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The Golden Chain

Essays on William Morris and Pre-Raphaelitism

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DREAMERS OF DREAMS:
Toward a Definition of Literary
Pre-Raphaelitism

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I

All three were dreamers. Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote of his constitutional tendency toward reverie and sleep, of loving to "lie and symbolize till one goes to sleep, and that be a symbol too"; William Morris announced that his work was "the embodiment of dreams in one form or another," and Algernon Charles Swinburne began his first major volume of poetry with the lines: "I found in dreams a place of wind and flowers." Rossetti was the progenitor and Morris and Swinburne the shapers and transmitters of a literary tradition which, though never fully defined, has been called "literary Pre-Raphaelitism." It is a movement to which dream is central, a movement which utilizes accounts of actual dream, dream language, dream symbol, and, most significantly, a movement with the characteristics of dream itself.

The works of Rossetti and the early works of Morris and Swinburne have been called Pre-Raphaelite by numerous critics because they interweave reality and fantasy or fact and imagination or materiality and spirituality. Yet the role of dream in creating these fusions has never been fully explored. How and what did the Pre-Raphaelites know about dream? How did they utilize and reshape what they knew? This study is an essay into the sources, traits, and themes of literary Pre-Raphaelitism. Its focus is dream, for, as the makers of Pre-Raphaelitism proclaimed themselves dreamers, they defined their movement in terms of dream.

The Pre-Raphaelites were not unique in their interest in and use of dream. A fascination with all its varieties--reverie, nightmare, visionary and
premonitory experiences—and with its relationship to Gradgrindian factualism was an important legacy of the Romantics to the Victorians in general. The Pre-Raphaelites shared this inheritance, flourishing in a society whose writers and thinkers were in the process of investigating dreams, reexamining earlier speculations about them, and evolving new theories of their cause and meaning. The evidence of the Victorians' interest in dream abounds in their literature, science, and painting.

Much of what the Victorians read, glorified and dramatized the experiences of the mind in sleep. They knew the Gothic novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis, Wilhelm Meinhöld, Charles Maturin, and others which vividly depicted dreams of premonition and terror. "Kubla Khan" was widely known and read. Ostensibly nonfictional accounts of dreams and speculations about them pervaded such popular works as Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and *Suspiria de Profundis*, the essays of Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt, and the novels and prefaces of Sir Walter Scott, including his essay *On Demonology and Witchcraft*. The Victorian medieval revival led to the reading and imitation of dream-vision literature which suggested the educative power of dream. The literati admired Tennyson and Browning who used the dream as a psychological device for the revelation of character, and a vast Victorian audience was delighted and edified by the dreams and trance experiences in the novels of Charles Dickens. The members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of 1848 were familiar, in addition, with less generally popular works—such as those of Keats and Blake—in which dreams and visions figured large.

Victorian taste in and devotion to past and contemporary literature was neither the only evidence of an interest in dream nor the only source of information about it. The causes, meanings, and significance of dream were issues in Victorian religion, philosophy, science, and pseudo-science. The Oxford Movement, reviving the older "purer" creed in the 1840s, supported the truth of biblical prophetic dreams. Religion indicated that dreams could be premonitory and, at times, prophetic, that they might be seen as messages from the higher instincts in the self or from the regions of the blessed or damned. Coleridge's speculations and Carlyle's natural-supernaturalism made German and English philosophical ideas of the power and insight of the mind in sleep available to a middle-class audience. Mesmerism, popular in England in the 1830s and '40s, valued dream as well as states of trance and sleep-walking. Followers of the Marquis de Puységur believed that trance could improve one's abilities and produce clairvoyance, while the public drawn to mesmerism at least half-believed that dreams, like trances, were ways to explore past, present, and future. More important, they felt that from dreams one could gain the will, energy, sustenance, hope, and power that would help to liberate the soul or self. Spiritualism, increasingly popular in the 1850s, invested dreams with the same qualities mesmerism assigned to them; it valued them even more highly, discovering in them paths to the eternal and means of communicating with those now in another world.

The Victorians' speculations about what dream was and how it functioned were enriched by the various theories of dream etiology and process available to them. The debate between latter-day Cartesians and Locketians about whether the sleeping mind always thought (i.e., dreamt) was very much alive. The etiology of dream was explained by metaphysical theories such as those of Dugald Stewart (Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind), Erasmus Darwin (Zoœmnia), and Sir Benjamin Brodie (Psychological Inquiries) which held that the nature of dream is explained by the absence or suspension of the actions of the will and of normal attention in sleep. Physiological theories—ranging from those of Burton (Anatomy of Melancholy) and Hobbes (Leviathan) to those conceived by the Victorians themselves held that dream is due to somatic or sensory stimuli. Philosophy and medicine
often traced the causes of dream to incipient disease, to diet, and to somatic discomfort. The "heavy supper" theory—that sleeping on a full stomach or suffering from indigestion caused dreams—was widely held. The external stimulus theory—that dreams were caused and their matter dictated by sounds heard or sensations felt—was gaining much credence. A sharp rap on the door, for example, would lead to a dream of a pistol shot, while excessively warm bedclothes would prompt one of a burning desert.

The various sources of dream materials had been discussed by David Hartley in his Observations on Man (1749) and, though nineteenth-century philosophers, physicians, and popular writers varied in the emphasis they placed on Hartley's sources, most agreed that dream images came from: (1) recent impressions and ideas (or, as Stewart and De Quincey indicated, recent ideas coupled with childhood impressions); (2) conditions of the body, especially the stomach and brain; (3) the laws of association. Most believed that, in sleep as in waking life, chains of association were created on the basis of the resemblances between things, their contiguity in time and place, and their tendency to create objects and events by visualizing their opposites. Dreams differed from waking thoughts largely because of the dreamer's loss of voluntary control over the succession of associations.

A Victorian did not have to consult complex philosophical or medical materials to encounter these theories. Popular books, journals, and reference works summarized dream theories and also recorded the dreams of the writers' acquaintances and predecessors. Joseph Waller vividly described and characterized the nightmare in A Treatise on the Incubus, or Nightmare (1816), in which he both created a verbal equivalent to Fuseli's famous painting, The Nightmare, and catalogued the physiological and psychological responses to incubus in terms acceptable to modern psychologists. Dr. John Abercrombie,

in Inquiries concerning the Intellectual Powers, and Investigation of Truth (first published in 1815 and reprinted at least eleven times in the Victorian era), analysed and gave examples of dreams. Robert Macnish, in The Philosophy of Sleep (1830), a work published in several later editions in England and America, united Waller's and Abercrombie's observations with those of the phrenologist Combe to interpret dreams, in part, from the phrenological point of view. The Encyclopaedia Britannica—that omnipresent source of information for the middle-class intelligentsia—included full entries on dream theory in its editions of 1842, 1855, and 1876.

What the Victorians knew about dream from these and other sources (including their personal experiences) amounts to an awareness of many of the phenomena that Freud was to describe as characteristic of dream in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900). The Victorians knew that dreams revealed something about the self and that, as De Quincey said, "the self, disguised, appears in dreams"—whether as a "Dark Interpreter" or as a more concealed or neutral figure. They were aware, through Herder or the German and English Romantics who succeeded him, that "the world of dreams gives us the most serious hints about ourselves" and that "dreams betray in the most peculiar fashion, what is sleeping within us." They noted that dreams can command memories that are inaccessible in waking life (constituting what Freud calls "hypermnesic" dreams) and that they were almost never simple memories; instead, the sleeping mind often mingled recent events with those of the past and of childhood. They observed that in dream the past seemed to be present and in the process of actually occurring.

Long before Erich Fromm, they recognized that dreams could be forms of perseveration, reproducing, in different guises, problems that one had encountered but was unable to solve. Although the Victorians did not necessarily indicate that dreams reflected infantile and repressed wishes (as Freud
does), they repeatedly stressed that dreams fulfill longings and gratify desires, showing one things as one wishes them to be. They reiterated that dreams renew and intensify the powerful joys, woes, hopes, and anxieties of the dreamer. Significantly, many were aware that, since the will was absent in the sleeping mind, morality was not a major issue—that dreams often contained materials that the dreamer could not openly discuss in waking life.

The Victorians were fascinated by the fragmentary nature and absurdity of some dreams, commenting that the involuntary visions which appear ordered at night seem irrational in the morning—that, while dreams re-embroider thoughts which have "formerly...occupied the mind," they are "heterogeneously mingled together," "jumbled together incoherently," or bound together in "absurd combinations." But they also commented on the "absence of surprise" in dream, noticing that the appearance of even the most improbable events or persons is accepted and that, to the dreaming mind, all things have "a real and present existence." They were particularly concerned with premonitory dreams and, like Freud ("A Premonitory Dream Fulfilled" [1889]), some sought to explain, rationally, how these could prove true. Hazlitt, Macnich, and the author of the Britannica's 1842 article on "Dreams" anticipated Freud in describing prevenient dreams as coincidences, as realizations about character and emotion masked by waking life, and as forebodings of an anxious mind occasionally actualized in reality.

The Victorians understood the ways in which dream transforms time, space, and image. They were cognizant of dream time and speed, noting, for example, that one may have an ostensibly long dream about a noise while being awakened by it. They commented upon the confusion of times and places logistically remote from each other and upon the "inconsistency, incongruity and deficiency in cause and effect" of dreams. They were conscious of the changes of size and perspective that occur in the dreaming mind. Although they did not utilize Freudian terminology, the Victorians observed the dream experiences of displacement, condensation, and symbolization. They knew that dreams often disguised and distorted content, that one may dream of what feels important but appears trivial or foolish, or of familiar persons and objects in absurd or bizarre combinations. They recognized that a single dream thought may be depicted in many different ways—that a single image may symbolize numerous wishes, impulses, attitudes, and persons, though they did not call the phenomenon "condensation," as Freud did. They commented upon the fact that one often sees the self as double or multiple in dream (Freud's "irradiation" or "diffusion"), that one face may represent those of many people (Freud's "collective figure"), and that two or more images may be superimposed upon each other (Freud's "composite figure"). They were fully aware that, in dream, abstractions were made into pictorial and concrete images; Coleridge's statement that "images rose up before him as things" did not go unheard.

What especially intrigued the Victorians—as it had the Romantics before them—was the visual, imaginative, and dramatic intensity of the sleeping mind's experiences. Philosophical and medical writers, including Stewart and Macnich, indicated that dreams contained "confused and imperfect" auditory components, but were essentially optical phenomena. Bond, Waller, Abercrombie, Macnich, and others described the special clarity of nightmare and commented upon the heightened dread and physical powerlessness characteristic of it. They traced the physiological effects of waking from incubus—the cold perspiration, palpitations, suffocation, and other symptoms of panic it left behind—and speculated upon the connections between disturbing dreams and insanity. Many observed the variations of sight in dreams, the fact that some were partially or totally dim while others were charged with "supernatural energy." Non-literary writers joined poets, novelists,
and essayists in stressing the power of dreams to "magnify and exaggerate," in noting the "force of reality" within them, and in believing that they freed and stimulated the imagination. Scientific and belletristic writers alike saw that, since dreams transformed, dramatized, and intensified vision and emotion, they could provide ingredients for art.

The Pre-Raphaelites shared the preoccupation with and knowledge of dream extant in their milieu. Like Keats, Coleridge, Blake, Tennyson, Browning, and Dickens, they examined and reproduced the content of dream. Like them also, they used the conventional forms and devices of medieval and Romantic dream literature and tried to catch the intensity and drama of actual dreams. But their works are distinguished by a special concern with accurate accounts of "real" dream experiences and by increased emphasis on capturing dream logic and structure. Their belief in the principles of truth to nature and fidelity to experience made them demand fidelity to inner experience, as well as to external nature. Creating with their inner eyes, they tried to represent faithfully what they saw in sleep. Only then did they shape these impressions into patterns which could be used in literature and painting. Thus, they created works that have the qualities that (and we) associate with dreams.

The members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of 1848 first demonstrated their knowledge of dream theory and awareness of dream phenomena in their paintings of the late 1840s and their contributions to *The Germ* (1850). They sought to be true to nature by using meticulously painted realistic details in visual depictions of religious, supernatural, or imaginary subjects. Holman Hunt capitalized on the notion that rendering objects in more precise detail than that with which they are ordinarily seen produces the hallucinatory effect of dream. Even Hunt, the Pre-Raphaelite most haunted by the idea of fidelity to external nature, believed "that a man's work must be the reflex of a living image in his own mind and not the icy double of the facts themselves" and strove to paint true pictures of what his inner eye perceived. Insisting that the members of the PRB "were never realists," Hunt, joined by Millais and Rossetti, worked to transform and heighten ordinary perceptions. Through hyperclarity, proliferation of detail, and powerful color, all three attempted to imbue reality with the intensity of dream.

In the tales and poems of *The Germ*, the associates of the PRB reproduced both the dream-vision form and prophetic and didactic dream sequences. More important, however, they reiterated the sentiment that sleep and reverie are the true sources of creative energy and psychological truth, and they created accounts of dream which have the ring of actuality. Not until "Goblin Market" does Christina Rossetti at last create a poem which, though not called a "dream," has the vivid unreason of actual dream experience; but in the earlier poems written for *The Germ*, she already uses the dream-vision form for educative purposes ("Repining") and equates sleep and death through hyperclear images of a paradisiacal landscape ("Dream Land"). In "Morning Sleep," William Bell Scott depicts the images seen by a "dreamer half awake" and the "golden atmosphere" through which he sees the "forms of immortals." In "Emblems," Thomas Woolner describes the truths that rise when one reposes in a reverie and opens the mind to nature and feeling. William Michael Rossetti proclaims the creative powers of reverie in "Noon Rest" and "Sheer Waste." In "The Breadth of Noon," he finds quiet and sleep the appropriate conditions for seeing "inwardly" (130). In "To the Castle Ramparts," he reveals his knowledge of the external stimulus theory and in "The Fire Smouldering," of dream transition and distortion.

It was a minor Brother, James Collinson, who composed one of the first Pre-Raphaelite literary works to combine a dream episode which appears actual with an exploration of the Victorian psychology underlying it. Comprised of a series of prefiguring events in
the childhood of Jesus (similar to the visual typology in the religious paintings of Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti), Collinson's lengthy and mediocre poem, "The Child Jesus," closes with Mary's prophetic dream of her son's crucifixion. Mary's dream is realistically presented—even to Collinson's depiction of her attempt to block out its unpleasantness by reminding herself that she is merely dreaming (an example of Freud's "secondary revision"). Before she wakes, she must journey through a barren landscape, meet herself disguised, and watch as the face of a dead lamb and the visage of her child merge into a "composite figure."

Collinson reports on the responses to and interpretations of Mary's dream of premonition. Mary's response to it is simply confusion and distress, while Joseph seeks a naturalistic explanation: it has been caused by the external stimulus of a storm. Jesus, the best dream interpreter in the poem, offers his mother both religious and Victorian psychological answers. He announces that he has read that "God will speak to those he loves / Sometimes in visions," but he stresses the idea that her dream has been a confused recollection of recent events—the result of a chain of associations uncontrolled by her will. He suggests that "the thought / Floated across thy mind of what we read / Aloud before we went to rest last night" (56-57). What they read was Isaiah 53 on the sufferings and death of God's servant and lamb, and Jesus, grasping the implications of the chapter, attempts to comfort his mother. However, on the basis of her unconscious dream perceptions of the nature of her son, Mary has predicted his destiny.

Although Collinson is no poet, his account of a preexistent dream has "the force of reality" in its irrationalities, associative transitions, and distortions of time and space. Many of the same techniques, shared by the Brothers as they read each other's works, shape the dreams in the tales, poems, and paintings of the "master" of The Germ, Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

II

Pre-Raphaelite dreams are first effectively molded into art by Rossetti. His contribution to The Germ—the account of the fever-dream and waking vision of Chiaro in "Hand and Soul" and the dream-vision of lover, beloved, and lovers' heaven in "The Blessed Damozel"—show his early, careful observation of the vividness and apparent realism of dreams. Walter Pater praised Rossetti's "subtle and fine imaginative hold upon all the secret ways of sleep and dreams," and Rossetti's lifelong fascination with these subjects is most obviously manifested in the plethora of paintings, tales, and poems described as "dreams" or "daydreams" or centering around them. It is more subtly demonstrated, however, in his creation of works which, though not identified as dreams, begin to imitate their structure, technique, and impact.

Dante Gabriel shared with his brother, William Michael, the belief that art should be "followed in the dozing style," and explained to William Sharp, "I do not wrap myself up in my imaginings, it is they that envelop me from the outer world whether I will or no." His predisposition toward dream was strengthened by his love for the writers who had skillfully utilized it—Keats, Coleridge, Scott, Meinhold, and Blake—by his growing belief in mesmerism and spiritualism, and by his study and veneration of Dante and his circle.

Rossetti's work in translating Dante's Vita Nuova and the poems of the dolce stil novellisti (begun in 1847 and published as The Early Italian Poets in 1861) led to his identification with Dante the dreamer and to a knowledge of medieval dream forms and theories. More important, it strengthened his acceptance of dreams as premonitory, true, and educative—as clear revelations of their dreamer's mind and soul. As Rossetti records the dreams and visions of the Vita Nuova, he analyzes them, later using their form and contents in his own paintings and poems. In describing Dante's vision of Love as
a Pilgrim (painted as Dante's Amor), Rossetti indicates that Love and Dante become a composite figure. Struggling over Dante's dream of Love as the lord of sorrowful aspect (an image utilized in Beata Beatrice, Dante's Dream, and the "Willowwood" sonnets), Rossetti attempts, in a footnote, to interpret Love's ambiguous dream message. He carefully describes (and repeatedly paints as Dante's Dream) the poet's prescient dream of Beatrice's death, in which women mourn Dante's demise—a displacement of the fear that Beatrice will die—and Dante finds himself first in a dream landscape and then in his lady's death chamber. Fully aware of the ways in which Dante depicts dream—his use of shifting episodes, conflated times and places, and traditional dream symbols—Rossetti studies and translates other dream poems generated by Dante's circle. He renders into English the interpretations of Dante's dreams by Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, and Dante da Maiano. In addition, he chooses to translate Cino's "A Trance of Love," in which dream functions as catharsis and wish-fulfillment; Dante de Maiano's "He craves interpreting of a Dream of his," in which a dream actually because of its "irrational" images of the poet wearing his lady's smock and making love to her as his dead mother watches, and Guido Orlandi's admonition to Dante da Maiano to renounce the lust of which his dream testifies. Rossetti even refrains from printing one poem of Dante Alighieri's, in part, because it does the poet "little credit as a lucid interpreter of dreams" (II, 180).

The ways in which Dante and his circle depict and utilize dream influence Rossetti's use of it in his own poems and tales. Simple premonitory dreams, partially modeled on Dante's, are described in "Ave," in which Mary's dream of the unborn Jesus is a traditional prefiguration, and in "The Staff and Scrip," in which the Pilgrim's dream of the Queen's face comments on the immortality of love and the déjà vu experience and forcefully predicts the events that end the poem. Although they are not premonitory, more complex dreams reveal their dreamer in "A Last Confession," in which the nocturnal visions of the dying Italian patriot illuminate the hidden causes and psychological results of his crime of passion. The patriot's first dream, of the laughing blessed damozels who play in paradise, exposes his obsessive idealization of the girl he murdered and his associations of her with the saints and an Italian madonnna. It subtly incorporates within it distortions of moments in his waking experience; for example, when, in dream, he watches world set, he translates into concrete images the emotions felt when he, encountering the girl, had "thought the world / Must be all over or had never been" (I, 19-20). His recurrent nightmare and his final vision of his judgment fulfill his wishes: in dream, at least, the woman he has loved and slain still lives.

Rossetti's knowledge of dream theory ranges from the prophetic to the realist and centers around the use of that pre-vision which unifies religious and scientific theories—the foreboding dream which foretells disaster. The most powerful premonitory dream among the early works is that in "Saint Agnes of Intercession"; it is vividly depicted and strongly reminiscent of actual dream experience. In an incident integral to the doppelgänger and reincarnation motifs of the tale, the painter hero of "Saint Agnes" dreams of his fiancée, Mary. In the first episode, built on a distorted recollection of the London exhibition in which his portrait of Mary has been shown, the painter hears his death announced. Mary weeps, and a man dressed as a harlequin writes an invisible review of the painting—a dream statement of the painter's fear that his achievements will be writ in water. Invisible to others, the painter confronts the harlequin to discover that he has met himself. As the harlequin's face dissolves, a fatuous critic, earlier in the tale, had attacked the dreamer's painting, delivers an urgent but incomprehensible message. In the second dream sequence, the painter, his anxiety mounting, finds himself ascending an
interminable staircase, like those in Piranesi's paintings, and hears the voices of others descending but invisible to him. In the final episode of the dream, a door at the top of the stairs, opened by an angel, reveals the collective figure of Mary-Saint Agnes-Blanzipiore (the beloved of the painter whose reincarnation he believes he is). As the aureoled figure intercedes for him, the painter awakens—to succumb to illness and delirium.

Although the tale is unfinished, its ending is clearly implied: in dream, the poet has predicted his own and Mary's death. In this "Autopsycho," dream is significant for reasons beyond its premonitory function and dramatic impact. It has "the force of reality" as it concretizes the painter's anxieties about loss and death and his desire for fame. It combines the strange and the familiar, the fantastic and believable, and the trivial and portentous. It utilizes universal dream symbols and dream language: masking and unmasking, invisibility, the climbing of an interminable staircase. Its characters are true to dream: the central figure of the dreamer displaced into an observer and a participant, encountering an irradiation of himself: the condensed figure of the beloved seen as all the women he has unconsciously associated with each other. Events have the psychic reality of dream. Vivid episodes lack transitions; mysteries and irrationalities are unexplained, but are not found surprising; urgent conversations are unheard; time and space are unnatural. In effect, "Saint Agnes" combines the use of and belief in the prescience of dream with an accurate--almost "scientific"--depiction of the ways in which the dreaming mind perceives.

The same combination of faith in premonition and accuracy in description dominates Rossetti's account of nightmare in the verse fragment and complete prose summary of "The Orchard Pit." A compelling anxiety dream ending in masochistic wish-fulfillment, "The Orchard Pit" embodies intense fear and sexual desire in a vision of the fatal woman whose image haunts Rossetti's later paintings and of the dreamer in whose mind she is created. The dreamer (a young medieval knight-Rossetti) announces that, unlike other men for whom "sleep has many dreams," he has "dreamt one dream alone" (I, 427). It is of himself and the siren who will destroy him. As the dream that has dominated his waking life moves into nightmare, the dreamer walks with his mortal beloved, torn between returning to home and life or going forward toward a dream landscape in which, though it is late in autumn, apple trees are covered with both blossom and fruit. Lured by the siren's song, he struggles down the slope of her glen pushing back the branches and, in an unconscious gesture of rejection, interfering with his beloved's attempt to follow him. As the siren sings with increasing sweetness, "Come to Love," "Come to Life," "Come to Death," he reaches her fatal tree, "blazing now like a lamp beneath the moon." Experiencing her kiss, he bites the apple of carnal knowledge she holds out to him and feels his fall and commingling with "the dead white faces that welcomed me in the pit" (I, 429-30). He awakes suddenly, chilled and half-believing he is dead, fully convinced his dream is true, his hand still tensed as if it held an apple.

In this overtly erotic dream episode, the dreamer rejects an available woman for a forbidden but desirable creature of another order. He sees her as a vampire whom he loves and fears, who, while giving momentary joy, sucks away his energy and life. The dream's images—the siren, the grove of trees, the apples, the pit—are consistently associated with sexuality by Rossetti, but here, their erotic qualities are accompanied by strong feelings of sexual guilt, powerlessness, and dread. The dreamer's sense, while asleep, that he is "spellbound by some enchantment" and an "unresisting victim," his feelings of terror, of physical and psychical oppression and, on waking, his malaise, exhaustion, and chill (caused by the cold sweat of fear) are the classic nightmare symptoms enumerated by such dream...
philosophers as Bond, Waller, and Macnish. Like other nightmares, his seems to be "an expression of intense mental conflict centering about some form of 'repressed' sexual desire," undoubtedly incest—an obsession Rossetti probably did not recognize, but one which has been pointed out as a recurrent motif in his works. Whatever the exact significance of the nightmare, the intensity of the connections it makes between the act of loving and the act of dying, the imagery used to describe them, and the actuality of the dream experience depicted demonstrate Rossetti's knowledge and mastery of dream.

Commenting on this mastery and on Rossetti's belief in dream, Pater remarked that, to Rossetti, "Dream-land . . . is . . . a real country, a veritable expansion of, or addition to, our waking life." Rossetti creates a mental geography of dreamland and then transfers it to his poems and paintings. Described in "Love's Nocturn" as "Vaporous, unaccountable . . . forlorn of light" and, like the Romantic caverns of the mind, "Hollow like a breathing shell," Rossetti's dream realm is dark and may be ominous as in the nightmare world of "The Card-Dealer" or dimly glowing in the light of dawn, evening, or a cloudy day. It is a place of woods and waters, Rossetti's symbols of the unconscious mind, as it is in "Love's Nocturn" and the "Willowwood" sonnets. It contains "elf girls . . . with wings" and the "Siren . . . who winds her dizzy hair and sings," the prototypes of his soul's beauties and fatal women. Rossetti's dreamland is generally subterranean; Dante stands below the other figures in Dante's Dream to show that he inhabits it; the dreamer of "Love's Nocturn" reaches his "whirling waters" and "springs" by a classic descent down a "windy stair" surrounded by "(Darkness and the breath of space / Like loud waters everywhere)" (I, 288-89). At the bottom—the heart of the dream—one meets oneself and, hopefully, one's love.

Rossetti utilizes elements of this typology in a number of his paintings. Often he will indicate the presence of dream or the occurrence of an event in dreamland by depicting backgrounds and figures as "vaporous," translucent, or shadowy, as in The Sleeper, based on Poe's poem of the same name, the 1879 study for a predella to Dante's Dream, and Beata Beatrix. The background of Beata Beatrix, for example, records a moment seen in dream, part of the contents of Beatrice's trance when "she through her shut lids, is conscious of a new world." The deliberately hazy rearground of the painting embodies her premonitory dream of the reactions her death will cause: Dante hiding from others as he roam through a widowed Florence; Love (the same image as in Dante's Dream) holding the poet's bleeding heart.

In other paintings, such as Dante's Vision of Rachel and Leah, based on the dream described in Canto 37 of the Purgatorio, Rossetti transfers the full landscape of the sleeping mind onto the flat plane. Here, a misty background serves to indicate the past and future of the central dream event, creating the simultaneity of the dream experience and placing the distinctly painted foreground figures in strange perspective. Dante is seen in the background, as through a veil, moving toward a hazy wood. A stream meanders down the center of the painting and its waters, seen distinctly only in the foreground, flow through a basin and out of the front of the painting. The waters are symbols both of dream and of the river of life, and the wood is a condensed dream image of the "selva oscura" in which Dante's adventures began and of "la divina foresta s pressa e viva" he will enter after his dream of the contemplative and active lives.

But Rossetti is truest to the actual nature of dream when, in other paintings, he abandons direct depictions of dreamland and dream episodes and, instead, integrates the elements of dream into visual works. He creates dream effects by repeatedly depicting distinctly painted details; he discovers dream symbols and intensifies their impact with brilliant or competing colors; he distorts composition, space, and the size of figures to create a visual dissociation similar to the verbal dissociation.
of the dream sequences in his poems. Often he will irradiate single figures or, conversely, create composite ones. For example, the faces of the intertwined lovers embracing in the mazelike hedges of the 1876 study for the background of The Blessed Damozel reveal that they are creatures of dream. The same couples are duplicated—each shown simultaneously in two stages of loving reunion; moreover, each couple consists of a man and woman who have almost identical faces, symbolically indicating the dreamer's wish that in heaven the aspects of the self will be reunited. The fairy maids of Elfen-Mere share one face as a sign that they are images derived from dream; Cassandra, in the painting of the same name, and the dead Beatrice of the 1871 Dante's Dream are composite figures which blend the attributes of Lizzie Siddal and Jane Morris.

Rossetti's use of detail is particularly striking, for he often utilizes seemingly irrelevant objects as dream symbols. A red lily breaks through the floor of The Blue Closet; a serpent slithers across the rim of Arthur's Tomb, straying, as in dream, into a landscape where it is not logically expected. The soldier guarding Saint Cecilia, in the Moxon Tennyson illustration of "The Palace of Art," absurdly munches on an oversize apple. Other details, like the serpentine, almost animate hair of Rossetti's women, are unnaturally emphasized. Flowers and fruits—consciously used for their traditional language—take on the aura of dream symbols because they are painted with an intensity beyond that of realism.

His deliberate distortions of space and size contribute to the impression of dream dissociation. The absence of negative space in many paintings creates an illusion of claustrophobia, reminiscent of dreams of suffocation. In Arthur's Tomb, for example, the verticals of the apple trees are flattened, as if to push the contorted figures of Launcelot and Guenevere into the prone position of the effigy of Arthur—to make them images on a tomb. The bent figures of Galahad in Sir Galahad at the Ruined Chapel, painted so close to the foreground that it appears thrust against the front of the picture, is too large for the space which encloses it. In Rossetti's last paintings, scale is distorted and figures become huge and sculptural; their heads are sometimes framed by a faint aureole of light. Piazzetta, Astarte Syriaca, Proserpine, Pandora, and Mnemosyne resemble, in size and solidity, the gigantic authority figures of childhood dreams. They replicate the "colossal proportion" and dramatic stance of De Quincey's nurse as she sees her in the nightmare of his sister's death.

Throughout his career, Rossetti depicts women as either dreams or dreamers. Many are the stuff of dream itself and, as Helene Roberts implies, the iconic images of dream women move increasingly into the foreground of his paintings. Fatal women, in particular, are the obsessive subjects of his deepest dreams. In poems and paintings alike, he portrays them as powerful and fearsome, mysterious and sinister in their attractiveness, be they the "Card-Dealer" who mesmerizes all while caught herself in "the dreams that wreath her brows," the Siren who bears "Life's eyes... gleaming from her forehead fair, / And from her breasts the ravishing eyes of Death" (I, 248, 377) or the painted figures of Proserpine, Astarte, Lilith, and Pandora. Even the most beautiful partake of the intensity and repressed sexuality of nightmare.

But what is most important is that in his paintings and in several poems, Rossetti begins to utilize dream structures and devices in works that are not ostensibly dreams. His sense of the associative flow of the mind in sleep creates the deliberate indi- stinctness, rapid shifting of images, and fluid stanzaic transitions of "The Stream's Secret." In "The House of Life" he builds a dreamwork, writing, I believe, with dream techniques in mind. The sonnet sequence contains the collective and composite figures of Love and the Lady, displacements of the dreamer and accounts of how he meets himself, the private symbols of the dreaming mind. Its structural logic is dream logic: gaps in argument, confoundings of time and place, lack of cause-and-effect relationships,
combinations of strange and familiar and past and recent events. Both the structure of individual sonnets and that of the overall sequence recapitulate the structure of dream as poems linger over vivid but uninterpreted episodes, shift without transition, and blend and alter image, language, and association.

Rossetti creates a model for the Pre-Raphaelite use of dream which permeates the works of the poets who admired and followed him. Taking the prophetic and premonitory concept of dream—a tradition retained, in part, in mesmerism and spiritualism—and ridding it of its religious implications, he humanizes and internalizes it. He blends this tradition with his own Pre-Raphaelite faith in fidelity to the inner eye, an idea buttressed by his awareness of the cultural views of his era on the phenomenology and process of dreams. He shows dreams intensifying emotions, revealing wishes and fears, dealing with all forms of sexuality, and imaging human preoccupations with guilt, death, birth, and authority. He recognizes dream symbolism and works with the phenomena of condensation, irradiation, displacement, and the simultaneity and "absence of surprise" in dream. He utilizes dream's deliberate indistinctness and displaced distinctness and its distortions of space, size, and figure as tools for art. Thus, he creates a vocabulary of dream subjects and techniques to be further expanded by the many influenced by his example.

III


Lushington's essay on "Two Pictures" includes an impressionistic critique of Dante's Dream. As Lushington "reads" Rossetti's painting for typology and symbolism, he takes notice of the elements of dream within it. In Pre-Raphaelite prose, he describes Dante "gazing intently as in a trance, fixed by the spell of unutterable thoughts . . . all eye and soul," and in analyzing the composition of the picture, he observes that Dante stands below the rest of the grouped figures in token of the fact that he is in another realm, "a world of dreams."28

Apart from Rossetti's influence, "the use of dreams and vision, as methods for communicating further truths increases in the Magazine," as John Dixon Hunt observes. Hunt further reports that "seven stories out of seventeen use a dream or imaginative reverie to introduce their visions, while others indulge in passages of impressionistic description which create much the same effect."29 Actually, thirteen of the tales describe or contain dreams, while nonfictional essays on contemporary writers emphasize the dreamlike elements within their works. Recognizing "the general subjective tendency of modern imagination" (724), the young contributors to the Magazine turn their attention to the question of fidelity to the inner eye. William Fulford's ideal poet—described in "The Singing of the Poet"—composes "as his inner spirit moved him," no matter how "wild and weird" (388) his melody sounds to his audience. The most astute critic of the group, Fulford insists that creative artists "must faithfully render what they find within [my italics] and without themselves" (80). This emphasis on truth to inner experience leads him to praise Tennyson's vision poems. In the first of his three long essays on Tennyson, Fulford connects these poems with "the dreams of sleep" although differentiating between the "continuity and sequence" of the poetry and the fragmentary nature of actual dreams" (10). Apparently seeing Tennyson as a pre-Pre-Raphaelite, Fulford lauds his dream landscapes, accurate narration of actual dreams, and truth to the
reader's own dream experiences. In a similar vein, Burne-Jones commends Pre-Raphaelite paintings for making those who view them dream aesthetically pur-
pose and emotionally satisfying dreams. Even the
dreams described in the fiction written for The Ox-
f ord and Cambridge Magazine are no longer entirely
shaped "literary" creations. Although there are a
number of conventional premonitory dreams derived
from Gothic fiction, several of the tales—"The Druid
and the Maiden," Fulford's "Night in a Cathedral,"
and Burne-Jones's "The Cousins"—present dreams as
vivid fragments of experience, inconsistent, incon-
gruous, and lacking in causality, as vivid images
mixed together in powerful but irrational combinations.

The contribution of the Magazine thus lies in its
contributors' critical study of the subjective dream
elements within the writings and paintings of contem-
poraries and in the treatment of some of the dreams
that are depicted in its fiction. William Morris and
his co-contributors suggest that the absurd, frag-
mented visions, as well as the traditional prophetic
ones that men have in sleep, are truths of inner life
and, therefore, important to observe, describe, and
analyze.

Seven of the eight tales Morris wrote for the
Magazine utilize dreams as their framework or as vital
components in their plots. The mastership of Ros-
setti is evident in Morris' dream symbols—women's
hair, serpents, and apples—and in his portraits of
women as dreams, e.g. of Margaret as the guide and
anima of "The Hollow Land." However, from the begin-
ning, Morris displays an essentially materialist and
scientific approach to dreams and adds a highly indi-
vidual set of techniques to those he learns from Ros-
setti. Morris' particular interest is in the trans-
foming power of dream; his dream episodes are con-
scious imitations of the perceptions of the sleeping
mind; he renders with exactitude the structures and
distortions it engenders.

While a number of the dreams in Morris' early
tales are modeled on the medieval dream-vision
literature he admires, Morris' dreams recapitulate
its themes and purposes rather than its form. Mor-
ris' dreamers, like those in medieval dream-visions,
are spiritually troubled people who are enabled by
dream to visit another realm of reality where they
can experience and learn new truths. While Morris
does not always use the medieval topos of the meeting
and journey with a dream-guide (as he does in "The
Hollow Land"), he does emphasize the illumination of
problems through sleep and the transformation of the
dreamer by means of the new insights he gains there
and can apply to life in the waking world he reenters.

Transformation through dream is clearly shown in
"Frank's Sealed Letter," the only tale set in Morris' 
own era. Linked to the other tales by its use of
dream, this tale centers around Hugh's admonitory
dream, a warning that his life will be embittered and
destroyed if he does not forgive the woman who has
scorned him. Triggered by a letter from his dead
friend Frank, Hugh's vision guides him on the proper
path of life as mesmerists and spiritualists had so
often indicated that the mind in sleep can do.

More subtly educative are the dreams in such tales
as "Lindenborg Pool," "The Hollow Land," and "A Dream."
In the first tale, the narrator is emotionally cleansed
by reenacting, in a dream metamorphosis, the justi-
fiable homicide he has committed. In the second,
Florian, the protagonist, learns the nature of his sin
through a dream-guide in a dream realm. In "A Dream,"
the participants discover the nature of love and duty
through their dreams—all set within the framework of
a dream. The tale ends with a poetic fragment on the
power of the dreaming mind.

In other tales, dreams intensify the wishes and
fears of those who dream them and simultaneously serve
as premonitions. Morris explains prescient dreams as
the actualizations of the dreamers' anxious forebo-
dings rather than as supernatural occurrences controlled
by external forces. When Leuchmar, in "Gertha's Lovers,"
renounces his love for Gertha in favor of King
Olaf's passion for her—half convinced that he and
Olaf will die in war—he dreams that "Gertha had come to him, shrieked out that Olaf was slain, then thrown her arms about his neck" (192). He wakes to learn that the sensation of an embrace has been caused by an external stimulus, the horse's bridle dangling on his neck. Later, fulfilling Leuchnar's premonition (and perhaps his unconscious wish), Olaf is killed in battle. In the same vein, the mason of "The Story of the Unknown Church" daydreams of the long absent friend about whom he is deeply worried and awaken to find him present, though sick unto death.

A close observer of actual dreams, Morris recreates their effect by fully depicting their fragmentary quality, their irrational elements, and their essential amorality. The "foolish dream" (292) of the hero of "Golden Wings" is not a shaped literary construct but a vivid if absurd experience in which dream's latent content is masked by comic affect: the hero's mother carries a live goose instead of a rosary to mass; an old priest speaks strangely and behaves incongruously; the chapel roof flies off; a dragon chants and dances. In "Lindenburg Pool," Morris captures the absurdity and amorality of dream through the use of anachronisms, collective and composite figures, and even a dream pun. A nineteenth-century man who, in sleep, is both himself and a thirteenth-century priest, participates in an anxiety dream in which faces, scenes, places, and historical times are "heterogeneously mingled together." The dreamer administers the last rites to a grunting boar, and the animal is a dream pun on a boar whose face is swinish—"retreating forehead, small twinkling eyes, projecting lower jaw" and whose voice is "like the grunt of a boar mostly" (248). The logic of dream association makes the Baron into the very animal he resembles and frees the narrator from any guilt about having murdered his modern double. A similar dream pun makes Margaret, the mason's sister in "The Unknown Church," a bunch of flowers, probably including marguerites. In general, dream figures in Morris' tales forget, displace, or change their identities like the narrator-priest in "The Hollow Land." or like Florian and Red Harald in "The Hollow Land."

To Morris, hyperclarity, the intensification of color and detail, is a major component of dream. The reader sees, as the mason sees in his dream, "even very far-off things much clearer than we see real material things on the earth" (154-55). Morris' dream landscapes (both those identified as parts of dreams and those presented as "natural" in tales that are dreamlike) are described in superlatives, vividly depicted, and carefully particularized. The Hollow Land, described by Florian as the place one finds in dream, seems intended by Morris to represent his own vision of dreamland. Unlike Rossetti's veiled and subterranean dream realm, Morris' is this earth seen with heightened clarity. It does not provide an escape from reality as Rossetti's does, but serves instead as a place of transformation in which the dreamer is prepared to encounter problems with a new perspective.

Morris emphasizes the visuality of dream and those who visit dreamland are educated primarily by witnessing bizarre, vividly depicted events. When Florian is banished from the Hollow Land to undergo his purgatorial cleansing, he enters another dream world in which events occur in absurd dream fashion. He is speared like a fish by a man in a boat, paints patterns on the face of his fallen enemy and, later, paints mysterious pictures alongside his foe-becomes-friend. But it is witnessing the funeral procession of a king whose emblem—two hands praying for forgiveness—is the sign of the lesson he must master that visually symbolizes Florian's transformation.

In the same way, the mason's daydream in "The Unknown Church" prepares him for the journey from life to death through the sight of sets of images connected to each other by dream logic. As the mason carves the figure of Abraham on the church, he muses on Abraham's pursuit of the kings who captured Lot. The image of the patriarch as a knight fording a river calls up by association "a strange dream of lands
... [the mason] had never seen," and of himself standing by a celestial river. As a transfigured image of his friend, Amyot, appears and vanishes and the mason drinks of the river, dream association carries him to a less benign body of water. In a dream flashback, he finds himself in a boat "floating in an almost landlocked bay of the northern sea, under a cliff of dark basalt" (153-54). He sees with unearthly clarity a battle for a castle at its summit and watches as the banner of the losing forces and the bunch of flowers that symbolize his sister are thrown down to him. Amyot again appears and the mason stretches out his arms to him. The friends find themselves momentarily reunited in a paradisiacal garden, but Amyot and the garden vanish. The mason, suddenly called back to reality, looks down from his scaffold to see Amyot, returned from the crusades, standing below him.

The manifest content of the dream expresses the mason's love for and identification with his friend, fears about Amyot's fate in the "holy war," and ardent wish for reunion with him. The mason's anxious forebodings and unconscious realizations about the danger to his friend have led to a premonitory dream of death. The source of the dream's artistry and power is its imitation of actual dream experience: the passive dreamer witnesses vivid but shifting events in conflated dream times and places; in fragmented moments of intense perception, he sees images he recognizes as significant but whose precise meaning he cannot translate; he feels exaggerated emotions of joy and grief. Morris, unlike the mason, seems aware of the profound emotion underlying the dream—that of massive anxiety about separation. Through the use of bright clear imagery and color, and through the vast discrepancy between the beauty described and the pain experienced by the dreamer, Morris richly evokes the agony of loss while creating a paradigm of dream experience.

The same dream subjects and treatments that appear in the tales Morris wrote for the Magazine pervade the poems of The Defence of Guenevere (1858). Walter Pater recognized the force of dream within the volume and, thus, described its poems as "somnambulistic," "delirious," and reminiscent of a "fever dream." Eight poems contain or allude to dreams, but although Morris continues to describe their subjects and to depict their contents (in the compressed form appropriate to short poems), he shows increasing interest in analyzing the physiological and psychological impact of dreaming upon the dreamer.

In effect, Morris moves from primarily emphasizing dream phenomena to directly exploring the minds in which they arise. In several of the poems, for example, he examines the awakening from and aftermath of reverie and dream. In "Sir Peter Harpdon's End," he traces the movement from a reverie through a premonitory dream based on forebodings to a cruel awakening. Anticipating news of Peter, Lady Alice muses on his kiss and begins to dream that she is sleeping in a field in Avalon and hearing "clear blue, fresh water breaking on the slates." The external sound of a trumpet infiltrates her sleep and, in the second before she wakes to learn of Peter's execution, she dreams of running fast to "leap adown / The slippery sea-stairs, where the crabs fight" (55). The accuracy of this account of dream time and process is replicated in Morris' frank treatment of the impact of a sexual dream upon its dreamer in "Spell-bound." Here, an imprisoned knight imagines his beloved's dream of love for him. In his daydream about her dream, he imagines her awakening from sleep both grieved and aroused to

wander forth with fever'd blood,  
That makes me start at little things,  
The blackbird screaming from the wood,  
The sudden whirr of pheasants' wings.  
(105)

Morris' italics indicate the intensity of the knight's reverie—a reverie which projects the prisoner's desires onto his lady and reveals his frustrated sexuality rather than hers.
In other poems, Morris' male dreamers also dream of their passion for their ladies in sexual terms more frankly expressed in dream than in waking life. The impact of their dreams of passion upon their minds and lives are main themes in Morris' treatment of John of Castel Neuf in "Concerning Cefray Tesse Noire," Sebald in "Rapunzel," and the mad persona of "The Wind." Indeed, "The Wind" contains Morris' most psychologically complex explanation of a dream's impact on its dreamer. Dream psychologists such as Abercrombie had connected dreaming and insanity, describing the latter as a permanent dream which affects conduct in waking life—a theory which illustrates the condition and behavior of the insane persona of the poem. As explaining the roots of his madness, the old Norseman drifts into a dream of his past, reliving, in sleep, a fragmented and distorted recollection of a long-ago event. At first, as "a dream half-slumber" gives way to dream, he cannot reach the "blue spring sky" (107) which he sees through the castle roof. He experiences a moment of classic dream frustration, like the dreamer-poet in Keats's "Hyperion." Suddenly, through dream association, he is on a hillside dotted with daffodils, walking with, embracing, and then leaving his beloved, Margaret. Returning to her, he heaps flowers on her still form, waits passively beside her, leaves again, and once more returns—this time to recognize that she is dead. Murdered by persons unknown? Slain by him? A suicide?

In this account of dream, the relationship between cause and effect does not exist; time, place, and event are unrelated; the dreamer, for example, is absurdly slow in realizing that Margaret is dead. Her death is not logically explained and there is no ostensible connection between it and the events that end the poem: the narrator's waking vision of the ghosts of Norwegian soldiers from the more recent past. Instead, the narrator—now trapped in the permanent dream that is insanity—associates irrational images he sees while awake with those of dreams while asleep. An orange with a gash cut in its rind becomes, in sleep, Margaret's bloody breast; the green cloth that drapes the chair in which he sits and on which the orange lies becomes the spring hillside on which his beloved has been slain. Most important, the impact of the dream upon its dreamer is the action of the poem. At the beginning, the narrator is afraid to move lest he cause the dogs to howl, the chair on which he sits to "scream," and the orange to "roll out far, / And the faint yellow juice ooze out like blood from a wizard's jar" (107). At the end of the poem, he awakes in shock and leaps from his chair, actualizing in reality the events he had earlier predicted and fulfilling the traumatic dream he has experienced.

In "The Wind," as in "Rapunzel" and other poems of The Defence, even "plot advances by association— as in dream, rather than as dramatic action." Other dream phenomena, deliberate distortion of time and place, internality of action, doubled and irradiated dreamers and the collective and composite figures of whom they dream richly contribute to creating the dream effect of the volume.

Such poems as "Spell-bound," "The Blue Closet," and "King Arthur's Tomb" are not called "dreams," but are marked by a disjointed structure which is that of dream logic. "King Arthur's Tomb," for example, emerges as a nightmare of sex and death because of Morris' dream fusion of time and place, use of groups of microscopically detailed, brilliantly colored images, and imitation of the broken utterances and associative transitions of dream speech and sight. Launcelot, dreaming awake as he rides to Glastonbury, is haunted by disconnected images of Guenevere's beauty and of heightened moments in their relationship. Guenevere, in the midst of verbally lashing her lover, sees him shake, and involuntary images of wind-tossed trees flash through her mind, reminding her of their first meeting. Her dominant images of Launcelot are classic dream symbols of sexuality and destruction: he is "A crooked sword," a "sickle cutting hemlock" (22), a great serpent, and a damned soul curling in the fires of hell.
learned from Rossetti, he adds to them his own—hyper-
clarity. More physiological, materialist, and realist
in his orientation, Morris tends to treat dreams, even
premonitory ones, as internal, psychological responses
to external fears and problems. Yet, like Rossetti,
he investigates their emotional power. Morris explores
the transformative force and psychosexual impact of
dreams. He is full and frank in depicting sexual,
amoral, and frightening dream content. His complex
depiction of dream's absurdities breaks literary con-
vention and opens up new materials to other writers.

The unnatural clarity and specificity of Morris' accounts of dream adds another dimension to Pre-
Raphaelite dream literature. Although transformation
through sight is a Ruskinian concept, Morris is unique
in demonstrating how the hyperclear vision of dream
alters the passive but watchful dreamer. In juxta-
posing brilliantly visualized, beautifully described
settings and painful emotions, Morris adds yet another
way of capturing in literature the dissociation basic
to dream. He also demonstrates that what is clearly
visible to the inner eye in sleep may be more intense
and frightening than what is dimly glimpsed.

Morris' tales and poems are major sources of the
specificity and unnatural clarity of dreamlike inci-
dents in Swinburne's earliest poems; they influence
Swinburne's use of dream to avoid explanations of
cause or motivation. In effect, Rossetti's dream vo-
cabulary and Morris' realistic approach are transmuted
by a slightly younger poet who, in turn, creates new
varieties of the literature of dream.

IV

The Pre-Raphaelite dream legacy reaches its con-
summation in Swinburne's literary works as dream in-
creasingly becomes the structure and essence of poe-
try and prose. Swinburne quickly mastered the dream
elements in the work of Rossetti and Morris and ulti-
mately moved beyond them to a new, if less aestheti-
cally satisfying, literature constructed on a founda-
tion of the discontinuity, deliberate indistinctness
and displaced distinctness, distortion, condensation, and associative transition of the dream experience.

Swinburne's juvenilia, poems of the late 1850s, reproduce Rossetti's dream forms and figures and Morris' hyperclear yet mysterious accounts of dream. Such poems as "Queen Yseult" (begun a few days after hearing Morris read some of his "grinds"), "Lancelot," "The Death of Rudel," "The Queen's Tragedy," "The Dream by the River," "Southwards," "Joyouse Garde," and "A Lay of Lilies" constitute homage to the themes, images, and techniques of his two masters. Swinburne's dreams of their fair dreamers recapitulate the pallor, sensuous lips, and abundant hair of their dream sirens and repeat their symbols: flowers, fruits, and omnipresent snakes. The female figures in the early poems are often dreamers trapped in their dreams. Guenevere, in "Queen Yseult" (a poem metrically and stylistically based on Morris' "Blanche"), is a Rossetti-Morris fatal woman immersed in the dream of Lancelot which passes "Thro' her eyes" (I, 40, 47). The queen of "The Queen's Tragedy" is caught, like Lady Alice in Morris' "Peter Harpdon," in the nightmare of her beloved's murder and haunted by the image of "the hot black ceremonial troop / Wherethro' I see him riding in my dreams" (I, 82). One of the best of the early fragments, "Lancelot," is Swinburne's interpretation of Rossetti's Oxford Union painting of Sir Lancelot's Vision of the Sanc Graal. A verbal recreation of a visual representation of a famous dream, the poem constitutes a dream of a dream of a dream. Two other early poems, "A Lay of Lilies" and "The Dream by the River" imitate the dream logic and lack of causality of Morris' "Blue Closet," "Golden Wings," and "Tune of Seven Towers." They are vivid, inexplicable fragments of experience which, like most of Swinburne's juvenilia, display his fondness for microscopic detail united with essentially untranslatable content.

Although Swinburne's more blatant imitation of Rossetti and Morris vanishes after the late 1850s, his fascination with depicting actual dream and observing its impact manifests itself in the works of the 1860s, Chastelard (1865), Atalanta in Calydon (1865), Lesbia Brandon (written 1866), and the first series of Poems and Ballads (1866). The works and the dreams they contain are chiefly concerned with love and death; most manifest his unique sensibility—displaying both his considerable erudition and his sado-masochistic tendencies. The Pre-Raphaelites, most acculturated in dream, Swinburne assumes his readers' knowledge of dream conventions and usage and thus creates works in which dream materials are fully and richly integrated. The most willing of the Pre-Raphaelites to espérer les bourgeoisie and, perhaps, the most aware that the content of dreams is outside the realm of moral judgment, Swinburne presents fully revealing portraits of the mind in sleep. In his works, dreams truly "betray . . . what is sleeping within us," including repressed, perverse, and amoral impulses. Moreover, they are shown to be among the factors both causing and affecting the actions of our waking lives.

In Chastelard and Atalanta, Swinburne demonstrates that dreams not only fully reveal their dreamers but also impel them to violent, amoral, and destructive actions. Chastelard (begun while Swinburne was at Oxford and completed in 1862) utilizes two dreams, Chastelard's of Mary, Queen of Scots, and hers of him, as psychological and characterological portraits of the personae. The Queen's dream, based on distorted memories of recent events (she has danced with Chastelard on the two previous evenings) and of her earlier marital experiences with the Dauphin, conflates time and place and mingles past, present, and future. Mary dreams that she is in bed with the Dauphin and knows, in dream fashion, both that she is "deep asleep" and that to save her life she must remain so. Suddenly she is forced to dance with her feet bound, falls, finds her bonds broken, and begins yet another dance:

To a bitter tune; and he that danced with me
Was clothed in black with long red lines and bars
And masked down to the lips, but by the chin
I knew you though your lips were sewn up close
With scarlet thread all dabbled wet in blood.

(VIII, 38)

Her dream foreshadows the events of the play, providing an insight into the mind that will make those events occur. In the language of dream symbols, Mary is announcing that she will grant Chastelard her love; they will dance the old dance together. Then, to silence him, to keep the affair "masked," and preserve her reputation, she will destroy him and tie his lips with his own blood. She does so, compelled by the demands of her inner self as first expressed in her dream. Chastelard's awareness of her fatality and his masochistic desire to be her victim are concretized in his dream of the "little red snake . . . without spot" (VIII, 119) within her heart, a snake whose deadly bite he welcomes. Seeing both characters as victims of their dreams, Swinburne suspends judgment on the waking actions that arise from them.

In Atalanta in Calydon, Althaec, Meleager's mother, again has premonitory dreams which reveal her inner nature and impel her to destructive action. Before Meleager's conception, she dreamt that her womb carried "Fire and a firebrand" and that she watched the brand burn while "Death came and with dry lips / Blew the charred ash into my breast; and Love / Trampled the ember and crushed it with swift feet" (VII, 277, 279). The connections she makes between love and death in her dream, in addition to the terror she feels at facing her dreams of her slain brothers, are partly responsible for leading her to destroy her son. Her dreams are prescient; however, they are not depicted as commands from the gods but as impulses from within herself. Through dreams, her anxious mind expresses her forebodings and repressed desires; as in insanity, the visions of the night invade and finally destroy her waking life.

In Chastelard and Atalanta, dreams that impel characters (who see themselves in sleep as passive victims) to destructive action, are utilized by Swinburne as traditional dramatic foreshadowings. In Lesbia Brandon, however, dreams are used for their value as experiences, per se. What each of the novel's main characters (Bertie, Margaret, and Lesbia) witnesses and feels in sleep is vividly described and given "the force of reality," because it illuminates the motivations, fears, and concealed desires of its dreamer, presenting them in more intense forms than those they take in waking life. In his childhood dreams, Bertie, Swinburne's fictional shadow, expresses both his incestuous passion for his sister and the guilt it provokes. His adult dreams reveal his equally conflicted love for Lesbia, the complete modern Sappho. In an "irrational vision" triggered by a friend's mention of the death of Lesbia's father, Bertie dreams:

He saw the star of Venus, white and flower-like as he had always seen it, turn into a white rose and come down out of heaven, with a reddening centre that grew as it descended like a living mouth; but instead of desire he felt horror and sickness at the sight of it, and averted his lips with an effort to utter some prayer or exorcism; vainly, for the dreadful mouth only laughed and came closer. 37

As he tries to flee the vision, he hears the "vicious" sound of the sea and wakes just as he feels himself drowning. His nightmare leaves him physically oppressed and psychically distressed, horrified that "these fairest things, sea and sky, star and flower, light and music, were all unfruitful and barren." 38 Venus and the white rose are symbols of Lesbia, and Bertie's dream insight is of her barrenness and destructive love. Swinburne, however, aware that the dreamer is the center of the dream, shows the nightmare as indicative of Bertie's (and his own?) intense sexual anxiety and revulsion—the powerful fear which leads him to devote himself to a woman like his sister who will torment him and leave his passion unsatisfied.
Although Margaret reveals her adult terrors about life and love through the dream she describes to her own children—an account charged with the force of reality, of her nightmare of desertion, isolation, entrapment, and mockery—Lesbia's dream dominates the novel, most vividly exposing an inner life. In a chapter named "Leucadia" (after the cliff from which Sappho supposedly leapt to her death), Lesbia reveals the irrational within her, fears, wishes, and self-realizations not described elsewhere in the book. She tells Bertie, for example, that she has dreamt of Margaret falling off a cliff (like Sappho) and has realized, in sleep, that she has pushed her. Thus, she reveals her repressed anger at the woman she supposedly loves. Charged with "supernatural energy," Lesbia's most important dream—a vision of death—explores her anxieties about her life. Images of local woods, a familiar pier, and a river (which metamorphoses to Lethe) lead to her dream insight that, in death, she sees "nothing anywhere that was not like something . . . [she] had seen already" and makes her wish to wake. Feeling cold while asleep (a symptom of her terror that death will not differ from life), she expects to awake, but instead continues to dream, waiting anxiously until Proserpine, "incarnate death," appears. Superbly exemplifying dream condensation, the figure is a visual composite of the goddess, Margaret (whom Lesbia associates with death and with herself), and Lesbia.

In describing her dream, Lesbia comments that she has noticed the absence of men and children in Hades and has been distressed by the absence of the white roses that symbolize herself. In interpreting her dream, she makes clear that she knows that although she yearns to die, she fears that death will not bring the change and rest she desires. She knows the dream is frightening, but she does not see that its terror derives from the fact that it describes not her death but her life. Her feelings, expressed in dream, explain her suicide; she sees herself as a dead Proserpine; she recognizes her identification with and hatred of Margaret; she senses the cruelty of her rejection of men and children. The visually powerful and imaginatively intense account of Lesbia's nightmare—its fusion of past and present and of familiar and remote time and place—renders concrete the abstract concerns and confused emotions that have tormented her. It enables her (and Swinburne) to discuss openly the homosexual passions that have dominated her life. Yet Bertie correctly questions her telling of her dream, apparently noticing its lack of fragmentation and irrationality, its coherent structure and careful order. Lesbia, when pressed, admits that she is certain only of the wharf, the woman, and the flowers, and, speaking for Swinburne, Bertie comments: "There is nothing harder for a child or a sick person than to tell a dream truthfully, for only the clearest and soundest of full-grown minds can safely lay down the accurate landmarks of sleep."

Lesbia cannot, but Swinburne can and does "lay down the accurate landmarks of sleep" both in Lesbia Brandon and in Poems and Ballads—his major exploration in poetry of the power and design of dream. Appropriately, the volume is dedicated to "one of the nicest young fellows in -- Dreamland," Edward Burne-Jones, whose painting, personality, and close association with Rossetti and Morris Swinburne so admired. Announcing his debts to his Pre-Raphaelite predecessors, Swinburne asks in the "Dedication" that his poems and the "daughters of dreams" who inhabit them—"Faustine, Fragolelta, Dolores, / Felise and Yolande and Juliette"—be granted their place in Burne-Jones's "palace of painting" and in the visual and verbal world of Pre-Raphaelitism: "In a land of clear colours and stories, / In a region of shadowless hours" (1, 136–37).

In Poems and Ballads dream moves to the foreground and itself determines and becomes the structure of poetry. The dream form becomes organic, and the volume that Swinburne described as an account of "passions and sensations" reshapes Pre-Raphaelite dream themes and images so that they mesh with his inner
vision. Pictorial and brilliantly colored poems—filled with reiterated images of flowers, fruits, hair, lips, and serpents—are dreamlike transformations of reality. Female figures, whether goddesses or mortals or sadists or victims, are dream images, projections of the poet's internal being. Although a number of the poems—"A Ballad of Life," "A Ballad of Death," "Anactoria," "Sapphics," "Fragoletta," "The Two Dreams," and "Love and Sleep"—contain accounts of dreams and visions, they are less detailed, for the most part, than in the earlier poems and plays. But the overall effect of dream is more widespread, for external reality has virtually vanished. Swinburne has moved from the borders of dreamland to immerse himself in the lakes of its interior. As he indicates, here in the "Dedication" and later in "Sestina" and "A Ballad of Dreamland," he has chosen the world of dream as the source and matter of his poems. He who "sees the secret light" and "fairer way" of dreams "Shall care no more to fare as all men may" (III, 30). Instead, he has chosen his part "In the world of dreams" and sought his inspiration in "the song of a secret bird" (III, 79).

In two of the poems women dream or daydream and the poet dreams of them. The "White Girl" depicted in Swinburne's homage to Whistler, "Before the Mirror," stares into the glass and "hears across cold streams, / Dead mouths of many dreams that sing and sigh" (I, 262). Sappho projects her suffering and wish for love in "Anactoria" through a dream of the Paphian Venus who offers the rejected poet praise, comfort, and a promise of fulfilled passion. In such poems as "Sapphics," "Hesperia"—a portrait of "Our Lady of Sleep"—and "Fragoletta," male dreamers are visited by the iconic images of fair, fatal, and androgynous women of another order. In "A Ballad of Life," the male dreamer sees Life as the composite figure of Rossetti's painting of Borgia and a Rossetti-Morris-Swinburne beauty by whose person and dream-song he is enthralled. In "A Ballad of Death," the same dreamer sees Death, through a vision, as another beautiful woman, the composite image of Venus-Proserpine-Beatrice-Borgia-Lizzie Siddal, and renounces his first dream to "become thrall" (I, 145) to the second.

In the volume, the only depiction of sexual fulfillment followed by contentment occurs within a dream, described in "Love and Sleep." The poet-dreamer's beloved appears before him and, true to dream, her amorous lips say words he cannot understand except for that which he would hear—"Delight." True to dream, she willingly becomes "honey" to his mouth and "pasture" (II, 36) to his eyes while the lovers enjoy a consummation unknown and inexpressible outside the world of sleep.

In Poems and Ballads, Swinburne utilizes dream landscapes and interiors, identified as such in the ballads of "Life" and "Death" or more subtly designated as in "The Garden of Proserpine," a poem whose landscape is modeled on that of Christina Rossetti's "Dream Land." At other times, the lack of vagueness of a specific background, as in "Hesperia" or "Anactoria," highlights the iconic images of the dreamer and the dream. Time, in the poems, is usually dream time—the shortened, extended, or frozen moment of the dream experience as in "A Ballad of Death," "Anactoria," and "Laus Venefis"—and the very speed of Swinburne's long anapestic and dactylic lines creates a dream effect. Not surprisingly for a poet who valued sound so highly, Swinburne's dream poems are richly auditory. But what is heard in his specific accounts of dream does not belie the actuality of the experience: the sounds depicted are of music, of the sea, and of whispered, indistinct, or unintelligible speech and song.

Most important, the poems of Poems and Ballads imitate dream structure and language. Settings and the figures within them change, coalesce, and appear and disappear as in dream; transitions between stanzas or sections are based on dream logic; fragments of experience are presented but unexplained (i.e. "A Cameo" and "August"); discontinuity becomes a
poetic strategy. Swinburne's style, based so firmly on private associations, amplifies the dream effect of the poetry. The often-cited mesmeric quality of his meters; the constant alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme, and repetition of words and images; the habit of reversing and jumbling expected syntax and metaphor all create a dislocation of consciousness identified with dreaming. "The words come muffled, as if in a foreign tongue," as John Rosenberg says, and Swinburne's use of language produces the deliberate diffuseness and sense of disorientation of dream. As in dream, the poet and the reader know what is said without being able to analyze the precise words that say it.

After the first series of Poems and Ballads the number and specificity of dream episodes diminishes in Swinburne's poetry and his charged imagery and overt pictorialism wane. Yet dreams, the materials and techniques that originate in them, and the observations of their processes remain pervasive. Among the later poems, "An Autumn Vision," "A Swimmer's Dream," and "A Nympholept" record sleeping and waking dreams. Collective and composite images of dream figures, condensations and irradiations of the same ideas or emotions continue to dominate later poems. "Hertha" is a multifaceted dream of nature and generation containing the collective image of the goddesses who have signified them; the figure to whom Baudelaire is joined in "Ave Atque Vale" is the composite image of the medieval Venus and the classical Proserpine. Iseult, in "Tristram of Lyonesse," is the collective figure of all the fair women who comprise Swinburne's calendar of famous beauties. "Tiresias" contains an important comment on dream process as Swinburne notes that the prophet recognizes latent dream material before it quickly fades. Tiresias "sees"

As when one wakes out of a waning dream
And sees with instant eyes the naked thought
Whereof the vision as a web was wrought

(II, 243)

In "On the South Coast," Swinburne reiterates his belief that "Dreams . . . show what we fain would know, and know not save by the grace of sleep" (VI, 87). Through simile and metaphor, he connects dream to experiences, states of being, and places important to him. Swimming is likened to dreaming. Water—be it of lakes or the sea—is the site of dreamland.

In general, the impression of Swinburne's poetry and fiction is "like that of dreams, which seem to be vivid and coherent but which become evanescent upon any attempt to specify their signification." His contribution to the Pre-Raphaelite dream legacy is to further internalize and organize Rossetti's dream vocabulary and Morris' exactitude in rendering dream experience without attempting to suppress dream's psychosexual, infantile, or pathological elements. Perhaps because he was so driven by the force of the irrational in his own life, Swinburne effectively utilizes dreams to expose the repressed impulses that shape and move the personae he creates. Less concerned than Rossetti and Morris with fidelity to the facts of external nature, he emphasizes the depiction of things as they appear to the eye and sound to the ear in sleep. Thus, he creates a literature that replicates dream structure, language, and effect. In his work the gap between poem and dream is closed, the way to symbolism is further opened, and the Pre-Raphaelite dream bequest is finally completed.

What, then, was the nature and impact of that inheritance? How did the dreams of Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne, first dreamt and then formalized as art, describe and define a literary movement? By means of those techniques already discussed—devices such as hyperclarity and dream logic—Pre-Raphaelitism broadened the realm of literature and freed it from some of the old constraints imposed on its forms and subjects. By presenting actual accounts of dreams and refusing to expunge their irrationalities or alter their fragmentations, it enlarged the lexicon of literary art and introduced new conventions of image and association.
In using the contents of dream as subject matter, Pre-Raphaelitism becomes a literature of dream in which truth is personal and interior. Its proponents see with and write from the vision of the inner eye. They depict with intensity experiences of death, guilt, anxiety, and sexuality, losing the irrationality at the core of humanism in order to enrich and deepen their poems, tales, and plays. Because the feelings they expose are described as occurring in dreams, or as dreamlike, Pre-Raphaelite authors and the persona they invent need neither explain nor morally judge these emotions. Pre-Raphaelitism thus utilizes dream to create a poetry and prose in which morality is no longer central.

Pre-Raphaelitism, then, is a union of fantasy (which is, in fact, the real function of the unconscious mind) and exterior reality. These are fused through dream, for it is there that the internal realm is seen as more immediate and formative than the external one. Opening the door of the mind in dream, the movement revealed the landscape of the unconscious. The panorama it disclosed demonstrated to the Victorians that dream can mold the material and shape of art. The door it opened could never again be closed.

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Notes


2. See, for example, Cecil Y. Lang, ed., The Pre-


As used in my essay, the term "Pre-Raphaelite" includes both the original members of the PRB of 1848 and their associates such as William Bell Scott, William Allingham, and Christina Rossetti and the second group or movement of 1857 comprised of such figures as William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, and Algernon Swinburne. Considerations of space have prevented discussing other relevant works like Oliver Madox Brown's Gabriel Denver or Simeon Solomon's Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep.


5. Specific pages in Freud's Interpretation of Dreams are not cited since the terminology utilized is general to and easily locatable in all editions of the work.

summary of "Michael Scott's Wooing"—intended as a study of the soul's departure from the body during sleep—are particularly interesting. See also the account of daydream in "The Burden of Nineveh," the narrator's fantasies about Jenny's dreams in "Jenny," and the sonnet, "Nuptial Sleep." Other important tales and poems are discussed in my text.


20. See, for example, Thomas Woolner's letter to Lady Trevelyan (February 28, 1858) on Rossetti's preoccupation with spiritualism:

You will be sorry to hear that Gabriel Rossetti has taken up with that foolish but growing abomination, Spiritual Rapping, and declares he can make ghosts and spirits talk to him and do all he pleases... It is really saddening to know how this idiotic horror is spreading in England and America.


23. Jones, p. 44; he indicates that both Bond and Waller were aware of the sexual implications of nightmare (pp. 45, 53). Helene E. Roberts, for example, suggests that Rossetti had repressed incestuous feelings, in "The Dream World of Dante Gabriel
26. De Quincey, p. 175.
27. Roberts, p. 376.
28. The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine (1856), 480, 482. All further references to the Magazine appear in the text.
30. Only "Svend and His Brethren" is without a dream incident; however, the ending of the tale--fragmented, discontinuous, and filled with nightmare images--is certainly dreamlike.
32. Pater, pp. 216, 218. Pater calls Morris a "master of dreams" (p. 222) and notes that, like Victor Hugo, Morris makes "strange creations of sleep... cross the limit of the dawn" (p. 218).
33. See Abercrombie, p. 196.
35. Pater, p. 222.
36. Exceptions to this are the dreams in the novel Morris chose not to publish, especially the dream of foreboding quoted in full by Jessie Kocmanová, in "'Landscape and Sentiment': Morris' First Attempt in Longer Prose Fiction," Victorian Poetry, 13, Nos. 3-4 (Fall-Winter 1975); see also the absurd dream at the beginning of News from Nowhere which Morris uses for its comic effect.
38. Swinburne, p. 282.
39. See Swinburne, p. 340, for Margaret's account of her dream and conversation with her son, Arthur, about his childhood nightmares.
40. Swinburne, pp. 345-46.
41. Swinburne, p. 347.
42. Rossetti, Letters, I, 292-93.
46. Stevenson, p. 224.