

**A BRITISH SYMBOLIST IN PRE-RAPHAELITE CIRCLES:
EDWARD ROBERT HUGHES RWS (1851-1914)**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reconsiders key aspects of the work of the British artist Edward Robert Hughes RWS (1851-1914). A nephew of the Pre-Raphaelite painter Arthur Hughes (1832-1915), Hughes made a career as a portraitist and draughtsman and as an exhibiting watercolourist, specialising in highly-finished compositions of literary and allegorical subjects.

The first chapter situates the artist in the context of the late Victorian and Edwardian art world, and particularly in relation to the wider Pre-Raphaelite circle. It summarises the key relationships enjoyed by Hughes within contemporary artistic networks, investigating the extent to which these connections helped to shape his career and affected the ways in which his work was critically received.

The second chapter discusses Hughes's use of drawing as a medium. It examines Hughes's drawn work in the context of Victorian exhibiting practice, casting light not only on his career as a draughtsman but on the changing status of drawings as exhibition pieces in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The final chapter considers the extent to which Hughes can be characterised as a Symbolist artist. It relates his later work to Symbolist theory and practice, and investigates Hughes's personal and professional links with Symbolism as an international movement.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis reconsiders key aspects of the work of the British painter and draughtsman Edward Robert Hughes RWS (1851-1914). A nephew of the Pre-Raphaelite artist Arthur Hughes (1832-1915), Hughes (fig. 1) made a career as a portrait painter and draughtsman and as an exhibiting watercolourist, specialising in large-scale, highly-finished compositions of literary and allegorical subjects. He exhibited widely, notably at the Royal Academy, Dudley Gallery, Grosvenor Gallery and New Gallery, and was a prominent figure in the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours (RWS), exhibiting there twice a year from 1891 and serving as the Society's Vice President between 1901 and 1903.¹

Hughes established a reputation for his colour sense and technical facility, but by the beginning of the twentieth century his meticulously-painted historical and allegorical watercolours were dismissed by many critics as vapid, sentimental and hopelessly old-fashioned, particularly when seen alongside the freely-handled modern-life subjects of artists such as Laura Knight (1877-1970). One reviewer of the RWS's winter exhibition in 1909 praised Knight's work as 'stand[ing] out in protest against the pretty and sugary stuff of lazy and inefficient exhibitors', singling out 'the school studies and Christmas cards of

¹ Hughes is listed with the title 'Deputy President' in the RWS exhibition catalogues for summer 1901 and winter 1901-2, and as 'Vice-President' from summer 1902 until the winter exhibition of 1903-4. Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836-1912) had taken over by summer 1904.

Mr. E.R. Hughes, and other pictures which, if reduced, might decorate confetti boxes'.² After he died in 1914, Hughes effectively plummeted into critical obscurity, and his work was not seriously re-examined for more than sixty years.

There were first indications of a reassessment some thirty years ago, when Hughes's '*Night with her train of stars and her great gift of sleep*' (fig. 52)³ was shown in the exhibition *Fantastic Illustration and Design in Britain 1850-1930* (Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1979).⁴ Since then, Hughes's contribution to the development of later Pre-Raphaelite and Symbolist painting has been recognised by his occasional inclusion in major survey exhibitions:

'*Night with her train of stars...*' and '*Oh, what's that in the hollow...?*' (fig. 45)⁵ were both shown in *The Last Romantics: The Romantic Tradition in British Art, Burne-Jones to Stanley Spencer* (Barbican Art Gallery, London, 1989),⁶ and in

² *The New Age*, 23 December 1909, 189

³ For consistency, works are cited in the text using the titles and capitalisation printed in the catalogues of the RWS or elsewhere on their first exhibition, where known. This watercolour, more usually known as *Night with her Train of Stars*, was first exhibited in 1912 without a title but with a poetic tag from W.E. Henley's *Margaritae Sorori*: 'Night with her train of stars and her great gift of sleep'. It has been referred to in this form on its first appearance in the text, and thereafter, for the sake of brevity, as '*Night with her train of stars...*' Where Hughes's works made their first appearance with a title, but in inverted commas to denote a quotation (as for example in the case of '*Wings of the Morning*', fig. 51), this has also been followed in the present text.

⁴ Diana L. Johnson, *Fantastic Illustration and Design in Britain, 1850-1930*, exhibition catalogue, Providence, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1979, 71

⁵ Like '*Night with her train of stars...*', this work was exhibited without a title but with a poetic tag, two lines from Christina Rossetti's *Amor Mundi* (1865):

“‘Oh, what's that in the hollow, so pale, I quake to follow?’

‘Oh, that's a thin, dead body, which waits the eternal term.’”

Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, *Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies 1893-4*, 1893, 2

For brevity the work is referred to throughout as '*Oh, what's that in the hollow...?*'

⁶ John Christian (ed.), *The Last Romantics: The Romantic Tradition in British Art, Burne-Jones to Stanley Spencer*, exhibition catalogue, London, Barbican Art Gallery, 1989, 95. '*Night with her train of stars...*' was selected as the cover image for the catalogue.

1995 ‘*Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?*’ featured in *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal.⁷

However, while a few key watercolours have been exhibited and published in recent years, there has been comparatively little investigation of the wider extent or context of Hughes’s output. In 1990, Rodney Engen’s article ‘The Twilight of Edward Robert Hughes, RWS’ was important as the first published research dedicated to Hughes alone, establishing an outline for his life and career and identifying the primary stylistic and thematic developments in his art.⁸ Six years later, in 1996, Georgiana L. Head built on the research carried out by Engen with her MA thesis on Hughes, which comprised a biographical study and two subsequent chapters, one dedicated to the artist’s illustrative projects of 1894-7 and one to his work as a studio assistant for William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) during the last years of the veteran artist’s life, when Hunt’s eyesight was failing.⁹

Critical attention has more often focused on Hughes’s working relationship with Hunt than on his own artistic career. Prior to Head’s thesis the extent of his contribution to the third and final version of Hunt’s *The Light of the World* (fig. 22) had been considered by Jeremy Maas in 1984,¹⁰ and more recently Judith

⁷ Jean Clair et al., *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe*, exhibition catalogue, Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts, 1995, 514

⁸ Rodney Engen, ‘The Twilight of Edward Robert Hughes, RWS’, *Watercolours and Drawings*, 5:1, 1990, 34-37

⁹ Georgiana L. Head, ‘Edward Robert Hughes 1851-1914’, unpublished MA diss., Royal Holloway College, London, 1996

¹⁰ Jeremy Maas, *Holman Hunt and the Light of the World*, London, 1984, 103-111

Bronkhurst has assessed Hughes's role in the production of *The Light of the World* and *The Lady of Shalott* (fig. 21)¹¹ as well as examining instances where Hughes altered existing works by Hunt at the request of Hunt's wife Edith and daughter Gladys.¹² Hughes's studio assistantship is thus an aspect of his career that has been comparatively fully explored, and is not one of the main focuses of the present thesis; however, the first chapter touches briefly on references in previously unstudied correspondence which cast new light on his relationship with Hunt.¹³

This thesis differs from previous research both in its emphasis and in the range of sources that have been consulted, many of which have either not been previously studied or not considered in relation to Hughes. They include an unpublished collection of about 155 letters written by the artist to his friends and patrons Sydney and Juliet Morse between 1883 and 1914, held at Princeton University Library,¹⁴ and correspondence and other manuscript material held in the George MacDonald collection at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.¹⁵ The thesis also draws upon exhibition records, memoirs of friends

¹¹ Judith Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: a Catalogue Raisonné*, New Haven and London, 2006, 289-291

¹² *Ibid.*, 215-217, 260-262

¹³ See pp.30-33 in this thesis

¹⁴ Correspondence, E.R. Hughes to Sydney and Juliet Morse, unpublished manuscripts, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, collection CO743. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Judith Bronkhurst for bringing this collection to my attention.

¹⁵ George MacDonald Collection, General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 103. Hughes was engaged to MacDonald's second daughter, Mary Josephine, from January 1874 until her death in April 1878, and remained a friend of the family.

and acquaintances including Estella Canziani, Walter Crane, and William Silas Spanton, papers in the possession of the artist's family, and paintings, drawings and watercolours in both public and private collections, many of which are unpublished and little known. Central to the thesis are extracts from contemporary reviews, drawn in part from the archives held at the RWS, which cast light on the ways in which Hughes's work was received by contemporary critics and audiences and help to place it within a wider artistic context.

The thesis comprises three chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of Hughes's career. The first, by way of introduction, situates the artist in the context of the late Victorian and Edwardian art world, and particularly in relation to the wider Pre-Raphaelite circle. It traces the extent to which his watercolours were characterised by contemporary reviewers as 'Pre-Raphaelite' and summarises the key relationships enjoyed by Hughes within the wider Pre-Raphaelite circle and other artistic networks, investigating the ways in which these connections helped to shape his career and affected the ways in which his work was critically received.

The second chapter discusses Hughes's use of drawing as a medium. As a student at the Royal Academy in 1870 the artist won a silver medal for the best drawing from the Antique, and he later became noted for his portraits and studies in red or black chalk, pencil and silverpoint, many of them exhibited at the RWS. The chapter will examine Hughes's drawn work in the context of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century exhibiting practice, casting light not only on his

career as a draughtsman but on the changing status of drawings as exhibition pieces in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The final chapter considers the extent to which Hughes can be characterised as a Symbolist artist. It relates his work to Symbolist theory and practice, connecting the themes and imagery of his drawings and watercolours to the broader context of international Symbolism, and investigates Hughes's personal and professional links with the movement, for example assessing to what extent the presence in London of Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921) — who exhibited at the New Gallery in the early 1890s, concurrently with Hughes — was significant in developing his Symbolist interests.

The thesis revisits a painter and draughtsman who was described on his death as 'sure of a place among the "minor classics" in the library of art',¹⁶ but who has attracted scant critical attention in subsequent decades and whose name remains little known. It is hoped that the present study will help to stimulate a reassessment of a still largely neglected figure, and that by placing Hughes in his broader context it will also make some contribution to wider debates around Pre-Raphaelite, post Pre-Raphaelite and Symbolist art.

¹⁶ Randall Davies, 'The Royal Water-Colour Society', *The Queen*, 136, 3544, 28 November 1914, 910

CHAPTER ONE

‘ONE OF THE VERY LAST VOTARIES

OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD’¹:

HUGHES, PRE-RAPHAELITISM AND THE LATE VICTORIAN ART WORLD

Following Edward Robert Hughes’s death on 23 April 1914, the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours (RWS) marked his passing with a special display of thirty-four of his works in that year’s winter exhibition.² Since Hughes had not had a one-man show during his lifetime, this display – ‘a whole wall’, according to his uncle, Arthur Hughes³ – was the first opportunity critics and audiences had had to evaluate the whole range of Hughes’s career, place him in his wider artistic context and assess his likely legacy.

Critics reviewing the memorial display almost unanimously characterised Hughes as a Pre-Raphaelite artist. This was doubtless in part because of his close personal links with the movement: when reporting Hughes’s death in April *The*

¹ ‘O.W.’, “‘Ted” Hughes, RWS: A Great Loss to British Art. Rare Gifts and Ideals. Special Memoir.’, unnamed publication, almost certainly *The Pall Mall Gazette*, late April 1914; newspaper clipping, private collection. This appreciation was written in the week following Hughes’s death. To judge from the distinctive combination of typefaces, the design of the spacers in the headline and the ‘PA’ appearing at the top of the clipping the article derives from *The Pall Mall Gazette*, although a search of the microfilms of the *Gazette* held at the British Library failed to trace it there.

² See Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, *Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies*, 1914-15, cats 163 and 200-232.

³ Letter, Arthur Hughes to Agnes Hale-White, [23 November 1914]. Unpublished manuscript, Tate archive 71-28/15. I am grateful to Leonard Roberts for directing me to references to E.R. Hughes in the correspondence of his uncle.

Studio had noted the artist's familial relationship to Arthur Hughes,⁴ while the correspondent of the *Notts Guardian*, possibly aware of Hughes's work as studio assistant to William Holman Hunt, described him as Hunt's 'artistic son'.⁵ However, the reviewers' identification of Hughes with Pre-Raphaelitism was stylistic, as well as personal: *The Observer's* critic, 'P.G.K.', remarked that the artist had 'to the very end of his career adhered to the principles of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, with which he was closely connected from his earliest days'.⁶ Indeed, so strongly was Hughes identified with the Pre-Raphaelite movement that immediately after four paragraphs of discussing the artist's memorial display, 'P.G.K.' made the stark pronouncement that 'Pre-Raphaelism [*sic*], which in its day exercised so significant an influence upon British art, is dead.'⁷ It was as if the passing of E.R. Hughes marked the end of Pre-Raphaelitism itself.

⁴ Hughes is described as 'a nephew of Mr. Arthur Hughes, and like him closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.' [Anon.], 'Studio-Talk', *The Studio*, 62, 1914, 57. The family connection caused some confusion: *The Northern Whig* reported the memorial display as commemorating 'the late Arthur Hughes' (2 November 1914, RWS archive, press cuttings book P8) and *The Observer* twice referred to Arthur Hughes instead of his nephew: 'P.G.K.', 'Royal Society of Painters in Water-colours', *The Observer*, 1 November 1914, 7. The fact that Arthur Hughes was both still living, and deeply affected by E.R. Hughes's death (see letter, Arthur Hughes to Jack Hale-White, 4 October 1914, unpublished manuscript, Tate archive, 71-28/19) made the error doubly regrettable.

⁵ *Notts Guardian*, 31 October 1914, RWS archive, press cuttings book P8 (1914-1919)

⁶ 'P.G.K.', 'Royal Society of Painters in Water-colours', *The Observer*, 1 November 1914, 7.

⁷ *Ibid.* When 'P.G.K.' uses the term 'Pre-Raphaelism' here, he is referring to the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in its broadest sense. As Percy Bate noted, the term 'Pre-Raphaelite' had come to be 'very loosely used' and habitually applied to two strands of painting: to describe 'pictures painted with unsparing effort after truth in every way – honest endeavours after sincerity which are really and truly Pre-Raphaelite, as the inventors of the word understood it; and ... to characterise every picture which showed in conception or in feeling that the painter had been influenced by the later work of Dante Rossetti, or of his pupil, Edward Burne-Jones'. Percy Bate, *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters, their Associates and Successors*, London, fourth ed., 1910, 56

There can be no doubt that Hughes's personal and professional connections with the Pre-Raphaelite movement were important in shaping his life and career. Hughes himself asserted, in the catalogue of the first International Art Exhibition in Venice in 1895, that 'having grown up among ardent exponents of Pre-Raphaelitism, the artistic ideals of which I share, my sympathies are reserved for that school.'⁸ However, while he was particularly closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelite circle, Hughes's working life saw him active in a series of overlapping and interconnecting networks, both social and professional. This chapter explores his place within those networks, attempting to situate Hughes's work, and the critical responses to it, not only in relation to Pre-Raphaelitism but to the wider artistic context of his day. It traces key personal, artistic and institutional relationships and outlines his exhibiting history, which took him from progressive 'alternative' spaces in the 1870s and 1880s – the Dudley Gallery, Grosvenor Gallery and New Gallery – to that perceived bastion of conservatism, the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours (RWS), where he ended his career.

⁸ Hughes's artistic statement in the catalogue notes that '...cresciuto 'fra sostenitori ardenti del prerafaellismo, serbo le mio simpatie per questa scula, car la quale ho comuni gli ideali artistici.' *Prima Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia*, exhibition catalogue, 1895, 100, quoted in Georgiana L. Head, 'Edward Robert Hughes 1851-1914', unpublished MA diss., Royal Holloway College, 1996, 13n. The translation is mine.

Hughes's comment about having 'grown up among ardent exponents of Pre-Raphaelitism' was literally true. Born the son of a London clerk,⁹ the young Edward Robert was nephew to the Pre-Raphaelite painter Arthur Hughes (1832-1915), who painted a portrait of him, barefoot and in his night-gown, when Hughes was two-and-a-half years old (fig. 2).¹⁰ When his nephew was born in autumn 1851, Arthur Hughes was a young artist of nineteen, a student in the Royal Academy Schools and newly introduced into the Pre-Raphaelite circle. He had discovered the group through the first issue of its journal *The Germ* the previous year, and in late March or early April 1851 had met Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) and Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893) for the first time.¹¹ It was probably Arthur Hughes who gave the young Edward his first practical lessons in art,¹² and his example was surely influential in shaping his nephew's ambitions to be a painter. Edward Hughes (or Ted, as he was invariably known to family and friends) was close to his uncle: significantly, he lived with Arthur Hughes's family for a period in the 1860s,¹³ and it was his uncle's address in

⁹ Hughes's father, Edward Hughes (c.1828-1876), is listed in the 1851 England census as a 'clerk to Turkey Merchant', in 1861 as a commercial clerk in the East India Trade, and in 1871 as a clerk to an eel merchant. I am grateful to Jude Flint for her assistance in deciphering these entries.

¹⁰ The portrait bears an inscription in the left spandrel, beneath the mount, in Edward Robert Hughes's hand: 'E R Hughes at / two & a half years / old. Painted by / his uncle/ Arthur Hughes', suggesting a likely date of 1853.

¹¹ Stephen Wildman, 'Arthur Hughes 1832-1915: True artist and true Pre-Raphaelite', in Leonard Roberts, *Arthur Hughes: his life and works, a catalogue raisonné*, Woodbridge, 1997, 12-13

¹² Arthur Hughes would later refer to 'my nephew and old pupil Ted'. Letter, Arthur Hughes to Alice Boyd, 21 February 1891, Penkill Papers, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, quoted in Wildman, 'Arthur Hughes 1832-1915: True artist and true Pre-Raphaelite', in Roberts, *Arthur Hughes*, 1997, 34

¹³ In a memoir of her parents compiled from their reminiscences, Arthur Hughes's granddaughter writes that Arthur and Tryphena Hughes and their five children were joined by

Windsor Street, Putney, that Hughes gave when he enrolled in the Royal Academy Schools in 1868.¹⁴

Hughes seems to have fixed upon a career as an artist by his mid-teens, when he enrolled at Heatherley's art school on Newman Street.¹⁵ He was typical of the many young artists who attended Heatherley's to practice the skills in drawing that they needed to prove themselves eligible for the Royal Academy Schools: for relatively modest fees, the school provided classes in studying from the nude model and gave its students access to an extensive collection of casts, costumes, armour, pottery and furniture.¹⁶ The date of Hughes's entry to the school is unrecorded, but he was almost certainly there in the summer of 1866, when he probably first met the young Charles Fairfax Murray (1849-1919), then a fellow student and shortly to begin work as studio assistant to Edward Burne-Jones

'Ted Hughes, a cousin. A handsome, loving, brilliant boy, who, wild for painting, calmly elected to leave his own home and live with his uncle.' Cecily Hale-White, 'Jack and Agnes Hale-White: A Tribute', unpublished typescript, transcribed from a photocopy of the original, 1 February 1980, Tate archive, 7017, 11; I am grateful to Leonard Roberts for directing me to this source. Leonard Roberts suggests (by email, 11 August 2008), that Hughes may have gone to live with his uncle because his father was in financial difficulties and unable to support him. He cites a letter from Arthur Hughes to James Leathart, [c.Oct.1868], unpublished manuscript, University of Berkeley, California: 'Since sending you the picture I have been called upon to pay some money for a brother of mine, for whom I became surety some time ago'. Roberts notes that the letter may refer to Arthur Hughes's other brother, William, but if it refers to Edward senior then it would support the supposition that he was in straitened circumstances.

¹⁴ Hughes gave his address as Windsor Lodge, Windsor St, Putney when he enrolled as a student on 29 May 1868 (information by email from Andrew Potter, Royal Academy Library, 28 February 2007).

¹⁵ For a brief history of the school to 1907, see Christopher Neve, 'London Art School in Search of a Home: Heatherley's – I', in *Country Life*, 164, 4232, 17 August 1978, 448-50

¹⁶ Hughes's fellow student William Silas Spanton, for example, had failed to enter the RA Schools at seventeen and enrolled at Heatherley's to prepare for another attempt. William Silas Spanton, *An Art Student and his Teachers in the Sixties, with other Rigmaroles*, London, 1927, 15. I am grateful to David Elliott for bringing Spanton's memoirs to my attention.

(1833-1898).¹⁷ Two years later, Murray would record his seventeen-year-old friend in a wash drawing now at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (fig. 3), previously catalogued simply as *Head of a Young Man* but identified here, by comparing it with photographs (for example fig. 4), as a study of the young Hughes. The two men's friendship would be one of the closest and most enduring of both their lives, lasting nearly fifty years until Hughes's death in 1914.¹⁸

On 29 May 1868, aged sixteen, Hughes succeeded in entering the RA Schools as a probationer, with a letter of recommendation from Thomas Heatherley, his principal at Newman Street.¹⁹ He made his exhibiting debut at the Royal Academy two years later, in 1870, with *The Spinet* (fig. 5), a watercolour depicting a little girl playing music in an interior, watched over by a young woman. It seems to have been overlooked by reviewers at the time; however, when it was exhibited in Hughes's memorial display forty-four years later *The Spinet* was the one work singled out for particular praise. For the critic of *The Studio* it was 'by far the most important' of the thirty-four works on view.²⁰ Significantly, *The Spinet* was identified by reviewers in 1914 as the work that most clearly demonstrated Hughes's engagement with Pre-Raphaelitism: *The*

¹⁷ David B. Elliott, *Charles Fairfax Murray, The Unknown Pre-Raphaelite*, Lewes, 2000, 12-13 and 194

¹⁸ Murray wrote to William Silas Spanton in 1915, the year after Hughes's death, that '... you are now I think my oldest friend, Hughes was the last near you coming as he did a few months or weeks later than you – I met him at Heatherley's.' David B. Elliott, *Charles Fairfax Murray, The Unknown Pre-Raphaelite*, Lewes, 2000, 193-4

¹⁹ Information by email from Andrew Potter, Royal Academy Library, 28 February 2007

²⁰ [Anon.], 'Studio-Talk', *The Studio*, 62, 1914, 57.

Notts Guardian, for example, observed that ‘The Pre-Raphaelite phase of his art is admirably represented by “The Spinet”’,²¹ while for *The Studio*, the reason for this work being ‘by far the most important’ on display lay ‘both in [its] escaping the sentimentality which affected this artist’s brush and in reflecting in water-colours some of the true genius of the Pre-Raphaelite movement when it was at the flood.’²² Critics perceived in *The Spinet*, with its modest scale, close observation and unassuming subject matter, a sincerity and intensity (a word chosen by at least two reviewers)²³ that they failed to find in the ‘elaborated poetical essays’²⁴ habitually exhibited by Hughes at the RWS in the latter years of his career. These qualities of intensity and sincerity were precisely those that the observers of the early twentieth century considered to epitomise the ideals of the first phase of the movement. In his study *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters*, the first survey of Pre-Raphaelitism and its followers, Percy Bates had asserted that the Pre-Raphaelites’ ‘whole creed might almost be summed up in one word, for the keystone of the doctrines that they attempted to preach by word and deed was simply SINCERITY.’²⁵

²¹ *The Notts Guardian*, 31 October 1914, RWS archive, press cuttings book P8 (1914-1919)

²² [Anon.], ‘Studio-Talk’, *The Studio*, 62, 1914, 57

²³ The London correspondent of *The Glasgow Herald* commented that in the early seventies Hughes had painted ‘gracefully felt, sincere little works touched even with intensity, such as “The Spinet”’ ([Anon.], ““Old” Water-Colourists. Some Prominent Scotsmen’, *Glasgow Herald*, 261, 31 October 1914, 10), while *The Notts Guardian* discerned in this watercolour ‘an intensity and significance, a character of beauty, too, lacking almost entirely in many later and far more ambitious efforts’ (31 October 1914, RWS archive, press cuttings book P8).

²⁴ [Anon.], ““Old” Water-Colourists. Some Prominent Scotsmen’, *Glasgow Herald*, 261, 31 October 1914, 10. For a discussion of these ‘elaborated poetical essays’, such as *Heart of Snow* (1907) and ‘*Night with her train of stars...*’ (1912), see chapter 3 of this thesis.

²⁵ Percy Bates, *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters, their Associates and Successors*, London, fourth ed., 1910, 8

While to reviewers in 1914 *The Spinnet* was most notable for its Pre-Raphaelite qualities, it can also be seen as significant in showing an early engagement with Aestheticism. The composition incorporates a number of elements characteristic of the movement, most notably the peacock feathers tucked behind the framed sampler on the wall and the foreground detail of the Chinese vase.²⁶ As Colin Cruise has pointed out, the motif of the girl at the spinet also reflects an interest in early music and performance associated with the Aesthetic movement, and may owe a debt to *A Prelude by Bach* by Simeon Solomon (1840-1905), exhibited at the Dudley Gallery the previous year, in which figures gather round to listen to a young woman at the keyboard.²⁷ Hughes and Solomon knew each other: they had met by April 1869, when the latter wrote to his friend, the Eton master Oscar Browning (1837-1923), that he had taken ‘the beautiful Hughes’ to a choral concert at St James’s Hall, Piccadilly: ‘He was much impressed and looked, leaning on his hand, quite lovely.’²⁸ Solomon also asked Hughes and the

²⁶ The Aesthetic interests perceptible in *The Spinnet* are also evident in other works by Hughes of the 1870s, and into the 1880s. In the double portrait *The Picture Book* (1875, sold Christie’s, 12 July 2007, now private collection), for example, the decoration of the interior includes another Chinese vase, this time containing a plant with orange berries, while the little boy holds a picture book in which the illustration, with its flat bold areas of colour and text contained in a cartouche, is suggestive of those being illustrated by Walter Crane at about that date (for example *Puss-in-Boots*, published by George Routledge & Sons, 1873). The very manner in which the portrait is painted, with the flat areas of bold colour in the wall, chair upholstery, red dress and sage-green cushion – provides an echo of the style of the illustration in the story book. While presumably reflecting the tastes of the sitters’ family, these decorative elements may indicate the artist’s own tastes and concerns.

²⁷ Personal communication to author, 27 April 2007. The interest in early musical instruments was also a personal one: Hughes owned a spinet (now in a private collection) in which he took great pride. See G. Rae Fraser, ‘The late Mr. E.R. Hughes. An Appreciation’, *The Herts Advertiser & St. Albans Times*, 2 May 1914.

²⁸ Letter, Simeon Solomon to Oscar Browning, April 1869, unpublished manuscript, Oscar Browning Correspondence, Eastbourne Central Library, file 1531, quoted in Gayle Seymour, ‘The Life and Work of Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)’, unpublished PhD diss., 1986, 173.

young Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1853-1937) to model for him, probably at around this time.²⁹ Simon Reynolds suggests that the resulting composition was ‘possibly’ *Until the Day Break and the Shadows Flee Away* (fig. 6),³⁰ but the faces in the drawing are so idealised that the models are difficult to identify. However, the two young men surely modelled for *Then I knew my Soul stood before me* (1871, private collection), the composition reproduced as the frontispiece to Solomon’s prose poem *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (fig. 7). Although here too both faces are idealised to some degree, a photograph of Robertson when a seventeen-year-old student at Heatherley’s (fig. 8) identifies him as the model for the Soul, on the left, while the fair, wavy hair, straight nose and regular features of the second figure suggest the profile of Hughes.

Hughes’s acquaintance with Solomon may have influenced him in submitting works to the Dudley Gallery, where he showed a watercolour, *Evensong*, in 1871,³¹ and an oil, *Hushed Music*, in the winter exhibition of cabinet pictures in oils the same year.³² Solomon had served on the Gallery’s committee in 1865

Although Solomon’s companion at the concert is identified only by his surname, the reference to his beauty points to an identification with the seventeen-year old E.R. Hughes, whose striking appearance as a young man was often commented upon. William Silas Spanton remembered him from Heatherley’s as ‘a beautiful youth’ (Spanton, *An Art Student and his Teachers in the Sixties*, 1927, 110), while Greville MacDonald recorded that Hughes was “‘an Apollo in looks”, people said’ (Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, London 1924, 466).

²⁹ Gayle Seymour records that in “Notes by Simeon Solomon of 1888” (20 September 1888, unpublished manuscript, private collection), Solomon ‘listed a pencil drawing of two heads, owned by a Mr. Stevenson of Tynemouth, as being based on two young friends of the artist: Robertson and Hughes.’ Gayle Seymour, ‘The Life and Work of Simeon Solomon’, 1986, 173

³⁰ Simon Reynolds, *The Vision of Simeon Solomon*, Stroud, 1984, 17

³¹ Dudley Gallery, *General Exhibition of Water Colour Drawings, the Seventh*, London, 1871, no.530

³² Dudley Gallery, *Winter Exhibition of Cabinet Pictures in Oil, the Fifth*, London, 1871, no.226

and 1866 and was a regular contributor to its exhibitions until his arrest in 1873.³³ The Dudley Gallery had been founded in 1865 as an alternative to the Society of Painters in Water Colours (SPWC, from 1881 renamed the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours or RWS), and was described by its founders as ‘a Gallery, which, while exclusively devoted to Drawings as distinguished from Oil Paintings, should not in its use by Exhibitors involve Membership of a Society.’³⁴ As a venue which was potentially open to all, and which, as Colin Cruise notes, ‘had become associated with the exhibition of new and challenging works’,³⁵ the Dudley not only served as an alternative to the SPWC but provided additional exhibiting opportunities for artists who, like Hughes himself, sometimes struggled to have works accepted at the Royal Academy.³⁶

During the five years between 1873 and 1878 there was a lull in Hughes’s public exhibiting (he seems to have shown no works in the major London exhibitions

³³ Solomon was arrested on charges of indecency in February 1873, which effectively ended his career, at least as an exhibiting artist. See Gayle Seymour, ‘The Trial and its Aftermath’, in *Solomon: A Family of Painters: Abraham Solomon (1823-1862), Rebecca Solomon (1832-1886), Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)*, exhibition catalogue, London, Geffrye Museum, 1985, 28-30

³⁴ Dudley Gallery, *General Exhibition of Water Colour Drawings, Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, The First*, London, 1865, 9. Winter exhibitions of cabinet pictures in oil were introduced in 1867.

³⁵ Colin Cruise, *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites*, London, 2005, 107

³⁶ Rossetti observed in 1880 that ‘the R.A. hangers have been making great havoc. Poor Arthur Hughes his nephew son and daughter (certainly a gang of claimants for space) are all kicked out to solve the problem.’ Letter, Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Jane Morris, Friday [30 April 1880], in *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Jane Morris: Their Correspondence*, ed. and with an introduction by John Bryson, in association with Janet Camp Troxell, Oxford, 1976, 151. I am grateful to Leonard Roberts for bringing this reference to my attention. Hughes showed at the Dudley Gallery that year, although it is not clear whether the work he exhibited, *Young England in Italy* (no.316), had been previously rejected by the RA. *Young England in Italy* was probably the watercolour now known as *Boy with a Basket of Oranges* (Philadelphia Museum of Art), a portrait of George MacKay MacDonald (1867-1909) painted at Nervi in 1878.

between these dates) while he busied himself building up a practice as a portrait painter.³⁷ From the early 1870s he spent several months of the year as a portraitist in Birkenhead³⁸, and by 1881 he identified himself as a specialist in the genre.³⁹ Unfortunately for Hughes, his experience was clouded by the frustrations of working for difficult patrons. As he lamented in 1883, ‘I should enjoy my work if I had more sympathetic people to deal with here. But they don’t seem to think it at all necessary to keep their wretched artist in good spirits. ...some

³⁷ It may be significant that this hiatus in Hughes’s exhibiting coincided with his engagement to Mary Josephine MacDonald (1853-1878), the daughter of the writer George MacDonald (1824-1905). Hughes had proposed to Mary and been accepted on 24 January 1874 (see letter, E.R. Hughes to Mary’s sister Lilia Scott MacDonald, 26 January 1874, unpublished manuscript, George MacDonald Collection. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 103, folder 86a). According to Mary’s mother, Louisa, Hughes had been in love with Mary for eight years, and had originally wanted to delay his proposal ‘till he could shew her something great and beautiful that he could do – but somehow it couldn’t be kept back’. Although the young Hughes, then twenty-two, had ‘only his wits & several orders for pictures & a good stock of health & beautiful thoughts to shew to represent bread & butter’ she was delighted with her daughter’s choice: ‘...he is as lovely in heart and life as his face is to look at. [...] His name is rising in his profession and everywhere he is spoken well of.’ (Letter, Louisa MacDonald to her sister Charlotte Godwin, 7 February 1874, unpublished manuscript, George MacDonald Collection. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 103, folder 287.). Hughes was touched by his prospective family’s confidence in him – they said ‘such unheard of good things about their trust in me’ (see letter, E.R. Hughes to Lilia Scott MacDonald, 26 January 1874, unpublished manuscript, George MacDonald Collection. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 103, folder 86a) – and this, combined with his own sense of his responsibilities as a future husband, may have motivated him to focus his energies on building up his career. Hughes and Mary were engaged for four years until Mary’s premature death from tuberculosis at Nervi in Liguria, Italy, on 27 April 1878; she was twenty-four. Hughes was with her when she died and designed her gravestone in the cemetery at Nervi; the same design was used later for the graves of her sisters Lilia (1852-91) and Grace (1854-84): see photograph, George MacDonald Collection. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 103, folder 433. Hughes would later marry Emily Eliza Davies on 17 December 1883; she outlived him and died in 1925.

³⁸ In a letter from Mere Hall, Oxton, Birkenhead, Hughes discusses his portrait practice and comments that ‘I’ve gone through this kind of thing in this very neighbourhood for months every year during the last twelve years’. Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 3 December [1883], unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743. Mere Hall was the home of one of Hughes’s patrons, the solicitor John Gray Hill.

³⁹ The England census of 1881 lists Hughes’s profession as ‘Artist (Portrait Painter)’.

criticisms you know are as bad as blows in the face. There again my time is thought to be of no account – appointments are made and very seldom kept. I simply hate doing work away from home.’⁴⁰ If painting portraits was sometimes a grind, Hughes was cheered to receive on occasion the compliment of commissions from fellow artists, which gave him ‘great joy’.⁴¹ In summer 1882, for example, he painted Walter Crane’s sons, Lionel and Launcelot, during a stay with the family at Tunbridge Wells,⁴² and in November 1894 was delighted to be commissioned to paint miniatures ‘for the Hunts & Alfred Gilbert.’⁴³

Hughes would continue to practice as portraitist for the rest of his career. The commissions provided him with a steady income, and his sitters also served him as inspiration for his subject pictures, not always with their knowledge, and sometimes many years later. Hughes confessed to his friend Juliet Morse in 1909, for example, that ‘That “Bridesmaid” [identifiable as *All I Saw at the Wedding*, fig. 9, shown at the RWS the previous summer] was really a portrait of the [*sic*] Frances Midford [*sic*], your neighbour in Cheyne Walk of 26 years ago,

⁴⁰ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse from Mere Hall, Oxton, Birkenhead, 3 December [1883], unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743.

⁴¹ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 14 November 1894, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743

⁴² Walter Crane, *An Artist’s Reminiscences*, London, 1907, 235. Hughes exhibited the portrait at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1883 (no.327); see Christopher Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World*, Cambridge, 89.

⁴³ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 14 November 1894, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743. Hughes mentions in the letter that he had shown the Hunts a miniature of Edmond Morse that he was about to send to the RWS (although it is not listed in the catalogue for that winter’s exhibition) and that ‘I beleive [*sic*] they are very pleased with it’; it was perhaps this that prompted their commission. A miniature of Hunt, possibly painted at around this time, is in a private collection (fig. 20); if Hughes produced a miniature of Gilbert (1854-1934) it has not yet been traced.

done from a sketch or a very clear recollection of her beautiful face. I never told anyone this.’⁴⁴ In his portraits proper, Hughes made a distinction between creating a work that succeeded as what he referred to as a ‘picture’ or ‘composition’, and capturing an accurate likeness. Where a patron demanded both, his task was made more difficult and he expected to be remunerated accordingly. Struggling with a commission in 1908, he complained to Mrs Morse that ‘I’ve been trying to do portraits of children whose faces I did’nt [*sic*] know & for people who want photographic likenesses as well as pictures. The children are difficult & I’ve had toothache.’⁴⁵ The following month, he told Mrs Morse that when he sold his ‘Bridesmaid’ it had been priced at fifty guineas, ‘& that’s what I should expect to get if I had to struggle to make a portrait as well as a composition.’⁴⁶

Following his six-year hiatus in exhibiting, Hughes had resumed showing his work in 1879, sending a portrait, *Joseph King, Esq.*, to the Royal Academy (his first appearance there since 1872)⁴⁷ and making his debut at the Grosvenor Gallery with *Portrait of Mrs King*, presumably the pendant to his portrait at the

⁴⁴ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 3 January 1909, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743. Hughes had exhibited a portrait in watercolour and bodycolour of five-year-old Frances Georgina Mitford at the Dudley Gallery in 1880 (WC619; sold Sotheby’s, 14 June 1977, lot 25).

⁴⁵ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 31 December 1908, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743

⁴⁶ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 3 January 1909, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743. *All I Saw at the Wedding* was purchased from the summer exhibition at the RWS by Reverend J.P. Haslam, a parson in Cumberland: RWS archive, sales book S66 (summer 1907-winter 1909); it was bequeathed by him to the Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston, in 1949.

⁴⁷ Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*, 8 vols, London, 1906, 4, 185

RA, but perhaps turned down by the hanging committee there.⁴⁸ The Grosvenor Gallery and its successor the New Gallery would be important exhibiting venues for Hughes in the 1870s and 1880s. Opened two years before Hughes made his debut, the Grosvenor Gallery had been established on New Bond Street by Sir Coutts Lindsay (1824-1913) as an alternative space to the Royal Academy for the promotion of 'progressive' artists, and for young up-and-coming painters who might lack opportunities to exhibit elsewhere. For Hughes, an invitation from Lindsay to show at the Gallery was important both in allowing his work to be seen in the company of artists such as Burne-Jones, James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and George Frederic Watts (1817-1904), and in providing a 'shop window' for his portraits to be assessed by potential clients. As Christopher Newall has noted, the Grosvenor came to be particularly associated with the exhibition of portraits: it 'drew a fashionable audience before which socially ambitious sitters were pleased to appear, and from which portraitists might expect to receive further commissions.'⁴⁹ Hughes would contribute to the Gallery every year between 1879 and 1886.⁵⁰ Following the split between Lindsay and his assistants Charles Hallé and Joseph Comyns Carr in 1887, and the establishment by Hallé and Comyns Carr of the New Gallery the following year, he transferred his allegiance there. He exhibited at the New Gallery every year between 1889 and 1893, by which time he had adopted the RWS as his main exhibiting space.

⁴⁸ Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions*, 1995, 89

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 28

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 89

During this same period, the sociable and gregarious Hughes was also active in the Art Workers Guild, the group of architects, artists and craftsmen formed in 1884 to share knowledge and further connections between the different branches of art and design. Hughes was elected a member in 1888, and served on the Committee between 1895 and 1897.⁵¹ He showed in the First Art Workers Guild Exhibition of Members' Work in December 1895⁵², and also contributed to the staging of the Guild's masque *Beauty's Awakening*, performed at the Guildhall of the City of London on 29 June 1899, a production which Hughes felt to be 'quite beautiful in many ways.'⁵³ Hughes worked with C.R. Ashbee (1863-1942), Walter Crane, Christopher Whall (1849-1924) and Henry Holiday (1839-1927) on the 'Pageant of Fair Cities', in which costumed figures appeared representing historic artistic centres including Athens, Venice and Nuremburg. Hughes himself appeared in the role of St Louis, in attendance on Mrs Oakley Williams as the Fair City of Paris (see figs. 11-13).⁵⁴

Hughes's membership of the Guild led indirectly to his securing a teaching post at the London County Council Central School of Arts & Crafts, which had been established in 1896 by William Richard Lethaby (1857-1931) and others 'to provide instruction in those branches of design and manipulation which directly

⁵¹ H.J.L.J. Masse, *The Art-Workers' Guild, 1884-1934*, Oxford, 1935, 139

⁵² Hughes exhibited *Expectancy*, one of his illustrations for *The Novellino of Masuccio* (London, 1897, II, facing p.77). See 'A Record of the First Art Workers Guild Exhibition of Members' Work held in Dec.r 1895', unpublished bound volume, Art Workers Guild archive.

⁵³ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 6 July 1899, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743

⁵⁴ 'Beauty's Awakening. A masque of winter and of spring. Presented by the members of the Art Workers Guild.', *The Studio*, Summer Number, 1899

bear on the more artistic trades'.⁵⁵ Hughes began teaching the men's life drawing class alongside the designer Henry Wilson (1864-1934) in autumn 1900, and took the class alone from 1909 until his death in 1914.⁵⁶ Wilson was a fellow-member of the Guild and the husband of Margaret Ellinor Morse (see fig. 27), daughter of Hughes's close friends Sydney and Juliet Morse; a letter from Hughes to Mrs Morse of 18 August 1901 indicates that he owed his post at the School to her influence and to Wilson.⁵⁷ Unlike institutions such as Heatherley's, which were open to amateur artists, the London Central School was open only to those actively engaged in art, craft and design. The curriculum was explicitly practical and vocational in emphasis, thus the life class taught by Wilson and Hughes was intended to furnish the students with life-drawing practice not as an end in itself, but 'with a view to its application in decoration and book illustration.'⁵⁸ Hughes seems to have been a popular member of staff: after his death *The Times* noted that 'his wonderful skill as a teacher and his great patience endeared him to all',⁵⁹ and one of his obituaries recorded that the

⁵⁵ London County Council Central School of Arts & Crafts, *Prospectus and Time-table, 6th Session commencing Sept. 23rd 1901*, 3. The School opened at 316 Regent Street, W. in 1896 but moved to Southampton Row in 1908.

⁵⁶ See London County Council Central School of Arts & Crafts prospectuses for the academic years 1900-1 to 1913-14, Central St Martins College of Art and Design archive

⁵⁷ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 18 August 1901, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743. Hughes tells Mrs Morse about his new purchase, 'An enchanting possession that I owe entirely to you & Peter [as Wilson was familiarly known]. With the money earned at the L.C.C. class since last Oct.r I've had a "piano player" attached to our piano... Thanks again.'

⁵⁸ London County Council Central School of Arts & Crafts, *Prospectus & Time-table for the Session beginning 21st September, 1908*, London, 1908, 24

⁵⁹ [Anon.], 'The late Mr. E.R. Hughes: His Work for English Art', *The Times*, 29 April 1914, 10

congregation attending his memorial service in St Albans Abbey included ‘many pupils of Mr. Hughes’s L.C.C. class.’⁶⁰

On 18 February 1891, Hughes had been elected to Associate Membership of the RWS, the institution which would be the main showcase for his work for the remaining twenty-three years of his life.⁶¹ Arthur Hughes was happy to hear it, writing to his friend Alice Boyd to remark upon the ‘good news of my nephew and old pupil Ted.... I feel very proud with two pupils there – he and [Albert] Goodwin.’⁶² Hughes would contribute to every RWS exhibition, winter and summer, from 1891 to his death in 1914, typically submitting one highly-finished subject picture (sometimes two) to the summer exhibition and showing a group of chalk drawings or silverpoints, and often a subject picture in addition, in the winter exhibition of sketches and studies. His debut in summer 1891, *In an Old Garden*, was described by one reviewer as ‘a lady in white sitting amongst severely-drilled shrubs, with a nice little marble grotto in the foreground, with a gilt Mercury on top’ (untraced but see fig. 14).⁶³ The picture seems to have been ignored by most reviewers, and only one, the critic of *The Echo*, commented on it at any length. While describing it as ‘Monumental in diligence’, he criticised its ‘insistent finish of vulgar details’: ‘You can count the leaves on the myrtle tree

⁶⁰ G. Rae Fraser, ‘The Late Mr. E.R. Hughes: Funeral and Cremation’, *The Herts Advertiser and St. Albans Times*, 2 May 1914

⁶¹ See *The Times*, 19 February 1891, 9

⁶² Letter, Arthur Hughes to Alice Boyd, 21 February 1891, Penkill Papers, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, quoted in Wildman, ‘Arthur Hughes 1832-1915: True artist and true Pre-Raphaelite’, in Roberts, *Arthur Hughes*, 1997, 34

⁶³ ‘S.’, ‘The Old Water-Colour Society’, *The Echo*, 4 May 1891, 2

behind, or the individual threads of the lady's tresses – they are all painted. The lady will wait for you. She is too prim, too artificial to move.'⁶⁴ Hughes's submissions to the next two exhibitions, *Dealing with the Fairies* (winter 1891/2, fig. 30) and *The Careless Shepherd* (summer 1892)⁶⁵ were better received, with *The Times* commenting that the latter was 'full of beautiful colour' (even if the subject – a young shepherd nude and face down on the grass – was 'rather comic'⁶⁶) and *The Athenaeum* remarking that it was 'so good a work that it deserved a better place than near the floor.'⁶⁷

In the early 1890s, Hughes was commissioned to contribute illustrations to a collection of Italian tales, *The Nights of Straparola*, written in 1550-3 by Gianfrancesco Straparola (c.1480-after 1557) and translated by W.G. Waters.⁶⁸ This collection, published by Lawrence and Bullen in 1894, was followed by two further books of tales: in 1895 *The Novellino of Masuccio* (written in 1475) and in 1897 *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni* (written c.1378).⁶⁹ The illustrations were painted by Hughes in grisaille (see for example fig. 15), and then reproduced as photogravures.⁷⁰ All three books were collections of short stories, and in the

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Untraced, but see *The Studio*, 3, June 1894, 66 for a reproduction.

⁶⁶ *The Times*, 26 April 1892, 13

⁶⁷ [Anon.], 'The Society of Painters in Water Colours', *The Athenaeum*, 3367, 7 May 1892, 606

⁶⁸ Gianfrancesco Straparola, *The Nights of Straparola*, trans. W.G. Waters, 2 vols, London, 1894. William George Waters (1844-1928) was a novelist, translator and writer on Italian art. His wife Emily compiled a book of Italian recipes, *The Cook's Decameron* (1901). Hughes exhibited a portrait of the couple at the RWS in winter 1901/2 (no.299).

⁶⁹ Masuccio Salernitano, *The Novellino of Masuccio*, trans. W.G. Waters, 2 vols, London, 1895, and Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni*, trans. W.G. Waters, London, 1897

⁷⁰ See Georgiana L. Head, 'Hughes' Work as an Illustrator', in 'Edward Robert Hughes 1851-1914', unpublished MA diss., Royal Holloway College, 1996, 26-34

tradition of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1349-51) were often bawdy in tone, with a familiar cast of crafty seducers, frustrated young wives, and libidinous friars.⁷¹ Hughes's illustrations for the more lascivious stories were cheerfully risqué rather than explicit (see for example figs. 16-17), but they were nonetheless of a tone that was acceptable only within the pages of a book, rather than displayed publicly on the wall of an exhibition. Some of the more decorous subjects, however, were to provide the basis for the artist's major exhibition pieces over the next seven years.⁷²

This series of historical watercolours met with mixed reviews. Although the artist's technical facility was consistently admired, several commentators took him to task over the choice of subjects, criticising them as both overly obscure and lacking in dramatic and pictorial potential. Their reaction was typified in the reviews of *Bertuccio's Bride* (fig. 18), a composition depicting an incident from Straparola's *Nights* which was accompanied in the catalogue with an explanatory

⁷¹ In reviewing Waters's translation of *The Nights of Straparola*, *The Athenaeum* warned its readers that 'Of improprieties such as startle modern taste the 'Nights' has plenty and to spare'. [Anon.], 'Christmas Books', *The Athenaeum*, 3504, 22 December 1894, 866.

⁷² The exhibition watercolours relating to Hughes's illustrative work and shown at the RWS were: *Biancabella and Samaritana* (summer 1894, private collection), based on *Biancabella and the Serpent* in *The Nights of Straparola* (vol.I, facing p.128), *Bertuccio's Bride* (summer 1895, collection of Lord Lloyd-Webber), based on the frontispiece to vol.II of *The Nights of Straparola*; *Fugitives* (summer 1896, untraced), based on *The Lovers in the Storm* in *The Novellino of Masuccio* (vol.II, facing p.133); *A Coward* (summer 1897, private collection), based on *The Flight of Petruccia* in the *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni* (facing p.37); *A Festa* (summer 1900, Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery), based on *Marco the Piper* in *The Novellino of Masuccio* (vol.I, facing p.81); *Journey's End* (summer 1901, untraced), based on *The Lady of Belmonte* in *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni* (facing p.49); *A Dream Idyll* (winter 1901/2, private collection), based on *The Demon Horse* in *The Nights of Straparola* (vol.II, facing p.46). An oil painting by Hughes known as *The Expulsion* (Cartwright Hall, Bradford), apparently unexhibited, relates to the illustration *The Captain of the Watch* in the *Pecorone* (vol.II, facing p.37).

extract from the text of no fewer than thirteen lines. *The Athenaeum*, which had given Hughes's illustrations for the book a glowing review the previous year,⁷³ accused him of having 'wasted extraordinary resources and amazing industry on subjects such as this, which, even if it were paintable, is not worth painting',⁷⁴ while for *The Times*, the watercolour exemplified 'the common English excess of literature over art; enormous pains taken to tell a story which is entirely unintelligible unless one has the key.'⁷⁵ In choosing to paint an incident that could not be 'read' and understood independently of the text, and in interpreting it as a large-scale, highly-finished watercolour, Hughes was accused of having confused the properties of the book illustration and the exhibition piece: 'We believe that Mr. Hughes has lately illustrated a translation of Straparola, and doubtless the black and white sketch for this drawing was admirable for its purpose; but that is a different thing from expending the whole resources of his palette upon a large water-colour which should be enjoyed apart from the book.'⁷⁶

The criticism that works such as *Bertuccio's Bride* attracted is illustrative of the fact that, in this series of watercolours at least, Hughes had fallen out of step with contemporary taste. As Richard Altick has pointed out, in the wake of the Aesthetic movement and in the face of a shift towards works in which an

⁷³ [Anon.], 'Christmas Books', *The Athenaeum*, 3504, 22 December 1894, 866

⁷⁴ [Anon.], 'The Society of Painters in Water Colours', *The Athenaeum*, 3522, 27 April 1895, 542

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *The Times*, 20 April 1895, 8

emphasis on narrative had been superseded by a concern with formal qualities, narrative painting appeared dated and the very term ‘literary’ had acquired pejorative overtones.⁷⁷ When in his review of Hughes’s memorial display in 1914 the critic of *The Observer*, ‘P.G.K.’, summed up Hughes’s art as ‘essentially literary’, the implication was that it was also outmoded.⁷⁸ Even Randall Davies, a friend of the artist writing a sympathetic assessment for *The Queen*, would concede that Hughes’s compositions illustrating Straparola were ‘just of that age, at the present time, to come within the definition of “old-fashioned”, being neither old enough to belong to a past age nor young enough to be “modern”’.⁷⁹

The character of the work that Hughes was exhibiting at the RWS in the 1890s, and the critical response to it, reflects the conservative nature of the Society as an institution at the end of the century. Even in the early 1890s, when Hughes was

⁷⁷ Richard Altick, *Paintings from Books: Art and Literature in Britain, 1760-1900*, Columbus, 1985, 237-8. The shift in Hughes’s work away from narrative subjects and towards more enigmatic compositions, as discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, may have been partially a response to the negative press that his historical and literary watercolours often received. After years of criticism for his work being too ‘literary’, Hughes must have been delighted when in 1913 his watercolour ‘Pack, Clouds, Away! and Welcome Day’ (private collection), a floating nude representing the moon, partially obscured by clouds, was at last hailed as ‘pictorial’: ‘A marked distinction should be made between the painted anecdote which depends entirely on its literary associations and the imaginative subject picture which is, in the first place, an essentially pictorial conception. To the latter class belong pictures such as Mr. E.R. Hughes’s “Pack, Clouds, Away! and Welcome Day”...’: *The Daily Mail*, 5 April 1913. Following Hughes’s death even the reviewer of *The Observer*, in a largely negative assessment of the artist’s career, conceded that ‘His various phases of the moon, or rather of the woman in the moon, have at least independent pictorial existence and stand therefore on an infinitely higher artistic plane than any of his purely illustrative work.’: ‘P.G.K.’, ‘Royal Society of Painters in Water-colours’, *The Observer*, 1 November 1914, 7. See fig. 40 for an example.

⁷⁸ ‘P.G.K.’, ‘Royal Society of Painters in Water-colours’, *The Observer*, 1 November 1914, 7

⁷⁹ Randall Davies, ‘The Royal Water-Colour Society’, *The Queen*, 136, 3544, 28 November 1914, 910

elected an Associate Member, the RWS held a reputation as a traditionalist, even reactionary, institution. In 1893, *The Court Journal* remarked that ‘The present exhibition of the society, like its predecessors, represents absolute respectability in art; its doors are closed against all the wild art men who live in a whirl of new art and new criticism.’⁸⁰ The reviewer suggested that ‘this extreme conservatism’ resulted in ‘the acceptance of a number of pallid and strengthless works’.⁸¹ By 1900, the critic of the Liberal newspaper *The Speaker* would describe that year’s summer exhibition – which included Hughes’s *A Festa* (Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery) – as ‘woefully disappointing’ and accuse the Society of ‘antidiluvianism’.⁸² Hughes himself was well aware that both the RWS and his own work were by now at variance with progressive tastes. When in summer 1904 his watercolour *The Lesser Light* (untraced), shown in the RWS’s centenary exhibition, was praised in a review in *The Pilot*, Hughes’s friend Juliet Morse sent him the cutting. Hughes found it ‘really quite encouraging to have a complimentary notice sometimes’, adding ruefully that ‘as a rule the RWS & I get abused or boycotted.’⁸³ Mixed reviews notwithstanding, by the beginning of the new century Hughes enjoyed a status as a leading figure in the Society, one reflected in the prominence of his works in its exhibitions. In summer 1895

⁸⁰ [Anon.], ‘Fine Arts’, *The Court Journal*, 3353, 22 April 1893, 662

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² ‘F.J.M.’, ‘Art: The Royal Academy (I). – Royal Water-Colour Society’, *The Speaker*, 5 May 1900, 133

⁸³ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 26 April 1904, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743. The review in *The Pilot* rather unfortunately misnamed the artist as ‘Edwin Hughes’ but was positive about *The Lesser Light*, remarking that it was ‘the type of subject-picture in which Mr. Hughes excels, and which is always welcome.’ ‘E.H.’, ‘The Water Colour Society’, *The Pilot*, 9, 213, 16 April 1904, 358

Bertuccio's Bride had been hung 'in the centre of one of the end walls'⁸⁴, a position 'generally conceded to a work by one of the most distinguished of the younger members of the Society';⁸⁵ by summer 1901, the journal *Literature* reported that *The Princess out of School* (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne) 'occupies what may be regarded as the place of honour in the gallery, and it is a tribute to the intelligence of the hanging committee that it is so well placed.'⁸⁶ Hughes was elected Vice-President of the Society in the same year, a post he held until 1903.⁸⁷

In the RWS winter exhibition of 1903/4, Hughes exhibited a portrait, *Master Tony Freeman* (fig. 19), 'a head of an exuberant red-haired boy in a blue dress, and relieved against a broken-up background of green; all in the strongest colour, and a most effective performance.'⁸⁸ With its intense colour and high degree of finish, this portrait invited comparison with the earliest works of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; indeed, for the critic of *The Telegraph*, 'The frank and uncompromising brilliancy of British pre-Raphaelite art [was] a little excelled in Mr. E.R. Hughes's full-face portrait'.⁸⁹ In the RWS exhibition, Hughes's portrait was hung directly above a study in pen and ink by William Holman Hunt (1827-

⁸⁴ *The Times*, 20 April 1895, 8

⁸⁵ [Anon.], 'The Society of Painters in Water Colours', *The Athenaeum*, 3522, 27 April 1895, 542

⁸⁶ [Anon.], 'Old Water Colours', *Literature*, 185, 4 May 1901, 371

⁸⁷ Hughes is listed with the title 'Deputy President' in the RWS exhibition catalogues for summer 1901 and winter 1901-2, and as 'Vice-President' from summer 1902 until the winter exhibition of 1903-4.

⁸⁸ [Anon.], 'Society of Painters in Water-colours', *The Builder*, 85, 3174, 5 December 1903, 570

⁸⁹ *The Telegraph*, 30 November 1903

1910) for *Claudio and Isabella* (1850, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), a juxtaposition that was not lost on the critic of *The Builder*, who observed that Hughes's portrait 'reminds one a good deal of the earlier work of Mr. Holman Hunt' and remarked that it was 'possibly with a recognition of this' that the two works had been hung so close together.⁹⁰

The hanging of works by Hunt and Hughes in such close proximity was apt for professional as well as stylistic reasons, however. Remarkably, it was at this point in his career, when he was over fifty years old and an established artist in his own right, that Hughes was also quietly and regularly working as Hunt's studio assistant. One of the last survivors of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (with William Michael Rossetti and Frederic George Stephens) and a retired honorary member of the RWS, Hunt (fig. 20) had been affected by glaucoma for a number of years, and his eyesight had deteriorated to the point where he required another artist to execute parts of his works under his direction.⁹¹

Hughes was a longstanding friend⁹² and had been assisting Hunt since at least

⁹⁰ [Anon.], 'Society of Painters in Water-colours', *The Builder*, 85, 3174, 5 December 1903, 570

⁹¹ By Hunt's account in late 1906, 'When my great defect of sight came to me I could still see – as I can now – well enough to distinguish the different hues of every colour on the palette when brought close enough, and I could also tell the forms when I looked at them singly. I can still do so much as to enable me to oversee and direct a man working for me. Soon after the defect began to show itself I found it undesirable to work without having an assistant by me to see that the colours were blended before they dried. Although I could express the forms, colours, and expressions of things, I was always in danger of leaving the colour between the high light and the shadow unblended. I therefore obtained the services of a competent artist, Mr. Edward R. Hughes.' *Manchester Guardian*, 5 December 1906, 4, quoted in Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt*, 2006, 272.

⁹² [Anon.], 'The late Mr. E.R. Hughes: His Work for English Art', *The Times*, 29 April 1914, 10. Hughes's relationship to Hunt is described in this tribute as that of 'a son in art and in life-long friendship.'

1888.⁹³ He now worked with the veteran artist on two significant late paintings, *The Lady of Shalott* (c.1888?-1905, fig. 21) and the third and final version of *The Light of the World* (c.1900-1904, fig. 22),⁹⁴ as well as altering existing paintings by Hunt at the request of Hunt's wife Edith and daughter Gladys.⁹⁵

The exact nature of Hughes's collaboration with Hunt has always been, to some degree, shrouded in mystery. Given the sensitivity of producing paintings that bore his name but were partially executed by another hand, Hunt was understandably reticent about revealing the extent of Hughes's contribution, and the discreet and self-effacing Hughes seems to have been inclined to play down his involvement. Randall Davies, who enjoyed a 'long-lasting friendship' with Hughes, claimed in *The Queen* that 'the only time I ever knew him to be a little ruffled was when I attributed to him too much credit (as he thought, but I am sure he was wrong) for his part in the conspicuous success of Holman Hunt's "Lady of Shalott [*sic*]". [...] ...though the design was Holman Hunt's, there can be no doubt that it owed its beautiful colour effects in a great measure to Hughes.'⁹⁶

In private letters to his trusted friend Juliet Morse, however, Hughes felt able to discuss more freely his work with Hunt, and the references in his letters to her, although occasional, cast valuable new light on his assistantship. It is clear that

⁹³ Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt*, 2006, 49

⁹⁴ See Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: a Catalogue Raisonné*, 2006, 289-291

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 215-217, 260-262

⁹⁶ Randall Davies, 'The Royal Water-Colour Society', *The Queen*, 136, 3544, 28 November 1914, 910

Hughes held Hunt in great respect, and felt a weight of responsibility in contributing to work that would bear the name of an artist he invariably referred to as ‘the Maestro’.⁹⁷ On Good Friday 1905, having learned that Mr and Mrs Morse had seen *The Lady of Shalott*, then near completion, at Hunt’s studio, he urged Mrs Morse to let him have her thoughts on the picture: ‘A candid criticism from you, that shall be strictly entre nous, may give us great help: please don’t be afraid of giving it, even the smallest hint I’ll consider & will carry out if I can I am so anxious that this picture shall not disgrace him’.⁹⁸

Despite Hunt’s reluctance in revealing publicly the extent of the assistance Hughes had given him, it was perhaps in acknowledgement of the younger artist’s loyalty that Hunt afforded Hughes’s own work a tribute in his autobiographical study *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, on which he was working on during the period of their collaboration. Hunt credited Hughes with being a late torch-bearer for the Pre-Raphaelite movement, remarking that ‘For simple Pre-Raphaelitism some able neophytes still appeared. E.R. Hughes, with a sweet drawing at the Academy, and Cecil Lawson, in his “Minister’s Garden”, seemed well capable of representing not only the literal

⁹⁷ Hughes uses this term a number of times, for example on 27 December 1901 when describing the works of art in Hunt’s ‘houseful of treasures’: letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 27 December 1901, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743

⁹⁸ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 21 April 1905, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743

truth but the healthy poetic spirit of our principles.’⁹⁹ Hughes would remain a close and trusted friend of Hunt and his family, and after the elder artist died on the afternoon of 7 September 1910, Hughes arrived at the house early the next morning. He was one of the few present when Archdeacon Wilberforce led ‘a beautiful little service by the bed side ... & there were just about 8 or 10 at most of us, in the house, kneeling around also.’¹⁰⁰

In summer 1913 Hughes, though still taking his class at the Central School of Arts & Crafts, moved with his wife from London to a cottage in St Albans, adjoining the Abbey close.¹⁰¹ He showed no sign of retiring from painting and exhibiting, and indeed was said later to have been ‘boyishly eager... to open a new chapter of work.’¹⁰² In April 1914, however, he was suddenly taken ill at home with appendicitis. The artist Estella Canziani (1887-1964) appears to have been visiting at the time and recalled later that ‘Immediate operation was necessary; poor Mrs Hughes cried so much that he delayed an hour to comfort

⁹⁹ William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 vols, London, 1905, 2, 366-7. It is not clear which ‘sweet drawing’ Hunt had in mind, but since he refers to Hughes appearing as a ‘neophyte’ he may well have been referring to the artist’s debut at the RA in 1870, *The Spinnet*.

¹⁰⁰ E.R. Hughes to Juliet, 12 September 1910, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743. The same letter contains Hughes’s detailed account of attending Hunt’s funeral.

¹⁰¹ Arthur Hughes noted that Hughes and his wife had ‘settled in the quaint and jolly cottage, he first hired for the summer furnished... it is the nearest house to the Abbey, it and the country all their own – and the town behind and unseen’. Letter, Arthur Hughes to Agnes Hale-White, unpublished manuscript, 22 October 1913, Tate archive, 71-28/12

¹⁰² ‘O.W.’, “‘Ted’ Hughes, RWS: A Great Loss to British Art. Rare Gifts and Ideals. Special Memoir.’, unnamed publication, almost certainly *The Pall Mall Gazette*, late April 1914; newspaper clipping, private collection. See p.7, n.1.

her, and then it was too late.’¹⁰³ Hughes did not recover from the operation and died on 23 April. He was cremated at Golders Green and is buried in Hatfield Road Cemetery, St Albans (see figs. 23-24).¹⁰⁴

News of Hughes’s sudden death was met with shock, and his obituaries remember with remarkable warmth and affection ‘a personality of singularly lovable qualities’,¹⁰⁵ ‘characterised by one who knew him well as a man with few acquaintances but with hosts of friends. To know him indeed was to love him.’¹⁰⁶ In the aftermath of his death, some of these friends organised a subscription to raise funds to purchase a work to be presented to a public gallery in Hughes’s memory. By June the following year, the E.R. Hughes R.W.S. Memorial Fund had raised £296 14s. 7d including interest from nearly two hundred contributors.¹⁰⁷ Arthur Hughes had hoped that ‘*Night with her train of stars...*’ would be acquired for the national collection,¹⁰⁸ but there is no record at either Tate or the National Gallery of the Memorial Committee having made any offer to donate it. In the event, the Committee presented ‘*Night with her train of stars...*’ to the City Art Gallery, Birmingham (now Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery), and *Blondel’s Quest* (fig. 25) to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

¹⁰³ Canziani, *Round About Three Palace Green*, 1939, 170

¹⁰⁴ Hughes and his wife Emily Eliza are buried in section C, grave R13.

¹⁰⁵ ‘O.W.’, “Ted” Hughes, RWS: A Great Loss to British Art. Rare Gifts and Ideals. Special Memoir.’, unnamed publication, almost certainly *The Pall Mall Gazette*, late April 1914; newspaper clipping, private collection. See p.7, n.1.

¹⁰⁶ [Anon.], ‘The late Mr. E.R. Hughes: His Work for English Art’, *The Times*, 29 April 1914, 10

¹⁰⁷ *E.R. Hughes Memorial Fund*, printed paper sent to subscribers, June 1915, private collection.

¹⁰⁸ Letter, Arthur Hughes to Agnes Hale-White, 25 November [1914], unpublished manuscript, Tate archive, 71-28/14

Hughes's commemorative display took place at the RWS that winter. For Arthur Hughes, the retrospective provided grounds for reassessing his nephew's achievement: he found it 'most surprising and most splendid – he comes out as very much above one's familiar estimate... only his highest is there – and in [*sic*] the chief picture "Night with her train of stars" is a glorious one of the very highest'.¹⁰⁹ However, the response in the press was generally at best lukewarm, and at worst dismissive. *The Liverpool Post* was unusual among the reviewers in celebrating 'this idealist in contemporary art', praising Hughes's 'Faultless draughtsmanship, refined and balanced colour, and ideals of truth and beauty, rendered eloquent and melodious on canvas'.¹¹⁰ For the majority of critics, the showing of over thirty works reinforced an impression of Hughes as one of the last representatives of Pre-Raphaelitism, and only confirmed their conviction that that movement's time had long passed. The critic of *The Northern Whig*, mistaking Hughes's name and referring to 'the late Arthur Hughes', characterised him as 'an enthusiastic disciple of the pre-Raphaelite school. The admirers of the school will take it as no disparagement of those works if it be said that they certainly cannot be popular.'¹¹¹

For 'P.G.K.' in *The Observer*, the most telling juxtaposition was that between Hughes's work and the watercolours of Laura Knight (see as an example fig.

¹⁰⁹ Letter, Arthur Hughes to Agnes Hale-White, [23 November 1914], unpublished manuscript, Tate archive, 71-28/15

¹¹⁰ *The Liverpool Post*, 2 November 1914, RWS archive, press cuttings book P8, (1914-1919)

¹¹¹ *The Northern Whig*, 2 November 1914, RWS archive, press cuttings book P8 (1914-1919)

26), who had made her debut at the RWS five years before, in 1909, and who was represented elsewhere in the exhibition. He commented, 'To turn from Hughes's literary romances and astral allegories to Mrs Laura Knight's "The Morning Ride" is like a refreshing plunge into a cool stream on a sultry summer day. [...] In Mrs Knight's frank enjoyment of Nature... – and every stroke of her forceful brush is inspired by such enjoyment – there is more real poetry than in all the imagery of a mythological dreamer.'¹¹² It is revealing that by characterising Hughes's art in terms of 'literary romances and astral allegories', *The Observer's* critic identified in his work the two strands that, to early twentieth century viewers, most directly associated him with the Pre-Raphaelite tradition. The 'literary romances' such as *Bertuccio's Bride*, with their historical subject matter, high degree of finish and bright colours, appeared to be in direct descent from the literary subjects treated by the original Brotherhood in the late 1840s and 1850s. His 'astral allegories' – such as the Moon series (exhibited at the RWS in 1910) and '*Night with her train of stars...*', meanwhile, were suggestive of and heavily influenced by the mystical strain in the 'second wave' of Pre-Raphaelitism typified by Burne-Jones and Solomon.

Hughes had spent the earlier part of his career exhibiting at progressive venues – the Dudley Gallery, the Grosvenor Gallery and the New Gallery – but it is clear that by the time of his death, and after many years associated with the conservative RWS, his work was regarded by the majority of critics as an

¹¹² P.G.K., 'Royal Society of Painters in Water-colours', *The Observer*, 1 November 1914, 7

anachronism. In the new century, the historical, literary and allegorical subject matter of Hughes's watercolours, and their high finish, marked him out to contemporary eyes as a Pre-Raphaelite, but also as a relic of a past era. The critic of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, while writing an affectionate and appreciative tribute, was typical in characterising the artist as 'born out of due time'.¹¹³ Once the memorial exhibition was over, Hughes would be effectively forgotten as an irrelevance for more than sixty years.

¹¹³ 'O.W.', "'Ted" Hughes, RWS: A Great Loss to British Art. Rare Gifts and Ideals. Special Memoir.', unnamed publication, almost certainly *The Pall Mall Gazette*, late April 1914; newspaper clipping, private collection. See p.7, n.1.

CHAPTER TWO

HUGHES AND DRAWING

In a review of the winter exhibition at the RWS in 1893, the critic of *The Athenaeum* drew attention to a red chalk drawing by Edward Robert Hughes, *Study for a Picture*, praising it as ‘in several respects, the finest work here.’¹ The *Study* was classed by the reviewer with a group of drawings by Edward Burne-Jones and studies of heads by Frederic Shields (1833-1911) as one of ‘a series of fine examples of drawing proper in monochrome, which will delight painters and critics trained in the higher technique.’²

The Athenaeum’s reviewer was not alone among contemporary commentators in his praise for Hughes’s drawings: much of the artist’s critical reputation during his own lifetime was built on his portraits and finished studies in pencil, chalk or silverpoint. This chapter will argue that drawing was central to Hughes’s artistic practice – to his pattern of exhibiting, his ability to attract commissions, and his critical standing. It will explore aspects of his career as a draughtsman, examining key works and placing them in the wider context of exhibition culture and approaches to drawing in the later nineteenth century. It will suggest that although a mastery of drawing had long been established as a cornerstone of

¹ [Anon.], ‘The Society of Painters in Water Colours. Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies’, *The Athenaeum*, 3450, 9 December 1893, 813

² *Ibid.*

academic art practice, the four-and-a-half decades of Hughes's career as a professional artist saw fundamental changes in the way that drawings were perceived, exhibited and critically assessed. These changes allowed Hughes to build an artistic reputation on his facility for draughtsmanship, to an extent that would have been impossible even a generation before.

A thorough grounding in the techniques of drawing had been regarded as fundamental to the training of young artists since at least the fifteenth century. The practice of observational drawing was believed to instil discipline in the student, training both hand and eye, and apprentices in the artists' workshops of fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy received rigorous tuition in draughtsmanship.³ A mastery of drawing was equally fundamental to subsequent academic art practice, whether in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and private art schools in Paris, or at the Royal Academy. Students aspiring to enter the Royal Academy Schools had to demonstrate an aptitude for draughtsmanship before being admitted, and on beginning their studies would expect to spend three years drawing from the Antique, first from engravings and then from casts, before progressing to drawing from the live model. Only when they had received a thorough grounding in draughtsmanship would young artists be judged ready to work in paint.

³ Francis Ames-Lewis and Joanne Wright, *Drawing in the Italian Renaissance Workshop*, exhibition catalogue, Nottingham, University Art Gallery, and London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983, 13

The young Hughes had followed a conventional path in his own art training. With an ambition to study at the Royal Academy Schools, he had initially enrolled at Heatherley's school of art on Newman Street to practice his skills in drawing and build up a portfolio of work.⁴ In the spring of 1868, aged sixteen, Hughes entered the RA Schools as a probationer,⁵ his award of a silver medal for the best drawing from the Antique two years later providing an early indication of his aptitude for draughtsmanship.⁶ Hughes's academic training would be sealed much later, in his mid-thirties, with a year spent in Paris in 1886 at the Académie Julian.⁷ He was taught there by Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant (1845-1902),⁸ who had in turn trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Ecole de la Rue Bonaparte under the Salon painter Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889).⁹

In the academic tradition, drawing had a dual role: as an exercise in observing and recording nature, or, in the case of compositional or preparatory studies, as a preliminary stage in the process of generating a work of art. Drawings were, however, rarely considered as independent works in their own right, and prior to the mid-nineteenth century there was no culture of exhibiting them as finished

⁴ For a brief history of the school to 1907, see Christopher Neve, 'London Art School in Search of a Home: Heatherley's – I', in *Country Life*, 164, 1978, 448-50

⁵ Information from Andrew Potter, Royal Academy Library, 28 February 2007

⁶ This achievement must have gratified Hughes's uncle, Arthur Hughes, who had himself been awarded the silver medal in 1848: Roberts, *Arthur Hughes: his life and works*, 1997, 48

⁷ Catherine Fehrer, *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, exhibition catalogue, New York, Shepherd Gallery, [179]

⁸ See *Prima Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia*, exhibition catalogue, 1895, 100, quoted in Georgiana L. Head, 'Edward Robert Hughes 1851-1914', unpublished MA diss., London, Royal Holloway College, 1996, 13n.

⁹ David A. Rosenthal, '(Jean-Joseph) Benjamin Constant', *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, London, 1994, 7, 759-60

works in the manner of oil paintings or even watercolours. The drawings of most artists remained unknown outside their own studio, or their immediate social and professional circle. The mid-nineteenth century however, saw a crucial shift in the public profile and critical status of drawings. Central to this development was the introduction of winter exhibitions in commercial dealers' galleries in London in the 1850s and 1860s. These were pioneered by the Belgian printseller and picture dealer Ernest Gambart (1814-1902), who hosted an annual Winter Exhibition of British Art at his premises, the French Gallery at 120/121 Pall Mall, from the early 1850s.¹⁰ As the proprietor of a commercial gallery, Gambart was primarily motivated by what he considered saleable, and he was less bound than the Academy by traditional hierarchies of medium. His exhibitions were thus more flexible in the range of work that they contained, showing drawings and reproductive prints as well as oil paintings and watercolours. Several artists of the wider Pre-Raphaelite circle took advantage of the opportunity to exhibit there, with Ford Madox Brown, William Holman Hunt and Simeon Solomon all showing works in the winter exhibitions of the 1850s and early 1860s.¹¹ As Pamela L. Fletcher notes, these exhibitions were taken sufficiently seriously by the art press to be included in the listings of *The Art-Journal* and *The Athenaeum*, and to be mentioned by John Ruskin in his *Academy Notes* between 1856 and

¹⁰ See Pamela L. Fletcher, 'Creating the French Gallery: Ernest Gambart and the Rise of the Commercial Art Gallery in Mid-Victorian London', in *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 6:1, 2007, www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring_07/articles/flet.shtml, accessed 5 March 2009

¹¹ Solomon, for example, exhibited notable examples of finished pen and ink drawings at the French Gallery in 1859: *Dante's First Meeting with Beatrice* (Tate) and *'Babylon hath been a Golden Cup'* (Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery).

1859.¹² Where Gambart led, other commercial galleries followed, and winter exhibitions of contemporary art proliferated in commercial dealers by the mid-1860s.¹³

It was probably largely in response to the success of Gambart's winter exhibitions that the Society of Painters in Water Colours (from 1881 the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours or RWS), a near neighbour of the French Gallery on Pall Mall East, introduced its own winter exhibition in November 1862, complementing its existing summer show. The annual exhibition was proposed by its member and future President, John Gilbert (1817-1897), as a showcase for sketches and studies produced by the members and associates of the Society, and provided an opportunity for the exhibition and sale of more experimental, less finished works in watercolour. The Institute of Painters in Water Colours (or New Society) introduced its own annual winter exhibition of sketches and studies in 1866. The winter exhibitions of both societies, like those of the commercial galleries, provided opportunities for increasing sales. As *The Art-Journal* observed in 1866, 'purchasers are amiably inclined to spend on cabinet pictures and portfolio drawings any surplus cash which winter months may find idle in the pocket.'¹⁴

¹² See Fletcher, 'Creating the French Gallery', 2007

¹³ [Anon.], 'Winter Exhibitions', *The Art-Journal*, 28, 1866, 373

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

From the earliest exhibitions there was some debate as to exactly what constituted a 'sketch' or 'study', although as Scott Wilcox has summarised, 'In contrast to the exhibition watercolour, it was more intimate – a more direct expression of the artist's creativity. It spoke of genius and spontaneity against the mechanical. It made a more telling use of the medium's inherent properties – its fluidity and its capacity for rapid, meaningful gesture.'¹⁵ Such a 'sketch' or 'study' remained a watercolour – however spontaneous and informal – rather than a drawing, but the opportunity to show such works in the winter exhibitions further loosened the restrictions on what was considered appropriate for public display.

By the time Edward Robert Hughes made his exhibiting debut in 1870, the winter exhibitions of sketches and studies were established as a regular part of the art calendar. There had not to date, however, been an exhibition devoted solely to the exhibition of monochrome drawings, as opposed to less finished works in watercolour. This changed in 1872, when the Dudley Gallery mounted its first *Exhibition of Works of Art in Black & White*, at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly. The catalogue observed that the Gallery's Committee had 'reason to believe that such an Exhibition might be made highly interesting to lovers of Art, and the general public, besides tending to the development of a phase of the Fine Arts which has scarcely received the encouragement due to it (owing to the

¹⁵ Scott Wilcox and Christopher Newall, *Victorian Landscape Watercolors*, New Haven and London, 1992, 23

necessarily limited space afforded by existing Exhibitions)'.¹⁶ This first exhibition included both drawings and prints, comprising works in pencil, pen and ink, crayon, and charcoal, and designs for illustration, as well as wood engravings and etchings. Among the artists represented were James McNeill Whistler, Frederic Leighton (1830-1896), George du Maurier (1834-1896), John Leech (1817-1864), Randolph Caldecott (1846-1886), and Hughes's friend Charles Fairfax Murray. The exhibition of 1872 was described by its organisers as an experiment to test the public's appetite for an exhibition of solely monochrome work, and proved successful enough to be followed by similar exhibitions in four out of the five years between 1873 and 1877, and by further exhibitions into the 1880s.¹⁷

In spite of these increased opportunities for showing work in black and white, Hughes appears to have focused entirely on showing watercolours and oils for the first twenty or so years of his exhibiting career, to the exclusion of drawings. Certainly, the first works he exhibited that can categorically be identified as drawings are his contributions to the RWS winter exhibition of 1893-4.¹⁸

However, he was certainly producing drawings privately, and making drawings to commission, from at least the 1870s. In a diary entry for 9 January 1877,

¹⁶ Dudley Gallery, *Exhibition of Works of Art in Black & White*, London, 1872, [7]

¹⁷ The British Museum Print Room holds catalogues for the Dudley Gallery 'Black & White' exhibitions of 1872, 1877 (listed as the fifth such exhibition, indicating there were exhibitions in four of the five years between 1873 and 1877), 1879 and 1880 (X.3.37, 7-10).

¹⁸ These were two studies in silverpoint (nos.271 and 277) and *Study for a Picture* (no.276, see fig. 33 in this thesis): Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, *Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies 1893-4*, London, 1893.

Hughes's fiancée Mary MacDonald recorded that 'T[ed] is to do a sketch for Mr. C of his children.'¹⁹ Revealingly, four days earlier Mary had written that she had received a note from 'Mr. C' (who remains unidentified), who was 'distressed he can't afford to have his children painted by E.R.H.'²⁰ A portrait drawing by Hughes, which could be produced more rapidly than an oil painting or a watercolour, would have been more affordable than either. It is not known what fee, if any, Hughes charged 'Mr. C' for the 'sketch', but this incident illustrates the fact that portrait drawings were accessible to a wider range of potential patrons than oil paintings and watercolours. Hughes's facility as a portrait draughtsman opened up to him a larger pool of clients than he might otherwise have been able to reach.

The 'sketch' Hughes made for 'Mr. C.' is an early instance of his child portraiture – a genre in which he would come to be renowned.²¹ By 1907, Walter Crane could remark in his autobiography that Hughes's 'portraits, notably of children, in red chalk are also much appreciated',²² a comment which, while explicitly acknowledging his talent in depicting his young sitters, also implies

¹⁹ Mary MacDonald, diary entry, 9 January 1877, unpublished manuscript, George MacDonald Collection. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 103, folder 310

²⁰ Mary MacDonald, diary entry, 5 January 1877, unpublished manuscript, George MacDonald Collection. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 103, folder 310

²¹ In reviewing Hughes's *Master Tony Freeman*, the *St James's Gazette* described the watercolour as 'one of those portraits of children in which Mr. Edward Hughes has long been preminent'. [Anon.], 'The Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours', *St James's Gazette*, 7285, 30 November 1903, 18

²² Walter Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences*, London, 1907, 88

more generally that Hughes had acquired a reputation for his drawings as well as for his more elaborate, finished watercolours. At their best, Hughes's studies of children have an unsentimental directness that recalls the drawn portraits of the early Pre-Raphaelite circle. In his portrait in black chalk *Margaret Ellinor Morse* (fig. 27), for example, the young sitter is shown to the shoulders, and full face, meeting the eyes of the artist and viewer with a serious, steady gaze. The frontality and uncompromising directness of this portrayal can be compared to that of Ford Madox Brown's full-face study of his friend Daniel Casey (fig. 28), even if the softness of the little girl's features and the greater distance between sitter and viewer makes the directness of her gaze less intense and disconcerting. Margaret was a daughter of Hughes's close friends and regular patrons Sydney and Juliet Morse, and this intimacy – like the bond of friendship between Brown and Casey – may have permitted him greater freedom and informality in his depiction.

Hughes was a perceptive recorder of children. In the chalk drawing known as *In the Corner Chair* (fig. 29), for example, he sensitively suggests the interior life of the little girl, who leans her head against the chair back and stares into space in a reverie. The drawing relates to a watercolour that Hughes exhibited at the RWS in winter 1891, *Dealings with the Fairies* (1891, fig. 30),²³ in which the same

²³ The watercolour was sold at Christies's, London, on 18 November 2004 (lot 145) as *Daydreams*, but is identified here as *Dealings with the Fairies* based on descriptions in contemporary reviews. See [Anon.], 'The Society of Painters in Water Colours. Winter exhibition', *The Athenaeum*, 3345, 5 December 1891, 768, where the subject of Hughes's

sitter is shown at half-length, again daydreaming but in a variant pose. In the exhibited watercolour, both the title and the open book in the girl's lap suggest that her reverie has a focus: she is dreaming about the story she has just been reading. In the drawing, by contrast, it is more difficult to guess her thoughts, and this ambiguity, together with her listless demeanour, combine to create an unconventionally melancholy and introspective image of childhood. The changes Hughes made between the drawing and the finished watercolour may reflect the necessity of evoking a less sombre mood in a work created for public exhibition. In the drawing, which does not appear to have been exhibited, he may have felt he could allow himself greater freedom to experiment.

Many of Hughes's finished drawings – particularly his portraits – were made to commission and were an important source of income. However, others seem to have been drawn as tokens of friendship, and were almost certainly given as gifts. This too may owe something to Pre-Raphaelite practice, where the mutual making of portraits, and the giving of drawings, had been a method of cementing friendships and professional relationships within the group.²⁴ Some of Hughes's

watercolour is described as 'a girl in a white dress day-dreaming, with a charming expression on her beautiful face', and [Anon.], 'Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours', *The Daily News*, 30 November 1891, 3: 'Apart from the grace of the pose, the painter has got into the face of the young girl who leans back in the Chippendale chair a look of abstraction and reverie which is very natural.' The title of the work had personal significance for Hughes, *Dealings with the Fairies* being a collection of stories published in 1867 which had been written by George MacDonald (who had almost become the artist's father-in-law) and illustrated by his uncle, Arthur Hughes.

²⁴ Perhaps the most famous example is the exchange of drawings inscribed with dedications between Millais and Rossetti in the first year of the Brotherhood, 1848. Millais gave Rossetti his

drawings bear dedications to the sitter, and/or the recipient. A haunting undated study in black chalk of the head of an unidentified woman with hollow cheeks and lowered eyes (fig. 31) bears the inscription ‘W.H.W. from E.R.H.’, while a life drawing given by Hughes to his fellow-artist Arthur Hopkins (1848-1930) carries a dedication on the reverse ‘To Mr. and Mrs. A Hopkins from their old friend E.R. Hughes, Sept. 15, 1913’ (private collection).²⁵ Most personally, a tender pencil study of the young Gwendolen Freeman (who would later marry William Holman Hunt’s son, Hilary) bears the inscription ‘To Gwendolen, from her Painter man E.R. Hughes July 30. 1901’ (fig. 32).²⁶

Although Hughes’s skills as a draughtsman would initially have been known primarily to his immediate circle and to his network of patrons, his drawings became familiar to the critics and to a wider public through the works he exhibited at the RWS’s winter exhibitions of sketches and studies between 1893 and 1913. His submissions were often heads in pencil, chalk or silverpoint, which were usually listed in the catalogues simply as ‘A Study’, making them difficult to identify individually, although he also showed portraits of named sitters and occasional subject pictures in chalk. Hughes’s exhibited drawings

Lovers by a Rosebush, and received Rossetti’s *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice* (both 1848, Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery).

²⁵ See *English Romantic Art 1840-1920: Pre-Raphaelites, Academics, Symbolists*, New York, Shepherd Gallery, 5 October-19 November 1994, no.65. I am grateful to Abbie Sprague for bringing this catalogue to my attention.

²⁶ In one of her two books of memoirs, Diana Holman Hunt, Gwendolen Freeman’s daughter, refers to this drawing (then in her possession) and asserts that Hughes ‘fell in love with my mother when he was fifty and she was eighteen.’ Diana Holman Hunt, *My Grandfather, His Wives and Loves*, London, 1969, 59n. To date no further evidence has come to light to substantiate this.

quickly attracted critical notice, with *The Morning Post* hailing him on 11 December 1893 as ‘a very capable draughtsman’,²⁷ and *The Athenaeum* commending three studies exhibited the following year as ‘heads of perfect draughtsmanship and powerful and true expressions.’²⁸ *The Daily Telegraph* concurred, remarking that ‘this artist draws with authority’.²⁹

Reviewing the winter exhibition of 1893, *The Athenaeum* had singled out one of Hughes’s submissions, a ‘study in red chalk of a hooded head’, for particular praise.³⁰ The drawing (fig. 33) was a half-length depiction of a young man in the habit of a monk, standing in an Italianate garden and toying with the petals of a rose. It was exhibited simply as *Study for a Picture*, but the artist’s inscription within the image, along the top right edge, of a quotation from Robert Browning’s poem *Fra Lippo Lippi* (1855), identified the figure as the Quattrocento artist Fra Filippo Lippi (c.1406-1469). Hughes had exhibited a watercolour of the subject, in which the figure is depicted at full-length, in the summer exhibition the same year (fig. 34), accompanying it in the catalogue with the same quotation:

“All the Latin I construe is,

²⁷ [Anon.], ‘The Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours’, *The Morning Post*, 11 December 1893, 3

²⁸ [Anon.], ‘The Society of Painters in Water Colours’, *The Athenaeum*, 3502, 8 December 1894, 797

²⁹ *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 December 1894

³⁰ ‘It is in several respects the finest work here.’ [Anon.], ‘The Society of Painters in Water Colours. Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies’, *The Athenaeum*, 3450, 9 December 1893, 813

‘Amo,’ I love!’”³¹

Hughes’s drawing is virtuoso display of chalk technique in which the young man’s features are sensitively modelled in softly-graded areas of tone and the effect of light shining through the semi-transparent fabric of his hood is deftly captured. The title Hughes gave the drawing, *Study for a Picture*, as well as its exhibition in the Society’s winter exhibition of sketches and studies, implies that it was a preparatory study for the watercolour he had shown earlier in the year. Certainly some critics followed Hughes’s description and referred to it as such, the *St James’s Gazette* for example describing it as ‘a drawing for a picture of Browning’s favourite painter’.³² However, the degree of elaboration of Hughes’s drawing, in which almost the entire surface of the paper is densely worked, takes it far from the spontaneity of the sketch. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a more finished chalk drawing.

By the end of the century the definition of what could be exhibited as a sketch or study had become increasingly blurred, and Hughes’s exhibition of a highly finished drawing as a ‘Study’ was certainly not unusual. Reviewing the exhibition of ‘sketches and studies’ in which Hughes’s drawing appeared, *The Times* noted on 4 December 1893 that ‘Perhaps half the wall space is given up to works of this kind [i.e. ‘sketches and studies’], but all the rest contains drawings

³¹ Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, *Illustrated Catalogue comprising facsimiles of drawings by the artists*, London, 1893, cat.35, pl.51

³² [Anon.], ‘The Old Water-Colour Society’, *St James’s Gazette*, 4203, 4 December 1893, 7

as elaborate and highly-finished as possible, so that, except that they are framed with white mounts instead of gold, they form a show that is indistinguishable from that of the spring.’³³ So flexible had the parameters become, that in the same exhibition Hughes could show the large and extraordinarily detailed watercolour ‘*Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?*’ (fig. 45), occasioning the comment from the same reviewer that ‘... Mr [John Henry] Henshall and Mr. E.R. Hughes have seldom equalled in elaboration the two finished drawings that they send.’³⁴ Indeed, much as critics usually admired Hughes’s studies in pencil, chalk and silverpoint, they came to expect a more elaborate exhibition piece as well. In 1911 *The Architects’ and Builders’ Journal* went so far as to comment that ‘one may rather regret to have from Mr. E.R. Hughes only some portrait heads in pencil, instead of the highly finished figure-picture by which he is usually represented.’³⁵

Thematically, Hughes’s *Study for a Picture* can be seen as a late manifestation of the Pre-Raphaelite motif of the Italian Renaissance artist, exemplified by Rossetti’s *Giorgione Painting* and *Fra Angelico Painting* (both c.1853, Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery), or Simeon Solomon’s two versions of *The Painter’s Pleasance* (1861, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, and c.1862, British Museum). Despite the fact that, unlike Rossetti

³³ *The Times*, 4 December 1893, 14

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *The Architects’ and Builders’ Journal*, 13 November 1911, RWS archive, press cuttings book P7 (1905-1913)

and Solomon, Hughes seems concerned solely with the artist as a romantic figure, and not with the artist at work, his choice of a Quattrocento painter and draughtsman (albeit filtered through the production of a nineteenth-century poet) as a subject is in itself revealing. The rise in status of drawing as a medium from the mid-century was bound up with a revival of interest in Old Master drawings. The members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had been accustomed to looking at early Italian art in the form of prints (notably, in the earliest days of the Brotherhood, the engravings by Carlo Lasinio (1759-1838) after the frescoes in the Campo Santo, Pisa)³⁶ but within the wider Pre-Raphaelite circle a more specialised interest in drawings themselves began to develop. In 1868, Algernon Charles Swinburne (at that time a close friend of Hughes's acquaintances Burne-Jones and Solomon) published an article on Old Master drawings in the collection of the Uffizi in Florence, based on a visit he had made there in spring 1864.³⁷ By the early 1870s, Hughes's friend Charles Fairfax Murray was developing a connoisseurship in the field that would lead to his amassing one of the most important collections of Old Master drawings in private hands.³⁸ In Milan in 1872, he already had the experience to assert with regard to Leonardo da Vinci that 'the number of his drawings is not nearly so large as is generally supposed – I am confident that fully two-thirds are by his scholars. A good deal might be done by connecting drawings with pictures which has never yet been

³⁶ Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 1905, 1, 130

³⁷ Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 July 1868, 16-40

³⁸ See Charles Fairfax Murray, *A Selection from the Collection of Drawings by the Old Masters formed by C. Fairfax Murray*, privately printed, London, [1904]

done.’³⁹ By 1909, when Murray sold 1400 Old Master drawings to the American collector John Pierpont Morgan, it could be said by the Keeper of British and Medieval Antiquities at the British Museum, Charles Hercules Read, that ‘the *whole* of his collection is certainly worth having. He is about the best judge of such things here’.⁴⁰ Although there is no documentary evidence of Hughes having had access to Murray’s drawings, it would be surprising, given their close and lifelong friendship, if Hughes had not seen at least some of the collection at first hand, as well as being able to take advantage of his friend’s prodigious knowledge and expertise.

The growing interest in Old Master drawings was reflected in a major showing of over seven hundred examples at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877-8. This exhibition, centred on Italian drawings but also including works by French, German, Dutch, Flemish and English artists, was claimed by Joseph Comyns Carr in the catalogue as the first of its kind, and ‘an epoch in Art exhibition’.⁴¹ In his introduction, Carr asserted the unique value of a drawing in revealing both the artist’s style and personality, arguing that while in a finished painting the artist’s identity is, to some extent, effaced, ‘a drawing made in preparation for such a picture restores as by magic the lost presence of the artist. Its few simple

³⁹ Quoted in David B. Elliott, *Charles Fairfax Murray: The Unknown Pre-Raphaelite*, Lewes, 2000, 38

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 189

⁴¹ Grosvenor Gallery, *Winter Exhibition (1877-78) of Drawings by the Old Masters, and Water-colour Drawings by Deceased Artists of the British School. With a Critical Introduction by J. Comyns Carr*, London, 1877, iii

lines have the force and the fascination of spoken words.’⁴² The staging of the exhibition had, Carr asserted, created ‘extraordinary interest’, and had proved there was an appetite for a genre of work which ‘by many persons... was assumed to have small chance of recognition beyond a limited and learned circle of amateurs.’⁴³

As familiarity with Old Master drawings grew, both critics and artists made explicit links between the drawing practice of their own day and the work of the masters of the past. The critic of *The Athenaeum* observed of Burne-Jones in 1893 that ‘His sculpturesque heads of lovely girls may justly be compared with the similar exercises in which Leonardo took delight; and his capital studies of drapery are also comparable with those of Da Vinci.’⁴⁴ The following winter, the same journal described three studies by Hughes as ‘Thoroughly admirable, learned, and worthy of an old master of the greatest time’.⁴⁵ In this way, commentators situated the work of these contemporary artists within a continuous tradition of draughtsmanship stretching back to the fifteenth century. The choice of the word ‘learned’ by *The Athenaeum*’s reviewer seems intended to imply that Hughes’s draughtsmanship appeared to be based on extensive study, though whether study from the life or study from existing drawings is

⁴² *Ibid.*, v

⁴³ *Ibid.*, iii

⁴⁴ [Anon.], ‘The Society of Painters in Water Colours. Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies’, *The Athenaeum*, 3450, 9 December 1893, 813

⁴⁵ [Anon.], ‘The Society of Painters in Water Colours’, *The Athenaeum*, 3502, 8 December 1894, 797

unclear. It is certainly difficult to identify specific drawings, in Murray's collection or elsewhere, that Hughes actually saw, and that could have influenced him technically or compositionally. However, a comparison between Hughes's drawing *Rosalind* (fig. 35) and the celebrated *Ideal Head* by Michelangelo acquired by the Ashmolean Museum in 1846 (fig. 36), suggests that Hughes knew Michelangelo's study, either in the original or in reproduction. Although the direction of the head is reversed, the viewpoint, the angle of the model's head, and the downturned gaze and partial profile – not to mention the choice of red chalk as a medium – all recall Michelangelo's drawing.

This is not the only instance where the choice of medium is crucial in allowing connections to be made between Hughes's productions and the work of the Old Masters. His use of silverpoint, a medium inescapably associated with the workshop practice of early Renaissance Italy, was also significant. The technique involves drawing with a silver stylus on a paper prepared with a coloured ground. The pressure of the metal point leaves a residue of oxidised silver, forming the drawn line; highlights may then be added using brush and white. Silverpoint is a medium demanding exceptional care, discipline and control, as the line is indelible and mistakes cannot be corrected. For a young student in the early Quattrocento workshop, a mastery of silverpoint was an essential skill, and a year's study of the medium was expected before he could

progress to drawing in pen and ink.⁴⁶ Writing on Burne-Jones's career as a draughtsman, John Christian has observed that the artist would occasionally 'resort to pencil and bodycolour on a toned ground, in the manner of silverpoint drawings by Botticelli or Filippino Lippi – the kind of drawings that his friend A.C. Swinburne had enthused about in his article'.⁴⁷ To use silverpoint and exhibit the results, as Hughes was doing from at least 1893, was at once a demonstration of virtuosity, given the technical demands of the medium, and a statement about his own work, placing it within an existing tradition of draughtsmanship.

Hughes's choice of red chalk, too, can be seen as having a particular relevance within this context. The use of black chalk as a drawing medium had begun to be established in the fifteenth century, with the warmer tonality of red chalk gaining in popularity from the sixteenth. Hughes and Burne-Jones exchanged letters about the use of red chalk, a correspondence of which only Burne-Jones's half is recorded.⁴⁸ The exchange of letters had come about as a result of Burne-Jones's eagerness to find a red chalk comparable in tint to that used by the Old Masters. A model of his acquaintance, 'F.', had noticed that the chalk used by Hughes appeared 'much more crimson' than his own, and mentioned this to Hughes who,

⁴⁶ Ames-Lewis and Wright, *Drawing in the Italian Renaissance Workshop*, 1983, 44-46

⁴⁷ John Christian, 'The Compulsive Draughtsman', in *Hidden Burne-Jones: Works on Paper by Edward Burne-Jones from Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery*, London, 2007, 25

⁴⁸ Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, London, 1904, II, 322. The date of the correspondence is not specified in the text but it appears in the chapter relating to events of 1897.

with typical generosity, duly wrote to Burne-Jones to share some details of his working method.⁴⁹ This evidently occasioned some embarrassment to Burne-Jones, who assured Hughes that ‘I should never have dreamed of asking how any effect was produced... I only asked if your red chalk was the ordinary red chalk of commerce’.⁵⁰ Apparently it was, as he went on to thank Hughes for his information and to observe that ‘your method of using this poor substitute reads admirably, and since you have generously imparted it to me, I shall assuredly use it.’⁵¹ In the context of the relationship between late-nineteenth-century practice and the Old Master tradition, it is revealing that Burne-Jones’s hunger for a redder shade of chalk stemmed directly from his admiration of and desire to emulate the drawings of the past. He remarks that ‘the ancient red is a far more crimson and rosy tint than the dusty brown sticks they give us now, and I have understood always that the ancient red is exhausted and that we have fallen on evil days and can get no more of it’. In the absence of ‘that ancient treasure’, Burne-Jones comments, ‘I never make careful red chalk drawings. I am waiting till I can find one stick of the tint Correggio used.’⁵²

On 1 November 1914, *The Observer* concluded its review of Edward Robert Hughes’s memorial display at the RWS with the remark, ‘It is when he applies his pre-Raphaelite precision to portrait drawings and studies of heads that Arthur

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

Hughes [sic] commands most admiration.’⁵³ This assessment reflects a more general opinion of Hughes’s drawn work. His studies in pencil, silverpoint and chalk were more consistently admired than his elaborate historical, literary and imaginative subjects in watercolour. The artist’s ‘careful and masterly’⁵⁴ drawings were seen as embodying his strengths – sensitivity and technical skill – while avoiding the weaknesses of over-elaboration, ill-advised choice of subject or lack of pictorial imagination that were so often perceived to mar his work in watercolour. It was on his drawings, and not on his watercolours, that *The Observer*’s reviewer judged that Hughes’s future reputation would rest: ‘These are things of lasting value, and no fluctuations in taste can affect their appreciation.’⁵⁵

⁵³ P.G.K., ‘Royal Society of Painters in Water-colours’, *The Observer*, 1 November 1914, 7

⁵⁴ *The Guardian*, 18 December 1901

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER THREE

‘THE COMING OF TWILIGHT IS THE TIME TO SEE THINGS’:

HUGHES’S RELATIONSHIP TO EUROPEAN SYMBOLISM

When Edward Robert Hughes’s *‘Night with her train of stars and her great gift of sleep’* (fig. 52) was displayed in the exhibition *The Last Romantics* in London in 1989, Graham Horton observed in the catalogue that the watercolour was ‘a very symbolist image’,¹ while for Rodney Engen the inclusion of *‘Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?’* (fig. 45) in the same exhibition ‘made a strong and lasting plea for Hughes to be reinstated as a powerful symbolist.’² Six years later, in 1995, *‘Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?’* was one of some five hundred exhibits selected for the comprehensive survey *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe* (Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal),³ allowing Hughes’s watercolour to be seen in a European context for the first time since its showing at the first International Art Exhibition in Venice a century before.⁴

¹ *The Last Romantics: The Romantic Tradition in British Art, Burne-Jones to Stanley Spencer*, exhibition catalogue, London, Barbican Art Gallery, 1989, 95

² Rodney Engen, ‘The Twilight of Edward Robert Hughes, RWS’, *Watercolours and Drawings*, 5:1, 1990, 36

³ *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe*, exhibition catalogue, Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts, 1995, 514, cat.166

⁴ *Prima Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte della Città di Venezia*, exhibition catalogue, 1895, 100, cat.156. See Georgiana L. Head, *Edward Robert Hughes 1851-1914*, unpublished MA diss., Royal Holloway College, 1996, 13n. *‘Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?’* was one of two submissions by Hughes, the other being *Biancabella and Samaritana* (cat.155, now private collection).

The suggestion that Hughes's work, or at least certain examples of it, can be characterised as 'symbolist' is, then, not a new one. However, to date there has been no attempt to define more fully the ways in which his work can be understood as 'symbolist', nor to establish the extent of Hughes's personal and professional connections with Symbolism as a movement.⁵ This chapter explores connections between Hughes and his contemporaries, tracing the relationship between his later watercolours and developments in mainland Europe. It investigates the degree to which his choice of subjects and their treatment are representative of wider Symbolist concerns, while also examining reviews of the period to determine how such works were received and understood by Hughes's contemporaries.

It is perhaps significant that the descriptions of works by Hughes as 'symbolist' (in both cases with a lower-case 's') by Horton and Engen predate 1997, the year of the exhibition *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts: Symbolism in Britain 1860-1910* at the Tate Gallery, London. Although not the first exploration of connections and exchanges between British artists of the period and their counterparts in continental Europe,⁶ the exhibition was important as a

⁵ Georgiana L. Head observes that there are 'strong similarities between the themes covered by Hughes and the Belgium [sic] Symbolists', citing *Heart of Snow* and '*Night with her train of stars...*' as examples, but notes that the subject is not within the scope of her dissertation: Head, 'Edward Robert Hughes 1851-1914', 1996, 25n.

⁶ See particularly Susan P. Casteras and Alicia Craig Faxon (eds), *Pre-Raphaelite Art in its European Context*, Madison and London, c.1995

self-declared ‘attempt [by its curators] to define Symbolism in Britain’.⁷ It reassessed the later nineteenth-century painting of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Watts and their circles, setting aside ‘the usual labels of Pre-Raphaelite, Aesthetic and Academic’ and redefining it as Symbolist.⁸ By identifying shared concerns and relating these to the approaches of artists in continental Europe, the exhibition both confirmed the importance of mid- to late nineteenth century British artists in the development of international Symbolism, and argued in turn the persistence of Symbolism as an influence on British art into the 1920s.⁹

To redefine artists such as Burne-Jones, Watts and Rossetti as Symbolist, as Wilton and Upstone proposed, is not only to acknowledge common artistic ground – the choice of poetic, mystical or allegorical subjects, the evocation of a mood of dreamy contemplation, and a diminished emphasis on narrative – but to recognise a network of personal and professional connections with artists in mainland Europe. As Colleen Denny has noted, the establishment of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877 was particularly significant, both in introducing the London public to a range of international artists and in bringing the work of progressive British painters, especially Burne-Jones, to the attention of critics in

⁷ Andrew Wilton and Robert Upstone (eds), *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts: Symbolism in Britain 1860-1910*, London, 1997, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.* Edward Robert Hughes was not represented in the exhibition or the publication.

⁹ Although the exhibition primarily focused upon the fifty years between 1860 and 1910, its last section included paintings as late in date as Charles Shannon’s *The Golden Age* (1921-2, Simon Reynolds) and Frederick Cayley Robinson’s *Youth* (1923, private collection).

France.¹⁰ Burne-Jones and Watts were both prominent exhibitors when the Grosvenor Gallery opened (Rossetti was also invited to contribute but declined); Hughes was invited by the Gallery's proprietor, Sir Coutts Lindsay, to submit work two years later, in 1879, and became a regular contributor, exhibiting every year until 1886.¹¹ His association with the Grosvenor Gallery would bring him into contact with continental art and artists: from the first exhibition in 1877 Lindsay made a point of inviting French, German and Italian artists to contribute, and the Gallery established a reputation as a venue showcasing some of the latest developments in European painting.¹²

The first exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery included two works that would be particularly significant in the development of the Symbolist movement, and that together illustrate the importance of both French and British painters in providing inspiration for its adherents. The watercolour *L'Apparition* (1876, Louvre, Paris) by Gustave Moreau (1826-1898) would become a Symbolist icon through its role in Joris-Karl Huysmans's novel *A Rebours* (1886),¹³ and Burne-Jones's *The Days of Creation* (1870-6, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard, see fig. 37), too, would resonate with Symbolist artists both in Britain and in continental Europe.

¹⁰ See Colleen Denney, 'The Role of Sir Coutts Lindsay and the Grosvenor Gallery in the Reception of Pre-Raphaelitism on the Continent', in Susan P. Casteras and Alicia Craig Faxon (eds), *Pre-Raphaelite Art in its European Context*, Madison and London, c.1995, 66-80

¹¹ Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions*, 1995, 89

¹² *Ibid.*, 24-6

¹³ *L'Apparition*, which depicts Salome transfixed by a vision of the severed head of John the Baptist, appears in the novel as one of two works by Moreau owned by the decadent protagonist Des Esseintes. Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature*, trans. Robert Baldick, with an Introduction and Notes by Patrick McGuinness, London, 2003, 54-7.

Consisting of six watercolours, each centred on an angelic figure clasping a globe representing one of the days of creation as described in the book of Genesis, Burne-Jones's work provided one of the prototypes for the Symbolist use of female figures to personify abstract concepts, and foreshadowed the movement's interest in cosmological imagery.¹⁴ *The Days of Creation* was admired by Burne-Jones's fellow exhibitor Moreau, who subsequently owned a photograph of it by Frederick Hollyer (Musée Gustave Moreau, Paris) while the globes held by the angels are also echoed in the work of the Belgian Symbolist Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921), notably in the sphere or bubble enclosing a female figure in *Solitude* (1890-1, Neumann Collection, Gingins, Switzerland, see figs. 38-9), which was shown in London, at the Grafton Galleries, in 1893. *The Days of Creation* made a deep impression on Hughes, who had admired it in the artist's studio the previous summer. Irene MacDonald, the sister of Hughes's fiancée Mary, wrote to her mother on 30 July about a visit to Burne-Jones's studio 'to see the pictures I know Ted is telling Mary about the one the Creation. [...] Oh! it is so wonderful.'¹⁵ Both the mysterious globes in Burne-Jones's watercolour, and Khnopff's figure enclosed within a circular form, may have helped to shape the imagery of Hughes's much later series of depictions of the moon personified as a female figure, beginning with *The Lesser Light* (RWS, summer 1904), which

¹⁴ See for example Elihu Vedder's *The Pleiades* (1885, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) and Gaetano Previati's *Dance of the Hours* (c.1899, Fondazione Cariplo, Milan).

¹⁵ Letter, Irene MacDonald to Louisa MacDonald, 30 July [1876], unpublished manuscript, George MacDonald Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 103, folder 306

one critic described as ‘a girl’s figure crouched within a sphere of light’¹⁶ and continuing with *Waxing Moon*, *Radiant Moon* (fig. 40), *Waning Moon* and *Shrouded Moon* (all RWS, summer 1910, untraced)¹⁷ and *Weary Moon* (RWS, winter 1911, untraced).¹⁸

If the seeds of Symbolism were sown in the 1870s in the work of artists such as Moreau and Burne-Jones, its flowering as an artistic movement in France can be dated to 1886. That year saw both the publication by Jean Moréas (1856-1910) of a Symbolist manifesto,¹⁹ and the appearance of Huysmans’s *A Rebours*, in which the decadent protagonist Des Esseintes exemplified Symbolist taste by surrounding himself with works of art which would ‘transport him to some unfamiliar world, point the way to new possibilities, and shake up his nervous system by means of erudite fancies, complicated nightmares, suave and sinister visions.’²⁰ That same year Hughes himself was in Paris, studying at the

¹⁶ [Anon.], ‘Art Notes’, *The Queen*, 16 April 1904, 663

¹⁷ *Shrouded Moon*, *Waning Moon* and *Waxing Moon* were sold at Sotheby’s Belgravia, 20 November 1973, lots 36-38; *Radiant Moon* at Sotheby’s Belgravia, 18 April 1978, lot 34; and *Weary Moon* at Sotheby’s Billingshurst, 31 January 1989, lot 191.

¹⁸ The four *Moon* pictures shown at the RWS exhibition of summer 1910 were bought by Hughes’s friends Sydney and Juliet Morse. Coincidentally, when Hughes moved from Kensington to St Albans in 1913 he left the Morses as a memento ‘a glass ball’ or ‘a crystal ball’, which he gave to Mrs Morse and her daughter Enid: see annotation, probably in Juliet Morse’s hand, on letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 16 July 1913, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743.

¹⁹ Moréas’s manifesto *Le Symbolisme* was published in *Le Figaro*, 18 September 1886. For an English translation see ‘Symbolism – a Manifesto’ in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, with Jason Gaiger (eds), *Art in Theory 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Oxford and Malden, 1998, 1014-1016

²⁰ Huysmans, *Against Nature*, 2003, 50

Académie Julian.²¹ To date it is not clear how much he involved himself in artistic communities in the city beyond the Académie, but he may well at least have been aware of contemporary developments in French art.

Symbolist artists were united in a desire to transcend the mere depiction of the material world, creating visionary works that would evoke profound emotional or spiritual associations. As the critic Camille Mauclair would write in 1902, 'Emotion has once more become the ideal of art, which has too long prided itself on the mere presentment of things seen. And our young painters have perceived that they must seek for the hidden elements under the outer aspects of life, the emotional principle which gives rise to thought, which transcends form.'²²

Diverse as Symbolist artists were, they shared an interest in altered and liberating states of consciousness, such as dreams and visions; the presentation of women as powerfully sexualised figures, sometimes seductive, sometimes frightening, and often both at once; and evoking an air of disillusion, melancholy and decline.

Symbolism had originated as a literary movement, and its development in the visual arts remained closely associated with the written word. The figure of Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) came to acquire a particular significance for Symbolist writers and artists, both as a poet and as a personality. They identified

²¹ Catherine Fehrer, *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, exhibition catalogue, New York, Shepherd Gallery, 1989, [179]

²² Camille Mauclair, 'Idealism in Contemporary French Painting. -II', *The Magazine of Art*, January 1902, 27. Mauclair's article considers work by several artists, not all of them Symbolists, but among them Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1865-1953).

with Baudelaire's expressions of *ennui*, which seemed to foreshadow their own intimations of decline and decadence as the old century drew to a close; the mingling in his work of images of sex, death and decay; and its ambivalent attitude to the modern city, as a site of both pleasure and perversion. Particularly important was Baudelaire's poem *Correspondances*, with its references to Nature as a living, speaking temple, and to man's journey through 'forests of symbols'.²³ For Symbolists, the creative artist, whether writer or painter, was uniquely placed to negotiate these 'forests of symbols' and interpret the 'jumbled words' of Nature, divining and communicating their meaning.

In 1907, Hughes exhibited a subject picture at the RWS that he entitled *Heart of Snow* (fig. 41). The work was not accompanied in the catalogue with any poetic tag, but the title appears to derive from lines in Baudelaire's sonnet *La Beauté*:

'In the blue air, strange sphinx, I brood supreme
With heart of snow whiter than swan's white crest.'²⁴

²³ 'La Nature est un temple ou de vivants piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.'
Charles Baudelaire, *Complete Poems*, trans. Walter Martin, Manchester, 1997, 19

²⁴ 'Je trône dans l'azur comme un sphinx incompris;
J'unis un coeur de neige à la blancheur des cygnes'
The English text quoted is an extract from the translation of 1909 by Lord Alfred Douglas (1870-1945). See Carol Clark and Robert Sykes (eds), *Baudelaire in English*, London, 1997, 31.

Hughes's choice of a quotation from Baudelaire as a title for his watercolour is significant, reflecting the fact that the poet had caught the imagination of fin-de-siècle writers and artists in England, as well as in France.²⁵ An interest in Baudelaire had awakened in Aesthetic and Decadent circles in England as early as 1862: as Carol Clark and Robert Sykes note, in that year Algernon Charles Swinburne had written admiringly of *Les Fleurs du Mal* in the *Spectator*, perceiving in it 'the languid, lurid beauty of close and threatening weather', and identifying in the poet 'a natural leaning to obscure and sorrowful things.'²⁶ By the time Hughes painted *Heart of Snow*, a link between Baudelaire and Symbolism had become firmly established in England, as in France. The connection is made explicit in a study of Baudelaire by Frank Pearce Sturm which appeared in 1906, the year before Hughes painted *Heart of Snow*, and accompanied Sturm's translation into English of a substantial selection of Baudelaire's poetry and prose poems. Sturm acknowledged Baudelaire's influence upon the development of Decadence in French literature and Aestheticism in England before identifying the new Symbolism as 'a flower sprung from the old corruption' and 'a greater movement than either'.²⁷ Sturm asserted that Symbolism was more significant than the work of Baudelaire because whereas the latter's poetry 'almost inevitably concerns itself with

²⁵ For a history of the reception of Baudelaire in England and an overview of translations of *Les Fleurs du Mal* into English, see Clark and Sykes, *Baudelaire in English*, 1997.

²⁶ Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'Les Fleurs du Mal', collected in *Les Fleurs du Mal and other Studies*, London, 1913; quoted in Clark and Sykes, *Baudelaire in English*, London, 1997, xxix.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, xxvii.

material things’,²⁸ Symbolists recognised that ‘the visible world is the world of illusion, not of reality’, and attempted through imagination to realise truths that exist beyond the visible world.

Hughes’s *Heart of Snow* depicts a young woman in white drapery, reclining in a wintry landscape. This delicate, even vulnerable young girl is far from evoking the ‘mysterious and immortal’ figure of Beauty as goddess evoked by Baudelaire’s poem and described by Sturm as ‘as terrible as Pallas, “the warrior maid invincible.”’²⁹ Nonetheless, the placing of a female figure in a frozen landscape, together with the title *Heart of Snow*, suggests a connection with Symbolist depictions of women as alluring yet cold and forbidding.

Symbolist art was typically mysterious, allusive and suggestive. The subjects depicted – whether figures, landscapes, or objects – were resonant with associations, but could rarely be ‘read’ in a straightforward and unambiguous way. In the case of *Heart of Snow*, the presence of the dreaming young woman in the icy landscape is left unexplained. Instead, the emphasis is on evoking a mood of silent reverie. In this suppression of narrative content and elevation of formal qualities, and in its exploration of subtle variations in tone, *Heart of Snow* recalls the concerns of Aesthetic painting of the 1870s and ‘80s, for example the many depictions of contemplative young women in classicizing robes by Albert Moore (1841-1893). As Andrew Wilton has observed, such paintings made

²⁸ *Ibid.*, xiv-vv

²⁹ *Ibid.*, xlvi

possible the work of Symbolist artists of the end of the century: 'Into the *tabula* relatively *rasa* of the Aesthetic canvas, a new symbolic language could be introduced in which old meanings were replaced and even the paint surface could attain associative significance.'³⁰ In *Heart of Snow*, the quotation from Baudelaire's poem becomes a kind of pivot around which the formal and compositional qualities of the work revolve. The reference to snow and to the whiteness of swans in the text is the stimulus for Hughes to create an exploration of variations on white, juxtaposing the garlands of pale flowers, drapery, icy landscape, and white feathers of the bird swooping low over the snow (perhaps intended as a nod to Baudelaire's 'whiteness of swans') with the slight flush and warmth of the girl's skin.

The connection between Hughes's watercolour and European developments extends beyond its literary source. In its depiction of a draped female figure in a barren, snow-covered landscape, Hughes's *Heart of Snow* responds to a painting of 1891, *The Punishment of Lust*, by the Italian artist Giovanni Segantini (1858-1899). The painting (fig. 42) had been shown at the first exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in London in 1893 and at the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition the same year, from where it was bought by the Walker Art Gallery.³¹ Hughes

³⁰ Andrew Wilton, 'Symbolism in Britain', in *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts*, London, 1997, 17

³¹ See Walker Art Gallery, *Foreign Catalogue: Paintings, Drawings, Watercolours, Tapestry, Sculpture, Silver, Ceramics, Prints, Photographs*, Liverpool, 1977, 200. Segantini's painting had been exhibited at the Grafton Galleries under the title *The Punishment of Luxury*, a mistranslation of the Italian *Il Castigo delle Lussuose* (literally *The Punishment of the Lustful*)

would surely have been aware of it, since it was among the most discussed works in the exhibition at the Grafton Galleries and was also much reproduced.³²

As Helen Zimmern remarked in *The Magazine of Art* in 1897, Segantini had formerly been associated with depictions of Italian rural life, but in works such as *The Punishment of Lust* he had ‘adopted a symbolical style, suppressing details and embodying ideas.’³³ Segantini evokes a frozen purgatory in which women who aborted unborn children rather than become mothers must suffer before achieving redemption.³⁴ The suspension of the figures in the air, and the eerily icy and barren landscape, implies that the emotions of women who cannot or will not embrace motherhood are unnaturally ‘frozen’ and that they too are ‘barren’: only the experience of maternal love will warm and release them. This meaning becomes explicit when the painting is seen in conjunction with a related work of the same date, *The Angel of Life* (1891, Museo dell’Arte Moderna, Milan), in which a woman bends to embrace a child in a landscape in which the snow is melting and spring shoots are bursting into life. The nature of the implied coldness at the heart of the young woman in Hughes’s watercolour is more ambiguous, but it is significant that she wears a garland of flowers around her

and retained that title on its acquisition by the Walker Art Gallery. The painting is currently displayed with the title *The Punishment of Lust*.

³² It was illustrated for example in *The Magazine of Art*, 1894, 143, and in *The Art Journal*, 1895, 248.

³³ Helen Zimmern, ‘Giovanni Segantini’, *The Magazine of Art*, January 1897, 31

³⁴ Walker Art Gallery, *Foreign Catalogue: Paintings, Drawings, Watercolours, Tapestry, Sculpture, Silver, Ceramics, Prints, Photographs*, Liverpool, 1977, 200

head and carries more blossoms in her hand, suggesting the coming of spring and thaw and implying a melting of her own ‘heart of snow’.

Although it had originated in Paris, Symbolism was an international movement in which ideas and imagery were shared and disseminated across national boundaries through personal and professional relationships, the publication of reviews and commentary in the art press, and exhibitions where British and international artists showed their work together. Hughes himself participated in exhibitions in continental Europe from the mid-1890s onwards, embracing opportunities for his work to be seen and judged in an international context. He exhibited in Venice in 1895, Munich in 1896 and Brussels in 1897; there may then have been a gap of several years before he showed in Düsseldorf in 1904 and Amsterdam in 1912.³⁵ The reception of his work outside Britain and the extent to which it was collected there remains to be established, but it is worth noting that as early as 1904 ‘one of his most important pictures’ had been acquired by a private collector in Hamburg.³⁶

³⁵ Hughes showed *Biancabella and Samaritana* (as cat.155) and ‘*Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?*’ (cat.156) in the First International Exhibition in Venice in 1895 (see Head, ‘Edward Robert Hughes’, 1996, 13n); *Trifles of this Sort* (1894, untraced but see Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, *Illustrated Catalogue*, 1894, cat.152, pl.50) at the exhibition of the Munich Secession of 1896, cat.184 (information by email from Peter Lüdemann, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, 5 June 2009); *Biancabella and Samaritana* at the Brussels International Exhibition of 1897, cat.297 (information by email from Anne Adriaens-Pannier, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, 30 June 2009); a work or works as yet unidentified at the International Art Exhibition in Düsseldorf in 1904 (see Hans Vollmer (ed.), *Allgemeines Lexicon der Bildenden Künstler*, Leipzig, 1925, 8, 86); and *Twilight Phantasies* in the International Exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1912, cat.1494 (information by email from Bart Brouns, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 5 June 2009).

³⁶ See Frank W. Gibson, ‘Edward R. Hughes: Le Retour’ in *L’Art et la Couleur: Les Maitres Contemporains*, Paris, 1904, 53. The book, which will have helped to bring Hughes’s name to a

Just as there were opportunities in mainland Europe for British artists to show their work, so exhibitions in London allowed continental artists to exhibit alongside their British contemporaries. The opening exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in London in 1893, where Segantini's *The Punishment of Lust* had its first viewing by a British audience, was particularly important. As one critic noted, these new galleries aspired to be 'representative, not of this or that school, but of all; professing an equal regard for all current artistic movements, not only of Paris or London, but of all centres of artistic life... There are impressionists of all kinds, Scottish and French and English; naturalists from Paris and Munich; primitives from Belgium, and the new symbolists, with eccentrics from all quarters.'³⁷ As the critic of *The Saturday Review* remarked, the multi-national gathering of exhibitors at the Grafton Galleries reflected an openness to international developments that was already evident in the art press of the day.³⁸ The pan-European, and even global, awareness of artists and critics by the end of the century is best exemplified in the pages of the magazine *The Studio*, founded in 1893. Based in London, it made a point of covering international developments. Its regular 'Studio Talk' feature carried despatches from

French audience, reproduces his watercolour *Journey's End* (RWS, summer 1902) as a colour plate. The work in private ownership in Hamburg described as 'une de ses toiles les plus importantes' has not been identified.

³⁷ [Anon.], 'The Grafton Galleries', *The Saturday Review*, 75:1, 949, 4 March 1893, 234. From this diverse range of work the critic of *Theatre* singled out 'the Continental pictures' as being 'exceedingly interesting, and in some degree a revelation to the picture-loving Londoner.' [Anon.], 'The Grafton Galleries', *Theatre*, 21, April 1893, 221

³⁸ 'The scheme is decidedly in sympathy with a well-marked tendency of the times to which the popular literary organs of art, the old not less than the new, have conformed.' [Anon.], 'The Grafton Galleries', *The Saturday Review*, 75:1, 949, 4 March 1893, 234.

correspondents in the major British and European art centres (and sometimes beyond), including such hubs of Symbolist activity as Paris, Munich and Brussels, and its profiles of international artists associated with the movement helped to raise awareness of their work in British art circles.³⁹

Significantly, from 1894 to 1914 one of *The Studio*'s regular correspondents was Fernand Khnopff. A leading member of the Belgian avant-garde groups *Les Vingt* and *La Libre Esthétique*, Khnopff made regular visits to London and was a frequent exhibitor in the city, becoming an important point of exchange between the English art world and Symbolist circles in Belgium.⁴⁰ Through the works that he exhibited in London and his columns in *The Studio*, Khnopff was the primary means of introducing the British art-going public to developments in Belgian Symbolism. At the same time, he was an enthusiastic advocate for British art in his home country. As he recounted in an interview in 1892, he had 'delivered a lecture [on the subject of English art, in Brussels], and was made the target of a good deal of banter. One critic dubbed me Sir Fernand Khnopff,

³⁹ See for example Hans W. Singer, 'Max Klinger', *The Studio*, 5:26, 1895, 43-51; Gabriel Moury, 'A Dream Painter: M.L. Lévy-Dhurmer', *The Studio*, 10:47, 1897, 3-11; Vittorio Pica, 'The Last Work of Giovanni Segantini', *The Studio*, 32:135, 1904, 309-317.

⁴⁰ Khnopff 'exhibited in Britain for the first time in 1886 when he showed at the Liverpool Art Club, and then regularly in London from 1890-1906.' Mary Anne Stevens, 'Symbolism – A French Monopoly?', *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Khnopff*, London, 1997, 58. Khnopff had a one-man show at the Hanover Gallery in 1890 and became a member of the Society of Portrait Painters in 1892: see Jeffery W. Howe, *The Symbolist Art of Fernand Khnopff*, Ann Arbor, 1979, 7. His contributions to the Grafton Galleries exhibition of 1893, *Samuel and the Witch of Endor* and, particularly, *Solitude*, were widely reviewed.

Bart.’⁴¹ It is significant that when asked which British artists had ‘the most important message for [him]’, Khnopff chose the Pre-Raphaelites, whom he declared had been ‘a great revelation to me. So have Mr. Frederic Sandys, Mr. Burne-Jones and Mr. Watts.’⁴² Khnopff mixed freely in artistic circles in London and became especially friendly with Burne-Jones, the two artists exchanging drawings as tokens of their mutual respect.⁴³ The esteem in which Khnopff held Burne-Jones is also indicated by the fact that he hung a drawing by him in the Blue Room in his villa in Brussels: the most personal room in the house, to which he retreated to contemplate and listen to music. In the Blue Room, Burne-Jones was accorded equal honour with Moreau, not only in having a work displayed, but in Khnopff’s allocating both artists a gold ring set into the wall, on which their names were to be inscribed.⁴⁴

Although Hughes and Khnopff shared an acquaintance in Burne-Jones, it is not clear whether the two artists ever met. However, Hughes certainly had opportunities to see Khnopff’s work on the London exhibitions circuit, and crucially both artists showed at the New Gallery in the same year, 1892. Hughes sent one work, *Portrait of Mrs Douglas Arden* and Khnopff showed *I Lock my*

⁴¹ [Anon.], ‘A Poet Painter’, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 8582, 22 September 1892, 1. The interviewer recounts that although Khnopff spoke fluent English, the two men agreed to speak to one another in their own languages. Khnopff’s responses appear in the article in translation.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ See *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts*, 1995, cats 96 (Burne-Jones) and 108 (Khnopff).

⁴⁴ See ‘The Palace of Art: Khnopff’s Villa’ in Jeffery W. Howe, *The Symbolist Art of Fernand Khnopff*, Ann Arbor, 1979, 149. Moreau was represented in the Blue Room by an engraving of 1883 by Felix Braquemond after his *David* (1878).

Door upon Myself, painted the previous year (fig. 43).⁴⁵ That Hughes saw and remembered Khnopff's painting can be inferred from an untraced drawing in coloured chalks of a female head dated 1898 (fig. 44). Although in Hughes's drawing the eyes of the model are averted from the viewer, so avoiding the unsettling directness of gaze in Khnopff's work, the facial type, tilt of the head, and heavy loosened hair with fringe worn low over the brow all recall the woman in Khnopff's painting.⁴⁶

Khnopff's *I Lock my Door upon Myself* takes its title from a line in a poem by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), *Who Shall Deliver Me?* (1864). Perhaps significantly, Hughes's first notable foray into Symbolism in his exhibited work, the following year, took its inspiration from the same poet. In winter 1893, he showed at the RWS a large watercolour that was exhibited without a title but accompanied with a quotation from Rossetti's *Amor Mundi* (1865):

“‘Oh, what's that in the hollow, so pale, I quake to follow?’

⁴⁵ New Gallery, *Fifth Summer Exhibition*, London, 1892, cats 78 (Khnopff) and 394 (Hughes).

⁴⁶ As Jeffrey W. Howe points out, the 'type' of female beauty represented in Khnopff's painting, while resembling his sister Marguerite, also owes a debt to the ideal women associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly Rossetti, with 'strong, regular features, often with long red hair and a penetrating, soulful gaze': Howe, *Fernand Khnopff and the Belgian Avant-Garde*, exhibition catalogue, New York, Barry Friedman Ltd, 1983, 9. There is a sense in which Hughes is 'borrowing back' a prototype that Khnopff has already borrowed from Rossetti. The pale intensity of gaze of figures such as the woman in *I Lock my Door upon Myself* may also have made its own impression on Hughes's mind. There are striking echoes in the disconcerting blue stare of Blondel in *Blondel's Quest* (fig. 25).

‘Oh, that’s a thin, dead body, which waits the eternal term.’⁴⁷

Described by one reviewer as ‘The most dreadful sight in the gallery’,⁴⁸ the watercolour (fig. 45) depicted, at half length and approximately life size, a young man lying dead, with wild roses twining around and enclosing his body. The corpse has the red hair, fair skin and angular features of an early Pre-Raphaelite model, with pale, blue, unseeing eyes and long, thin hands with their bones visible beneath the skin.

Rossetti’s poem takes the form of a dialogue between two lovers, who come across a series of ominous signs: a meteor in the sky, a ‘scaled and hooded worm’, and finally the corpse itself lying in the hollow. As the combination of the imagery with the title *Amor Mundi* (which can be translated ‘love of the world’) implies, the theme of the poem is the transience of earthly life and love, and the inevitability of death. *Amor Mundi* had first appeared in 1865 in *The Shilling Magazine* with an illustration by Frederick Sandys (1829-1904) which, as Andrew Wilton has pointed out, ‘foreshadows some of the darker imagery of later Symbolist painting.’⁴⁹ Hughes certainly knew Sandys’s composition (fig. 46): the pair of carrion crows beside the body must surely be a reference to a

⁴⁷ Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, *Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies 1893-4*, London, 1893, 2

⁴⁸ [Anon.], ‘Art Notes: Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, 5a, Pall Mall East – First Notice’, *The Whitehall Review*, 9 December 1893, 9

⁴⁹ Andrew Wilton, ‘Symbolism in Britain’, in *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts*, London, 1997, 21

similar bird swooping low over the dead woman in Sandys's illustration.

However, there are crucial differences in approach between Sandys's treatment of the poem and that of Hughes, which help to explain both how Hughes's work can be situated within the Symbolist movement, and why it caused consternation to contemporary reviewers.

For a Victorian audience versed in the conventions of narrative painting, a meaning could be easily read into Sandys's illustration. It depicts the lovers at the moment before they stumble across the 'thin dead body' and, by leading the viewer's eye downwards from the couple with their carefree music-making, to the hollow-cheeked corpse with her discarded lute and tambourine lying alongside, makes a clear and direct connection between the lovers and their inevitable fate. The abandoned musical instruments recall the vanitas tradition of Dutch and Spanish painting of the seventeenth century, with their reminder that worldly pleasures turn to dust, while the various wild creatures investigating the corpse suggest imminent decay, and the return of the body to nature and the earth. By contrast, Hughes's interpretation crucially reduces the possibility of reading the image as a straightforward narrative. Unlike Sandys's illustration, which was printed to accompany Rossetti's poem, '*Oh, what's that in the hollow...?*' is not only divorced from the full text but omits the figures of the lovers, so that the composition is dominated instead by the 'thin dead body'. This change of emphasis was unsettling for contemporary critics attempting to

‘read’ the composition, or indeed to justify the depiction of the corpse. As one reviewer commented, ‘No story whose tragic import might necessitate the introduction of such an object is suggested by the picture.’⁵⁰

A contextual narrative, and an association with the theme of love, may be read into the watercolour, but only by deciphering more subtle codes. The pair of brimstone butterflies pitched near the head of the corpse may stand for the absent couple, while roses are traditionally associated with romantic love.⁵¹ In the language of flowers, dog roses, with their sharp, tenacious thorns and soft blooms, carry particular associations with the pleasure and pain of love.⁵² As they twine around and envelop the body they suggest a close, even symbiotic relationship not only between pleasure and pain, but between love and death. Interestingly, neither of these associations was noted in contemporary reviews. Critics seem not to have commented on the butterflies at all, and while more than one noted the wild roses, none suggested a reason for their prominence in the composition, nor their twining around the body. One literal-minded reviewer drily observed, ‘How a quantity of leafless brambles could entwine themselves round a corpse from the appearance of which the soul had departed not longer

⁵⁰ [Anon.], ‘The Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours’, *The Morning Post*, 11 December 1893, 3

⁵¹ I am grateful to Paul Spencer-Longhurst for drawing the implication of the butterflies and roses to my attention. As John Christian has observed, the wild roses encircling the corpse also ‘owe something to Burne-Jones’s *Briar Rose* paintings, exhibited to great acclaim in 1890’ (*The Last Romantics*, 1989, 95). Hughes’s composition recalls particularly the first painting in the series, *The Prince enters the Wood* (1870-90, National Trust, Buscot Park) in which the prince discovers reclining figures asleep among the briars.

⁵² See for example Mrs L. Burke, *The coloured Language of Flowers*, London, [1886], 73

than a week, the artist must state.’⁵³ In fact, however, the relationship between the wild roses and the corpse is crucial to the watercolour’s potency as an image. Just as in Rossetti’s poem the reference to the ‘velvet flowers’ with their ‘rich and sickly’ scent is linked with the ominous snake and ‘thin dead body’, so in Hughes’s watercolour the implied fragrance of rose blossom is set against dead flesh. This ambiguous fascination with death and decay, with sinister sweetness, connects Hughes’s watercolour to the preoccupation with decline and mortality that pervades so much of Symbolist art.

Contemporary viewers were both arrested and disturbed by ‘*Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?*’ As the critic in *The Whitehall Review* commented, it was perceived as ‘a horribly fascinating, and yet, as a lady ejaculated at our side, a most uncomfortable picture.’⁵⁴ Hughes’s image would have appeared particularly disturbing in the context of more conventional Victorian images of death such as those in popular prints, which often provided a comforting vision of the loved one slipping peacefully away, surrounded by relatives at the bedside and consoled by the hope of Resurrection (see for example figs.47-8). The stark depiction of the isolated corpse in Hughes’s watercolour, forgotten, abandoned and left to decay, offers no such consolation. More unsettling still are the half-open eyes and unseeing gaze: this is no peaceful sleep of death, but instead a disturbing blankness and emptiness. If there is a hint of comfort, it is present

⁵³ [Anon.], ‘Art Notes: Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, 5a, Pall Mall East – First Notice’, *The Whitehall Review*, 9 December 1893, 9

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

only in the pair of butterflies. While suggesting the absent lovers, the butterflies could equally imply the survival of the spirit after death.⁵⁵ This ambiguity of association, in which a single compositional element permits multiple responses, would be consistent with the open-ended approach to the use of symbolic elements characteristic of the wider Symbolist movement.⁵⁶

While critics were struck by the power of Hughes's image, they found in it a quality that they identified as unhealthy, even aberrant: one commentator observed that 'like the poem, it is a trifle morbid and hysterical.'⁵⁷ The choice of the word 'hysterical' seems particularly significant in the context of the period. The exhibition of Hughes's watercolour came at a time of growing interest in the study of nervous disorders, with hysteria especially being much discussed. In Paris, the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), who had died earlier that year, had been carrying out work with women patients at the Salpêtrière hospital and claimed to have codified the symptoms associated with the condition. His research became widely known through regular public demonstrations, where both medics and lay people were invited to watch his patients in the throes of

⁵⁵ A butterfly is traditionally symbolic of the soul: see James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, London, 1974, revised 1979, 54

⁵⁶ Jeffrey Howe notes that Fernand Khnopff, for example, drew upon a repertoire of 'symbolic vehicles' in his paintings: 'mirrors, masks, the sphinx, women (fatal and otherwise), androgynes, flowers, the head of Hypnos and [the city of] Bruges.' The recurrence of these elements implies that they held particular significance for the artist himself, but as Howe points out, 'these symbols are both personal and universal, and have multiple associations and meanings.' Jeffrey H. Howe, *Fernand Khnopff and the Belgian Avant-Garde*, New York, 1983, 9

⁵⁷ [Anon.], 'The Society of Painters in Water Colours. Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies', *The Athenaeum*, 3450, 9 December 1893, 813

what he had defined as *grande hystérie* (hysterical seizure), and through three volumes of photographs documenting the various phases of the seizures as Charcot had categorised them.⁵⁸ Rodolphe Rapetti notes that the demonstrations and photographic images resulting from Charcot's work at the Salpêtrière form 'a kind of theatricalization of experimental medicine'; a "dramatic" representation of torment', and suggests that they contributed to the development of Symbolist interests in the representation of the body in extreme emotional states.⁵⁹

Hughes's watercolour, with its depiction of a still and lifeless corpse, may not immediately appear 'hysterical'; however, in its starkly realistic depiction of an inert body, its eyes open but unseeing, it may have carried disturbing associations of medical images of patients frozen in their seizures. Perhaps equally importantly, the poem that inspired the watercolour was written by a woman, and for the reviewer in *The Athenaeum* it was the poem, not less than the image, that was defined in terms of its hysteria and morbidity. Hysteria was a condition almost invariably attributed to women⁶⁰; indeed the French physician Auguste Fabre in 1883 went so far as to assert that 'As a general rule, all women are

⁵⁸ Désire-Magloire Bourneville and Paul Regnard, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière (Service de M. Charcot)*, Paris, 3 vols, 1877-80. See Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, trans. Alisa Hartz, Cambridge, Mass., 2003.

⁵⁹ Rodolphe Rapetti, 'From Anguish to Ecstasy: Symbolism and the Study of Hysteria' in *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe*, Montreal, 1995, 225

⁶⁰ It should be mentioned, as Elaine Showalter notes, that Charcot took an interest in the study of male hysteria: see Showalter, 'Hysteria, Feminism and Gender', in Sander L. Gilman et al (eds), *Hysteria beyond Freud*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1993, 307. Significantly, however, since the Salpêtrière was a women's hospital, none of the images in the *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* were of men.

hysterical and ... every woman carries with her the seeds of hysteria.’⁶¹ The perceived hysteria of ‘*Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?*’ may have lain almost as much in its literary source, as in the way in which it was depicted.

The strong criticism that ‘*Oh, what’s that in the hollow...?*’ attracted on its first exhibition may help to explain why Hughes never subsequently attempted so controversial a subject. However, the watercolour does represent the beginnings of a shift (though one that was to be neither immediate nor total) in his exhibited subject pictures towards compositions in which narrative becomes less important than the evocation of mood and atmosphere. In a notable series of watercolours produced after 1905, Hughes explored transitional times of day: twilight and dawn. These moments, when the boundaries between night and day become blurred and ambiguous, were significant for Hughes. His friend Estella Canziani recalled walking with the artist through the streets of St Albans one evening as the sun was setting. She remembered him remarking, ‘The coming of twilight is the time to see things, their harshness is softened, and buildings which were medieval and are now modernized again become medieval.’⁶² On one level, Hughes’s observation can be read as an expression of nostalgia, suggesting a romanticized view of the Middle Ages, or even a degree of unease with the

⁶¹ Quoted in Elaine Showalter, ‘Hysteria, Feminism and Gender’, in *Hysteria beyond Freud*, 1993, 287.

⁶² Estella Canziani, *Round About Three Palace Green*, London, 1939, 169

present.⁶³ However, his comment about twilight being ‘the time to see things’ also points to a Symbolist sensitivity to its potential to enable the viewer to see the world differently. According to some writers, twilight could facilitate a ‘spiritual’ perception, allowing an engagement with a world beyond the merely visible. As Charles H. Caffin observed in a discussion of the work of his friend the photographer Edward Steichen (1879-1973), ‘It is in the penumbra, between the clear visibility of things and their total extinction in darkness, when the concreteness of appearances becomes merged in half-realized, half-baffled vision, the spirit seems to disengage itself and envelope [sic] it with a mystery of soul-suggestion.’⁶⁴ Hughes presents these ambiguous times of day as both mysterious and charged, offering a gateway into unseen spiritual or even supernatural realms. In *Twilight Phantasies* (fig. 49) a shepherdess plays a pipe at sunset, conjuring up a cavalcade of tiny winged figures and supernatural knights on horseback; in *Midsummer Eve* (fig. 50) a young woman stands at dusk surrounded by fairy figures. One has crept into her lantern and extinguished it, so the scene is lit only by the twilight and the firefly-like glow of the fairies themselves.⁶⁵

⁶³ A yearning for the past would itself be compatible with Symbolism: a strain of unease and nostalgia is prominent in Symbolist art, notably in Fernand Khnopff’s haunting, melting chalk drawings inspired by memories of medieval Bruges, his childhood home. See for example *A Grégoire Le Roy: Mon coeur pleure d’autrefois* (1889, Hearn Family Trust).

⁶⁴ Charles H. Caffin, ‘The Art of Edward Steichen’, *Camera Work*, 30, 1910, 34; quoted in Ulrich Pohlmann, ‘The Dream of Beauty, or Truth is Beauty, Beauty Truth: Photography and Symbolism, 1890-1914’, in *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe*, Montreal, 1995, 438

⁶⁵ Midsummer eve itself already carried associations with the supernatural, being traditionally the night of the year when fairy power was thought to be at its strongest. See Carol Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*, New York and Oxford, 1999, 106.

In Hughes's '*Wings of the Morning*' (fig. 51) and '*Night with her train of stars...*' (fig. 52) the transition between day and night becomes itself the subject of the picture. Both watercolours depict a flying female figure personifying a time of day, and each focuses on a moment of change, the coming of dawn or the coming of evening. In '*Wings of the Morning*', a 'radiant floating figure' representing Morning crosses the sky; bats flee and the coming dawn is 'heralded by rosy clouds and flights of doves with brilliant plumage.'⁶⁶ In '*Night with her train of stars...*', the winged, blue-robed figure of Night brings the end of the day. Light-bearing putti, the 'train of stars', follow in her wake, while birds fly home to roost.

When '*Night with her train of stars...*' was exhibited at the RWS in 1912, the critic of *The Onlooker* drew attention to the work's colouration, identifying it as 'another of those harmonies of deep, luminous blues of which [Hughes] seems to have the secret.'⁶⁷ Reviewers had come to associate 'blueness' with Hughes's work: as early as 1892, when he exhibited *The Poet Gringoire* (untraced), a depiction of the poet and his children sheltering in a church porch by moonlight, *Keene's Bath Journal* had criticized it as 'monotonously blue'.⁶⁸ Hughes's use of a predominantly blue tonality became almost a trademark from 1902, in a

⁶⁶ [Anon.], 'Pictures Worth Seeing. Brilliant Exhibition by Water-Colour Painters', *The Daily Express*, 7 April 1905, 5

⁶⁷ *The Onlooker*, 27 April 1912, 146; RWS archive, press cuttings book P7 (1905-1913)

⁶⁸ *Keene's Bath Journal*, 17 December 1892, RWS press cuttings book, P3 (1891-1895). *The Poet Gringoire* was exhibited as no.64 in that winter's RWS exhibition .

series of paintings beginning with *A Dream Idyll* (fig. 53), and continuing with his ‘blue presentation of “The Lesser Light” – the moon’⁶⁹ in 1904 (untraced), and, the following year, ‘*Wings of the Morning*’.

Hughes himself was conscious of this vein of ‘blueness’ in his work. In November 1902, while working on *A Dream Idyll*, ready for its submission to the winter exhibition at the RWS, he wrote to Sydney Morse of ‘the struggle of painting, for me, a very large & very blue picture’⁷⁰ and in February 1904 he told Juliet Morse that the work he was then engaged upon (which must have been *The Lesser Light*) was ‘a blue moon’.⁷¹ By the time he exhibited *The Valkyrie’s Vigil* (fig. 54) in 1906, the critic of *The Speaker* would charge Hughes with ‘repeating the same blue phantasies’.⁷² However, this repetition may have been more significant than critics perceived. In his interview with *The Pall Mall Gazette* in 1892, Fernand Khnopff had been asked by the puzzled correspondent to provide ‘the solution’ to his painting at the New Gallery, ‘*I Lock my Door upon Myself*’.⁷³ Khnopff argued that it was sufficient for the work to satisfy ‘as colour, as composition, *comme peinture, enfin*’, but when pressed about ‘the meaning of the bust above the girl’s head with wings of azure, one broken off’, he offered, ‘Blue is the colour of the sky, of dreams. Wings show the longing to soar and be free;

⁶⁹ *The Standard*, 8 April 1904, RWS archive, press cuttings book, P5 (1904-1905)

⁷⁰ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 12 November 1902, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743

⁷¹ Letter, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, 13 February 1904, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743

⁷² ‘F.J.M.’, ‘The Old Water-Colour Society’, *The Speaker*, 14 April 1906, 33

⁷³ [Anon.], ‘A Poet Painter: M. Fernand Khnopff’, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 8582, 22 September 1892, 1

but one is broken.’⁷⁴ For Hughes to produce a series of works dominated by intense blues, and in which motifs of winged or floating figures so frequently feature, suggests a response to the dreamlike and mysterious works, apparently ‘so abstruse... so keyless’,⁷⁵ of Symbolist painters such as Khnopff.

When ‘*Night with her train of stars...*’ was shown at the RWS in 1912, it was untitled but accompanied in the catalogue with a quotation from the poet William Ernest Henley (1849-1902), ‘Night with her train of stars and her great gift of sleep’, giving it the name by which it is now known.⁷⁶ Henley’s poem, *Margaritae Sorori*, concludes:

Let me be gather'd to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.⁷⁷

The figure of Night bringing sleep is thus also a personification of Death bringing oblivion, and the child she cradles in her arms represents the departing

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Although it appeared in the catalogue of the RWS exhibition as a single line, Hughes’s quotation conflates two lines of Henley’s poem:

‘Night with her train of stars

And her great gift of sleep.’

William Ernest Henley, *Poems*, London, 1898; published in facsimile, Marston Gate, UK, 2005, 162

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

soul.⁷⁸ She scatters poppies from her hand, reinforcing the association between sleep, oblivion and death.⁷⁹ This correlation between sleep and death – the implication that the oblivion of sleep prefigures that of death, and that death can in turn be seen as eternal sleep – was not a new one, but the dividing line between the two states became particularly blurred in Symbolist art.⁸⁰ Hughes's personification of Night/Death is enigmatic yet reassuring, holding the sleeping child tenderly to her breast and smiling a soft, mysterious smile. Both the choice of subject and the smile suggest a debt to the French Symbolist Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1865-1953), whose work Hughes could have known through exhibitions at the Society of Pastellists in London or have seen in reproduction in the British art press. Lévy-Dhurmer's subjects included female figures and

⁷⁸ The decision to represent the soul as a baby is significant. As Diana L. Johnson observes, works such as '*Night with her train of stars...*' and Holman Hunt's *The Triumph of the Innocents* (National Museums Liverpool), with its procession of visionary infants accompanying the Virgin and Child – 'served, in this period of shockingly high infant mortality, to solace and reassure an audience too frequently confronted with the harsh reality of a child's death.' Diana L. Johnson, *Fantastic Illustration and Design in Britain, 1850-1930*, exhibition catalogue, Providence, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1979, 71. Rodney Engen suggests that Hughes's watercolour is a homage to Hunt's painting (Engen, 'The Twilight of Edward Robert Hughes', 1990, 34).

⁷⁹ See also *The Last Romantics*, 1989, 95, where Hughes's use of poppies here is related to the poppy dropped into the hands of Beatrice in Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* (c.1864-70, Tate) and those accompanying Thomas Cooper Gotch's *Death the Bride* (1894-5, Alfred East Gallery, Kettering). The central figure in Hughes's watercolour draws on several prototypes, among them Burne-Jones's watercolour *Night* of 1870 (private collection), depicting a floating figure against a deep blue sky studded with stars. As Colin Cruise has pointed out, the principal figure also recalls the personifications of Night and Sleep in the late drawings and watercolours of Simeon Solomon (Colin Cruise, *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites*, London, 2005, 182). Solomon's mystical heads are often crowned with poppies: see for example *The Winged and Poppied Sleep* (1889, Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums). The most direct precedent, however may be Arthur Hacker's *A Cry in Egypt* (1897, private collection), which provides a source for the horizontal composition and the personification of Death as a winged female figure clasping a child to her breast.

⁸⁰ The close connection between the two states can be traced back at least as far as ancient Greece: in Greek mythology Thanatos (Death) is the brother of Hypnos (Sleep). As Jean Clair observes, 'it is sometimes difficult, when looking at a Symbolist painting, to tell who is dreaming and who is dying, who is asleep and who is dead.' *Lost Paradise: Symbolist Europe*, Montreal, 1995, 133.

heads, often suggestive of times of day, seasons, and music, such as his pastel drawing *Nocturne* of 1896, reproduced in *The Studio* the following year (fig. 55).⁸¹ Noting the artist's diverse influences, Camille Mauclair commented in 1902 that 'his highly-finished paintings sometimes remind us of Rossetti by their ardent passion, sometimes of Gustave Moreau by their jewel-like colour, and always of da Vinci's heads by their shadowy smile'.⁸² Lévy-Dhurmer's Symbolist heads probably also influenced other similar works by Hughes: Gabriel Mourey's description of *Nocturne* as a 'delicate woman's head, with the waving hair sparkling with the dew of night, which show like clusters of stars in the moonlight' could as easily describe Hughes's watercolour '*Dusky Night*' (one of a pair with '*Dayspring*', figs. 56-7).⁸³

As she smiles, Hughes's *Night* puts her finger to her lips in a gesture that recalls the figure in Khnopff's *Silence* (1891, Musée d'Art Moderne, Brussels). On one level this gesture can be read as a simple injunction to the playful putti to be quiet, so they do not wake the sleeping child. However, it takes on a deeper meaning in the wider context of Symbolist thought, where the state of being

⁸¹ See Gabriel Mourey, 'A Dream Painter: M. L. Lévy-Dhurmer', *The Studio*, 10, no.47, February 1897, 2.

⁸² Camille Mauclair, 'Idealism in Contemporary French Painting. -II', *The Magazine of Art*, January 1902, 25

⁸³ Mourey, 'A Dream Painter: M. L. Lévy-Dhurmer', *The Studio*, February 1897, 2. Similarly, Hughes's undated drawing in coloured chalks *With the Wind* (sold Christie's, London, 5 June 2006, lot 105), a female head with windblown hair surrounded with swirling autumn leaves, echoes several variations by the French artist on a similar theme, for example his pastel *La Bourrasque* (1897, sold Christie's, London, 17 November 2005, lot 66).

silent, ‘the condition of reverie, of prayer, of contemplation and of mystery’,⁸⁴ has an almost sacred significance.

Many of Hughes’s later works can be seen retrospectively as demonstrating an awareness of and receptiveness to contemporary Symbolist concerns. This is evident in the artist’s choice of literary sources, a suppression of narrative, and a preoccupation with ambiguity, twilight and death. However, it is through the central motif of the finger pressed to the lips that ‘*Night with her train of stars...*’ can be seen as, in one sense, the most quintessentially Symbolist of Hughes’s watercolours. Through her simple gesture, in that ambiguous moment where one day is transformed into another, Night exhorts not only the putti but the viewer to be still and receptive to the possibility of revelations – to realities that lie beyond the visible world.

⁸⁴ Howe, *The Symbolist Art of Fernand Khnopff*, 1979, rev. 1982, 84.

CONCLUSION

In spite of his place at the heart of Pre-Raphaelite and Arts and Crafts circles and the range of his artistic connections, Edward Robert Hughes remains a comparatively overlooked figure in the history of British painting. In his short article on the ‘elusive yet endearing’ Hughes, published in 1990, Rodney Engen outlined the painter’s biography and summarised his artistic interests, but suggested that ‘a more substantial story remains to be written.’¹ The present thesis, following on from the work carried out by Georgiana L. Head in 1996, represents a contribution towards writing this ‘more substantial story’. However, a study on this limited scale is necessarily selective, and the material that has come to light in the course of the research raises a series of additional questions, opening up avenues for future investigation.

The research to date has traced a number of unpublished and little-known works by Hughes in both public and private hands, but there is still much work to be done, with the assistance of salerooms, dealers and collectors, to locate Hughes’s lost paintings, drawings and watercolours. Most significantly, his early submission to the Royal Academy *A rainy Sunday* (1872), a work praised by Burne-Jones as ‘a most beautiful little picture’² and singled out in Hughes’s brief

¹ Engen, ‘The Twilight of Edward Robert Hughes, RWS’, 1990, 34

² Letter, Edward Burne-Jones to Rosalind Howard, undated but probably 1879, unpublished manuscript, Castle Howard archive, J22/27/158

obituary in *The Times* as one of his most important paintings,³ remains to be traced, even in reproduction.

A key area for future investigation is Hughes's contribution to the turn-of-the-century revival of interest in tempera painting. In 1907 he wrote to Juliet Morse that he planned to attend a talk given by William Richard Lethaby (1857-1931) to 'a little party of us who are interested in Tempera pictures, ...& this from him I cannot miss'.⁴ By 1909 Hughes was a member of the Society of Painters in Tempera and contributed two works, *The Mantilla* and *Grass of Parnassus* (both untraced), to the Society's second exhibition at the Baillie Gallery in London.⁵ Estella Canziani would later recall that 'It was E.R. Hughes who first encouraged me to work in tempera', adding that he 'gave me a practical demonstration, and with Sir William Richmond, introduced me to J.D. Batten and other members of the Society of Painters in Tempera and Mural Decorators.'⁶ Both of Hughes's submissions to the Baillie Gallery exhibition were also shown at the RWS, *The Mantilla* in winter 1906 and *Grass of Parnassus* in summer 1909.

Assessing Hughes's contribution to the tempera revival is complicated by the difficulty in tracing examples of his work in the medium. One painting by

³ *The Times*, 25 April 1914, 7

⁴ Postcard, E.R. Hughes to Juliet Morse, postmarked 3 June 1907, unpublished manuscript, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, CO743

⁵ *Catalogue of the Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Tempera*, London, The Baillie Gallery, 1909. *The Mantilla* was exhibited as cat.10 and *Grass of Parnassus* as cat.28.

⁶ Canziani, *Round About Three Palace Green*, 1939, 170

Hughes identified as being painted in tempera, sold as *Woman Walking her Dog* (but probably depicting the goddess Diana with a hound), has been on the art market in recent years, with an estimated date of 1900 (fig . 58);⁷ however, the free handling of the medium is atypical of the tempera painters of the period, and there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that it is more likely to date from the early 1880s, and so to predate the beginnings of the tempera revival proper by at least ten years.⁸

Given the importance of Hughes's portrait practice to his career, it would be useful to establish more fully his network of sitters, patrons and collectors, tracing links between them and identifying the extent to which Hughes's pool of clients intersected with those of his Pre-Raphaelite and other contemporaries. Further, there is considerable work to be done in exploring in greater detail Hughes's critical reception, both at home and abroad. Material relating to the critical response in Britain, particularly the collection of press reviews held in the RWS archive, has been extensively consulted for in the present thesis, but offers

⁷ The subject can be identified as the goddess Diana with a hound, based on thematic and compositional similarities with Walter Crane's *Diana and Endymion*, shown at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1883 (fig. 59). The painting was sold as *Woman Walking her Dog* by the Leicester Galleries, London, in 1999.

⁸ Although Hughes could have been inspired to paint a variation on Crane's theme of *Diana and Endymion* considerably later, it is much more likely that he produced the work during or shortly after his visit to the Crane family during their stay at Tunbridge Wells in summer 1882 (see Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences*, London, 1907, 235). Graham Robertson recalled posing with a hound for Crane at Tunbridge Wells while he made studies for this composition: Graham Robertson, *Time Was*, London, 1931, 410-11. Crane painted the finished version early the following year in Rome (Christian, *The Last Romantics*, 88), where his and Hughes's paths crossed again: see letter, Walter Crane to George Howard, 13 May 1883, unpublished manuscript, Castle Howard archive, J22/38/38. Abbie Sprague confirms (to author by email, 19 October 2009) that the early 1880s would be early (though not impossibly so) for Hughes to be working in tempera, 'as Southall didn't really master it until the 1890s'.

a rich seam of further evidence for the ways in which Hughes's paintings, drawings and watercolours were understood by contemporary critics and audiences, and evaluated in relation to the work of other artists, both conservative and progressive. It remains to be investigated, too, how the work that Hughes exhibited in mainland Europe was received in the continental press, and to what extent his contributing to international exhibitions translated into picture sales and new commissions abroad.

Georgiana L. Head has suggested that Edward Robert Hughes 'is an artist destined to be remembered by his associations with others. As the nephew of Arthur Hughes, as one time fiancé of George MacDonald's daughter, and as "a great friend and admirer" of William Holman Hunt.'⁹ Certainly, Hughes's personal and professional relationships, with his uncle and with Hunt in particular, played an important part in his career and heavily influenced both his reputation during his lifetime, and the emphasis of subsequent research. However, it is hoped that the present thesis demonstrates that a study of Hughes's own work too has a contribution to make to an understanding of wider currents and concerns in late nineteenth and early twentieth century art, both in Britain and in mainland Europe. As the centenary of his death approaches, Edward Robert Hughes is an artist ripe for reappraisal.

⁹ Head, 'Edward Robert Hughes 1851-1914', 1996, 16

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Fig. 1

Frederick Hollyer (1837-1933)
Edward Robert Hughes, undated, probably c.1880
Platinum print
Victoria and Albert Museum

Fig. 2

Arthur Hughes (1832-1915)
Edward Robert Hughes aged two-and-a-half, 1853
Oil on canvas
Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, UK/ The Bridgeman Art Library

Fig. 3

Charles Fairfax Murray (1849-1919)
Study of Edward Robert Hughes aged seventeen, August 1869
Brush and brown ink on paper
Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

Fig. 4

George Mackay MacDonald (left) and Edward Robert Hughes, undated, probably early to mid-1880s
Photograph
George MacDonald Collection, General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,
Yale University, GEN MSS 103, folder 425

Fig. 5

The Spinet, 1870
Watercolour
Untraced

Fig. 6

Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)

Until the Day Break and the Shadows Flee Away, 1869

Pencil, black chalk and red chalk with bodycolour on paper

The British Museum

Fig. 7

Frederick Hollyer (1838-1933) after Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)
Then I knew my Soul stood by me, and he and I went forth together
Frontispiece to *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep*, 1871
Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

Fig. 8

Samuel Butler (1835-1902)
Johnston Forbes-Robertson in a suit of armour, c.1870
Photograph
Heatherley's School of Art

Fig. 9

All I Saw at the Wedding, 1908
Watercolour on paper
Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston

Fig. 10

Miss Frances Georgina Mitford, 1880
Watercolour
Untraced

Figs. 11-13

*Three costume designs for the masque
'Beauty's Awakening', 1899*

Untraced

Reproduced from *The Studio*, special number, summer 1899
Art Workers Guild archive

Fig. 11

A page attendant on the Fair City of Paris

Fig. 12

The Fair City of Paris

Fig. 13

St Louis

Fig. 14

After Edward Robert Hughes

In an Old Garden, 1891

Reproduced from Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, *Illustrated Catalogue comprising facsimiles of drawings by the artists*, London, 1891, plate 61

Royal Watercolour Society archives

Fig. 15

Buondelmonte's Tryst, c.1897
Oil on canvas
Illustration for *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni*
Private collection

Figs. 16-17

After Edward Robert Hughes

The Pig Prince

Illustration to *The Nights of Straparola*, vol. I, 1894, facing page 63

Photogravure

Royal Watercolour Society archives

After Edward Robert Hughes

The Scholar's Revenge

Illustration to *The Nights of Straparola*, vol. I, 1894, facing page 73

Photogravure

Royal Watercolour Society archives

Fig. 18

Bertuccio's Bride, 1895
Watercolour on paper
Collection of Lord Lloyd-Webber
Image courtesy of Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries

Fig. 19

Master Tony Freeman, 1903
Watercolour on paper
Private collection

Fig. 20

Miniature portrait of William Holman Hunt, c.1894(?)
Watercolour
Private collection

Fig. 21

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) with the assistance of Edward Robert Hughes
The Lady of Shalott, c.1888?-1905
Oil on canvas
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut

Fig. 22

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) with the assistance of Edward Robert Hughes
The Light of the World, c.1900-1904
Oil on canvas
St Paul's Cathedral

Figs. 23-24

Grave of Edward Robert and Emily Eliza Hughes
Hatfield Road Cemetery, St Albans

Fig. 25

Blondel's Quest, 1912
Watercolour on paper, in original frame
Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford

Fig. 26

Laura Knight (1877-1970)
Wind and Sun, 1911
Watercolour and bodycolour over pencil on linen
Private collection

Fig. 27

Margaret Ellinor Morse, 2 January 1882

Pencil on paper

Private Collection/ © The Maas Gallery, London, UK/ The Bridgeman Art Library

Fig. 28

Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893)
Daniel Casey, 1848
Black chalk on paper
Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

Fig. 29

In the Corner Chair, 1891
Red chalk on paper
Private collection

Fig. 30

Dealings with the Fairies, 1892
Watercolour on paper
Private collection

Fig. 31

Study of a Woman, undated
Black chalk on paper
Maidstone Museum and Bentrif Art Gallery

Fig. 32

Gwendolen Freeman, 1901
Pencil on paper
Private collection

Fig. 33

Study for a Picture, 1893

Red chalk on paper

Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Birkenhead; Wirral Museums Service

Fig. 34

*'All the Latin I construe is,
"Amo", I love!'*, 1893

Watercolour

Untraced

Reproduced from Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, *Illustrated Catalogue comprising facsimiles of drawings by the artists*, London, 1893, plate 51

Royal Watercolour Society archives

Fig. 35

Edward Robert Hughes
Rosalind, 1898
Red chalk on paper
Private collection. Image courtesy of Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries

Fig. 36

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564)
Ideal Head
Red chalk on paper
Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford

Fig. 37

After Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898)

The Days of Creation: The Fourth Day, 1900

Photogravure

Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

The original watercolour was stolen from the Fogg Art Museum in 1970 and has yet to be recovered.

Fig. 38

Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921)
Solitude, 1890-1
Oil on canvas
Neumann Collection, Gingins, Switzerland

Fig. 39

Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921)
Solitude, 1890-1: detail of the female figure enclosed in a sphere
Oil on canvas
Neumann Collection, Gingins, Switzerland

Fig. 40

Radiant Moon, 1910
Watercolour
Untraced

Fig. 41

Heart of Snow, 1907
Watercolour on paper
Private Collection/ © Whitford & Hughes, London, UK/ The Bridgeman Art Library

Fig. 42

Giovanni Segantini (1858-1899)
The Punishment of Lust, 1891
Oil on canvas
National Museums Liverpool (Walker Art Gallery)

Fig. 43

Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921)
I Lock my Door upon Myself, 1891
Oil on canvas
Neue Pinakothek, Munich

Fig. 44

Study of a young Woman, 1898
Coloured chalks on paper
Untraced

Fig. 45

*“‘Oh, what’s that in the hollow, so pale, I quake to follow?’
‘Oh, that’s a thin, dead body, which waits the eternal term.’”*, 1893
Watercolour on paper
Courtesy of the Royal Watercolour Society

Fig. 46

Joseph Swain (1820-1909) after Frederick Sandys (1829-1904)
Amor Mundi, 1865
Wood engraving
The British Museum

Figs. 47-48

J. Bouvier, *The Lovely Must Depart* (left) and *The Common Lot*, both c.1860
Coloured lithographs illustrating poems by Mrs Heman
Museum of Childhood, Edinburgh; reproduced from John Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians*,
London, 1971, plates 22 and 24

Fig. 49

Twilight Phantasies, 1911

Watercolour on paper

Private Collection/ © The Maas Gallery, London, UK/ The Bridgeman Art Library

Fig. 50

Midsummer Eve, 1908

Watercolour on paper

Private Collection/ © The Maas Gallery, London, UK/ The Bridgeman Art Library

Fig. 51

'Wings of the Morning', 1905

Watercolour on paper

Private Collection/ © The Maas Gallery, London, UK/ The Bridgeman Art Library

Fig. 52

'Night with her train of stars and her great gift of sleep', 1912

Watercolour and bodycolour with gold paint on paper

Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

Fig. 53

A Dream Idyll, 1902
Watercolour, bodycolour and pastel on paper
Private collection

Fig. 54

The Valkyrie's Vigil, 1906
Watercolour on paper
Private collection. Image courtesy of Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries

Fig. 55

Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1865-1953)

Nocturne, 1896

Pastel

Reproduced from *The Studio*, February 1897, 2.

Image courtesy of Birmingham Central Library

Figs. 56-57

'*Dayspring*' (left) and '*Dusky Night*', 1905

Watercolour on paper

Private Collection/ © Whitford & Hughes, London, UK/ The Bridgeman Art Library

Fig. 58

The Goddess Diana with a Hound, probably c.1882
Tempera on board
Private collection. Image courtesy of Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries

Fig. 59

Walter Crane, *Diana and Endymion*, 1883
Watercolour and bodycolour on paper
Dundee Art Galleries and Museums