when it comes to a sense of excitement, to making the heart beat faster, Pre-Raphaelitism ranks high among cultural phenomena and certainly has no equal in Victorian art. . . . It is a story with a strong element of romance, of youthful enthusiasm, opposition overcome, success beyond the wildest dreams of the original exponents. . . . The heady mixture of beauty, poetry, intellectual challenge and personal magnetism appeals today every bit as powerfully as it did during the movement’s ascendancy, with the added edge that only nostalgia for a vanished age can give.1

John Christian’s succinct and exuberant comments on Pre-Raphaelitism explain only part of the fascination, excitement, and exquisite appeal that Pre-Raphaelite art generated in the past, continues to emanate in the present, and no doubt will stimulate in the future. Despite an initially hostile reception, that “heady mixture of beauty, poetry, intellectual challenge” gradually spread to all aspects of Victorian popular and high culture, including the novel. Reconfigured in diverse modes such as the sensation novels of Elizabeth Mary Braddon or the intellectual works of George Eliot, Pre-Raphaelite art became an integral part of most Victorian novels, conveying contemporary anxieties over various sociopolitical issues and capturing multiple perspectives on constructions of gender.

*The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel* explores the ways in which the Victorian novel was shaped by Pre-Raphaelite art. It focuses on the work of four prominent novelists, Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy, all successful in reaching a wide audience of diverse classes and therefore of varied educational achievement, aesthetic sensibility, and intellectual sophistication. The novels of these four authors reveal the rich and multifaceted complexity of the art of the Victorian novel, attested by innumerable scholarly works devoted to its interpretation. This book elucidates yet another facet of the exquisite intricacy of the Victorian novel, the
narrative reconfigurations of Pre-Raphaelite paintings, understood and appreciated by Victorian readers in ways lost to us. Entries in the journals of these writers on Pre-Raphaelite art, as well as letters addressed to prominent Pre-Raphaelite artists or to other contemporary intellectuals, express these novelists’ great interest in and glorious delight over Pre-Raphaelite art. Although their comments differ considerably in scope and intensity, they all point to a common sense of excitement and awe at the sight of Pre-Raphaelite masterpieces. In a letter to Charles Norton in 1859, for instance, Elizabeth Gaskell, who crafted the intense emotions of her characters, is at a loss for words to express the overwhelming emotions and startling thoughts that William Holman Hunt’s and Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s paintings had stimulated in her: “I am not going to define & shape my feelings & thoughts at seeing either Rossetti’s or Hunt’s pictures into words; because I did feel them deeply, and after all words are coarse things.”

Like Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins was deeply affected by Pre-Raphaelite art throughout his career. Shortly after viewing Hunt’s exhibit in 1889, he burst into effusive praise in a letter to him, not merely admiring the beauty and splendor of his paintings but simultaneously underscoring his enormous appreciation of Hunt’s unique expression of human emotion, one of the principles that propelled the Pre-Raphaelite revolution against preestablished aesthetic notions: “As a painter of human expression, the most difficult of all achievements in your Art, there is not a man among your living English Colleagues . . . who is fit to be mentioned in the same breath with you.” As we shall see in chapter 3, Collins turned some of the most importantPre-Raphaelite painterly techniques he discusses in this letter into narrative strategies in his most successful novel, The Woman in White.

George Eliot’s response to the Pre-Raphaelites was even more complex than that of other Victorian novelists, the subject of chapter 4. “Art works for all whom it can touch,” she writes to Edward Burne-Jones after visiting his studio in 1873. “And I want in gratitude to tell you that your work makes life larger and more beautiful to me.” Fascination pervades a short entry in Thomas Hardy’s journal following his visit to the Grosvenor Gallery in 1878: “June 8, [1878]— To Grosvenor Gallery. Seemed to have left flesh behind, and entered a world of soul.” As these few short entries suggest, Pre-Raphaelite art captivated literary artists, inspired them, and compelled them to reconfigure some of the most notable and popular Pre-Raphaelite paintings in their own ways into narrative images of intense emotions, emotions that reflected multifarious cultural and social issues.

But besides these letters, contemporary reviews of Pre-Raphaelite paintings disclose the complexity of the issues Pre-Raphaelite art
involved and generated in British culture and society. Seemingly objections to the Pre-Raphaelites’ defiance of the preestablished principles of art upheld by the Royal Academy, derogatory comments in these reviews often conceal and reveal anxieties about the Pre-Raphaelites’ transgressions of conventional gender boundaries. Referring to the Pre-Raphaelite paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1850, the critic of Athenaeum, for instance, protested: “Abruptness, singularity, uncouthness are the counters with which they play for fame. Their trick is to defy the principles of beauty and the recognized axioms of taste.” In this respect this review was typical in interweaving without distinction aesthetic principles with representations of gender, subsumed under aesthetic categories such as beauty and taste.

In addition to new ways of representing gender, the revolutionary and innovative spirit of Pre-Raphaelite art initiated new approaches to perceptual and psychological realism, new ways of seeing, of feeling, of expressing emotions. By evoking popular Pre-Raphaelite paintings that readers had seen either in galleries or in engravings of illustrated magazines and newspapers, Victorian novelists established a common ground with them, interweaving the fictional with the actual in ways that often blurred the borderline between the two realms. At the site of these reconfigurations, where the fictional merged with the actual, readers were drawn into not merely hypothetical issues but also into questions confronting them in their quotidian lives.

In her recent work, Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature, Alison Byerly discusses several reasons for the nineteenth-century literary artists’ fascination with the visual arts. By comparing landscapes to works of art, she points out, Romantic writers attempted to validate the status of poetry as art; by alluding to works of art, realist novelists established “an imaginative space where the fictional world and the real world came together” (121). Byerly’s discussion of the relation of literature to the visual arts may explain one of the reasons for the Victorian novelists’ tendency to reconfigure Pre-Raphaelite paintings in their novels.

Over the years the relation of literature to the visual arts has been extensively discussed. Yet the particular intersection of Pre-Raphaelite art and the Victorian novel has been noted in only a few brief studies. The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel focuses on this intersection exclusively, providing several reasons for this phenomenon, one of which is that the Pre-Raphaelites’ aesthetic and sociopolitical concerns neatly dovetailed with those of the Victorian novelists. Rather than relying merely on ekphrasis, the novelists discussed in this book reconfigured popular Pre-Raphaelite paintings and in the process engaged their readers
in contemporary debates on cultural and sociopolitical issues, more specifically on aesthetics, class, and gender.

A brief overview of Victorian reviews of literature or painting points to the contemporary bias for the amalgamation and expansion of the temporal and spatial arts rather than their separation and limitation, which Lessing had championed in his seminal *Laocoön*. In her recent work, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, Kate Flint shows that Victorian critics of painting tended to “read” paintings, relying mostly on verbal rather than on visual terms. This intersection of the spatial and temporal arts, however, was not limited to critical responses to painting but was also a common occurrence in reviews of the novel. Whereas reviewers early in the century drew rather general affinities between the novel and painting, later on they often sought in narratives techniques employed in the visual arts. Referring to the controversial subject of Gaskell’s *Ruth*, for instance, a critic contends that “the extent of the canvas should bear some proportion to the dimensions of the picture.” Yet another, speaking about the novelist’s obligation to represent life truthfully, applauds Gaskell’s realistic treatment of Ruth’s story: “The sadder you say the world is, the sadder I must paint it. Woe be indeed unto me, if for the paltry sake of artistical effect, I tamper with its sadness, darken its shadows, exaggerate its miseries, so that the original shall no more be recognized from the portrait.” In an article on Wilkie Collins, published in *Fortnightly Review* at the end of the century, A. C. Swinburne compares Collins’s novels to those of his godfather’s pictures: “All the works of Wilkie Collins which we remember with pleasure are works of art as true as his godfather’s pictures, and in their own line as complete.”

What often strikes us as paradoxical in some of these reviews is the critics’ objection to the novelists’ tendency to “merely” write, which is exactly what we assume they were to do. R. H. Hutton, for instance, reviewing *Daniel Deronda* in 1876, criticizes George Eliot for devoting a great part of her novel to studying rather than painting Daniel Deronda’s character: “[S]o much pain has been expended on studying rather than on painting him.” Similarly, W. H. Mallock objects to Eliot’s disinclination to “paint” her novel, protesting that she “has ceased to use her brush at all, and has left the whole in the condition of shadowy sketches.” A. V. Dicey further elaborates on this point, conjecturing that even Eliot herself was unhappy with her heavy reliance on a verbal rather than a visual representation of Daniel Deronda: “The author, too, is dissatisfied, and, returning again and again to the hero’s character, retouches a portrait which the very painter seems hardly to consider a likeness. When dealing with minor characters, or carried away by the stress of the drama, George Eliot falls back on artistic instinct and paints with a bold hand.”
From the beginning of his career, Thomas Hardy drew attention to the relation between the novel and the visual arts through his novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* with the subtitle “A Rural Painting of the Dutch School.” Certainly the reviewers followed his lead. *The Saturday Review*, for instance, notes that “the author has produced a series of rural pictures full of life and genuine colouring.” In a review of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the Spectator questions the verisimilitude of the novel, for it lacks a “picture of the scenery and ways of life” and a “picture of the human beings who give the chief interest to that scenery and those ways of life.”

At the end of the century *The Savoy*, reviewing *Jude the Obscure*, discussed Hardy’s ability to paint nature and morals: “[I]t is clear how the artist who has trained himself to the finest observation of Nature cannot fail, as his art becomes more vital and profound, to paint morals. The fresher and more intimate his vision of Nature, the more startling his picture of morals.”

Clearly, contemporary reviews of the Victorian novel point to a set of pictorial demands placed on novelists, expected not only to be masters of the art of narrative but also to be familiar with the visual arts. Knowledge of classical or contemporary art was not enough; they were additionally expected to understand painterly techniques to such an extent as to be able to employ them in their narratives or, even further, to transform pictorial into narrative techniques. Under the circumstances, then, it was impossible for any writer to disregard the initial turmoil the Pre-Raphaelites engendered in British culture. Apart from their notoriety and later their popularity, which attracted critical and popular attention, the Pre-Raphaelites initiated unorthodox techniques and unconventional subjects extending aesthetic and social boundaries and creating a magnificent realm of beauty and splendor. Simultaneously they offered various ways to meet the contemporary demand and satisfy the longing for the visual in the verbal.

From the very beginning, Pre-Raphaelite art involved the interplay of poetry and painting, the verbal and the visual. The short-lived, Pre-Raphaelite publication, *The Germ*, highlighted its interdisciplinary nature in its subtitle, *Thoughts Towards Nature in Poetry, Literature, and Art*. After the first two issues, the new title emphasized its intertextual nature: *Art and Poetry, Being Thoughts Towards Nature, Conducted Principally by Artists*. If we consider the critical response to the change of the original title, Lindsay Smith suggests, we may perceive the new title as an attempt to destabilize the categories of art and poetry: “It [the title] is a blatant advertisement for a radical intertextuality that presents the journal as questioning its categorization as discourse. And in this sense it may be regarded as, in effect, a self-parodic intervention into the rigidity...
of genre division, and into the sister arts analogies of reviewers.”20 The Pre-Raphaelites then from the beginning of the movement had emphasized the extension and intersection of spatial and temporal boundaries. In essays on history, aesthetics, literature, and art, as well as in poems that translated pictorial into verbal texts, The Germ thoroughly explored the relationship between visual art and literature. Rossetti’s compositions in this journal, particularly his “Sonnets for Pictures,” reflect his early attempts to translate painting into poetry and thus achieve not only a destabilization of hitherto established boundaries between visual and verbal texts but also new syntheses of the spatial and temporal arts.

The intertextual nature of subjects continued to distinguish Pre-Raphaelite paintings from the beginning of the movement to its very end. The Lady of Shalott, for instance, made her first appearance in the Moxon edition of Tennyson’s poetry and continued to inspire Pre-Raphaelite painters like Waterhouse even as late as the beginning of the twentieth century. It was the “common enthusiasm” for John Keats’s poetry, William Holman Hunt recalls, that brought the three founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood together and later served as the inspiration for several paintings.21 Contemporary critics such as John Ruskin and David Masson described the Pre-Raphaelites as poetical painters. Twentieth-century critics, like Stephen Spender, continued to see the Pre-Raphaelites as literary painters whose inspiration was mainly “verbal, literary, poetic, rather than painting.”22 Although Spender’s interpretation is quite restrictive, as Elizabeth Prettejohn has recently demonstrated, it is quite applicable to a large corpus of Pre-Raphaelite art.23 Vibrant, sensuous paintings such as Millais’s Mariana and Lorenzo and Isabella, Arthur Hughes’s April Love, Rossetti’s Blessed Damozel, Holman Hunt’s Lady of Shalott, to name but a few, originated in poetry and illustrated the Pre-Raphaelite painter’s vision of a moment, a scene, or a theme. Such literary paintings may be seen as attempts to make palpable and tangible impalpable and intangible verbal expressions or as challenges to ideological representations of gender.

Yet Pre-Raphaelite art was not limited to the well-known and extensively documented amalgamation of the poetic and the painterly. The Pre-Raphaelite convergence of the verbal and the visual transpired in yet another significant contemporary genre—the Victorian novel. Novelists as diverse as Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy, whose philosophical and literary perspectives differed considerably, were all fascinated by the Pre-Raphaelites, corresponded with them, visited their studios, and frequently commissioned them to illustrate their novels. But beyond explicit visual illustrations that accompanied the text, the Pre-
Raphaelites entered the Victorian novel in more subtle and implicit ways. It is interesting to note that the relationship between Victorian novelists and Pre-Raphaelite artists was reciprocal. Paintings such as Holman Hunt’s *Rienzi* and *The Awakening Conscience* were inspired respectively by Bulwer Lytton’s *Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes* and Charles Dickens’s *David Copperfield*.

The affinities of the Victorian novel with the sister arts have been the subject of extensive scholarship, particularly that devoted to William Thackeray, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy. The *Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel* extends this kind of scholarship and concentrates primarily on representations of Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the Victorian novel. In textual redrawings of these paintings, novelists often engaged readers in questions over restrictive, conventional gender boundaries. Simultaneously, readers became involved in contemporary debates on gender issues, seeing the sociopolitical contradictions that governed constructions of gender in Victorian England.

Never just a sympathetic or mildly antagonistic response but intense emotions, ranging from anger or anxiety to praise or enchantment have governed the critical reception of the Pre-Raphaelites’ representations of gender through the years. Since its inception Pre-Raphaelite art has been the locus of impassioned debates. Vituperative critical attacks reached their culmination in 1850, when the meaning of the monogram PRB became known and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was seen by a few critics as yet another religious or political group with a subversive agenda at a time of tumultuous sociopolitical activities. That year, Charles Dickens’s sarcastic denigration of the Pre-Raphaelites in general and John Everett Millais’s *Christ in the House of His Parents* in particular is representative of the hostile reception the first Pre-Raphaelite paintings received: “Wherever it is possible to express ugliness of feature, limb, or attitude, you have it expressed. Such men as the carpenters might be undressed in any hospital where dirty drunkards, in a high state of varicose veins, are received. Their very toes have walked out of Saint Giles’s.” Aesthetics and gender politics were involved in the critical reception of Pre-Raphaelite art from its very beginning and continue to be the controversial subject of critical studies.

Over one hundred years after its inception, the Pre-Raphaelites’ representations of gender constructs once again elicited emotionally charged responses. In “Patriarchal Power and the Pre-Raphaelites,” Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock berate the art historians’ responses to the 1984 Pre-Raphaelite Tate exhibit, the first major Pre-Raphaelite exhibit since the 1961 exhibition at the Maas Gallery: “The exhibition at the Tate and its accompanying publications offer no suggestion that such work [on
the constitution and culture of the British bourgeoisie] will even be inti-
mated in its procedures. Indeed, class, race and gender are systematically
erased from a discourse which none the less provides an affirmation of
bourgeois, sexist and racist ideologies." 27 Cherry and Pollock’s emotion-
ally charged response is reminiscent of the emotional upheaval that Pre-
Raphaelite paintings generated in their earliest viewers.

Ironically, the Pre-Raphaelites have recently been censured not for
their subversion but for their endorsement of Victorian gender constructs.
Instead of upbraiding the Pre-Raphaelites for their unorthodox represen-
tation of gender constructs, as some of the early reviewers had done, crit-
ics such as Cherry and Pollock have decried their stereotypical
depictions. Similarly, critics like Jan Marsh in Pre-Raphaelite Women:
Images of Femininity have often discussed Pre-Raphaelite images in terms
of feminine stereotypes. Most likely, the Pre-Raphaelites, especially the
ey early ones, who perceived themselves as rebels fighting the artistic and
sociopolitical establishment, would have winced at such accusations.
These recent responses to the Pre-Raphaelites as well as hundreds of
books devoted to their art demonstrate the lasting quality of Pre-
Raphaelite art, which has survived the centuries and is still as dazzling and
bewildering today as it was in its very beginning.

Today the controversy surrounding the Pre-Raphaelites has not sub-
sided but has taken on our own sociopolitical preoccupations. Class, race,
and gender are the primary lenses through which recent critics scrutinize
Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Such perspectives, however, are as steeped in
ideological battles now as they were more than a hundred years ago. Yet,
as Elizabeth Prettejohn in her recent Art of the Pre-Raphaelites contends,
most often recent perspectives on the Pre-Raphaelites

have shifted the responsibility for patriarchal bias, comfortably, away
from ourselves and on to the Pre-Raphaelite pictures. By unmasking the
misogynistic implication of Pre-Raphaelite pictures of women, we can
rail against Victorian patriarchal presuppositions with a complacent
sense of our own superiority. Indeed the case with which we find our-

By projecting our own anxieties onto the Pre-Raphaelites, Prettejohn
claims, we tend to distance ourselves from our own complicity with gen-
der inequities. In the process, Prettejohn points out, we tend to overlook
the Pre-Raphaelites’ astonishing contribution to art and culture, not
only in Great Britain but also throughout the world. Yet even those writ-
ers embroiled in controversial responses to Pre-Raphaelite representa-
tions of gender, I believe, would agree that the Pre-Raphaelites expanded the limits of rigid Victorian morality and transgressed established gender boundaries.

The Pre-Raphaelites' resistance to conventional gender constructs was quite often interwoven with an astute understanding of human psychology, at times captured in representations of subjects in emotional turmoil. Their treatment of psychological subjects in turn is reflected in the multifarious interpretations their paintings to this day have received. Recent art historians have unraveled the nuances of meaning that Pre-Raphaelite images convey, they themselves transgressing interpretive boundaries that confine their meaning within racist and misogynist classifications. In just the last few years critics such as J. B. Bullen, *The Pre-Raphaelite Body*, Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, and Christine Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail: Arthurian Legend in British Art 1840–1920* have pioneered discoveries moving our understanding beyond the hitherto established parameters of psychoanalysis, feminism, poststructuralism, and deconstructivism. Dominated by the forces of the marketplace, the Pre-Raphaelites, like Victorian novelists, quite often hovered over the hazy borderline between the conventional and the unconventional. The belligerent response to their first paintings compelled them to adjust the choice of their subjects to the expectations of their spectators. Nevertheless the Pre-Raphaelites remained throughout their careers more progressive and liberal than their contemporary counterparts. Chapter 1 explores this hazy borderline between the stereotypical or conventional and the unconventional or progressive. In the conflation of the sacred and the profane, the pure and the fallen, the Victorian binary opposites governing conventional representations of femininity, Pre-Raphaelites achieved the extension of gendered boundaries and simultaneously revealed the inherent contradictions in prevailing norms. In chapter 1 I also examine the affinities the Victorian novel and Pre-Raphaelite art shared, specifically in perceptual, psychological, and poetic realism. This chapter concludes with the gender politics governing ekphrasis.

Like the Pre-Raphaelites who challenged prevailing subjects of representation, Elizabeth Gaskell chose Ruth, an unmarried, teenaged woman, for the heroine of her eponymous novel. Most Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the early years of the movement were unorthodox representations of conventional subjects. In her textual redrawings of popular Pre-Raphaelite paintings, Gaskell explores this convergence of the unconventional with the conventional in her contentious *Ruth*, the subject of chapter 2. Her representations of Ruth, like those of the Pre-Raphaelites, involve the conflation of and challenge to a specific contemporary binary—the fallen
woman and the Virgin Mary. In her reconfigurations of Pre-Raphaelite paintings of idealized versions of feminine beauty, Gaskell demonstrates that prevalent notions of ideal femininity sustain conditions for victimization. Her concern with the social conditions of victimization may explain her reconfiguration of a notable Pre-Raphaelite painting such as *Ophelia*, which displays the tragedy of an innocent victim, blending youthful features and vibrant female beauty with the fragility of a tragically premature death. Her own representation of the relationship between innocence and victimization, however, does not focus so much on inevitable tragic fate as on social conditions that are situational and as such ought to be changed.

In Pre-Raphaelite art, Wilkie Collins found a unique amalgamation of two quintessential and distinctive qualities of his work—realism and sensationalism. In chapter 3 I explore Collins’s new modes of perception developed in *The Woman in White*, initiated by Pre-Raphaelite art, in connection to landscapes, identity formation, and the extension of conventional gender boundaries. In addition to themes for his novel, Collins found in Pre-Raphaelite paintings his primary narrative technique—the treatment of light and shade. This chapter presents a brief overview of early reviews of Pre-Raphaelite exhibits concerned with the Pre-Raphaelites’ departure from traditional perspective and treatment of light and shade. The Pre-Raphaelite naturalistic and egalitarian, rather than artificial and hierarchical, representation of life made new demands on spectators, compelling them to see what traditional modes of perception concealed. To Collins, the Pre-Raphaelites were engaged in new ways of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world. In *The Woman in White* Collins develops these new ways of interacting with the world. In particular he situates his characters in Pre-Raphaelite scenes partially lit and partially darkened, in the process-evoking states of consciousness between waking and dreaming and forms of knowledge between the real and the imaginative. *The Woman in White* orients us toward a new perspective on Collins’s challenge to gender constructs, inextricably bound with modes of perception initiated by his Pre-Raphaelite friends.

In chapter 4 I argue that the Pre-Raphaelites’ impact on George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* is significantly different from that on her earlier novels. As with her previous novels, in *Daniel Deronda* Eliot derives from Pre-Raphaelite pictorial techniques sources for her narrative strategies and from their subjects inspirations for her literary portraits. I maintain, for instance, that while she initially was more interested in developing the Pre-Raphaelite notion of the germ into an aesthetic theory of narration, she gradually developed it into an aesthetic that integrated narrative technique with social critique. What is new about this stage of her writing is the level of complexity she introduces to her already successful ways
of merging literature and painting. The new direction Eliot's reconfigurations of Pre-Raphaelite paintings takes in her last novel may be partly explained by the fact that she met Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones just a few years before the composition of her last novel. A letter occasioned by her visit to Burne-Jones's studio in 1873 records the new perspective she began to form toward his work, the relation between great drama and historical understanding. Thus, I argue, Eliot's understanding of Pre-Raphaelite art at the time affected her previous interest in the relation between literature and painting and extended it toward history. Edward Burne-Jones's *Wheel of Fortune*, I demonstrate, is the locus of the Pre-Raphaelite presence in *Daniel Deronda*, a vibrant illustration of her critique of the British Empire. As the novel progresses, we become aware that Gwendolen's gambling and the sense of supremacy it fuels in her is paradigmatic of the colonialist ideology dominating the mid-Victorian years.

*Daniel Deronda* reveals that Eliot was aware that the contemporary interest in classical Greece and Rome dovetailed with colonialist and patriarchal ideologies. At a time when women's status was gradually improving through the women's movement and legislative measures, the turn to classical gender constructs expressed the contemporary resistance to women's evolving roles. Unlike contemporary, classical subject painters like Frederic Leighton, Rossetti questioned patriarchal interpretations of classical figures like Pandora, Proserpine, and Astarte Syriaca through the sonnets he wrote for these paintings. Eliot reconfigures Rossetti's representations of these goddesses and further questions her culture's insistence on the universal and natural status of woman as man's inferior. In her notebooks for her last novel we find records of the sensational accounts of African explorers in the 1860s dwelling on “superstition,” “bewitchery,” and “childish passion.” As it happens, Eliot implies, such are the qualities we may also find in Rossetti's and Burne-Jones's Pre-Raphaelite stunners of the 1860s and 1870s, which she reconfigured into images of Gwendolen in *Daniel Deronda*. In images of beauty, evil, and magic, Eliot, like Rossetti and Burne-Jones, blends images of the primitive and the demonic with the civilized, blurring the demarcation between categories considered distinct. But her goal in her last novel differs from that of the Pre-Raphaelites. Through the contradictory representations of Gwendolen, George Eliot articulates and criticizes contemporary anxieties over crucial events, namely the question of women's suffrage and the expansion of the British Empire, which determined conflicting attitudes toward women, often seen as the other. In her last novel Eliot saw otherness as a critical domain from which to refigure the self.
In the latter part of the nineteenth century even hostile critics recognized the Pre-Raphaelites’ remarkable contribution to British art. Ironically, what early critics had decried as a distorted, unhealthy depiction of reality, those in the later part of the century lauded as the healthy, Pre-Raphaelite principles that they often contrasted with the decadent aestheticism of the second phase of Pre-Raphaelitism. Chapter 5 includes an overview of the critical reception of the second phase of Pre-Raphaelitism, the aesthetic movement, led by Edward Burne-Jones. Here I focus on prevailing apprehensions over the destabilization of established gender boundaries that his paintings generated during the second part of the nineteenth century. Like the reviewers of the early Pre-Raphaelite pictures, some critics of Edward Burne-Jones’s paintings relied on pathological terms to protest his representations of unconventional gender constructs, particularly his recurrent representation of androgyny. In his hazy distinctions of gender Burne-Jones engaged his viewers in more problematic and puzzling ways of understanding gender constructs than did his Pre-Raphaelite predecessors, in whose paintings gender identity was readily understood. In seductive dreamscapes that seem completely removed from the gender politics of his era, Burne-Jones problematized gender constructs in representations of indeterminate androgyny.

Through subtle reconfigurations of Edward Burne-Jones’s androgynous figures such as Nimue and Merlin, Cupid and Psyche, Thomas Hardy, I contend in chapter 5, participates in contemporary debates on the “new woman,” often labeled “the bachelor girl,” who distinguished herself in that era by her rejection of marriage and her demand for equal rights. Like Burne-Jones, who places his androgynous figures in dreamscapes that appear to be removed from the sociopolitical sphere, Thomas Hardy experimented with the suspension of gender boundaries in the “dreamy paradise” Sue and Jude conjure, until crass reality completely annihilates their dreams and their lives, compelling them to seek shelter within the enclosure of conventional gender boundaries they had once spurned. Nevertheless, unlike Burne-Jones, who destabilized gender constructs by representing men and women as androgynous, Hardy, in his reconfigurations of Burne-Jones’s paintings, represented only Sue as androgynous. Through the representation of Sue’s intellectual power and her depiction as an androgynous figure, Hardy sustained feminism; yet, in her stereotypically feminine breakdown and eventual capitulation to convention, he thoroughly subverted it. Hardy’s contradictory perspective on Sue and Jude captured unresolved and puzzling questions about constructions of gender that are characteristic of the Victorian era.

I have limited the scope of The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel to four prolific Victorian novelists, Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins,
George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy, and to the four, most prominent Pre-Raphaelite artists, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, and Edward Burne-Jones. The works of these literary and painterly artists were widely disseminated and as such represented and shaped salient aspects of Victorian culture.