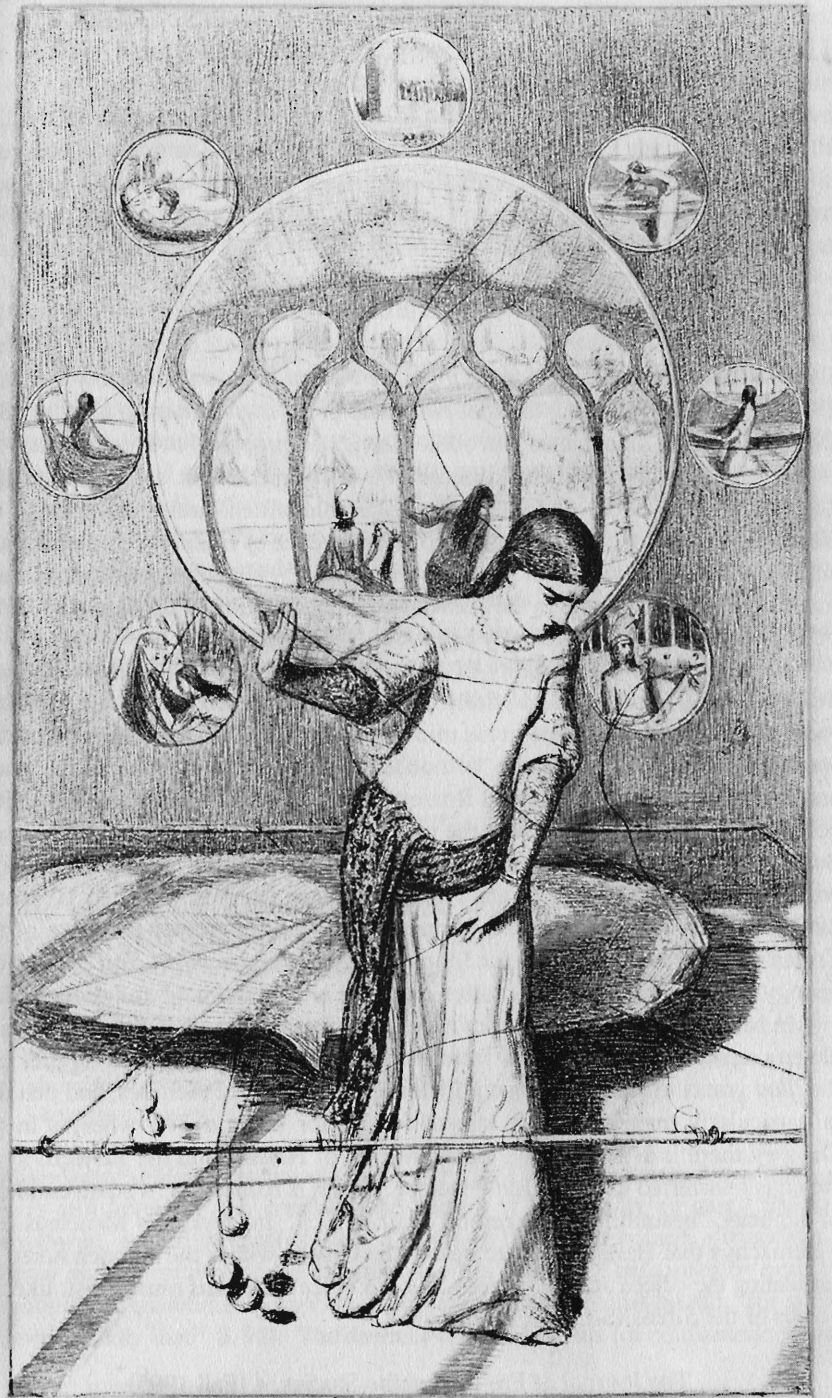


fig. 11