

論文

Millais as a Sartorialist: Costuming and Dressing in the Early Works by John Everett Millais

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Introduction

A cold wintery day on 30th December in 1850, with a new year just around the corner, the young John Everett Millais (1829-96) went into the draper's shop, where he asked for velvet fabrics and silk draperies (John Guille Millais). The shopkeeper, Millais records, "simper[ed] with astonishment" (94) as purchasing fabrics was an unlikely habit for Victorian men like Millais. The artist's son and biographer, John Guille Millais, notes that these fabrics were for the paintings of *Mariana* (1850-51, Tate Britain) and *The Woodman's Daughter* (1850-51, Guildhall Art Gallery). As this anecdote from the artist's letter reveals, the young artist highly valued acquiring actual materials and conceiving suitable apparel for his subjects in his art making and thus most likely, sartorial depiction occupied an important role in his pursuit for truth to nature. Millais' keen interest in costume is fully reflected in his early Pre-Raphaelite subject pictures as well as the following "highly evocative and symbolic pictures" (Rosenfeld, *Millais*, 51)¹; and we as beholders can observe his experimental depiction of different materials which includes thick velvets, damp lacy fabric, and even, rustic pinafore.

This paper will trace how Millais investigated costuming in figure paintings and developed sartorial illustrations throughout the culmination of his Pre-Raphaelitism and his gradual transition to more symbolic art from the end of the 1840s to the 1850s. As widely recognised and studied, sartorial elements are inseparable from the works of the Pre-Raphaelite artists and

those closely associated with them. Preceding studies and exhibitions have paid attention to the fashion depicted by certain artists such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris, as well as their extended interests in costume and jewellery designs² — one example being Roger Smith and Leonée Ormand's examination of the use of Camille Bonnard's collection of costumes from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. Their study has been developed by others such as Gail S. Weinburg and Eriko Yamaguchi by examining the use of the Bonnard book by Rossetti as well as identifying the plate from the same book as the source for his early drawings.³ Meanwhile, compared to his fellow Pre-Raphaelites, who are all known for their engagement in design and craft, Millais' sartorial interest and fashion illustrations have thus far lacked a similar level of study. This lack of attention extends to Millais' consistency of sartorial interest as well. Although Jason Rosenfeld in the 2012 Tate exhibition catalogue comments that Millais' *Isabella* (1848, Walker Art Gallery) "represents Pre-Raphaelite practice in terms of novelty of source, thorough research into costume and setting" (46), scholarly interest in his consistency and dedication to dressing his subjects remains limited. Prior studies have tended to focus instead on natural scenery in Millais' early works as that is exactly what makes Millais Pre-Raphaelite. While this focal point of course deserves attention, sartorial details should likewise be given a prominent position in scholarly study, as they demonstrate the artist's detailed interest and painstaking effort in depicting costumes, which are also a key characteristic of literary works in the Pre-Raphaelite period and the more symbolic works from the following period.

The Pre-Raphaelite and following periods were, as Rosenfeld states, a time full of experiments and growths for Millais in terms of artistic styles and materials and this can be observed in his specific interest in costume and design as well as his treatment of the materiality of fashion in his art. His ardent interest and investigation of apparel never diminished, instead, remaining constantly present in the artist's career. As evident in his late

works, the sartorial element had played a significant role to appeal to a wider audience — particularly that from the upper-middle and upper classes — in both popular society portraits and subject pictures. In addition to this, Millais’ fashion illustrations in his early art are important for several reasons. First, the sartorial depictions are where his artistic development in style can be clearly observed. Secondly, they reflect the influence and involvement of women with Millais’ works as his sartorial illustrations often resulted from the collaboration between the artist and female members of his family and friends. Thirdly, as will be further discussed later in this paper, Millais’ fashion illustrations, I believe, possess potential value in terms of modern fashion design. Through detailed examination of specific works, this study will attempt to uncover the artist’s unexplored quality as a Sartorialist and reveal that his interest in garments contributed to his overall artistry.

II Millais’ s plausible encounter with historical costume through stage

What might have led Millais to this fascination with sartorial depiction, and in particular, historical and realistic costuming in the first place? In the mid-nineteenth century when Millais and his Pre-Raphaelite peers were actively engaged in their innovative art production, there existed a trend in the realm of theatre of producing historical plays with an antiquarian approach. This meant adopting “detailed and historically realistic sets and costumes” (“19th-Century Theatre”), as encouraged by the antiquarian dramatist, James Robinson Planché. His collaboration with Charles Kemble in *King John* at Covent Garden Theatre in November, 1823, was noted as a landmark of the early Victorian theatrical reform for featuring costumes, armour and heraldry which were considered to be historically accurate (Jackson). This almost archaeological costuming approach was also followed by the actor-manager, Charles Kean, in his productions at Princess’s Theatre in the 1850s, where he “not only consulted scholarly sources on the trappings appropriate to the period of each play but flaunted them on his playbills, with essays attesting to the historicity of his costumes and sets” (Alan Fischer,

341-42, in Herbert F. Tucker, ed.). Though many theatres remained hesitant to adopt historical accuracy into their productions, the practice culminated in the middle of the nineteenth century; and so, Millais must have been aware of the ongoing theatrical fascination with historicity. Specific evidence for a theatrical connection, or awareness, can be observed from *Study of an actor* which is said to have been executed in Sadler's Wells Theatre by the artist in 1845. Millais was evidently no stranger to sketching in theatres: in fact, Millais frequented theatres "to eke out his precarious income" by "making sketches of the actors and actresses" and selling them (J. G. Millais, 83). In this sense, Millais certainly had the opportunities to observe historical fashion brought to life and study such fashion on actual human bodies as the actors moved around on stage. As much as the young artist had been likely influenced by the contemporary theatre in choosing subject matter for his art, it is also likely that he was affected by its staging and costuming trends. Even before his embarkation as professional artist, Millais conceived a series of elaborate illustrations of armour and heraldry as recorded in memoirs and these drawings also suggest the fascination with historicity and actualism in costuming of this precocious talent had been present for some time.⁴ Having been inspired by the theatrical trend of accurate representation, Millais might have nourished and developed such an interest in fashion and adopted the concept of historically accurate costume in his pursuit of realism through the creation of art.

III Adopting medieval fashion through Bonnard's *Costumes Historiques*

Let us then shift our focus to the individual works as we trace the development of Millais' interest in costuming. *Isabella* (1848-49) is the first painting completed after the foundation of the Brotherhood and represents his painstaking attention to actualism including that in costume. Depicting Boccaccio's tragic heroine reimagined by John Keats in his poetic adaptation, a highly medieval tone permeates this ambitious work by a

young Millais. In contrast to the aggressive movement and stern gazes of her merciless brothers, Isabella here appears almost static and serene receiving the cut blood orange from Lorenzo and patting a head of a nervous dog. Perhaps trying to emphasize the short-lived romance between the two lovers as well as the exact moment where her siblings sensed their mutual feelings, the artist also produced a contrast in colours by dressing his heroine in dimly lit grey robe slightly tinted with basil colour which evokes the “Pot of Basil” where she lays her dead lover’s head in the original poem by Keats, while portraying the male characters around her in bright colours such as salmon-coloured garment on Lorenzo and a red tunic on one of the brothers.

As widely known and discussed, Millais drew the inspiration from Camille Bonnard’s *Costumes Historiques* (1829) for the outfit of his eponymous character as well as her hairstyle, which was likely modelled after the style of Beatrice d’Este in the illustrated copy of the painting in 1494 (Rosenfeld, Tate catalogue). In the midst of the Victorian medievalism, the interest in the medieval dress and “the wearing of costumes that represented medieval clothing” (Roberts, 11) had grown and it was heightened by the publication of the literature on the related themes. Those included *History of British Costume* (1834) by the aforementioned dramatist, Planché, and *Costumes in England* (1846) penned by the wood engraver, draughtsman and antiquarian, Frederick William Fairholt; and Bonnard’s *Costumes Historiques* was one of such early examples. First published in 1827 under the different title, it had undergone a complex publication history consisting of various editions and names as uncovered by Michèle Hannoosh. It was officially introduced to the English readers with the fourth ‘London’ edition published by Paul and Dominic Colnaghi in 1844, while the earlier Paris edition in 1829–30 was likely imported to the English market and had already fascinated Victorian medievalists as well as artists like the Pre-Raphaelites. While there is no proof of Millais’ acquisition of this collection of fashion plates, it has been recognised how it came into the artist’s hands: William Michael Rossetti records that Millais borrowed a copy from his brother, Dante

Gabriel Rossetti, who had proudly announced the acquisition of “a most stunning copy [... of] india proof impressions” (Alison Smith, 32). This is also mentioned by John Guille Millais, by quoting his father’s remark, “[t]he only one of my pictures that I can think of as showing what is called the influence of Rossetti is the ‘Isabella,’ in which some of the vestments were worked out in accordance with a book of medieval costumes which he was kind enough to lend me” (55). Plausibly under the influence of Ford Madox Brown, the young Pre-Raphaelite painters were first introduced to Bonnard’s *Costumes Historiques* when pursuing reality in their picture-making and nurtured their interests in historically accurate costumes for their elaborate sartorial depictions. Lacking the experience and knowledge in early Italian art as much as his peers, the young artist must have been allowed by this Bonnard book to explore the style and technique in Italy of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, and eventually was able to create the atmosphere of the period in which the tale of Isabella takes place.

IV Costuming and posing his subjects based on the medieval fashion plates

The influence of Bonnard’s book made its way to Millais’ subsequent painting, *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (1849-50, The Makins Collection, fig. 1), as the artist depicted the outfit for his human subject modelled after one of the fashion plates from the book. Having chosen the scene from Act 1 Scene 2 of Shakespeare’s *Tempest* where the shipwrecked prince of Naples, Ferdinand, steps on to the mystical island ruled by Prospero as his subject matter, the artist aimed to depict “all [he] could see” (Prettejohn, 2000, 172) and managed to capture the exact moment in a setting evocative of a tableau. The luminous colours pervading the canvas, from the bright and clear green of the grassland and fluorescent green of Ariel, and the subordinate sprites almost blending into the botanical background, to the cardinal red of Ferdinand’s tunic and the white colour of his tights made to seem damp from the seawater from which he has just emerged are the result of the

‘wet-on-wet’ technique Millais adopted for this work. The greenness of the grassland and even the bodies of the sprites seem to echo the exclamation of Gonzalo, loyal courtier of King Alonzo, “[H]ow green!” (II. i. 55), in the original text. As “the artist’s first attempt to paint nature in a radical Pre-Raphaelite manner” (Rosenfeld, *Millais*, 36), most attention has been paid to the vividly and meticulously depicted nature in the background; yet, we must not dismiss another detail on this work for which Millais creatively incorporated his investigation and imagination — the costume and pose of his human subject.



Fig.1. John Everett Millais. *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel*. 1849-50. Oil on panel. 64.8 x 50.8 cm. The Makins Collection, Washington D. C. Public domain.

Following *Isabella*, Millais once again looked into Bonnard's plates for inspiration, seen when attiring the Neapolitan prince in a luminous vermillion tunic trimmed with fur over velvety, navy garment with bright white tights and golden, embroidered footwear known as 'poulaine' or 'Cracow'. The artist referred to Bonnard this time for both costume and pose of his human subject, and as stated in the Tate exhibition of 1984, it is highly possible that Millais was particularly influenced by plate six (fig.2) illustrated by Paul Mercuri where "Jeune Italien" from the fifteenth century takes a bow touching his hat and stepping forward as Millais' Ferdinand takes a similar action. In addition to the above example, there are four tracings



Fig.2. Paul Mercuri. "MCCCC.—No 6: Jeune Italien." *Costumes historiques des XIIe, XIIIe, XIVe et XVe siècles*. By Camille Bonnard. Vol.2. Paris: A. Lévy fils, 1860-61 (first published 1829-30). 3 vols.

of the subjects from Bonnard's *Costumes Historiques* attributed to the artist which were likely conceived in the same period as *Isabella* and *Ferdinand*. Now housed at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, the figures in these tracings — one depicting “a man in medieval Italian military dress” (fig.3) and the other three showing women in Milanese, Florentine and French medieval dresses respectively — bare no close resemblance to those in the final paintings, and it is also possible that these tracings were by the hands of



Fig.3. Attributed to John Everett Millais. *Tracing of a man in medieval Italian military dress from Camille Bonnard's Costumes Historiques*. Pre-1849. Pen, ink and watercolour (?) paint on tracing paper. 20 x 13.5 cm. Royal Academy of Arts, London. © Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London.

Millais' father instead of the artist himself as Malcolm Warner proposes (The Royal Academy of Arts). Having said this, these can be a solid proof that the young artist thoroughly studied and relied on Bonnard's plates as well as an early example of the partnership between Millais and his family, which was inevitable in his creation process.

V Crafting a dress from velvet fabrics for his Mariana

In the following painting, Millais further developed his own passion for fashion and purchased actual fabrics for his pictorial subjects as if the fashion plates alone could not fulfil his artistic needs in terms of observation and representation. In *Mariana* (1850-51, Tate), he distanced himself from the fashion plates in the Bonnard book while continuing to work on the medieval subject as he did in *Isabella* and *Ferdinand*. What he crafted for his new subject is a rather original costume which appears to be an amalgam of the medieval and Victorian sartorial tastes.

As already quoted, in the end of December, 1850, Millais ventured to a draper's shop to purchase fabric for his new subject, *Mariana*. Tired and bored of her solitary and repetitive life, Mariana stands up from a vermilion stool, and stretches her back with her hands on her waist. Though presented as a minor character compared to Isabella and the Duke in the original play by Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, the subject was reimagined by Tennyson and transformed into a tragic heroine who invites people's sympathy towards the forsaken woman. Inspired by this Tennysonian representation of Mariana as unfortunate heroine, Millais skillfully visualised the heartbroken woman and heightened her solitude by placing her in the forlorn chamber, suggesting a sense of loneliness and fatigue. The costume of Mariana itself plays a particularly important role in bringing these themes to fruition. While fallen leaves on the embroidery insinuate her loss of youth and beauty, her lapis blue dress tailored fittingly to her body shows her mature beauty and wellbeing. For his own representation, Millais pictorially tailored the blue dress out of the fabric he had acquired from the draper and its significant

texture and colour set the tone and dominate the canvas. In contrast to the desolate interior of the abandoned “moated grange”, the opulence of the Victorian-styled velvety gown on the forsaken heroine and the bejewelled, golden girdle with a small purse—so-called ‘gipser’ (a purse or bag worn on a girdle)—coiling around her waist truly stands out. The flowing, smooth design of the garment itself evokes the vesture of the woman in *Portrait of Giovanni(?) Arnolfini and his Wife* (1434), also known as *The Arnolfini Portrait*, by Jan van Eyck displayed at the National Gallery where the Royal Academy School then resided.⁵ The drapes and wrinkles of her blue dress and the gloss and smoothness it creates are the result of Millais’ painstaking research and observation of the actual fabric.⁶ Even more, the colour contrast between the glowing blue of her gown, the vivid vermillion of her stool and the blended green and brown of her meticulous embroidery and autumnal view from the window, seems to have been well calculated to draw the beholder’s eyes to the main figure. Another notable point of her garment is its separation from the contemporary fashion worn by Victorian women. Precisely, the slender line of the lower half of her garment suggests that she is not wearing a crinoline which was to hold out a dress and create a ball-like shape. Meanwhile, from the details such as the lacy collar, her robe cannot be technically defined as medieval as it rather evokes the Victorian style while maintaining medieval sartorial elements with the golden girdle and gipser. In this way, Millais creatively incorporated different elements from both medieval and Victorian fashions while skilfully applying the result of his observation of the actual fabric. As much as the theme this work represents, its elaborately crafted costume might have attracted the audience’s attention and turned it into a favourite piece particularly of female beholders when first exhibited at R.A. as witnessed by William Michael Rossetti. While neither Shakespeare nor Tennyson had suggested the attire of Mariana, Millais, by costuming the isolated heroine in his own imaginary garment, managed to breathe life into the subject and carefully accentuated the weariness and loneliness occupying her mind.

VI Procuring actual garment and footwear for the *The Woodman's Daughter* (1850-51)

While producing *Mariana*, the young artist further developed his research and skills in costuming by simultaneously working on another poetry-themed painting, *The Woodman's Daughter* (1850-51, Guildhall Art Gallery, fig.4). Coventry Patmore, the author of the poem on which this painting is based, had been a close friend of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, even informing Millais of Tennyson's wish to have his own work painted by him (Rossetti). *The Woodman's Daughter* is similar to *Ferdinand* in terms of the structure as the flourishing nature occupies the greater part of the canvas as a backdrop in both paintings, while it echoes *Mariana* by connoting a similar theme — betrayal and abandonment as faced by Mariana and Maud, the heroine of Patmore's poetry. As Rosenfeld notices, the latter refers to “issues of social injustice” (Tate, 92) and so could the tale of Mariana. While *The Woodman's Daughter* recalls other works as suggested, it differs, especially in terms of the source Millais adopted in costuming. Unlike other works for which Millais used a reference book and fabric, this time he showed more enthusiasm for dressing his subjects realistically and also suitably for their own circumstances. In order to pursue verisimilitude in costuming Maud, he required actual materials as models and asked for help from his friends. On January 28th, 1851, Millais wrote to his patrons and friends in Oxford, Thomas and Martha Combe, asking to procure certain items as quoted below:

I have got a little commission for you to execute for me. You recollect the lodge at the entrance of Lord Abington's house, where I used to leave my picture of the Wood [‘The Woodman's Daughter’] Well, in the first cottage there is a little girl named Esther; would you ask the mother to let you have a pair of her old walking-boots? I require them sent on to me, as I wish to paint them in the wood. I do not care how old they are; they are, of course, no use without having been worn.

Will you please supply the child with money to purchase a new pair? I shall settle with you when I see you in the spring. If you should see a country-child with a bright lilac pinafore on, lay strong hands on the same, and send it with the boots. It must be long, that is, covering the whole underdress from the neck. I do not wish it new, but clean, with some little pattern — pink spots, or anything of that kind. If you have not time for this task, do not scruple to tell me so. (J. G. Millais, 97)



Fig.4. John Everett Millais. *The Woodman's Daughter*. 1850-51. Oil on canvas. 88.9 x 64.8 cm. Guildhall Art Gallery, London. Photo Credit: City of London Corporation.

The couple carried out this task without fail as revealed in Millais' subsequent letter to Mrs Combe on February 10th, 1851, that "[t]he brevity with which [his] troublesome request was executed astonished [him]" and both pinafore and boots would turn out beautifully (99). As he had expected, these details were meticulously painted after these models: Maud appears in her rustic, dusky-lilac pinafore and dingy boots and the ochre of her shirt matches with the colour of her father's trousers. This humble attire makes a great contrast to the outfit of the squire's son as remarked by Rosenfeld that "the contrast between her simple yet iridescent costume and Merton's brilliant red finery and riding crop marks their disparate stations in life" (Tate, 92). Elaborately depicted, such a contrast between their costumes effectively intensifies the tragedy awaiting Maud in the end. This level of effort and dedication suggests a growing interest in fashion and enthusiasm for costuming, and as such this work bears a great importance in Millais' early career as a Pre-Raphaelite. Compared to preceding works, *Isabella*, *Ferdinand* and *Mariana*, the use of actual items which perfectly fit his initial vision appears to be a considerable shift for the young artist. In the pursuit of realism,⁷ Millais' sartorial study had developed from mimicking fashion illustrations and imagining a dress from a piece of fabric to having a precise vision and imagery of his ideal costume and depicting one based on physically present items.

VII In search of an ideal costume for his Ophelia

Following his own practice of using actual garments, Millais further pursued this actualism in his subsequent work, *Ophelia* (1851-52), which bears the marks of Millais' sincere approach to the Pre-Raphaelite principle of 'painting all he could see', including the costume of his subject. Just as he had painted the foliage of *Ferdinand* at Shotover Park, Horspath in Oxfordshire (Millais, 84), Millais spent nearly four months painting the background landscape in a natural setting. This avid observation and draughtsmanship reflected in his natural depiction were also demonstrated

in his portrait of the figure. In this case, the figure of Ophelia was modelled by Elizabeth Siddall and her beauty as well as that of Ophelia were simultaneously captured by Millais on canvas. While the fact that Millais depicted a scene which had been neither enacted on stage nor depicted in preceding art, as it is only narrated by Queen Gertrude in the original text, is significant in itself, another notable feature of this painting are the meticulous details from her spreading hair to her gaping mouth which evokes her final moments singing “the old tunes” (*Hamlet*, IV. Vii. 175) as recounted by Gertrude. Once again, this attention to detail extends to the depiction of Ophelia’s costume, exemplifying a continuing trait in Millais’ art. While he obtained the particular items which he thought fit for his subject in his previous work, *The Woodman’s Daughter*, from second-hand sources, Millais ventured out to explore the city and find the garment for his heroine of *Ophelia* himself. In early March of 1852, the artist reports his acquisition of the item to his patron-friend, Mr Combe as follows: “To-day I have purchased a really splendid lady’s ancient dress — all flowered over in silver embroidery — and I am going to paint it for ‘Ophelia.’ You may imagine it is something rather good when I tell you it cost me, old and dirty as it is, four pounds” (Millais, 162). What especially merits attention here is how minutely the elaborate pattern of this lacy dress is depicted: we barely see the entirety of the dress, yet are allowed to make out some parts which consist of botanical designs, which are, if borrowing Millais’ expression, “all flowered over in silver embroidery”. These patterns seem to respond to the opulent foliage on the riverbank and floating flowers around the body, which are likely inspired by the flowers and plants mentioned by Ophelia in her songs of the original play. The shimmering effect of the dress partly soaked in water is also a perfect example of Millais’ attentive observation of his model, while the old dress floating in a bathtub seems to suggest the flickering of this character’s life in the Shakespearean play.

VIII Collaborating with the women in his family circle

Millais' pursuit of realism in dressing had continued, or rather, further developed after *Ophelia* which “marked a watershed in the Pre-Raphaelite movement” (Rosenfeld, *Millais*, 71), throughout the following period when he produced more symbolic pictures. What we should note in exploring Millais' following works is that they were not simply the result of his own thorough investigation of his subject matters and themes, but in fact, they considerably owed to the support from the female members of his family, especially his mother,⁸ his wife, Effie Gray, and her younger sisters as well as his friends.

For *A Huguenot, on St. Bartholomew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge* (1851-52) simultaneously produced with *Ophelia*, the artist asked his mother to visit the British Museum to conduct research on the costumes. In addition, he also borrowed a piece of lace from a certain lady via his patron-friend, Mrs Combe, for the white armband which the male subject refuses to wear on canvas. Millais' own study of the actual cloth and the collaborative research of historical costume with his mother transformed this portrait of a couple into a highly emotional, romantic scene. In the following year, 1853, Millais conceived a series of elaborate designs of costume, accessories and furniture, now titled as *Sketches for 'Natural Ornament' (following suggestions from John Ruskin)* (partly housed at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the British Museum). One of those pen and ink studies displaying a female figure, plausibly Effie Gray (then-Mrs Ruskin), with whom he was infatuated, in a gown gorgeously adorned with uniquely designed accessories and embroidery such as “flower bells round her neck, wheat in her hair, a lizard bracelet up her arm and a pineapple and squirrel emblazoned in her breast” (Mary Lutyens, 76; fig.5), also exhibits Millais' consistent and growing interest in vesture.

In two subsequent works conceived during the period from 1854 to 1856, *Autumn Leaves* (1855-56, Manchester city Art Gallery) and *The Blind*



Fig.5. John Everett Millais. *Sketches for 'Natural Ornament'—Effie Ruskin*. 1853. Pen and Brown Ink on Paper. 18.5 x 23.3 cm. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham. Public Domain.

Girl (1854-56, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery), it was his newly-wed wife, Effie, who filled in the post of an assistant. A marriage to Effie Gray had certainly provided him another path to procure models — both humans and items — and made his sartorial research much easier thanks to her refined taste in colour and design, as well as her sociable personality. While having had her younger sisters, Sophy and Alice, model for two of four figures in *Autumn Leaves*, Effie ventured out to the local town to find the remaining models and suitable props. The third girl with downcast eyes is Matilda Proudfoot, a pupil at the School of Industry whose “brilliant-red hair” attracted Effie’s eyes. Likewise, she discovered the model for the fourth girl, Isabella Nicol, at the local house she visited to nurse the bed-ridden lady who happened to be Isabella’s grandmother. Again, Effie was

particular about her hair, and she specifically instructed this little model to wash and plait her hair overnight to bring out the waves to perfectly frame her face (Cooper, 211). As fair as the models were, what particularly catches the observer's eye in this work are the garments on the figures. As pointed out by Rosenfeld (Tate) and Cooper, the Gray sisters' plain yet fine linsey-wolseys in green with white lacy collars and the rough and dusty clothes on Matilda and Isabella mark a stark contrast in their living environments. Unlike his earlier pictures, Millais did not procure the vesture for his subjects but instead, he depicted his models in their everyday clothes — Matilda in her rustic school uniform and Isabella in her sooty dress in blue. For his other highly sentimental work from the same period, *The Blind Girl*, Millais again was helped by Effie's intuition for procuring props. The anecdote of Effie obtaining the petticoat for the coppery orange linsey-wolsey skirt in this work by borrowing it from an old lady she spotted on the street of Bridgend for a shilling (Cooper, 144)⁹ proves a collaborative process between the couple. It also demonstrates the artist's growing commitment to fashion in his art, as well as the continuance of his elaborate research and attention to the study of actual garments — particularly worn as everyday clothes —, even after his gradual departure from the Pre-Raphaelite history paintings for more symbolic pictures.

IX The impact of Millais' sartorial illustrations on fashion designs in later centuries

Having explored Millais' costuming illustrations in his early works and traced the development of his sartorial interest and research, it is still not easy to decide whether the sartorial aspect of Millais was different from that of his contemporaries — particularly of the Pre-Raphaelites — or not, and if his investigation and illustrations of costume bear little significance or value in themselves. While the answer to this question has yet to be drawn in the scholarly field as it still lacks sufficient attention and careful study, some initial assessments can be observed in the practical field of fashion design.

Contemporary designers such as Gareth Pugh, Anna Sui, past Alexander McQueen, Roksanda Ilincic, to name a few, publicly state the influence of Pre-Raphaelite art in their own designs and some of them reveal a direct reference to Millais' sartorial drawings (Alexander Fury; Andrew Bolton; Mariko Finch; Dean Mayo Davies). In the interview for his Spring/Summer 2009 collection, British designer, Gareth Pugh, admits he indebted to Millais' *Ophelia* in his creating process. Fashion critic and writer, Alexander Fury, also stresses the impact of Millais' artistry on some designers including Pugh from 2000s and 2010s. More conspicuous influences can be traced in other designers' creations such as Roksanda Ilincic's lapis blue dress with coral piped bow from her Spring/Summer 2013 collection and the velvety navy gown by Maria Grazia Chiuri's first ready-to-wear collection for Spring/Summer 2017 at French fashion house, Dior, which both bear a close resemblance to Mariana's garment, and the kilt dress by the late Alexander McQueen reminiscent of the costumes in *The Order of Release, 1746* (1852-53). To modern practitioners, fashion recreated and often imagined by Millais on canvas appears worth studying and reproducing, and in their eyes, his sartorial illustration is instrumental in completing each painting.

X Conclusion

As seen in the works of his early career from the late 1840s to the 1850s, Millais certainly nurtured and cultivated his own interest and study in costuming by exploring different sources and models, trying out various drawing techniques and experimenting with different types of materials and actual garments. This paper first examined the heightened interest in historicity in the realm of theatre which possibly influenced Millais in his early career. This was followed by the examinations of early works by the artist from *Isabella* to *The Blind Girl* in their sartorial details as well as the paths through which he procured the materials. Starting with Camille Bonnard's *Costumes Historiques* as the literary source for the first two paintings, we have traced the actual models he procured and studied and

observed how Millais had experimented with various materials and items and developed his sartorial interest and draughtsmanship. As examined, the reference to Bonnard book for *Isabella* and *Ferdinand* had prepared the young Millais with the basic knowledge in historical and accurate costuming. Having lacked knowledge and understanding of early European art and crafts, such a foundation was surely crucial for his artistic development. In order to gain a deeper understanding and ideas of fashion while nourishing a skill to depict various textures, Millais expanded his range of research and observation from referring to the book to actual garments and items and managed to bring realism into his subjects on canvases. Having explored these early works, we have also focused on the works from his post-Pre-Raphaelite period including *Autumn Leaves* and *The Blind Girl* and the effects that the realistically depicted everyday clothes create in these paintings. Particularly evident in works such as *Mariana* and *The Woodman's Daughter*, the effect of sartorial elements derived from his meticulous observation and careful depictions is not only limited to their impressions but extends to their intrinsic aspects; realistically depicted, they subtly narrate the intricate positions and statuses of his subjects and represent their sentiments. In addition to these examinations of the sartorial feature in early Millais, we have extended our discussion to the significance of his fashion illustrations in the context of practical designs. Finally, the sartorial interests and draughtsmanship Millais nurtured in his early stages had remained throughout and were even developed further in the subsequent phases of his career. Rarely featured and discussed unlike his Pre-Raphaelite fellows, the sartorial interest and study of John Everett Millais was, as this paper has observed, a crucial element which defined his artistry not only in his early career specifically, but in later years as well.

Notes

- * An earlier version of this paper titled “Millais as a Sartorialist: Costuming the Literary Subjects by John Everett Millais” was presented at the 19th VSSJ Annual Conference, held on 23rd November, 2019, at Kindai University,

Higashi-Osaka. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Eriko Yamaguchi at the University of Tsukuba for insights and expertise she generously offered at the conference. Mr Peter Dustan had kindly looked over the manuscript and I am truly grateful for his generosity and invaluable comments. Finally, I would also like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on the first version of this paper.

- 1 Rosenfeld, in his monograph of Millais, describes the 1850s as “the most thematically rich and artistically challenging period of [the artist’s] career” and states that the portrait of John Ruskin in 1853-54 was “the summit of Millais’s Pre-Raphaelitism” (83). It was soon followed by the symbolic paintings such as *The Blind Girl* and *Autumn Leaves* which “anticipate the strands in British Aestheticism” (51) and these “symbolic pictures” represent Millais’ eventual departure from the Pre-Raphaelite style.
- 2 Hunt, for example, is known to have designed “a Renaissance-style green velvet dress” worn by Ellen Terry in *Choosing* (1864), by her first husband, George Frederic Watts (Tim Barringer, 165). Likewise, Rossetti’s design for a watch case made for Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company in 1863 reveals his passion and involvement in designing adornments and applied arts (Burry, 1976).
- 3 The plate titled “Homme d’armes” in Bonnard is, according to Yamaguchi, the source for the figures of the youth in Rossetti’s *Salutation of Beatrice* (1849-1850) and *To Caper Nimbly in a Lady’s Chamber* (1850).
- 4 *Three Swordhilts* (1838-39) recorded by J. G. Millais was most likely designed for Millais’ *Book of Armour* (1845) along with other drawings such as *Sketches of Armour — Study for Henry VIII* (1844). The artist is said to have made “a series of studies of armoury at the Tower of London” (*Pre-Raphaelite Online Resource*).
- 5 Marian connotation in the source text by Tennyson is deeply reflected upon Millais’ canvas and that also suggests its connection to van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Portrait* as discussed by Alison Smith in the following remark:

The pose of Mariana herself is the single most striking feature of the painting—the rich blue of her dress having Marian connotations while also accentuating the curvature of her figure in the same way that the bright green gown of the woman in van Eyck’s painting exaggerates the swelling of her belly. The intimation here that Mariana could have been pregnant may have been prompted by the pregnancy theory raised in

connection with the Arnolfini Portrait when it first appeared in public in 1841. (Smith, 2017, 39)

- 6 The round shape of the gown, in addition, evokes some of its beholders of the combination of the undergarment and dress worn by the female figure in *The Eve of St Agnes* by Millais in 1863.
- 7 Millais' devotion to pursue realism in his art was not certainly limited to the depiction of fashion, but it extended to every detail on his canvases. In *Christ in the House of His Parents* ('*The Carpenter's Shop*') (1849-50), for instance, the artist took his canvas to an actual carpenter's shop to depict its interior and painted the flock of sheep in the background after the heads of two sheep he obtained from the neighboring butcher. Likewise, for *The Woodman's Daughter*, Millais not only procured the clothes for Maud as mentioned but also purchased four strawberries at the market in Covent Garden for "five-and-sixpence [...] a vast sum for [the artist]" to depict the fruits offered by Merton (Millais, 111). According to the anecdote recounted by J. G. Millais, he even used the dead mouse he found in his studio when illustrating the animal which '[b]ehind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd, Or from the crevice peer'd about' (Tennyson) in *Mariana*.
- 8 "[...] But Millais' truest and most helpful friend was his mother, whose love and foresight did so much to advance his aims and ambition, putting him I the right path from the very outset. She herself undertook the greater part of his education, and being more gifted than most women, grounded him in history, poetry, literature, etc., knowledge of costume and armour, all of which was the greatest use to him in his career." (Millais, 3)
- 9 Millais is said to have been satisfied with this collaboration with his wife as described by Cooper below:

Everett was always impressed that Effie was able to procure props and models for next to nothing. She had a good eye and was willing to haggle. He told Hunt that Effie was wonderful about 'going into strange habitations and seizing adults and children without exception, and dragging them here, and sending them back to their homes with a sixpence, when I should have been doubtful between a sovereign and thirty shillings'. Effie was equally happy to research details of historical costume, and run them up. For Everett's picture of *The Escape of Heretic*, Effie worked from some sixteenth-century woodcuts of 'condemned prisoners of the Inquisition' that she saw at a friend's house. She said that 'the Girl was to be clothed in a sort of Sack-like garment of black

serge painted over with red Devils' (145).

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