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## **Representations of Ophelia's Death in British Art**

**Bakalářská práce**

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## Introduction

Literature and the fine arts have been always closely connected throughout history. Many scenes and themes from the Bible or classical legends and characters have been depicted by renowned artists and, vice versa, the finest masterpieces have sometimes inspired the authors to write books. Homer's hero *Ulysses*, the myth of *Tristan and Isolde*, *Romeo and Juliet* greatly inspired artists to portray them imaginatively. As an example of the process reversed, the famous painting by Vermeer *Girl with a Pearl Earring* inspired Tracy Chevalier<sup>1</sup> to write a historical novel. Thus a painter and a writer could be said to be the same type of artist, each of them using different vehicles to convey their message. The painter uses colours on canvas that create an image; the writer puts to use the words that result in a complex and coherent text.

In my thesis I focused on a particular scene from William Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*, the death of Ophelia, which is highly impressive from the theatrical point of view. This scene is not visualized on the stage, but only pronounced in a dialogue between two characters in the play. I find it interesting to observe how this accurately descriptive, as regards the place and the manner of Ophelia's last moments, and greatly poetic scene influenced the British artists who decided to shape it in a visual form.

The first part of my thesis briefly deals with the relations between the images and texts in general. Then, I discuss Shakespeare's relationship to the Fine Arts and consequently, applied on the specific case of Ophelia, I retell her story in the tragedy and present the source text. The source text is part of Act IV, Scene 7 where Queen Gertrude speaks to Laertes, Ophelia's brother, about the drowning of the young girl.

The particular representations in British art are included in the second part. After providing a short definition of the genre mentioned, I sort the British Ophelias into three groups as following: The Pre-Raphaelite paintings, The Pre-

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<sup>1</sup> Tracy Chevalier is a historical novelist, born in 1962, Washington, D.C., USA.

Raphaelite Brotherhood and The Twentieth century Ophelias. Consequently, I present the artists' biographies and give a concise analysis and comment on each visual representation in the context of the original Shakespearean text.

The first three to be discussed among the British painters are Robert Westall, Joseph Severn and Richard Redgrave, who produced their works in the first half of the twentieth century. My list continues with the British painters, who were members, cooperated or were members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The group is opened by John Everett Millais, the prominent member of The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as well and continues with Arthur Hughes, George Frederic Watts, Henry Nelson O'Neil, John William Waterhouse, who treated visually the theme of Ophelia several times and finally Harold Copping.

The next group focuses on the British artists who painted Ophelias after 1900 and includes Margaret Macdonald, W. G. Simmonds and Stanley William Hayter. The list is brought to a close with the fairly contemporary British painters Peter Blake, Annie O'venden and Norma Galley.

# 1. Text and its visual representation

## 1.1 Images and texts

For the information in the following lines, I am indebted to having attended courses of Image Analysis and to the Czech translation of the book called *Image* by Jacque Aumont.

Images and texts are closely connected. They are both based on the same principle of encoding a message that is communicated via various media.

A text is a coherent unit of written language signs that conveys a message encoded in it. It is a graphic representation of spoken words or vice versa, the text can be pronounced by reading.

An image is also an encoded message that just differs in the form. It is an iconographic document, i.e. different genres of imagery, which contain the messages encoded in a visual or graphic form. To decode or read an image, it is necessary to use the language signs and organize them into a speech or text. Thus, it implies that an image is an encoded text message and to interpret it, it must be decoded by using the words.<sup>2</sup>

### "Image" definitions

*Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary:*

"1: a reproduction or imitation of the form of a person or thing; *especially*: an imitation in solid form: statue"<sup>3</sup>

*Dictionary.com:*

"1: a physical likeness or representation of a person, animal, or thing, photographed, painted, sculptured, or otherwise made visible."<sup>4</sup>

*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary:*

"3: (*formal*) a copy of somebody or something in the form of a picture or a statue"<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jacques Aumont, *Obraz* (Praha: Akademie Múzických umění v Praze, 2005)

<sup>3</sup> "Image," *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, 1 April 2010 <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/image>>

<sup>4</sup> "Image," *Dictionary.com*, 1 April 2010 <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/image>>

## **"Text" definitions**

*Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary:*

"1 a (1): the original words and form of a written or printed work

(2): an edited or emended copy of an original work

b: a work containing such text"<sup>6</sup>

*YourDictionary.com:*

"1: the actual structure of words in a piece of writing; wording

9: something, usually a piece of writing, regarded as an object of analysis or interpretation"<sup>7</sup>

*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary:*

"1: the main printed part of a book or magazine, not the notes, pictures, etc.

4: the written form of a speech, a play, an article, etc."<sup>8</sup>

## **Types of images (iconographic documents)**

The images are presented in different genres, of which the most popular and common are: paintings, drawings, satirical drawings, comic strips, photography and film.

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<sup>5</sup> A S Hornby, "Image," *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 7th Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 743.

<sup>6</sup> "Text," *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, 1 April 2010 <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/netdict/text>>

<sup>7</sup> "Text," *YourDictionary.com*, 1 April 2010 <<http://www.yourdictionary.com/text>>

<sup>8</sup> A S Hornby, "Text," *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 7th Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 1530.

## 1.2 The source text

### Shakespeare – a literary painter?

In the following lines I would like to discuss Shakespeare's relationship to the Fine Arts, particularly in the genre of painting while providing several examples that demonstrate Shakespeare's mastery in depicting scenes and the influence of painting in his work. For this information I am mainly indebted to shakespeare-online.com website.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) lived during the flourishing period of the English Renaissance. His contemporaries in arts were great persons as Hans Holbein, a painter of German origin and the author of the portrait of *Henry VIII* or *The Ambassadors*. Among other Shakespeare's contemporaries in British art, I would mention Marcus Gheeraerts, the famous portraitist of the queen Elizabeth I., or the miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard.

According to S. Clarke Hulse, the author of the article "‘A Piece of Skilful Painting’ in Shakespeare’s *Lucrece*", Shakespeare's interest in painting can be traced, for example, in *Lucrece* where he provides the "elaborate description of a tapestry or painting of Troy which takes up over two hundred lines in *Lucrece*"<sup>9</sup> and "draws on Virgil and Classical art theorists to create for his poem a proper epic *ecphrasis*, comparable to the shield of Achilles, to the bronze doors at Carthage where Aeneas sees written the fate of his people, or to the 'clothes of Arras and of *Toure*' which decorate Malacasta's castle in the *Faerie Queene*. When he describes the painter's wondrous skill, Shakespeare invokes the ancient *paragone* of poet and painter, asserting his own mastery of his craft and equality to the ancient masters of the arts."<sup>10</sup>

The Painter appears also as a character in one of the Shakespeare's tragedies *Timon of Athens*.

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<sup>9</sup> S. Clark Hulse. "‘A Piece of Skilful Painting’ in Shakespeare’s *Lucrece*." Shakespeare Survey: Volume 31: Shakespeare and the Classical World. Ed. Kenneth Muir. Cambridge University Press, 1979. *Cambridge Collections Online*. Cambridge University Press. 12 April 2010  
<[http://cco.cambridge.org/extract?id=ccol0521220114\\_CCOL0521220114A002](http://cco.cambridge.org/extract?id=ccol0521220114_CCOL0521220114A002)>

<sup>10</sup> S. Clark Hulse. "‘A Piece of Skilful Painting’ in Shakespeare’s *Lucrece*." Shakespeare Survey: Volume 31: Shakespeare and the Classical World. Ed. Kenneth Muir. Cambridge University Press, 1979. *Cambridge Collections Online*. Cambridge University Press. 12 April 2010  
<[http://cco.cambridge.org/extract?id=ccol0521220114\\_CCOL0521220114A002](http://cco.cambridge.org/extract?id=ccol0521220114_CCOL0521220114A002)>

Shakespeare uses "painting" as a metaphor to express the beauty and love of his beloved in the *Sonnet n° 24*. He calls his own eye, a painter, who paints a portrait of his love directly into his heart. Thus, it seems as if Shakespeare was using the meta-language to create an image with his words.

It is apparent that Shakespeare, in his work, had given very accurate and poetic descriptions of the characters, places, situations and thus can be considered a literary painter who is leading the imaginary brush and creates more or less concrete images in the readers or spectators minds.

This supposition can be clearly demonstrated in the dialogue between Laertes and Queen Gertrude in *Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene 7, the scene of Ophelia's death:

#### "QUEEN GERTRUDE

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream:  
There with fantastic garlands did she come,  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name;  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:  
There on the pendent boughs, her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang; an envious sliver broke,  
When down her weedy trophies, and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook; her clothes spread wide,  
And mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up,  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native, and indued  
Unto that element: but long it could not be,  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay,  
To muddy death."<sup>11</sup>

As stated before, the important fact is that this scene is not visualized on the stage. Nevertheless, in order to create a precise visualisation, Shakespeare, exactly as the painter would, starts to unwind the veil over the imaginary canvas inside the spectator's mind. He sets the composition of the surroundings of the scene, where he describes the river, willow tree and pays attention to the smallest detail as the reflection of the willow leaves in the water surface.

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<sup>11</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994) 132.

He names the flowers that Ophelia brought and weaved into the garlands and briefly provides the symbolism. Later with close observation, he depicts the last feeling of Ophelia before her drowning.

A striking fact about this piece of text is that it actually describes an action, particularly Ophelia's coming to the stream, hanging flowers, falling into the water and dying by sinking caused by her heavy dress. Nevertheless, the poetic complexity, particular doleful atmosphere and fluency of the course of the scene, altogether finally make a somehow static image inside a spectator's mind. This proves Shakespeare to proceed as a painter, who is creating a picture, just with the difference that he is not using oils or other colours to put them on canvas but employs words. Thus, Shakespeare could be considered as a literary painter.

### **Ophelia's character**

In *Hamlet*, Ophelia has the role of Hamlet's lover, Polonius' daughter and the sister of Laertes. She is young but Shakespeare does not speak about her age exactly. Other characters describe her as beautiful, sweet and innocent. From her behaviour, the spectator can deduce a fragile soul that is driven mad after the death of her father and the rude refusal by Hamlet.

Ophelia enters the scene for the first time at the beginning of the Scene 3 of Act I, where she speaks with Laertes, who warns her against her passionate love towards Hamlet. Then Polonius enters and they talk the same matter. Now Ophelia is trying to defend Hamlet's affection but at the end she agrees to obey her father.

In Act II, Scene 1 Ophelia enters deranged by Hamlet's behaviour and confesses her worries about Hamlet to Polonius. She reappears again in the Act III, Scene 1, where Hamlet speaks to her in a rude manner, denying his affection for her and convincing her to enter a nunnery. The two speak again in the Scene 2 of the same Act, when watching the play that Hamlet stage-managed.

The very last physical presence of Ophelia at the stage takes place in the Act IV, Scene 5, when she enters "distracted"<sup>12</sup> and sings to the King and Queen about the death of her father. After the return of Laertes, she re-enters the scene

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<sup>12</sup> Shakespeare 118.

and sings to Laertes while distributing flowers (rosemary, pansies, fennels, columbines, rue, daisy and speaks about violets "but they wither'd all when her father died"<sup>13</sup>) each of them having a symbolic meaning. She leaves to find her death in a stream.

The scene of her death is described by Queen Gertrude in the Act IV, Scene 7, when she comes to announce the sad news to Laertes. The Queen says that Ophelia came to a small river, where she wanted to hang her "fantastic garlands"<sup>14</sup> on the branches of a willow. Suddenly, the branch broke and Ophelia fell into a stream. While floating in the water and singing "as one incapable of her own distress"<sup>15</sup>, her heavy dress caused her to sink and drown. This scene is only pronounced at the stage by a character and visualised just in the heads of the spectators.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Shakespeare 124.

<sup>14</sup> Shakespeare 132.

<sup>15</sup> Shakespeare 132.

<sup>16</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994)

## **2. Representations of Ophelia's death in British art**

### **2.1 Generally about painting**

#### **2.1.1 Painting**

I took the basic information for the following chapter mainly from the booklet *Introduction à l'analyse des images visuelles* from the "Images et Textes" course that I attended at Université de Provence in 2007 and 2008.

Painting is a genre in the visual arts. It is an act of putting various types of colour pigments on the canvas using a brush or another device in order to depict the light.<sup>17</sup> Painting is basically divided into figurative painting and abstract painting. The most common techniques are oil painting, watercolour painting, acrylic painting, gouache painting, etc.

#### **2.1.2 How to read the painting**

In order to achieve the most accurate analysis of a painting it is necessary to concentrate on several phase of the analysis itself.

First of all, the painting must be described in several points of view. Factual description gives the title, name of artist, date of production and also the medium or technique used. Thematic description that should follow simply reveals the subject matter of the painting, provides basic symbolism and the link to the title. Last part of the description is the stylistic point of view, which treats composition, colour, lines, form, volume, depth and perspective but as well the light, brushwork, etc.

An important phase in image analysing is the contextualization. It shows what preceded the production of the painting, the relation to other painters or paintings and also it reflects the work's reception that followed the production.

The last phase, the interpretation, should be a conclusion following the two preceding phases. This part can include the original meaning for the artist but it equally comprises the personal opinion or appreciation.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Vincenç B. Ballestar, Jordi Vigué, *Malba* (Barcelona: Gorg Blanc, 2002) 9.

<sup>18</sup> Hinchliffe, Phelan, Reynes, Teulié, Vanfasse, *Introduction à l'analyse des images visuelles*, English course: CO4 "Images et Textes," (Université de Provence, 2007-2008) 28.

## 2.2 Representations of Ophelia's Death in British Painting

### Art before the Pre-Raphaelites

British art of the first half of the 19th century was influenced by Romanticism, which had sprung up from the new enthusiasm inspired by the Great French Revolution and the British economic expansion. Dominant artists in painting of this period were J.M.W. Turner, the famous precursor of the Impressionists, and John Constable, the best-known English landscape painter.

Among the painters of that period who portrayed the scene of Ophelia's death rank three artists: Robert Westall, Joseph Severn and Richard Redgrave.

#### 2.2.1 Robert Westall (1765-1836)

##### The Life of Robert Westall

Robert Westall, born in Hertford in 1765, was a British engraver, painter but above all a book illustrator. He came from the artistic family of Westalls, his brother William was a painter as well. Originally, Robert Westall was apprenticed in engraving to John Thompson.<sup>19</sup> In 1784 he was advised by John Alefounder to continue with painting and one year later he became a student of the Royal Academy, where he exhibited more than 300 works.

As a painter he used "violent and sometimes excessive colours"<sup>20</sup> and in other works "tends towards a Rococo prettiness"<sup>21</sup>. One of his most important employers was John Boydell, who commissioned Westall to paint five images for his Shakespeare Gallery.<sup>22</sup>

Robert Westall was a prolific artist, nevertheless, his paintings did not sell well and he ended as a poor man. Westall died on December, 4th 1836 in London.

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<sup>19</sup> Shearer West, "Westall, Robert," *The Dictionary of Art*, Ed. Jane Turner, Vol. 33 (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996) 95.

<sup>20</sup> West 95.

<sup>21</sup> West 95.

<sup>22</sup> West 95.

### ***Ophelia* (undated) by Robert Westall**

Robert Westall's *Ophelia* is an illustration that is a part of the *The Dramatic Works of Shakespeare*, "edited by George Steevens (1736-1800) and published as a part of *Boydell's Shakespeare Prints*".<sup>23</sup> The picture presents a young woman in a flared dress, who leans against the branch of a willow to hang flowers above a stream. This is the very moment, described in the Act IV, Scene 7, when the branch broke and Ophelia fell into the stream and drowned.<sup>24</sup>

This painting seems to correspond best to Queen Gertrude's words in the original Shakespeare text, particularly the lines 1-8 and also it seems the most veritable as it anticipates the following fall. The composition shows that Ophelia steps on the willow branch and reaches diagonally to hang flowers on the other one. Thus it seems logical, when the branch breaks, she falls into the stream and the heavy soaking dress brings her down.

### **2.2.2 Joseph Severn (1793-1879)**

#### **The Life of Joseph Severn**

Joseph Severn was a British painter, who was born 7<sup>th</sup> December 1793 in London. Along with Richard Westall, he started his artistic carrier as an apprentice in engraving. He left with John Keats to Italy in 1820 and remained in Rome after Keats's death one year later. In Italy, Severn became quite popular and successful. In 1841, he came back to London to leave it again for Rome about twenty years later as British Consul.<sup>25</sup>

Italian scenes, "conventional both in terms of their style and subject-matter"<sup>26</sup>, are frequent themes of Severn paintings. He was inspired by "pastoral and historical themes" and in the early stage of his career produced, for example "the oil studies of peasants"<sup>27</sup>. Later, his style anticipates the future Pre-Raphaelite

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<sup>23</sup> "Robert Westall, *Ophelia*," *Index of classes/Shakespeare\_Illustrated*, Emory University - English Department website, 5 March 2010

<[http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/Westall.Ophelia.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Westall.Ophelia.html)>

<sup>24</sup> "Robert Westall, *Ophelia*," *Index of classes/Shakespeare\_Illustrated*, Emory University - English Department website, 5 March 2010

<[http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/Westall.Ophelia.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Westall.Ophelia.html)>

<sup>25</sup> Cecilia Powell, "Severn, Joseph," *The Dictionary of Art*, Ed. Jane Turner, Vol. 28 (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996) 509.

<sup>26</sup> Powell 509.

<sup>27</sup> Powell 509.

techniques, especially in "the over-attention to detail"<sup>28</sup>, observable in his paintings *Shelley* or *Ophelia*.

Joseph Severn, who is now remembered especially thanks to portraying his good friend and well-known poet John Keats, died on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1879 and is now buried next to Keats in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Ophelia* (1831) by Joseph Severn**

Joseph Severn's oil on canvas from 1831, presents *Ophelia* at the very moment before falling into the stream and dying. The woman's leaning figure is diagonally placed from the upper left corner to the lower right corner and her enlightened head creates the focus point of the painting. She sits on a wooden branch and leans against the rock or shore above a stream, with her head dropped on her right arm. Her absent gaze is directing upwards suggesting a busy and depressed mind. The open mouth makes the impression that the woman is sighing or singing, which refers to the Act IV, Scene 7.

The scene is highly stylized and refers to the original text of the Act IV, Scene 7 in several symbols. Firstly, it is the dress that is slowly sinking into the water and causes Ophelia's drowning later. Ophelia holds a letter from Hamlet in her left hand. The most symbolic effect is created by the flowers. This image is very extraordinary because of the arrangement of the flowers, as they are attached to the wooden sticks that shape letters giving the word Hamlet.

Severn emphasizes in this picture the source of Ophelia's suffering and madness - Hamlet himself. Undeniably his cruel and rude behaviour towards her, led to the unhappy love and her final death.

The act of arranging the flowers in order to make the name can be perceived very ambiguously. Either Severn brilliantly expressed the insanity of the poor girl's mind, or he just added a kitsch detail that lowers the poetics of this scene. In my personal view, with a regard also to choice of colours, I tend to agree with the latter statement.

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<sup>28</sup> Powell 509.

<sup>29</sup> Powell 509.

### 2.2.3 Richard Redgrave (1804-1888)

#### The Life of Richard Redgrave

Richard Redgrave was born in London in 1804 to the family of a manufacturer of wire fencing, William Redgrave. After having been given a home education, he attended school in Chelsea. Gradually, he started to work for his father's company but tended to arts. In 1826 he entered the Royal Academy, where he produced paintings mainly inspired by literary themes, which were later substituted by those depicting the life of the poor social classes.

His professional career was developing very well. Redgrave became a full member of the Royal Academy in 1851 and in 1857 was appointed the inspector general for art. He became a renowned designer as well and worked on several important commissions, e.g. he designed a funeral carriage for the duke of Wellington in 1852 or five years later, he designed the South Kensington Museum's<sup>30</sup> art gallery exhibiting the British art. His intention as a designer was to improve the craftpeople of England and to "make museums appeal to the general public and the lower classes in general".<sup>31</sup>

As regards his personal life, he married Rose Margaret Bacon in 1843. Richard Redgrave, who was a well-known British painter, important designer and art historian, went blind at the end of his life and died in 1888 at his home.<sup>32</sup>

#### *Ophelia Weaving Her Garlands* (1842) by Richard Redgrave

Richard Redgrave's painting is called *Ophelia Weaving her Garlands* from 1842. This picture actually reflects the first five lines of Act IV, Scene 7 from Hamlet. Ophelia again as in Severn's painting is captured pensive, sitting upright on the willow branch and weaving the garlands of flowers. In Redgrave's painting the woman's figure creates the vertical composition of the whole scene. A detailed depiction of Ophelia's dress, study of flowers and somehow pious atmosphere correspond already to the early Pre-Raphaelites style. The expression in Ophelia's face hints at an occupied mind and the character is absent from the scene.

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<sup>30</sup> now Victoria and Albert Museum

<sup>31</sup> Lee Sorensen, "Redgrave, Richard," *Dictionary of Art Historians*. 3 March 2010  
<[www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/redgraver.htm](http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/redgraver.htm)>

<sup>32</sup> Lee Sorensen, "Redgrave, Richard," *Dictionary of Art Historians*. 3 March 2010  
<[www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/redgraver.htm](http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/redgraver.htm)>

Redgrave thus perfectly conveyed the atmosphere from the play, where Ophelia is practically not present at the stage during the scene of her death described in Act IV, Scene 7.

## The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

I am indebted to the website [artmuseum.cz](http://artmuseum.cz) and its editor Martina Glenn for the majority of the following ideas and information.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a "small group of young English artists formed in 1848, who took their name from their desire to revive the sincerity and simplicity of early Italian painting e.g. the time before Raphael"<sup>33</sup>, who represented for them an ideal model of mechanic non-authenticity. Three men were responsible for the foundation of the Brotherhood, the painters William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), who were soon joined by other four artists: the brother of Rossetti – William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919), James Collinson (1825-1881), critic Frederic George Stephens (1828-1907) and sculptor and poet Thomas Woolner (1825-1892). Since The Pre-Raphaelites were strongly opposed to the teachings and academism of The Royal Academy in London and since some of them were students there, they decided to keep the existence of the group in secrecy and to sign their paintings with PRB an abbreviation for The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

The Pre-Raphaelites rejected so-called frivolous art of that period as well as the hypocrisy of Victorian society and the rigid system of art teaching.<sup>34</sup> They, in contrast, hoped to bring the English art back to nature and to the pure concept of reality by their own vision. Their main ideas and thoughts were published in a magazine called *The Germ*, issued in a short period from January to April 1850. They also recorded inscriptions of their meetings in the Pre-Raphaelite diary.

These artists mostly painted themes of medieval legends, biblical stories and mythology. The most striking and typical features of their canvases were brilliant colours and masterfully depicted details. The Pre-Raphaelites admired the medieval culture that, according to them, had spiritual and creative unity, which has disappeared over the centuries.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> John Julius Norwich, *Oxford Illustrated Encyclopedia of The Arts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 366.

<sup>34</sup> "Prerafaelité," *Artmuseum.cz*, 9 September 2009  
<[http://www.artmuseum.cz/smer\\_list.php?smer\\_id=103](http://www.artmuseum.cz/smer_list.php?smer_id=103)>

<sup>35</sup> "Prerafaelité," *Artmuseum.cz*, 9 September 2009  
<[http://www.artmuseum.cz/smer\\_list.php?smer\\_id=103](http://www.artmuseum.cz/smer_list.php?smer_id=103)>

The first exhibition of Millais and Holman Hunt at the Royal Academy in 1849 aroused great indignation among the society and critics of arts who denounced their highly realistic religious paintings so different from the popular over-decorated and dramatic historical paintings of the official academism. One year later, John Ruskin, an English writer and art critic, defended publicly the Pre-Raphaelites by speaking highly of their representation of nature and their denial of old and rigid traditions of art and the Academia itself. Ruskin also supported the group in his books and reviews and sponsored them financially.<sup>36</sup>

The Pre-Raphaelites significantly contributed to English literature and poetry above all. Rossetti, who deeply admired the Renaissance author Dante Alighieri and from whom he borrowed his first name, is known as an excellent poet. His poems, however, were not completely preserved as he buried them (and had them exhumed afterwards) together with his beloved wife Elizabeth Siddall, who died of a laudanum overdose.

Other artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood were, among others, the painter and designer Ford Maddox Brown who refused membership, Edward Burne-Jones, Algernon Swinburne, Christina Rossetti, William Morris or John William Waterhouse. The Pre-Raphaelites with their thinking had a great influence on the Symbolist movement that shared the fascination for the Middle Ages, old myths and legends.

#### **2.2.4 John Everett Millais (1829-1896)**

##### **The life of Millais**

I used the *artmuseum.cz* website as a source of information about Millais' life.

The English painter Sir John Everett Millais was born in 1829 in Southampton. He started to express his talent already when four years old; his rich parents encouraged him in his first attempts and paid him the private lessons. In 1840 the family moved to London, as the art teacher advised, and presented their son to the president of Royal Academy. He recognized his extraordinary talent and made an exception to accept Millais to the Academy. Millais, who was eleven

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<sup>36</sup> "Prerafaelité," *Artmuseum.cz*, 9 September 2009  
<[http://www.artmuseum.cz/smer\\_list.php?smer\\_id=103](http://www.artmuseum.cz/smer_list.php?smer_id=103)> 9 September 2009

at the time, became by far the youngest student of the Academy ever. As a painter he was very skilful and, without regard to his age, was considered the most talented student of the Academy.

He stood at the origins of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and respected their ideas and doctrines in his own work. Millais' first painting according to the PRB traditions was *Lorenzo and Isabella* (1849), which was strongly criticized. It was painted after Keats' poem written on the theme from Boccaccio. Millais painted the image in the Italian style into which he put lots of symbolic metaphors, colours and details.<sup>37</sup> Other Millais' canvases were not well accepted and he lost almost all of his admirers who he gained during his successful studies at Academy. He painted several pictures with religious themes and was also influenced by Shakespeare. Shakespeare's influence on Millais can be clearly recognized in paintings like *Ophelia* (1851-1852), *Marianna* (1850-1851) and *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (1849-50).

Gradually, he gained popularity among critics and in France, even the Royal Academy accepted him as a member in 1853. His personal life was not less interesting. In 1853 he accepted Ruskin's invitation for a holiday in Scotland where he was supposed to paint portraits of Ruskin and his wife Effie. It was in Scotland, where Millais fell in love with Effie, who reciprocated his feelings, left Ruskin and married Millais. Despite this fact, Ruskin maintained his fondness for Millais and was his great supporter.

After 1855 Millais split up with PRB and devoted his work to demands of the broad public taste. In 1856 he became the richest and the most famous painter in England but his paintings lost the quality of Pre-Raphaelite compositions.<sup>38</sup>

Millais became a baronet in 1885 and four years later gained the office of the Royal Academy president. He died the same year and was buried in Saint Paul's Cathedral, London.

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<sup>37</sup> "Sir John Everett Millais," *Artmuseum.cz*, 9 September 2009  
<[http://www.artmuseum.cz/umelec.php?art\\_id=943](http://www.artmuseum.cz/umelec.php?art_id=943)>

<sup>38</sup> "Sir John Everett Millais," *Artmuseum.cz*, 9 September 2009  
<[http://www.artmuseum.cz/umelec.php?art\\_id=943](http://www.artmuseum.cz/umelec.php?art_id=943)>

### ***Ophelia* (1851-1852)**

I must agree with the fact that John Everett Millais' *Ophelia* (1851-1852) is generally the best-known and most classic representation of the tragic fate of the Shakespeare's young heroine. This popular picture is housed in the Tate Gallery, whose website [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk) was for me an important source of information. Millais, faithful to the Pre-Raphaelite theories, painted it with the greatest attention to detail and the complementation of the picture took him almost two years of constant work. Millais worked directly in the terrain as well as in the studio. The landscape part of the painting is an observation of the surroundings of the Hogsmill River near the town called Ewell.<sup>39</sup> Millais incorporates all the natural details mentioned by Shakespeare. Those are the flowers from Act IV, Scene 5 and Act IV, Scene 7, as well as the willow tree with its trunk growing across the brook. He added, however, several sorts of flowers that are not mentioned, e.g. forget-me-nots or poppies.<sup>40</sup>

The focal point of Millais' composition is the face and body of a young girl who is floating in the stream. Her head, neck, breast and hands protrude from the water surface. The rest of her body is under the surface. Ophelia's face shows a great distress. She has her eyes half-closed and the mouth is open as if she sighed in pain. Her complexion is very pale but bright and contrasts perfectly with the darkness of the water that later becomes her tomb. The flower garlands floating next to her body and her right hand holds one of them. Ophelia is wearing a highly decorated dress that is embroidered with silver and creates the impression of heaviness.<sup>41</sup>

Millais painted the Ophelia figure in his studio and the model was a nineteen year old girl, Elizabeth Siddall, the future wife and muse of D. G. Rossetti. A curious story is related to the painting of the model. Millais, who wanted to achieve the best authenticity of the scene, placed Elizabeth Siddall in a bath full of water. The water was heated by several candles placed under the bath. Millais, absorbed by his work, did not notice that the candles went out and the

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<sup>39</sup> "Work in Focus: Millais's Ophelia," *Tate Online*, 28 March 2010  
<[http://www.tate.org.uk/ophelia/working\\_landscape.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/ophelia/working_landscape.htm)>

<sup>40</sup> "Work in Focus: Millais's Ophelia," *Tate Online*, 28 March 2010  
<[http://www.tate.org.uk/ophelia/subject\\_symbolism.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/ophelia/subject_symbolism.htm)>

<sup>41</sup> "Work in Focus: Millais's Ophelia," *Tate Online*, 28 March 2010  
<[http://www.tate.org.uk/ophelia/working\\_model.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/ophelia/working_model.htm)>

water became cold causing the illness of his model. Fortunately, after Millais had paid all the medical bills, she recovered quickly.<sup>42</sup>

An interesting detail of the painting is the hand gesture that Ophelia makes. Her palms point upwards and her fingers tips meet at one point. This evokes an impression of Ophelia's resigning to her fate and consigning herself into the hands of God.

I find Millais' *Ophelia* especially impressive mainly because of the fact that the painter perfectly captured the desperate expression in the face of the dying heroine, which is deeply moving and invites a longer observation of the picture. I also appreciate the precision of details observable on Ophelia's dress and natural surroundings. All these facts confirm that Millais was a painter par excellence.

### 2.2.5 Arthur Hughes (1832-1915)

#### The life of Arthur Hughes

This British painter and successful illustrator was born in London, 1832. At the age of fourteen he entered the School of Design, Somerset House and studied under Alfred Stevens. Shortly after he was accepted to Royal Academy and exhibited his first painting *Musidora* there in 1847.

Hughes was a contemporary and adherent of the Pre-Raphaelites but never became a full member of the brotherhood. He accepted, however, to some extent the Pre-Raphaelite principles and rules and became a friend of Hunt, Madox Brown and Rossetti in 1850. The painting *Ophelia* from 1852 can be considered his first Pre-Raphaelite painting. His best Pre-Raphaelite works were produced during the 1850's. These are paintings as *April Love* (1855-1856) or *The Long Engagement* (1854-1859). Hughes later returned to the theme of Ophelia in 1863 and 1864.

In his private life he was a father of five children, who he had with his wife Tryphena Foord.

Arthur Hughes died at Kew in 1915 at the age of eighty-three.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> "Work in Focus: Millais's Ophelia," *Tate Online*, 28 March 2010  
<[http://www.tate.org.uk/ophelia/working\\_model.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/ophelia/working_model.htm)>

<sup>43</sup> Terry Riggs, "Hughes, Arthur," *Tate Online*, Nov 1997. 12 February 2010  
<<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ArtistWorks?cgroupid=999999961&artistid=283&page=1&sole=y&collab=y&attr=y&sort=default&tabview=bio>>

### ***Ophelia* (1852) by Arthur Hughes**

Arthur Hughes presents his *Ophelia* (1852) at the very moment that preceded her fall into the brook. In the picture, which has an unusual semi-circular shape, the figure of Ophelia is situated in the central part of the painting. She is sitting on the willow trunk "aslant a brook", holding a bunch of meadow flowers in her left hand and throwing some other flowers into the stream with her right hand. Hughes Ophelia looks very girlish with pale skin and delicate limbs. Great suffering can be read from her pensive face. The straws in her hair look similar to the crown of thorns, which probably alludes to the suffering of Jesus Christ.<sup>44</sup>

Hughes concentrated on the landscape in great detail – leaves of grass, birch bark or the plant film on the water surface. The landscape enhances the bleak and gloomy atmosphere of the whole scene.

An extraordinary element that Hughes used is the integration of Shakespeare's words in the frame of the painting. This is the best example showing the interaction between text and image. Hughes as the graphic encoder shows spectator the visual representation of the text. The included text allows the spectator – decoder to receive the message conveyed by the artist more easily.

In my point of view, Hughes provides the spectator with the graphic translation of the text. The painting looks more epic and the story behind the graphic translation is more profound.

### ***Ophelia* (1863-1864) by Arthur Hughes**

Hughes' vision of *Ophelia* from 1863-1864 is an ideal example of the Pre-Raphaelite technique. Hughes is obviously influenced by Millais' *Ophelia* (1851-1852). Again he explores and depicts the scene in the smallest detail, particularly visible in the transparency of the scarf gently floating next to Ophelia, the natural authenticity of flowers, lace on Ophelia's dress or the bark of the willow tree.

Hughes made his *Ophelia* in this later version of the painting slightly older than the girlish character in his painting from 1852. Ophelia depicted here is a Pre-Raphaelite ideal woman – a young and slender woman with long ginger hair and a shy look in her eye. Her beauty is emphasized, in contrast with the early

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<sup>44</sup> "Arthur Hughes, *Ophelia*," *Index of /classes/Shakespeare\_Illustrated*, Emory University - English Department website, 13 March 2010  
<[http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/Hughes.Ophelia.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Hughes.Ophelia.html)>

version, by the lack of paleness and the stunning highly decorated dress. Hughes included the element of the "straw crown" in this painting as well, making it a kind of a recognition sign for his Ophelias.

As regards the composition, he chose Ophelia as the main focal point by placing her in the central part and making her take most of the space of the picture. She is depicted standing near the willow next to the stream, touching the branches of the tree with her right hand and holding a bunch of flowers in her left hand. She is looking back over her left shoulder as if she wanted to convey her sad fate to the spectator. Hughes masterly expressed Ophelia's hurt feelings, the suffering of unhappy love and the somehow strange reconciliation with her fate together with the apathy present in her look. This scene corresponds in many details to the first seven lines of Queen Gertrude's words.<sup>45</sup>

This representation of *Ophelia* by Arthur Hughes had an undisputable influence on John William Waterhouse's *Ophelia* from 1910.

### **2.2.6 George Frederic Watts (1817-1904)**

#### **The Life of George Frederic Watts**

The English painter and sculptor, George Frederic Watts, was born 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1817 in London into a family of a "poor piano-forte maker"<sup>46</sup>.

As a young boy, Watts studied sculpture at William Behnes and "developed facility as a draughtsman"<sup>47</sup>. In 1835 he entered the Royal Academy Schools but was disappointed with the instruction there and attended the courses very rarely. For his all life, as a sculptor he remained devoted to his Antique idol Pheidias and as a painter, was particularly renowned for portraits in oil, literary subject paintings and above all, he developed the tradition of history painting.

Watts also spent a great deal of his life travelling and studying new techniques in painting and sculpture. From 1843 to 1847 he lived in Italy, where he acquired skills in the fresco technique. He painted there "large canvases depicting scenes from Romantic literature"<sup>48</sup>, "executed landscapes in oil"<sup>49</sup> and

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<sup>45</sup> Shakespeare 132.

<sup>46</sup> Barbara Bryant, "Watts, George Frederic," *The Dictionary of Art*, Ed. Jane Turner, Vol. 32 (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996) 921.

<sup>47</sup> Bryant 921.

<sup>48</sup> Bryant 922.

made some portraits for his patron Henry Fox. During the 1850's he travelled to Venice, worked in Paris for one year and visited Turkey.<sup>50</sup>

He met several young Pre-Raphaelites while living at Little Holland House with the Prinseps during 1851 and 1875. In this period he mainly produced portraits.<sup>51</sup>

Watts tried to promote his work in the international sphere and "presented his paintings to museums in the USA, Canada and France".<sup>52</sup> In Britain, he founded his own gallery (1888) at his residence in Melbury Road in London, where he also died 1<sup>st</sup> July 1904.

### ***Ophelia* (1864) by George Frederic Watts**

George Frederic Watts' *Ophelia* from 1864 is a striking and extraordinary representation of Shakespeare's scene in several points. The composition of the picture is very unusual in comparison with other authors. *Ophelia* is seen from a close point of view, in a way that the image shows her from head to waist.

I think that with this closer look upon her face, Watts provides a more precise observation of her expression and it is easier to penetrate her mind and imagine her thoughts.

Her figure is placed in the left part and her head, which is situated in the central upper part, creates the focal point of the whole painting. Watts' *Ophelia* puts her head on her right hand or more precisely, leans her chin against the back of her hand and the whole body is supported by the willow. The willow takes up a great deal of the right part of the picture. The water surface of a stream can be observed in the lower right corner.

Watts depicted *Ophelia* as the Pre-Raphaelite ideal of beauty, e.g. a young woman of delicate figure, with the typical ginger hair and with a coy facial expression. The woman in this painting looks as if asleep or dreaming and, in contrast to most other *Ophelias*, has a somehow peaceful and resigned expression in her face. Watts achieves such an atmosphere by using the bright light coming from the left side that illuminates the woman's hand and the heavy plaid that she has around her shoulders.

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<sup>49</sup> Bryant 922.

<sup>50</sup> Bryant 922.

<sup>51</sup> Bryant 921.

<sup>52</sup> Bryant 921.

This particular representation is highly stylized and does not refer to the original text to such an extent as for example *Ophelias* by other Pre-Raphaelites, particularly Millais, Hughes or O'Neill. Nevertheless, I decided to include it because I find it poetic and extraordinary.

### 2.2.7 Henry Nelson O'Neil (1817-1880)

#### The Life of Henry Nelson O'Neil

An English painter with Russian origins, Henry Nelson O'Neil, was born in St Petersburg in 1817. In 1823, his family moved to England, where O'Neil lived and worked until the end of his life.<sup>53</sup>

At the age of nineteen, O'Neil started to attend the Royal Academy Schools and two years later already "sent his first picture to the Royal Academy exhibition"<sup>54</sup>. In his painting he treated the subject from the modern life "that had a strong emotional component"<sup>55</sup>, i.e. "the soldiers leaving their families to quell the Indian Mutiny"<sup>56</sup>, which is depicted in his work called *Eastward Ho! August 1857* (exhibited in 1858).<sup>57</sup>

O'Neil's origin also influenced his work in some measure. His patriotism aroused with the beginning of the Crimean war and he dealt often with the subject of emigration, "that is treated as a cause for excitement rather than despair".<sup>58</sup>

Other subjects typical of O'Neil's paintings are "British history, literature, the bible and the history of art"<sup>59</sup>. In the formal point of view, he was praised for the choice of his subjects. Nevertheless, he was reproached for his composition faultiness.<sup>60</sup>

Henry Nelson O'Neil died 13th March 1880 in London.

#### *Ophelia* (1874) by Henry Nelson O'Neil

Henry Nelson O'Neil painted his *Ophelia* in 1874. His representation shows Ophelia sitting on the branch of a willow that "grows aslant a brook"<sup>61</sup> holding onto a spray with her right hand and trying to hang the garland of flowers with her left hand. O'Neil depicted Ophelia with a great sense of detail so typical of the Pre-Raphaelites. He concentrated, as well as Millais did, on the flowers -

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<sup>53</sup> Shearer West, "O'Neil, Henry Nelson," *The Dictionary of Art*, Ed. Jane Turner, Vol. 23 (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996) 442.

<sup>54</sup> West 442.

<sup>55</sup> West 442.

<sup>56</sup> West 442.

<sup>57</sup> West 442.

<sup>58</sup> West 442.

<sup>59</sup> West 442.

<sup>60</sup> West 442.

<sup>61</sup> Shakespeare 132.

white and yellow crow-flowers, daisies, long purples and violets that she distributes in the Act IV, Scene 5. O'Neil also concentrates on the woman's dress that is very pompous and robust, which causes her death by drowning after the "envious sliver broke"<sup>62</sup>. The white colour of her dress symbolises the innocence of the young girl. Her expression seems less showing madness and despair than other paintings. She looks rather concentrated and pensive.

With any doubt, O'Neil faithfully depicted Shakespeare's lines with the most precise details describing the moment before Ophelia slips into the streams and drowns.

My personal evaluation of this version is somewhat lower than that for example of the previous Ophelia by G. F. Watts. Even though O'Neil tightly followed the Shakespeare's words, I think he added several overdramatic elements that spoil the poetics of the scene. They are, in my opinion, the garishness of the colours and the exaggerated pompousness of the dress.

### **2.2.8 John William Waterhouse (1849-1917)**

#### **The life of John William Waterhouse**

John William Waterhouse, also known under his nickname Nino, was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April in Rome to English parents, both painters, who moved to Italy in pursuit of art. The family came back to England in the late 1850s. As a little boy, Waterhouse spent a great deal of time in his father's art studio where he learned the technique and developed a talent for painting and sculpting. In 1870 he was accepted after several attempts to the Royal Academy and at the age of fifteen became an Associate of the Royal Academy but it is not before 1895 he was named a full member.<sup>63</sup>

As regards his work, Waterhouse is often considered a Pre-Raphaelite painter, however, the critics agree on classifying him as a Neo-Classicalist. In his early paintings he was inspired by Italian themes and scenery. Waterhouse went on to paint over 200 paintings depicting classical mythology, historical and literary subjects, particularly those of Roman mythology and classic English poets

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<sup>62</sup> Shakespeare 132.

<sup>63</sup> *JWWaterhouse.com*, 15 February 2010 <<http://www.jwwaterhouse.com>>

such as Keats and Tennyson (*The Lady of Shalott*).<sup>64</sup> Last but not the least he drew inspiration and themes from Shakespeare, depicted in paintings like *Juliet* (from *Romeo and Juliet*), *Cleopatra* (from *Antony and Cleopatra*) or *Miranda* (from *The Tempest*).<sup>65</sup> The Femme fatale is a common theme in his works, as the most are of beautiful elegiac women and many of the men are victims.<sup>66</sup>

There are not many facts known from his private life. That little known is contained in letters that survived. Waterhouse and his wife Esther did not have any children. Esther outlived her husband, who continued painting until he died of cancer in 1917, by 27 years and is buried next to him in London.<sup>67</sup>

### **Waterhouse and his *Ophelias* (1889, 1894, 1910)**

#### ***Ophelia* (1889)**

John William Waterhouse painted his first *Ophelia* in 1889 and returned to this theme later in 1894 and 1910. In his first representation he depicts the scene where Ophelia is lying in the grass of the flowered meadow. It is difficult to determine whether she is lying still as if breathless and absent from the scene or whether she is tossing from side to side by her madness present in her look and arm gesture.<sup>68</sup> She is lying on her back with bent knees; her right arm freely spread holding a bunch of crow-flowers and her left hand touching her dark coppery hair in a manner that it seems as if she were tearing it. She wears a simple white dress with a leather belt and a small leather bag attached to it. The white colour of the dress emphasizes the innocence of the young girl. She looks very natural as if part of the nature, surrounded by flowers and birds.

Waterhouse chose an unusual point of view by depicting Ophelia not by the stream as it is described in the Act IV, Scene 7. Moreover, he did not even paint the willow tree as most of the painters depicting Ophelia's death did. He follows the Pre-Raphaelite theme and pays attention to detail but his technique

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<sup>64</sup> *JWWaterhouse.com*, 15 February 2010 <<http://www.jwwaterhouse.com>>

<sup>65</sup> "John William Waterhouse," *Index of/classes/Shakespeare\_Illustrated*, Emory University - English Department website, 15 February 2010  
<[http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/Waterhouse.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Waterhouse.html)>

<sup>66</sup> *JWWaterhouse.com*, 15 February 2010 <<http://www.jwwaterhouse.com>>

<sup>67</sup> "Biography of J. W. Waterhouse," *Johnwilliamwaterhouse.com*, 15 February 2010  
<<http://www.johnwilliamwaterhouse.com/articles/biography-john-william-waterhouse>>

<sup>68</sup> "John W. Waterhouse, *Ophelia*, 1889" *Index of/classes/Shakespeare\_Illustrated*, Emory University - English Department website, 15 February 2010  
<[http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/Waterhouse.Ophelia1889.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Waterhouse.Ophelia1889.html)>

resembles more the Impressionists. This is demonstrated in the brush strokes creating the meadow and also the woman's dress. Even though the water surface of the stream into which Ophelia fell is not visible in this painting, it is somehow present as if Ophelia was lying next to it. With a closer look the banks of the stream can be observed in the background of the painting creating a dark line dividing two meadows.

### ***Ophelia* (1894)**

The second version of *Ophelia* that John William Waterhouse painted in 1894 is more of a reference to the Shakespeare's lines of the Act IV, Scene 7. Here Waterhouse depicted *Ophelia* sitting upright on the trunk of a willow that "grows aslant a brook"<sup>69</sup> covered with the lotus leaves. She is seen in her profile weaving the "fantastic garlands" of "crow-flowers, daisies"<sup>70</sup> and poppies into her long ginger hair. This *Ophelia* looks slightly older than the *Ophelia* from 1889. She has glowing skin and red lips. Her dress is much more decorated and the white colour is completed by the golden and silver reflections. Waterhouse here paid relevant attention to the golden embroidery on her skirt and to the smallest material detail on her belt, sleeve-ends and collar.

The nature surrounding the young woman is depicted in the smallest detail as well. The water surface clearly reflects the leaves of the trees as mentioned in the Act IV, Scene 7: "There is a willow grows aslant a brook, That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream"<sup>71</sup>. Even though the nature takes up a great proportion of the painting, it is somehow suppressed with the dim colours to allow *Ophelia's* figure to shine out of the picture. Her face and hands as the brightest points create the focus of the whole picture. She turns her head from the viewer and the suffering and sorrow can be observed from her expression.

It is very likely that lifting her hands towards her head caused the loss of balance and *Ophelia's* falling into the river and her subsequent drowning.

This one of the three versions of *Ophelia* by Waterhouse is my favourite one. I appreciate the balanced composition and harmony between the figure and the natural surroundings. I particularly admire the delicacy of details of the dress,

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<sup>69</sup> Shakespeare 132.

<sup>70</sup> Shakespeare 132.

<sup>71</sup> Shakespeare 132.

reflections of light, etc. This Ophelia brilliantly materialize the Shakespearean idea, as she is a sweet, beautiful woman with a girlish fragility.

### ***Ophelia* (1910)**

*Ophelia* from 1910 is the last version painted by John William Waterhouse. Here again Waterhouse chose a different composition. Ophelia is depicted standing in the central part of the picture. She is ready to make another step that probably became fatal for her. It is evident from her gesture. She lifts her heavy long skirt with the left hand, in which she grips a bunch of meadow flowers, in order to step freely in the high grass. At the same time she is leaning against a willow tree touching it with her right hand. The willow, which is placed in the left part of the image, stands next to a little stream covered with lotus leaves. Waterhouse added a wooden bridge that crosses the brook in the upper right corner.

A very unusual element that Waterhouse added is the small figures of two children. They are a boy and a girl, who stand on the bridge and watch the whole scene as mute spectators.

With a closer concentration on *Ophelia*, it is obvious that she is now a mature woman in comparison with the earlier versions, where she has a rather girlish look. The long ginger hair and the thin figure are maintained. However, the expression in her face seems as if petrified by some horrible thoughts or inner suffering and with madness reflected in her eyes. Waterhouse paid more attention to Ophelia's dress as well. Firstly, the blanket blue colour replaced the innocent white from the earlier versions. The blue dress is completed with a reddish underskirt and sleeves-ends and is decorated with a golden hem and golden embroidery on the woman's chest. These colours are usually used in portraying the Virgin Mary.

## **2.2.9 Harold Copping (1863-1932)**

### **The life of Harold Copping**

Harold Copping, born 1863, was one of the greatest British illustrators. When young he studied at The Royal Academy School and after his studies visited France, particularly Paris. *Children's stories from Dickens* (1911) or *A*

*Christmas Carol* (1920) rank among his early illustrations. He was also entrusted with illustrations to the Bible. In order to obtain a more precise knowledge of the places and atmosphere he even travelled to Palestine. He produced *The Copping Bible* in 1910 that achieved a huge success among readers.<sup>72</sup>

Harold Copping illustrated an edition of *Hamlet* that was published in 1897 by Raphael Tuck.<sup>73</sup>

Copping died in 1932 in England.

### ***Ophelia Drowns* (1897) by Harold Copping**

As the title suggest, Harold Copping chose for his illustration of Ophelia's death the moment when the young girl had fallen into the stream and remained singing while slowly sinking down. Copping painted his *Ophelia Drowns* in 1897. His composition is obviously influenced by Millais. Copping presents as in a dream or a foggy haze a woman's figure floating on the water surface. She grips a bunch of flowers in her right hand and her left hand floats freely next to her head. Her hair is festooned by flower garlands and she gazes upward towards the sky. The girl's mouth is half-opened as if she "she chanted snatches of old tunes, as one incapable of her own distress"<sup>74</sup>. Copping's Ophelia is dressed in white and has blond hair that differs from the Pre-Raphaelite reddish ideal.

The painter masterfully handled the visualization and at the same time maintained the original idea of the spoken text that is visualized only in the spectators' minds. This imaginative effect is supported by the blurred edges of the painting. The nature, comprising the willow tree and the lotus leaves, fluently melts into the foggy haze. Thus Copping shows in fact an image created inside the spectator's mind.

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<sup>72</sup> "Harold Copping," *Harold Copping*, 20 February 2010  
<<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/ARTcopping.htm>>

<sup>73</sup> Alan R. Young, *Hamlet and the visual arts*, 1709-1900, p.255., 20 February 2010  
<[http://books.google.cz/books?id=bNOYljBhqlAC&pg=PA255&lpg=PA255&dq=harold+copping+hamlet&source=bl&ots=LqDLCk8KM4&sig=hJbB4zY1gjcgFBorg4rNpQzeKzs&hl=cs&ei=BIz6SoTMGJ\\_smwPrkLi6Cg&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CCgQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=harold%20copping%20hamlet&f=false](http://books.google.cz/books?id=bNOYljBhqlAC&pg=PA255&lpg=PA255&dq=harold+copping+hamlet&source=bl&ots=LqDLCk8KM4&sig=hJbB4zY1gjcgFBorg4rNpQzeKzs&hl=cs&ei=BIz6SoTMGJ_smwPrkLi6Cg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CCgQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=harold%20copping%20hamlet&f=false)>

<sup>74</sup> Shakespeare 132.

## Twentieth Century *Ophelias*

### 2.2.10 Margaret Macdonald (1864-1933)

#### The Life of Margaret Macdonald

Margaret Macdonald was born 5<sup>th</sup> November 1864 in Tipton to a "British family of decorative artists and painters".<sup>75</sup> Throughout all her life she had a very close relationship to her younger sister Frances MacDonald (1873-1921). MacDonald sisters co-operated all their lives, influenced each other to the great extent and are considered "two of the most original artists working in Glasgow in the 1890's".<sup>76</sup>

From 1890 to 1894 Margaret together with her sister attended the Glasgow School of Art and "worked so closely together, that much of their work from this period cannot be differentiated".<sup>77</sup> They produced very original and innovative works that "are characterized by the use of decorative linear patterns and gaunt, stylized human and plant forms".<sup>78</sup>

As regards her personal life, Margaret married the Scottish architect and designer, Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1900. Next ten years she spent collaborating with her husband mainly on watercolours, graphics and textile designs. After 1910 her work started to decline.<sup>79</sup>

"While most of her subject-matter is drawn from her imagination, she occasionally used literary sources such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poetry and in particular Maurice Maeterlinck's writings. Her compositions frequently comprise stylized female figures set against a decorative linear background incorporating rose motifs in muted tones of pink, green and violet."<sup>80</sup>

Margaret Macdonald died 10<sup>th</sup> January 1933 in London at the age of sixty-eight.

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<sup>75</sup> Pamela Reekie Robertson, "Macdonald, Margaret," *The Dictionary of Art*, Ed. Jane Turner, Vol. 19 (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996) 875.

<sup>76</sup> Robertson 875.

<sup>77</sup> Robertson 876.

<sup>78</sup> Robertson 876.

<sup>79</sup> Robertson 876.

<sup>80</sup> Robertson 877.

### ***Ophelia* (1908) by Margaret Macdonald**

Margaret Macdonald captured *Ophelia* in her painting from 1908 as a highly stylized figure. The girl is floating on the water surface placed horizontally in the central part of the image with her head on the right side. A longer observation is needed in order to recognize the figure and details. The dynamics and dark colours of the girl's dress and water surface expressed by the brisk brush strokes are contrasted with the peacefulness and paleness of *Ophelia*'s complexion. The girl is of a delicate figure, lying still as if asleep. She has long, thick fair hair fastened with a blue flower-resembling decoration on each side. Her skin is pale and the purple dress slipped down in a way that reveals the girl's breasts. The hands are almost piously copying the line of her body. *Ophelia* is seen at the moment of her death. However, Macdonald's *Ophelia* looks strangely peaceful and differs a great deal from other representations, where the young girl sings in distress of the approaching death.

The viewer's sight and mind must be occupied by the two unusual details that were added by Macdonald. She incorporated into the picture five faces, which seem to float above *Ophelia*'s figure. They are placed in the upper right corner and seem to be staring at the body. The fourth face from the left reminds one of a skull, which is also sometimes recognized in Millais' representation. This is explicitly linked to Hamlet and the motif of death. A latter detail that can be observed is probably a piece of wood or part of *Ophelia*'s dress that floats next to her left side. With its pattern the object is reminiscent of a snake. Perhaps, Macdonald wanted to refer to the biblical scene, where Eve was tempted by the snake and tasted the apple of the Tree of Knowledge that led to the exclusion from the Garden of Eden. Thus Hamlet could be compared to the Devil that seduced the young innocent girl.

### 2.2.11 W. G. Simmonds (1876-1968)

#### The life of W. G. Simmonds

William G. Simmonds was born 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1876 in Pera, Istanbul and became a famous English illustrator, painter, sculptor, woodcarver and maker of marionettes.<sup>81</sup> W. G. Simmonds died at the age of ninety-two in 1968.

#### *The Drowning of Ophelia* (1910) by W.G.Simmonds

W.G. Simmonds' illustration is called *The Drowning of Ophelia* (1910) but the painter rather depicted the moment that preceded the drowning itself - the fall into the stream. This is the very moment "When down her weedy trophies, and herself Fell in the weeping brook; her clothes spread wide".<sup>82</sup>

Simmonds' painting has a very symmetrical composition. Ophelia is placed in the very centre of the picture and her head creates the focal point of the painting. The expression in her face reflects distress and despair. Her blond hair is decorated with flowers and some other flowers are falling down from the place where she sat before. She spreads her arms as if flying and stares towards the sky. Ophelia looks in this picture as if half buried in her large snow-white dress. The lightness of the material causes the floating of the multilayered skirt and it makes an impression of the angel's wings.<sup>83</sup> Again the white colour here emphasizes the innocence and purity of mind of the young character.

The whole scene is surrounded by nature, particularly by the high reed creating a sharp effect, the lotus leaves and the willow tree situated in the upper left corner.

Simmonds gave his Ophelia the look of a true martyr in this painting.

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<sup>81</sup> "William G. Simmonds," *Tate Online*, 11 November 2010

<<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ArtistWorks?cgroupid=999999961&artistid=1942&page=1&sole=y&collab=y&attr=y&sort=default&tabview=bio>>

<sup>82</sup> Shakespeare 132.

<sup>83</sup> "W. G. Simmonds, *The Drowning of Ophelia*," *Index of/classes/Shakespeare\_Illustrated*, Emory University - English Department website, 3 March 2010  
<[http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/Simmonds.Ophelia.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Simmonds.Ophelia.html)>

## 2.2.12 Stanley William Hayter (1901-1988)

### Life of S. W. Hayter

For the information about S. W. Hayter's life, I am indebted to the website [www.artmuseum.cz](http://www.artmuseum.cz).

Stanley William Hayter was a British painter and printer, born 27<sup>th</sup> December 1901 in London to a family with a long artistic tradition. His great great grandfather John was the brother of the famous British painter Sir George Hayter. Stanley studied geology at King's College (London University) and spent several years as a chemical researcher in the Persian Gulf, where he caught malaria and was forced to go back to London.

In 1926 he left London for Paris, where he started the well-known and influential *Atelier 17* one year later. In Paris he met and worked with Dalí, Picasso, Miró, Chagall, Giacometti and other great artists. Later he moved the studio to New York where he cooperated with Rothko, de Kooning and Pollock during the 40's. He later came back to Paris in 1950 and re-opened his *Atelier 17*.

S.W. Hayter ranks among the most important artists of the twentieth century. He is often linked with the Surrealist movement, which he was introduced to by Yves Tanguy in 1929. His own work specialized in printing and he developed new techniques in this domain, e.g. multicolour printing from a single graphic board. He also used the technique of automatism, very popular among the Surrealists. S.W. Hayter's surrealist work reflected as well the beginning of Fascism and the situation in Spain during the Civil War.

Stanley William Hayter died 4<sup>th</sup> May 1988 in Paris.<sup>84</sup>

### *Ophelia* (1936) by Stanley William Hayter

*Ophelia* (1936) by Stanley William Hayter is an abstract painting with a trace of a woman's figure. Hayter uses light violet, ochre, pink, white and yellow colours to form the background of the painting. In the central right part of the picture, he placed the woman's figure, particularly a half figure. The head is seen in profile. *Ophelia* has long ginger hair decorated with stripes of various colours that are probably the stylized chaplets of flowers. The viewer can identify the

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<sup>84</sup> "Stanley William Hayter," *Artmuseum.cz*, 16 February 2010  
<[http://www.artmuseum.cz/umelec.php?art\\_id=302](http://www.artmuseum.cz/umelec.php?art_id=302)>

woman's breast and the right hand, which is bending and leaning against an object that looks like a boat reversed on its side. Under her breast the figure vanishes as if sinking in the water. The impression of a water surface is enhanced by the incorporated motif of a boat.

Hayter added another four abstract motifs to the painting. They are floating next to *Ophelia's* body and probably represent the stylized flowers mentioned by Queen Gertrude in Act IV, Scene 7. *Ophelia* is depicted by Hayter at the moment following the fall into the stream, when her heavy dress draws her down under the water surface.

### 2.2.13 Sir Peter Blake (born 1932)

#### Sir Peter Blake's Biography

Peter Thomas Blake was born at Dartford, Kent 25<sup>th</sup> June 1932.<sup>85</sup> From the age of fourteen until nineteen he studied at the Gravesend Technical College and School of Art and then continued at The Royal College of Art where he remained until 1956. Two major subjects can be found in his early work. These are "fantastic scenes from the world of the circus and naturalistic paintings with autobiographical elements"<sup>86</sup>. With his paintings he undoubtedly became one of the first representatives of British Pop Art in the 1950s. He achieved great public success by designing the cover for The Beatles album "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" in 1967. During the 1970s he was influenced by rural art and was one of the founders of the Brotherhood of Ruralists. These artists were inspired by the country and just like the Pre-Raphaelites sought for the "aesthetic permeation of all parts of the life"<sup>87</sup>.

In 2002 Peter Blake was knighted by The British Queen for his services to art.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> "Peter Blake," *Tate Online*, 11 September 2009

<<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ArtistWorks?cgroupid=999999961&artistid=763&page=1&sole=y&collab=y&attr=y&sort=default&tabview=bio>>

<sup>86</sup> *Peter Blake Biography*, 11 September 2009 <<http://www.blake-peter.com/index.shtml>>

<sup>87</sup> *Peter Blake Biography*, 11 September 2009 <<http://www.blake-peter.com/index.shtml>>

<sup>88</sup> "Sir Peter Blake Biography and Artwork," *MetroArtWork.com*, 11 September 2009 <<http://metroartwork.com/sir-peter-blake-biography-artwork-m-33.html>>

### **Blake's *Ophelia* (1977-2002)**

Peter Blake's *Ophelia* (1977-2002) is very specific. The viewer is not facing the Renaissance ideal woman, but a rather modern woman dressed in synthetic materials typical of the second half of the twentieth century. Another unusual aspect of the painting is the composition in which *Ophelia* is presented. She is neither standing alternatively sitting on the bank nor floating in the water. Blake's *Ophelia* is standing in the brook with the water going up to her hips. Her face is the focal point of the whole painting. Blake as nobody else perfectly expressed the madness of the young girl. She gapes with a vague look in her eye as if looking through the viewer. There is make-up on her face but it seems that she has put it only on her right eye. This was probably an act of an absent mind. A red stain on her nose suggests a bloody bruise and her chapped red lips could suggest unconscious biting of them. Blake's *Ophelia* has dark chestnut hair with interweaved daisies, long purples and violets.

She is dressed in a short transparent white blouse with bluish hems on her sleeves. The blouse is torn in a way that exposes her right breast and navel. Her white satin skirt is probably long and thick but its larger part is hidden under the water surface. *Ophelia* tensely grips a bunch of dry sprigs or flower stalks in her right fist.

Blake paid greater attention to the expression in the character's face rather than to the natural surroundings. The water of the stream is very dark and the banks are completed with the reed, the trunk of a birch and another trunk of a willow tree. The sky in the background is gloomy and dim, as if the scene took place shortly after the sunset.

### 2.2.14 Annie Ovenden (born 1945)

#### Annie Ovenden's Biography

Annie Ovenden is a British painter, born in Amersham, Buckinghamshire in 1945. She is associated with the art movement of Ruralists or The Brotherhood of Ruralists<sup>89</sup>.

From 1961 to 1965, Ovenden studied at High Wycombe School of Arts and one year later started to work as a graphic designer until 1969.<sup>90</sup> Her work comprises above all landscape paintings and figural portrayals of village people. She uses oils, acrylic, gouache and also water colours in her painting. She specializes, however, in graphic design, pencil drawing and theatrical sets as well.<sup>91</sup>

#### *Ophelia* (1979) by Annie Ovenden

Annie Ovenden painted her *Ophelia* in 1979. She shows her standing on the bank of a small river. *Ophelia* leans against an ivied willow tree and holds a bunch of meadow flowers in her hands. Ovenden, as a Ruralist painter, paid great attention to the natural side of the painting. Even though *Ophelia* takes the central part, nature with its realistic power plays a significant role as well. In this aspect, Ovenden has much in common with the Pre-Raphaelites.

*Ophelia* by Ovenden is practically a contemporary of Blake's *Ophelia*. However, Ovenden keeps to a more standard conception. Her female character is neither a young girl nor a woman yet. She has fair wavy hair decorated with flowers. Her fine-shaped face expression is vacant but somehow more peaceful than that of Blake's *Ophelia*. She is dressed in white with a black embroidered plaid. In addition, the complex style of the painting is less expressive than Blake's.

Annie Ovenden's representation of *Ophelia* refers to the first five lines of Queen Gertrude's words in Act IV, Scene 7.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The Brotherhood Of Ruralists was found in 1975 by seven British artists A.Arnold, G.Arnold, P.Blake, J. Haworth, D.Inshaw, A.Ovenden and G.Ovenden. They were interested in music and English pastoral. They made mostly oil portraits, watercolour and photography. (ruralists.com)

<sup>90</sup> "Annie Ovenden Profile," *The Brotherhood of Ruralists Information Website*, 3 February 2010 <<http://ruralists.com/artists/annieovenden/aoprofile.html>>

<sup>91</sup> "Annie Ovenden Profile," *The Brotherhood of Ruralists Information Website*, 3 February 2010 <<http://ruralists.com/artists/annieovenden/aoprofile.html>>

<sup>92</sup> Shakespeare 132.

### 2.2.15 Norma Galley (born 1937)

#### Norma Galley's Biography

Norma Galley is a British painter who was born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire in 1937. She studied at York College of Art and then went on to Bradford College of Art where she graduated with a BA (Hons) in 1998. She has exhibited widely in group exhibitions across the North of England and Scotland. She won a prize in a show at the Priestly Centre for the Arts in Bradford and she has had also several solo shows. Her proudest experience, as she states personally, was when she took part in the exhibition called "Shine" with Paula Rego<sup>93</sup> and others in order to celebrate Women's International Day.

Norma Galley mainly works with oils and mixed media creating sensuous surfaces with paint and texture. She defines and describes her art work in the following words:

"I let the ideas make their own way into the image, never quite knowing how my paintings will turn out. I am fascinated by the unpredictability of paint - each work is allowed its own identity with its own presence. For me, my paintings are objects in themselves and there is often a sculptural aspect to the work. My work hints at faraway places - a deep curiosity of different peoples and lifestyles has led me to travel to many parts of the world".<sup>94</sup>

#### *Ophelia* (2002) by Norma Galley

Norma Galley's *Ophelia* from 2002 represents the most contemporary version of the scene of Ophelia's death painted by a British artist listed in my work. It is an almost abstract painting where the central lying figure is perceived after longer observation. The obvious abstract features correspond to the technique that Galley used. As she says she "had painted a face" and decided she "did not like it and turned it in its side". It reminded her of a drowning woman figure and she "recalled the story of Ophelia and developed the painting accordingly".<sup>95</sup> Galley uses vivid colours. In the central part of the canvas a

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<sup>93</sup> a British painter and printmaker of Portuguese origin, born 1935.

<sup>94</sup> Norma Galley: from personal email correspondence between Stepanka Bublikova and Norma Galley from 10th February 2010.

<sup>95</sup> Norma Galley: from personal email correspondence between Stepanka Bublikova and Norma Galley from 10th February 2010.

woman's lying figure in heavy large dress can be identified. Orange and red hues are contrasted with a complementary blue background that suggests a dark night landscape with the full moon. The reflecting moonlight shows that the figure, which turned out to be Ophelia, is lying or rather floating on the water surface. The texture of the painting forms objects similar to flowers that are held in Ophelia's hands. Her face is slightly blurred but still a somehow desperate expression can be perceived from the empty mouth and eyes. The mouth is open as if the character would sing or sigh. The yellowish colour of the woman's face, in all probability, suggests the paleness and fear of the approaching death. The whole scene looks as if covered behind fog. An interesting part of the picture can be observed in the lower right corner where the texture is highly wrinkly and may be interpreted as a splash of water and the falling of Ophelia in the stream.

## Conclusion

In my work I concentrated on the two most powerful domains of British arts: literature and painting. I took a particular example which shows how these two domains influence each other and how texts are closely connected with images and vice versa.

In the first part of the thesis I explained and gave definitions of texts and images. Consequently, I discussed the theme of William Shakespeare as a literary painter. I found out that Shakespeare himself was influenced by visual arts and that he, on the contrary, was a source of inspiration for many painters. As the clearest example of Shakespeare's literary painting mastery, I took the scene of Ophelia's death. This scene, which is not visualized on the stage but only in the spectator's mind, is a text spoken by Queen Gertrude in Act IV, Scene 7 of the tragedy called *Hamlet*. Later, I briefly explained the role of Ophelia's character in the play in order to give a clear background to the viewer of the visual representations of the scene of her death, which are listed in the second part of my thesis.

As I stated previously, the second part of my work comprises the particular representations of Ophelia's death in British painting. For this section I chose fifteen British painters who treated the theme of Ophelia's death in the visual form. I provided a brief biography of every artist and I commented and gave personal analysis of their *Ophelias*.

I started my list of artists with the painters who worked in the first half of the nineteenth century. They were: Robert Westall, Joseph Severn and Richard Redgrave.

Another subsection is opened with the history and foundation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The Pre-Raphaelites often treated the theme of Ophelia and the themes from Shakespeare and literature in general. Among the painters who painted Ophelia's death during the Pre-Raphaelite period, i. e. the second half of the nineteenth century, are J. E. Millais, A. Hughes, G. F. Watts, H. N. O'Neil, J. W. Waterhouse and H. Copping.

The list of artists who painted Ophelia in the twentieth century is opened with M. Macdonald and terminated with Norma Galley, whose *Ophelia* encloses the whole set of visual representations of Ophelia's death in British art.

During the one hundred and fifty years that are covered in my thesis, painters had different approaches and different ideas about the visualization of the famous scene. The nineteenth century *Ophelias* are entirely figurative paintings with the attention to detail and reference to the source text, i.e. Act IV, Scene 7 of *Hamlet*. The twentieth century artists are on the contrary more experimental. If I pass over the still classic vision of W. G. Simmonds, I must emphasize the Ruralists, especially Sir Peter Blake, who transferred the Renaissance Shakespearean heroine into the modern epoch of the late second half of the twentieth century, though he as well as A. Ovenden maintained the figurative composition.

In contrast to the realistic figurative style, the *Ophelias* by M. Macdonald, S. W. Hayter and Norma Galley are almost purely abstract paintings with the more or less obvious traces of the woman's character. In these versions, the painters focused rather on the colour symbolism and the whole atmosphere of the paintings.

To conclude my work I would like to give my personal evaluation of the representations. On the one hand, I very much appreciate the classic works of Millais and Waterhouse, as well as the more modern versions by Macdonald and Galley. Millais captivates me with his attention to detail and sense of realism that he is able to create in *Ophelia's* face or in the decoration of her dress. This painting is still enjoyable even after many observations. In Waterhouse's work I particularly admire his diversity in style and composition. I find extraordinary *Ophelia's* character development that he captured in his three paintings. Margaret Macdonald brought a fragile lyricity to the representation of her *Ophelia*. Norma Galley's work is especially outstanding thanks to the great choice of colours and unusual technique.

On the other hand, I must say that I was not significantly impressed by Westall's and O'Neil's canvases. In my opinion, Westall's *Ophelia* lacks originality and O'Neil's makes an impression of kitsch to me.

## Shrnutí

Ve své práci jsem se zaměřila na problematiku vztahu literatury a výtvarného umění, konkrétně malířství. Obraz a text spolu úzce souvisí. Oba jsou nositeli zprávy, kterou chce autor jejich prostřednictvím sdělit. Text je koherentní soubor slov, který se skládá ze zapsaných jazykových znaků. Pro správnou interpretaci obrazu je nutno použít také slov. Lze tvrdit, že obraz je ve skutečnosti vizuální zpráva zakódovaná v grafické podobě, tuto zprávu je možné opět rozvinout do textu. A naopak zpráva obsažená v textu může být zakódována do vizuální podoby.

Má práce demonstruje tuto skutečnost na konkrétním případě z Britské literatury a umění. Tímto případem je scéna Oféliiny smrti, obsažena v sedmé scéně čtvrtého dějství Shakespearovy tragédie Hamlet. Z divadelního hlediska je scéna Oféliiny smrti velmi zajímavá. Není totiž na scéně vizualizovaná, tzn., neodehrává se před očima diváků, nýbrž v jejich mysli pomocí představivosti. Je to pouze pronesený text v dialogu královny Gertrudy a Laerta, bratra Ofélie. Královna tak sděluje, respektive popisuje událost, kdy Ofélie přišla k břehu říčky, u které chtěla všet věnečky z květin na vrbu, jež rostla přes říčku. Pod Ofélií se zlomila větev a dívka spadla do vody. Za nepřetržitého žalostného zpěvu ji její těžké šaty nasáklé vodou stáhly pod hladinu a Ofélie se utopila.

Tato scéna je tak poeticky vyjádřena, že v divákově mysli tvoří vcelku konkrétní komplexní představu či obraz. Shakespeare tak může být považován za literárního malíře, který ovšem ke své tvorbě nepoužívá barvy, jež přenáší na plátno, ale pomocí slov vede svůj imaginární štětec v divákově mysli. Shakespeare sám byl ve své tvorbě malířstvím v podstatě velmi ovlivněn. Téma malířství se objevuje jako metafora v jeho *Sonetu č. 24*. Dále také v tragédii *Timon z Atén* uvádí malíře jako postavu anebo v Lukrécii řeší obecný vztah mezi básníkem a malířem.

První část mé práce dále obsahuje stručnou analýzu Oféliiny postavy a shrnutí její role v Hamletovi, které slouží pro lepší porozumění následujících vizuálních reprezentací scény její smrti, jež jsou uvedeny v druhé části.

Druhá část je uvedena obecnou definicí malířství a přehledem, který shrnuje, jak je třeba správně přistupovat k analýze obrazu. Dále následuje seznam děl britských malířů, kteří zpracovali téma Oféliiny smrti v období od počátku devatenáctého století až do současnosti. U každého malíře je uveden stručný životopis a analýza díla doplněná o osobní komentáře.

Jako první se na seznamu objevuje trojice malířů z období první poloviny devatenáctého století. Jsou to Robert Westall, Joseph Severn a Richard Redgrave.

Další podkapitola je věnována Prerafaelitskému Bratrství, jeho vzniku, členům, technikám a tématům tvorby. Právě Prerafaelité ve svém díle zpracovávali často témata z literatury a ve velké míře také čerpali inspiraci ze Shakespearovy tvorby. Jako první je mezi Prerafaelity uveden John Everett Millais, jehož *Ofélie* z let 1851-1852 je v uměleckých kruzích považována za klasické dílo. Millais v nejmenších detailech vychází přímo ze Shakespearova textu a sám také přidává několik detailů, jako například květiny zmíněné v páté scéně, čtvrtého aktu anebo do obrazu začleňuje sojku, o níž Ofélie zpívá v té samé scéně. Po Millaisovi následuje Arthur Hughes, který zpracoval téma Oféliiny smrti ve vizuální podobě hned dvakrát a to v roce 1852 a později v letech 1863-1864. Dále uvádím George Frederica Wattse, Henryho Nelsona O'Neila a Johna Williama Waterhouse. Poslední zmiňovaný také zpracoval Ofélii vícekrát podobně jako Hughes a to celkem třikrát. Poprvé v roce 1889, dále pak v letech 1894 a 1910. Výčet Prerafaelistických umělců je uzavřen britským ilustrátorem Haroldem Coppingem a jeho *Topící se Ofélií* z roku 1897.

Seznam pokračuje britskými umělci, kteří namalovali téma Oféliiny smrti v průběhu dvacátého století až do současnosti. Zde se poprvé objevuje v mém přehledu umělců žena malířka. Je to Margaret Macdonald, umělkyně skotského původu, která namalovala svou *Ofélii* v roce 1908. Po Margaret Macdonaldové následuje anglický ilustrátor narozený v Turecku, W. G. Simmonds, a jeho *Utonutí Ofélie* z roku 1910. Scénu Oféliiny smrti v roce 1934 abstraktně pojal Stanley William Hayter, zakladatel proslulého *Ateliéru 17* a významná postava malířství první poloviny dvacátého století. Za Hayterem jsou uvedeni britští Ruralisté, Sir Peter Blake a Annie Ovensen. Blakova *Ofélie* je

výrazně expresionistickým počinem, kde autor přenesl středověkou hrdinku do moderní současnosti. Blake sice vychází ze Shakespearova textu, ale přesto se zaměřuje spíše na vnitřní napětí, které obraz vyvolává po delším pozorování hrdinky.

Celou práci uzavírá *Ofélie* od současné britské výtvarnice Normy Galley, se kterou se mi podařilo navázat osobní kontakt. Galley také velice neotřelým způsobem zpracovává téma Oféliiny smrti. Ve skutečnosti ji k tomuto tématu přivedla náhoda a celá myšlenka přišla až později.

Osobně mne velice zaujala díla Johna Everetta Millaise a Johna Williama Waterhouse, jejichž *Ofélie* považuji za klasické ukázky vizualizace textu. Obdivuji zároveň modernější a nápaditější verze od Margaret Macdonaldové nebo Normy Galley. Naopak mne do větší míry neoslovila díla od Roberta Westalla či Henryho Nelsona O'Neila.

Má práce by měla sloužit zejména k rozšíření obzorů v rámci britské kultury, a také k zamyšlení nad neoddělitelným vztahem mezi jazykem a literaturou, respektive texty a uměleckou vizuální tvorbou.

## Annotation

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Title of the Bachelor Thesis: Representations of Ophelia's Death in British Art

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Number of Characters<sup>96</sup>: 63,058

**Key words:** text, image, visual representation, literature, painting, literary painter

This thesis deals with the relationship between literature and the visual arts. The relationship is clearly demonstrated with a concrete example from British literature. It is the scene of Ophelia's death, which is not visualized on the stage but spoken by one of the characters in William Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*. In the first part of the work I concentrate on and discuss Shakespeare's relationship with the arts and provide arguments regarding Shakespeare as a literary painter. In the second part of my work I provide a list of the particular representations of the scene of Ophelia's death. I chose paintings from fifteen British artists, who worked from the first half of the nineteenth century up until the present.

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<sup>96</sup> No spaces included.

## Anotace

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Název bakalářské práce: Reprezentace Oféliiny smrti v britském umění

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone

Počet znaků<sup>97</sup>: 63 058

**Klíčová slova:** text, obraz, vizuální reprezentace, literatura, malba, literární malíř

Práce se zabývá vztahem literatury a výtvarného umění. Tento vztah je jasně demonstrován na konkrétním případě z britské literatury. Jedná se o scénu Oféliiny smrti, která není na scéně vizualizovaná, nýbrž se jedná pouze o text vyslovený jednou z postav v Shakespearově tragédii *Hamlet*. V první části své práce se zaměřuji na Shakespearův vztah k výtvarnému umění a předkládám argumenty pro označení Shakespeara jako literárního malíře. Druhá část práce je věnována seznamu jednotlivých reprezentací scény Oféliiny smrti v britském umění. Vybrala jsem patnáct britských malířů, kteří toto téma zpracovali v době od počátku devatenáctého století až do současnosti.

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<sup>97</sup> Bez mezer.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Images (Representations of Ophelia's Death by British Artists)

1. Robert Westall, *Ophelia* (undated)



2. Joseph Severn, *Ophelia* (1831), oil on canvas, Pre-Raphaelite Trust



3. **Richard Redgrave**, *Ophelia Weaving Her Garlands* (1842), oil on panel, Victoria and Albert Museum



4. **John Everett Millais**, *Ophelia* (1851-1852), oil on canvas, The Tate Gallery, London



5. **Arthur Hughes**, *Ophelia* (1852), oil on canvas with an arched top, Manchester City Art Galleries, Manchester, England



6. **Arthur Hughes**, *Ophelia* (1863-1864), oil on canvas



7. **George Frederic Watts**, *Ophelia* (1864), oil on canvas, Watts Gallery, London



8. **Henry Nelson O'Neil**, *Ophelia* (1874), oil on canvas



9. **John William Waterhouse, *Ophelia* (1889), oil on canvas**



10. **John William Waterhouse, *Ophelia* (1894), oil on canvas**



11. **John William Waterhouse**, *Ophelia* (1910), oil on canvas, Pre-Raphaelite, Inc., London



12. **Harold Copping**, *Ophelia Drowns* (1897)



13. **Margaret Macdonald**, *Ophelia* (1908), watercolour and pencil



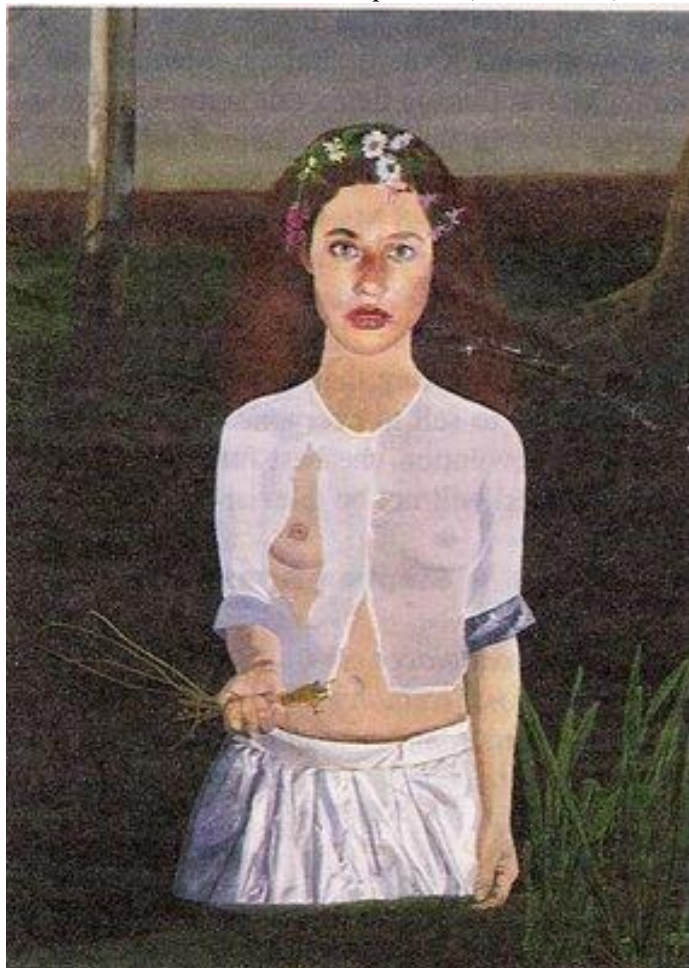
14. **W. G. Simmonds**, *The Drowning of Ophelia* (1910), watercolour, illustration found in an edition of *Hamlet*, Huntington Library



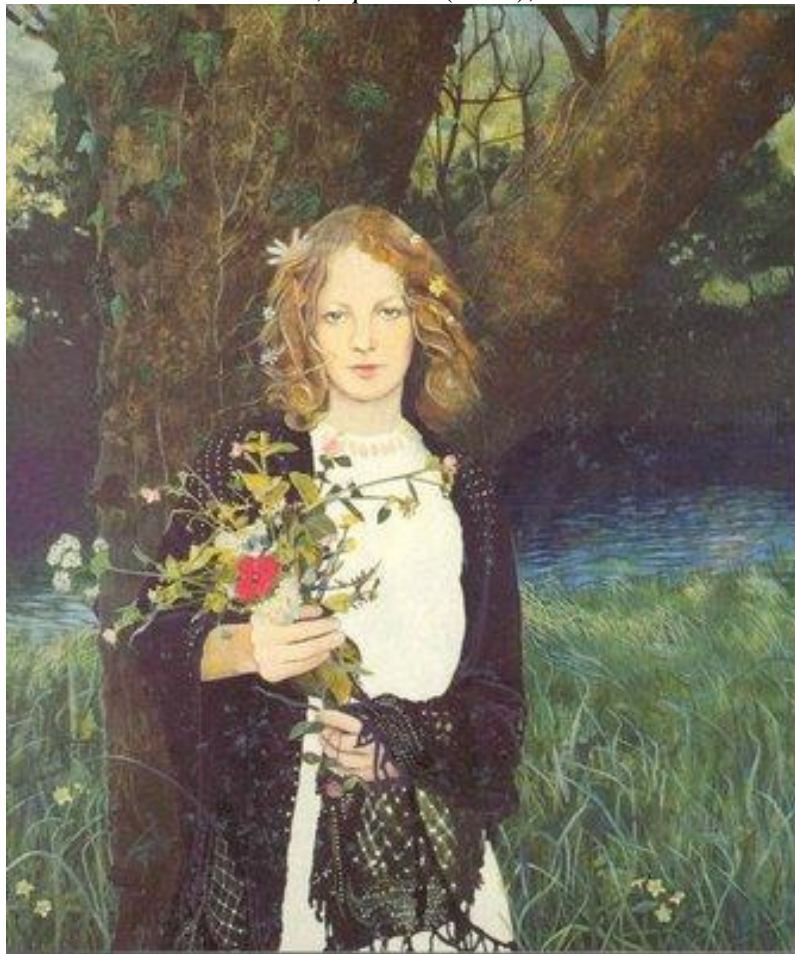
15. **Stanley William Hayter**, *Ophelia* (1936), oil, casein tempera and gesso on canvas, The Tate Gallery, London



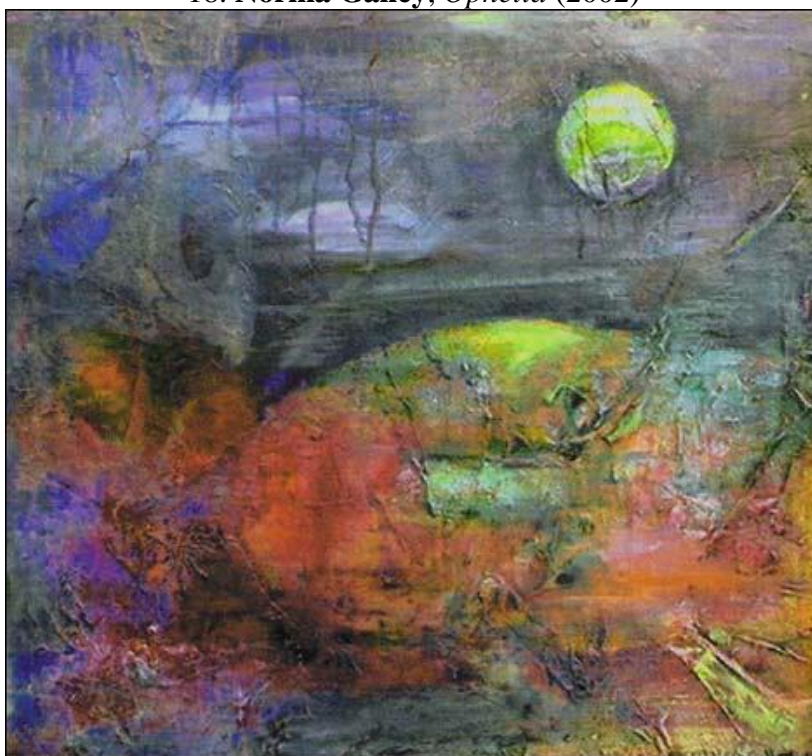
16. **Sir Peter Blake**, *Ophelia* (1977-2002)



17. **Annie Ovenden**, *Ophelia* (1979), oil on hardboard



18. **Norma Galley**, *Ophelia* (2002)



**Appendix 2**  
**Other Images**

**The Master of the Johnson** *Assumption of the Magdalene, The Adventures of Ulysses: The contest with Laestrigonians*, tempera on panel, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College Poughkeepsie, New York



**John William Waterhouse**, *Tristan and Isolde* (1905), oil on canvas, Whitford & Hughes Collection



**Ford Madox Brown, *Romeo and Juliet* (1867), watercolour, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, Manchester**



**John Everett Millais, *Lorenzo and Isabella* (1849), oil on canvas, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool**



**John Everett Millais**, *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (1849-1850), oil on canvas,  
Private Collection



**Jan Vermeer**, *Girl With a Pearl Earring* (1665-1666), oil on canvas, Royal  
Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague



### Appendix 3

#### Interview with Norma Galley

**Štěpánka Bublíková:**

*What is your relationship to Shakespeare?*

**Norma Galley:**

"I know Shakespeare as having been perhaps the greatest ever playwright and poet -fantastically prolific. Although I find his work not easy to read, I have read or seen popular plays like Julius Caesar; Twelfth Night etc. I do have a book of quotations from his work handily placed for easy pick up and thumb through."

**Š.B.:**

*What was the main source of inspiration for you to paint Ophelia?*

**N.G.:**

"My painting of Ophelia developed like this. I had painted a face. I decided I didn't like it and turned it in its side. It looked like a drowning woman. I recalled the story of Ophelia and developed the painting accordingly."

**Š.B.:**

*Were you familiar with the fact that the scene of Ophelia's death is not visualized on the stage?*

**N.G.:**

"No, I did not know this fact."

**Š.B.:**

*When did you paint this picture?*

**N.G.:**

"I painted 'Ophelia' in 2002. It sold immediately I exhibited it."

**Š.B.:**

*Have you painted other themes from literature?*

**N.G.:**

"No, I have not painted any other work from literature. Maybe some time in the future. More likely, knowing my approach I will paint something and a subject from literature will suggest itself."