

Nineteenth-Century British Art

1. Academic painting
2. Portrait painting
3. Landscape painting
4. Social Realism
5. Photography
6. Women in art



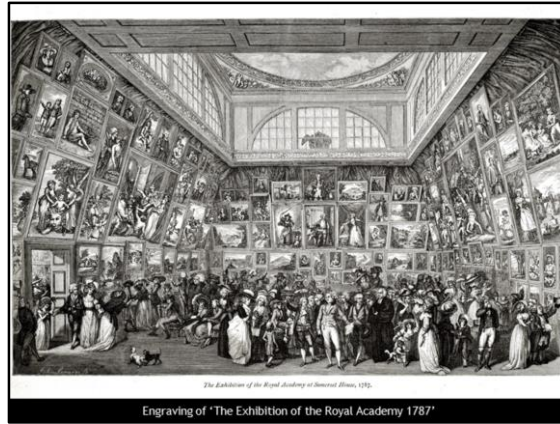
Academic painting was based on following the style of the Old Masters. It was defined by the Royal Academy, taught in their School and was divided in a hierarchy – history painting, portrait, genre, landscape, animal painting and still life



Johan Zoffany (1733-1810), *The Portraits of the Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-72, Royal Collection

- **Key point:** the **Royal Academy** reinforced painting as a **male-dominated** world and emphasised the **intellectual**
- Johan Zoffany, **cannibal**, founding RA
- Note all the **symbolism**, thoughtful workers
- Mock **School of Athens** with Reynolds (Plato) and William Hunter
- **Chinaman**
- Two female founder academicians but only as portraits. **Why?**
- This is a painting by Johan **Zoffany** showing the original academicians. Zoffany was a **German painter** active in England and was one of the **founding members** of the Royal Academy and a **court painter**. He lived at **Strand-on-the-Green** and is buried at St Anne's Church, Kew near to Thomas Gainsborough. He is best known as 'the first and last Royal Academician to have become a **cannibal**' as when he was shipwrecked when returning from Lucknow in India the survivors held a lottery in which the loser was eaten. Zoffany depicts himself **far left** at the bottom, the only artist holding the tools of the trade.

- Note the working symbols, the classical casts and the simple use of **packing cases** as seats. They are **discussing** the nude not drawing emphasising the key importance of the **intellectual** element of drawing or 'designo' as first defined by Renaissance artists in Florence. The model in the foreground adopts the pose of **Spinario**, a famous classical statue. The flames of the candles show Newton's **spectrum of colours** emphasising the scientific and technical in art and the pre-eminence of British intellect. The students sit at the semi-circular bench and each has an individual candle and there is one central light. There are two male models and various casts of bodies and body parts including a **female torso** bottom **right** into which an Academician **thrusts his cane**.



Engraving of 'The Exhibition of the Royal Academy 1787'

Key point: the Summer Exhibition became a **major society event**. What do **skied** and **'on the line'** mean?

- At 'the Exhibition' paintings were hung frame-to-frame, floor to ceiling
- They could be **skied** or, the best position, **'on the line'**
- Most were portraits, **swagger portraits**
- Constable's six-footers were painted to be hung on the line
- Gainsborough, a founder, had his (unreasonable) request have a painting hung at 5.5" refused and exhibited at Schomberg House, Pall Mall (where he lived at No. 80 from 1774 to his death in 1788). Next door (No. 81) was the Temple of Health and Hymen with its 'celestial bed' and electrical bed that allegedly cured infertility hired out at £50 a night. No. 81 also housed a high-class brothel and gambling den.

Summer Exhibition

The summer exhibition was held in the great room at Somerset House and noble society gathered in a room whose walls were covered with paintings from floor to ceiling. In the centre of the room is the Prince of Wales, wearing a red jacket and

standing next to Joshua Reynolds.

The number of pictures increased each year from 547 in 1781 to 1,165 in 1821 so they had to be **hung frame to frame**. The position was determined by the Hanging Committee and the position of a painting was critical to it being seen. If it was too high, known as being 'skied' it could not be appreciated and the ideal position was **'on the line'** with the **bottom edge eight foot from the floor**. This position was occupied by **'swagger' portraits and history paintings**. Small pieces and pieces by lesser known artists were skied and we shall see later that Constable created his 'six footers' to be large enough to be placed on the line. Although Thomas Gainsborough was a founding member he broke with the Academy in 1784 when his portraits of the royal family were skied.



Benjamin West (1738-1820), *The Death of General Wolfe*, 1770, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

- Key point: **history painting was the highest genre of academic painting but this painting shocked audiences, why?**
- The first and by far the most important category was **history painting**.
- It is not an historical event, it could be mythological, it is a biblical or classical scene that ennoble the viewer.
- This painting created a minor scandal as the figures are wearing **contemporary clothes**, George III refused to buy it
- Benjamin West was **pushing the limits** of history painting and changed what was acceptable
- General Wolfe is **Christ-like**, wearing ordinary clothes, in blue Dr. Thomas Hinde, Simon Fraser in green was not there, only 4 of 14 were
- Runner approaching with news of victory
- Native American warrior, sign of deep thought, inspired by '**noble savage**' (not Rousseau), 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury – people are essential good (as opposed to Thomas Locke's 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish'. 18thC sentimentalism – David Hume

– moral judgements are essentially emotional not rational, as opposed to Immanuel Kant.

History Painting

This is a history painting, the highest academic genre of painting. It tells a noble story and should show man in general not a particular man. This painting is therefore, arguably, not a history painting. The figures are not classical and many—including Sir Joshua Reynolds and West's patron, Archbishop Drummond—strongly urged West to avoid painting Wolfe and others in modern costume, which was thought to detract from the timeless heroism of the event. They urged him to paint the figures wearing togas. West refused, writing, 'the same truth that guides the pen of the historian should govern the pencil [paintbrush] of the artist.' After its completion, George III refused to purchase it because the clothing compromised the dignity of the event. The work, however, eventually overcame all objections and helped inaugurate more historically accurate practice in history painting. So this painting is important as it started the change in what was regarded as a history painting and ultimately it started to undermine the entire hierarchy of academic genres.

Benjamin West was depicting the death of General James Wolfe during the 1759 Battle of Quebec of the Seven Years' War (1754-1763, a war involving most of the great powers). Britain gained a large part of North America from France (called new France) and Florida from Spain but ceded Florida to Spain and returned Cuba and the Philippines to Spain.

William Woollett's engraving was the best known copy of West's original and became popular around the world

The Death of General Wolfe is currently in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, the Royal Ontario Museum (Canadian art collection), as well as the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan. The fourth copy produced resides at Ickworth House, Suffolk, England. There are five known portraits by the author. Wolfe's death and the portrayal of that event by Benjamin West make up half of Simon Schama's historical work *Dead Certainties: Unwarranted Speculations* (1991).

This type of painting was not open to women as they could not attend life classes and learn to draw the nude male body.

Benjamin West

Anglo-American painter (born Springfield, Pennsylvania) of historical scenes around and after the time of the American War of Independence. He was the second president of the Royal Academy in London, serving from 1792 to 1805 and 1806 to

1820 (James Wyatt, architect, the Destroyer of cathedrals was in between). He was offered a knighthood by the British Crown, but declined it, believing that he should instead be made a peer. A friend of Benjamin Franklin, painted *Death of Socrates* and met John Wollaston who had been a famous painter in London. Travelled to Italy and copied Titian and Raphael. Went to London in 1763 and never returned to America. Appointed historical painter to the court at £1,000 a year, encouraged George III to found the Royal Academy. *The Death of General Wolfe* is his most famous painting.



Claude Lorrain (born Gellée, c. 1600-1682), *Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah*, 1648, National Gallery, London

Key point: Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) and Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) **defined how a landscape should look**. It was based on Biblical, mythological and classical themes suggesting a history painting. What is 'Repoussoir'?

Claude Lorrain

Beginning around 1640 Claude began to make his compositions more classical and monumental. During this decade something like a formula establishes itself: tall trees on one side of the picture (a framing device called '**repoussoir**', from the French 'to push back') balanced by a classical ruin and smaller trees further back on the other; a foreground stage with figures; a low horizon; a **winding river** conducting the eye by stages through an open landscape to the horizon; and distant hills, often with a glimpse of the sea. The figures are not, as often before, in contemporary dress but are always represented in **classical** or biblical costume. Contrary to popular belief, virtually all of Claude's figures were painted by himself. Sometimes they are merely shepherds, but frequently they embody a subject from classical mythology or sacred

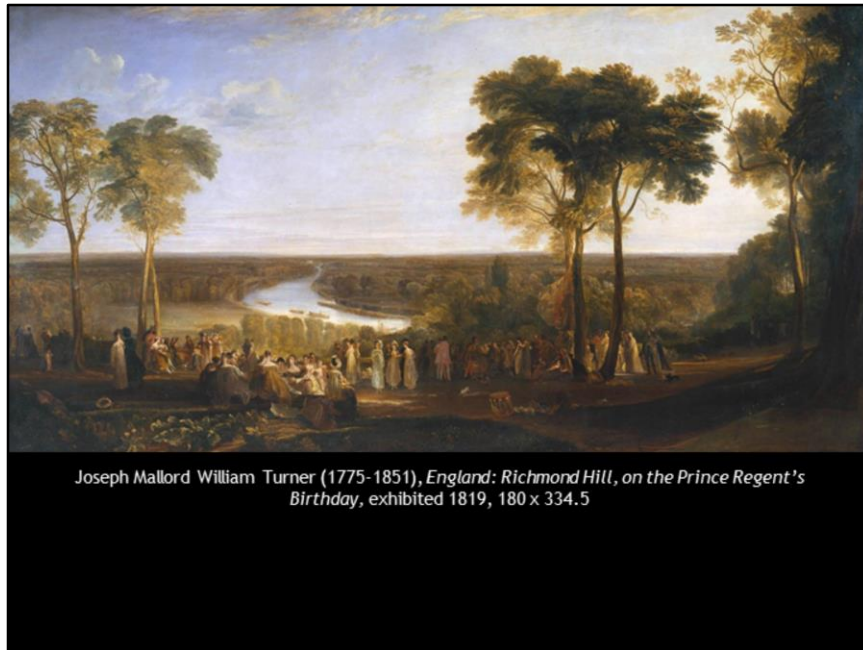
history. The light is clearer than in paintings of the early or late periods. Spacious, tranquil compositions are drenched in an even light, as can be seen in this painting, *The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah* (also called *The Mill*), dated 1648.

In the 1650s he painted still larger and more heroic paintings, including *The Sermon on the Mount*. In the middle of the following decade, Claude's style moved into its last phase, when some of his greatest masterpieces were produced. The colour range is restricted, and the tones become cool and silvery. The figures are strangely elongated and by conventional standards ill drawn. The paintings of this period are solemn and mysterious and radiate a sublime poetic feeling. It was in this spirit that Claude painted his famous work *The Enchanted Castle*.

The Story of Isaac and Rebekah

Abraham sent his servant with gold and camels to find a wife for his son Isaac. The servant decided to choose a wife as follows. 'May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. ' Rebekah came out and offered him and the camels water.

Genesis 24: 'Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. ⁶⁷ Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.'



Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *England: Richmond Hill, on the Prince Regent's Birthday*, exhibited 1819, 180 x 334.5

Key point: **Early Turner painted in the high academic style**

- Turner painted this great panorama of the Thames after the Napoleonic War. It shows the view from Richmond Hill, looking west towards Twickenham, and brought Turner's early series of river scenes to a splendid conclusion. The scene is treated in the grand, classical manner of the seventeenth-century French artist, Claude Lorrain. It presents an Arcadian vision of English scenery, with an explicitly patriotic message in the reference to the birthday of the Prince Regent.
- The Prince's official birthday, **23 April**, was also St George's Day (the patron saint of England) and Turner's own birthday
- The poets Alexander Pope and James Thomson, whose 'Summer' he quoted with the picture, and the painter Joshua Reynolds had lived at Richmond or nearby at Twickenham where Turner had his own property, Sandycombe Lodge (which falls within the picture).
- Turner had known this view since childhood and he painted watercolour views of this scene both before and after this oil painting.

- The Prince Regent had ridden to Richmond Hill in 1818 from Kew Palace on 10 August, two days before his actual birthday.
- The *Annals of Fine Art* recommended he pumice it down, coat it with priming and paint another picture like that of Carthage.
- It may have been painted specifically to procure Royal patronage.
- It was exhibited with the verse (which was hung upon a tree at the top of the hill),

'Which way, Amanda, shall we bend our course?
 The choice perplexes. Wherefore should we chuse?
 All is the same with thee. Say, shall we wind
 Along the streams? or walk the smiling mead?
 Or court the forest-glades? or wander wild
 Among the waving harvests? or ascend,
 While radiant Summer opens all its pride,
 Thy Hill, delightful Shene?'

James Thomson (1700-1748, he wrote the lyrics of '*Rule Britannia!*' and died in Richmond), *The Four Season: Summer*



Portraits were the most common paintings exhibited in the Royal Academy at the beginning of the century but photography changed this.



Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), *Portrait of Elizabeth Farren* (1759-1829), before 1791, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, largest art museum in US, 10th largest in the world, founded 1870).

- **Key point: ‘Swagger portraits’** were popular and painted in the ‘Grand Manner’ (Reynolds referred to it as the ‘great style’ or ‘grand style’). It is the portrait version of history painting. The sitters must be presented in surroundings that convey nobility and elite status and they are often full length (‘swagger portraits’). We would call them ostentatious.
- We start with a late eighteenth-century portrait from one of the great portrait painters, **Thomas Lawrence**. It is a known and named person, Elizabeth Farren, and we know from reports at the time that it was an excellent representation. In a moment we will explore what is meant by a portrait as many pictures of people are not portraits in the conventional sense. First, it is interesting to consider the artist Thomas Lawrence and the sitter **Elizabeth Farren**.
- And we will end with the other great nineteenth century portrait painter – **John Singer Sargent**.
- Reynolds said that the artist must present their subject in a poetic manner. The Scriptures say that **St Paul**’s bodily appearance was **mean**, **Alexander** was of **low stature** – **‘None of**

these defects ought to appear in a piece of which he is the hero'.

Sir Thomas Lawrence

Lawrence was a **child prodigy** who was **supporting his family** with his pastel portraits by the **age of ten**. At **18** he went to **London** and soon became established as a fashionable **portrait artist** and he received his first royal commission, to paint **Queen Charlotte**, wife of George III, when he was 21. He was **self-taught**, could capture a **likeness** and was a virtuoso at **handling paint (Click)**. Consider how he captures the sheen of the silk with a few dabs of white paint alongside the soft fur and the glowing skin of her cheek and the softness of her lips. Her face is animated and she seems about to speak. His un-English virtuosity meant that he was not widely appreciated after his death and some of his greatest paintings, such as this one, ended up in the US.

Lawrence was described recently as '*one of the great painters of the last 250 years and one of the great stars of portraiture on a European stage.*' He was the foremost **Regency portrait painter** and on his return from **Italy** in **1820** he was voted as **president of the Royal Academy** that evening to **replace Benjamin West** who had just died. He **never married** and when he died in 1830 at the age of 61 he was the most fashionable portrait painter in Europe. His **death** is a **mystery** as his doctor described it as due to the ossification of his aorta but his first biographer suggested it was caused by over zealous bleeding and leeching. The other **mystery** was where all his **money went**. He worked extremely hard, was paid well and **did not gamble or drink**. He kept poor or **no accounts** and was **very generous** so it is wondered if he gave it away to his family and friends. He almost went **bankrupt** and on his death his estate was worth nothing. His reputation declined after his death but has recently been partially restored.

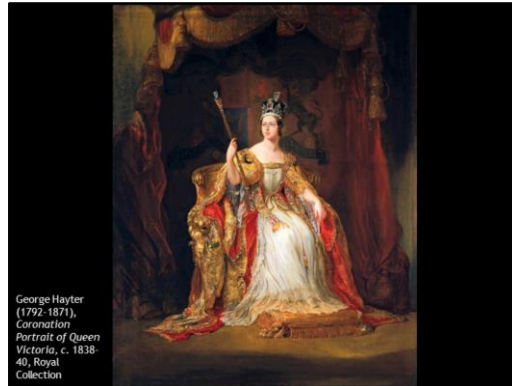
Elizabeth Farren

Farren was an **actress daughter** of a surgeon and apothecary (pharmacist). She started acting when she was young and first appeared in **London** when she was **18**. She played many parts including **Portia** (Merchant of Venice), **Olivia** (Twelfth Night), **Juliet** (Romeo and Juliet) and **Hermione** (The Winter's Tale) in Shakespeare's plays. She later **married Edward Smith-Stanley**, the **12th Earl of Derby** and although she was the subject of satire **no imputation was ever cast** on her morals. **Horace Walpole** described her as the **most perfect actress** he had ever seen. One critic wrote,

'We have seen a great variety of pictures of Mrs. Farren, but we never saw her mind and character on canvas. It is completely Elizabeth Farren: arch, spirited, elegant and engaging'.

The **Grand Manner** referred to an idealised style derived from classical art as interpreted by the Old Masters of the High Renaissance. As we know the highest genre was history painting but the term Grand Manner was increasingly applied to portraits. They were **ostentatious**, typically **full-length** and were also referred to as **swagger portraits**.

This was a major change, previously artists were paid to create a **likeness** but increasingly they represented a **mood or a personality**.



George Hayter (1792-1871), *Coronation Portrait of Queen Victoria*, c. 1838-40, Royal Collection

- **Key point: portraits were usually commissioned and fashions changed.**
- **The grand state portrait.** Shaft of light on her upturned face like a religious Baroque painting.
- Commissioned by Queen Victoria in 1838.
- The queen thought Hayter '*out and out the best portrait painter in my opinion*'. The figure is regal but cold and aloof.
- He received no royal commissions after 1842 as the Queen came to prefer Landseer and Winterhalter.
- **What do you think?**
- The queen loved watercolour painting and the queen and prince Albert both loved painting.

George Hayter (1792-1871), English portrait painter appointed **Principal Painter** to the **Queen**, his father was an artist, he ran away to sea, secretly **married** his **father's lodger** when he was 15/16 and she was 28, had three children, wife left him, had an open affair and lived with the daughter of Sir William Cauty, had two children, so never became an RA, sent to

Italy met Canova, annoyed other artists because he was so **pompous**, history painting, moved to Italy, mistress poisoned herself with arsenic, Paris, then London, took 10 years to paint 400 portraits of MPs passing the Reform Bill, 1842 knighted, by 1840s considered **old-fashioned**.

Royal Collection Description

- Before his appointment as Queen Victoria's 'Painter of History and Portrait' in 1837, George Hayter had impressed the young Princess with his skill as a portraitist and helped her with her first attempts at oil painting. Hayter was to succeed Sir David Wilkie as Principal Painter in Ordinary to the Queen in 1841. However, he received no royal commissions after 1842 as the Queen came to prefer the work, and personality, of other artists - particularly Sir Edwin Landseer and Franz Xaver Winterhalter.
- Queen Victoria commissioned this, her State Portrait, from Hayter in 1838. The 19 year-old Queen is depicted as she was at her Coronation in Westminster Abbey on 28 June of that year. Shown seated in her Homage Chair, she wears Coronation Robes and the Imperial State Crown and carries the Sceptre with the Cross. Hayter's first background for the painting showed the Queen in Westminster Abbey, but he was to alter this later, placing her in a more generic regal setting.
- Queen Victoria's pose, with her **upturned face** illuminated by a **shaft of light**, endows the composition with a **religious spirit** reminiscent of **Baroque painting**. In fact the day **did not proceed smoothly**, as the Queen was to relate in her journal. For instance, the **Coronation Ring**, which had been made to fit her little finger, was **forced on to her fourth finger** by the Archbishop and the unfortunate Queen had to bathe her hand in iced water after the ceremony before she could remove the ring. There was, according to Lord St John, the Sub-Dean, 'a continual difficulty and embarrassment, and the Queen never knew what she was to do'. Nevertheless, she described the day as 'the proudest of my life'.



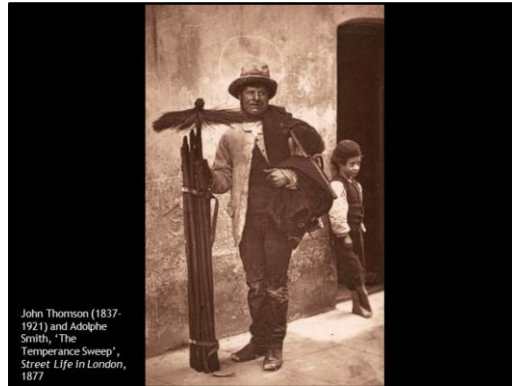
James Abbott Whistler (1834-1903), *Arrangement in Gray: Portrait of the Painter*, self portrait, c. 1872, Detroit Institute of Arts

- **Key point:** Whistler was a controversial artist who helped redefine the nature of art. This is an arrangement of colours.
- Whistler was the **next generation**. He was an American who trained in Paris but lived in London most of his life.
- He was a **difficult character** and in **1867** he **threw a 'friend' through a plate-glass window** (Sir **Francis Seymour Haden**, artist, etcher, surgeon, Whistler's half-brother-in-law, married to Whistler's half-sister Deborah, had come to Paris to bury his partner and Whistler's friend James Traer and found Haden was slandering him) and he insisted his **students** always called him '**master**'. He also got into a fight with a construction worker in Paris and Haden had him thrown out of the Burlington Fine Arts Club, which was assisted by a women with whom Whistler had an alleged affair writing about his low character. In 1890 Whistler wrote *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*.
- He was **not a prodigy** but came to painting slowly.
- He developed a **unique style** of art that rejected subject painting, moralising and

sentiment.

James Abbott McNeill Whistler

- Whistler was an American born in Lowell, Massachusetts, who spent most of his life in London where he died. He was a leading exponent of 'art for art's sake' and rejected sentimental and moral paintings. He gave his works the names of musical works, such as 'arrangement', 'harmony' or 'nocturne' to emphasize the importance of tonal harmony both in music and painting.
- Whistler came to London when he was young as his father was a railroad engineer and had a project in Russia. His father died of cholera in Russia and he moved back to his mother's home in Connecticut. He went to the Military Academy at West Point but did very badly because of his near-sightedness, poor grades, casual dress on parade, long hair, inability to follow rules and sarcastic comments. He was eventually dismissed and joined the etching division of the US Coast Survey where he learned etching techniques. With some money he made selling paintings he left for Paris, never to return to the US.
- In Paris he made friends with **Henri Fantin-Latour**, whom he met at the Louvre and through him, Whistler met **Gustave Courbet**, **Alphonse Legros**, and **Édouard Manet**. Also in this group was **Charles Baudelaire**, whose ideas influenced Whistler. Baudelaire challenged artists to find beauty in the everyday aspects of modern life and to portray the brutality of life faithfully, avoiding the old themes of mythology and allegory.
- In **1859** he moved to **London** which he adopted as his home and over the next ten years he developed a unique style based on his theory that art should be concerned with the arrangement of colours in harmony, not with a literal portrayal of the natural world. In this self-portrait he adopts a **Rembrandt-like pose** and holds the tools of trade in his hand. In the background is the symbol he adopted of a **stylized butterfly** with a long **stinger** for a tail.



John Thomson (1837-1921) and Adolphe Smith, 'The Temperance Sweep', *Street Life in London*, 1877

- **Key point: Photography** enabled portraits to be produced of people who were **previously unrecorded**.
- This is **John Day**, turned out of his home aged **10**, **slept rough**, obtained some work. In 1877 was a happy father of a **large family** in Lambeth Walk. A **master sweep** who is prosperous and respected.

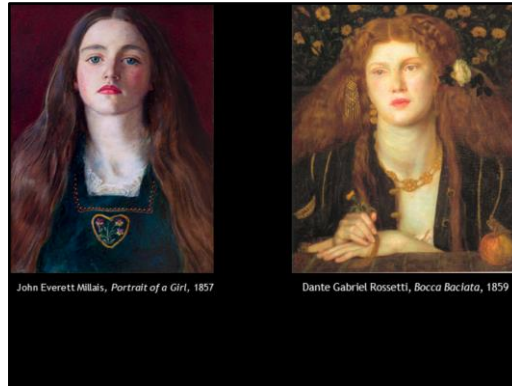
LSE Digital Library:

Born in Lambeth, the son of a road-mender, John Day was sent out to work when scarcely more than **ten** years old. His **father** was decidedly **addicted to drink**, and was in the habit of taking his son on **Sunday** to public-houses, where drink was sold in defiance of the Licensing Act. So long as the child had a few halfpence for beer, he was in the parental eyes a good boy; but when his meagre earnings had been thus uselessly spent, his father came to the conclusion that he could not afford to keep him, and that it was high time the boy should **fight his own way** in the world. He was therefore turned out of his home, and had to resort to the friendly, if cheerless shelter of railway arches; or at times he would sleep on a barge, and profited by the

opportunity to wash his solitary shirt in the canal, and hang it up on the rigging of his temporary home, while he disported himself amidst the tarpaulin till it dried. At time when there was nothing to be done at the flour-mill, he obtained a little work as **assistant** to a neighbouring **chimney-sweep**; but in either employ he rarely made more than **3s per week**.

[...]

He is now the happy father of a large family, he lives in a house near Lambeth Walk, where he once humbly worked in the capacity of a mere assistant. As a master sweep he has an extensive connexion. The money he earns enables him to subscribe to several **benefit societies**, and he is entitled to receive from them **10s. a week in sickness**, while his wife will have **£46** given her at **his death**, or he will receive **£18** should **she die first**. Altogether he is both prosperous and respected throughout the neighbourhood, where he ardently advocates the cause of **total abstinence**, and is well known as the **temperance sweep**.



The two previous pictures hanging side-by-side.

George Pryce Boyce bought the picture of Sophie Gray for 60 guineas. He commissioned or encouraged Rossetti to paint *Bocca Baciata*, a picture of Fanny Cornforth, a lover they both shared.

Boyce is said to have bought the *Portrait of a Girl* for his sister Joanna but this is not clear.

Sophie is assertive, knowing is wearing 'heart's ease'. Fanny is dreamy, languid and is holding a marigold for grief.

Unlike Millais' 1854 portrait of Sophy, his later work was not kept by the family. It was sold to George Price Boyce, a friend of Millais' pre-Raphaelite "brother", Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who painted a portrait of Fanny Cornforth, a lover he shared with Boyce, to hang alongside that of Sophy. Entitled *Bocca Baciata* ("the mouth that has been kissed") after a theme in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Rossetti's picture (1859) was described by William Holman Hunt, another member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as "**remarkable for gross sensuality of a revolting kind ... I see Rossetti as advocating as a principle the mere gratification of the eye**". As Cooper has

remarked, this "*after-life*" of Sophy Gray demonstrated its "*erotic potential*".

See <http://fannycornforth.blogspot.co.uk/2014/06/the-portraits-of-sophia-gray.html>

John Everett Millais, *Portrait of a Girl*, 1857, private collection.

- This is Millais's sister-in-law, **Sophie Gray (1843-1882)**, aged **13**. 10th of 15 children of George Gray and Sophia Margaret Gray, *née* Jameson (1808–1894)
- **Is this a portrait?** It was called ***Portrait of a Girl*** and sold to **George Price Boyce** for 60 guineas.
- It is a very sensual, "knowing" and direct image, which, almost inevitably, has provoked questions about the nature of Millais' relationship with his sister-in-law.
- "Alive with electric energy". Women of this period were not portrayed in a confrontational manner as it was unacceptable to Victorian society. The image is far more familiar to 21st century eyes than those of Victorian society.
- Effie, Millais lived with Sophie and her parents in Bowerswell, Perth. She started to displace Effie as his muse.
- The change from a child to a stunning teenager can be seen in three paintings *Autumn Leaves*, *Spring* (or *Apple Blossom*) and this portrait.
- It is rumoured that Effie sent her away but her parents continued to allow Millais to chaperone her.
- Was Millais too interested in her, did his wife Effie complain?
- Sophie suffered later (1868, aged 25) from **anorexia nervosa**, became obsessed, became incoherent, placed in care and died aged **39**. She was cared for by Dr Thomas Harrington **Tuke** (1826–88), a leading practitioner in lunacy who had treated Millais' friend, the painter **Edwin Landseer**.
- Millais wife Effie had been married to the art critic John Ruskin.
- The painting was displayed in 2012 at Tate Britain's major exhibition on the Pre-Raphaelites, *Victorian Avant-Garde*.
- In 1859, **Boyce** commissioned Rossetti to paint **Fanny Cornforth (Bocca Baciata)**.
- Boyce wanted to show Sophie and Alice and the RA exhibition of 1858 but Millais asked him not to as he had not completed his large painting *Spring* and did not want to be represented by two small portraits. He was having a hard time as the critics, led by Ruskin, turned against him. In later exhibitions (1898 to 1923) this portrait of Sophie was misidentified as Alice.

Key point: a painting that raises questions about the **nature of a portrait, is it a girl or Sophie Gray?**

Sophie Gray

Sophie Gray (1843-1882, also known as Sophy) Millais's sister-in-law, **was only 13** when this portrait was painted and it was titled *Portrait of a Girl* and, I think **strangely, was sold to George Price Boyce a friend of Rossetti and joint lover of**

Fanny Cornforth. The painting, or portrait of Fanny Cornforth was hung alongside that of Sophie Gray. It is difficult to understand why her parents did not want this portrait of Sophie. After Millais and his then wife Effie moved to Annat Lodge, close to Bowerswell in Scotland, her family home, she was readily available for sitting, and it seems she was beginning to displace Effie as a favoured subject. Sophie was one of Millais's favourite models in the 1850s, see *Autumn Leaves* (1856). This painting was painted in the summer and autumn of 1857 when Millais and Effie were living with her parents and sisters at Bowerswell, the family home in Perth.

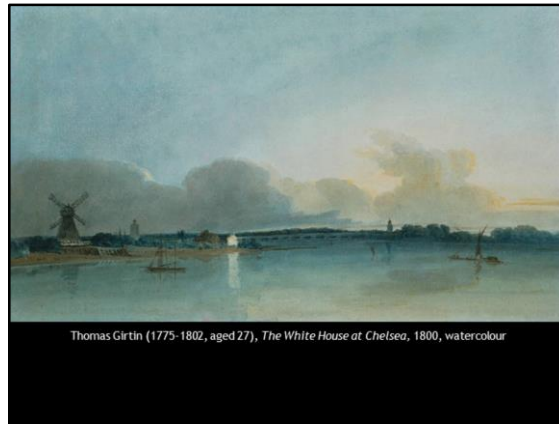
There is another portrait of Alice, another of his favourite models. Both works were bought by George Pryce Boyce for himself and on behalf of his sister Joanna, also an artist. The portrait of Alice is a straightforward portrait of an immature girl.

The sensual and **'knowing' look has raised questions about Sophie's relationship with Millais** and there is some evidence that Millais wife, Effie, **sent her away** because they were growing too close. Eleven years later Sophie became unwell and was suffering from what is now called **anorexia** nervosa. She became **obsessed** with piano playing and her speech became incoherent. She married Caird, later made a baronet (like Millais) and had a daughter called Baeatrice who Millais painted and who died aged 14 in 1888. She was placed in the care of **Dr Thomas Tuke** who had **treated** Edwin **Landseer** but her mental state continued to be a problem for the rest of her life. She **died** at the age of **39**.

See <http://www.leicestergalleries.com/19th-20th-century-paintings/d/portrait-of-a-girl-sophie-gray/10207>



Landscapes were the second most common type of painting and went through the biggest revolution.



Thomas Girtin (1775-1802, died aged 27), *The White House at Chelsea*, 1800, watercolour, Tate Britain
For more information see <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/girtin-the-white-house-at-chelsea-n04728>

Key point: a leading topographical painter was Thomas Girtin who established watercolour landscapes

Thomas Girtin

Thomas Girtin's architectural and topographical sketches and drawings established his reputation and his use of watercolour for landscapes means he is credited with establishing watercolour as a reputable art form and creating the Romantic watercolour painting.

I wanted to start with this painting, because it was produced at the start the nineteenth century and it is regarded as one of the great landscapes of the century. It is Thomas Girtin's *The White House at Chelsea*. Girtin died when he was 27 and is not well-known today but he was a legend in his time and a friend of Joseph

Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) who admired his work.

According to an **anecdote**, a dealer went to **Turner's house** and after looking at his drawings, had the audacity to say, 'I have a drawing out there in my hackney coach, finer than any of yours.' Turner bit his lip, looked first angry, then meditative. At length he broke silence: 'Then I tell you what it is. You have got Tom Girtin's White House at Chelsea'. Turner knew Girtin well as they were the same age and students together. Turner said after his death in 1802 'Poor Tom.....If Tom Girtin had lived, I should have starved.'

In 1800 Girtin married the daughter, Mary Ann Borrett, of a wealthy London goldsmith and moved to Hyde park next door to the painter Paul Sandby. He was welcome as a houseguest at his patrons' country houses and the following year he spent five and a half months in Paris. In spring and summer 1802 he produced an enormous panorama of London called the 'Eidometropolis' (Greek for 'view of the mother city') which was 18 feet high and 108 feet long. That November he died while painting of either asthma or 'ossification of the heart'. His later bolder, spacious style had a lasting influence on English painting and the popular romantic and picturesque landscapes for which England became well known. Girtin's early death reportedly caused Turner to remark, 'Had Tom Girtin lived I should have starved'. Turner was an introvert and often rude but Girtin was kind and considerate. As the pair of them went around together people tolerated Turner because of Girtin.

'The Brothers'

Girtin was apprenticed to a water-colourist called Edward Dayes who did not appreciate his talent and had him imprisoned as a refractory apprentice. Girtin became friends with Turner and exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1794, when he was 19 (Turner was 15). Within five years he had acquired influential patrons such as Sir George Beaumont who helped create the National Gallery and Girtin was the leading member of the Brothers, a sketching society of professional artists. The Brothers used to meet at each of their houses in turn and in draw all evening based on a few lines of poetry that had been selected. The host would keep all the sketches in exchange for providing everyone supper. Turner was an early member but thought his sketches were worth more than the cost of supper so he stopped attending.

Watercolour

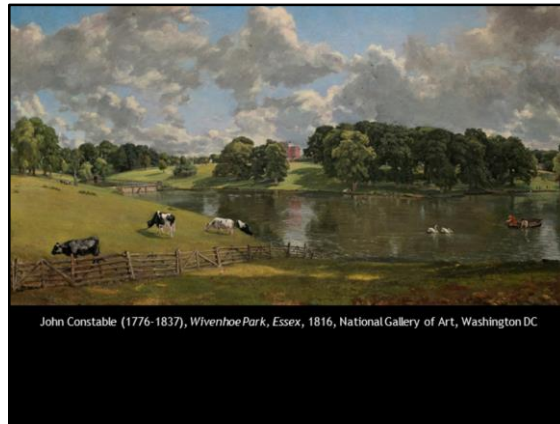
On the right is Chelsea Old Bridge and we are looking upstream across the Thames to Battersea. The windmill known as the Red House Mill belonged to Joseph Freeman and the white house is where Battersea park is today. The bridge is Battersea Bridge and on the other side of the river is Chelsea Old

Church which was destroyed in the Second World War (1941). The focus is the White House which was created by leaving the paper unpainted. Watercolour is a transparent medium and there is no white watercolour. Watercolours are created by starting with the lightest colours and adding increasingly dark colours. Girtin played a key role in establishing watercolour as a reputable art form but in the early part of the nineteenth century it was regarded as a lesser art form compared with oil painting and watercolour paintings were referred to as drawings which had been 'stained' or 'tinted'. In 1804 a group of watercolour artists formed their own exhibiting society, the Society of Painters in Water-Colours. They were anxious that the 'novel' term 'painters' in watercolour 'might...be considered by the world of taste to savour of assumption'.

Topographical Landscape

This is known as a topographical landscape, one that shows the land and often buildings accurately. The interest in topographical landscapes started by patrons wanting to show their country estate but was fuelled by the extraordinary growth in travel guides. The representation of travel locations evolved out of the need to bring reminders back from the Grand Tour of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (flourished 1660 to 1840). The Grand Tour was a rite of passage for wealthy young men and they often brought back paintings of the cities they visited, such as Canaletto's (1697-1768) Venice. The eighteenth century was associated with a rise in travel and the need for travel guides. These guides described the landscape in terms of visual landscape conventions, such as bounding sidescreens and a receding foreground and the use of the term 'picturesque'. It was William Gilpin who first formalised the picturesque but it acquired a life of its own.

However, it is more than topographical. In 1852 *The Art Journal* claimed that Thomas Girtin was responsible for changing the merely topographical into an evocative composition. This painting, for example, does not just record a scene but creates an image that once seen cannot be forgotten.



John Constable (1776-1837), *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, 1816, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

Key point: Constable stretched the definition of topographic painting

John Constable

- This work is of Wivenhoe Park in Essex but is it topographical? It appears to radiate clarity, the precise recording of the estate and the expansive perspective. The brushstrokes are tighter compared with his later paintings giving it the air of accuracy. All is content and self-sustaining nature. However, Constable modified the view as the park and lake are not part of the same view.
- In the far left distance is **Mary Rebow**, daughter of the owner Major-General (a 2-star general) **Francis Slater Rebow**. She is driving a donkey cart with a friend. The painting contains light and dark and has a strong open feel to the sky, what Constable called the 'chiaroscuro of nature'.
- Wivenhoe Park is 55 miles northeast of London and east of Colchester now

part of University of Essex and Wivenhow House Hotel. The owner was a friend of Constable's father and commissioned Constable. Constable needed the income from this commission to marry Mary Bicknell as her parents did not approve. It was finished in September and they married in October 1816.

- His parents Golding and Ann Constable approved the match but thought he should wait until he was financially secure. They **died** in 1816 and Constable inherited a fifth share of the business, became **financially independent** and married the same year. His father had made his money by inheriting from his childless uncle and from Ann's dowry. They were not gentry but Ann knew Lady Beaumont who lived in Dedham. The whole family were Tories and objected to the sale of land to Whigs.
- In 1827 Maria's father died leaving her **£20,000 in Spring 1828** which Constable invested poorly. **Maria died** on 23 November **1828**.
- He only sold **20 paintings** in England but 20 in France in just a few years but he fell out with his French dealer Arrowsmith.
- RA student in 1799, first exhibited 1802, **ARA in 1819, Academician 1829**.
- Leslie wrote in 1824 'You have long lain under a mistake; men do not purchase pictures because they admire them, but because others covet them...'
- Art is a construction that needs an art world to define and recognise it and Constable was always at odds with the Royal Academy aesthetic. Constable work was criticized for its 'lack of finish', Constable wrote,
'My art flatters nobody by imitation, it courts nobody by smoothness, it tickles nobody by pettiness, it is without either fal-de-lal or fiddle-de-dee: how can I therefore hope to be popular?'

Politics

- Let's look at the **politics and social circumstances** of 1816, the year this was painted.
- The **war** against Napoleon had **finished the previous year**, (Waterloo was Sunday, 18 June 1815), and the war had left the country **close to starvation** when a terrible summer occurred the like of which had never been seen before. It was an **agricultural disaster** and **riots, arson, and looting** took place in many **European cities**.
- It was called the '**Year without a Summer**'—world temperatures dropped and crops died worldwide.
- We now know that it was caused by a combination of low solar activity and

a series of volcanic events that winter capped by the **April 1815** eruption of **Mount Tambora** (in the Dutch East Indies now Indonesia). This was the most powerful eruption in recorded history, **four times** larger than **Krakatoa** in 1883. One third of the mountain, **38 cubic miles** of ash was ejected into the atmosphere, **ten times** more than then the eruption of **Vesuvius** that destroyed Pompeii.

- The summer had many interesting side effects. In Germany, the lack of oats to feed horses led inventor **Karl von Drais** ('Dray') to research horseless transport, which led to the invention of the **Laufmaschine**, velocipede (France) or **dandy horse** (which led to the invention of the **bicycle**). **Note that this clever chap also invented the first typewriter five years later.**
- In Switzerland **Mary Shelley** was on holiday but the bad weather and incessant rain meant she had to stay indoors and she spent the time writing the novel ***Frankenstein***.
- The bad harvests lasted for **three years** and led to **riots** across Europe. Amidst all this chaos, Constable shows us a **tranquil** summer day.
- I will return to Constable's rendition of the landscape later but first let us consider another type of landscape, **the picturesque**.



Joseph Mallord William Turner (1776-1851), *Ploughing up Turnips near Slough*, exhibited at Turner's Gallery in 1809, Tate Britain

The view is from Salt Hill near Slough? In modern terms it is looking towards the M4 motorway towards the Thames, Eton College and Windsor Castle. Turner would have known the view and there was a famous inn, called Castle Inn, at Salt Hill a mile from Slough. It was named for its view of Windsor Castle and the Inn and its view were so well known that in 1814 the Prince Regent hosted a breakfast there for the King of Prussia and his three sons.

Pastoral

The painting was first exhibited April 1809 in Turner's gallery. At first glance we see a Romantic painting of the pastoral or bucolic type. That is it shows the herding of livestock. It is also known as Georgic based on Virgil's (70 BCE-19 BCE, an ancient Roman poet of the Augustan period)) *Georgics*, a poem about agriculture and animal husbandry which was very popular in the eighteenth century. The poem describes man's struggle against a hostile natural world and how hard work and animal husbandry can overcome setbacks (published 29BCE). Related to the Greek

Hesiod's *Works and Days* regarding man's relationship to the land and the importance of hard work.



Philip James de Loutherbourg (1740-1812), *Coalbrookdale by Night*, 1801, Science Museum

Key point: in the eighteenth century two types of aesthetic experience were defined – the beautiful and the sublime

The painting depicts the Madeley Wood (or Bedlam) Furnaces, which belonged to the **Coalbrookdale Company** from 1776 to 1796. The picture has come to symbolize the **birth of the Industrial Revolution** in **Ironbridge**. It is held in the collections of the Science Museum in London. The blazing furnaces, the heat and the danger instil a sense of awe and terror. These are aspects of the sublime.

Sublime

- **Edmund Burke** in his ***Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757)***, the thrill and danger of untamed nature. Burke identified seven aspects - darkness, obscurity, deprivation, vastness, magnificence, loudness and suddenness. It was associated with terror, infinity, immensity, awe, horror and despair. Feelings invoked by journeys across the Alps in the 18thC. Greatness beyond calculation.

- It was an importance concept as it was beyond reason in an Age of Enlightenment when everything was subject to reason. It is when words fail us and involves painting the unpaintable and a oneness with nature. These days it is used to indicate a well executed performance, such as a good tennis shot or a delicious meal but in the eighteenth century it was an aesthetic experience distinct from beauty.
- The earliest writer about the sublime is **Longinus** (also called Pseudo-Longinus as his real name is unknown, he lived in the 1st or 3rd century CE and wrote ***On the Sublime***) who saw it as an aspect of eloquence, the ability to uplift the soul of the audience and provide a sense of joy such they thought they had produced what they heard. Other examples are the Bible (Longinus used it to provide examples), Dante Alighieri's (1265–1321) *Divine Comedy* and John Milton's (1608-1674) *Paradise Lost*. The Romantic poets, such as William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) were very concerned with the sublime.
- **Modern theorists** such as Barbara Claire Freeman have distinguished between the **feminine sublime** involving feelings of awe, rapture and the spiritual and metaphysical infinity of nature and the **masculine sublime** concerned with terror and domination. This painting is an example of masculine sublime.
- Romantic theorists saw Salvator Rosa (e.g. *Rocky Landscape with Huntsman and Warriors*) as sublime as his landscape was a **vehicle of terror** compared with Claude Lorrain (born Gellée, c. 1600-1682) as the antithesis of the sublime as he represented classical beauty, elegance, harmony and luminosity.
- Before Burke (back to Augustine of Hippo) the ugly lacked form and was therefore non-existent. Burke said that both beauty and the sublime invoke pleasure and are therefore not opposites. Burke harks back to Plato in so far as the ugly can create intense emotions that are ultimately pleasurable.
- In the latter half of the nineteenth century the **sublime was abandoned** by artists for reasons of taste, an interest in beauty and scientific realism.
- Some argue the **sublime has returned** in terms of the interest in horror and **horror films**.

See <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/alison-smith-the-sublime-in-crisis-landscape-painting-after-turner-r1109220>



J. M. W. Turner, *Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway*, first exhibited 1844, National Gallery

Key point: Turner used the sublime to create an aesthetic experience from technological developments

J. M. W. Turner

- This is an example of one of Turner's late landscapes. It is not clear whether some of his late landscapes are finished works that were intended to be displayed but this is clearly the case with *Rain, Steam and Speed*.
- Turner redefined landscape painting by pushing the boundaries of how we appreciate colour and light. In this painting, a **conventional** interpretation is that it is a celebration of **power and progress** and the new scientific age. It shows Maidenhead Railway Bridge, across the River Thames between Taplow and Maidenhead and the view is looking east towards London.
- The **bridge** was designed by **Isambard Kingdom Brunel** (1806-1859, died aged 53 of a stroke) and completed in **1838**. The Great Western Railway was one of a number of private British railway companies created to develop the new means of transport.

- A **tiny hare** appears in the bottom right corner of the painting. Some have interpreted this as a **positive statement** about technology as the train is able to **outrun** what was the fastest animal before the steam train. Others see the hare **running in fear** of the new machinery and Turner warning us of the **danger** of man's **new technology** destroying the beauty of nature. My view is that this is a masterpiece precisely because it contains both contradictory interpretations.
- The other interesting element of the picture is the **boat** on the river. It looks possible that this is an artist on the river with a parasol to keep off the sun and sketching a group of wild, **bacchanalian dancers** on the shore. Is this this Turner saying he prefers a **bucolic** scene of dancers to the new technology **or** are they **celebrating** the wonders of the new form transport that was changing the face of Britain? Again it is up to you to decide.



William Dyce (1806-1864), *Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858, ?1858-60*, Tate Britain

- This painting has been analysed in various ways. One interpretation is that it is about time and it therefore invokes **feelings of the sublime** concerning the **vast age of the earth**. Critics at the time described it as a travesty of the sublime because its microscopic detail prevents an overall unified view.
- It shows the middle class interest in geology. **Charles Lyell** had published his *Principles of Geology* in three volumes between 1830 and 1833, and the entire scientific community was interested in the controversial attempt to reconcile the implications of geological time with Biblical scripture.
- The **variety of ages** in the figures may represent the passage of time, while the **setting sun** and the **autumnal chill** in the air serve as a reminder of **death**.
- Dyce's painting was the product of a trip he made in the autumn of 1858 to the popular holiday resort of Pegwell Bay near Ramsgate, on the east coast of Kent. It shows his wife, her two sisters and his son gathering shells and

fossils.

- The artist's interest in geology is shown by his careful recording of the flint-encrusted strata and eroded faces of the chalk cliffs.
- The barely visible trail of **Donati's comet** in the sky places the human activities in far broader dimensions of time and space. The **artist-scientist** on the right is holding a **telescope**.
- Discovered by Giovanni Donati on June 2, 1858, after the Great Comet of 1811 it was the **brightest comets** to appear during the 19th century. It has a period of about **2,000 years**.
- The geologically unstable cliffs along much of England's south coast were (and still are) a paradise for those in search of fossils, including the famous fossil hunter Mary Anning (1799-1847) of Lyme Regis, who is credited with the discovery of the first plesiosaur skeleton.
- The *Illustrated London News* considered the work to be
'a very curiosity of minute handiwork ... being painted in the finest of fairy like lines ... with a completeness and exactness which render every microscopic detail palpable to the naked eye'
- but concluded that the ultimate effect of such representation was *'a rapid descent from the sublime to the droll'*.

William Dyce

- William Dyce (1806-1864) was born in Aberdeen, Scotland. After studying at the Royal Academy Schools in London and in Rome, Dyce became well known for his paintings, and between 1837 and 1843 was Superintendent of the Government School of Design. He later won a competition to complete fresco paintings for the newly rebuilt Houses of Parliament, a project that occupied him almost until his death. However, Dyce was also interested in intellectual and scientific pursuits, for example, writing a prize-winning essay on electro-magnetism in 1830.
- As a deeply **devout High Anglican**, Dyce probably intended these figures to elicit feelings of **wonder** in the viewer – an idea that connects with the poet and critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge's notion of the sublime in which individual consciousness is subsumed by a sense of the **eternal**. On the other hand, the **estrangement** between the figures and between the figures and the scene could be seen to undermine the reference to the sublime.



William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), *Our English Coasts, 1852* ('Strayed Sheep'), 1852, Tate Britain

Key point: the Pre-Raphaelites demanded the faithful reproduction of detail and colour

William Holman Hunt

- John Ruskin (1819-1900) in *Modern Painters* (1847) urged young artists to *...go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remember her instructions; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth.*
- Following this advice William Holman created this painting, his greatest and most Pre-Raphaelite landscape. It is the **Lover's seat**, a beauty spot on the cliffs overlooking **Covehurst Bay**, near Hastings. Hunt paid attention to natural detail, although the cliffs, sheep and parts of the foreground were

all painted from different viewpoints. The **butterflies** in the left foreground were painted **indoors** from a live specimen.

- F.G. Stephens, a critic and member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, suggested it '***might be taken as a satire on the reported defenseless state of the country against foreign invasion***'. In 1852 the press had created fears of an invasion because of Napoleon III's dictatorial régime.
- The original frame bore the inscription '*The Lost Sheep*', and when Hunt **sent** the painting to the ***Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1855*** he changed the title to *Strayed Sheep*, thus underlining the picture's religious symbolism.
- Critics noticed the treatment of light and Ruskin wrote in 1883 that
*It showed to us, for the **first time in the history of art**, the absolutely faithful balances of colour and shade by which actual sunshine might be transposed into a key in which the harmonies possible with material pigments should yet produce the same impressions upon the mind which were caused by the light itself.*



James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea*, 1871, Tate Britain

Key point : Whistler's landscapes broke with many traditions and led to the Whistler v. Ruskin trial about the nature of art

Art for Art's Sake Landscape

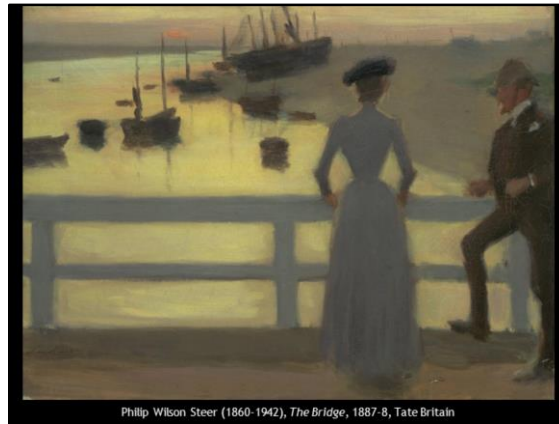
- This is the first of Whistler's **Nocturnes**, a name suggest by his patron Frederick Leyland. Whistler's aim was to convey a sense of beauty and tranquillity. He wrote, *'By using the word 'nocturne' I wished to indicate an artistic interest alone, divesting the picture of any outside anecdotal interest which might have been otherwise attached to it. A nocturne is an arrangement of line, form and colour first'* (quoted in Dormont and MacDonald, p.122).
- Whistler had been inspired one evening while returning one **evening** by **steamer** from **Westminster**. He had a procedure for creating these riverscapes. He would go out on a **boat rowed** by his neighbour and boat builder **Walter Greaves** at 10 Lindsey Row Chelsea (Whistler lived at 7 Lindsey Row). Coincidentally **his father** had rowed J. M. W. **Turner** on the Thames at the same spot. Whistler would then

look at the scene, **turn his back** on it and then try to verbally describe it building by building. If he made a mistake he would turn back and relearn the scene before trying again.

- Having **memorized** the scene the next day he would prepare the special '**sauce**' he used to paint the picture on a panel. It was essentially a thinned oil paint that was so runny he had to paint on horizontal panels. He would prepare the panels using dark grey paint and then apply the sauce to create a contrasting sense of luminosity. Typically, he would regard most attempts as failures and would start again. The paintings were therefore produced quickly but it took a long time to produce an acceptable picture.
- The view is **Battersea** looking **across to Chelsea**, and it is possible to make out the tower of **Chelsea Old Church** on the right which also features in **Girtin's watercolour**. In the foreground, a low barge and the figure of a fisherman are indicated with the minimum of detail, and the influence of Japanese art is evident in the restricted palette and the economy of line. *The Times* (14 November, 1871), wrote,
'painting should not aim at expressing dramatic emotions, depicting incidents of history or recording facts of nature, but should be content with moulding our moods and stirring our imaginations, by subtle combinations of colour.'

Walter Greaves

Whistler employed Greaves and his brother as studio assistants and taught them to paint in an **impressionistic** style. Later, when **Whistler** moved house he **broke off contact** with them. They had by then **abandoned boat building** and tried to make a **living as artists** but fell onto harder and **harder times** even though Walter Greaves paintings are of **high quality**. In 1911 his paintings were **discovered** by a dealer and exhibited creating an overnight **sensation**. However, when a critic suggested Greaves had **inspired Whistler** the latter's **American friends retaliated** and accused Greaves of **stealing** Whistler's half-finished paintings, finishing them and selling them as his own. Although **untrue** this damaged his reputation and the exhibition was closed. It was not until **1921** that three prominent artists **rescued Greaves** and his reputation and they found a retirement home for him at Charterhouse.



Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942), *The Bridge*, 1887-8, Tate Britain

Key point: an influential Post-Impressionist English artist who is **little known today** is Philip Wilson Steer

Philip Wilson Steer

Steer was **rejected** by the **Royal Academy** school and so trained in **Paris** before returning to London. He exhibited at the Royal Academy on his return and became a **founder** of the **New English Art Club**. This painting, *The Bridge*, is now considered to have been painted in **Walberswick**, Suffolk. With Walter Sickert he became a leading British Impressionist who were influenced by Whistler, Gainsborough, Constable and Turner.

This picture was **strongly attacked** by the critics when it was first exhibited in **1887**, and dismissed by one as '**either a deliberate daub or so much mere midsummer madness**'. Steer considered giving up painting in the wake of this disapproval. With its exploitation of the **creamy fluency** of oil paint, its

atmospheric lighting and **subdued colouring**, *The Bridge* is like Whistler's landscapes he called 'Nocturnes'. It was unusual in London at the time for its lack of detail, and for the uncertainty about its subject.



Genre paintings or subject paintings were the third most popular. Later in the nineteenth century some artists started to paint the poor and other social problems such as the 'fallen woman'.



Luke Fildes (1843-1927), *The Doctor*, 1891, Tate Britain

Luke Fildes (1843-1927), *The Doctor*, 1891, Tate Britain
His name is pronounced to rhyme with 'childs'.

- Starting with a late subject painting
- Key point: when we understand the Victorian period some paintings have more significance

Fildes, *The Doctor*

- Perhaps what lifts a work of art from the 'merely' sentimental is a better understanding of the social circumstances and intent behind the painting. An academic reading is much more difficult if we become 'entangled' in the emotions of a work. For example, this is Luke Fildes's painting *The Doctor* (1891), depicting a night vigil beside a child. When I saw this painting at the Tate with a group of art historians the **feminist view** was that it shows the **power** of the **male doctor**. The way he **sits** reminds us of **Lorenzo de' Medici** carved by **Michelangelo** (1520-1534, tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, containing figures of Dawn and Dusk). The figure

has been nicknamed *Il Pensieroso*, '**The Thoughtful One**'. The implication is that the doctor is a different class, a thinking class, and the poor people are dependent on him for physical salvation as they depend on their priest for religious salvation.

- In 1890, Sir **Henry Tate** (1819-98) **commissioned** a painting from Luke Fildes, the subject of which was left to his **own discretion**. The artist chose to recall a **personal tragedy** of his own, when in 1877 his first son, Philip Luke, had died at the age of one in his Kensington home. Fildes' son and biographer wrote,
'The character and bearing of their doctor throughout the time of their anxiety, made a deep impression on my parents. Dr. Murray became a symbol of professional devotion which would one day inspire the painting of The Doctor'.
- Fildes's painting was also inspired by the professional devotion of **Dr Gustavus Murray** who treated him. But this work shows the moment when a child shows the **first sign of recovery**. The **redeeming light of dawn** is shining on the child. In order to make the picture convincing Fildes **constructed a cottage interior** in his studio. He began **work at dawn** each day to catch the exact light conditions. The image of an ordinary doctor's quiet heroism was a huge success with the late-Victorian public
- Fildes chose a rustic interior with the boy's father resting his hand on the shoulder of his wife whose hands are clasped in prayer. The man is bravely looking into the face of the thoughtful doctor trying to read any sign of recovery. They are poor, there is a scrap of carpet on the floor and their clothes are **ragged** but the child has been given **medicine** and the bowl and the jug of water used to try to reduce his temperature. The **scraps of paper** on the floor could be prescriptions made out by the doctor and now taken. Fildes described the shaft of daylight as signifying the imminent recovery of the child. He wrote,
'At the cottage window the dawn begins to steal in – the dawn that is the critical time of all deadly illnesses – and with it the parents again take hope into their hearts, the mother hiding her face to escape giving vent to her emotion, the father laying his hand on the shoulder of his wife in encouragement of the first glimmerings of the joy which is to follow'.
- A year later it was exhibited at the Royal Academy and an engraving was

published that sold more than a **million copies in America alone**. It became one of the **most profitable prints** Agnews had ever produced. **Tate paid Fildes £3,000** for the painting and he **donated it and 56 other pictures** as a gift to the nation in 1897 and it became that **start of the Tate collection**.

Is Sentimental Art Unforgiveable?

- Why do many critics and art historians find sentimental Victorian art unforgiveable? It might be that art historians **look down** on art that **appeals to popular taste** or because the emotional themes – childhood and especially child death, forsaken love, animals, sunsets, heart-rending stories and pathetic scenes – now seem **hackneyed or trivialised**. It is sentimental and so **trivialises deep human emotions**. **Sentiment reduces all emotions to comfort and warmth**. In the **18th century sentimentality** was the **reliance on feelings** as a **guide to truth** and was much in vogue among the polite. By the end of the **19th century** it was seen as **false** and in **modern times**, as **Oscar Wilde** said,

'A sentimentalist is one who desires to have the luxury of an emotion without paying for it'.

- The term 'sentimental' is often associated with Victorian genre painting but I will show that many paintings concerned social issues and morality.
- Alternatively, it could be that we see Victorian subject painting as trying to **manipulate us** by the use of emotion and manipulative images. We are used to being manipulated by **advertising** as so Victorian art could be seen as **debased** by similar motives. In this case not for commercial gain but to **persuade us** that the **religious, social and political systems are in our best interests**. For example, the 'deserving poor' are shown in a way that convinces us that everything is being done to correct the situation.
- Some later critics and art historians even believe that all painting that tries to **tell a story** is **dishonest** because it is **not the job** of the **medium**. Each art should focus on what **best suits the medium** so story telling is the task of writing and painting should be concerned with putting colours on a flat surface.

Sir (Samuel) Luke Fildes (1843–1927)

- Illustrator and genre and portrait painter, was born on 18 October **1843** at 22 Standish Street, **Liverpool**, the fourth of the ten children.
- His **grandmother**, Mary Fildes, was a radical reformer (Manchester Female

Reformers Society) who was injured at the **Peterloo massacre**.

- Trained as an **illustrator**. Government Art Training School and RA School.
- Influenced by Millais.
- **Five large social realist paintings**, praised for their realism but criticized as **inappropriate** subject matter for fine art.
 - ***Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward*** (exh. RA, 1874; Royal Holloway College, Egham), 23 freezing adults, children and babies waiting for food and a bed.
 - ***The Widower*** (National Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; reduced version, 1902, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), man looking after five children, one sick
 - ***Return of a Penitent*** (1879, City Hall, Cardiff), a young woman returns to find the old cottage deserted
 - ***The Village Wedding*** (ex Christies, 12 June 1992), exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1883, young newly marrieds walking down the street followed by wedding guests
 - ***The Doctor*** (exh. RA, 1891; Tate collection)
- Friend **Henry Woods** (1846-1921, painter and illustrator, Neo-Venetian School, RA 1893), married his sister Fanny had six children.
- **Compassionate, caring, loving, affectionate.**
- 1879 associate RA, 1887 RA, knighted 1906.
- Admired by **Van Gogh**, took up portrait late in life but then **only rival** was John Singer **Sargent**.
- Fellow social realist painters included **Frank Holl** and **Hubert von Herkomer**, also **David Wilkie** and **Thomas Faed** and later **Richard Redgrave** and **George Frederick Watts**.



David Wilkie (1785-1841), *The Village Holiday*, 1809-11, Tate Britain

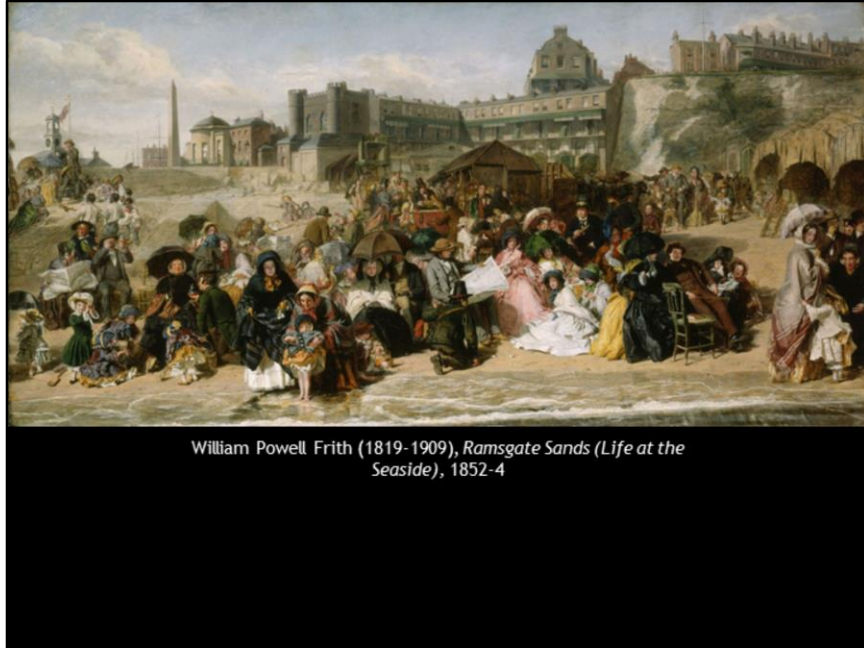
- An **early** subject painting from a master of the genre.
- Wilkie first called the painting *Public-House Door*, then *Alehouse Door* (more polite), then *Village Holiday* and finally *Village Festival* (a title often used by Teniers).
- Scottish born **David Wilkie** became a **star** of the London art world. Much admired for his **moralising** and **humorous** narratives of everyday life. He is **virtually unknown today**. This is about virtue and vice, in this case drink.
- It was exhibited in **1812** and bought by John Julius **Angerstein**, an important collector, for **900 guineas**. After his death 38 of his finest paintings were **bought** by the British government to form the nucleus of the collection of the **National Gallery**. Until the National Gallery was built in Trafalgar Square, the works were displayed in his town house in Pall Mall.
- Sir George Beaumont bought *The Blind Fiddler* in 1808 for 50 guineas and then wrote to Wilkie enclosing a cheque for an additional £50 as the rising

fame of Wilkie made Beaumont feel in his debt. Wilkie returned the cheque although only three years previously he had been so poor he considered returning to Scotland.

Key point: genre painting changed enormously during the nineteenth century.

David Wilkie (1785-1841)

- Born in Fife, the son of a Reverend. Trained in **Edinburgh** and painted in the style of **David Teniers the Younger** (Flemish, Antwerp, 900 paintings) stories of common life.
- Went to London 1805 aged 20 and enrolled in **RA School**. No money so turned to **portraiture** and a genre subject was commissioned and accepted by the RA and hung in prime position.
- Patron Sir **George Beaumont**, by 1807 President Benjamin West already considered him a great painter.
- ARA 1809 **RA 1811**.
- In 1820 he was commissioned by the Duke of Wellington to paint **Chelsea Pensioners** (1822) for which he paid 1,200 guineas cash.
- His mother and eldest brother died in 1824 and his other older brother died in 1825. Both brothers left children to be taken care of. He had long been prone to **nervous illness**, brought on by anxiety and by 1825 he had become **too tense paint** and he travelled abroad.
- His **European travels** resulted in a looser less detailed style.
- He was made **Painter in Ordinary** to George IV (following Thomas Lawrence) and William IV the same year (1830) and then Queen Victoria. He found portraits difficult and failed with Victoria.
- He was knighted in 1836 and made chevalier of the Légion d'honneur in 1841.
- He went to the **Holy Land** in 1840 and made many sketches and his style may have changed again on his return but he **died suddenly** on the **steamer home** and was buried at sea.
- He **never married** and was a private man.



William Powell Frith (1819-1909), *Ramsgate Sands (Life at the Seaside)*, 1852-4
 William Powell Frith, *Self-portrait*, 1838

- Before *Ramsgate Sands* Frith depicted figures from history or literature but this was the **first time** the **contemporary Victorian crowd** had been painted. The idea of **painting modern life** was a **revolutionary idea** of the Impressionists inspired by the writing of Charles Baudelaire but Frith's pictures **predates** the Impressionists by **twenty years**.
- Many of Frith's fellow artists were against the idea of painting modern-life and one called it '**a piece of vulgar Cockney business**' and another '**a tissue of vulgarity**'. However, **the public loved it** and it was an immediate an **enormous success**. It was one of the few paintings at the Royal Academy for which a **guard rail had to be installed** to keep the public back – the ultimate sign of success. In all, Frith had six guard rails over the years.
- It was bought from the artist by Messrs Lloyd who sold it to **Queen Victoria** the same year, 1854, for **£1,000**, the same price he paid but he retained reproduction rights and Frith may have earned as much as £3,000 from the sales. Although this was the price they paid they retained engravings and print rights so it was a highly lucrative deal. Victoria had **stayed in Albion House** (built 1789) in Ramsgate before

she became Queen. This is the highest house in the middle of Frith's painting. Victoria stayed in Ramsgate aged 16 she nearly died of typhoid and Sir John Conroy forced a pen into her hand to try to force her to sign authority to him, she resisted.

- Victoria had also entered the sea from a **bathing machine** in **Osborne**, Isle of Wight for the first time in **1847**. She wrote in her
'drove down to the beach with my maid & went into the bathing machines, where I undressed & bathed in the sea (for the 1st time in my life), a very nice bathing woman attended me. I thought it delightful till I put my head under water, when I thought I should be stifled.'

Queen Victoria's Journal, 30 July 1847

- It was inspired by a **holiday Frith** and his family took to Ramsgate in **1851**. He always painted from **real people** and liked to use friends and family as he found professional models often turned up drunk and had no sense of responsibility. The artist included a **self-portrait** (peeping over the shoulder of the man on the far right), while the **little girl** paddling in the centre staring directly at the painter is thought to have been his **daughter**. He also shows himself, if I display his portrait can you **find him**?
- My professor at the Courtauld devoted a large part of her **doctoral thesis** to this painting and she **examined and analysed every person** and their **social role** within society. Seaside holidays or weekends had become possible with the advent of the railway. Trains first reach Ramsgate in 1846 and although it involved changing at Canterbury the old station was in the centre of the town near the beach.
- The bathing machines had a curtain that could be lowered to sea level but **men** were allowed to **bathe nude** until the 1860s. Some resorts employed a **dipper** whose job was to **push people under water** and then help them back into the bathing machine. The machine was developed in Margate about 1750 when most people bathed naked. Legal segregation of bathing areas ended in 1901 and the machines became extinct by 1820. Poorer people from London came to the seaside by train and as they could not afford bathing machines they often bathed naked. In 1874 a **rector wrote** in his diary that he had to adopt the **detestable custom of bathing in drawers**, he wrote, *'If ladies don't like to see men naked why don't they keep away from the sight?'* Boys and young men would **bathe naked** even in the **Edwardian Era** but **middle class girls and women** always had to be **fully covered** with clothes that did not expose their shape.
- Frith is showing a world of mixed sexes, ages, classes and occupations but he maintains the important **class distinctions** and generally the lower classes are shown as deferential and respectful. There is an intellectual air among the entertainment and **seven women are reading books**. One man is

an **idler** and another appears to be **flirting** and two people are potentially voyeurs with telescopes watching women bathing. However, one is an old man and the other a young girl. No bathers are shown in the painting and there are no coarse or vulgar displays.

- Granite Obelisk (known as the Royal Tooth Pick) erected 1822 to commemorate the departure (1820) and safe return of King George IV from Ramsgate Harbour. He was so pleased with his reception he named it a 'Royal Harbour' (the only one). Beyond the obelisk is the Royal Harbour, important during the Napoleonic Wars. The first railway was 1846.
- Augustus Pugin, George du Maurier, James Tissot, Vincent van Gogh, Wilkie Collins and Jane Austen stayed in the town.
- Frith went on to paint many other scenes of everyday life such as *The Derby Day* (1858) and *The Railway Station* (1862) for which Frith was paid an astonishing **8,000 guineas**.
- **So 15 years before Claude Monet (1840-1926) was brave enough to paint a modern-life railway station (*La gare Saint-Lazare*, 1877) Frith was making a fortune from the same daring subject matter.**
- Key point: an important painting that reflected Victorian life

William Powell Frith (1819-1909)

- Born in **Yorkshire** to a house steward and cook and his parents took a keen interest in art.
- He was sent to **school in Dover** where he indulged in drawing.
- His formal training was at the **Sass Academy** and then the **RA School** in 1837 (aged 18).
- His **father died** and his mother moved to London and he **made money** **portrait** painting (Lincolnshire farmers at 5-15 guineas).
- Member of **the Clique**, which included **Augustus Egg**, **Richard Dadd** and **Henry O'Neil** and rapidly established himself as a genre painter.
- His painting was at **odds with the RA** but his character and incident, sparkling detail and high finish made his work popular and suitable for engraving.
- 1840 travelled abroad and had his first painting exhibited at the RA.
- ARA 1845 and RA 1852 (aged 33).
- He was friends with **Charles Dickens** and centre of the literary life of London.
- In 1851 he visited **Ramsgate** and decided to take a commercial risk investing in *Ramsgate Sands (Life at the Seaside)* and it was a success and sold to

Lloyd then Queen Victoria for £1,000.

- His second panorama, *Derby Day* was a stroke of genius, few paintings have ever earned such universal acclaim.
- **He had a wife with 12 children and a mistress with 7.**
- **He was an artist with a well developed business sense and he remained in the news throughout his life.**
- **Six of his paintings** had to be and his three most important works, *Ramsgate Sands*, *Derby Day*, and *The Railway Station*.
- He was criticized for his **artistic philistinism** by **John Ruskin**, **Whistler** and **Oscar Wilde**, and later **Roger Fry** and he was a **staunch reactionary** criticising the Aesthetic Movement, Oscar Wilde and Impressionism.



William Collins (1788-1847), *Rustic Civility*, 1833, V&A

Key point: poor children being shown at leisure was acceptable if they were civil

Sentimental scenes of children were popular with collectors and the public.

Child Mortality

- The important thing to realise is that **in 1840, 1 in 6 children died before the age of one and one third before five**. In **slums half** of all children died before the age of five. Parents loved their children as much as today and without contraception most women were more or less **permanently pregnant**. This meant **everyone was in mourning**, had been in mourning or had friends in mourning for dead children.
- Surprisingly, if we **remove child mortality** then, despite what you often read, **life expectancy was similar to today**. **Degenerative disease** was **very low** compared to today (e.g. **heart diseases, cancer, dementia, diabetes**,

arthritis). The reason was that everyone had a **lot of exercise and a healthy diet**. People did not die of degenerative diseases **but of infections** that can be cured today.

- The general view was that **children were naturally infidels** and had to be **taught Christian values**. This meant they had to be **rescued from the poor**. Children were treated **very strictly** and subject to **punishments** that historians now class as torture. Children who worked in **factories** were on average **six inches shorter** than those who did not and the average eighteen-year old factory boy was five feet three inches tall.
- One study of the poor in Bolton (1834) found of a total weekly wage of £1 8s 5d over £1 was spent on food, thirty pounds of bread, twenty pounds of potatoes and three pounds of flour. 3s 5d went on rent including coal. Other items included cheese, butter, bacon, meat, sugar, tea, salt, soap, candles and tobacco but all small quantities. Their diet was **deficient in protein, iron and vitamin C**. Note that there were **no green vegetables**, they did not become available until the 1850s.
- As a result the children of the poor were **stunted**, might suffer from vitamin deficiencies such as **rickets** and as a result looked very different from the children of the wealthy. It was not until the twentieth century that children of different social backgrounds began to develop in a similar way.
- In this painting, we see three rustic children **holding a gate open** for a gentleman whose presence is indicated by his **shadow**. Poor children had generally been shown at work, for example in Gainsborough's pictures of children, but here they are **at leisure**. They are also displaying a natural civility. This painting is not ironic, **Collins was a Tory** and **opposed** to the **Reform Bill** and what this picture is saying is that the **poor do not need the vote** as they are **well off**, have **leisure time** and are **naturally subservient** to gentlemen.

William John Thomas Collins (1788-1847)

- William Collins was a **genre painter** whose work was **more highly valued than that of Turner or Constable**.
- He trained at the Royal Academy School and went on to become a popular painter of landscapes and rustic genre scenes.
- He travelled extensively in Britain and abroad, particularly in **Italy**, and these journeys are reflected in the subjects of his pictures.
- He was particularly fond of representing **children**.

- He became an **RA in 1820** (aged 32) and exhibited at the **RA every year from 1807 to 1846 (39 years, 124 pictures)**.
- He married the sister of **Margaret Sarah Carpenter** (1793-1872), a British portrait painter who was very famous in her time but unknown today. She exhibited at the **RA from 1818 to 1866 (48 years)** and was awarded a £100 a year pension by Queen Victoria.
- The eldest of his two sons was **William Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) the novelist** and author of *The Woman in White* (1859) and his other son Charles Allston Collins (1828-1873) the Pre-Raphaelite painter whose *Convent Thoughts* was attacked in *The Times* but defended by Ruskin and who gave up painting in 1857 as it gave him stomach pains (he died of stomach cancer in 1873).



William Holman Hunt (1827–1910), *The Flight of Madeline and Porphyro during the Drunkenness Attending the Revelry (The Eve of St. Agnes)*, 1847-57, Guildhall Art Gallery

There is another version in the Walker Art Gallery

- Begun in February 1848 before the Brotherhood was founded in September. Exhibited at the RA exhibition and admired by Rossetti which led to them becoming close friends and sharing a studio. The **cramped picture space, bright colours, naturalism and detail** prefigured the work of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Key point: literary subjects could be painted in the Pre-Raphaelite style

The Eve of St. Agnes

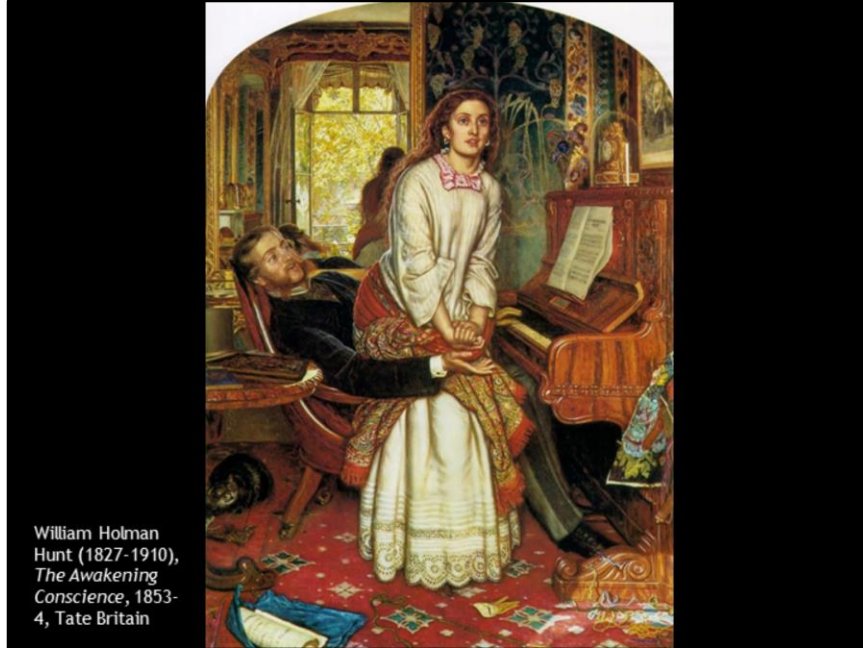
- **Holman Hunt** was a founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with Rossetti and Millais. He was the one that stayed most true to its aims.
- In **John Keats** poem *The Eve of St. Agnes* (1820) a young maiden called

Madeline is in love with a young man called **Porphyro**. It is **January 20th**, the day before the **feast of St. Agnes**, the **patron saint of virgins**. St Agnes was a young Roman girl, martyred in the fourth century for her faith. There was a superstition that a girl could **see her future husband** on St Agnes Eve if she followed a **certain ritual** when going to bed. She would dream of the man and he would prepare a feast for her. Her family are sworn enemies of his family and on the evening her family engages in an alcoholic revelry that can be seen in the background. Porphyro **rides** to the castle and persuades an elderly woman to **hide him** in Madeleine's bedroom. He **watches her** prepare for bed and **fall asleep** and then **creeps out** to prepare a feast. Madeline **wakes** and **sees the man she has been dreaming about** and half asleep invites him to bed. She fully wakes, realizes her mistake and says she cannot hate him for his deception. They both **agree to flee** across the southern moors where Porphyro promises her a home.

- Here we see Holman Hunt has caught the moment when both are downstairs opening the door and trying not to make a noise. I think they are both looking at the dog which is looking at them. He is a stranger so the dog could bark and wake everyone but she lays her hand on his chest to signify he is a friend.
- The painting is interesting as it was **started before the Pre-Raphaelite movement began** (which was September 1848) and yet it has many of the features such as **heightened colour, cleanly delineated detail** and a **medieval subject**.

John Keats

- John Keats (1795–1821, aged 26) was an **English Romantic poet**. He was one of the main figures of the **second generation** of Romantic poets along with **Lord Byron** and **Percy Bysshe Shelley** despite his work having been in publication for only four years before his death.
- Although his poems were **not generally well received** by critics during his life, his **reputation grew** after his death, so that by the end of the 19th century, he had become one of the **most beloved** of all English poets. He had a significant influence on a diverse range of poets and writers. Jorge Luis Borges stated that his first encounter with Keats was the most significant literary experience of his life.
- The poetry of Keats is characterised by **sensual imagery** most notably in the series of odes. Today his poems and letters are some of the most popular and most analysed in English literature.



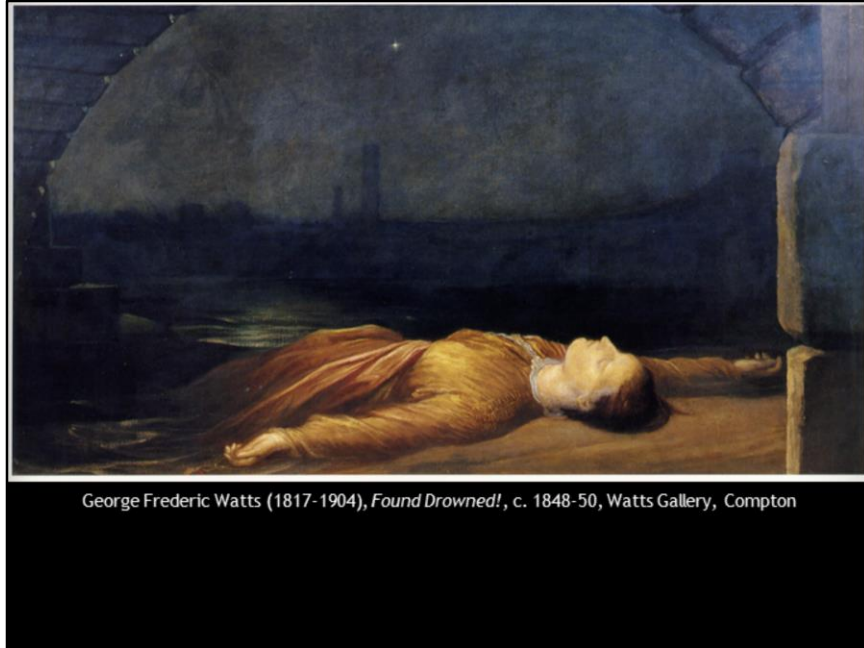
William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853-4, Tate Britain

Key point: a controversial painting about an important social problem from a different angle

The Awakening Conscience

- The inspiration for this painting was **Proverbs**: 'As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart'.
- Some critics misinterpreted this painting, one thought it was a **brother and sister** playing the piano but the real meaning was quickly determined. It is a gentleman with his mistress (she does not wear a wedding ring) in the room he has rented for their meetings. Hunt hired a room at Woodbine Villa, 7 Alpha Place, **St John's Wood** to provide an authentic interior.
- As they play the piano and sign Thomas Moore's *Oft in the Stilly Night* together she has a sudden spiritual revelation. She gazes into the **garden** reflected in the mirror representing **God's work on earth** and **redemption** is possible signified by the **ray of sunlight** in front of her.

- The painting is full of symbolic elements that are intended to be read.
 - The **cat** toying with the broken winged bird symbolizes her plight,
 - The man's **discarded glove** warns that the likely fate of a cast off mistress is prostitution.
 - The **tangled skein** of yarn signifies the complex situation in which she is trapped.
- Ruskin wrote to *The Times* on 25 May 1854, 'the very hem of the **poor girl's dress**, at which the painter has laboured so closely, thread by thread, has story in it, if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street'.
- The model is **Annie Miller** (1835-1925), a barmaid Hunt met when she was **15**. He **fell in love** with her and wanted to **marry her** but only if she **educated herself** when her was away in the **Middle East**. When he was away and contrary to his instructions she **sat for Dante Gabriel Rossetti** and this caused a **rift** between them on Hunt's return. She became involved with 7th **Viscount Ranelagh** (pronounced ran-er-lah) and Hunt broke off their engagement. She was going to sue for **breach of promise** by Ranelagh's cousin Captain Thomas Thomson **fell in love** with her. And they married in 1863. Years later Hunt met her on Richmond Hill 'a buxom matron with a carriage full of children'. She **died aged 90** in **Shoreham-by-Sea**. It is not known whether she became 'gay' (i.e. a prostitute) but one art historian (Jan Marsh) believes it is likely she remained 'pure'.



George Frederic Watts (1817-1904), *Found Drowned!*, c. 1848-50, Watts Gallery, Compton

- It was painted when Watts returned from Italy but was **not exhibited** for 20 years.
- This is one of four social realist pictures that Watts painted between 1848 and 1850.
 - *Under a Dry Arch* c. 1845-50, the most brutal. In London 1 person out of 20 had no food or shelter.
 - *The Irish Famine* c. 1845-50
 - *The Seamstress* c. 1845-50
- ‘**Found Drowned**’ is a **legal term** used in a coroner’s inquest and the heading used in newspapers to report bodies that had been found in the Thames who were typically women. This woman looks as if she has just been pulled from the Thames as her feet are still in the water.
- There is a chain and heart shaped locket in her hand suggesting the cause of her suicide. The setting is under **Waterloo Bridge**, well known for illegal suicide and the drama is increased by her outstretched pose, illuminated face and the star which suggest she is a **martyr** to the injustice of the way in which women were treated in society.

- Her plain clothes suggest poverty and in the distance we see the heavily industrialised south bank near **Hungerford Bridge** contrasting the wealth of capitalism with the despair brought about her poverty.
- This was one fate that befell a woman that had fallen on hard times. The other was prostitution which was the other scandal in Victorian London.
- Henry Mayhew (1812-1887), *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851, 4th volume 1861 on prostitutes, thieves and beggars), detailed interviews first published in the *Morning Chronicle*. A significant part of the population had no fixed abode, outsiders and migrants teemed through the streets. All goods were transported by cart, there were thousands of street traders called costermongers. He describes now obsolete trades such as gathering snails for food, collecting dog dung for tanneries (pure finders) and sewer-hunters who such for metal. See <https://archive.org/details/londonlabourlond04mayh>
- Mayhew estimates the number of prostitutes as 50,000 in 1793 when the population was 1 million. The police estimate 8,000 and the Bishop of Exeter 80,000. 50,000 in 1 million is 1 in 10 of all women (including children). 105 women were born to every 100 men, which is 50,000 per million excess women who cannot earn a living.

Key point: Watts painted four social realist paintings between 1848 and 1850



Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), *The Sempstress*, 1846

Key point: This painting defined a new style of art.

The Sempstress

- This painting is **the fountain head** of a whole tradition of social realist painting in Victorian England.
- This painting is based on a poem of the same name and the two had a profound effect.
- You can see it is 2:30 in the morning and the sky is streaked with moonlight. The lit windows opposite indicate that the same thing is happening all over London. The seamstress's eyes are swollen and inflamed as she must do close work by the light of a candle. The morsel of food on the plate indicates she has to eat while she is working and on the mantelpiece you can see medicine bottles. One has a label saying 'The Mixture' and it is supplied by Middlesex Hospital so she is unwell.
- This is one of the first paintings in which art is used to campaign for the

poor. Richard Redgrave did not come from a wealthy family and his sister had been forced to leave home and find a job as a governess. She became ill when in service and had to be nursed by his family until she died. It was painted in 1843, the year that Punch appeared and in the Christmas issues there was a poem that struck a nerve. By Thomas Hood and called *The Song of the Shirt*. It began:

*With fingers weary and worn
With eyelids heavy and red
A Woman sat, in unwomanly rags
Plying her needle and thread –
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the “Song of the Shirt”*

- The verse that inspired Redgrave. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1844 (this is the 1846 version). The poem continues that she is sewing a shirt but also her own shroud.
- Redgrave was an Academician, art director of the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A), received the cross of the Legion of Honour and was surveyor of crown pictures for 24 years and produced a 34 volume catalogue. He declined a knighthood in 1869.
- It is impossible today to **understand the impact** it had. Thackeray described it as *‘the most startling lyric in our language’*. It was set to music, the subject of a play and of many sermons. Sempstresses often went blind and if a single stitch was wrong their wages were docked. Articles appeared saying British citizens were being subjected to a **form of slavery** and a German living in England called **Friedrich Engels** showed a study he had written of the **horrors** of the situation to a **friend** living in **Paris** called **Karl Marx**.
- Redgrave had created a **new category of painting** but it is not based on visiting the poor but the interior is borrowed from a 17th-century Dutch work and the **swollen eyes** looking **heavenward** is typical of many Baroque images of **swooning saints**. Redgrave realised that unless he made the subject **respectable** it would not be accepted. He **succeeded** brilliantly.



George Frederic Watts, *Irish Famine*, 1850, Watts Gallery, Compton

- We have seen *Found Drowned*. This is another of the four social realist paintings of 1848-50. They were only shown privately.
- The Irish **Great Famine** was from 1846 to 1850 and resulted in the **deaths of 1 million** and the emigration of a further million, about 20-25% of the population. The cause was potato blight but Ireland was still exporting **30-50 shiploads of food** a day to Britain, more than enough to feed the population. Some historians therefore describe it as **genocide** and it eventually led to Irish independence in the next century (1921, law 1922, David Lloyd George and Michael Collins).
- Watts **falling spirits** and **ill health** fed into a series of social realist canvases depicting problems of Victorian society at the time.
- He fell in **love** with **Virginia Pattle** but she married Viscount Eastnor and Watts travelled to Ireland with the poet Aubrey de Vere.
- Virginia was one of the eight Pattle sisters (Adeline (eldest), Eliza, Julia, Sara, Maria, Louisa, Virginia and Sophia). Julia Pattle (the 'ugly duckling') married

Charles Cameron and took up photographer in her later life. Maria married John Jackson and one of their children, born in India, was Julia Prinsep Duckworth Stephen (née Jackson), a renowned beauty, niece of Julia Margaret Cameron and mother of Virginia Woolf. Her parents had both been married previously so she grew up with brothers and sisters from three marriages. Julia had first married Herbert Duckworth and Sir Leslie Stephen had first married Harriet Marian (Minny) Thackeray, a daughter of William Thackeray (novelist who wrote *Vanity Fair*).



Photography completely changed artists and everyone saw the world.

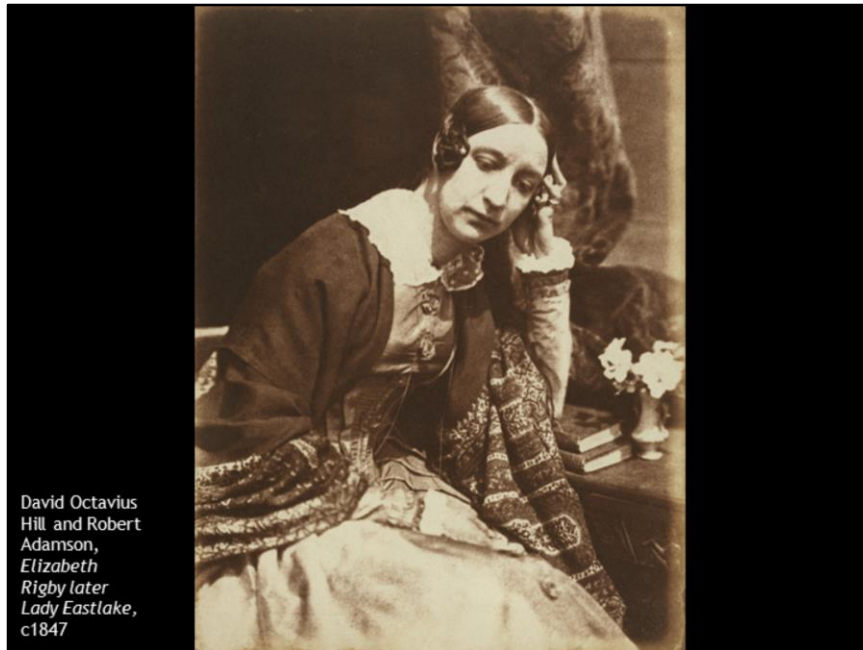


William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877), Latticed window at Lacock Abbey, 1835
See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Henry_Fox_Talbot

- It should be noted that **Aristotle and Euclid** mentioned a type of **camera obscura** but it did not record images. The first recorded image was taken by **Thomas Wedgwood in 1800** but it could not be fixed and was very faint. The first surviving **permanent image** was taken by **Nicéphore Niépce in 1826 or 1827** but the image took **several days** to record and could only be seen by holding the metal plate at an angle.
- **William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877)** was the only son of William Davenport Talbot of Lacock Abbey and Lady Elizabeth Fox Strangways. He was educated at Harrow School and **Trinity College, Cambridge** and was awarded a **prize in classics** in 1820. He communicated with the Royal Society on **mathematical subjects** and **optical researches** and began **experimenting** with what became photography in **1834**. When Louis Daguerre exhibited his pictures in 1839 Talbot showed his three and a half year old pictures at the Royal Institution in 1839. He submitted his process (photogenic drawing) to the Royal Society in February, six months before Daguerre revealed the details of his process. In **1841** he announced the discovery

of the **calotype or talbotype process** which used paper coated with silver iodide.

- Talbot has often been **criticised** for patenting his work and charging a **license fee** of up to £300 a year as it was thought this held back the development of photography in Britain. The alternative **daguerreotype** process was free in the rest of the world although also patented and **charged for in Britain**. Talbot's negative/positive process eventually **became the standard** in the nineteenth and twentieth century and by **1860 the use of daguerreotypes was rare**. Early calotypes were **fuzzy** and daguerreotypes were sharp but in 1851, the year of Daguerre's death) the **wet collodion process** enabled glass to be used as the support and the **level of detail** became as great as in **daguerreotypes**. Wet plates were inconvenient and in the **1880s** the wet plates were replaced by the **dry gelatin coated plates**. In **1884 George Eastman** invented **dry gel on film** and in **1888** he launched the **Kodak camera** with the slogan '**You press the button, we do the rest**'. The first widely used **colour photography** process was not discovered until **1907** although coloured images could be projected using three black-and-white photographs and coloured filters. **Kodachrome film** and therefore simple colour photography was not introduced until **1935**.



David Octavius
Hill and Robert
Adamson,
*Elizabeth
Rigby later
Lady Eastlake*,
c1847

David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, 'Elizabeth Rigby later Lady Eastlake', c1847
See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Octavius_Hill
See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Eastlake

- Key point: with care and careful posing good portrait photographs could be taken in the **late 1840s**.

David Octavius Hill

- Photography quickly expanded in use to include portraits and landscapes. This portrait was taken by David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson of Elizabeth Rigby, **later Lady Eastlake**, in c1847.

Lady Eastlake

Elizabeth Rigby was a British author, art critic and art historian who married **Sir Charles Lock Eastlake** in **1849**, Keeper of the **National Gallery** from 1843-47 (Note his nephew Charles Locke Eastlake was keeper of the National Gallery from 1878-1898). He became **President of the Royal Academy** and was **knighted in 1850** and **President of the Photographic Society in 1853** and first Director of the National Gallery in 1855. She was the first woman to write regularly for the *Quarterly Review*. When her

widowed mother moved to Edinburgh she moved with her and her literary career meant she mixed in the intellectual circles that included David Octavius Hill. He produced a series of 20 calotypes assisted by Robert Adamson and in 1857 she published an **essay** on the relationship between **art and photography**. She married when she was 40 and toured Europe with her husband. She **wrote *Five Great Painters*** (1883) about Leonardo, Michelangelo, Titian, Raphael and Durer. She is now seen as a **pioneer of female journalism**.

[Click] Played by **Emma Thompson** in the film *Effie Gray*. She was sympathetic to Effie Grey's plight when married to John Ruskin. Euphemia 'Effie' Gray is played by **Dakota Fanning** (born 1994, 20 years old and been in 55 films, learned to read at 2, Screen Actors Guild Award aged 7, aged 13 she was earning \$4m a year). They are standing in front of **John Everett Millais's *The Woodman's Daughter*** (1851) and **Charles Allston Collins's (1828-1873) *Convent Thoughts*** (1851). 'The Woodman's Daughter' is a poem by Coventry Patmore about a country girl Maud who gets pregnant by the squire's son and drowns the baby and herself. Collins was Wilkie Collins brother The passion flower symbolises the crucifixion of Christ. It is a novice nun and the missal shows the Annunciation and the Crucifixion. It was painted in Thomas Combe garden and he bought the painting. The tide of opinion regarding the Pre-Raphaelites was turned by John Ruskin's letter to the Times which was most positive about this painting. He never became a PRB, he fell in love with Maria Rossetti but she rejected him and in the late 1850s he abandoned painting for writing. He married Charles Dickens's daughter Kate in 1860.



David Octavius Hill, *The First General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1866*

- The first work of art painted with the help of photographic images.
- Hill was a **Scottish** painter and **arts activist** and he formed a studio with **Robert Adamson** an engineer and photographer. An early collaboration between **art and science** with a business objective. They became very early innovators and in **1843** **photographed** the **450 ministers** who founded the Free Church of Scotland (the Disruption Assembly) and then produced a painting of them all 4' 8" high and over **12' long** (took 23 years to complete in 1866).
- Photography was changing the way events were recorded, the way artists worked and the way we see the world.



Philip Henry Delamotte, *Crystal Palace South Transept & South Tower from Water Temple, 1854*

- This is a photograph taken by Delamotte after the building had been reassembled at Sydenham in 1854.
- The original building in Hyde Park **cost £150,000** and entry was £3 for men £2 for women later a shilling a person. **Six million** visited (a third of the population) and it made a **profit of £186,000** (£17.7m today) which funded the building of what are now the South Kensington museums. The rebuild in Sydenham was 50% larger and with the park cost **£1,300,000** (£50.5m today), £800,000 over the £500,000 budget. It never repaid the debt and only ever made a small profit.
- 1,848 feet long, 465 feet wide, 135 feet tall, 900,000 square feet glass and a floor area of 772,784 square feet.
- It had the first **public toilets** for which it charged one penny ('spending a penny').
- The park and grounds cost much more than rebuilding the Palace.
- **Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins** made 33 life-sized models of the newly discovered and named **dinosaurs** by Richard Owen.
- There were **12,000** jets of water, the highest fountains were **250 feet** and a full display took **7 million gallons** of water. The first **water towers collapsed** under the

weight of water and **Isambard Kingdom Brunel** was called in to design two new towers 284 feet tall and 46 feet wide.



Roger Fenton (1819-1869), Cantinière tends the wounded soldier in the Crimean War, 1854

Roger Fenton (1819-1869), Cantinière tends the wounded soldier in the Crimean War, 1854

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Fenton

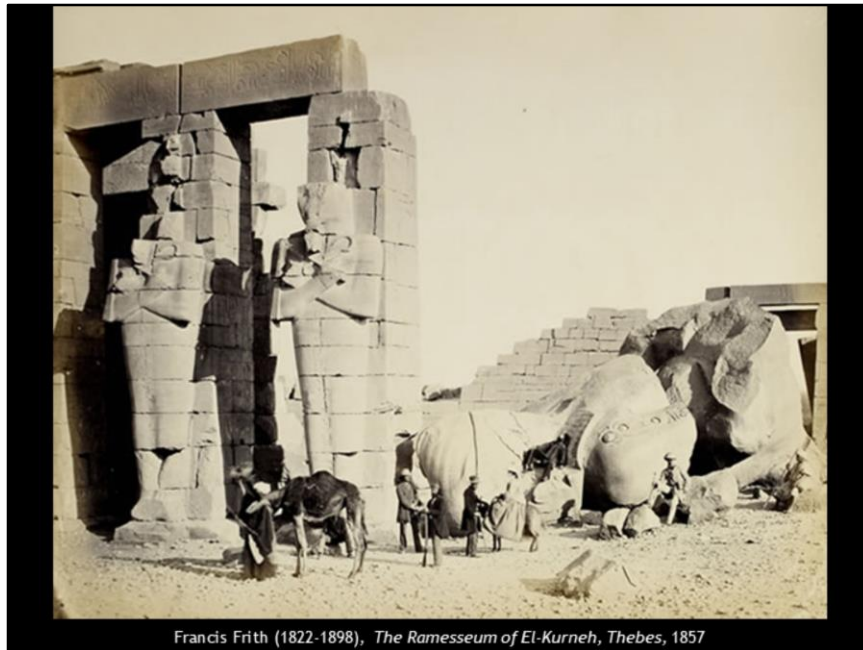
See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimean_War

Key point: it was even possible to take war photographs although it is believed many were staged

Crimean War Photographs

- The Crimean War was the **first major war to be photographed**.
- This photograph shows a **Cantinière** tending a wounded soldier. A Cantinière or Vivandière is a French name for women attached to military regiments as sutlers (someone who sells provisions to soldiers) or canteen keepers. Their actual historic function was selling wine to the troops and working in canteens. Before the French Revolution the provision of food, drink and other items was allocated to eight privileged soldiers called Vivandières. They were allowed to marry and as the soldiers were busy with their other duties their wives took on the role of selling wine. This was encouraged to lessen the chance of desertion. The role of the Vivandière has not been closely studied by historians.

- **Roger Fenton (1819-1869)** was mentioned previously and he was a pioneering British photographer and one of the first war photographers. His father was a wealthy banker and Member of Parliament and was the fourth of 17 children by two wives. After his degree at Oxford he studied law at University College, London but became interested in painting. He went to Paris and may have studied in the studio of Paul Delaroche. He visited the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park and was impressed by the photography exhibits. He **founded the Photographic Society**, later the Royal Photographic Society, in 1853.
- In autumn **1854** the Crimean War grabbed the public's attention and Fenton was encouraged by his friend **Prince Albert** to go to the Crimean to record what was happening. He stayed for three months and it is possible the photographs were intended as **propaganda** to counter criticism of the war in the press.
- The photographs were converted to **woodblocks** and printed in the *Illustrated London News*. Because of the long exposures photographs **had to be posed** and he **avoided** photographs of **dead**, injured and **mutilated** soldiers.
- Despite high temperatures, breaking several ribs, suffering from cholera and depression from the carnage he managed to take **350 usable negatives** which were displayed in London on his return. However, it was not a commercial success. Undaunted he travelled widely across Britain recording the landscape. He later came into **conflict with other photographers** as he was **wealthy** and did not need to **make money** and he believed no photographer should **soil himself** with the **sin of exploiting his talent commercially**.
- In **1862** at the International Exhibition in London **photography** was **placed with machinery** and tools rather than with the fine arts as it had been five years earlier at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition. For **Fenton this was proof photography has sold out** and its **status was diminished**. In 1863, he **sold his equipment** and returned to law as a **barrister**. He died six years later aged only 50.



Francis Frith (1822-1898), *The Ramesseum of El-Kurneh, Thebes*, 1857

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Frith

Key point: the best known travel picture photographer was Francis Frith whose photographs can still be bought

Francis Frith

- Perhaps the **best known photographer** of travel pictures is Francis Frith. He photographed the Middle East as well as many towns in the United Kingdom. He was a founding member of the **Liverpool Photographic Society** in 1853 and he **dedicated himself** entirely to **photography** in 1855.
- He noted that tourists were the main consumers of views of Italy but armchair travellers wanted scenes of further afield. His ambitious goal was to **create a true record, 'far beyond anything that is in the power of the most accomplished artist to transfer to his canvas.'**
- He first went to the **Nile Valley in 1856** and later extended his trip to include Palestine and Syria. He kept a journal in which he complained about the difficulty of finding a good viewpoint for taking photographs. A problem known to

photographers today. Yet he is praised for his ability to find a novel viewpoint. When he had finished his travels he opened the firm of Francis Frith & Co in Reigate and became the world's first specialist photographic publisher. He then embarked on his grand project to **photograph every town and village** in the United Kingdom. He initially took them himself and later hired people and he set up the first postcard company and within a few years over **2,000 shops** in the United Kingdom were selling his postcards. His **family firm** continued in business until **1970** and Bill Jay, a photography historian identified the archive as being nationally important and he persuaded Rothmans, the tobacco company to purchase it. It was **re-launched in 1976** and from 1977 run as an independent business that sells over **125,000 photographs of 7,000 cities**, towns and villages.

- This photograph was one of the enormous **20x16 inch glass plates** that Frith took to Egypt along with the huge camera and chemicals. The Ramesseum is a memorial temple to Pharaoh Ramesses II (Ramesses the Great) in Thebes in the Upper Nile near modern day Luxor. Only the torso of the statue of the Pharaoh remains and it weighs over 1,000 tons. It was alleged to have been transported 170 miles over land. It is the largest free standing statue in the world.



Oscar Gustave Rejlander (1813–1875), *Two Ways of Life*, 1857

Oscar Gustave Rejlander (1813–1875), *Two Ways of Life*, 1857

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Gustave_Rejlander

Key point: photographers combined multiple photographs to create artistic pictures in the academic tradition

Oscar Gustave Rejlander

A **pioneering Victorian art photographer** and an expert in **photomontage**. His collaboration with **Charles Darwin** on ***The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*** has assured him a position in the history of behavioural science and psychiatry.

He may have **invented combination printing** which enabled **two or more photographs** to be combined. One of the earliest is this called ***Two Ways of Life*** created in 1857 and first exhibited at the **Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition**. It is a made from **32 negatives** and took **six weeks to produce**. It is intended to create the same sort of **serious moral point as a history painting**. On the **left** was see the **immoral life** and a **young man** being **enticed** towards it. On the **right** the **serious, religious, moral life** that is attracting the **other young man**. This type of photography

became **popular**.



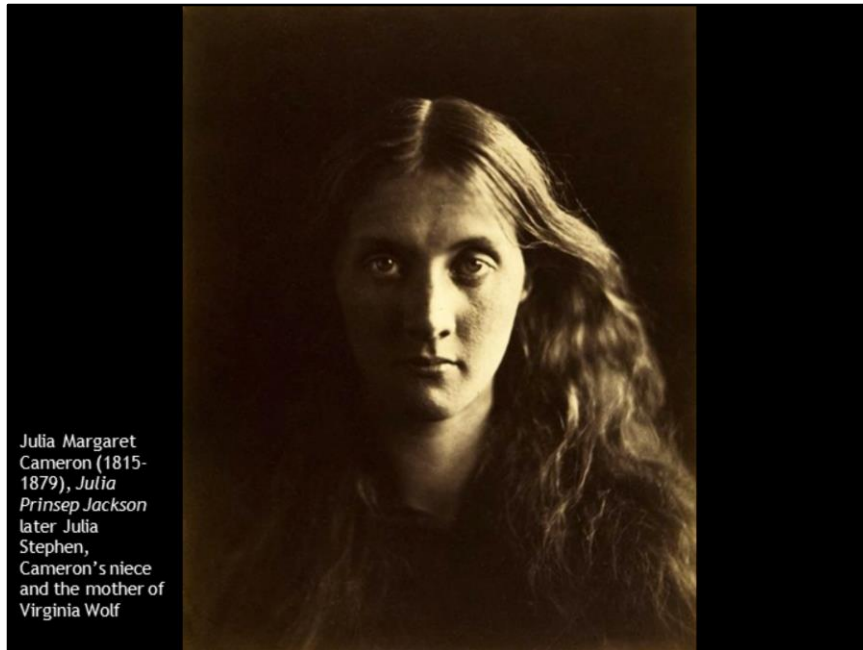
Julia Margaret Cameron, *Sadness*, Ellen Terry, 1864

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Terry

Ellen Terry

- Cameron also took **mood photographs**. Although this is of the actress Ellen Terry it is entitled ***Sadness***.
- **Dame Ellen Terry** (1847–1928) was an English **stage actress** who became the leading **Shakespearean actress** in Britain. She was born into a family of actors, Terry began acting as a child in Shakespeare plays and continued as a teen, in London and on tour.
- At **16** she **married** the much-older artist **George Frederic Watts**, but they **separated within a year**. She was soon acting again but began a relationship with the architect **Edward William Godwin** and retired from the stage for six years. She returned to acting in 1874 and was immediately acclaimed for her portrayal of roles in Shakespeare and other classics.
- In 1878 she joined Henry Irving's company as his leading lady, and for more than the next two decades she was considered the **leading Shakespearean and comic actress in Britain**. Two of her most famous roles were Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*. She and Irving also toured with

great success in America and Britain.



Julia Margaret
Cameron (1815-
1879), *Julia
Prinsep Jackson*
later Julia
Stephen,
Cameron's niece
and the mother of
Virginia Woolf

Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879), ***Julia Prinsep Jackson*** (1846-1895) later **Julia Stephen, Cameron's niece** and the **mother of Virginia Woolf**.

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Woolf

Key point: Cameron was well connected in society and took photographs of all the famous people

- Julia Stephen wrote Julia Cameron's biography
- Virginia Woolf and Roger Fry edited a collection of Cameron's photographs published in 1926.
- Clementina Maude, Viscountess Hawarden, née Clementina Elphinstone Fleeming (1 June 1822 – 19 January 1865), commonly known as **Lady Clementina Hawarden**, was a noted **portrait photographer** of the Victorian Era, producing over **800 photographs** mostly of her adolescent daughters.



The changing role of women was one of the major advances of the nineteenth century although major advances were not made until the twentieth century. Women were a common subject for men's paintings. Women artists faced many problems which explains why there were so few.

- In his 1869 *The Subjection Of Women*, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) articulated what was probably the first liberal theory of oppression. According to this account, **oppression is a denial of equal liberty**, which, for Mill, is tantamount to a denial of the opportunity to develop one's rational capacities for thought and action. Mill's central concern in *The Subjection or Women* was to establish that "***the legal subordination of one sex to the other is wrong in itself, and ...one of the chief hindrances to human improvement.***"
- He pointed out in earlier times the majority of men were slaves.
- Establishing this required, Mill thought, undermining the "almost universal opinion" that the subordination Of women to men in his society was natural and therefore just to undermine this opinion, he addressed the question of **why women** in his society appeared to submit **voluntarily** to their **oppression**.
- His answer had three parts,
 - First, Mill showed how women were made to be inferior, or allegedly

inferior, to men by being coerced and by not having equal opportunities to develop their talents. The mechanisms that were used to **manufacture and entrench women's inferiority** included both **social roles**, such as motherhood, and legal institutions, such as **marriage and property**.

- Second, he showed how these real or **perceived inferiorities** were used to **justify women's inequalities**; women were seen as **not fit for the public sphere** because of their **fragile and flighty natures** and **inferior mental faculties**.
 - Finally, he showed how, unlike other oppressed groups, women were made, **not just to obey** their oppressors, **but to want to obey them**.
-
- Women over 30 got the vote in 1918 and aged 21 not until 1928. In America universal suffrage was in 1920, in France though not until 1944 under Nazi occupation. New Zealand was first in 1893.
 - Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792.
 - In 1915 Virginia Woolf predicted it would take six generations of women to come into their own



John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Mrs Coventry Patmore*, 1851, Fitzwilliam Museum

The Angel in the House

- Mr **Coventry Patmore**, the **poet**, wrote ***The Angel in the House*** (1854-1862, about 200 pages in 4 parts) over eight years. **Millais** painted **Emily Augusta Patmore** three years before the poem appeared and **Julia Margaret Cameron** did a fictional portrait entitled '*The Angel in the House*' in 1871 by which time **the title of the poem had become a catch phrase**.
- The poem is about Coventry Kersey Dighton Patmore's (1823-1896) **courtship** of his wife Emily who he believed was **the perfect woman**. The term 'Angel in the House' came to be used as a reference to women who embodied the **Victorian feminine ideal**. A **wife and mother** who was **selflessly devoted** to her children and **submissive to her husband**.
- **Virginia Woolf** satirized the angel in the house, writing that '***She [the perfect wife] was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed daily. If there was a chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it ...***

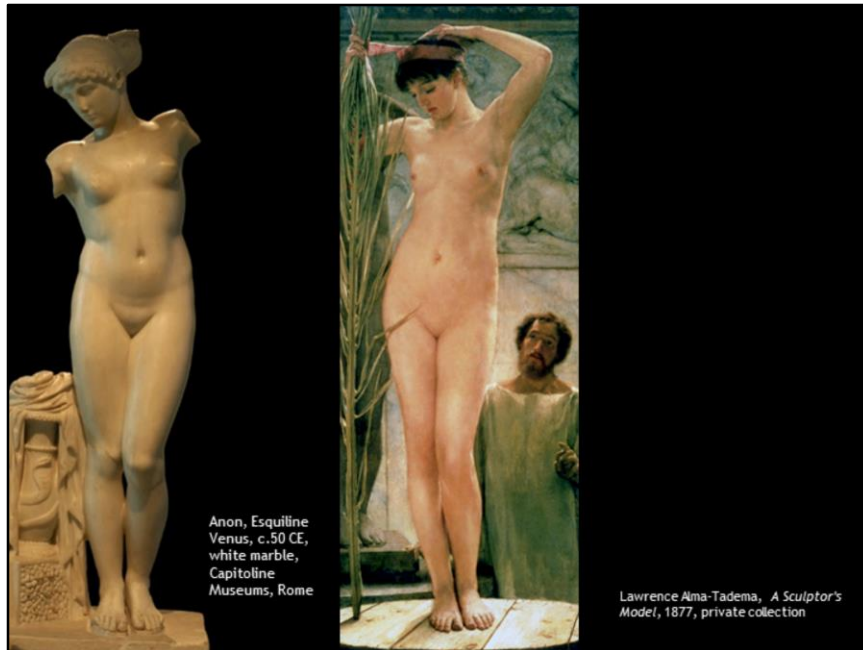
Above all, she was pure. (Woolf, 1966) She added that she *'bothered me and wasted my time and so tormented me that at last I killed her'*.

- Nel Noddings (b. 1929), American feminist and philosopher views her as *'infantile, weak and mindless'* (1989).
- As long ago as **1891**, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935), American feminist and novelist, wrote a short essay entitled ***The Extinct Angel*** in which she described the angel in the house as being as **dead as the dodo**. Gilman believed the domestic environment **oppressed women** through the patriarchal beliefs upheld by society. She embraced the theory of 'reform Darwinism' and argued that **Darwin's theories** of evolution presented **only the male** as the given in the process of human evolution, thus **overlooking the origins of the female brain** in society that **rationality chose the best suited mate** that they could find. Gilman argued that **male aggressiveness** and **maternal roles for women** were **artificial** and **no longer necessary** for survival in **post-prehistoric times**. She wrote, ***'There is no female mind. The brain is not an organ of sex. Might as well speak of a female liver.'*** from *Women and Economics* (Boston, MA: Small, Maynard & Co., 1898).

Excerpts

*Man must be pleased; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure;*

- Daughter to her mother:
*Mother, it's such a weary strain
The way he has of treating me
As if 'twas something fine to be
A woman; and appearing not
To notice any faults I've got!*



Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Sculptor's Model*, 1877, private collection

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Alma-Tadema

- This is a nude from the 1870s when it was still shocking but much more common at the RA exhibition.

The Woman's Gaze

- **Men were allowed to look at the female nude** but only if the painting or sculpture was **classical or biblical** and therefore **ennobling**. Although we might think anything goes, any sign of impurity or sensuality was strictly forbidden. However, almost any reference to the classical made the nude acceptable. Men were concerned about the affect on their wives and particularly their daughters.
- This painting was commissioned by John Collier's father as an attempt to recreate the posture of the **Esquiline Venus** that had been excavated in **1874** from the Esquiline Hill and seen by the artist on a visit to Rome the following year. (The statue is hidden behind the palm frond.) However, it went too far for many people. When Alma Tadema's *A Sculptor's Model* was exhibited in Liverpool the **Bishop of Carlisle** wrote '**My mind has been considerably exercised this season by the**

exhibition of Alma-Tadema's nude Venus....for a living artist to exhibit a life-size, life-like, almost photographic representation of a beautiful naked woman strikes my inartistic mind as somewhat, if not very, mischievous.'

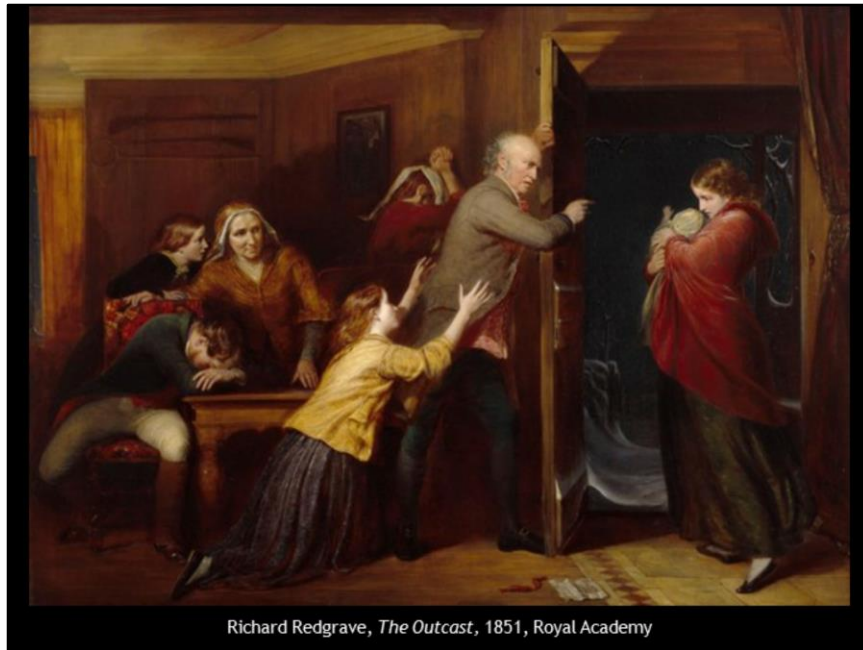
- The **woman's view**: in **Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*** (1853), Lucy Snowe visits an art gallery in Brussels but her male companion thinks a painting of a black semi-nude **Cleopatra** not suitable. Lucy's view is "***she had no business to lounge away the day on a sofa...strong enough to do the work of two plain cooks***". For men she was the epitome of sensuality. Lucy was made to sit in a corner looking at improving modest women. She saw women looking at Cleopatra but was told they were married women which was permitted.

Lawrence Alma-Tadema

- Born in Dronrijp, the Netherlands, and trained at the Royal Academy of Antwerp, Belgium, he settled in England in 1870 and spent the rest of his life there. A classical-subject painter, he became famous for his depictions of the luxury and decadence of the Roman Empire, with languorous figures set in fabulous marbled interiors or against a backdrop of dazzling blue Mediterranean Sea and sky. Though admired during his lifetime for his draftsmanship and depictions of Classical antiquity, his work fell into disrepute after his death, and only since the 1960s has it been re-evaluated for its importance within nineteenth-century English art.

Waist-to-Hip

- The proportions of the *Esquiline Venus* were possibly modelled on a real person as the head to height is 1:7 rather than the more elegant 1:8. Kenneth Clerk describes it as '*a stocky little peasant such as might be found still in any Mediterranean village*'.
- We know the left arm was raised and the left hand was on her head as a fragment of her left little finger remains on the back of the head.
- Opinions are divided but one school of thought is that this was a sculpture of **Cleopatra**.
- Ideal 70%, painting 75%, statue 75% (72% as the backside is large)



Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), *The Outcast*, 1851, Royal Academy
 Diploma work given by Redgrave to the RA
 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Redgrave

Key point: the 'fallen women' was based on a strict Victorian code

The Outcast

- We have already seen *The Sempstress* (1846, sketch 1844, based on Thomas Hood, *The Song of the Shirt*, 1843), the image not of a fallen woman but the lengths a woman would go to retain her purity in the face of all odds.
- This is ***The Outcast*** by Richard Redgrave. The **head of the household** forces his **daughter** out of the family home with her **illegitimate baby**. In the foreground on the floor is what may be an **incriminating letter**, possibly naming the father of the child. The scene is made more pathetic by the snowy wastes outside the door and the innocent child's hand raised in echo of the hand of the pleading sister.
- On the floor is a purse and an incriminating letter. On the wall is a **biblical scene** of **Abraham** casting out **Hagar** and her **illegitimate child Ishmael** into Wilderness of Beersheba (Genesis 21:10). God shows Hagar a well and save Ishmael's life and his

descendants become the Arabic nations.

- She is a fallen woman and so **no forgiveness** is possible. She has brought **shame** on the household and so must fend for herself. This means becoming a sempstress or **working in a factory**. If these are not possible the only options left are **prostitution or suicide**.
- Originally **Redgrave** produced works of **historical** and literary subjects but from the **1840's** he painted themes which exposed the **cruelty of Victorian society, especially to women**, with works such as *The Governess* (1844, Victoria & Albert Museum) and *The Sempstress* (1846, private collection). In 1850 in the *Art Journal* he wrote that '**my best efforts in art have aimed at calling attention to the trials and struggles of the poor and oppressed.**'

The Sempstress

- Thomas Hood (1799-1845) a British humourist and poet, son of a well-known playwright Tom Hood. He was not a political radical and loved playing practical jokes on his family (wife and the story of the plaice with red spots) and he loved puns.
- Based on a real case of Mrs Biddell a seamstress who pawned the clothes she had been given to sew to feed her children and thus incurred a debt she could not repay. She was sent to a workhouse and her fate is unknown. The poem was published anonymously in *Punch* Christmas edition 1843 and quickly became a phenomenon.



Johann Zoffany (1733-1810), *The Portraits of the Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-72, Royal Collection

George Romney (1734-1802), *Mary Moser*, 1770-71, National Portrait Gallery

Angelica **Kauffman** (1741-**1807**), *self-portrait*, 1770-1775, National Portrait gallery

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Zoffany

Problem of being a woman artist: could not attend the RA School or become Academicians

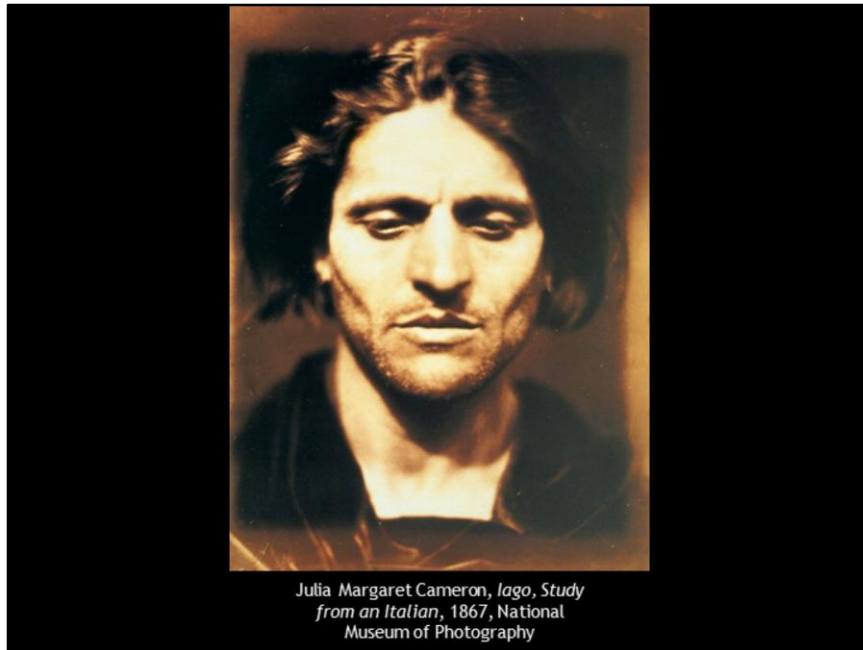
This is the **Zoffany** painting showing the portraits of the Academicians of the Royal Academy. It was painted in **1771**, **three years** after the Academy was founded and it shows the two female founders of the Academy as portraits **on the wall**. One is **Mary Moser** (1744-1819) was one of the most celebrated artists of 18th-century Britain and the other is **Angelica Kauffman** (1741-1807) who was a Swiss-born Austrian Neoclassical painter with a successful career in London and Rome.

- The **RA excluded women** until **1860** even though two of the founding members were women.
- **Slade** took women from its founding in 1871.

- **Laura Herford's** (1831-1870) in **1860** was accepted for the RA School based on a painting using her initial 'L. Herford'. This was at the suggestion of the **President** Sir Charles Eastlake. **Thirteen** other women were accepted over the next few years. Women were only allowed to draw from casts and the **draped model**. Women were excluded from the life class although there was some provision made in 1893. In **1863** the Council decided its **constitution** did not allow women painters (in the Instrument of Foundation, Academicians ... shall all of them be ... Men of fair moral Characters'). In **1903** women were allowed to study living nudes in separate classes.
- **The Society of Female Artists** was founded in **1856**, it became the Society of Lady Artists in 1872 and the Society of Women Artists in 1899.
- 1870s and 80s women **petitioned RA** in vain to attend life classes.
- There were private art schools 1880s and 90s like French atelier
- **Rich women** attended classes in **Paris**, Munich, Dusseldorf and Antwerp
- **Lady Butler** was **nominated** three times to the RA 1879-81 and turned down.
- **Annie Laura Swynnerton** and **Laura Knight** (1877-1970, née Johnson, attended Nottingham School of Art 1890-4, aged 13) were made **ARA** in the **1920s** and Laura knight a RA in **1936**.

Note

- **Kauffman** on left, **Mary Moser (1744-1819)** on right. Moser's father **George Moser** putting on the noose. **Richard Cosway** (1742-1821, RA1770), Moser's lover bottom right with cane (canvas was extended to include him). Cosway was separated from his wife Maria (an Italian-English artist who had an affair with Thomas Jefferson, American Founding Father, principal author of the Declaration of Independence 1776 and third President of the US) and he and Mary Moser had an open affair that lasted 6 months during which they travelled around Europe.



Julia Margaret Cameron, *Iago, Study from an Italian*, 1867, National Museum of Photography
Pronounced ee-ah-go

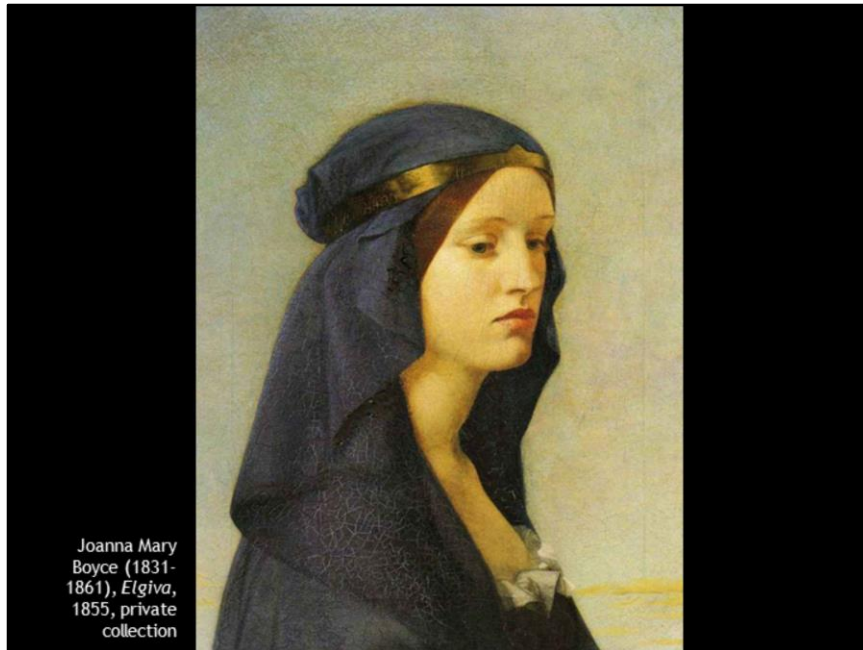
One of the few examples of a woman artist representing individual male beauty
(not a portrait or a scene that includes men, such as Elizabeth Butler)
Also see Eleanor Fortesque-Brickdale *The Idylls of the King* with a single medieval knight
Also Florence Caxton, illustrator, 'The Dance Domestic-The Gyration Archaic Post-Prandial'

Identified by Colin Ford as **Angelo Colarossi**, studio assistant to the sculptor **Alfred Gilbert** whose son, also called Angelo, modelled for **Anteros** (god of requited love, i.e. love returned, the mirror image of the lover's feelings, son of Ares and Aphrodite, brother Eros, plumed butterfly wings, symbolises the selfless philanthropic love of Salisbury for the poor) on the **Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain** in **Piccadilly Circus** at the age of 15. Very recent research suggest it is his uncle **Alessandro di Marco** who modelled earlier in Rome for Leighton. His original trade was organ grinder. This is thought to be the **only paid model** Cameron ever used. The National Museum of

Photography has the only known print.

Not used:

Julia Emily Gordon (1810-1896), *Palace at Nanteuil*, date not known, Tate Britain
Tate Britain: 'Julia Emily Gordon was an industrious, ambitious and talented amateur artist, like her **mother Lady Gordon** (née Julia Bennet). Julia Gordon is chiefly remembered as the daughter of Sir James Willoughby Gordon, a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars and, when a child, as one of several claimants to the honour of sitting on the Duke of Wellington's knee at Brussels on the eve of the battle of Waterloo.'



Problem of being a woman artist: not a suitable occupation, childbirth – early death and the time required

Joanna Mary Boyce (1831-1861), *Elgiva*, 1855, private collection

Joanna Mary Boyce also known by her married name Joanna Mary Wells, English painter of portraits, genre pictures and occasional landscapes. **Sister** of pre-Raphaelite painter **George Price Boyce**. **Died aged 29** during childbirth, described in her obituary as a '**genius**'. *Elgiva* was her first painting to be exhibited at the RA. Ford Madox Brown described it as '*the best head in the room*'. *Elgiva* was an **Anglo-Saxon queen** and compared to Rossetti female head and shoulders it is **stark, quiet and serene**. **John Ruskin** wrote about *Elgiva* in his 1855 'Academy Notes':

"The expression in this head is so subtle, and so tenderly wrought, that at first the picture might easily be passed as hard or cold; but it could only so be passed, as Elgiva herself might have been sometimes seen, –by a stranger– without penetration of her sorrow. As we watch the face for a little time, the slight arch of the lip seems to begin to quiver, and the eyes fill with ineffable sadness and a look of despair. The dignity of all the treatment---- the beautiful imagination of faint but pure color, place this picture, to my mind, among those of the very highest power and promise."



Emily Mary Osborn or Osborne (1828-1925), *Nameless and Friendless*, 1857
See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily_Mary_Osborn

Problem of being a woman artist: selling their work, Emily Osborn was successful but was never made an Academician

Emily Mary Osborn

- Osborn began showing her work at the **Royal Academy** when she was **just 17** and continued to do so over a period of **40 years**. This is her **most famous work** which has been called '*The most ingenious of Victorian widow pictures.*' A **recently bereaved woman** is attempting to make a living as an artist by offering a picture to a dealer while **two 'swells'** on the left stare at her distracted from the **bare legged ballet dancer** they have been previously **ogling**. She nervously pulls on a loop of string while the dealer disdainfully judges her work.
- It has been suggested that this painting relates to **Mary Brunton's novel *Self-Control*** published in 1810 but **republished in 1850**. This describes the **struggles** of a self-motivated **female artist** to **sell her pictures** in order to help save her father from **financial ruin**.

Society of Female Artists

- The **difficulties** experienced by women in exhibiting and selling their works led to the **formation** of the **Society of Female Artists** in **1857**, the year *Nameless and Friendless* was first exhibited at the Royal Academy. Emily Mary Osborn was a member of this group and one of the artists associated with Barbara Bodichon's Langham Place circle and campaign for women's rights.
- Osborn was a member of the Society and a member of Barbara Bodichon's Langham Place circle that campaigned for women's rights. Despite the problems faced by women artists Osborn went on to develop a successful career.
- The *Art Journal* on Emily Mary Osborn, 'Nameless and Friendless' 1857:
A poor girl has painted a picture, which she offers for sale to a dealer, who, from the speaking expression of his features, is disposed to depreciate the work. It is a wet, dismal day, and she has walked far to dispose of it; and now awaits in trembling the decision of a man who is to become rich by the labours of others.'
- Osborn **never married** and died aged 97 in 1925.

Reviews of Exhibitions of the Society of Female Artists:

***The Illustrated London News*, 6 Jun 1857:**

Strength of will and power of creation belonging rather to the other sex, we do not of course look for the more daring efforts in an exhibition of female artists: but observation, taste, or the art of selection, and various other qualities adapted to the arts, are to be found in this Oxford-Street display.

***The Art Journal*, 1 May 1858:**

...that which we see at the Egyptian Hall is the result of assiduous self-tuition, for we have no school for the instruction of ladies in painting from the living model. Labouring under such disadvantages as the female student does, we are not disappointed to see here so many drawings of flowers, fruit, and still-life objects – we are only surprised into exultation to see so much excellence in the higher departments of art...



Elizabeth Butler (1846-1933, née Thompson), *Scotland Forever!*, 1881

Problem of being a woman artist: had to travel, manage her husband's affairs and raise six children

Elizabeth Butler

- Wikipedia: **Elizabeth Southerden Thompson, Lady Butler** (1846–1933) was a British painter, one of the **few female painters to achieve fame for history paintings**, especially **military** battle scenes, at the end of that tradition. She was married to **Lieutenant General Sir William Butler**, and is still often referred to as Lady Butler. Some of her most famous military scenes come from the Napoleonic Wars, but she covered most major 19th-century wars and painted several works showing the First World War.
- She was born in Switzerland and received her art training in **Italy** and then **South Kensington**, London and she entered the **Female School of Art**. She initially concentrated on religious subjects and later switched to war paintings.
- She was very popular as she painted scenes of battle at a time when Victorian pride and nationalism for the growing British Empire was at its height. She said, '*I never painted for the glory of war, but to portray its pathos and heroism*'.



Laura Knight (1877-1970), *Self-Portrait with Nude*, 1913, National Portrait Gallery

Problem of being a woman artist: cannot learn to draw and paint figures

- **Returning** to the **Royal Academy** and looking at the first woman to become an **Academician** since its foundation.
- **Laura Knight** (born Johnson) was an artist who worked in the figurative, realist tradition and was an English Impressionist. She was created a Dame in 1929 (aged 52) and was elected a Royal Academician in 1936, the first since 1868. Her large retrospective at the RA in 1965 was the first for a woman.
- Her father died shortly after she was born and her mother struggled financially but managed to send her France to study in a Paris atelier. She returned and her mother managed to enrol her at the Nottingham School of Art aged 13. She started teaching art when she was 15 and her mother fell ill and won a scholarship and gold medal from the South Kensington Museum (which became the V&A in 1899). She met Harold Knight when she was 17 and they married in 1903 when she was 26.
- She became a central figure in the **Newlyn** artists colony with Alfred Munnings.
- In 1913 she painted a first for a woman, Self Portrait with Nude showing her

painting the artist **Ella Naper**. Using mirrors she painted herself and the model as seen from the point of view of someone entering the studio. As an art student she she was not permitted to paint nude models, only casts, which she deeply resented. It was first shown in Newlyn and was well received but rejected by the RA. The *Daily Telegraph* art critic called it '**vulgar**' and suggested it '*might quite appropriately have stayed in the artist's studio.*' She continued to exhibit it throughout her career and it continued to receive criticism but it was purchased by the NPG after her death and **is now considered both a key work in the story of female self-portraiture and as symbolic of wider female emancipation.**

- She painted the world of theatre and ballet and was a war artist during WWII. She was also interested in marginal groups, such as gypsies and circus performers.
- A woman artist painting a nude was very difficult during the nineteenth century as few art schools allowed women students to attend life classes.
- One of the first was the Slade
- **Edward Poynter, first principal at the Slade, in his inaugural address in October 1871:**

'There is unfortunately a difficulty which has always stood in the way of female students acquiring that thorough knowledge of the figure which is essential to the production of work of a high class; and that is, of course, that they are debarred from the same complete study of the model that is open to the male students...But I have always been anxious to institute a class where the half-draped model might be studied, to give those ladies who are desirous of obtaining sound instruction in drawing the figure, an opportunity of gaining the necessary knowledge...It is my desire that in all the classes, except of course those for the study of the nude model, the male and female students should work together.'

Next Term

- ▶ 7th January 2015
- ▶ The major art movements during the Victorian period
 - ▶ Pre-Raphaelites Brotherhood
 - ▶ Arts & Crafts Movement
 - ▶ Aesthetic Movement and Decadent Art
 - ▶ English Impressionism and the Fin de siècle
- ▶ More discussion?

Next Year

- ▶ September - December 2015 and January-March 2016
- ▶ 300 years of British Art as 10 topics over 20 classes
- ▶ British Art & Society: from Tudor Propaganda to Georgian Satire
 - ▶ Henry VIII and Holbein
 - ▶ Elizabethan portraiture
 - ▶ Charles I as patron and the Commonwealth Sale
 - ▶ Lely and the Windsor Beauties
 - ▶ Kneller and the English Baroque
 - ▶ Hogarth and satire
 - ▶ Gainsborough and landscape
 - ▶ Wright of Derby and the sublime
 - ▶ Reynolds and portraiture