INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
Recasting the flâneur: The triumph of Christina Rossetti

Tannehill, Arlene, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1994
RECASTING THE FLÂNEUR:
THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Arlene Tannehill, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1994

Dissertation Committee:

David G. Riede
Jeredith Merrin
Marlene Longenecker

Approved by

Adviser
Department of English
Dedication

To the memory of my father, Paul M. Trueger
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express sincere appreciation to Dr. David G. Riede for introducing me to the Pre-Raphaelites, and for his insight and encouragement throughout my graduate career. Thanks go to other members of my advisory committee, Drs. Jeredith Merrin and Marlene Longenecker, for their suggestions and comments. The editorial and technical assistance of Dr. Grace A. Epstein and Natalie Clark is gratefully acknowledged. To my children, Clare, Soren, and Tess, I thank you for your patience and fortitude.
VITA

September 6, 1954 . . . . . . . . . Born - Newark, New Jersey

1986 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . B.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1985-1992 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Teaching Assistant The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio

1988 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . M.A., The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio

1989 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Research Assistant The Ohio State University Mansfield, Ohio

1992-1993 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Lecturer, Department of English The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY
Major Field: English

Studies in 19th Century British Literature.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**DEDICATION** ............................................. ii  
**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** ................................. iii  
**VITA** ........................................................ iv  
**INTRODUCTION** ............................................. 1  

**CHAPTER**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>BEGINNINGS: THE QUESTION OF VOCATION</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>DECIPHERING THE GAZE: THE TROPE OF INFLUENCE</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>ENABLING THE FEMALE GAZE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FLÂNEUSIAN PROTOTYPE</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>RULES ADMIT OF AND ARE PROVED BY EXCEPTIONS: CHOICE IN THE MARKETPLACE</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSION** ................................................ 187  
**BIBLIOGRAPHY** ........................................... 191
INTRODUCTION

RECASTING THE FLÂNEUR: THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

The difficulties of a nineteenth-century female poet, writing from within a culture and literary tradition that, as Margaret Homans notes, was "unequivocally defined as masculine," are well-known.¹ Girls were seen as "fulfilling their function only as they existed in relationship to others," particularly the male members of their families.² The experience of educator Frances Buss, cited by her biographer in Deborah Gorham's The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal, was paradigmatic for girls born during the early Victorian period:

"Like so many other sisters, this girl would watch her brothers going off to school or college for the studies in which she—being a girl—could have no share. But, like many a good sister before, and since, she would contentedly put aside her own dreams or desires, doing her best to help her brothers."³

Any hopes an early-Victorian girl might have had for a career were superseded by family economic circumstances and, more importantly, by middle-class notions of "femininity," elaborately developed by men like John Ruskin as embracing such qualities as "self-sacrifice, wifely subjection, and submission."⁴
Christina Rossetti’s early unpublished novella, *Maude*, is a tale of a struggling, Anglo-Catholic, middle-class Victorian girl attempting to pursue, at least part-time, the occupation of poet. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar describe a scene which illustrates the anger an aspiring female poet might feel at the limitations imposed upon her by a trivial female audience, itself confined by roles predetermined for it by men like Ruskin and Coventry Patmore, author of the popular nineteenth-century poem, *The Angel of the House*. Maude willingly agrees to sing at this gathering (thereby conforming to the demands of propriety) and "felt condoled for all the contrarieties [too much cake] of the day" by the melodiousness of Caroline’s song. But the entrance of a female fan disturbs her comfort. She is saved from the Misses Mowbray and Savage’s gushing requests for a recitation only by the upcoming "supper," and goes home "dissatisfied with her circumstances, her friends and herself" (*M* 49). What disturbs her is not so much the necessary limitations of drawing-room accomplishments, but that her poetry should be classified as such an accomplishment. Within the world of Victorian domesticity, Maude has no serious audience or context in which to write.

Most critics briefly summarize the relationship between Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti’s work in a few sentences: Joan Rees states that they possess "a strong,
common sense of irredeemable moments"; Jerome McGann describes both of their "imaginations of desire" as having "no social or worlded equivalents." But although there have been several fine book-length studies published recently that focus on Dante and Christina Rossetti as individuals, none has closely examined the relationship between their early poetry and prose. I would argue that a more detailed comparison of their early work yields a clearer sense of what Janet Wolff labels "the early experience of modernity" because, as brother and sister, they reflect this experience from the opposite poles of the public and private spheres. Christina’s role as her brother’s first model also provided her with an ideal opportunity symbolically to look into the public sphere, a role closed to most nineteenth-century women. Indeed, I believe that the power of Christina Rossetti’s poetry rests on her capacity to invert the flâneurian, artist’s perspective which dominates her brother’s early work. The flâneur, in Dante Gabriel and Charles Baudelaire’s work, often uncomfortably straddles a boundary between the artist as genius and the artist as an isolated observer looking for buyers, although both Dante Gabriel and Baudelaire are careful to differentiate between artists and "mere" flâneurs. The authority of the flâneur; i.e., of both the artist as genius and the artist as salesman, however, focuses around his detached gaze and his ability
imaginatively to improvise upon what he sees. Christina's narrators, on the contrary, generally empathize with rather than distantly regard their objects of vision, as well as engaging such objects in dialogue rather than solipsistically manipulating them as sources of inspiration.

In this study, I attempt to answer the question of what one can learn about the struggles that a gifted, nineteenth-century female poet would have faced by comparing them with those of a talented male sibling in a society where "a rigid separation of sex roles was [thought] essential for social life, democracy, and economic welfare." The main difference between Christina Rossetti and her poet-persona Maude was the presence in her life of her brothers, particularly Dante Gabriel Rossetti. On December 7, 1893, about one year before her death, Christina wrote in a separate printing of the title poem from her 1862 volume *Goblin Market* that "here I [would] like to acknowledge the general indebtedness of my first and second volumes to his [Dante's] suggestive wit and revising hand." Comparing the two Rossettis is particularly interesting because in spite of their uncharacteristically egalitarian upbringing, which encouraged all the children to sketch and write, it was only Dante Rossetti who was protected from the family's economic struggles and encouraged to focus his attention solely on art. The only way Christina could protect herself from what Dante Gabriel
called "the bread and cheese question" was through developing, like Maude, "the reputation of an invalid" (M 47). She was therefore able to save herself from the fate which overtook her more scholarly-oriented sister Maria: the justifiably dreaded family female vocation of governess.

The connection between sickness and poetic productivity for women is supported by one of Ford Madox Brown’s diary entries describing Dante Gabriel’s beloved, Elizabeth Siddall, in 1855. He calls her "thinner and more deathlike and more beautiful and more ragged than ever; a real artist, a woman without parallel for many a long year." Madox Brown’s semi-colon implies that two prerequisites for women desiring to become "real artists" are 1) being beautiful and 2) being sick. Christina, however, used her freedom from the pressures of being successful, which plagued her brother, and the pressures of being a beloved object, like Elizabeth, to recast the male-dominated canon she inherited as well as to develop a distinct poetic self.

For Christina Rossetti, as for her mother and sister, the question of self was deeply tied to her religious convictions. Whereas Dante Gabriel attempted to substitute "moments of illumination," usually with a female beloved, for "divine irruptions" into human time like the birth of Christ, Christina defines self in relation to the Old Testament. In her 1892 prose commentary on the Apocalypse, The Face of the Deep, she states: "man’s
inherent feeling of personality seems in some sort to attest and correspond to this revelation . . . 'I Am That I Am' . . . I who am myself cannot but be myself." In this way, Christina recasts Carlyle's romantic theory of personality, which celebrated "the innate greatness of the individual character independent of his social environment," within an orthodox framework that linked self-expression to divine authority. In the words of John Henry Newman, poetry became "'the utterance of the inward emotion . . . seeking a purity and truth which this world will not give.'" Because of her orthodoxy, Christina tenaciously retains the notion of a unified self throughout her career; however, due to both socio-historical conditions and her own somewhat anomalous position as a female poet, the fragile construction of that self remains dependent upon an all-powerful male God.

Rapid conditions of social change made the writing of poetry a complicated project for both men and women. Florence Boos astutely notes that "all poetic evidence testifies to . . . the intense fear of time; and perhaps Victorian science, historicism, and religious doubt were results as well as causes of this anxiety." The only solution Victorian poets generally found to this problem was an emphasis on "the quality and value of. . . [the] 'soul'" (PDR 91). Nevertheless, such heart-felt expressions of the soul also had to be commercially successful. Hannah Arendt
explores this phenomenon in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* when she identifies an "infatuation with one's own fate" as actually a defense against "chance . . . the final arbiter over the whole of life." Through such "infatuation," artists and intellectuals were able to separate themselves from the "philistines"—the commercial audience they had at least sometimes to embrace in order to achieve success.\(^{21}\) It is intriguing, as I stated earlier, that whereas both Baudelaire and Dante Gabriel distinguish between their artist-heroes and flâneurian amateurs, twentieth-century critics like Walter Benjamin and Griselda Pollock blur the two figures together, evidently because of the flâneur and the artist's mutual need for an audience, purchasers, and someone or something to look at. (*VD* 70-71).\(^{22}\) Nineteenth-century writers and critics mostly embraced a theory figuring art as transcendent—above crass commercial considerations.\(^{23}\)

Such circumstances help explain Dante Gabriel's much-noted contempt for his patrons, as well as his traditional solution to this problem: the theme of love through a relationship with an idealized female "other." Throughout his early career (1848-56), however, Dante Gabriel's personae increasingly resemble flâneurs in the freedom they develop to stroll through the city, "observing but never interacting, consuming the sights through a controlling but rarely acknowledged gaze" (*VD* 67). But a
female poet's solution had to be somewhat different, since women did not have the right to look into the public sphere. Dorothy Mermin sets up the problem as follows: "A man's poem which contains a female self-projection shows two distinctly different figures, poet and projection; in a woman's poem on the same model, the two would blur into one." While Dante Gabriel's problem is that of an other who is silent, absent or simply unreliable—a projection of his own imagination—Christina's is that of a self culturally defined as nonexistent or, in the words of courtesy book author Sarah Stickney Ellis, "'strictly speaking, relative.'" Nevertheless, I would argue that from 1848-62, Christina gradually gains the capacity to look into and even momentarily to enter the public sphere, symbolized by the marketplace in her most famous poem, Goblin Market. She thus becomes what Wolff states is impossible—an "invisible flâneuse"—and gives us an account "of the very different nature of those women who did appear in the public arena" ("IF" 45).

My own focus, in comparing the two Rossettis, is on their different perspectives towards the female figure, as an other or as a possible self. Dante Gabriel and Christina expand upon this theme in their early works through the ability of their personae to look or refuse to look either into the public sphere (Christina) or at a variety of female objects (Dante). In one of Dante Gabriel's early,
bouts-rimés sonnets, "One of Time's Riddles," he imaginatively improvises upon his distanced view of a proud, calm woman. As is usual in his early poems, the sonnet ends on a religious note, illustrating David Riede's point that Dante Gabriel's vision, at this point in his career, depends upon "the certainties of dogma and the simplicity of an earlier era" (DGR 19):

In her deep bosom the pride settled down--
That pride which is a brackish thing like salt;
And the life in her pulses seemed to halt
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
She lives and moves and is a mystery.
That which she hath been the thought cannot touch
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
And at the least it knows of her thus much:--
She bides her season with a solemn faith.
(W:263,1-3,9-10,13-14)

As is characteristic of his early poems, Dante Gabriel employs metaphors that focus on the tension between what Pollock calls "home, the inside domain of known and constrained personality," and the outside world, "where there is liberty to look without being watched or even recognized in the act of looking" (VD 71). This is illustrated in "One of Time's Riddles" by the speaker's appearing to look into the private sphere at a confined female object. In his later poems, when this abstracted female figure reappears, she is purged of her religious connotations, as in his last poem, "The Question," dictated to Hall Caine four days before his death: "Time's visible silence, frontleted / With Psyche wings, with eagle plumes
arched o' er." But in Christina's early poems, the central issue is her personae's ability to look into the public sphere at all. In one of her early narrative poems, "Repining," published in the second issue of the Pre-Raphaelite magazine, The Germ, a heroine who sits and spins alone (much like Tennyson's lady of Shalott) goes forth to contemplate the world accompanied by a young man, "[b]eaming with serious charities" (3:18,38). The only result, however, is her immediate retreat from the horrors of war, fire, shipwreck, and avalanche that the young man shows her:

She knelt down in her agony:
"Oh Lord, it is enough;" said she:
"My heart's prayer putteth me to shame;
"Let me return to whence I came.
"Thou, Who for love's sake didst reprove,
"Forgive me for the sake of love." (3:24,247-52)

In another poem, "The Dead City," written, like "Repining," in 1847, the heroine traverses a beautiful garden only to come upon a feast surrounded by people who have been turned to stone. As in "Repining," the heroine's only response is to kneel and pray. In his early poems, Dante Gabriel resolves the uncertainties of his vision through traditional Christian imagery; Christina resolves her uncertainties through refusing to look.

Two later poems further develop this comparison: Dante Gabriel's "The Card Dealer" (first published in 1852) and Christina's "The Queen of Hearts" (1863). Dante Gabriel bases "The Card Dealer" on what was becoming one of his
favorite motifs: the picture of a beautiful woman dealing out cards, staring into space. All of the images in the poem—auditory, visual, and tactile—combine, together with the poem’s expanded six-line ballad stanzas, to form a single incantatory vision that stresses the obsessive quality of the speaker’s perceptions. But the tension between the private and public realms present in "One of Time’s Riddles" is mitigated by both speaker and audience viewing this woman only as a public exhibit in an art gallery. We therefore regard this figure from the greater distance more characteristic of a classic flâneur:

Could you not drink her gaze like wine?  
Yet, though its splendour swoon  
Into the silence languidly  
As a tune into a tune,  
Those eyes unravel the coiled night  
And know the stars at noon.  

Thou seest the card that falls--she knows  
The card that followeth:  
Her game in thy tongue is called Life,  
As ebbs thy daily breath:  
When she shall speak, thou’lt learn her tongue  
And know she calls it Death.  
(W:174-75,1-6,49-54)

By the end of the poem, through Dante Gabriel’s use of the second person plural, the point of view of the audience has been merged with that of the speaker, illustrating Richard Stein’s comment that the "inescapable presence of an audience is the essential ingredient in the proliferation of writing about nonliterary arts." In Christina’s "The Queen of Hearts," however, the autonomy of her speaker, her object, and her audience are preserved through her speaker’s
uncertainty concerning Flora's (clearly a classic female object’s) "secret." The paraphernalia of a gambling resort in Dante Gabriel's poem has been domesticized into the apparently innocent pasttime of two presumably middle-class women. And although the speaker's vision cannot penetrate Flora's "secret," her determination to open up a dialogue with Flora succeeds, as she tricks her into replying, "'There should be one card more'" (1:132,15). The speaker's poetic authority, in direct contrast to Dante Gabriel's personae, rests on: 1) the real-life, unglamorized setting of the poem; 2) the speaker's focus on dialogue rather than vision; 3) the speaker's uncertainty, which leaves the audience free to make up its own mind concerning the meaning of the poem.

I've scanned you with a scrutinizing gaze,  
Resolved to fathom these your secret ways:  
But, sift them as I will,  
Your ways are secret still.

I cut and shuffle; shuffle, cut, again;  
But all my cutting, shuffling, proves in vain:  
Vain hope, vain forethought too;  
That Queen still falls to you. (1:132,5-12)

Such "secrecy" seems to parody the series of rhetorical questions framing "The Card Dealer" that the observant male persona so decisively answers. In "The Queen of Hearts," the speaker's final judgment is that she cannot make up her mind; her opponent's extraordinary "imitative dint that seemed my own" could be the result of "skill, or craft, or luck . . . / [or] Natural affinity" (1:133,21,26,28). The
narrator's uncertainty is also stressed by shortening the pentameter couplet that begins each quatrain to a trimeter couplet at the end. In each stanza, as Constance Hassett notes, the pentameter couplet asks a question which the trimeter couplet attempts to answer, but cannot. Techniques like these recall what Jeredith Merrin points to in her excellent study of Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop: the beginning of a recasting of "the Romantic poet's resounding certainties" with a "more minutely observant objectivity" as well as a subtly subversive "ambiguity." Christina's "flâneuse" in this poem can be defined through her power to look back at a conventional poetic object like Flora and speculate, rather than define what she sees.

It is interesting that the same sort of "subversions" Merrin notices in Moore and Bishop occur almost a century earlier in Christina Rossetti's work. "The Queen of Hearts" is a paradigmatic example of a woman writer, according to Patricia Meyer Spacks, "'mining'" her "'limited sphere for a wealth of concrete details that enable[s] . . . [her] to master experience.'" Of course, the male Pre-Raphaelite poets also stressed pinpoint accuracy of observation, but in "The Card Dealer," all of Dante Rossetti's careful details emphasize, in the end, his almost solipsistic vision. As Carol Christ states of Victorian poets in general, "'conceiving of the universe as a mass of particulars . . . led logically to seeing experience as wholly subjective.'"
In Christina’s poem, however, her persona’s uncertainty replaces Dante Gabriel’s male speaker’s greater confidence in labelling what he sees. Christina’s ambiguity allows both her poetic speaker and her object their own autonomy: they are equal partners in a rather comic perceptual game which neither can win.

I cheated once; I made a private notch
In Heart-Queen’s back, and kept a lynx-eyed watch;
Yet such another back
Deceived me in the pack. (1:133,17-20)

Interestingly enough, Dante Gabriel objected to this poem because of its "taint" of the "Barret-Browning style . . . a falsetto muscularity." He seems to have missed the point that what his sister accomplished was a recasting of the male romantic heritage that he so successfully—albeit more traditionally—exploited.

My argument, in this study, concerning the relevance of the Rossettis’ consanguinity to a study of their early poetry and prose, is informed by both new historicist and feminist methodologies. New historicism insists that such influences should be "'examined as far as possible from within their own discourse or code or cultural system.'" The alternative model of McGann also stresses "other persons or groups involved in the initial process of production (e.g., collaborators; editors or amanuenses; etc.)" I also employ some of Mary Poovey’s feminist insights into the relationship between ideology and style. She writes that "'style,' understood in the largest sense of this term,
represents ideology as it has been internalized and articulated by the individual." In addition, she defines ideology as something that is "never static," but reflects the "contradictions that exist between the ideal and eternal life the imagination projects and the diminished reality that the earth’s limited resources and human mortality allow . . . . contradictions that appear in literary texts both reproduce these tensions and represent their authors’ attempts to resolve them imaginatively." Such tensions are mirrored in Christina’s work through her increasing ability, as evident in "The Queen of Hearts," to look back at and/or speak to her poetic objects, as well as to engage her audience in a symbolic dialogue through the uncertainty of her observations. This stance is opposed to that of Dante Gabriel’s personae, whose power, like that of the conventional flâneur, rests on their ability imaginatively to improvise and define what they see.

I begin this study by comparing Christina’s early 1850s tale Maude with two tales that Dante Gabriel wrote during the same time period: "Hand and Soul" and the unfinished "St. Agnes of Intercession." All three of these tales focus around vocational issues as a consequence of having artists and/or poets as protagonists. But whereas Dante Gabriel’s two tales are fantasies of at least partial success, Maude is a fantasy of failure, although Christina’s heroine similarly grapples with the problem of finding a suitable
audience for her poetry. In chapter two, I compare Christina and Dante Gabriel's revisions of their male and female romantic heritages in the poetry they wrote before 1851. Whereas Dante Gabriel focuses on the female as an object of his increasingly appropriative vision, Christina concentrates on ways of granting the same conventional poetic object autonomy and speech. In one of her unpublished poems ("A Year Afterwards"), Christina directly recasts imagery from two of Dante Gabriel's most famous early poems, "The Blessed Damozel" and "On Mary's Portrait, Which I Painted Six Years Ago," by undercutting Dante Gabriel's visionary romantic certainties with doubt.

In chapter three, I examine Christina's developing poetic project during a period when Dante Gabriel wrote little poetry (1851-1860). She, however, begins to define herself in opposition to the languishing, female romantic self that dominates her poetry before 1851 and speaks only from a vague boundary-line between life and death. Although they mostly remained unpublished in her lifetime, in the best of these poems Christina uses the trope of female influence to criticize the point of view of her male protagonists. My final chapter discusses Christina's most expanded development of her flâneusian posture in her most famous poem, the 1859 Goblin Market. She achieves this through her use of two female personae who gain in poetic authority through their ability to look and act within the
marketplace. Such a posture seems conceptualized in direct opposition to that of a flâneur, who can be identified mainly by his distance from what he sees. In Goblin Market, Christina recasts the trope of female influence as a force through which sisters can enter the marketplace and save each other. I argue that the sisters' hard-won capacity to look and act in the marketplace transforms them into at least prototypical flâneuses. In works like Goblin Market, ironically through two heroines, dialogue, and the story-telling that ends the poem, Christina Rossetti achieves the clearest expression of the self defined so eloquently at the beginning of The Face of the Deep: "I may loathe myself or be amazed at myself, but I cannot unself myself for ever and ever" (FD 47).

Approximately four hundred pages after this declaration, Christina deliberately expands the range of her definition by conflating creative self-expression and religious aspiration:

> We are conscious of feelings inexpressible and as yet insatiable; He stirs up such feelings. . . . He works upon us by what we can and by what we cannot utter. . . . words and thoughts . . . painting, sculpture, music, all are sources capable of swelling that store. (FD 432)

Along with Dante Gabriel and other male Pre-Raphaelites, Christina accepted the Victorian theory of the transcendent nature of art. For Christina, however, as William Michael Rossetti notes, "spiritual responsibilities" were paramount: "[t]he narrow path was the only one for her, and a lion in
the same path made no difference." Paradoxically, her strict orthodoxy, while perhaps limiting her range, allowed her to define herself as a rather unusual entity—a female poet—and therefore escape, to some extent, the crippling relativity imposed on most other Victorian women.

Due to unavoidable limitations of time and space, I do not discuss many excellent poems by Christina Rossetti, particularly from among her devotional works, since my focus is on comparing her work with that of Dante Gabriel. I also end my study with a discussion of Goblin Market, rather than attempting to analyze Christina and Dante Gabriel's famous sonnet sequences, Monna Innamorata and The House of Life. My purpose here is to focus on poetry and prose that illustrate how gender as well as consanguinity influenced the Rossettis' early development as poets. In their later work, as several critics have remarked, they tend to have less in common.

1890s critics such as Edmund Gosse mostly view the siblings' relationship as entirely positive, with Christina benefiting from her "'association with men so learned and eager, so daring in experiment, so well-equipped in scholarship'" and Dante Gabriel, "scarcey recognized by himself," being influenced by "the beauty of Christina's life and her religious system" (CRC 25). Yet the price of such mutual admiration may also be high: William Michael Rossetti rather critically described his sister's life as
one of "isolated devoteeism," while McGann notes that Dante Gabriel's "empirical testing" of his theory concerning the transcendence of art led only to "a field of endless wandering" ("BT" 358-59). Through examining Dante Gabriel and Christina's efforts at recasting two of the most popular tropes of their age—the flâneur as a strolling artist figure and the female as object—I hope to gain some insight into how their early work was shaped by their difference in gender.
Notes


3 Quoted by Gorham, *The Victorian Girl*, 142.


George Landow, "'Life touching lips with immortality': Rossetti's Typological Structures," *Studies in Romanticism* 17 (Summer 1978) 258-59. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as "'LTL.'"


Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 141.

has an interesting discussion of the relationship between the
flâneur or "man of letters" (he uses these terms
interchangeably) and the prostitute.

23 Jerome J. McGann, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the
340-342. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as "BT."

24 Dorothy Mermin, "The Damsel, the Knight, and the
Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as "DK."

25 Quoted by Hickok, *Representations of Women*, 3.

26 Oswald Doughty and John R. Wahl, eds., *The Letters of
Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as "DW."

27 Richard L. Stein, *The Ritual of Interpretation: The
Fine Arts as Literature in Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pater*

28 Constance W. Hassett, "Christina Rossetti and the
Poetry of Reticence," *Philological Quarterly* 65.1 (1986):
509. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as "CR."

29 Jeredith Merrin, *An Enabling Humility: Marianne
Moore, Elizabeth Bishop, and the Uses of Tradition* (New
Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990) 89,97.

30 Quoted by Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the
Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary
Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: U of
31 Quoted by Riede, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 267.


34 Poovey, The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer, xiii.–xv.


CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS: THE QUESTION OF VOCATION

It is obvious from even a cursory glance at William Michael’s copious documentation on the founding of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood that this was an exciting time for all the members of the Rossetti family, particularly William Michael and Christina. In spite of their small income, limited as it was to William Michael’s salary at the Inland Revenue office and what his mother and Maria could scrape together from teaching, William Michael’s memories of this time make it seem like an idyll:

We were really like brothers, continually together and confiding to one another all experiences . . . . Those were the great days of youth; and each man of the company, even if he did not project great things of his own revelled in poetry or sunned himself in art.¹

Holman Hunt, impressed by Dante Gabriel’s sister Christina, described her as "‘exactly the pure and docile-hearted damsel that her brother portrayed God’s Virgin pre-elect to be" in his first oil painting, The Girlhood of Mary Virgin. But in spite of Hunt’s admiration for Christina as a model, when Dante Gabriel nominated her for membership in the P.R.B., both Hunt and John Millais, the most talented and
experienced painters of Rossetti's circle, objected.\textsuperscript{2} Dante Gabriel explained,

"When I proposed that my sister should join, I never meant that she should attend the meetings, to which I know it would be impossible to persuade her . . . . I merely intended that she should entrust her productions to my reading; but [I] must give up that idea, as I find she objects to this also, under the impression that it would seem like display."\textsuperscript{3}

Clearly Hunt and Millais, if not Dante Gabriel, perceived Christina as closer to a perfect model than a serious poet. As Glennis Stephenson remarks in her excellent article, "Letitia Landon and the Victorian Improvisatrice," "the common tendency to conflate the writer with the work was charged with peculiar authority when the writer was female."\textsuperscript{4} As an unpaid model, Christina fulfilled a socially acceptable and useful role; a poet's vocation was far more ambivalent. It is not surprising that in her early prose tale, \textit{Maude}, composed from 1849-50, Christina seems to satirize the typical languishing image of a female poet popular throughout nineteenth-century literature. Her device of two female heroines allowed her to criticize her poet-persona and to construct a new sort of heroine who by the end of the tale has been transformed into an editor if not a poet. Christina achieves this goal through her practical heroine Agnes' embrace of reality rather than fantasy; dialogue as opposed to female "improvisation" (which demanded an audience); and the words of God the father recast as her own. Whereas in the prose tales Dante
Gabriel wrote during this period, "Hand and Soul" and "St. Agnes of Intercession," his heroes straddle a boundary between the artist as genius and the artist as an aspiring amateur who needs an audience and/or buyers, Christina's heroines, like Christina herself, were more concerned with treading carefully within the domestic boundaries they had to respect in order to write.

It is intriguing, considering the biographical circumstances, that in Maude, composed during the heyday of the P.R.B., male characters are only vaguely present. Although Maude dies from injuries sustained by her cab's mysterious "overturning," ironically when she is on her way to assist at her cousin's wedding, her death appears somehow connected with her lack of a serious audience for her poetry, such as the one to which Christina had limited access through Dante Gabriel. Christina underscores this vocational question by Agnes' careful placement of Maude's combination of "Common-Place Book, Album, Scrap-Book . . . [and] Diary" beneath her head after her death, transforming her into one of Mermin's isolated figures of art (M 30), ("DK" 68). In this context, the absence of male relatives in Maude seems a deliberate prefiguring by Christina of what her fate might be as a poet if the P.R.B. failed and her brothers departed. After the P.R.B.'s demise, Christina was forced to teach, received markedly less encouragement of her writing, and was even separated from her brothers and sister
by her mother and father’s temporary removal, for economic reasons, outside of London to Frome in 1853-54. From 1850-59, Christina published only two poems and one short story. At this point, in Antony Harrison’s words, "as someone largely at the mercy of decisions made by others," Maude must have seemed indeed prophetic to Christina.

The significance of such isolation, of course, is highlighted by what we know of the "ideal" Victorian relationship between brothers and sisters. Gorham notes that "[t]he bond between sister and brother represented, for many Victorians, the ideal relationship between males and females." This is illustrated by Gorham’s description of the relationship between Anne and Arthur Hugh Clough (Anne was born in 1820, just ten years before Christina). One point Gorham makes about the Cloughs that is particularly relevant to the Rossettis is that "[t]he differences between them [brother and sister] lay not in their impulses, but in the scope within which they could act upon them." When her father’s business failed, Anne was forced, like Maria and to a lesser extent Christina when their father became ill, to become a teacher; Arthur, "from the age of ten, was out in the world, testing himself." Anne’s relationship with her brother also closely parallels that of Dante and Christina Rossetti: "Anne always looked to Arthur as a guide, as her connection to the outside world." As Dante Gabriel promoted his sister’s poetry, Arthur helped Anne with her
studies, but as in Dante Gabriel's editing of Christina's poems, both brothers were "always critical should . . . [their sisters] exhibit any tendency to act assertively." This reminds one of Dante Gabriel's term for criticizing such tendencies in Christina's poems: "falsetto muscularity." And as also seemed true of the Rossettis, this was not an "evenly balanced relationship. She thought much more about him than he ever did about her." In the Rossettis' case, a similar feeling is expressed by a poem contained in a letter Christina wrote to William Michael on January 18, 1850, during the height of the P.R.B. She asks William, "'Will you recite to Gabriel the following admonitory stanza?'"

On the note you do not send me
I have thought too long: adieu
Hope and fear no longer rend me:--
Home is near: not news of you. (3:343,1-4)

This stanza directly parodies the first stanza of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Catarina to Camoëns," much admired by Robert Browning and other contemporary critics for its portrait of "'self-abnegation.'" The heroine, on her deathbed, reassures herself that if her poet-lover returned and contemplated her once again, she would regain her beauty, for she acknowledges it only as a function of his vision. Perhaps because she was her brother's model for his early paintings, Christina's commentary on such dependency is ironic; her last line is the most overtly complaining in her poem. But this stanza also reveals Christina's
characteristic guilt at criticizing her beloved, talented elder brother, who is, after all, supposed to range more freely in a wider sphere of action. All of this evidence again stresses the impact a talented father or brother might have on the life of a Victorian girl due to ideological constraints built into the relationship. One thing was certain: the man's sphere would be one of worldly activity; the woman's, to a greater or lesser degree, one of sheltered domesticity.

According to her biographer, Mackenzie Bell, Christina herself helped foster the myth of the apparent "spontaneity" of her poetry. Bell cites Mr. Glendinning Nash, Christina's friend and clergyman, who stated that Christina once told him "there were times when the power to write had apparently passed away, and . . . others [when] she wrote for hours with no mental effort . . . . The poetic flow was spontaneous . . . . [s]he seldom revised her work." If one can believe Nash, Christina's attachment to the nineteenth-century ideal of "sincere" expression was deliberate. But as Mermin and others have noted, Victorian female poets had to resist such "simple appeal[s] to common human emotions" and "impulses toward self-effacement and self-suppression" in female romantic precursors like Letitia Landon and Felicia Hemans. These "darker strains," focusing on "exile and failure, a celebration of female genius frustrated, [and] a haunting
omnipresence of death" had to be resisted because submitting to such tendencies would make the writing of poetry impossible. Nevertheless, Christina's device of two female personae (Maude being one of her first works in which this device is extensively used) allows her to criticize the self-destructive tendencies of a female romantic persona. Maude's death seems that of a classic, languishing heroine (Stuart Curran notes that "in poetry at least, the unhappy ending is the norm of women writers of the Romantic period"). The undefined potential of Agnes' future career, however, since she firmly rejects marriage, keeps the question of vocation at the center of Maude, although it is overlaid by a traditionally orthodox ending.

Vocational questions also dominate Dante Gabriel's tales, but one of the most obvious differences between his tales and Maude is that any sort of domestic universe present in "Hand and Soul" and, to a lesser extent, in "St. Agnes of Intercession" can be dismissed at a snap of his heroes' fingers. Stein argues that the "story-within-a story technique of "Hand and Soul" implies "a complex and crucial analogy: just as visionary experience can be created in art, so the visionary experience of the artist can be approximated by the passionate contemplation of his work." I think that the stances adopted by Dante Gabriel's protagonists in both tales can be called flâneurian because both narrators (notably not Dante Gabriel's hero in "Hand
and Soul", Chiaro dell’Erma), distantly view and imaginatively improvise upon what they see. Both tales emphasize the equivocal nature of the artist’s perspective: the artist as genius as well as the artist as a salesman who needs an audience.

At this juncture, a short summary of "Hand and Soul" should prove useful (I will discuss "St. Agnes of Intercession" in more detail later). The narrator of "Hand and Soul" tells the tale of Chiaro, a fictional medieval painter, whose early endeavors are marked by extraordinary success. When he wants the companionship of women, he has it ("And women loved Chiaro"); when he decides to take up "the race of fame," he is a commercial success in three years (W 550-51). Chiaro’s main problem lies in his reconciling his passion for beauty—the "mystical lady" somehow mysteriously conflated with "his own gracious Italian Art"—with his perception of himself as some kind of prophet of his apparently orthodox faith (W 550-51). Consequently, he begins to "multiply abstractions" and paint only those subjects that possess "moral greatness," but he despairs when two rival factions in Pisa fight beneath his paintings and cover them with blood. He is saved, however, by the sudden appearance of his female "soul," whose hair forms "the golden veil through which he beheld his dreams" (W 553). Her solution to his problem is simple: all he must do is "[p]aint . . . [her] thus" and work "from . . . [his]
own heart, simply" (W 554). Nevertheless, this remedy is undercut by the tale’s ending, where the narrator supposedly views Chiaro’s portrait of his "soul" surrounded by other art students. A French student remarks,

"Je dis, mon cher, que c’est une spécialité dont je ne fiche pas mal. Je tiens que quand on ne comprend pas une chose, c’est qu’elle ne signifie rien." (W 556)

Immediately following this statement, the tale ironically concludes with the sentence: "My reader thinks possibly that the French student was right" (W 556). This ending distances the speaker from the moment of romantic vision at the center of the tale, permitting Dante Gabriel to end on an uncertain note. Chiaro succeeds as a genius but fails as a salesman—he cannot command a consistently appreciative audience. Such an end encourages both the narrator and "us," the readers, to interpret the tale from a distance, the point of view of a classic flâneur. A flâneur’s perspective dominates the end of the tale.

Irony also signals the beginning of Christina’s attempt to construct a heroine different from the classic female romantic model in Maude. Christina’s narrator views Maude from a distance from the moment of her mother’s salutation (which she has to repeat twice), "A penny for your thoughts." Maude is surrounded by a "chaos of stationery," and embarrassed about the act of writing, even (or perhaps especially) before her mother (M 29). Writing seems a questionable occupation for Maude, but more importantly, at
this point, for the narrator, who rather sarcastically describes Maude's "original compositions," "pet extracts," sketches, and etc. as "choice" (M 30). But "choice," in this context, is an ambivalent word: does the narrator's irony suggest Maude's view or her own? The precise connotations of this adjective are not clear, but the sonnet Maude proceeds to write could certainly be fairly labelled morbid:

Yes, I too could face death and never shrink:  
But it is harder to bear hated life;  
To strive with hands and knees weary of strife;  
To drag the heavy chain whose every link  
Galls to the bone . . . (M 30)

This seems somewhat melodramatic and self-pitying, particularly after "having done which she yawned, leaned back in her chair, and wondered how she should fill up the time till dinner" (M 30). From the point of view of a Victorian advice book, Maude would undoubtedly be classified as an "upwardly mobile Miss":

"Pride and indolence are the crying evils of the present generation of young ladies of the middle class . . . . [Such a girl] creeps about from room to room, strums a little upon the piano, does an inch of fancy work . . . and so passes the day."21

The narrator of Maude appears to share the above author's point of view towards Maude's writing as simply another form of self-indulgence. But the narrator's swift change in tone in the next section, in which she describes the "howl[s]" of "a very fat baby," show her more in sympathy with the socio-cultural situation of middle-class girls who, as
Gorham points out, often "received two contradictory sets of messages about how they ought to behave" and whose roles were often "confining and limited" (M 32). Such girls' "education" was limited to what would help them make upwardly-mobile marriages.

As one moves into section two, the narrator's increasing sympathy for Maude is expressed through her cousin Agnes, defined by Crump as representing "another side of Christina's own personality--the rational . . . objective side which was sometimes at odds with the aesthetic, overly sensitive . . . somewhat masochistic side . . ." (M 20-21). It seems significant that whereas Maude mostly writes and pines, Agnes and her sister Mary are usually contentedly engaged in some "useful" domestic occupation like embroidery or gardening. Agnes attempts to minimize Maude's guilt by reassuring her that her writing fits Tractarian criteria for "sincerity" and, of equal importance, that it falls within the norm of allowable activities for a respectable, middle-class Victorian girl. Within this context, Maude's comment at the end of the first chapter is surprisingly revealing: "How I envy you . . . you who live in the country, and are exactly what you appear, and never wish for what you do not possess" (M 41). This spontaneous expression of discontent--perhaps what Dante Gabriel would have labelled "falsetto muscul arity"--helped Christina, I think, construct a self other than the traditional romantic
and/or gothic heroines that Dante Gabriel preferred in "Confluents" and "Amor Mundi" (poems by his sister that he singled out for praise) (DW 1379-80). Diane D'Amico writes that such female gothic characters "provided the young . . . [Christina] with a language at first suitable to her own strong-willed nature," but that as she matures, the first-person lyric "becomes her major form, a more suitable mode of expression for the soul's converse with its fellow pilgrims and its God." In *Maude*, such a conversation is carried on dramatically between the two cousins and, through her appreciation of Maude's poetry, with their friend Magdalen.

Another vocational option that Maude, her friend, and her cousins consider to escape the conventional roles of a wife or a languishing female poet is the much-reiterated question of the convent. As Janet Galligani Casey writes, "Anglican sisterhoods were advocated by Oxford Movement leaders" in the 1840s, but critics pointed not only to "the Popish connotations of convents but also to the risk of moral contamination in those Houses which undertook social work among the poor, the sick, or the fallen." A contemporary critic, however, notes that "Florence Nightingale . . . roundly answered criticism of convent rules by declaring them preferable to 'the petty grinding tyranny of a good English family.'" The question of the convent intrudes in part two of *Maude* through Magdalen's
choice of it as a career, and never quite disappears as first Maude and then Agnes consider such a possibility for themselves. Maude's dreaded social call at the Strawdy's and Miss Savage's attempt to perceive her as an icon of popular taste stress, as previously noted, that within the strict bounds of female domesticity, poetry will inevitably be trivialized. A "poetess" was an equivocal inhabitant in a Victorian drawing room.

Critical opinion is mixed concerning the activity of poetry writing for women: Gorham notes that "professional writing was one of the few intellectual occupations a middle-class woman could pursue... without violating the norms of appropriate female behavior." But other critics have noted that poetry--"a traditionally masculine creative mode"--could easily lead to doubts about a woman's "femininity"; in the early 1860s, Christina was challenged by another female poet (Dora Greenwell) to an embroidery contest in order to prove that she could stitch as well as write. A notorious woman like Adah Isaacs Menken (the American dancer and actress whom Dante Gabriel proposed as mistress to Algernon Swinburne) was also known as a published poetess. Most critics agree with Crump and William Michael that Maude's guilt over her poetry writing seems exaggerated, but within such contexts it is at least understandable. One must also note that her guilt is as much social as religious.
There are two typological moments in *Maude*, in which the dialogue between Maude and her cousin Agnes signals Agnes' development as a prototypical flâneuse (a new type of independent female character). In the first, Maude is again introduced ironically, "surrounded by the old chaos of stationery," except the irony is immediately undercut by the narrator's description of Maude as "pale, languid, almost in pain" (*M* 50). One soon learns that Maude feels guilty over "putting . . . [herself] forward and displaying" her verses, which is odd, since in the previous section she becomes quite angry when Miss Savage wants her to recite her poems under the bright lights of a drawing room. Not surprisingly, under the circumstances, Agnes criticizes Maude for taking herself so seriously; her "vanity" and "display" ironically lie, not in the writing of poetry, but in her harsh judgment of herself and, most importantly, in her avoiding "the appointed means of grace" (*M* 54).

... this is not reverence. You cannot mean that for the present you will indulge vanity and display; that you will court admiration and applause; that you will take your fill of pleasure until sickness, or it may be death, strips you of temptation and sin together. (*M* 54)

This almost foreshadows Maude's end, although the amount of "pleasure" Maude gets from her guilty self-indulgence seems rather limited. Agnes kneels, however, and in a scene that recalls a future act of sisterly salvation in *Goblin Market*, lays "her head against her [cousin's] bosom." But in *Maude*, Agnes' attempted
succour is incomplete: Maude cries and refuses to listen, while Agnes, "almost discouraged," simply leaves (M 54). Maude finally falls asleep on the stroke of midnight (it is Christmas eve), after listening to a hymn celebrating Christ's birth. It takes more than human power to save Maude: her guilt cannot be exorcized either through her own will or by the intervention of her cousin. The image of a symbolic death or sleep as a means to rebirth is one of the most popular motifs in Christina's poems: all of these moments are, of course, Christian and typological, providing a means for "redeeming human time, of perceiving ... order and causality in human events"—in this case, reconciling the reader to Maude's eventual death ("\'LTL\'" 248). Agnes reveals her orientation towards reality as opposed to fantasy by her matter-of-fact departure: she knows Maude needs greater assistance than she can give.

Agnes represents the beginning of a new type of Rossetti heroine who relies on reality, dialogue, and "grace" to solve her problems rather than her own efforts. Christina's second use of dialogue and typological symbolism is particularly significant because she confronts the question of vocation more directly here than at any other moment in the text. The climax in Maude (the typological machinery that introduces it makes this clear) opens with a letter from Mary brought to the dying Maude by Agnes—its subject is Mary's joy in her honeymoon— but the letter also
makes it clear that Mary has relinquished her independence: "... both plans seemed alike pleasing to Mary; for she was full of her husband, and both were equally connected with him" (M 69). The irrelevance of such questions to Maude helps focus the reader's attention on Agnes' answer:

"Agnes, if you could not be yourself, but must become one of us three: I don't mean as to goodness, of course, but merely as regards circumstances,—would you change with Sister Magdalen, with Mary, or with me?"
"Not with Mary, certainly. Neither should I have courage to change with you . . . nor yet with sister Magdalen, for I want her fervour of devotion. So at present I fear you must even put up with me as I am. Will that do?"
There was a pause. A fresh wind had sprung up and the sun was setting. (M 69)

The typological significance of the one-line description of a sunset which follows Agnes' limited affirmation of "self" perhaps unsurprisingly matches the "change of air" that heralds the appearance of Chiaro's "soul" in Dante Gabriel's tale (W 553). What is odd about such a setting in Maude is that Agnes does not seem to affirm anything but what is, after all, obvious--what she is--"as I am." Nevertheless, Christina's diction makes it clear that this scene is typological not just in the symbolic sense, as is her brother's, whose soul appears to function as some sort of messenger from God (and a rather vague one at that), but in the literal. Christina puts God's own essential revelation of Himself into the mouth of her surviving female character, one that she is not able to employ in relation to herself until 1892, in The Face of the Deep: "Who I was I am, who I
am I am, who I am I must be for ever and ever" (FD 42).
Moreover, her statement echoes Coleridge's poetic theory, in which the poet is also identified as "the direct inheritor of God's self-asserting 'I Am.'" In a culture obsessed with women's "redundancy," the simplicity of Agnes' assertion masks its surprisingly bold self-affirmation: although she specifically defines herself as a non-poet in the _bouts-rimés_ sonnet she writes at the beginning of _Maude_, she is permitted to echo the words of God the Father himself. This deliberate appropriation of traditional texts helps delineate a picture of "grace" operating within a simple domestic setting as well as suggesting, as George Landow notes, "with great economy of means . . . the entire Gospel scheme of salvation" ("'LTL'" 248).

In this context, Agnes' "humility" seems to reveal, on Christina's part, as Merrin notes of Moore and Bishop, "a complex and subtly combative attitude." Christina's definition of "humility" in her 1885 reading diary _Time Flies_ stresses, as is usual in her religious prose, the traditional Christian paradox underlying the conventional submissiveness commonly associated with the term:

> Now where humility lays deep the low-lying foundation, the superincumbent structure can safely and permanently tower aloft into heaven. Whence we perceive how by God's grace a predisposition towards inferiority may be reclaimed as a vantage ground for the achievement of excellence."
This passage is an example of what Landow calls Christina's "complex play upon types": the "foundation" (the "type") prefigures the "superincumbent structure" (the "antitype"), suggesting a "complex web of events that stretches across human history" ("‘LTL’" 248). By the novella's conclusion, the question of Maude's death and Agnes' survival only as a non-poet becomes, to a certain extent, irrelevant since, "in the Victorian age . . . any person who could read, whether or not a believer, was likely to recognize scriptural allusions." Landow makes an important point when he states that "when we modern readers fail to recognize allusions to such typology, we deprive many Victorian works of a large part of their context."³⁴

In "Hand and Soul", the appearance of Chiaro's "soul" is surrounded by far more supernatural trappings and elaborate diction, but as Riede notes, its appearance is "more unsettlingly uncanny than worshipful" (DGR 36). Dante Gabriel emphasizes the fantastic, non-human elements of this metamorphosis: the "soul" represents the most extreme form possible of an other that is somehow simultaneously Chiaro's self:

The warmth of the air was not shaken; but there seemed a pulse of light, and a living freshness, like rain. The silence was a painful music, that made the blood ache in his temples; and he lifted his face and his deep eyes . . . . She did not move closer towards him, but he felt her to be as much with him as his breath . . . . As the woman stood, her speech was with Chiaro: not, as it were, from her mouth or in his ears; but distinctly between them. (W 553)
This passage, with its clusters of unstressed syllables and almost exaggeratedly synesthetic imagery seems "an ideal moment . . . of fusion and synthesis accompanied by 'silent song'" which, as Boos states, was characteristic of romantic poetry: the "woman--music--silence" motif is found throughout Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats (PDR 61). But as Riede notes of Dante's tale, what if the "soul" refuses conveniently "to present itself for a sitting?" (DGR 38). In this case, any escape from being "a devil and not know[ing] it," as Chiaro labels himself, seems unlikely (W 553). On the other hand, Agnes' rather laconic affirmation of self, against the background of a sunset described with equal brevity, appears deliberately to avoid any overt use of gothic machinery or romantic synesthetic suggestiveness. As in "The Queen of Hearts," Agnes' conciseness points to Christina's recasting of her male romantic heritage within an orthodox typological frame in order to emphasize the hidden significance of Agnes' declaration. Moreover, Christina's description is consistent with the Tractarian doctrine of "Reserve," in which "nature affords a way of veiling and speaking of sacred things by indirection."

Dante Gabriel revises conventional typological symbolism to heighten his singular perception of a female "other" that has literally become a projection of himself--his "soul." As stated earlier, however, his tale's ending undercuts this vision through focusing on the
distanced, flâneurian perspective of the students (and presumably the narrator) who view Chiaro's portrait. In addition, the ending stresses the tale's vocational focus since it highlights the gap between an artist's intentions and his or her audience's perceptions. Christina's tale has the same underlying vocational theme, but paradoxically, she recasts her brother's traditional romantic notion of the female as other by reducing Agnes' self-affirmation to the smallest possible terms.

Another version of this question of vocation appears in Dante Gabriel's unfinished prose tale, "St. Agnes of Intercession," composed from 1848-50. In it, a sincere, ambitious young painter, who is also the tale's first person persona, attempts to make his fortune by exhibiting his first serious picture, whose principal figure is his fiancée, Miss Mary Arden. To do so, like Chiaro, he must expose his "naked soul" to an audience:

That is not the least curious feature of life as evolved in society . . . when a man, having endured labour, gives its fruits into the hands of other men, confiding it to them, unknown . . . submitting to them his naked soul, himself, blind and unseen . . . (W 559)

On the opening day of the exhibition, the speaker meets a "hippopotamus-fronted" poet-critic "with . . . splay limbs and wading gait," who insists on showing the narrator a bad poem that he has written in honor of a picture "familiar to all print-chop flâneurs, in which the wax doll is made to occupy a position in Art which it can never have
contemplated in the days of its humble origin" (W 560). Dante Gabriel’s narrator directly conflates the poet-critic and a conventional flâneur because of their bad taste, but he himself seems to share the flâneur’s distanced, critical stance when he speaks equivocally to the poet-critic about his bad poem:

"I think," replied I coolly, "that when a poet strikes out for himself a new path in style, he should first be quite convinced that it possesses sufficient advantages to counterbalance the contempt which the swarm of his imitators will bring upon poetry." (W 561)

As McGann notes in his astute essay, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Betrayal of Truth," the narrator "cannot afford to offend this man"--he needs his praise in order to sell his painting. Therefore, like a good salesman, he "practices a fraud" upon him ("BT" 341). As is usual in Dante Gabriel’s early work, a flâneurian figure spans the boundary between, in McGann’s words, "an exalted ideal of art, on [the] one hand [the artist as genius], and certain quotidian practical exigencies on the other [the artist as needy solicitor]" ("BT" 340). Because of this linkage, I would argue that the figure of the flâneur is closely associated with vocational issues.

As stated earlier, most Victorians would perceive the typological scenery that forms the background of both the appearance of Dante Gabriel’s soul and Maude’s death as a sign of hope, like the hymn on Christmas morn that comforts Maude and concludes Dante Gabriel’s contemporaneous poem,
"My Sister's Sleep." To a modern mind, however, what appears most evident is that Christina kills off her poet (she is laid out with her locked "Album" beneath her head; a sort of lady of Shalott recast as a poet), and allows only her non-poet heroine to survive. This tends to subvert any notion of Maude as a radical revision of Victorian domestic and/or amatory ideology; such an ending, with its strict orthodoxy, seems to deny even the possibility of self-expression and to endanger women's existence as poets. Nevertheless, the strong typological image with which Maude ends emphasizes that, from the beginning of her career, Christina revises the amatory and domestic ideologies of her age from a state of what McGann calls "extreme antithesis." As is clear from the uncertainties of "Hand and Soul", men like Dante Gabriel "had to grow into their skeptical and critical minds, which they did not fully find until the 'Age of Equipoise' had passed." But as I have already noted, the strong sacramental imagery at the end of Maude is the same Christina later employs in The Face of the Deep. Her ideological stance is consistent from the beginning of her career to its end.

Many critics have noted the relative innocence and unself-consciousness of Dante Gabriel's early work, but his problem with what Riede calls "a disjunction between faith and artistic impulse" became so difficult to solve that in a letter to William, written in August, 1852, he stated that
he had "abandoned poetry" (DGR 39), (DRFL 2:97). In his early poetry, he solves this problem through the female figure as a virtuous influence. At this point in his career, Dante Gabriel seems to accept the Victorian domestic ideology, extensively developed by Ruskin in "Of Queen’s Gardens," concerning the moral superiority of women. In terms of real power, this influence was a myth, but the female as a figure inspiring a skeptical Victorian young man appears again and again in early versions of Rossetti’s major poems: "The Blessed Damozel"; "On Mary’s Portrait"; "My Sister’s Sleep"; "Mater Pulchrae Delectionis"; his Marian picture poems. In 1850, Christina also experimented with this theme in the dramatic monologue, "A Year Afterwards," by recasting Dante Gabriel’s speakers in "On Mary’s Portrait" and "The Blessed Damozel" from a more orthodox perspective. Christina’s persona, instead of despairing, patiently anticipates being buried beside his lover. Dante Gabriel’s early personae are never quite this peaceful: in "On Mary’s Portrait," "The Blessed Damozel," and "My Sister’s Sleep," such influences or moments of vision are clearly supernatural, mostly involving meditations on dead or dying lovers (perhaps not surprisingly, much like the female personae in many of Christina’s early poems). The following passage is from the Germ version of "My Sister’s Sleep":

Almost unwittingly, my mind
Repeated her words after her;
Perhaps tho' my lips did not stir;
It was scarce thought, or cause assign'd."

This passage was cut from the 1870 version, but what I think is important concerning these revisions, besides Dante Gabriel's elimination of religious faith from the later versions of his poems, is that he also eliminates the Victorian notion of the female as a moral influence over her more skeptical male contemporary. In my next chapter, I contrast Christina's attempts to define herself as a female subject with Dante Gabriel's more traditional use of the female figure as other, particularly as an other who is also a classic—or possible (again, these issues are problematized, even in Dante Gabriel's early poems) "good influence."
Notes

1 Quoted by Stanley Weintraub, *Four Rossettis: A Victorian Biography*, 32.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 30.


7 Gorham, *The Victorian Girl*, 44.

8 Ibid., 140.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 141.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Quoted by Mermin, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, 104.

14 Bell, *Christina Rossetti*, 145.


16 Mermin, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, 70.

Ibid., 203.

Stein, *The Ritual of Interpretation*, 158.

I say, my Friend, that that's a specialty I couldn't care less about. I hold that when you can't understand something, it's because it doesn't mean anything. See Riede, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Limits of Victorian Vision*, 37.

Quoted by Gorham, *The Victorian Girl*, 51.


Ibid.


34 Ibid., 3.

35 Tennyson, *Victorian Devotional Poetry*, 34.


37 Ibid.

In chapter one, I discussed Dante and Christina Rossettis' early prose in relation to their mutual connection with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The gap between the public and private spheres evident in their prose becomes increasingly problematic when one also examines the poetry they wrote from about 1847-50. The impact of the public sphere on their work was to a great extent predetermined by their different genders, but also by their mutual determination to succeed as published poets. In her early poetry, Christina mostly achieves this power through the classic female moral influence that conservative women writers like Stickney Ellis promoted as a means of "'redeem[ing]' men 'from the mere animal.'" Another version of this theory is presented by an anonymous but presumably male author of an essay entitled "Woman, Her Duties, Education, and Position" in the 1856 Oxford and Cambridge Magazine. This author echoes Stickney Ellis's sentiment, stating that if women "ground [their] rights upon the performance of their duties, they can expect men's 'Woman-worshipping instinct' to rise . . . [and] count it an
honor to join in exalting those who are raising and ennobling their common humanity." In her early poetry, Christina generally seems to follow this advice, but although her narrators stay mostly within the private sphere, they often criticize and implicitly condemn the public one. Instead of, in Mermin's words, "providing emotional stimulus and release for overtasked men of affairs," they judge these same men ("DK" 69).

As many critics have noted, the visual metaphor was central to nineteenth-century poetics, especially to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Herbert Sussman describes how the P.R.B. participated, like Carlyle and Ruskin, "in a widespread effort in the 1830s and 1840s . . . to reconcile through their art the fading belief in the sacramental quality of the natural world . . . with the powerful new attitudes generated by a wholly materialistic science and . . . history . . . the more intense the power of observation, the more extensive the awareness of symbolic meaning." Dante Gabriel's early poems mostly take place within strictly-enclosed domestic spaces and, surprisingly enough, his rather passive personae's focus on a variety of traumatized or dead female figures from both the public and private spheres appears to emphasize the same sort of "social forces" that probably, as Pollock points out, conditioned nineteenth-century female painters Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot to explore "spacial ambiguities and
metaphors," particularly metaphors of "social confinement" (VD 62-63). As previously discussed, Christina’s early personae are similarly vulnerable to what Benjamin identifies as a peculiarly Baudelairean quality—"abrupt, shock-like change"—when they venture too close to the public sphere (LP 94). These personae only speak from an indistinct boundary between life and death, or from beneath the mask of a male persona. At this point in her career, Christina’s female personae do not openly gaze into the public sphere.

A letter written by Dante Rossetti to his mother as early as August 14, 1843, besides illustrating his epistolary concern with promoting his artistic progress and eliminating atheistic sentiments from his work, mentions two magazines to which all the young Rossettis were then contributing: The Illustrated Scrap-book and Hodge-Podge. Dante Gabriel describes the Scrap-book’s pages as containing, along with "some of . . . [his] choicest specimens of sketching . . . two poetic effusions by Christina, the one entitled Rosalind and the other Corydon’s Resolution, both of which are very good" (DGFL: 2 18). William Michael describes the ballad "Rosalind" as "indisputably bad," but its first stanza illustrates the susceptibility of Christina’s early heroines to the conventional female romantic pose of a visual icon:

She sat upon a mountain,
And gazed upon the sea;
Beside her crouched a stag-hound,  
A boy stood at her knee. (3:118,1-4)

Rosalind’s agonized stare in this, one of Christina’s earliest poems, derives from her romantic and gothic precursors such as Charles Maturin, whose works were favorites of the young Rossettis, particularly Melmoth the Wanderer. Christina wrote several poems inspired by Maturin’s heroine Isidora, who openly defies her gothic lover with such a stare:

It was a beautiful and fearful sight to see her as she stood;—her marble face—her moveless features—her eyes in which burned the fixed and livid light of despair . . . the lips that half opened, and . . . remaining unclosed, appeared as if the speaker was unconscious of the words that had escaped . . . them, or rather, as if they had burst forth by involuntary and incontrolable impulse.⁵

Since Christina’s heroine screams across the sea at the "robbers" (including a former lover) who have stolen her husband, I agree with William Michael that the scene is essentially absurd. But it also illustrates Christina’s and Dante Gabriel’s mutual fascination with the female figure as a domestic icon. The type, like Isidora, of a perfect gothic victim, Rosalind speaks only "under the influence of inspiration"—otherwise, she is respectably silent ("LL" 5). Nevertheless, since she dies immediately after her former lover, desiring compensation for his "grief," "hurl[s] her husband / Into the raging sea," she seems to achieve a certain limited retribution (3:119,27-28).

Mermin argues that Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina
Rossetti, particularly in their lyric poetry, find it difficult, if not impossible, to "situate themselves without self-contradiction and . . . not just daydream, but speak" ("DK" 65). "Rosalind" exemplifies this problem since the speaker can define herself only through death. The poem, however, reveals how early in her career Christina attempted to grapple with the problem of revising male and female romantic tradition—in "Rosalind" ironically through allowing her heroine to speak and look back at her former lover.

One can gain insight into some of Christina’s initial strategies for revising classic romantic tropes when one compares her early work to that of her precursor, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Browning’s "The Lost Bower," published in her 1844 volume The Seraphim, and Other Poems and Christina’s "Symbols," written on Jan. 7, 1849, and later published in Goblin Market as a devotional poem, both focus around child quest figures. Late in life, William Michael recalled his own and his brother’s enthusiasm for Barrett Browning’s 1844 work: "'We revelled in them [the poems] with profuse delight . . . . In the course of two or three years we must have read some of these more than half-a-hundred times over, and either of us . . . could repeat them with great exactness.'" One can assume that Christina also repeatedly read "The Lost Bower," in which Barrett Browning’s child-speaker accomplishes her quest by
discovering a hidden grove, but then finds that immediately after she announces "I will be the fairy," or perfectly passive female object as well as the poem's questing subject, she cannot find the bower again--she "misse[s] the place." As a consequence of such presumption, she becomes a female romantic tortured body, "weakly" lying on her "couch" and "linger[ing]" over her "losses" for about ninety subsequent lines (359, 409). Barrett Browning's poem consequently conforms to female romantic tradition in that its lengthiness is its only transgressive element. In "Symbols," however, Christina uses symmetry and balance in constructing her neatly stanzaic poem, like her precursor George Herbert, to mirror Christian faith. This attention to "lyric shape and syntax to match form with meaning" forms a major part of what differentiates "Symbols" from "The Lost Bower's" more traditionally romantic discursive style.

Christina's version of the quest motif that she and Barrett Browning both employ emphasizes, as is usual in her early work, the significance of looking or refusing to look. The first two stanzas illustrate her technique:

I watched a rosebud very long
Brought on by dew and sun and shower,
Waiting to see the perfect flower:
Then, when I thought it should be strong,
It opened at the matin hour
And fell at evensong.

I watched a nest from day to day,
A green nest full of pleasant shade,
Wherein three speckled eggs were laid:
But when they should have hatched in May,
The two old birds had grown afraid
Or tired, and flew away. (1:75,1-12)

Christina further stresses her focus on gazing through the poem's stanzaic structure: each six-line stanza (there are four) consists of a Petrarchan quatrain and a final two-line "tail" whose rhyme scheme reiterates that of lines three and four: ba. This creates an echo which connects the act of gazing in the central couplet of the first two stanzas with the imagery of inevitable disappointment and/or decay that ends them. The poem's structure, at this point, seems designed to contradict the romantic myth that "divinity exists in . . . nature." As Catherine Cantalupo astutely remarks, "Christian nature" can "merely shadow . . . divinity . . . . [it is] a sign of divine intelligence but not as the intelligence itself." Christina's cyclical form directly revises her male romantic heritage through stressing that the narrator's gaze is incorrect, not because of any inherent evil in the act itself, but because the speaker has overestimated her power to transform the world, like Baudelaire's flâneur, with a look. Many years later, in The Face of the Deep, Christina stresses the importance of "gazing" appropriately at "sin" or "enchantments" "unscathed and undefiled . . . not as a relishing pastime, but as an embittering deterrent" (FD 399). The theme of how to gaze insightfully runs through both Christina's devotional and secular works, forming a common ground between them.
Rather than focusing on the theme of gazing within a symmetrical framework, Barrett Browning's stanzas have a vivaciousness enhanced by the poem's balladic rhyme scheme: abcbdb. Barrett Browning manipulates traditional romantic image patterns in this poem, continually echoing synesthetic, romantic metaphors only to retreat from such transgressive self-assertion by resuming the storytelling posture of a conventional female "good influence." This technique is particularly evident at the climax of the poem, when she invokes a characteristically romantic "ideal moment . . . of fusion and synthesis accompanied by 'silent song'" similar to that employed by Dante Gabriel in "Hand and Soul" (PDR 61):

XXXV.
So, young muser, I sate listening
To my fancy's wildest word:
On a sudden, through the glistening
Leaves around, a little stirred,
Came a sound, a sense of music, which
was rather felt than heard. (205-10)

Run-on lines ("stirred, Came"; "which / was") augment the synesthetic effects here, yet the self-conscious speaker immediately afterwards admits that such visionary "water-Naiad[s]" are not for her. Consequently, she "drop[s] the music," leaves the bower, and attempts to find "strength from fancy's dauntings" through a strategy directly opposed to that of Christina (215, 266). Barrett Browning's heroine contemplates neither an empty nest nor a
broken branch, but "true mountains"--the traditional emblem of romantic, transcendent nature:

XLVI.
Face to face with the true mountains
I stood silently and still,
Drawing strength from fancy's dauntings,
From the air about the hill,
And from Nature's open mercies, and
most de bon air good-will. (271-76)

In the next few stanzas, the speaker declares herself both "Naiad" and poet, subject and object of her own personal quest (215). As Mermin notes, however, this conflation does not work: by "the next morning, all had vanished" (349, "DK" 66). The poem ends in accordance with female romantic tradition, with the speaker recounting "her losses" as a verbose but at least somewhat self-sufficient (as long as she retains her powers of speech and/or writing) female poet (359). But her ability as a story-teller is undercut by the suggestion that this quest will only end with the speaker's death. The poem's supposedly "happy ending," with its reference to "God's Eden-land" as the only true bower, appears unconvincing, partly because of its conventional imagery, partly because of the poem's overall emphasis on loss (430).

As opposed to female romantic submission or male romantic vision, the ending of "Symbols" emphasizes the power of the poem's poetic objects (the branch and the eggs) to talk back to the speaker. Initially, Christina's narrator is much less active than Barrett Browning's: she
simply watches until the third stanza, when her impatience causes her, like an innocent version of the gothic pirate in "Rosalind," to "break the branch" and "crush the eggs" she previously tended with such care through a desire for "vengeance" (1:75,13,18). But the last stanza, in which the "dead branch" and "crushed . . . eggs" admonish the speaker for expecting to find transcendence in objects "only partly restored by grace," is the antithesis of a conventional male romantic ending:

But the dead branch spoke from the sod,  
And the eggs answered me again:  
Because we failed dost thou complain?  
Is thy wrath just? And what if God,  
Who waiteth for thy fruits in vain,  
Should also take the rod? (1:75-76,19-24)

In William Wordsworth's somewhat similar poem, "Nutting," after having, like Christina's heroine, "merciless[ly] ravage[d]" his bower, the hero relieves his guilt by assuming a brother's prerogative to chastise his sister:

"Then, dearest maiden, move along these shades / In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand / Touch--for there is a spirit in the woods." By the end of "Symbols," however, the gaze has become a metaphor that emphasizes the autonomy of subject, object, and reader. The romantic (albeit child-like and therefore diminished speaker) cannot entirely appropriate what she sees because of her wanton destruction of the dead branch and eggs, which apparently grants them the power of speech. Speaker and object are thus more or less reduced to equals and, since the poem ends with a
question, Christina also opens up a gap in her text through which we as readers are left to determine the significance of her ending's typological implications. In the conclusion of "Symbols," Christina revises male romantic vision, which tends to appropriate what it sees, through metamorphosing it into something that points toward the transcendent, and female romantic tradition by allowing her poetic objects to engage her speaker in dialogue.

The metaphor of the painter as a peculiarly appropriate embodiment of romantic genius was notably exploited by Baudelaire who, as Pollock notes, uses the work of a minor artist, Constantin Guys, as an excuse for his "weav[ing] an elaborate and impossible image of his ideal artist who is a passionate lover of crowds and incognito": a "'perfect flâneur . . . [a] passionate spectator'" (VD 70). Similarly, both Rossettis exploited a version of the "'passionate spectator'" as a metaphor in their early work; however, they gaze from within distinctive frames. Christina Rossetti's watchfulness focuses on her own relation, as a female poet, to a public sphere from which she was mostly excluded, for ideological as well as family reasons. Because of this, in her 1848-49 lyrics, her speakers often become, like her poetess Maude, dead or dying women situated, as Mermin notes, "where the female object of desire can become, for a long transitional moment, subject and speaker" ("DK" 73). One can be distracted, as many
critics have been, by the apparent morbidity of these lyrics, among them some of Christina's most anthologized poems, such as "Remember" and "Song: When I Am Dead, My Dearest." Nevertheless, Christina's collapsing of poetic subject and object does allow her heroines to achieve a certain minimal self-assertiveness by watching themselves, taking the verbose self-sufficiency of L.E.L.'s and Barrett Browning's heroines one step further through becoming, in Delores Rosenblum's words, both "spectacle and witness." Such a strategy is limited in its effectiveness, however, because it can only be defined in the context of "the male poet who spoke first"; i.e., through a fantasy realm ("DK" 74).

In Dante Gabriel's early poems, "Woman" also appears the source of Dante Gabriel's speakers' "most productive pains," as she is for Baudelaire's flâneur ("PML" 30). But Dante Gabriel often selects as his speakers' objects of vision figures that are some form of exaggerated, Browningesque "grotesques," defined by Christ as "aggressively incongruous or bizarre." The relationship between speaker and object in "Jenny" and "My Sister's Sleep" is "incongruous" because the speakers are, with almost curious consistency, respectable, seemingly innocent Victorian young men (in "Sister Helen," it is the poem's internal auditor who plays the role of an innocent young boy). The enclosed, evidently claustrophobic domestic space
that isolates Dante Gabriel's speakers with these figures (a whore, the speaker's dying sister, and a witch) focuses the reader's attention on the narrators' reactions to them. We tend to become absorbed in these sensations simply because the narrators' passivity, as well as their distance from the female figures they view, mirrors our own perspective as readers. We as well as they become types of Baudelaire's "child[ren] or "convalescent[s]," "drunk... [on] a state of newness," or shock ("PML" 8). Baudelaire also differentiates the "man of genius" from a child because of his "sound nerves": those of the child are "weak" ("PML" 8). In "Sister Helen" and "Jenny," such "weak" nerves seem to leave us, as well as Dante Gabriel's personae, peculiarly susceptible to female influence. In the 1850 "My Sister's Sleep," Dante Gabriel manipulates traditional romantic and typological images not to focus on the transcendental, as Christina does at the end of "Symbols," but to paint a sacramental picture of the speaker's mother. In "My Sister's Sleep," shock is deliberately manipulated as part of the poem's framework to concentrate the reader's attention on the mother's apparently beneficent influence.

The early versions of both "Sister Helen" and "Jenny" ("Sister Helen" was published in the Dusseldorf's Artist's Album in 1854, together with Christina's "A Summer Evening") center around a moment when both subject and object collapse, focusing the reader's attention on the speaker's
"Sense[s]," as he defines them in "Jenny." In "Sister Helen," a literary ballad written as a dialogue between a sister who is melting a waxen doll of her treacherous lover and her "Little Brother," such a moment occurs when Helen’s brother, having reported to her the despairing prayers of her lover’s family to "go with . . . [them] for the love of God!" finally seems to acknowledge his sister’s transformation into a veritable witch. The poem’s incantatory rhythms and repetitive refrain all build towards this effect:

"O Sister Helen, ye heard the bell,
Sister Helen,
More loud than the vespers chime it fell."
"No vespers chime, but a dying knell,
Little Brother."
(O Mother Mary, Mother,
Our doom is sealed between Hell and Heaven.)
(169-75)

William Michael argues that the last line ("Our doom is sealed between Hell and Heaven") in this version of the poem is a misprint, but I would argue that the first person plural form ("Our"), rather than the third person ("His"), was deliberately employed by Dante Gabriel to blur the boundaries between subject, object, and reader. For a moment, the shock that envelops Helen’s "Little Brother" causes him to associate himself (and by implication the reader) with her damnation, particularly since by this point in the poem, the brother’s voice appears to have merged with that of the anonymous narrator. By the end of the poem, however (five stanzas later), "Little Brother" has distanced
himself from his sister's crime (perhaps in an effort by Dante Gabriel to spare his readers' nerves, particularly those of his orthodox mother and sisters), and merely prays that Helen and her lover's "souls" be "purged," "between Hell and Heaven!" (210). Dante Gabriel's blurring of the boundaries between subject, object, and reader is only momentary before the poem's rather predictably orthodox context and tight form reassert themselves, but it serves to focus the reader's attention on this moment of shock rather than on the poem's more conventional gothic ending.

Dante Gabriel's earliest version of "Jenny," a dramatic monologue in which a young man meditates upon the fate of a sleeping prostitute in the privacy of her bedroom is, as Riede notes, basically a "schematic" satire of a man torn between the popular nineteenth-century ideology of "evolutionary meliorism," which glorified the "Human Mind" as eventually triumphing over all "fleshliness," and "Sense," whose dominion will only be challenged when an all-powerful God breaks the "flint that wrappeth" Dante Gabriel's metaphor for "Sense," "a toad within a stone" (68, 84,95,100, DGR 95-96). The poem ends with the speaker, in the tradition of Elizabethan love poetry, recounting Jenny's physical attributes, leading up to a romantically-derivative, Shelleyan moment when the boundary between subject and object blur through "the air swoon[ing] around and over" the speaker and Jenny (121). This moment's derivativeness
somewhat diminishes its impact, and the poem ends with the speaker stymied in a state of shock by "Sense," an ending Dante Gabriel himself later admitted was incomplete. "'I felt it was quite beyond me then--a world I was happy enough to be a stranger to.'"^19 Dante Gabriel's creation of an original, typologically-based metaphor, however, reflecting, in Riede's words, "centuries of time and geologic change" suggests the direction in which he, as well as his sister, will later move (DGR 95). A more traditional version of this metaphoric "toad," the harlot of Revelations, recurs in his 1856 version of "The Burden of Nineveh." This "[d]elicate harlot," like the "toad" to which Dante Gabriel's speaker compares "Jenny," also "In state for ages sat'st alone; / And need were years and lustres flown / Ere strength of man could vanquish thee."^20 In 1854, Christina makes use of this image (Revelation's traditional harlot), but rather than calling her a "toad," Christina labels her "The World," which also becomes the title of her poem (1:76). For Christina, this woman reflects the dangers of looking into the public sphere; for Dante Gabriel, she represents his ambivalent attitude towards art and, presumably, women.

In "My Sister's Sleep," as a September, 1848 letter to Hunt makes clear, Dante Gabriel focused on fulfilling the demands of Pre-Raphaelite poetics: in the letter, he describes a revision (one assumes it was similar to the 1850
version) as "simpler and more like nature" than the previous versions he had shown him (DW 45). His desire, of course, was in perfect conformity with the Carlylean-Ruskinian poetic that the artist or poet should reproduce natural details with concise accuracy in order to maximize their symbolic significance. Apparently Dante Gabriel succeeded: a contemporary critic of the poem's 1850 Germ version, James Ashcroft Noble, describes it as a "tenderly beautiful poem, in which the old chords of emotion are struck in such a way as to make them seem new" (Germ 261). This would support Riede's characterization of this version as "straightforward[ly] religious," and indeed, in 1850 Dante Gabriel seems to mimic the strategies Christina uses in "Symbols" and Maude in order to emphasize his speaker's orthodox (therefore involuntary) acceptance of "grace" as "a choice / Made in God for" him, like the hymn that assuages Maude's "over-scrupulous" guilt concerning her poetry (DGR 81). But this apparently precise recapitulation of Tractarian poetic techniques, although in perfect conformity with the Pre-Raphaelite principle of figural vision, serves a different purpose in Dante Gabriel's poem than Christina's more conventionally orthodox strategies.

Christina's work mirrors the principles of Tractarian Reserve: she only speaks of sacred things indirectly and consistently manipulates two or more levels of meaning. Particularly in works like Maude and "Symbols," where her
use of typological symbolism is overt, Christina's endings consistently suggest what McGann labels "mysterious forms of language which . . . [have] no meaning we can understand." I would add, however, that she privileges dialogue as a way of at least indicating such forms. Acquiring speech and/or language appears part of Christina's variation on strictly conventional typological image patterns, particularly by creatures and/or things that would not normally be expected to speak--such as women.

It is perhaps unsurprising that when D.M.R. Bentley attempts to argue that "My Sister's Sleep" expresses sincere, "unironic" religious sentiment, he cites the Belle Assemblée text, an early version of the poem published anonymously in September, 1848. ("My Sister's Sleep" was one of Dante Gabriel's earliest major efforts, originally written in 1847). His main support for his argument is Dante Gabriel's consistent use of "the Pre-Raphaelite approach to scriptural iconography," particularly images like the "lattice-work" of "evergreen" (symbolizing the Resurrection) and Margaret's (the sister's) death occurring during the earliest moments of Christmas morn (BA 326). I agree with Bentley to some extent, but for a different reason: I think the Belle Assemblée version is fairly orthodox because the speaker has, like the classic gothic romance hero, too many "feminine qualities of passivity and endurance" to be taken seriously. The speaker's only
capacity for significant action, like the conventional
gothic hero's, lies in his predilection for rather absurd
attempts to philosophize over a family tragedy:

> While I was thinking, it struck twelve.
> I said, "As swift as came and went
> Those strokes, so swift is the descent
> Of life that once begins to shelve." (BA 324)

Dante Gabriel's speaker's self-conscious philosophizing,
together with his lack of action, presage the poem's
predictably sensationalistic ending (the sister dies, and
the speaker and his mother share a moment of prayer). With
its overlay of Christian symbolism, this conclusion makes
the poem seem merely an extension of gothic tradition.

Dante Gabriel clearly was concerned with minimizing
gothic elements in his revisions, as one can perceive from
his comments in his letter to Hunt expressing concern over
his "straining after original modes of expression," and from
remarks by William Michael in his journal, where he records
that Coventry Patmore criticized the poem for being "too
self-conscious," although he praised it "in respect of
sentiment" (DW 45). The 1850 version begins with a
basically unglamorized presentation of the speaker's dying
sister, who does not significantly reappear until her death
at the poem's end. The next four stanzas focus around the
mother, who prays and works surrounded by household items in
a room dimly lit by a candle and the moon's "depth of light"
while watched by the speaker who, with his "weak and blank"
mind, appears in a state of shock (15,22). But ironically,
compared to the speakers in "Sister Helen" and "Jenny," this speaker is not simply reacting to events. He retains the capacity to analyze what he sees, mainly through the reader's awareness of the poet (as in Browning's dramatic monologues) signalling to him or her behind the speaker's back because of his concise intertextual manipulations. The three traditionally romantic moments of "speaking silence" in this poem do not herald moments of synesthetic mergeance, as in "Hand and Soul," but rather announce incidents when the son seems almost surprised, through his mother's inspiration, into expressions of faith. As Sussman points out, all of these moments are self-consciously constructed to emphasize this aspect of will-lessness, in accordance with traditional typology, much like similar moments in Maude and "Symbols" (FF 84):

Silence was speaking at my side  
With an exceedingly clear voice:  
I knew the calm as of a choice  
Made in God for me, to abide. (25-28)

It is interesting, in this stanza, that the speaker questions why he is in the room at all. His unrelentingly passive gaze appears to "inscribe" his mother's domestic sphere as entirely separate from his own, as well as defining her as a classic female influence. In the eighth stanza, the speaker further emphasizes his evident expression of faith through stating he is "glad 'tis Christmas Eve" (32). The mother, however, does not respond: she does not respond to her son directly throughout the
entire poem, but simply echoes the angels in declaring
"'Glory unto the Newly Born!'" She then stands

... with her hands
Kept in each other, praying much;
A moment that the soul may touch
But the heart only understands. (41,45-48)

After stressing his emotional tie with his mother (the
"heart" over the more abstract "soul"), he reemphasizes her
power as a human emblem to inspire him, in complete
accordance with the acceptable power of influence Victorian
mothers were supposed to possess—strictly limited, however,
to the domestic sphere:

Almost unwittingly, my mind
Repeated her words after her;
Perhaps tho' my lips did not stir;
It was scarce thought, or cause assign'd.
(49-52)

Throughout the poem, the mother's power of influence is
a direct result of the male speaker's "inscribing" her in a
world quite distinct from his own as well as the presumably
masculine poet's and reader's. Moreover, Dante Gabriel
emphasizes this separation by the mother's lack of response
to her son as well as through his detachment from her
classic domestic chores (sewing and nursing) which he (and
again, presumably the poet and reader) do not share—except
by watching. Dante Gabriel's manipulation of his speaker's
gaze to denote a particular social organization designates
this experience as specifically masculine. Although the
poem, as many critics have noted, is clearly intended to
stress a domestic tragedy's "sacramental quality," the
separation of spheres demarcated by the speaker’s static, almost flâneuristic, pose emphasizes an underlying thread of alienation further exploited by Dante Gabriel in his 1870 revision (FF 82).

As stated earlier, Dante Gabriel develops his comparison between the two distinct spheres of mother and son, bringing them together in a final grand sacramental moment that, as Sussman notes, links the two (the son representing the skeptical shepherd and the mother the angel) in a tableau that concisely mimics the Adoration (FF 82-83). Interrupted in her prayers by the noise overhead, the mother goes to her daughter’s bed and discovers she is dead. She weeps, but the son only "hides" his face; he does not attempt to comfort her, but withdraws into another moment of "'speaking silence'":

For my part, I but hid my face,
And held my breath, and spake no word:
There was none spoken; but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept.
And both my arms fell, and I said:
"God knows I knew that she was dead"
And there, all white, my sister slept. (65-72)

This is the climax of Dante Gabriel’s interweaving of influence and alienation throughout this text: again, the mother ignores her son and, like Mary in Dante Gabriel’s picture poem, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," she simply weeps, while the son, equally helpless, speaks his words into the air. One might read this scene, as do most modern
and Victorian critics, as merely augmenting the final unity between mother and son in the last stanza, when both kneel beside the sister's "white" bed just minutes after midnight and beg "'Christ's blessing on the newly born!'" (76). But when one compares Dante Gabriel's revision of typology throughout this poem to Christina's typological motifs in Maude and "Symbols," some immediate differences become apparent.

In Maude, Agnes's efforts to influence Maude, i.e., to assuage her guilt, are notably unsuccessful; only the hymn Maude involuntarily overhears that echoes a biblical text has the power to comfort her. The equality between Maude and Agnes is further accentuated immediately before Maude's death. In the typological moment I discussed earlier in chapter one, Agnes resists the dying Maude's invitation to imagine herself other than "as . . . [she is]" (M 69). The biblical text she echoes, rather than the figure of Agnes herself, forms the focal point of this inspirational moment followed, not by a hymn, but by a simple "pause," which seems to induce Maude to tell the tale of her renunciation of "overscrupulousness" through a conversation with her parish priest. In spite of these somewhat banal, strictly Anglo-Catholic circumstances, it is clear that Agnes, formerly Maude's motherly influence, and Maude have become equals, an effect enhanced by the dialogue between them, which situates them in the same sphere, unlike the silence
signifying the relationship between mother and son in "My Sister’s Sleep." As is usual in Christina’s work, reality and dialogue are emphasized as opposed to Dante Gabriel’s focus on moments of silent communion. In addition, the dying Maude, although she fills the role of a languishing female romantic poet, does not become an object of vision: she makes no deathbed pronouncements except through her poetry.

Dante Gabriel’s form (Petrarchan quatrains) also highlights his poem’s overall impact as a series of somewhat abstract, discrete pictures. Even after the last stanza has been read, both poet and reader apparently remain as onlookers, or domestic flâneurs, as the speaker has been throughout the entire poem. Dante Gabriel further emphasizes this subtle collapse between poet and reader by the slightly cacophonous off rhyme in the last stanza’s central couplet: "struck" and "clock." On the contrary, "Symbols’" six-line stanzas, each of which (as stated earlier) ends with a two-line "tail," mirrors the poem’s emphasis on cyclicity.

Therefore, Dante Gabriel’s revision of traditional romantic and typological tropes in "My Sister’s Sleep," which enables him to escape the Baudelairean and gothic shock effects that dominate "Sister Helen" and "Jenny," centers around his speaker’s gender-determined gaze, which separates him from the domestic world he looks into
throughout most of the poem. We as readers are also observers, which allows the poet to focus on the mother's influence rather than, as is common in his sister's work, on a transcendent realm beyond the capacity of human speech. Dante Gabriel's emphasis on exploiting the male prerogative of his speaker's gaze is further enhanced by the slight collapse between poet and reader at the end of the poem. The speaker may overcome his alienation by becoming part of one final, all-encompassing Christian tableau, but we as readers, together with the poet, remain on the outside, still asserting our gaze's priority to define this domestic world beyond our presumably masculine sphere. On the contrary, Christina's characters are mostly circumscribed by the domestic sphere (Maude contains almost no male characters), and struggle desperately to find some sort of vocation in a world where, as the details of the text make clear, not only writing and looking, but more particularly, being looked at can constitute a threat to one's sanity.

Since Christina's poetess Maude dies, and the "dead branch" and "crushed eggs" in "Symbols" attain speech only at the price of their life, it is difficult to argue that by 1850 Christina had escaped the nineteenth-century female poets' tendency towards "life-weariness, the acceptance of inactivity, and the willing subsidence toward death" which encouraged them, like Maude, to "daydream" rather than speak ("DK" 65,75). Nevertheless, I think Christina's emphases on
her poetic subject's and object's autonomy (often through appropriating biblical texts); on dialogue; and on her characters' consistent rejection of fantasy as opposed to reality become strategies she will use throughout her career to redefine herself decisively as a speaking subject in her poems. It is equally difficult to argue that the 1850 "My Sister's Sleep" is unorthodox: Dante Gabriel also self-consciously manipulates traditional romantic and Tractarian images to focus on his own version of a typological emblem—the Victorian inspirational mother—as the mediatrix of his persona's evidently skeptical faith. But unlike "Sister Helen," "Jenny," and even "Hand and Soul," "My Sister's Sleep" deploys the speaker's domestic flâneurism to protect him from shock. By 1850, Dante Gabriel's speaker has acquired Baudelaire's mature artist's capacity to analyze what he sees and to contain it in a single image—in spite of, or perhaps because of his ambivalent attitude towards "faith."

By the time Dante Gabriel wrote "The Card Dealer," or "Vingt-Ét-Un," published in the Athenæum in 1852, he seems to have expanded his gaze into the public sphere, but this view is undercut by the title, which specifically identifies as the poem's subject a painting by von Holst of a beautiful woman "dealing out cards, with a peculiar fixedness of expression" (PDR 254). This distances both speaker and reader from the woman, since she is not human, but merely an
artifact. But this topic remained risky for Dante Gabriel, as illustrated by his 1848 letter to Hunt, when he describes this lady as "personifying . . . intellectual enjoyment"—a riskiness accentuated by Patmore's remark at an 1849 P.R.B. meeting "that the devil is the only being purely reasoning and analytic and therefore is the devil" (ZW 46). Dante Gabriel also reveals his desire to distance himself from this subject by his publishing this poem under a pseudonym (H. H. H.) as well as by its form: the same vivacious, six-line abcbdb stanza employed by Barrett Browning in "The Lost Bower."

Moreover, Dante Gabriel's use of the second person throughout this poem should be understood in the context of its composition: most of the poems he wrote during this period were directed towards his P.R.B. brothers, particularly poems he wrote during his journey to Paris and Belgium in late 1849 with Hunt. In "The Paris Railway-Station," a poem included in a letter he wrote to William Michael and described by McGann as employing a "kind of shock effect" through its description of a dead body in the station's morgue, Dante Gabriel also overtly employs the second person plural. I will discuss this in more detail later, but I would note here that, as well as drawing us into the poem through emphasizing its sensationalistic details, as McGann argues, the second person also serves as an additional frame to distance both speaker and reader from
the classic nineteenth-century evil occupation—gambling—as well as from the public woman who likewise personifies the forbidden. Such complex framing appears necessary for the speaker to allow himself, as well as us, blatantly to indulge in gazing as well as in the romantic, synesthetic devices that dominate the poem’s structure.

Boos describes the heroine of "The Card Dealer" as symbolizing "a mingling of sensory experiences ... the cancelling of opposites or their point of merger ... especially attractive to Rossetti" (PDR 202). I agree that this figure was emblematic for Dante Gabriel because he kept a reproduction of this painting in his room (PDR 255). I would argue, however, that Dante Gabriel’s overtly synesthetic presentation of this "dealer" is not important because she, like "Jenny," is a vehicle of the speaker’s shocked swoon, but because, as a commodified function of the gold she manipulates and the cards she serves, she is a figure for success.²⁰ Benjamin defines gambling’s appeal as "narcotic" through its power to stop "Time," and/or "invalidate the standards of experience" (LP 138). The "card dealer" possesses this power to "violate" time, but she also seems to figure the ambivalence of success for nineteenth-century artists and intellectuals like Dante and Christina Rossetti, a theme reflected in their mid-fifties poems such as "The Burden of Nineveh" and "The World."
The poem's initial image of the staring woman is, as Boos points out, concisely Coleridgean, resembling the old man in "Limbo," whom Coleridge also describes as staring into space "with a steady look sublime . . . his eyeless face all eye," and who similarly suggests a break in the apparently seamless fabric of human time implied by orthodox typology (PDR 201-02). In the second stanza, Dante Gabriel revises the traditional romantic conflation of music and silence used by Barrett Browning in "The Lost Bower" and Dante Gabriel himself in "Hand and Soul" to invoke a dreamlike, mystical state. In this poem, as his repetitions suggest, such a state is merged with the woman herself as well as the gold she manipulates:

The gold that's heaped beside her hand,
In truth, rich prize it were;
And rich the dreams that wreathe her brows
With magic silence there;
And he were rich who should unwind
That woven golden hair.

A "woven" "wreath" is, of course, the traditional "crown" of poetry (Agnes weaves one for Maude, introducing a "surreptitious sprig of bay"); here, however, gold is a peculiarly appropriate metaphor for a woman of the public sphere, by definition a commodity (M 33). The next stanza characterizes the woman's power to violate any typological scheme of history--the antithesis of the mother as domestic icon in "My Sister's Sleep"--through a precise visual image:

Some music surely fans the sense,
A breath like closing plumes:
You know it by the spark called up
From her eyes' purple glooms;
You almost feel the instant thrill
Pulse through the lighted rooms. (13-18)

The second stanza's synesthetic imagery is resolved here through a "spark": an image subsuming the visual and the tactile. Dante Gabriel's repeated use of the second person in this stanza, eventually cut from the 1870 revision, appears designed, like his similar usage in "The Paris Railway-Station" discussed by McGann, "to give us an extreme lesson in observation and sensory responsiveness": ". . .
You fancy him--/Smoking an early pipe, and watching, as /
An artist, the effect of his last work." As in "My Sister's Sleep," such a device subtly collapses the boundary between poet and reader, emphasizing our distanced perspective as flâneurs in relation to this picture and allowing us a safe space in which to toy with the notion of synesthetic collapse. After a series of allusions that describe the poem's setting in gothic and biblical terms, Dante Gabriel's persona returns to the woman as an emblem of the "Game" that she, we, and the speaker all share:

And do you ask, what game she plays?
With him, 'tis lost or won;

With him it is playing still; with him
It is not yet begun;
But 'tis a game she plays with all,
The game of Twenty-One. (49-54)

At the end of "The Card Dealer," even more self-consciously than in "My Sister's Sleep," Dante Gabriel collapses poet and reader, focusing our mutual gaze on a woman whose
commodification (ambivalently suggesting ours) is doubly stressed through her role as a function of gold.

In "The Card Dealer," Dante Gabriel also seems to be parodying his own inspiration in "My Sister's Sleep" through using the same strategy of the gaze to suggest an antithetical metaphor as an object of desire: gold rather than faith. Dante Gabriel, however, dismisses his powerful central metaphor in "The Card Dealer" with more ease than the speaker is able to rid himself of his mother's influence in "My Sister's Sleep" because he has defined the card dealer from the poem's beginning (partly through emphasizing the second person pronoun) as a picture, an object free to appropriate and define at will through the "sexual politics of looking" (VD 66). As in another picture poem initially written in 1848, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," based on his first oil painting for which Christina was the model, each image contributes to the poem's central frame. In "The Card Dealer," Dante Gabriel focuses his frame on a secularized moment with the potential to violate orthodox figural systems. In "Girlhood," his strategy is the opposite: he employs a deliberately flattened diction to recount Mary's attributes, stressing quintessentially domestic qualities, similar to those possessed by Agnes in Maude:

Loving she was, with temperate respect:
A profound simpleness of intellect
Was hers, and extreme patience. (DRFL 2:45)
These characteristics are directly opposed to those possessed by the "card dealer" or "Jenny," but it is noteworthy that these qualities are classified according to the type of woman Dante Gabriel is describing, and are divorced from any choice exercised by the women themselves—they are completely determined by the narrator’s vision. In "Girlhood," Mary’s only physical action, like Christina’s gothic heroine in "The Dead City," is to "weep for a brief period"; otherwise, her function in the poem is to accept her fate "Because the fullness of the time was come" (14). (Ironically but typically, in spite of this poem’s orthodox sentiments, Dante Gabriel revises the traditional biblical treatment of this moment through stating that Mary "had no fear / At all" (12-13). As Christina notes in The Face of the Deep, echoing the biblical text, "holy Mary ‘was troubled’ at the salutation of an Angel" [FD 310].) Agnes, similarly an embodiment of Christian humility, is also allowed, through the same type of flattened diction employed by Dante Gabriel, to affirm her autonomy through the words of God himself.

Again, the contrast between Dante Gabriel and Christina’s use of similar techniques is clear: Dante Gabriel employs his freedom to gaze into the public sphere to experiment with the various recastings of figural vision at the core of most of his poems. Christina, on the other hand, uses language as a tool to affirm her heroines’
autonomy. Her emphasis on this technique, as I discussed earlier, was heavily determined by her living and working within a sphere that defined single women as "redundant" and forbade them any vocation. Dante Gabriel, of course, was equally determined by his desire to prove himself a romantic genius--free to define his own visions.

Christina’s three central strategies for defining herself as a poetic subject rather than object--her use of dialogue; her emphasis on her subject’s, object’s, and reader’s autonomy; and her stress on reality rather than fantasy--are emphasized in one of her most anthologized sonnets: "Remember," written on July 25, 1849, and later published in Goblin Market. At this point in her career, Christina still employs what Mermin defines as one of her most successful techniques: that of "situating" her speaker "at or beyond the border . . . [of] life and death" in order to collapse traditional Victorian and romantic hierarchies and enable her heroines to speak ("DK" 74). In "Remember," her increased poetic authority is based on her speaker’s direct address of a male other rather than, as in her earlier poems, on her heroine’s fantasies of her own death. As well as employing a sort of dialogue to stress the other’s presence (and consequently, both her subject’s and object’s autonomy), Christina further develops this one-sided conversation through distinct physical gestures
which unsurprisingly reflect the hierarchy of a typical Victorian romantic relationship:

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
(1:37,1-8)

By using the imperative form to address her lover, she accentuates her speaker's authority although, as is typical of the female romantic mode, it is an authority enabled only by death. She accumulates, however, through concrete actions, her ability to resist her lover's efforts to control her life in a tone that seems to grow increasingly annoyed at his worldly solicitations. In line three, a cluster of spondees in the second, third, and fourth position stress the lover's inability to hold onto her even through the most innocent of Victorian romantic practices: holding her hand. Line four's iambic pentameter reveals her divided mind through her pose: she is "half-turned" towards her lover, not through coyness, but through being equally attracted to eternity.

Christina further emphasizes the tension between the speaker and her lover in the second quatrain, when she develops her exhortational tone through repeating her opening phrase, "Remember me," and through building upon her initial trope of separation. She begins deconstructing her
lover's authority by first pointing to his inability physically to restrain her in lines one to four, and secondly, in lines four to eight, through her usurpation of his culturally-determined prerogative: verbal authority. She stresses this through her repetition of "you" in line six, which diminishes her silent lover's traditionally powerful male voice by recasting his "myth" of their future together: her forthcoming death effectively negates all his projected plans to give "order and causality" to their lives ("'LTL'" 248). The poet's trochaic substitution at the beginning of line seven, together with her third repetition of the phrase "Remember me," further augments her authority, derived (as in "My Sister's Sleep") from classic Victorian female influence. The line's medial caesura, which divides it in half (three feet on one side, two on the other) equally stresses the exhortational tone of both sections: "Remember me" and "you understand." The entire octet reiterates what is becoming, as I stated earlier, a classic Christina Rossetti trope: renouncing fantasy in favor of reality, even if it is the reality of death. In the context of this poem, her speech, enabled by the acceptable female authority of influence (as line eight makes clear) "counsel[s]" her lover to avoid one of the most traditional of male romantic tropes, heavily exploited by Dante Gabriel, the early Italians, and others: mourning a youthful beloved's death. The anonymous male author's argument in
the 1856 "Woman, Her Duties, Education and Position" that women should become better educated in order to strengthen men through intelligent converse supports my point that, at the crucial turn of this sonnet, Christina augments her poetic authority by exploiting female "influence" to "counsel" her lover to eschew overt fantasy."

The sestet develops both of the strategies initiated in the octet: the exhortational tone with which she begs her lover not to "grieve" over her memory, and the gap she opens up in her text by contrasting her present with her unknown future, when her "thoughts" will be different than those she "once . . . had" (12). Again, the text’s theme rests on the speaker’s focus on reality, and on her encouraging her lover to accept it too, and abandon any projected "myths" in honor of her memory: "Better by far you should forget and smile / Than that you should remember and be sad" (13-14). This poem, along with "Symbols," is one of the earliest, I think, in which Christina overtly begins to recast the conventional male romantic’s linguistic authority through the ideology of influence; it presages her later, more developed experiments in this mode in her mid-fifties poems.

Christina expanded her revision of her brother’s favorite trope—the female beloved as visual object—in a dramatic monologue directly derived from "On Mary’s Portrait" and "The Blessed Damozel": "A Year Afterwards," written in February, 1850, during the P.R.B.’s heyday. In
addition to recasting Dante Gabriel's work, Christina's tone in "A Year Afterwards" also echoes that of William Michael's blank verse narrative, "Mrs. Holmes Grey," written in September, 1849, and favorably referred to by Christina in a January 31, 1850 letter. It is interesting that William Michael suppressed this poem from both his 1896 and 1904 collected volumes of his sister's published and unpublished work. One can speculate that this suppression (this poem remained unpublished until 1990, in Crump's third volume) had something to do with its extreme derivativeness.

Through identifying the narrator of "A Year Afterwards" as a male mourning the death of his beloved, Christina makes "an interesting attempt to split her identification between a male poet and a female object, but . . . loses the articulation and psychological tension that is generated by difference" ("DK" 71). As a result, this poem's male speaker, somewhat like the personae of "Sister Helen" and "Jenny," becomes too much like the traditional gothic romance hero—a "passive observer rather than [an] active participant in events."

At this period of her life, as Harrison's essay "Eighteen Early Letters" makes clear, Christina was happily involved with her brothers' efforts to produce The Germ, the P.R.B. journal that published many of her own works as well as those of her brothers and fiancé, James Collinson. She reveals her concern with its success in her January 31
letter to William Michael in which she shows herself, through her humorous portrait of a "poetess," highly sensitive to the public's expectations:

Do you know, I seriously urge on your consideration the increase of prose and decrease of poetry in the Germ, the present state of things strikes me as most alarming. Should all other articles fail, boldly publish my letters . . . . by hinting that I occupy a high situation in B----ch------m P------l------e, being in fact no other than the celebrated lady ------, and by substituting initials and asterisks for all names, and adding a few titles, my correspondence might have quite a success . . . .  

By this point in time, however, as the letter makes clear, The Germ's success was as questionable as the happy conclusion of Christina's engagement, another major theme of her letters during this period (her engagement was broken some time during the next few months). As Harrison points out, during this period Christina was under "enormous stress" which she does not relieve by dwelling on "the beauties and curiosities of nature." All of these pressures perhaps induced Christina so directly to revise both her brothers' work.

"A Year Afterwards" is a worthwhile poem to study in order to sum up Christina's poetic development during this period because, as in "Remember," she experiments with influence as a motif for constructing herself as a poetic authority. The poem recasts both her brothers' work in accordance with her own notion of "'the highest view,'" perhaps through a fantasized version of her soon-to-be
ex-fiancé, Collinson. Although the poem clearly is not one of her best efforts, she succeeds, I think, if one reads it as a type of parody: an attempt, on her part, "to come to terms . . . with . . . [her own poetic] past."

All three of the poems Christina worked with ("On Mary's Portrait," "The Blessed Damozel," and "Mrs. Holmes Grey") as well as her own, reveal their authors' characteristic concern with form as well as theme. All four are dramatic monologues, but William Michael's reflects his interest in narrative (the poem is written in blank verse) as well as psychology: it consists of a conversation between two men over the coffin of the first man's dead wife. She has died of unrequited love for a man other than her husband; the poem's epigraph, by Poe--"'perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart'"--illustrates its gothic theme. But it is written strictly in accordance with "Pre-Raphaelite naturalistic principles, 'excluding . . . [all] exalted descriptive matter.'" The balladic "The Blessed Damozel" memorializes a dead beloved, as does "On Mary's Portrait" which, however, more directly derives from Browning, the early Italians, and gothic literature. In it, the speaker converses with a friend while viewing his dead beloved's portrait, which he himself has painted. Moreover, its form is different from the ballad-like "Damozel": a variation on the Spenserian stanza, with lines shortened to tetrameter--its rhyme scheme is
Christina's form in "A Year Afterwards" is stichic iambic tetrameter, with irregular rhymes; her narrator, somewhat similarly to "On Mary's Portrait's" hero, converses with a friend while walking to visit his beloved's grave.

The beginning of "On Mary's Portrait . . ." directly echoes Browning's focus in "My Last Duchess" on what Riede describes as "a miraculously lifelike portrait," a trope also employed by the early Italian Lentino and Maturin in *Melmoth* (DGR 33-34). The poem's dramatic monologue form also further sensationalizes Dante Gabriel's focus on his speaker's and, by implication, his reader's appropriative gaze in his other early poems--"Sister Helen," "Jenny," "My Sister's Sleep," and "The Card Dealer"--through his frustration at the inability of the portrait he has painted somehow to grant his beloved eternal life:

Why yes: she looks as then she looked;  
There is not any difference:  
She was even so on that old time  
Which has been here but is gone hence.  
Gaze hard, and she shall seem to stir;  
Till the greenth, looking shadier  
As her white arm parts it and cleaves,  
Does homage with its bowing leaves.  
And yet the earth is over her.42

Like Christina in "Remember," Dante Gabriel here focuses on a distinct physical gesture, highlighted by his emphasis, similar to the early Italians, on contrasting colors: "greenth" and "white" (W 355). But whereas it takes Dante Gabriel thirty-six lines to describe the speaker's
ambivalent relationship with this portrait, Christina sums up her speaker's beloved's appearance (in this case, on her deathbed) in only eight lines. As is typical of her work, her speaker deliberately eschews the sort of supernatural vision often embraced by Dante Gabriel's personae and flatly mentions only the "many-feathered grasses" he has planted "Above her bosom":

Things are so changed since last we met:
Come; I will show you where she lies

The steady sweetness did not go
Thro' the long week she lay asleep,
Until the dust was heaped on her.
Now many-feathered grasses grow
Above her bosom: come; I will
Show you all this, and we can talk
Going; it is a pleasant walk
And the wind makes it pleasanter.

(3:181,1-2,8-14)

Christina's metaphors in this poem, as in her earlier work, revise Dante Gabriel's through being deliberately typological. As Sussman points out, "grow" is a metaphor signifying "human development within historical time," while Christina herself defines "grasses" in her 1881 calendar of religious festivals, Called to Be Saints, as emblematic of our "one nature": "Angels . . . with devils, sanctified souls with souls nigh unto cursing" (FF 65). In addition, the first two lines of "A Year Afterwards" reflect lines 140-41 in William Michael's poem--"Can we not talk again as once we used, / Through twilight and through evening into night,"--while her speaker's tendency to reveal suppressed emotion through remarks about the weather ("...
it is a pleasant walk / And the wind makes it pleasanter") mimics the tense Mr. Grey, who begins his tale of his wife’s attempted betrayal with the comment, "We’ve had a splendid harvest, you’ll have heard". But as the reader learns at the end of William Michael’s tale, Holmes Grey’s "reserve" merely masks his keen desire for revenge, mirroring the gothic hero’s wish to "dominate . . . [his] world, rather than accommodate . . . [himself] to it," much like Dante Gabriel’s speaker in "On Mary’s Portrait." On the other hand, the patience of Christina’s hero reflects John Henry Newman’s concept of Reserve as "a holding back against a tide of almost irrepressible emotion, letting out only a portion of the passion that lies beneath." In "A Year Afterwards," Christina uses Reserve much as she does in "Symbols" and Maude—to rewrite her brothers’ favorite romantic, gothic, early Italian, and naturalistic tropes—except, in this case, she revises both of her brothers simultaneously.

Both "On Mary’s Portrait" and "A Year Afterwards" lead up to epiphanic moments where the speaker imagines the beloved’s presence in or emerging from a grove of trees. But in Dante Gabriel’s poem, this moment is introduced by forty-four highly-derivative lines that directly echo Keats and Wordsworth, among others, and are evidently meant to signify the speaker’s "ultimate[ly] solipsistic self-engagement," although he is apparently trying to
construct a Wordsworthian "'myth of memory'" in an attempt to stave off madness. In addition, this "myth" is heavily permeated with the mystic presence of the stilnovisti: the speaker describes his beloved's emergence from the grove through colors (green and yellow), lights, and shadows that strongly suggest the early Italians. The beloved's "white dress . . . / yellow [beneath] with the press / Of sunshine" resembles the dead "lady" of a sestina by Dante Gabriel's beloved Dante, which he translated, who "sets a crown of grass" on her hair and "weaves the yellow with the green" (86-87, W 355). This image of self-crowning emblematizes Dante's lady's mergeance with nature rather than himself (a classic trope), and her consequent escape from her lover's control through death: the same motif Christina uses in "Remember." In "On Mary's Portrait," however, the lady is specifically placed in space by the speaker's gaze as she emerges from "that dim house of leaves," evidently into the speaker's arms: it is this scene, as illustrated by the passage I cited earlier, that he attempts to immortalize through his portrait (92).

In the second stanza of "A Year Afterwards," Christina also has her speaker and his companion arrive at a grove in which the speaker imagines his beloved's presence, but with three noteworthy differences. First, this "walk" takes place within the context of the poem's narrative action and, as a result, stresses reality rather than fantasy. Even the
"screen" the lover "fancies" between him and his beloved is made up of solid objects--"branches" and leaves, as opposed to Dante Gabriel’s more abstract house of "shadows" (3:181,18-20). Secondly, it takes up much less space in the poem (six lines as opposed to forty-four), and lastly, it gradually reflects more of "The Blessed Damozel" than "On Mary’s Portrait" because of Christina’s focus, towards the end of her second stanza, on influence rather than synesthetic merging. She introduces her theme of influence through a motif directly derived from stanza four of "The Blessed Damozel," in which the speaker’s efforts at conjuring up his beloved’s presence are contained in a single image: she "lean[s] o’er . . . [him, and] her hair / . . . [falls] all about . . . [his] face." Christina more strongly emphasizes her speaker’s awareness that he is only indulging in the classic female poet’s (Maude’s) favorite occupation--daydreaming--through her repetition of qualifying phrases and words such as "Cannot you fancy," "may," "Seems," and "I like to think":

Cannot you fancy she may be
Leaning down to me from her rest;
And shaking her long golden hair
Thro’ the thick branches to my face,
That I may feel she still is mine?--
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
I like to think her joy may not
Be perfected, although divine
In all the glory of the blest,
Without me . . . (3:181-82,22-26,32-35)

Throughout this poem’s seventy-nine lines, Christina is careful to stress the gap between the transcendent sphere,
where the speaker's beloved, "in all the glory of the blest," is doubtless at "rest," and her speaker's "fancies" that "her joy may not / Be perfected . . ." (italics mine). This supports my argument that "A Year Afterwards" directly recasts what McGann labels "Dante Gabriel's literalism . . . in the service of an erotic heaven that she [Christina] would not construct in her poems and would never approve in her mind." As in their earlier work, Christina's almost obsessive preoccupation with distinctly defining the boundaries between subject, object, and reader as well as between this world and the next allows her to focus, as Hassett notes, on "the objects of her notice," gradually enabling her construction of a distinct poetic self ("CR" 497). By the end of "The Blessed Damozel" and "On Mary's Portrait," however, both speakers have hopelessly blurred the boundary between self and other: the speaker in "Damozel" relinquishes his earlier doubt and claims he actually "saw" his beloved's "smile," and "heard her tears," while "On Mary's Portrait's" speaker likewise states that he sees "nought else / Alive" ("BD" 145,150; "OMP" 138-39). This implies their descent towards madness—a classic gothic theme.

Another likeness between the 1850 "The Blessed Damozel" and "A Year Afterwards," which suggests that Christina was working more closely with Dante Gabriel's texts than at any other point in her career, is their mutual focus, towards
the middle of both poems, on the ideology of influence. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Christina spends almost twice as much time as Dante Gabriel (thirty-one lines to his twelve) developing this theme, but strangely enough, both eliminated these lines from all later versions of the poems. Dante Gabriel, of course, consistently sought to purge such Christian connotations from his early poems, but in Christina's case, one can guess that it was probably because her expurgated lines introduce a note of dramatic conflict (reminiscent of "Remember") into a poem which she seems finally to have conceived as a fantasy of a perfect Anglo-Catholic lover. Christina experiments with the notion of influence in her poem's first version much as she does in "Remember"--as a possible source of female power and escape from male control--albeit, in conformity with female romantic tradition, only in the context of her heroine's death.

Stanza xviib of the 1850 "Damozel" focuses on the issue of influence through a series of rhetorical questions that merely suggest its power:

Alas, and though the end were reached? . . . . . .
Was thy part understood
Or borne in trust? And for her sake
Shall this too be found good?--
May the close lips that knew not prayer
Praise ever, though they would? (97-102)

Dante Gabriel refers to influence through one of the same qualifiers used by Christina to describe her speaker's fantasy of his dead beloved's discontent: "May."
"Influence," for Dante Gabriel's lover, is only a possibility, and by the end of the poem, it becomes irrelevant to his speaker's final fantasy of his beloved's presence. Christina, on the other hand, exploits the dramatic potential of the situation:

I recollect one Summer night
I wove a garland for her head
And bade her wear it for my sake;
She wore it till the bloom was gone;
And then made answer: "Pluck no more
These flowers for me: henceforward I
Will wait uncrowned till I put on
Such flowers as Dorothea wore

Her courage won a soul from earth;--
Is love sufficient for such things?
Can simple love possess such worth?--"
I understood her questionings
But would not answer. . .
(3:429-30,45-51,54-58)

This stanza goes on to mention how a "squirrel" then shook "a few / White may leaves" on the beloved's hair, and that "the last sun rays touched her brow" like a "glory" while her eyes remain "full of solemn prayer--" (3:430,62-68). Not surprisingly, this blatantly orthodox image "irks" the persona through its prefigurement of her death, but also, perhaps, in the context of "Damozel," because he resents her naïve attempts to manipulate him--particularly through her forthcoming death (68). The entire scene accentuates her authority rather than his: like the female heroine of Dante's "Sestina" or Barrett Browning's Aurora Leigh, she rejects his crown in favor of her own (further stressed through her repetition of "I" in lines 49-50), and uses
dialogue directly to question her lover concerning her possible role as mediatrix. (He diplomatically avoids a confrontation, but his equivocal response—"I was content / To walk on silently with her"—suggests that he acknowledges her questions as a possible challenge to his authority.)

The stanza's final image further emphasizes this: although they "walk on silently," she is, ironically, crowned by a squirrel (like herself, a natural "object") rather than by her lover (61). As in "Remember," this image suggests her ability to escape her lover's control—even his covert rejection of dialogue through silence. Through this scene's dramatic emphasis on female influence and a lover's somewhat irritated evasion of it, Christina echoes an underlying theme in many of Dante Gabriel's early poems. Rather than focusing on her speakers's irritation, or shock, however, Christina continues with increasing effectiveness to exploit the one power available to Victorian women—domestic influence—as a way of augmenting her poetic authority.

Her poem's last stanza again focuses her reader's attention on the intertextuality that has dominated the poem, although she switches back to a concise recasting, in orthodox terms, of the conclusion of "On Mary's Portrait." In Dante Gabriel's poem, the thirteenth stanza, in strongly connotative language, points to another moment (as in "The Card Dealer") when "Time" stops:

There was no Time while we sat there.
But I remember that we found
Very few words, and that our hair
Had to be untangled when we rose. (110-13)

The imagery here, clearly sexual, seems transgressive, but Dante Gabriel immediately recasts the event by framing it in an act that suggests spiritual adoration: his speaker paints a portrait of his beloved "Outstepping from the clustered trees . . . / [and] moved not till the work was grand, /
Whole, and complete" (121-23). "Mary" watches with awe, with her face against his breast, but as in Browning’s "Poryphria’s Lover," this scene of peaceful content does not last long: the artist has somehow endangered his beloved through his attempts fix her forever with his gaze. As Debra Mancoff, near the beginning of her essay on Elizabeth Siddall, "Is There Substance Behind the Shadows," astutely comments, that "For Rossetti, artistic depiction was inseparable from possession."50

In "A Year Afterwards," Christina concisely reverses such attempts to control one’s object through recreation in one’s own image: her speaker sows "grasses" over his beloved’s grave rather than painting her portrait, again exploiting "grass" as an emblem of unity as well as her speaker’s humility. Even flowers would constitute an ornament too expressive of the speaker’s ego; he merely shapes these "grasses" into a "Cross." The poem ends with his "dream," again by the qualifier "May," carefully distinguished from reality, unlike the endings of Dante Gabriel:
sometimes I could dream
She sees the Cross, and feels the love
That planted it; and prays that I
May come and share her hidden rest;
May even lie where she doth lie,
With the same turf above my breast,
And the same stars and silent sky. (3:183,73-79)

All Christina's technical devices in this section—her run-on lines; the medial caesura in line seventy-five, stressing the verb "prays"; as well as her use of anaphora and repetition—emphasize the speaker's dream-like state. He has truly become the equivalent of a classic gothic romance heroine in his passivity and acceptance of death—or a female romantic poet. As Mermin notes, such an ending does seem "a fantasy of wish fulfillment . . . in which [the nineteenth-century female poet] imagines herself enacting both roles perfectly at the same time," that of subject and object ("DK" 71).

I think, however, Christina's deliberate revision of alternate sections from two of her brother's longest and best poems of the period suggests originality and resistance rather than merely a classic female romantic fade-out towards death. This poem fulfills Linda Hutcheon's definition of a successful parody through exploiting "both textual doubling (which unifies and reconciles) and differentiation (which foregrounds irreconcilable opposition between texts and between texts and the 'world')." In my next chapter, I will further discuss how Christina's work was enabled by her distant, onlooker's posture in regard to
her brothers' public world--i.e., the P.R.B. and its remnants--and by her continuing experiments, even during her difficult life circumstances in the early 1850s, with revising classic male and female romantic tropes.
Notes


2 "Woman, Her Duties, Education, and Position," The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine for 1856 (London: Bell and Dalby, 1856) 472.


4 Herbert L. Sussman, Fact into Figure: Typology in Carlyle, Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1979) xvii., 7. Hereafter cited in the text as FF.

5 Charles Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1961) 286.

6 Quoted by Mermin, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 114.

7 Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "The Lost Bower," Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1882) 371. All subsequent references to this poem will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

8 David A. Kent, "'By thought, word, and deed': George Herbert and Christina Rossetti," The Achievement of Christina Rossetti, ed. Kent, 258-59.
9 Ibid.


11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., 285.


16 Paull F. Baum, "The Bancroft Manuscripts of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," *Modern Philology*, 39 (1941): 50-51. All subsequent references to this poem will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

17 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Sister Helen," *The Dusseldorf Artist's Album*, ed. and translated by Mrs. Mary Howitt (Dusseldorf: Arnz and Co., 1854) 11. All subsequent references to this poem will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number.


20 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Burden of Nineveh," The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine for 1856 (London: Bell and Dalby, 1856) 515. All subsequent references to this poem will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

21 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "My Sister's Sleep," The Germ, ed. & intro. by Hosman, 21. All subsequent references to this poem will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

22 McGann, intro., The Achievement of Christina Rossetti, 16.


26 Pollock astutely defines the term "inscription" in Vision and Difference on p. 62-63 as it reflects the practices of nineteenth-century female painters Berthe Morisot & Mary Cassatt: their ability to "demarcate" space as regards "the relation a man or woman has to that space and its occupants." I think that Dante Gabriel Rossetti similarly "demarcates"
space in his early poems to reflect his claustrophobic spatial orientations.


29 See Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, 188 for an intriguing discussion of the symbolic resonance of "gold" as "a catalytic agent for imperialist forces" in the nineteenth century.


31 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Card Dealer," Boos, The Poetry of Dante G. Rossetti, 254n. All subsequent references to this poem will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

32 McGann, "Rossetti's Significant Details," 81.


35 Day, In the Circles of Fear and Desire," 16.


37 Ibid., 203.

38 Quoted by McGann, intro., The Achievement of Christina Rossetti, 17.


41 Ibid., 130.

42 James Swafford, "'The Fulness of the Time': The Early Marian Poems of D. G. Rossetti," *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 2 (1982): 87. All subsequent references to this poem will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

43 Christina Rossetti, *Called to Be Saints* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1881) 518.


45 Day, *In the Circles of Fear and Desire*, 60.

46 Quoted by Tennyson, *Victorian Devotional Poetry*, 133.


49 McGann, intro., *The Achievement of Christina Rossetti*, 17.


CHAPTER III

ENABLING THE FEMALE GAZE:
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FLÂNEUSIAN PROTOTYPE

The impact of the Victorian ideology of separate spheres was probably most strongly felt by Christina after the demise of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1850. For financial reasons, but also because she lost a home-based market for her poetry, Christina published only two poems and one short story in the seven years after The Germ’s dissolution. Her publishing career was launched, in 1859-61, only by the active intervention of both her brothers and through her own persistence in writing poems during what must have been a literarily isolated period for her. Although her letters to William Michael during this period abound with humorous references to P.R.B. concerns and her own creative efforts, she never again served as secretary for Dante Gabriel, or worked as derivatively from her brothers’ texts as she did when she wrote "A Year Afterwards."

Nevertheless, whereas Dante Gabriel stated in both 1852 and 1856 that he had "abandoned poetry . . . as a pursuit of . . . [his] own," Christina’s poetic output during the early
1850s remained high (DKFL 97, DGR 59). I think Christina's separation from the P.R.B. proved curiously enabling because it forced her to renounce her traditional role as model and to abandon some of her more conventional poetic themes. (Of the nine poems Christina had published by the end of 1850, eight had protagonists who spoke from the edge of the grave or beyond.) In the poems she wrote from 1850-56, she persists in experimenting with ways to revise her male and female romantic precursors through a poetic that emphasizes the autonomy of speaker, reader and object in relation to the transcendental. She also continues to develop her technique of using the ideology of female influence to comment on the public sphere of her real and adopted P.R.B. brethren. Such authority was, of course, entirely in keeping with a sister's right, as a pure "sunbeam," to comment upon her brothers' actions.¹

Her early experiments with the posture of a prototypical flâneuse are best reflected in three poems where her poetic gaze directly focuses upon her real and adopted brethren. In the first of these poems, "Portraits," written in May, 1853, she praises her brothers' "selfsame treasured" friends—evidently the P.R.B.—as well as their privileged position as "the dear delight" of "one home" (3:213-14,13-14). This seems unintentionally ironic, since the poem was written immediately after she and her parents had settled in Frome. Moreover, at this point in time, the
P.R.B., for all practical purposes, was dead (even the steadfast William Michael stopped keeping the P.R.B. journal in January, 1853). Although a stanza which apparently contained an unbecoming "portrait" of Dante Gabriel was destroyed, the poem is basically a nostalgic hymn to her brothers by what must have been a rather lonely "sunbeam"--its tone is noticeably idealistic (3:442). The next version, written in September of the same year, contains more ironic comments directed toward "the great P.R.B.," although in this rendition, she goes out of her way to emphasize Dante Gabriel's actual accomplishments: "D. G. Rossetti offered two / Good pictures to the public view" (3:332,6-8). This was probably because, by 1853, criticism of his first two pictures had caused him to eschew public exhibitions. Two days before she composed the final version of this poem, on November 8, 1853, Dante Gabriel wrote her a long letter containing specific criticisms of her poetry. Although it is impossible to say whether she received this letter before or after she wrote "The P.R.B. is in its decadence," one can conjecture that her poem may have been written as a direct response to his remarks:

The latter verses of this are most excellent; but some, which I remember vaguely, about "dreaming of a lifelong ill" (etc. etc. ad libitum), smack rather of the old shop. I wish you would try any rendering either of narrative or sentiment from real abundant Nature, which presents much more variety than all such "dreamings."

(DFRL 2:119-22)
These comments are telling since, as I discussed in chapter two, Christina generally seems more focused on reality than her brother, whose early poems mostly consist of dream-like meditations. Christina’s perhaps angry response to her brother’s remarks is to invert traditional roles: she relegates all of her brethren, including Dante Gabriel, to the position normally reserved for women—that of objects whose only pathway to transcendence is through becoming one with natural cyclicity. It is intriguing, in the context of recent feminist criticism, that Christina should cast her "deceased" brethren as "abundant" (to use Dante Gabriel’s term) natural objects; as Homans remarks, for Wordsworth, "Mother Nature . . . is what the poet is not," but for the female poet, "Nature" "is prolific biologically, not linguistically, and she is as destructive as she is creative." Christina’s response is doubly ironic if one considers it not only in the context of male and female romantic tradition, but in relation to Dante Gabriel’s somewhat sarcastic suggestions that she should stop "dreaming" and focus on reality:

The P.R.B. is in its decadence:—
for Woolner in Australia cooks his chops;
And Hunt is yearning for the land of Cheops;
D. G. Rossetti shuns the vulgar optic;
While William M. Rossetti merely lops
His B.s in English disesteemed as Coptic
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
And he at last, the champion, great Millais
Attaining academic opulence
Winds up his signature with A.R.A.:
So rivers merge in the perpetual sea,
So luscious fruit must fall when over ripe,
And so the consummated P.R.B. (3:223,1-6,9-14)

Christina's irregular rhythms, cacophonous off rhymes ("chops" and "Cheops"), run-on lines, and violations of the Petrarchan quatrain's conventions all contribute to the humor of the octet, while the sestet's smoother rhythms, anaphora, and consonance stress her inversion of traditional roles. This double inversion—of romantic tradition and Dante Gabriel's suggestions—grants her, to some extent, the conventional flâneur's visual authority; his "freedom of incognito" as he distantly observes a passive object. What is distinctive about the comedic "P.R.B." is Christina's new-found ability to look outside the domestic sphere from a position other than that of a dead or dying woman. Her appropriation of the traditional male gaze demonstrates her increasing ability to show "control" in relation to her Pre-Raphaelite past and to assume the visual authority of a prototypical flâneuse, although as yet her speakers remain safely esconced in the private sphere.

In February, 1854, William Michael received a "riz," which enabled him to reunite his family in London and deliver Christina from the pressure of teaching "hairdressers's" and "pork-butchers's" small daughters "their p's and q's." Without any particular modesty, William Michael indirectly attributes her poetic activity during this period to his support, which freed her from the necessity of gaining "tin." There is probably something in
what he says, for Christina’s return from Frome was marked by a distinct increase in her poetic output. She continues to experiment with different ways of revising both her male and female poetic precursors, particularly, as in Maude, by recasting various female types to focus on vocational questions.

In a sonnet, "A Study," that Christina wrote in February immediately before she left Frome, she reconstitutes one type of classic Victorian model—the figure of Cleopatra—who is also the centerpiece of an entire chapter in Charlotte Brontë’s Villette, published in 1853. Typically, the male characters in Villette respond to this woman as "le type de voluptueux" and "une femme superbe," although Brontë’s heroine Lucy Snowe finds her indolence shocking, and her excess weight reminiscent only of "butcher’s meat." In contrast to this view, Christina, who first wrote a poem based on the Magdalene (a synonym, for the Victorians, of a reformed prostitute) when she was fifteen, deliberately employs such a fallen type to focus on the redemption Christ offers to all. Christina parodies the automatic assumptions of male speakers concerning Cleopatra by stressing how even she, if she chooses, can repent and resist appropriation—although, in accordance with Victorian convention, "A Study" implies that such resistance can be achieved only through death:

She stands as pale as Parian statues stand;
Like Cleopatra when she turned at bay,
And felt her strength above the Roman sway,
And felt the aspic writhing in her hand.
Her face is steadfast toward the shadowy land,
For dim beyond it looms the land of day

She stands there like a beacon thro' the night
She stands alone, a wonder deathly white
Her face and will athirst against the light.

(3:226,1-6,9,11,14)

Christina emphasizes the difficulty of standing alone, especially for a single woman, at the beginning of her poem: her repetition of the phrase "And felt" specifically links Cleopatra's resistance to her forthcoming suicide. In line nine, Cleopatra's hard-won independence transforms her into a "beacon": her "light" enables her to be on display without being possessed either by the reader's gaze or that of the speaker. The poem is limited, however, by its self-conscious role reversals: Christina undercuts its seriousness through making Cleopatra as much of a type as "The Card Dealer." She is a martyr, but in the context of Victorian poetics, she at least represents an attempt by Christina to construct an alternative to conventional Victorian tropes. In addition, "A Study" probably reflects Christina's desire to escape the role of a perfect model she once filled and to create some sort of artistic identity of her own. But the tenuousness of her conception reveals, as does her earlier work, the sheer difficulty of achieving this goal in a society that defined single women as
"redundant" and a "public" woman as whatever type of fantasized other a particular male might wish for.

In "From the Antique," written in June, 1854, Christina also casts her heroine as a stylized type, but in this poem, the type is more contemporary: rather than an "antique," admittedly immoral queen who achieves independence only at the price of her life, this speaker is the type of a female romantic poet. The label "Antique" seems to group Christina’s persona with Letitia Landon’s heroines: fictional poetesses like Pythia, Apollo’s priestess, and other classical personae like Erinna and Ariadne ("LL" 4-5). These heroines, as Stephenson discusses, were constructed as a direct response to male critical expectations that women poets reflect "a debased Romanticism . . . ‘spontaneous . . . feelings’ which, rather than being recollected in tranquility, are immediately spewed out upon the page" ("LL" 4). The heroine of "From the Antique" is the opposite of Christina’s protagonist in "A Study": the one thing this heroine cannot do, in spite of her desire to be a "man," is stand alone:

It’s a weary life, it is; she said:—
Doubly blank in a woman’s lot:
I wish and I wish I were a man;
Or, better than any being, were not . . .

Were nothing at all in all the world,
Not a body and not a soul;
Not so much as a grain of dust
Or drop of water from pole to pole.

Still the world would wag on the same,
Still the seasons go and come;
Blossoms bloom as in days of old,
Cherries ripen and wild bees hum.

None would miss me in all the world,
How much less would care or weep:
I should be nothing; while all the rest
Would wake and weary and fall asleep.
(3:231,1-16)

Christina’s first stanza clearly defines the heroine as a female romantic who, somewhat like Maude, writes or speaks "choice" selections to pass the time. Like Christina’s speaker in "Symbols," her insistent "wish" to be what she is "not" classifies her as child-like, precisely what male critics expected women to be. The poem’s simple iambic rhythms and balladic stanzas also help identify the protagonist as a female who is, after all, supposed to sound naïve. The second stanza’s tone is consistent with the first: the heroine’s desire to be "not a body and not a soul" literally transforms her into a "passive vessel filled by words," traditionally "both male and divine" ("LL" 5). But the poem’s vocational focus, indirectly emphasized in the first stanza by the protagonist’s repeated "wish[es]," becomes clearer here. This woman desires only to be a man: if she cannot, she ostensibly rejects both "body" and "soul." But the lack of any transcendent sphere in this poem brings her back to the body, at least in terms of the words that fill the absence her desire to be "nothing" leaves.

Lines nine and ten, through the repetition of "still," help define both the "world"--the secular, masculine,
"antique" public sphere—and the "seasons" as irrevocably alienated from the protagonist. Lines eleven and twelve further stress her detachment from nature through line eleven's historical reference ("as in days of old"), which emphasizes only nature's meaningless cyclicity, and through line twelve's three terminal monosyllables ("wild bees hum"), which flattens the impact of imagery derived from Elizabethan love poetry—"Blossoms" and "Cherries." In the last stanza, she returns to the self-pitying tone of a lonely body that seems to ask for protection from a "world" which she has supposedly already rejected. She reiterates, almost self-consciously, her desire to move outside her typecast body through her wish to be "nothing," highlighted by a medial caesura. But line fifteen's run-on conclusion, along with line sixteen's alliteration and repeated "ands," rhythmically weakening the heroine's point, demonstrate that her "wish" to separate herself from "all the rest"—presumably the male public as well as the female private sphere—is as essentially absurd as her "wish" to be "a man." In the end, these fantastically-conceived "wish[es]" only trap her more securely in conventional categories as "an idealized and weakened figure . . . [whose] truth is limited once more to her body" ("LL" 13-14).

The poem appears to illustrate that Christina would agree with Stephenson's point about L.E.L.: that the classic
image of a poetess L.E.L. manufactured was just a type created to please male readers, poets, and critics. Moreover, Christina reveals her awareness of the performance-oriented aspects of this type in her 1859 poem, "L.E.L.,” later published in her second volume, The Prince’s Progress: "Downstairs I laugh, I sport and jest with all: / But in my solitary room above / I turn my face in silence to the wall" (1:153-54,1-3). Her parody of her female romantic precursors in "From the Antique" reveals, as in "A Study," her continuing focus on vocational questions together with the difficulty of her arriving at a solution.

"Guesses," written one day before "From the Antique" (on June 27, 1854), seems a companion poem to "A Year Afterwards" because it is also a dramatic monologue in which a male speaker meditates upon his dead beloved. On the surface, the poem appears merely another attempt by Christina to stress the power of female influence; perhaps for this reason, it was, like "A Year Afterwards," suppressed from both of William Michael's collected editions of his sister's work. I think "Guesses" is provocative, however, because it focuses on recasting the nineteenth-century cultural phenomena defined by Benjamin as the "delight of the city-dweller"—"love at last sight"—the subject of poems by both Baudelaire and Dante Gabriel (LP 44-46). Baudelaire's sonnet on this subject is entitled "Á
une passante"; Dante Gabriel's version, written in 1850, is called "Mirror." I will cite only the last stanza:

As who, of forms that crowd unknown
Within a dusky mirror's shade,
Deems such an one himself, and makes
Some sign; but, when that image shakes
No whit, he finds his thought betrayed,
And must seek elsewhere for his own. (DW 93)

In "Guesses," Christina concentrates on recasting her brother's revision of the gothic and early Italian figure of the dead beloved. In the first two stanzas, influence is the focal point of the poem, although by the last two stanzas, the male speaker's resignation and acceptance of grace have diminished his objectification of the poem's female other. In order to equalize the relationship between subject and object, Christina develops one of her favorite poetic strategies: she has her male speaker question his own memory's authority. His poetic authority, therefore, rests on his "guesses," although one could argue that this revision of the traditionally masculine gaze almost too predictably serves Christina's own orthodox purposes to enable one to classify her as a prototypical flâneuse.

The poem's four, eight-line stanzas each consist of two Petrarchan quatrains; in the first two stanzas, Christina stresses this dualistic format by the repetition in the first and fifth lines of both stanzas of almost the same words--"Was it a chance" (lines one and nine) and "Or" (lines five and thirteen). Each of the first three stanzas also takes the form of a single question:
Was it a chance that made her pause
One moment at the opened door,
Pale where she stood so flushed before
As one a spirit overawes:--
Or might it rather be because
She felt the grave was at our feet,
And felt that we should no more meet
Upon its hither side no more? (3:230,1-8)

From the beginning of this poem, Christina clearly tries to grant the conventionally silent female object not only speech, but the ability, through the power of influence, specifically to challenge the nineteenth-century male's right to look at and appraise objects, including women. In addition, she emphasizes the woman's nonappropriative powers, as opposed to those of the male speaker, by linking the beloved's "pause," in line one, with a significant moment in the speaker's memory. Traditionally, this would presage the speaker's recounting of this memory in order to redefine and appropriate it, like Wordsworth or Dante Gabriel in "On Mary's Portrait." Christina, however, revises such a poetics of memory by using this moment not to draw her reader into the past, but to focus on the speaker's choice in the present. This equalizes the relationship between subject and object by stressing the woman's ability to evade appropriation albeit, as in her earlier work, only in the context of her forthcoming death. The rest of the stanza focuses on the gap in the speaker's perceptions between his vision of the woman as a religious icon, utterly detached from himself, and his hope, made clear by the repetitions in lines six-eight of "felt" and "no more," that
she is, after all, thinking of him. These repetitions appear to have been designed in accordance with Pre-Raphaelite naturalistic principles, where concise details are used to figure intense emotion. Here, they point to the gap in the speaker’s perceptions—the woman’s intentions—which again symbolize her autonomy. As is usual in Christina’s work, she revises male romantic poetics, particularly her brother’s focus on the female object as a reflection of his own subjectivities, by focusing on boundaries: between the poem’s subject and object as well as between this world and the next.

Stanza two precisely reiterates the oppositions of the first, except it inverts them: the speaker first focuses on his beloved’s possible signal to himself, then on her iconographized “yearn[ing]” for eternity:

Was it a chance that made her turn
Once toward the window passing by,
One moment with a shrinking eye
Wherein her spirit seemed to yearn . . .
(3:230,9-12)

Christina sharpens her speaker’s tone in this quatrain by making the beloved’s actions more specific: she "turn[s]" towards the persona rather than simply "paus[ing]." Her muted anaphora in lines ten and eleven (through the near equivalence of "once" and "one moment") appears doubly obsessive if one imagines the speaker observing the beloved surreptitiously from behind a window. (Victorian proprieties may be the source behind this image: it is
similar to the point Christina is careful to make in "A Year Afterwards" that someone else tells the speaker of his beloved’s death. As a non-family member, he is not permitted to wait beside her deathbed.) But although the speaker’s tone has intensified, the poetic space Christina allots him for such meditations is reduced. Rather than encompassing the entire second stanza, his thoughts only dominate the first quatrain; in the second, all the speaker’s emotions are subsumed by one of Christina’s favorite biblical tropes, *vanitas mundi*, which the speaker has evidently accepted:

> Or did her soul then first discern  
> How long and rough the pathway is  
> That leads us home from vanities,  
> And how it will be good to die?  
> (3:230, 13-16)

The poem’s direction (the beloved’s triumphant influence) is firmly established here. In the third stanza, Christina begins by directly recasting the scene in "On Mary’s Portrait," itself derived from the early Italians, where the beloved emerges from a grove, reflecting the greens and yellows of sunlight and grass. Christina inverts this image by depicting the beloved as departing rather than approaching:

> There was a hill she had to pass;  
> And while I watched her up the hill  
> She stooped one moment hurrying still,  
> But left a rose upon the grass:  
> Was it mere idleness:—or was  
> Herself with her own self at strife  
> Till while she chose the better life  
> She felt this life has power to kill?  
> (3:231, 17-24)
Again, Christina’s intertextual recasting is strengthened by her direct revision of traditional tropes: the beloved, rather than emerging from a shadowy bower, as in "On Mary’s Portrait," climbs a "hill," like a male romantic hero, while the speaker, rather than assuming that the classic romantic token she leaves "upon the grass" is for him, questions its significance. The verb "Was" that introduces and ends the first line of the last quatrain quoted narrows the gap between the speaker’s impressions and his beloved’s meaning. He focuses, throughout this stanza, on her past choice rather than on his own interpretation of it, as in Wordsworth’s and Dante Gabriel’s work. As in "A Year Afterwards," Christina concentrates on her speaker’s acceptance of reality rather than fantasy; in this case, directly enabled by his apparent embrace of orthodoxy in stanza two. It is interesting that line twenty-four, which stresses "this life’[s] . . . power to kill" seems, like stanza two, to reflect a Victorian domestic fact, considering Victorian maternal mortality rates and the non-career of even a woman like Lucy Madox Brown, who married William Michael in 1874. After being promised "a room of her own" in which to paint, she bore six children (including twins) in five years, which forced her to abandon painting, and soon afterwards, she contracted tuberculosis, dying in early 1894, not long before Christina herself. Such depressing commonplaces suggest that orthodox
references to "this life's" deadly potentialities, especially in a romantic context, were not merely metaphoric, but literal.

Through her juxtaposition of the adverb "[p]erhaps" in lines twenty-five and twenty-six with the "[o]r" that begins line twenty-seven in the poem’s final stanza, Christina projects her solution to the perceptual competition she sets up in the first two stanzas into "eternity." She protects the autonomy of both subject and object through emphasizing that perfect knowledge, as well as perfect union, must wait for "Paradise." She thus concisely reconstructs both the flâneur's "love at last sight" as well as Dante Gabriel’s gothic narrator’s obsessive desire for control:

Perhaps she did it carelessly,
Perhaps it was an idle thought;
Or else it was a grace unbought,
A pledge to all eternity:
I know not yet how this may be;
But I shall know when face to face
In Paradise . . . . (3:231,25-31)

Whereas in "A Year Afterwards," Christina directly recasts her brother’s emblems, in "Guesses," she appropriates the traditionally male authoritative gaze by introducing doubt into her speaker’s vision and enabling it through female influence in relation to an orthodox frame. Although this poem’s speaker, as in "A Year Afterwards," is decidedly male, and can thus be dismissed, along with the poem, as only a vehicle of influence’s power, I think that through directly reconstructing her brother’s and his precursors’
favorite visual trope, she makes some progress towards achieving a prototypically flâneusian posture.

One of Christina's most anthologized devotional poems, first published in Goblin Market, which also can be read as revising the flâneur's "gaze of modernity . . . both covetous and erotic" is "The World," written on the same day as "Guesses" (VD 67). It is based on a presumably male speaker who regards a classic "woman Babylon." Rather than blessing, she "tyrannizes by influence," making of "her own self a trap, a bait, a ruinous prize"—in other words, the antithesis of the speaker's pure beloved in "Guesses" (FD 400). "The World's" tension rests on the speaker's capacity, throughout the sonnet's fourteen lines, to resist this woman's "clawed and clutching hands" through her fixed gaze: "Is this a friend indeed that I should sell / My soul to her, give her my life and youth, / Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?" (1:76-77,12-14). Christina's speaker in this poem is distinguished by her freedom of choice—through a distinctly commercial metaphor—to "sell" or not to "sell" her "soul" (CRC 91). Christina could simply be recasting the typical flâneur's freedom to "look at other people as at . . . goods for sale," a reading supported by Harrison when he defines the speaker as "a specifically male self-inquisitor trying to resist an archetypal Eve-figure . . . a specter of Satan . . . designed to operate primarily upon a traditional male
audience" (VD 67, CRC 91). I would argue, however, that the poem's title, as well as Christina's rhetorical strategies (such as ending her poem with a question) suggest that the speaker is female, mainly because the choice the poem focuses on would not be particularly relevant to a mature Victorian male. For Christina, the "world" could be embodied as "an unacceptable potential self": for a man, it was a space in which he had, for most of his working day, to live ("DK" 75).

My reading of "The World" as deliberately representing a female's view of the public sphere is strengthened when one compares the poem to Dante Gabriel's contemporaneous efforts on a similar subject in his 1856 "The Burden of Nineveh." This poem is an interior monologue in which a young artist-persona (resembling both speaker and audience of "The World," as defined by Harrison) emerges from the British Museum after a session of "jott[ing] and blott[ing] and rott[ing]" to view workmen "hoisting" into the museum the Assyrian "bull-god," "a winged beast from Nineveh" (3, 9-10). He subsequently ponders the meaning of this religious artifact in a historical and archaeological context. Both Dante Gabriel's "bull-god," "with hoofs behind and hoofs before," and Christina's snake-tressed demon are only half-human, while the two poems also end with the same type of rhetorical questions, which seem to reflect their speakers' vocational anxieties concerning their
respective relationships to the "world" (12). The main difference, however, between the subject-object relationship in "Nineveh" and "The World" is that in "Nineveh," the speaker is not trapped in the same claustrophobic spatial plane as his object, but freely roams London's "miles," with "all the wealth of life's free choice," happily anticipating "Love's ardour, friendship's equipoise. . . / And all that evening's curtain joys" (155-59). Dante Gabriel especially stresses his speaker's freedom to roam in the poem's 1856 version (these lines were expurgated from Dante Gabriel's 1870 revision). In contrast with his earlier poems, in "Nineveh," his speaker has indeed become a full-fledged flâneur, susceptible to both the joys and risks of "incognito"—the risk being his subsequent alienation from any type of transcendent vision. The rhetorical question that ends this poem—"Oh Nineveh, was this thy God, / Thine also, mighty Nineveh?"—marks it as another example of Dante Gabriel's "search," in Landow's words, "for [an] analogous secular moment in life and art. . . [to] give human existence the same kind of meaning and essential coherence that types furnish for sacred history" (199-200, "'LTL'" 249). In failing to find this, as Harrison discusses, he takes refuge in parody.®

The point I am trying to make, however, in regard to Christina's poem, is that what Harrison identifies as "The World's" theme—a "wholesale renunciation. . . . [of the]
dialectical field of values where the Fall takes place"—is mostly irrelevant to Dante Gabriel's speaker in "Nineveh" (CRC 90). For the first time in his work, Dante Gabriel clearly identifies his speaker as part of the public sphere which most Victorian males, whether they patronized prostitutes or not, were obliged to enter. On the contrary, if one reads "The World’s" persona as female and her object as Mermin’s "unacceptable potential self," the poem is consistent with the other poems Christina wrote during this period, whose characters appear to be struggling towards some sort of vocation in the public sphere forbidden them by Victorian domestic ideology. The speaker's obsessed gaze could also connote the dangers of looking for a Victorian woman; as Pollock notes, "one's respectability, closely identified with femininity, meant not exposing oneself in public" (VD 69).

Harrison astutely describes "The World" as made up, in its first three sections, of "traditional dialectics--of beauty and horror, desire and destruction, seduction and damnation . . . . [as well as] a host of traditional images associated with both the Fall and English love sonnets" (CRC 90):

By day she woos me, soft, exceeding fair: 
But all night as the moon so changeth she; 
Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy, 
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair. 
By day she woos me to the outer air, 
Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety: 
But thro' the night a beast she grins at me, 
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands
In all the naked horror of the truth,
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands.
Is this a friend indeed that I should sell
My soul to her, give her my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?
(1:76-77,1-14)

If one reads the poem's speaker as female, then its concisely conceived dialectical structure enables Christina's construction of a new type of gaze, already present, in embryonic form, in poems like "The P. R. B." and "Guesses." Christina also emphasizes her speaker's choice by the strong, tactile imagery in the sestet and, in the tercet, the speaker's sincere tone, achieved through her repeated emphasis on "I" and "my." "The World's" highly traditional frame, particularly its final rhetorical question, makes it seem as if this "world" is something that the speaker implicitly rejects. But her ability to gaze unwinkingly at a sight forbidden to "nice" Victorian women suggests that Christina is revising male vision to serve her own ends. Her strained search for a vocation is reflected through the simple, but for a Victorian woman transgressive act of looking—particularly for one who, just a few years earlier, was typecast as a model object by her brother and his friends.

This search for a vocation is Christina's overt subject in the third part of one of her most personal poems (according to William Michael), written about one month after "Guesses," "The World," and "From the Antique": "Three
Stages (3)," one of a series of poems only the first of which Christina published in her lifetime. All three are written in Petrarchan quatrains, with three pentameter lines followed by a trimeter, a structure which emphasizes Christina's efforts to bring the conflicts expressed in all three poems to some sort of resolution, particularly in the third section, where the vocational focus is most evident.

The first part which, as the epigraph notes, was inspired by Schiller, has an ostensibly male speaker, and appears merely a reflection of the popular nineteenth-century ideology which stressed, as I stated in my introduction, the individual's ability to overcome social and economic obstacles imposed by his environment. The theme of the second part is the same as the first section of Christina's "Three Nuns," whose heroine, based on Maude herself, desires only to withdraw from the world. The poem's fourth stanza directly echoes Tennyson's "The Palace of Art," in which the speaker's "soul," after three years on her "intellectual throne," is "struck thro' with pangs of hell." "Shut up" alone "as in a crumbling tomb," she "howl[s] aloud":

... I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die? (285-88)

Christina's speaker echoes the same sentiment:

Now all the cherished secrets of my heart,
Now all my hidden hopes are turned to sin:
Part of my life is dead, part sick, and part
Is all on fire within. (3:233,13-16)
Her next two lines reflect the same theme as one of Dante Gabriel's *House of Life* sonnets, "Lost Days," presumably written in 1854, where the speaker fears that his life's efforts have been wasted:

The lost days of my life until today,  
What were they, could I see them on the street  
Lie as they fell . . . .  
. . . . . . . . . .  
I do not see them here; but after death  
God knows I know the faces I shall see,  
Each one a murdered self . . . (W 103)

Christina's version is shorter: "The fruitless thought of what I might have been / Haunting me ever will not let me rest" (3:233,17-18). Her solution, like Tennyson's speaker, is to build herself a "hermitage," but her speaker, at least in this section, does not, like Tennyson's, forecast a return when she has "purged . . . [her] guilt" (296). As Mermin notes and as "From the Antique" illustrates, it was harder for a woman poet to conjure up an "element of resistance" with which to resist the passive social roles that tended to preclude poetry writing ("DK" 75). In 1849, it seems as if the speaker's withdrawal is permanent.

Almost surprisingly, however, it is not. The first two sections of "Three Stages" were written within about a year of each other in 1848 and 1849, but as I stated earlier, Christina returns to the poem in 1854. The beginning of the third section is much the same as "Three Stages (2)"; passages which Christina later cut focus even more strongly on one of her favorite themes: *vanitas vanitatum*:
So will I close mine ears and seal mine eyes,
Grown cold to songs of mirth and summer light;--
For all is vanity, both depth and height,
Vanity of vanities. (3:451,17-20)

In an unexpected transition, however, in terms of female poetic tradition, her speaker, with uncharacteristic sincerity (in relation to concurrent poems), states that after having attempted to withdraw and allow her life to "lapse, a tedious monotone," her "care grew slack," while her "heart . . . wandered" and "woke unawares"
(3:234,18,22,27):

Full pulse of life, that I had deemed was dead,
Full throb of youth, that I had deemed at rest,--
Alas, I cannot build myself a nest,
I cannot crown my head

With royal purple blossoms for the feast,
Nor flush with laughter, nor exult in song;--
These joys may drift, as time now drifts along;
And cease, as once they ceased. (3:234,29-36)

In this excerpt, she appears to reject both her previous withdrawal from the world (the classic female romantic option) and the traditional male romantic posture she unself-consciously adopts in part one. But by the end of the poem, although one expects it to end on a female renunciative note, Christina surprises the reader by returning to the Carlylean quest motif emphasizing the poet's ongoing struggle with which she began. Through this poem's "three stages," she takes the traditionally male romantic quest motif emphasized in her first section and places it in the context of her attempts to revise male and female romantic tradition and to map out new poetic
strategies for herself. The overt theme of "Three Stages (3)" is consequently similar to the covert vocational emphasis in "The World":

I may pursue, and yet may not attain,
Athirst and panting all the days I live:
Or seem to hold, yet nerve myself to give
What once I gave, again. (3:234,37-40)

Christina echoes this poem's sincere tone in a cover letter she wrote one week later (on August 1, 1854) to William Edmonstoune Aytoun, contributing editor of Blackwood's Magazine, submitting six new poems for publication. I agree with Harrison in finding this letter "startlingly self-assertive" (CRC 1):

I hope I shall not be misunderstood as guilty of egotism or foolish vanity when I say that my love for what is good in the works of others teaches one that there is something above the despicable in mine; that poetry is with me, not a mechanism, but an impulse and a reality . . . . It would be a personal favour to me if you would look into the enclosed with an eye not inevitably to the waste paper basket, and . . . if . . . you would vouchsafe me a few words as to the fate of the verse. I am quite conscious that volunt[ary]eer contributors have no right to expect this of an editor; I ask it simply as a courtesy.10

This letter's serious tone illustrates her evident desire, unlike Maude in her 1850 novella, not only to write but to publish her poems, although Blackwood's took none of them. "Three Stages (3)" clarifies her tenuous poetic project with surprising openness during a time when her prospects for future fame must have looked dim.

In both of Harrison's recent works on Victorian poetry, Christina Rossetti in Context and Victorian Poets and
Romantic Poems, he focuses on "The World" as a poem which demonstrates the operation of "ideological estrangement" in Christina's poetry (VPRP 127). Three months after "Three Stages," a period in which she wrote very little poetry, she specifically focuses on such "estrangement" in relation to an ideal female object: the heroine of "Listening," composed in October, 1854. With great efficiency, in a poem of only fourteen lines, she recasts the Victorian "angel" at the center of the text through juxtaposing her with the more ambivalent figure of Eve, whom Harrison describes as "the first woman to defy rigid patriarchal ideologies and reduce the world to a house of sin and temptation" (VPRP 128). As the narrator, Christina deliberately exploits her position as an outsider to observe and comment upon her poem's subject: a classic domestic scene where her female object is evidently being wooed—or propositioned—by an invisible lover. She also recasts Dante Gabriel's use of the second person in "The Card Dealer" and "The Paris Railway-Station," not by incorporating her reader into a sort of group voyeurism, but by introducing a gap into her text from which both narrator and reader can evaluate the classic type and scene with which she presents us. Ironically but typically, she inverts her conventional theme—an ideal female type's iconographization by a male lover—through allowing her poem's meaning to rest on the interstices between subject, object, and reader, consequently emphasizing their autonomy.
Rather than entering into the public sphere through cross-dressing, like George Sand, thus enabling herself to meet the flâneur's gaze, she uses her "estranged" posture self-consciously to highlight her distanced view of her brother and other male Victorians' conventional roles as romantic "original and originating sources of meaning" ("IF"41).11

It is curious that "Listening's" first version, entitled "Two Choices," completely lacks such revisionary elements. It is three stanzas longer than her revision, but these stanzas merely take the element of choice that dominates "The World" and even "Three Stages" and reduces it to a simple opposition between "He," who chooses a dependent female object (albeit a "love-warm priceless heart") and the speaker (whose sincere tone mirrors that used in "Three Stages"), who chooses solitude (3:452,17). There is no dramatic tension in the poem, for this choice has already been made; the speaker's only comfort (like one of Landon's heroine's) is the language through which she mourns in "tedious dignity" lost chances (3:452,21). Moreover, there is no indication that the speaker's choice is a viable alternative to "love's dear monotone" (3:452,14). In short, Christina's heroine is just another version of the languishing female romantic type that dominates her early work.
In her revision, however, Christina's primary purpose has changed: rather than regretting the past, she subverts it through what was becoming a classic Pre-Raphaelite myth: the rescue of a beautiful, impoverished damsel in distress through love and art (a role which, as Mermin makes clear and "Two Choices" illustrates, was impossible for a woman to play) (PRS 54). One of this ideology's conveniences was that it enabled the aspiring artist to attain a live-in or almost live-in model as inspiration and housekeeper (Ford Madox Brown took for his second wife his young model Emma Hill); another was that it allowed one to escape the capitalistic middle-class marriage market where a young man was expected to support his beloved in a comfortable style. Such motives also apparently influenced Holman Hunt and John Millais: Millais "rescued" Effie Ruskin, in 1853-54, from "a loveless, sexless marriage," while Holman Hunt, during the same year, painted his highly successful The Awakening Conscience (PRS 59). In this picture, where a "kept woman" is portrayed "breaking away from her gilded cage with a startled holy resolve," Hunt used a poor girl, Annie Miller, as his model, whom he dreamed of "raising" to be his perfect wife (PRS 61). Dante Gabriel, of course, was even more ambitious: having "discovered" Elizabeth Siddall's great artistic talent, he intended to save her from "poverty and degradation," including the lower-class status of being a "public" model, and to help her exploit her artistic
"genius" (PRS 54). In the process, of course, she enabled his: many critics mention his obsession with drawing "wonderful" and "lovely" "Guggums" (his pet name for Elizabeth). Madox Brown describes them as a "monomania," but adds that "many . . . are matchless in beauty" and, perhaps more to the point, "one day will be worth large sums."12

It is fascinating that in her apparently deliberate attempt to dismantle this myth in "Listening," Christina incorporates into her poem some of the actual terms used by Dante Gabriel and Madox Brown to describe Elizabeth. Although Dante Gabriel promoted Elizabeth as a genius, most of the material about her in letters focuses on her ladylike appearance and reserve: even John Ruskin's father, when he first met her in 1855, declared "'she might have been born a countess,'" while Ruskin himself called her "'a noble glorious creature'" (PRS 74). Such praise earned her an allowance of one hundred and fifty pounds yearly from Ruskin as a deserving case, which seems particularly surprising since Jan Marsh states that when she first began modelling for the Brotherhood in 1850, she "was known only as a 'plain' model" (PRS 26). One can presume she had a gift for mimicry, and that she embodied a myth in which most people wanted to believe—with a little help from Dante Gabriel's salesmanship. In what appears to have been his first letter describing Elizabeth to Christina, written in
1852, Dante Gabriel tells her that Elizabeth "lately made herself a grey dress . . . bringing out her characteristics as a 'meek unconscious dove,'" while Madox Brown calls her a "queen" in 1855 simply because she was "beautifully dressed for about 3 [pounds]" (ZW 109 ). Christina herself expressed a desire to meet Elizabeth soon after the family's return to London in 1854, but there is no record of her impressions, except that in late 1855, Madox Brown recorded, "'there is a coldness between her and Gabriel because she and Guggums do not agree.'" In "Listening," Christina focuses on the problem of male idealization of a female other such as Elizabeth, probably because, for Christina, "'idolatry was the besetting sin of the age.'" She thus revises, on two levels, Dante Gabriel's mode of looking at a model and/or beloved through leaving the scene's meaning, as in "The World," as a "problematic question" for the reader, rather than resolving it through a frame predetermined by the poet (BI 214).

"Listening's" speaker appears, as McGann points out, "peculiarly feminine": although Christina presumably focuses on a man and woman's romantic relationship, she unconventionally emphasizes the woman's response—or lack of it—to the man (BI 217). Another transgressive element is the speaker's tone: unlike Christina's narrator in "Three Stages (3)" and "Two Choices," it is entirely objective. If Christina is presenting her readers with a floor-show, like
Landon, it is a silent one because her female object perfectly fulfills her ideologically-determined role of "listening" to her lover. The small irregularities in the poem's form—for example, the first quatrain closes with trimeter, the last with dimeter—also suggest the ambiguity that permeates the rest of the poem. The rhyme scheme of the poem's three stanzas is predominantly abab, with some off rhymes:

She listened like a cushat dove
That listens to its mate alone;
She listened like a cushat dove
That loves but only one.

Not fair as men would reckon fair,
Nor noble as they count the line;
Only as graceful as a bough
And tendrils of the vine;
Only as noble as sweet Eve
Your ancestress and mine.

And downcast were her dovelike eyes,
And downcast was her tender cheek,
Her pulses fluttered like a dove
To hear him speak. (3:236,1-14)

Christina's placement of her poem's title in the present tense and the poem's action in the past imply that this tale is being retold. The poem's first and third lines illustrate this by focusing on the woman as a "dove," Dante Gabriel's troublesome term for Elizabeth which, as McGann notes, evokes both "the Holy Spirit and pagan Aphrodite" (Bi 214). The first stanza's intertextual sources clarify the poem's central paradox: this woman is idolized as a "dove," embodying the "'honied consolation’" of women, whose only reward is "'to be beloved’"—but a "dove" is an
equivocal emblem (VPRP 116-17). Moreover, Christina stresses this incongruity by the off rhyme in lines two and four—"alone" and "one"—and by her female object’s apparent fulfillment of her heroine’s ambitions in "From the Antique": she is "not a body and not a soul" because all she does is "listen." Such details begin to convey this tale’s potential for tragedy.

In stanza two, Christina’s repetition of nearly-equivalent negative terms—"Not" and "Nor"—at the beginning of lines five and six as well as "only" in lines seven and nine further develop the speaker’s characterization of this woman as "ideal" in stanza one. She transcends man-made categories of "beauty" and "nobility" (here is where Christina echoes Madox Brown’s terminology in his letters) through being perfectly "natural." According to Ruskin’s theory, anything "natural" is inherently superior to any artifact. But Christina’s repeated qualifiers also seem to define such "naturalness" as potentially threatening because the woman is closer to "the tendrils of the vine" than male classification systems—as if she were some sort of "Belle Dame Sans Merci." In addition, as she herself notes in Called to Be Saints, "vines" are "not strong, except with a prop." Christina subsumes such paradoxical imagery, however, by her reference to Eve ("Only as noble as sweet Eve") in line nine and through her direct address to her reader in line
ten—which, somewhat surprisingly, dramatizes the relationship between the reader and the passive female object at the center of the poem. McGann argues that Christina’s use of the second person defines this poem’s audience as women only, thus emphasizing "the subversive insights of an estranged female experience" (BJ 215). Nevertheless, I would argue that Christina’s conceptualization of this woman as an entirely dependent object—a fact stressed throughout the poem—emphasizes the reader’s responsibilities concerning this figure. It is up to us to determine her significance since her meaning, as a perfect model, relies on our perception of her. This makes the poem, in my view, a warning particularly to men, especially in relation to the P. R. B.’s marital aspirations as well as the tendency of nineteenth-century male artists and writers to conceptualize their souls as ideal feminine types. Hans Meyrick, a fictional painter in George Eliot’s last novel, Daniel Deronda, echoes the ideology which became a real-life practice, as I noted earlier, for Dante Gabriel: "Every painter worth remembering has painted the face he admired most, as often as he could. It is part of his soul that goes out into his pictures. He diffuses its influence in that way." Apparently Christina deliberately intends to undercut such a theory which would posit "Ideal Beauty [as] transcendent" as well as the opinions of women writers
(Stickney Ellis and Mrs. Roe) who would exalt women only as dependent types ("BT" 358).

Christina’s analogy to Eve clarifies this point. Eve, for Christina, as Harrison remarks, was "a name to conjure with" (VPRP 134). Although traditionally, especially for the Victorians, the mother of sin and death as well as life, Christina views her not as the seductress found repeatedly in Western culture, but as the "type of all women." As she describes her in her 1883 prose work, Letter and Spirit, "'her very virtues may have opened the door to temptation. By birthright gracious and accessible, she lends an ear to all petitions from all petitioners’" (VPRP 133). This is entirely consistent with the off rhyme in stanza one ("alone" and "one"), which implies that Christina’s modern version of Eve will listen to almost anyone since she cannot discriminate between good and evil. Christina goes on to describe her as innocent even after the Fall, for "'she offered Adam a share of her own good fortune' . . . [and] that she was 'talked . . . over to [Satan’s] side serves more to condemn the world in which she found herself vulnerable than to expose her own moral deficiencies’" (VPRP 134). This supports Christina’s repetition of "only" in stanza two, which seems to excuse Eve’s ignorance as part of her likeness to nature, but also reinforces my reading of this poem as a warning to men who would idealize such a dependent type. In lines eleven and twelve, anaphora
further illustrates this point, particularly the heavy repeated accent on the syllable "down," while Christina's inversion of the subject/verb relationship in both lines suggests this woman's fragmentation through, as in Elizabethan love poetry, her catalogue of her heroine's facial parts. The last two lines stress both the woman's dependency and somewhat subhuman nature: her "pulses" flutter involuntarily, not due to an act of will, while in line thirteen, Christina inverts the adjective "dovelike" in line eleven to create an off rhyme with "like a dove." This repeated simile, as well as the poem's final shortened dimeter line, whose closing spondaic foot reiterates "her" dependence on "his" speech, supports my reading that the woman's problem lies in her pose--and her pose is determined by convention and the male beloved. It is probably not coincidental that most of the sketches Dante Gabriel made of Elizabeth during this period portray her with her eyes "downcast."

I think it is also significant that while the woman, in accordance with tradition, keeps silent in the poem's last line, the man speaks. Women's acquisition of speech and the capacity to see correctly are central themes in Christina's work: an obvious example of this is *Goblin Market*, where Lizzie, in order to rescue her sister, has to, "for the first time in her life" not only "look," but parley politely with the goblins (1:19,327-28). As I stated earlier,
"Listening" could be conceived as a warning to men who would idealize a type without acknowledging their responsibilities in relation to her ignorance, but it could also be read as a warning to women about the dangers of being dependent on male speech. Christina's only formula for a woman who wants to escape part of Eve's sentence—"desire" dependent "on one stronger than she"—is to exchange "the corrupt for the incorruptible" (FD 312). In this poem, as in others of this period, Christina uses her "estrangement" from the public sphere (specifically the P. R. B.) as a tool for enabling what Harrison defines as her "prophetic and monitory voice" (VPRP 126). She also revises male romantic authority through her use of the second person, thus incorporating into her poem's framework her reader's capacity freely to choose and interpret her poem. Through such parodically-related devices, Christina comes close to achieving "flâneusianism": certainly "Listening" may be defined as a self-conscious revision of the traditionally male authoritative gaze.

As I have attempted to illustrate, by the mid-1850s, Christina Rossetti's principle strategies for defining her poetic self were firmly established. McGann, Hassett, and Rosenblum have previously discussed from their various perspectives Christina's paradoxical method of defining a self through renouncing it, partly by opening up gaps and questions in her work (often through use of the second
person) in order to point towards the transcendent. But they do not mention another of Christina’s major revisionary tactics: her recasting of the flâneur’s (and her brother’s) favorite trope of the gaze by exploiting her capacity to look out from the private sphere’s narrow confines into the public world, or to look into the private sphere from the vantage point of a speaker of blurred gender.

Although "Listening" can be read as a radical revision of the male romantic authoritative gaze, there is still a wide gap between Christina’s version of the flâneuse at this point in her career and the flâneurian figures employed by Baudelaire and Dante Gabriel. As stated earlier, Christina’s personae look into both the private sphere ("Listening," "Guesses," "From the Antique") and the public sphere ("The P. R. B.," "A Study," "The World"). But their gazes tend to remain transfixed: in poems like "The World," "Listening," and "From the Antique," they cannot influence what they see. They remain trapped in the same claustrophobic spatial plane as the objects they view, like the personae in some of Dante Gabriel’s earliest poems ("Sister Helen" and "Jenny"). In my next chapter, I discuss Christina’s achievement of a prototypically flâneusian posture in her most famous poem, Goblin Market. She accomplishes this by revising Dante Gabriel’s flâneurian perspective in "The Burden of Nineveh," thus allowing her decidedly-female personae to look into and, most
importantly, to act in the public sphere, as emblematized by the marketplace.
Notes


8 See Harrison, *Victorian Poets and Romantic Poems*, 99-104 for an extensive and convincing discussion of "The Burden of Nineveh’s" parodic procedures.


13 Ibid., 41.


Rossetti, *Called to Be Saints*, 42.


CHAPTER IV

"RULES ADMIT OF AND ARE PROVED BY EXCEPTIONS":

CHOICE IN THE MARKETPLACE

In his 1850s poems, particularly "The Burden of Nineveh," Dante Gabriel Rossetti seems increasingly to fill the role of a flâneur, one who distantly observes and imaginatively improvises upon what he sees. In "Nineveh," he fulfills this definition through personifying his hero as an isolated amateur artist (one who "jots" and "blots") (3). But the speaker's ironic tone reveals his awareness that his objective flâneur's stance is merely a pose; he too needs a market for his artistic products and/or meditations.

As I discussed in chapter one, in his unpublished, unfinished 1850s tale, "St. Agnes of Intercession," Dante Gabriel describes a different type of flâneur: a poet-critic who, in spite of his professional right to observe and comment upon what he sees, has the bad taste to thrust his poems uninvited upon the artist-speaker. ("Who does not know the dainty action of a poet fingering MS.? The knowledge forms a portion of those wondrous instincts implanted in us for self-preservation") (W 559-60). The artist goes to a great deal of trouble (140 lines, including
the poet-critic's bad poem) to separate himself from such a
tasteless person; however, due to his professional status as
an exhibiting artist and the responsibilities connected with
his forthcoming marriage, he is dishonest with the
poet-critic, thus exposing his own vulnerability to
commercial considerations. The gap between the artist and
the poet-critic is rather thin, suggesting that both figures
are related to the flâneur.

I think that the fraud practiced by Dante Gabriel's
artist-speaker distantly but interestingly links him to the
goblins in Christina Rossetti's _Goblin Market_, who deceive
Laura when they do not tell her their fruit is poisonous.
Such flattery and deception blur the distinctions between
the flâneur as a salesman who depends upon his audience and
the flâneur as a professional who needs to speak
authoritatively and support a wife.¹ Christina confronts
flâneurian figures like the goblins in _Goblin Market_ to
explore the problem of women looking into the marketplace
not as mere consumers, but as potential producers. Through
gaining the power to look back at the goblins and create
their own music and stories, Lizzie and Laura become at
least prototypical flâneuses.

Perhaps because of her experience as her brother's
first model, Christina was particularly sensitive to the
transgressive elements of looking throughout her career. In
_Maude_, the notion of reading poems in public embarrasses the
guilty heroine; in "The World," a fouly-seductive female object transfixes the speaker. But in her mid-fifties poems "Listening" and "In an Artist's Studio," Christina's speakers transcend shock and gain the power distantly to gaze into the public sphere, much like Baudelaire's flâneur/artist figure. The following excerpt from Christina's 1856 poem, "In an Artist's Studio," demonstrates this: the authority of her persona rests on her ability to define what she sees:

That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
A nameless girl in freshest summer greens,
A saint, an angel:—every canvas means
The same one meaning, neither more nor less.
(3:264,4-8)

Christina revises the flâneur's capacity imaginatively to improvise by identifying the women her speakers contemplate as agglomerations of either body parts ("Listening") or literary tropes ("In an Artist's Studio"). Nevertheless, her personae's inability to influence what they see traps them in the same constricted spatial plane as the female objects they view (influence, as artistic inspiration and/or moral guide, as I noted in earlier chapters, was the most powerful source of authority available to women in Victorian England). These poems could have remained unpublished because influence was defined in such limited terms. In Goblin Market, however, Christina inverts the flâneur's classic pose of gazing distantly at what he sees. Rather
than remaining caught by their detached gaze, Lizzie and Laura become more flâneusian through directly engaging the marketplace.

Christina most fully defines her position as a producer of texts (according to my definition, a flâneuse) in her late work, The Face of the Deep. She achieves this through two motifs central to her work throughout her career: individual choice (labeled in The Face of the Deep as "[f]ree will . . . the foundation of heaven"), and dialogue (FD 430). But her position as a flâneuse straddles a somewhat problematic boundary: initially in The Face of the Deep, she concisely separates the roles of producer and consumer according to gender.² Men are defined as "seek[ing] out inventions" whereas women are apt only to "misuse" them:

There is no inherent evil in cedar and vermillion, horses and chariots, purple and fine linen . . . . St. Peter himself objects not to hair, gold, apparel, but to women's misuse of them . . . . man hath sought out many inventions; but the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them when made and finished were beheld to be "very good." (FD 333)

Nevertheless, about one hundred pages later, Dante Gabriel appears to be invoked in relation to the speaker's strong wish to become a producer; i.e., "one of those wise master singers" (FD 431):

Without cavilling or doubt then let us worship God in wordless aspiration aroused by any form of beauty, let us praise Him in musical yearnings and ecstasies. Or if not thou, at least I; who remember how one highly endowed by nature and by
grace and by me ever to be venerated, was affected by one movement in the overwhelming harmony of the Hallelujah Chorus. (FD 432)

Christina sets up a dialogue with her readers and, I would conjecture, the dead Dante Gabriel (he died in 1882) to define her own vocation as an artist and producer in the public sphere and to overcome the claustrophobic constraint of interior spaces prominent in "Listening" and "In an Artist's Studio." In her 1850s tale, "The Lost Titian," published in America in 1856, Christina similarly employs dialogue to blur the boundary between herself as producer of the tale and the reader as consumer, thus enabling both her reader's and her own entry into the tale's symbolic market.

The beginning of "The Lost Titian" immediately defines us, the readers, as potential consumers of Titian’s painting through the narrator’s teasing sales tone. Christina, however, simultaneously stresses her speaker’s ironic unreliability through her use of the modal verb "must" to praise the sensual immediacy of this "masterpiece"—but only through its being almost equal to nature:

The orange drapery was perfect in its fruit-like intensity of hue; each vine-leaf was curved, each tendril twisted, as if fanned by the soft south wind . . . . Look a moment, and those cymbals must clash . . . . draw nearer, and the songs of those ripe, winy lips must become audible."

The speaker’s teasing dialogue with us as potential consumers recasts both the speaker as a conventionally romantic producer of texts and the tale’s "genius," Titian, as a producer of masterpieces: meaning is suspended over the
gap between the perfect "fruitlike intensity of hue" and the repeated modal "must," used to indicate that these images are not real. The classic romantic producer begins to seem a sort of charlatan because of Christina's emphasis on the limitations of all commodities. The products of "genius" are not only inferior to nature; they are also subject to purchase.

This theme is reiterated as the tale continues: Titian's work is illegally wrested from him by his supposed friend Gianni, whose loyalty Titian overestimates; however, Gianni himself loses his "prize" to a philistine when he becomes a bankrupt ("LT" 157). He tries to save it by painting over it a "clawed, preposterous" dragon, but when he dies before he can repurchase it, he lets "his secret . . . [die] with him," allowing the philistine to keep both the dragon and the Titian hidden beneath it ("LT" 162). I agree with Angela Leighton's reading that there is a "secret" in "The Lost Titian" between "the lying decoy and the nostalgically desired authenticity of the lost work," but it is the "secret" of looking for meaning somewhere else, outside the limited material "world" of this tale ("LT" 163). Consequently, the text focuses around what McGann labels as "the central moral problem" in Christina's work: "... distinguishing between what seems and what is . . . multiple levels of statement . . . test the reader's powers of apprehension" (BI 213).
Christina’s dialogue with the reader sharpens at the tale’s end through the narrator’s increasingly ironic tone, but her irony serves the opposite purpose of the speaker’s in "St. Agnes of Intercession", whose ambivalent praise conceals his contempt. Christina’s narrator openly admits that the hidden "masterpiece" she tempts the reader with throughout this tale is most likely irrecoverable—that any replica we might discover will probably be a fraud:

An oral tradition of a somewhere extant lost Titian . . . recently induced Dr. Dreieck to expend a large sum on a nominal Titian, which he afterwards bequeathed to the National Museum of Saxe Eulenstein. The subject of this latter painting is a Vintage of red grapes, full of life and vigour . . . but clearly assignable to the commencement of a later century. ("LT" 162)

Through the above passage, Christina stresses the doubt inherent in purchasing "masterpieces"; nevertheless, she continues to emphasize her narrator’s unreliability by characterizing her readers as an audience who could still unearth a Titian and vicariously share in its "genius":

Reader, should you chance to discern over wayside inn or metropolitan hotel a dragon pendent, or should you find such an effigy amid the lumber of a broker’s shop, whether it be red, green, or piebald, demand it importunately, pay for it liberally, and in the privacy of home scrub it. It may be that from behind the dragon will emerge a fair one, fairer than Andromeda, and that to you will appertain the honour of yet further exalting Titian’s greatness in the eyes of a world. ("LT" 162-63)

As in the tale’s first paragraph, meaning is suspended over a single modal verb, "may." In "The World," the speaker’s vision shocks her into silence; here, her vision is merely a
specifically bounded space that we as readers should be able to place in its proper (i.e., limited) context. The trope of the marketplace as well as the narrator's teasing tone allow Christina to focus on the choice available to her readers, which tends to transform us into producers rather than conventionally consuming readers of this tale. This blurring of boundaries between the roles of speaker and reader and, ultimately, between the roles of producer and consumer I would define as flâneusian.

_**Goblin Market**_ also blurs the boundary between conventional consumer and producers' roles: Elizabeth Helsinger, in her excellent article, "Consumer Power and the Utopia of Desire," labels the poem "a fantasy of consumer power . . . . dependent on the power to produce, and . . . on the intertwined system of production and exchange that Rossetti would keep separate for women."® McGann and Galligani Casey have astutely discussed the authority the sisters gain from enabling each other to see; both grow up through their transgressive engagement of the marketplace (BJ 225-27). Other critics have discussed _Goblin Market_ in terms of its revision of language. Some (Leighton & Stephen Connor) argue that the poem's power rests on the sisters' appropriation of the "nonsensical energies" of the goblins' diction. Others (Lynda Palazzo) define Lizzie's achievement as her translation of the goblins' imperative, salesmanlike tones into socially-acceptable speech."®
I would argue that Christina bases the power the sisters gain to resist the goblins' persuasive improvisations on Lizzie's capacity to control her response to the goblins' invocation of her as an object in the poem's climactic scene. The theme of controlling the market through one's freedom of choice or, by not controlling it, being transformed into its object, is especially prominent in "The Lost Titian": we as readers are invoked in terms of a specific audience (scholars and art-collectors) to judge both Titian's masterpiece and the flaunting dragon above it. Through Lizzie's similarly determining her own response to the goblins' salesmanship, Christina revises both the passive, conventional model's pose (recast earlier in "Listening" and "In an Artist's Studio"), and the nineteenth-century female romantic myth of "'performing heroinism,'" based upon De Staël's Corinne (1807), which was also reworked by Barrett Browning and George Eliot. By her resistant pose, Lizzie gains the power to create her own music (through her "bouncing" "penny") and invoke her own audience (her sister) (1:23,453-54). Because of this, I think Goblin Market represents Christina's most radical conception of the flâneuse thus far in her career, in spite of the sisters' final withdrawal into the private sphere. In addition, Goblin Market is noteworthy because it was published in her lifetime, as Christina's earlier lyrics ("Listening" and "In an Artist's Studio") were not. It is a
vision of flâneurism recast to function actively between women in the public sphere through their empathy with each other.

The introductory stanza of *Goblin Market*, somewhat like the beginning of "The Lost Titian," simultaneously emphasizes both the lusciousness and the mutability of the fruit the goblin speakers are trying to sell. In "The Lost Titian," Christina focuses on the inability of even a "masterpiece" to equal nature; in *Goblin Market*, she focuses on the mutability of nature itself:

Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,

All ripe together
In summer weather,
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:

Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy. (1:11-12, 1-8, 15-19, 30-31)

Christina emphasizes the mutability of the fruit in the lines "Morns that pass by, / Fair eves that fly," and links this notion of mutability through end rhyme in lines thirty and thirty-one ("eye" / "buy") with her favorite trope of distinguishing between reality and appearances. Fruit, after all, may be "sound to eye" without being sound to touch, a more usual way of testing fruit. End rhyme also
connects these lines with the earlier "goblins' cry," which suggests that "maids" are particularly vulnerable to such sales techniques, a theme further developed in the next stanza. Several critics have argued that Laura and Lizzie's different reactions to the goblins illustrate that their personalities are antithetical. I would argue, on the other hand, that their responses are finally similar: both appear to react non-reflectively to the goblins' sales pitch with female romantic spontaneity.

It is interesting that Laura, the sister who eventually falls, is the one who initially uses the modal verb "must" to indicate her adherence to the conventional strictures of a Sarah Stickney Ellis or a Mrs. Roe, for whom any looking into the public sphere was transgressive (VPRP 117-18). But Laura also employs "must" sixteen lines later to suggest, as in "The Lost Titian," the imagination's potential for breaking these bounds. Anaphora and repetition enhance these destabilizing effects:

We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots

. . . . . . . . . . .
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Thro' those fruit bushes. (1:12,42-45,60-64)

Lizzie simply follows Laura's initial conventional advice, covering her eyes and shutting up her ears, like the heroines in Christina's early poems "Repining" and "The Dead
Laura's second use of "must" reveals her susceptibility to temptation; however, Christina makes it clear that Laura's fault is simply that of Eve—she is "curious" (1:13,69). Although in The Face of the Deep, Christina defines "fancies" as fruitless, "more hollow and unavailing than . . . Jonah's gourd," in "Letter and Spirit" she describes Eve sympathetically as "'that first and typical woman . . . indulging quite innocently sundry refined tastes and aspirations, a castle-building spirit'" (FD 46). Lizzie and Laura's reactions seem equally conventional at this point in the poem because the same word ("must") is used to indicate both Lizzie's conservative retreat and Laura's imaginative potential.

In the initial passage describing the goblins, Christina begins each line (with the exception of line fifty-nine) with the pronoun "one," an anaphora accented by the initial spondaic stresses:

One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds weight. (1:12,56-59)

Christina's repeated use of "one" may recall her brother's description of the prostitute "Jenny" in his famous contemporaneous poem as a "cipher," without individual presence or subjectivity (W 41). In his article on "Jenny," Daniel Harris defines a "cipher" as "'a person who fills a place, but is of no importance or worth'"; Robin Sheets calls it "nothing, o . . . [a] hole." At the
beginning of Goblin Market, the goblins share this lack of individuation: somewhat as the sleeping Jenny exists only as a projection of her male client's consciousness, the goblins at first appear mere functions of the weighty containers they carry. Christina's second descriptive passage further emphasizes the goblins' anonymity, recalling Victor Hugo's characterization of a crowd as a "'nameless mob! chaos! voices, eyes, steps'" (LP 62). Christina similarly individualizes the goblins only as synecdochical reductions of bestial parts:

One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.

(1:13,71-76)

Once Laura has transgressed by choosing to "linger" and look, the goblins' purpose becomes clearer: they begin to take on the classic posture of an invisible male audience before the performing, Corinne-like figure Laura has become through looking at them (1:13,69). Our move as readers into a female romantic realm, where the heroine pays for her performance and the admiration she invites by a tragic life, is accentuated by the goblins' crowning of Laura. Christina here, like Barrett Browning in Aurora Leigh, apparently satirizes the Corinne myth: "One began to weave a crown / Of tendrils, leaves and rough nuts brown / (Men sell not such in any town)" (1:13,99-101). Christina's parenthetical
commentary in line 101 as well as the goblins' mythic
crown-weaving suggest to the reader that he/she is moving
into a fantastic world based on literary tropes in which
Laura assumes the expected pose of a static sexual object.
The end rhyme ("crown," "brown," "town") of the above tercet
also implies that she is being prepared for a public
performance.

Laura compounds her primary mistake of looking at the
goblins with her appropriation of their language: I agree
with Terrence Holt that "the central element in Laura's
enslavement . . . is her acceptance of the goblins' use of
figural language. Troping the gold she lacks with the gold
on her head, the goblins lead her to accept their
construction of her within their gendered system of
exchange: she bargains on their terms."12 Christina
emphasizes Laura's assumption of goblin standards of value
by the regularity of her predominantly iambic rhythms in
lines 118-22:

I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather

. . . . . . . . . . . . . .
"You have much gold upon your head,"
They answered all together:
"Buy from us with a golden curl." (1:14,116-25)

This is a classic case of a female consumer misreading her
market, a trope Christina, as I mentioned earlier,
characterizes as peculiarly feminine in The Face of the
Deep. Christina also develops this trope in a nursery rhyme from her 1872 children’s work, Sing-Song:

"Ferry me across the water,
Do, boatman, do."
"If you’ve a penny in your purse
I’ll ferry you."

"I have a penny in my purse,
And my eyes are blue;
So ferry me across the water,
Do, boatman, do."

"Step into my ferry-boat,
Be they black or blue,
And for the penny in your purse
I’ll ferry you." (2:41,1-12)

The point made here, as in The Face of the Deep, is that although a coin is not innately evil, it functions as a symbolic figure in markets controlled by men. Laura misreads her market by entering it unarmed, somewhat like the heroine in "Ferry me," who does not know how to use her "penny" to protect herself, and by allowing her golden hair to be troped according to the goblins’ system of valuation ("gold" is repeated four times in lines 120–26). Her appropriation of their language is made clearer in the next stanza. Her sister tells her the cautionary tale of Jeannie, a maid who ate goblin fruits and was crowned by their flowers, but subsequently "pined away" and died—even daisies will not grow over her grave (1:15,154). Laura, however, confidently declares her faith in the marketplace ("Tomorrow night I will / Buy more") and continues to invoke "gold" as an absolute value: "What melons icy-cold / Piled on a dish of gold / Too huge for me to hold,"
(1:15,167-68,175-77). By taking on goblin language, Laura has apparently "fallen" like Jeannie, but her innocence consists in her not being self-conscious enough to acknowledge any guilt.

Laura clearly loses through her exchange with the goblins; after her gluttonous sucking of the fruit, she ". . . knew not was it night or day / As she turned home alone" (1:14,139-140). She retains nothing from her experience except a "kernel-stone" which the reader later finds will not grow (1:14,138). The goblins appear to gain power in inverse proportion to Laura’s loss: I would argue that they become flâneurian at this point in the poem because of the freedom Laura grants them distantly to appraise her and imaginatively to improvise upon what they see due to her static pose, caused by her obsession with the fruit. It is noteworthy that the goblins, after having persuaded Laura to eat, do not walk or run away, although we know that Laura returns home "alone." They seem to fade, like Lewis Carroll’s cheshire cat, still looking at Laura:

She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She sucked until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gathered up one kernel-stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone. (1:14,134-140)

The etymology of the verb "suck" indeed suggests that Laura has lost something to the goblins: according to the OED, to "suck" connotes "a deception; a disappointing event or
Moreover, Amanda Anderson states in her article, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'Jenny': Agency, Intersubjectivity, and the Prostitute," that "purity is . . . posited as an origin . . . the loss of purity is the loss of identity." Because of her dizziness, Laura's "fall" resembles the loss of "self" experienced by a prostitute: all she can do when she returns home is mimic goblin tropes. She occupies a blurred boundary between "innocence" and "fallenness" similar to the ambiguous territory occupied by the goblins between crass salesmanship and distanced looking.

McGann argues that the "unspeakably beautiful litany" towards the middle of "Goblin Market" implies that both sisters are "fundamentally uncorrupted," in spite of Laura's experience (BJ 229). Nevertheless, the line that concludes this fifteen-line stanza, "Locked together in one nest," suggests, through imagery which exemplifies the spatial constraint present in "Listening" and "In an Artist's Studio," that the limitations of innocence form the theme of the first third of this poem (1:16,198):

Golden head by golden head,  
Like two pigeons in one nest  
Folded in each other's wings,  

Like two blossoms on one stem,  
Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,  

Not a bat flapped to and fro  
Round their rest:  
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast  
Locked together in one nest.  

(1:16,184-86,188-89,195-98)
The similes in this passage are reminiscent of the images used in an eight-line poem entitled "Song," written on an unknown date but published in the Goblin Market volume—even some of the words are the same ("on," "one," "two," and "stem"). "Song," more directly than the above stanza, suggests problems with such states of supposedly perfect union. Christina again focuses on the deceptiveness of mere appearances, especially in a romantic setting where two persons or objects seem to form a single whole:

Two doves upon the self-same branch,
Two lilies on a single stem,
Two butterflies upon one flower:—
Oh happy they who look on them.

Who look upon them hand in hand
Flushed in the rosy summer light;
Who look upon them hand in hand
And never give a thought to night. (1:44,1-8)

The repetition of the first and third lines in the second quatrain stresses the ambiguity evidently inherent in close physical contact, further reinforced by the end rhyme connoting opposition, "light" and "night." Christina touches on the same theme in a tale she wrote in the 1860s, later published in 1870 entitled "Vanna’s Twins." In it, a sickly spinster seeks to create a community for herself by sharing the living quarters of an Italian couple with twins, one boy and one girl. These twins are two of the "funniest . . . prettiest . . . creatures imaginable," and so much alike that when they exchange hats, the speaker gets into "a complete mental muddle as to which was which."  

But the
only way they can maintain such perfect communion is by
dying (they freeze to death in a snowstorm), which also
spoils the speaker's chances of remaining with her adopted
family. The end of this tale suggests, as in the somewhat
ironically entitled "Song," that such a state of being
"locked together" (the twins are actually found dead in this
posture) connotes a mutual absorption impossible to maintain
as an adult. In Goblin Market, it implies that the girls'
domestic idyll, idealized in the next stanza, is not as
perfect as it seems, and that some greater knowledge and/or
linguistic skill is needed for both sisters to escape
stereotypical Victorian domestic roles and avoid being
transfixed as model objects. Innocence alone will not
protect one in the public sphere; in The Face of the Deep,
Christina defines it as merely "the absence of guilt" (FD
72).

The rest of the poem focuses primarily on the power of
Lizzie's will, which allows her both correctly to interpret
the market and to avoid being invoked in the goblins' terms.
John H. Timmerman notes that a characteristic of fantasy is
its use of "'masterkeys . . . to unlock ever-varying
personal doors’"; Lizzie reveals her increased linguistic
control of such keys by learning from her sister's
experience and by embracing a nurturing role." Lizzie does
not enter the marketplace unarmed (without her "penny"):
Laura's decline, which Christina rather lengthily describes
in 105 lines, has at least taught Lizzie that when entering the marketplace one must make use of its tools. Lizzie also accepts the position of her sister's nurse, a myth first popularized by Felicia Hemans and further developed through Florence Nightingale's ideal of the English "Sister . . . a mother, a saint, or even a female Christ." When Laura and Lizzie first encounter the goblins, Lizzie merely runs away, but by the middle of Goblin Market she has grown up enough to act like a Victorian mother. As Christina herself once remarked in a letter to Augusta Webster, "maternal love makes a woman 'not a giantess or a heroine but at once and full grown a hero and a giant'":

Till Laura dwindling
Seemed knocking at Death's door:
Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
. . . . . . . . . . . . .
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look. (1:19,320-24,327-28)

Lizzie is enabled to look out into the public sphere specifically through her love for her sister, which underscores the transgressive nature of looking and presages the retreat to the private sphere with which the poem ends. This is a retreat with a difference, however: it only occurs after Lizzie has directly engaged the goblins in the marketplace.

In her dialogue with the goblins, Lizzie is able to turn the irregular dactyls, trochees, and imperatives of the goblins' speech against them, thus undercutting her
seemingly passive pose when she allows them to smear her
with fruit. Dactylic dimeter dominates the next stanza in
which Christina describes the goblins' frenzied response to
Lizzie's looking at them. Gerunds, inverted similes
("Cat-like and rat-like"), and imperatives enhance the
effect of frenetic energy caused by the short dimeter and
trimeter lines, whether the sound patterns are cacophonous
("clucking and gobbling") or smooth ("squeezed and caressed
her") (1:20,335,349). The predominance of the sibilant "s"
sound at the end of this stanza also strikes a note of
serpentine foreboding:

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
. . . . . . . . . . .
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,
. . . . . . . . . . .
Hugged her and kissed her,
Squeezed and caressed her:
. . . . . . . . . . .
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
(1:19-20,329-34,340-41,348-49,355-58)

Through a form that is the antithesis of the goblins' eager
imperatives, Lizzie distances herself by addressing the
goblins as "Good folk" and relying on logic to get what she
wants (since the goblins are so enthusiastic, she asks for
lots of fruit) (1:20,363). The goblins cannot match
Lizzie's cold civility: for all their eagerness to get at
her, they can only respond with deception and flattery in order to identify her as another gluttonous object. Evidently, goblins can achieve a flâneur’s detachment only by watching maids eat fruit:

They answered grinning:
Our feast is but beginning.
Night is yet early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us. (1:21,370-82)

The goblins’ argument is based on 1) their personification of the night as "warm" and "wakeful"; 2) their appeal to the classic theme of carpe diem ("Half their bloom would fly, / Half their dew would dry"); and 3) their repetition of "us" in the last tercet. Lizzie, however, is aware of both the suspicious, hissing sound of the goblins’ last triple rhyme and the bad logic of their argument: when they state that "[n]o man can carry" their fruits, they ignore the fact that Lizzie is a woman, and they end the above excerpt with an outright lie—the one thing the goblins do not do is eat with their victims. Perhaps overwhelmed by their hypnotic rhythms, Lizzie first answers them with a strongly run-on, irregular line, but as she speaks of her sister, her voice noticeably gains the strength of iambic regularity:

"Thank you," said Lizzie: "But one waits
At home alone for me:
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits tho much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee."  (1:21,383-84,386-89)

Lizzie retains control of the terms of the exchange by asking the goblins to return her penny, thereby refusing to be appealed to on anyone's terms but her own. Although the goblins become angry and reveal their true identities as "hissing," half-bestial monsters who try to force Lizzie to eat, Lizzie stands her ground and apparently looks straight back at them. Although her pose seems passive, it is a radical posture from a nineteenth-century perspective: Wolff argues that it was impossible for a woman to become a flâneuse because she could not meet the gaze of a strange man ("IF"42). Goblin Market, of course, takes place within a fantasy realm, but I would argue that Lizzie's looking directly back at the goblins and controlling their diction transform her into a prototypical flâneuse. In the marketplace, power roles can quickly shift, depending upon who is better at manipulating the market's functions. Christina implies through her orthodox conceptualization that with enough free will one can foil almost any plot.

In the next stanza, as in her earlier poem "A Study," Christina recasts the conventional model's posture as a silent, resistant pose. As in the myth that developed around Florence Nightingale in the 1850s, two narratives converge in this passage: a domestic one of "maternal
nurturing and self-sacrifice" and an aggressive one of "individual assertion and will." In accordance with Victorian convention, Christina diffuses the aggressive overtones of her imagery by describing Lizzie as if she were a goddess:

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down. (1:22,408-21)

Through a series of standard as opposed to the inverted similes she uses to describe the goblins, Christina sets up a pattern of trochaic tetrameter that appears to challenge the dactylic dimeter she employs earlier. The metaphor "white and golden" recalls the "apocalyptic 'woman clothed with the sun,'" whom Christina describes at great length near the end of The Face of the Deep as coming forth "from the thousand battlefields of the fierce fight of her afflictions" (FD 432-36). Moreover, Mary Wilson Carpenter states in her essay "The Trouble with Romola" that nineteenth-century Protestant theologians saw this woman as a figure for the violent changes brought about by the Protestant reformation. The simile that compares Lizzie to a "fruit-crowned orange-tree" recasts the female romantic
myth of crowning evoked earlier in the poem. As in her 1850 unpublished poem "A Year Afterwards," Lizzie is crowned by nature instead of by man, generally a sign of at least personal triumph, although it can also connote death. In addition, this image supports Gilbert and Gubar's argument that the poem's fruits signify, among other things, the "fruits" of art.\(^{22}\) Christina's final two metaphors, linking Lizzie's resistance to that of a besieged "town" or "fleet," end the stanza where it began: with imagery recalling Nightingale's myth of patriotic service. Christina inverts the flaneur's conventional posture: whereas he distantly looks and imaginatively improvises, Lizzie focuses her energies and does "not open lip from lip" (1:22,431). Any passivity, however, inherent in her pose is undercut by the aggressive imagery used throughout this stanza.

Perhaps not surprisingly, considering Lizzie's triumph, the colloquial couplet that begins the next stanza, "One may lead a horse to water / Twenty cannot make him drink" shifts the reader's attention from Lizzie's victorious revision of the model's posture to the reader (1:22,422-23). The genderless pronoun "one," at this point in the poem, does not imply an undifferentiated mass, as it does earlier in relation to the goblins, but suggests the potential of each of us as readers (of both genders) to manipulate the marketplace if we appropriately exercise our "free will" (the same theme as at the conclusion of "The Lost Titian").
My argument also supports Galligani Casey’s thesis that "'Sisterhood' in Goblin Market is not an exclusionary term: rather it implies several meanings in the same way that it potentially includes the experiences of both sexes."23 "One" need not be a goddess or "genius" to imitate Lizzie; according to Christina’s orthodox conceptualization, even the proverbial "horse" can gain power over the marketplace simply by refusing its blandishments.

The next stanza blurs the boundary between Lizzie’s role as a consumer and her new-found potential as a producer as she crosses the gap between the "haunted glen" and her home (1:25,552). Christina emphasizes the power Lizzie gains by controlling her response to the market’s invocations through the goblins vanishing into the earth, through Lizzie being raped only according to a medieval definition of the term, and through her creating her own music by listening to her "bouncing" "penny" (1:23, 452-53). Lizzie’s initial triumph over the goblins is signaled by her getting the juice of their fruits without paying (she "laughed in heart to feel the drip / Of juice that syrupped all her face") and by her making the goblins disappear (1:22,433-34). In a somewhat surprising turnabout, they suddenly resemble Wordsworth’s "Lucy" through becoming one with "rocks, and stones, and trees":24

Some writhed into the ground
Some dived into the brook
... ... ... ... ... ...
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanished in the distance.
(1:22,442-43,444-48)

Moreover, the goblins leave nothing behind them, neither "root or stone or shoot," unlike the "kernel-stone" that is left for Laura (1:22,441,138). Christina's repeated conjunctions, which slow the pace of the above phrase, as well as the anaphora in lines 442-46 could indicate that the goblins and their fruits have been effectually banished from the sisters' world forever, except as a cautionary tale.

Many critics, among them Galligani Casey, Mermin, and Mayberry, state that to procure the "fiery antidote," Lizzie submits to an attempted or metaphoric rape (1:26,559). I would argue that Lizzie is only raped according to Chaucer's definition, for whom "repen and rinen" meant "to handle and touch." The OED defines "rape" as "the act of taking anything by force; violent seizure (of goods), robbery." Lizzie, on the contrary, loses neither her money nor her virginity: she gets her "penny" back without sacrificing a part of her body to the goblins:

Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,

And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse,
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran

But not one goblin skurried after,
Nor was she pricked by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.
(1:23,448-50,452-55,459-63)
As Leighton comments, a woman's "purse," for the Victorians, was a euphemism for the vagina; both Dante Gabriel and Hawthorne used it as a metaphor in their works. Lizzie's symbolic preservation of both her money and her sexuality through her "bouncing" "penny" appears to represent her new-found ability to look without harm into the public sphere (1:23,452-53). Her "inward laughter" reflects her triumph over the fear of self-exposure that is so prominent in Christina's early work, and prevents Lizzie from attempting a rescue sooner. With her coin "bouncing" melodiously, apparently as a reflection of her own energy, Lizzie also seems to have gained the capacity to create her own music; i.e., art. (In The Face of the Deep, Christina describes "hearing" as "the least sensual of the five senses"; the one most clearly addressed to "the intangible and invisible") (FD 352). Again, the key to Christina's powerful, publishable construction of Lizzie as a prototypical flâneuse or producer is Lizzie's ability to recast her own subjective version of the conventional model's "listening" pose rather than merely responding to someone else's (whether a goblin's or Mrs. Roe's) conceptualizations.

Lizzie's symbolic transformation into a female Christ through her offering herself to be "eaten" by Laura in the next stanza has been much discussed: Palazzo states that the sensual language employed by Lizzie is a sign that she has
been in touch with the corrupting fruit, and that it is Laura's horror at her sister's words and tone that initiates her recovery. I would argue, more along the lines of Leighton and Galligani Casey, that Lizzie's appropriation of the goblins' imperatives and metaphoric diction indicate that by the power she has gained through her linguistic control (her ability to invoke herself in their market), she can translate their language into domestic terms and invoke her own audience, thus triggering her sister's cure:

   Eat me, drink me, love me;
   Laura, make much of me:
   For your sake I have braved the glen
   And had to do with goblin merchant men.
   (1:23,471-74)

Laura's successful purging and return to "moderate behavior" (she "Hug[s] Lizzie but not twice or thrice") helps characterize Lizzie as a figure for good domestic management (1:25,539). Christina basically conforms to her culture's ideology in this scene: for the Victorians, the maternal ideal of nurturing it portrays constituted a middle-class woman's sole source of legitimate power.

Rossetti's striking metaphors also could have been due to a desire to balance the individualistic connotations of the military metaphors she uses earlier in the poem. Proof that such balance constituted a socio-cultural ideal can be found at the end of Book One in George Eliot's Daniel Deronda, first published in 1876, in a scene that appears directly derived from Goblin Market. When Daniel rescues a
woman from drowning who might be (but the reader finds is not) a prostitute and takes her to his friends, the Meyricks, one of the family’s daughter’s declares: "We will take care of you—we will comfort you—we will love you." It is noteworthy that the family has just been reading aloud Erckmann-Chatrian’s Histoire d’un Conscrit de 1813: Eliot’s trope of rescue occurs, similarly to Christina’s, in the context of a daughter’s dream of nursing as a powerful alternative to the embroidery she is doing to help support the family. Goblin Market evidently helped inspire one of the Victorian era’s most popular tropes.

Gilbert and Gubar claim that the end of Goblin Market (Laura and Lizzie’s withdrawal into the private sphere immediately after their victory over the market) signifies Christina’s renunciation of poetry and/or art. I think it represents Christina’s attempt symbolically to address the limited options for writing and publication available to a Victorian female poet. Perhaps because of the presence throughout her early career of her brother and critic, Dante Gabriel, she may have found it impossible openly to defy the poetic subjects and types recommended by her male mentors. I have tried, throughout this study, to convey a sense of what these types were by comparing Christina’s unpublished poems to her published ones. I would argue that Christina’s flâneusian prototype in Goblin Market rests on the
possibility of her recasting such types within publishable frameworks.

Christina’s final stanza sums up her revision of the flâneur’s posture, which she has been working on throughout the 1850s:

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives

. . . . . . . . . . . . .
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,

. . . . . . . . . . . . .
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,

. . . . . . . . . . . . .
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together,
"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."


The flâneur’s freedom imaginatively to improvise has been translated, for Laura, into the storytelling through which she passes on her experiences to a new generation. For Lizzie, this freedom corresponds to her capacity to enter into the marketplace through interpreting it accurately and controlling the figures by which she is invoked within it. As a result, she gains the power to create her own music and to invoke audiences of her own (another version of Laura’s storytelling). Helsinger’s definition of "hoarding" as the "teasing possibility" that the sisters can reenter the marketplace at will seems to be Christina’s flâneusian
equivalent of the flâneur’s right to stroll freely; i.e., to assume a producer’s as opposed to a consumer’s role.^^

The crux of Christina’s revision of the flâneur’s pose and her construction of a flâneusian prototype rests on the paradoxes implied by the poem’s last line. The communal, story-telling mode that dominates the last stanza of Goblin Market directs the reader’s attention towards listening as a group activity and suggests a return to the hypnotic, garrulous goblin sales pitch with which the poem began. In spite of the last stanza’s emphasis on familial support as a defense against the marketplace, however, the last line’s cadences closely echo those of the last line of "Listening": "To hear / him speak"; ["To strengthen] whilst /one stands." Moreover, when one compares the two poems’ matching promoted stresses on "him" and "one," one notices their contrasting contexts. In "Listening," the stress on "him" reinforces the passivity of the poem’s heroine, a stereotypically domestic object who possesses the same sort of trusting dependence that proves so dangerous to Laura. This in turn emphasizes that while the pronoun "one" occurs in both singular and plural forms, only in the singular form can "one stand." This tends to focus the reader’s attention on the individual rather than the community.

As at the conclusion of "The Lost Titian," meaning is suspended over a single word: "one." I think Christina uses irony in the poem’s last line subtly to undercut Goblin
Market's ostensible theme of sisterly support through stressing how each individual, in each new generation, must listen to, interpret, and finally face alone the alluring tones emanating from the marketplace. We as readers "consume" the text of Goblin Market along with Laura and Lizzie's children, but we are also potential producers insofar as choice ("free will") governs the marketplace. In an antithetical context, Dante Gabriel's speaker, in the crucial scene from "St. Agnes of Intercession" discussed in chapter one and at the beginning of this chapter, clearly defines himself as a producing artist. Nevertheless, like Baudelaire's flâneur or "Jenny," he is on the market himself in search of buyers for his paintings. At the end of Goblin Market, the boundary between producer and consumer blurs from the consumer's perspective; in Dante Gabriel's work, it blurs from the point of view of an artist-producer.

Towards the end of The Face of the Deep, Christina acknowledges the Victorian separation of spheres, personifying man as the "right hand," the "achiever," and woman as the "left hand," "more apt at carrying than at executing" (FD 410). But as in "The Lost Titian" and Goblin Market, she suspends the possibility of a different "world" in which gender roles could be altered or confused over a single word, "may": "Rules admit of and are proved by exceptions. There are left-handed people, and there may arise a left-handed society!" (FD 410). A similar blurred
boundary between consuming and producing roles defines Christina's flâneusian perspective in the nineteenth century.
Notes

1 Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988) 101-12. In chapter four, Poovey has an excellent discussion of the problems of mid-Victorian writers who on the one hand were perceived as prophets above crass commercial considerations and on the other were dependent on the shifting tastes of publishers, advertisers, and booksellers.

2 Poovey, Uneven Developments, 1-10. In her first chapter, Poovey discusses the Victorian "myths" of gender, and how the woman writer as well as other working women challenged such myths.

3 Christina Rossetti, "The Lost Titian," Commonplace, and Other Short Stories (London: Ellis, 1870) 45. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as "LT."

4 Angela Leighton, Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1992) 158.


Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy," *College Composition and Communication* 35.2 (May 1984): 155-71. Ede and Lunsford define the concept of the "invoked" audience as "the audience called up or imagined by the writer." I would argue that invoking one's audience according to one's own terms was a crucial aspect of Victorian poetics.

Quoted by Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets*, 32-34. Leighton defines Corinne's "pose" as a figure for the myth of the woman artist who triumphs artistically (before an invisible male audience) and pays for it with loneliness.


Quoted by Harrison, *Victorian Poets and Romantic Poems*, 133.


13 See Leighton, Victorian Women Poets (note eight), 135-37 for an illuminating discussion of Rossetti's playing "the socio-economic register off against the biblical register" through "the same shifting promiscuous image of the 'coin.'"


16 Christina Rossetti, "Vanna's Twins," Commonplace, and Other Short Stories, 227.

17 Quoted by Bentley, "The Meretricious and the Meritorious," 65.


19 Quoted by Galligani Casey, "The Potential of Sisterhood," 55.

20 Poovey, Uneven Developments, 169.


31 Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 183.
32 Gilbert & Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic, 574-75.
CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, I examine the difference that gender would have made to a brother and sister, both of whom succeeded in becoming poets in nineteenth-century England. As I have already discussed, their careers were greatly predetermined by a culture which forbade women any vocation outside the home and exalted the talented male artist as a genius. Pollock argues that women could not become flâneuses because they did not possess 1) "freedom of incognito"; 2) the right freely to enter the public sphere; 3) the right to look into the public sphere (VD 71). Nevertheless, the preceding chapters demonstrate that throughout her 1850s work, Christina’s protagonists gradually gain the capacity to look and act in "the world."

As I noted in my introduction, previous scholarship does not closely explore the relationship between Christina’s work and that of her brother, or examine how Christina constructs her flâneusian vision through revising Dante Gabriel’s favorite trope of gazing at a female object. As I show in chapter one, she employs two female characters in Maude to demonstrate how Agnes, her non-poet heroine, relies on dialogue as opposed to imaginative improvisation,
reality as opposed to fantasy, and echoes the words of God the father himself to transform herself into an editor if not a poet. Poetic authority in "Symbols" is generated by the power her poetic objects gain to confront the poem's typically male romantic speaker: the rhetorical question that ends the poem suggests that meaning can only be found in a transcendent sphere. "A Year Afterwards" and "Guesses" depict her decidedly-male narrators questioning their authority to classify the female romantic objects at the core of their respective visions, as I discuss in chapters two and three. In the comedic "The P. R. B.," she does the unthinkable: she inverts traditional roles by casting her real and adopted brethren as conventional poetic objects. "From the Antique" disputes the ability of a classic female romantic heroine to look into the public sphere, as does "The World." Thus, most of the symbolic looking of Christina's characters at this point in her career is based on their occupying blurred boundaries between the public and private sphere.

Following the writing of "The World," in "Three Stages (3)," Christina describes the public sphere as a force which draws her almost against her will: "Ah, too, my heart woke unawares, intent / On fruitful harvest sheaves" (3:234, 27-28). In "Listening" and "In an Artist's Studio," she harnesses the possibility of authority generated through the power of female influence to criticize her male characters'
view of two ideally-passive female objects. She adds a
dimension to the flâneur’s conventional posture by
empathizing with rather than distantly gazing at her objects
of vision. The culmination of her speakers’
"flâneusianism," as I show in chapter four, occurs in *Goblin
Market*, where her speakers gain the ability to move into and
out of the public sphere through exercising their power as
discriminating consumers. Again, Christina reconstructs the
classic flâneur’s distanced vision through having her
heroines actively save each other. It is what Lizzie says
and does and not merely what she sees that allows her to
traverse the gap between the "haunted glen" and her home.

Consequently, the triumph of Christina Rossetti is the
result of her speakers’ ability to negotiate the gap between
the public and private spheres. I would go so far as to say
that the flâneur’s typically distanced vision is not
possible for a female speaker, and that in poems like
"Listening" and "In an Artist’s Studio," such vision is
actually linked to a lack of poetic authority. I do think
Christina succeeds in constructing her own type of flâneuse,
however, through recasting the "[o]ne face . . . [that]
look[ed] out from all . . . [her brother’s] canvasses" and
enabling it to look back at him (3:264,1). By considering
the work of Christina Rossetti in relation to the famous
brother who greatly influenced his sister’s poetic
development, one exposes another facet of nineteenth-century
literature and allows a flâneuse to emerge from the "house of shadows" in which male poets like Dante Gabriel have placed her.


---. "'By Thought, Word, and Deed': George Herbert and Christina Rossetti." *Kent* 250-73.


**Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart.** Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1992.


---. Introduction, Kent 1-19.


---. "Rossetti’s Significant Details." Riede, David G., ed. Dante Gabriel Rossetti Revisited. 76-88.


---. Called to Be Saints. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1881.

---. Time Flies: A Reading Diary. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1885.


Sussman, Herbert L. Fact into Figure: Typology in Carlyle, Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1979.


---. "A Slumber Did My Spirit Steal." Perkins 265.