"Her tears fell with the dews at even": The Ekphrastic and Intertextual Dialogue between Victorian Poetry and Pre-Raphaelite Painting

Rocío Moyano Rejano
University of Málaga, Spain

This paper seeks to carry out an analysis of the ekphrastic and intertextual dialogue in the character of Mariana in both Alfred Lord Tennyson's homonymous poem and its subsequent pictorial representation in a painting by John Everett Millais. The character of Mariana is taken from Shakespeare's comedy, Measure for Measure*, which was published in the First Folio in 1623. By contrast, in 1832, Lord Tennyson introduces the character in his homonymous poem, "Mariana", as a woman who continuously laments her lack of connection to society. Through interfigurality, Tennyson opts to present her as a "tragic" heroine and she is depicted from a pessimistic perspective. The process of interfigurality entails a conversion stage of reverse ekphrasis through which Shakespeare's source text is turned into another text, Tennyson's poem. This interaction between both texts is later turned into two visual expressions. In doing so, both texts are later transferred into John Everett Millais's painting. Millais's intertextual dialogue with Tennyson's poem and Shakespeare's play involves a process of reverse ekphrasis. Taking this approach, this paper will analyse the ekphrastic and intertextual dialogue between the poem "Mariana" and its visual representation in Millais's artistic manifestations.*

Keywords
Interfigurality; reverse ekphrasis; William Shakespeare; Alfred Lord Tennyson; Pre-Raphaelite art

Introductory remarks

This paper aims to analyse the process of interfigurality and reverse ekphrasis in the painting *Mariana* produced by the Pre-Raphaelite painter John Everett

Millais. Bearing the interfigural and ekphrastic and intertextual dialogue of the painting, it may be also taken account that this painting is based on Tennyson's poem "Mariana", which in turn is taken from a homonymous character from William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1623). Therefore, the painting entails a double process of interfigurality and reverse ekphrasis. As a result, Tennyson's text borrows one character from Shakespeare's text and presents it in another context and the poem is turned into Millais's painting. As a starting point, it would be interesting to consider that the poem takes its cue from the Duke's description of Mariana's abandonment by Angelo in *Measure for Measure*. Mariana is a young woman who is engaged to her betrothed Angelo. However, after her family lost all of their wealth in a shipwreck, Angelo broke his promise to marry her. Despite Angelo's betrayal, she continued to love him five years after this event. There is a melancholic tone as Mariana is constantly waiting for the arrival of her lover and yet he will never return. Although the premise originates in Shakespeare's play, the poem ends before Angelo returns. Mariana is presented in a non-specified place where she is isolated from the rest of the world. This fact reinforces the idea of loneliness and confinement. As she is her own jailer, it is up to her whether to leave her prison or not.

It might be considered that the source text is defined as "dark comedy" since it contains several comic scenes and interludes but these elements have a grave and serious backdrop. Through interfigurality, Tennyson opts to depict Mariana as a "tragic" heroine and she is depicted from a pessimistic perspective. The process of interfigurality entails a conversion stage of reverse ekphrasis through which Shakespeare's source text is turned into another text, Tennyson's poem. This interaction between both texts is later turned into two visual expressions. In doing so, both texts are later transferred into John Everett Millais's painting. Millais's intertextual dialogue with Tennyson's poem and Shakespeare's play involves a process of reverse ekphrasis.

Interfigurality is an umbrella term coined by Wolfang G. Müller and it is defined as "the interrelations that exist between characters of different texts" (101). According to him, interfigurality is "one of the most important dimensions of intertextuality" (102) and differs from configuration, which is the relation of characters within the same text. The term interfigurality helps to analyse literary figures that have become independent from their original literary contexts without anticipating their quality. Many writers have extracted literary figure[s] from [their] original fictional context and inserted [them] into a new fictional context" (Müller 107) or have inserted them into "re-

writes and sequels to earlier texts" (110). Müller proposed different variations in names used across literary texts: back clipping, substitution, adaptation of foreign names in a new context, and translation. It is important to mention here Theodore Ziolwoski's concept "figure of loan", in his *Varieties of Literary Thematics*, that is defined as "the transfer of a figure from one fictional work to another fictional work" (qtd. in Müller 102); what authors do is to establish interrelations between texts by embedding literary characters from other texts into their work. When we compare painting and literature in terms of their medium, it is impossible to claim which discipline is superior to the other since they ought to be regarded as two separate areas. Considering this latter idea, Stephen Cheeke makes an interesting statement on his *Writing for Art*; we might also ask which medium renders reality the most accurately (5) since all poems for paintings might be read as commentaries (1) and those paintings provide the illustration, allowing the painting to be interpreted and explored in more depth with regards to a character.

Interfigural dialogue in Tennyson's poem

Before broaching the interfigural issue more deeply, a brief distinction of the two texts should be taken into account in order to emphasise their uniqueness as literary works: on the one hand, the primary source is Shakespeare's play and by way of contrast, we find Lord Tennyson's poem. Bearing in mind this interaction between the play *Measure for Measure*, and the poem "Mariana", the character of Mariana in Millais's painting involves a double process of reverse ekphrasis and interfigurality.

Regarding the distinctiveness of Shakespeare's text, the character of Mariana ought not to be considered as being entirely identical in Tennyson's poem. Generally speaking, it is impossible to have two identical characters in two literary works by different authors. As was mentioned earlier, this character is taken from a Shakespearean comedy and through interfigurality, Tennyson opts to depict her as a "tragic" heroine from a pessimistic perspective. Indeed, it is worth remarking that as Ziolwoski suggested and Müller expanded upon, we find a clear example of the concept of "figure on loan". Following this idea further, the process of reverse ekphrasis entails Tennyson's words; for this reason, the Pre-Raphaelite Society focused its interest on Mariana's sorrow, reproducing Tennyson's poem instead of Shakespeare's text.

The epigraph "Mariana in the Moated Grange" derives from Shakespeare's

text, "She should this Angelo have married: was affianced to her by oath, and the nuptial appointed. . . . Left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort [...] What a merit were it in death to take this poor maid from the world!...". There, at the moated grange, resides this dejected Mariana" (Act III Scene I lines 208-238). In the play, the "moated grange" conveys the idea of isolation, removal from society, and it reflects Mariana's feelings of isolation and rejection. The first time we are introduced to her (Act IV, Scene I) she says she has "sat here all day"; this statement is an indication of her sadness and she has few expectations, doing nothing but lamenting herself. She is also listening to a song that is a reflection of her current state of mind where "seals of love" were "seal'd in vain" (Act IV, Scene I, line 6). Unlike Isabella, Claudio's sister, who entered a convent, Mariana opts to seclude herself in the moated grange. Despite the amount of time since Angelo abandoned her, she still loves him – the Duke tells Isabella that instead of restraining Mariana's feelings for Angelo, his treatment of her has made Mariana's love "more violent and unruly" (Act III, Scene I, lines 234-235). As distinct from a convent, where Isabella seeks permanent seclusion and a private life, the moated grange offers a temporary refuge.

Conversely, in Tennyson's poem, Mariana is transformed from dramatic discourse to lyrical discourse through the abovementioned process of interfigurality. Tennyson introduces Mariana as a weary, nostalgic and apathetic woman who is constantly waiting for her lover's return. So Lord Tennyson, though indebted to Shakespeare's character, does not just borrow her but rather constructs his own version of her. It could be suggested that Mariana's Shakespeare and Mariana's Tennyson share the similarity that both of them have a common origin, that is, its source text. Nonetheless, what Tennyson intends to depict is another side of this character or, at best, a different Mariana. It is also of note that though Mariana's background is based on the premise of the source text, neither of the different representations of her is the same. To exemplify this, Mariana in Millais's painting is dynamic since her story is depicted on the canvas, whereas Mariana in Tennyson's poem is static because her words are said through Tennyson. Whilst the subject remains the same, the artists chose to approach the subject of Mariana in different ways. That is because there are a number of variables that affected each work; whether the artist looked to Tennyson, Shakespeare, or a combination of both for influence of the source text or, to a certain extent, what part of the poem they were most drawn to, or if they were influenced by previous versions of the same subject by other artists. By creating and separating Shakespeare's

character in the poem from the one depicted in the play, Tennyson succeeds in describing the theme of desolation throughout the poem. Therefore, there is no point in analysing *Measure for Measure* in order to discern whether "he will not come" (line 22), and to determine his intention, as he will come back eventually, as he does in the play.

An illustration for Tennyson's poem

The dialogue between poetry and painting has been identified since ancient times and it has occupied the scope of study for many scholars. This interaction, which is known under the name of the aforementioned *ut pictura poesis*, has divided the opinion of several critics and artists. For instance, Leonardo Da Vinci in his *Paragone of Painting* viewed that "painting is superior to poetry" (653) and "painting surpasses all human works by the subtle considerations belonging to it" (653). For him, painting was superior to poetry; to exemplify this supremacy, he drew the comparison between the direct images of the painting that are generated by the painter in contrast to the mental images of poetry that are based on the interpretation of the reader. Others such as the German philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing considered that painting and poetry might be treated as separate artistic disciplines. He argues that "in poetry the ugliness of form loses almost entirely its disagreeable effect, because it changes its coexisting into disagreeable part. [By contrast] in painting ugliness has all its forces collected together, and has nearly as strong an effect as in nature herself" (234). Osbert Sitwell goes further in the previous arguments asserting that "the similarities existing between the poetry and paintings of different great individual poets and painters – a similarity that often oversteps the spirit of the works of art they create, and extends, so far as this is possible between mediums, even down to matters of technique" (47). Ekphrastic dialogue is a broad concept since it has been expanded in recent years. Initially, ekphrasis was defined as "the rhetorical description of a work of art" according to the definition provided by the Classical Dictionary (Ripll 69) whilst Lahman defined it as "a self-contained description, often on a commonplace subject, which can be asserted at a fitting place in a discourse" (61). One of the ancient examples of an ekphrastic poem is found in *The Iliad*, when Homer describes Achilles' shield. In the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were other famous examples of these types of poems such as John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" or Robert Browning's

"My Last Duchess", the latter loosely based on the painting *Lucrezia de' Medici* by Bronzino.

Hence, the principle of reverse ekphrasis is described as "a practical realization of the *ut pictura poesis* theory consisting in the backward procedure of producing a double piece of art" (Bublíková 30). In other words, reverse ekphrasis is the visual representation of a written work. At the other extreme, Garret Stewart defines it as "the visual representation of a verbal representation" (89). Although this term was initially restricted to the interaction between painting and poetry and its backward process, for many critics this term has been redefined including the *tableau vivant*, theatricalisation and filmic ekphrasis. When examining how literary texts are transferred from one medium to the other, it is necessary not to thrust aside the fact that the target visual text, having originated through reverse ekphrasis, ought to be dealt with both in terms of their artistic greatness and in terms of their conditions as transpositions of literary source texts. Notwithstanding the debate between the different opinions about poetry and painting, it might be argued that neither of both disciplines is superior to the other since what the poem offers is a written description of a piece of art. By contrast, the painting offers the visual description of that poem and it may fill some gaps that were not displayed to the extent of providing additional details.

Seeing as how we have discussed ekphrasis and applied it to this paper, we can consider "Mariana", which takes the form of a lyrical narrative, as an example of an ekphrastic poem. Although it introduces some elements of dramatic monologue, it uses the perspective of a third-person narrator rather than the first-person narrator's point of view. It tackles one of the most recurrent themes in Tennyson's works, which are isolation and confinement. Even though the premise of the poem is taken from Shakespeare's text, it ends up before Angelo returns and it is up to her whether to leave her prison or not, as she is her own jailer. Mariana is presented in a non-specified place where she is isolated from the rest of the world. What caught the attention most of Pre-Raphaelite artists was her depiction as a fallen woman making us aware that she is not married or virginal. What is significant to remark about the poem is the use of the preposition "in" instead of "at" in Tennyson's epigraph ("Mariana in the moated grange"). It places Mariana in a different prepositional relationship to her circumstances. It can be asserted that the preposition "in" implies that Mariana's confinement will be indefinite whereas "at" conveys that her stay is temporary. Likewise, the prepositional change in both literary works also has something to do with the medium. Tennyson's

Mariana is a part of that medium, so she is contained inside the grange and, therefore, is the object in the scene. So Mariana's grief is being transferred to this place by means of pathetic fallacy and it will be gradually changing and worsening as her attitudes exacerbates. In contrast, Shakespeare's Mariana's relationship with this space is entirely different. The use of the preposition "at" implies she is the agent whose position towards the grange is merely physical proximity, which is a lack of integration with the space. Christopher Ricks mentions how Tennyson's version

> given where it ends, may not even have the same dénouement as Shakespeare's: 'a reader must inevitably make some decision about the known outcome in Shakespeare, and an open reader will bear in mind that 'Mariana' is only one of innumerable poems by Tennyson in which the final ending is shrouded but magnetic […] Mariana departs from the source that simultaneously sustains it: form itself in this poem becomes a way of hearing the contours of a character. In each stanza of 'Mariana', the last four lines constitute her despairing refrain, which echoes, with small but important variations, throughout the poem. (Ricks qtd. in Bevis 211)

As a way to connect this latter idea, the relationship between painting and literature is related to the limits of the medium. Millais's painting captures a moment, or a short stretch of time since it is static, that is, it captures a specific instant, Mariana's peak moment in which she is utterly devastated and whose pain will worsen. As a result, Millais's Mariana is static and there is no possibility of discerning what could happen next. By contrast, a written work is dynamic across time and space with the possibility of appreciating its transition. That is the case of Shakespeare's Mariana or Tennyson's Mariana. As they are both going through the process, it is possible to see why she has changed her mood and what drove her to the current state she is in.

When Millais first exhibited this painting in 1851 at the Royal Academy, he included the following lines from Tennyson's homonymous poem, which reflected the mood of the picture. For this reason, Millais relies on his dramatic painting, showing Mariana in front of the window, on a scene that is only indirectly presented in the poem, through her own words (see fig.1): "She only said, 'My life is dreary/ He cometh not,' she said;/ She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,'/I would that I were dead!'" (Tennyson lines 9-12). This poem follows a recurrent theme in part of Tennyson's work – that of dejected isolation. Throughout the poem, Tennyson uses tragic elements to

portray confining interior settings and harsh exterior settings as not ideal. The subject of "Mariana" is a woman who continuously laments her lack of connection with society. The isolation defines her existence, and her longing for a connection leaves her wishing for death at the end of every stanza. Tennyson's version was adapted by others, including the one which is the object of our paper. Due to her imprisonment in a confined space, Mariana is directly exposed to the restrictive nature of interior settings, as well as indirectly to the unkempt, "wildness" of exterior settings. Tennyson asserts that neither of these antithetical settings is suitable for Mariana, leaving only the possibility that he has a conception of an ideal location that lies somewhere between these two extremes.

As already mentioned, the representation of Mariana is worthy to remark on in both the poem and the painting. From the first stanza, Tennyson conveys a sense of solitude and decay "the flower-plots were thickly crusted, one and all" (lines 1-2) and there is no trace of life around the grange. It is not until the eighth line of the poem when we get our first and only reference to Shakespearean text and Mariana, "Upon the moated grange" (Act III Scene I line 162), which refers to the duke's description of Mariana's location. As she is prevented from leaving this place, the outside world or reality are unable to enter the world of the farm. As Tennyson comments, "She could not look on the sweet heaven/Either at morn or eventide," (lines 15-16) suggesting that her house may face either the north or the south and thereby prevent her from tracking the sun's course throughout the day. Mariana seems to be devastated by Angelo's abandonment and by means of pathetic fallacy she is transferring all her grief to the landscape. This latter idea can be observed in the moss crusting over the flower pots, "blackest moss the flower-pots" (line 1); the rusted nails falling out of the walls "the rusted nails fell from the knots" (line 3); the broken sheds, "the broken sheds look'd sad and strange" (line 5); the weeds taking over, "weeded and worn the ancient thatch" (line 7); the blackened waters of the sluice "a sluice with blacken'd waters slept" (line 38), the creaking hinges of old doors, and the dusty, dreamy house slowly disintegrating, "all day within the dreamy house, the doors upon their hinges creak'd" (lines 61-62).

Her melancholic attitude is present throughout the whole poem as she is constantly claiming "my life is dreary, he cometh not" or "I am aweary, aweary, I would that I were dead!". She is unable to gaze at the sun "either at morn or even tide" (line 16) and it is when the sun beams fall on her lover's chamber that the day is most loathsome. Therefore, it might be considered

that Mariana cannot channel her feminine qualities to assert her position in the private sphere nor fulfil her domestic duties, and this is the reason why she leaves her domestic duties unattended. An example of this can be observed in the next stanza:

> The rusted nails fell from the knots
> That held the pear to the gable-wall.
> The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
> Unlifted was the clinking latch;
> Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
> Upon the lonely moated grange
> (Tennyson lines 3-8)

In this way we can support what has been mentioned offering Elisabeth Prettejohn's arguments on her view about the painting, "the spectator is neither enticed by a femme fatale nor titillated by a virginal girl. Indeed, the picture acknowledges the sexuality of a mature woman in a way that is difficult to reconcile with our conventional preconceptions about the Victorians" (Prettejohn qtd. in Andres 63). In the same vein, the Pre-Raphaelite Society advocated for the fusion of poetry and painting, which was one of their greatest achievements. Most of their pictures were either based on the Bible, Greek myths, the Arthurian literary cycle or literary works, mostly from William Shakespeare. For instance, there are several paintings based on *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear* and, to a lesser extent, *Measure for Measure*. William Hunt admitted that "poetical painters [are not] just for seeking inspiration in poetry and for depicting and generating intense emotions, often associated with poetry", but they "[become] poets in themselves in the entire sense, and inventing the story as they paint it" (Ruskin 105). Nonetheless, it is crucial to remark that the Pre-Raphaelite paintings may be considered as transcriptions of the literary text, instead of individual artists' interpretations. Each artist would offer their own vision of the poem in question. In light of what has been commented on, Millais's visual representation is the result of the ekphrastic and intertextual dialogue between Shakespeare's play and Tennyson's poem. In other words, the conversion stage of reverse ekphrasis and interfigurality co-occur starting from the premise of its original character taken from *Measure for Measure*.

It can be assumed that Millais evokes the poem in his own way based on his own interpretations and prior artistic experience, employing the imagery

of the poem itself. The artist intends to recreate Tennyson's poem through the painting, in other words, a narrative for his painting of Mariana. Indeed, Millais had no previous works describing Mariana physically so he offers his own version of her on canvas. The story and the atmosphere are both transferred to the painting that goes further in the narration of the poem and it adds some details that are not specified in the poem. According to the description of the painting on the Tate Museum website, "[i]n the picture the autumn leaves scattered on the ground mark the passage of time. Mariana has been working on some embroidery and pauses to stretch her back. Her longing for Angelo is suggested by her pose and the needle thrust fiercely into her embroidery. The stained-glass windows in front of her show the Annunciation, contrasting the Virgin's fulfilment with Mariana's frustration and longing" (n.p.).

Millais's rendering of Mariana recalls Johannes Vermeer's representation of women. Known primarily for his paintings of interior scenes, Vermeer is best known for his use of light in his works. Light permeates his scenes, beautifully rendering his subjects using light and resulting in a sense of physical immediacy. Dutch homes were dark and restricted in space by design. Vermeer's masterpieces had the same kind of lighting style. Light would enter from the left side on to the canvas and illuminate a figure or figures recessed into the distance. Vermeer depicts female figures absorbed in their thoughts in front of windows. Among his paintings, the figure of a woman is the main focal point, and light plays an important role in its composition as well. A large window illuminates the room and contributes to the atmosphere of each painting. In addition, Vermeer understood that lighting can change the way we perceive colour and objects. Thus, one characteristic that both artists possess is the way the light comes through the window, as can be seen in Millais's *Miranda*.

The painting captures every detail that enables the viewer to read the narrative in the poem. Millais includes three core images: Mariana and the surrounding atmosphere inside and outside the place she is confined. From what can be observed, Mariana's back posture reflects that she has been sitting for a long time and she has stood up to stretch before going back to her work. Her countenance reveals her melancholic attitude with no sign of satisfaction towards the action. The whole form of her body reinforces her physical and psychological state. Sophia Andres establishes that:

[Mariana is] in the most original, unprecedented pose, wearily stretching

over her embroidery and at the same time unwittingly exhibiting her feminine sexuality, which the tightly fitted, striking blue dress and the belt around her hips reveal. The picture captures a sense of spontaneity and transience, but the meaning or resolution of the scene remains ambiguous and inconclusive. (159)

There are two symbols in the painting that are significant to mention because they reinforce Mariana's attitude throughout the poem. There is a central image of the stained glass that depicts the Annunciation scene and it is loosely adapted from the windows in the Chapel of Merton College, Oxford (see fig. 5). This image is a clear allusion to the beginning of a new life and a sign of hope. Contrariwise, on the top of the painting, there is a small detail that may be imperceptible to the human eye. The motto "In coelo quies" means "In Heaven there is rest" refers to Mariana's desire to be dead (see fig. 2). These two opposite symbols convey the idea of life and death in the same painting and it could be argued that it is up to Mariana what to do with her life, whether to remain alive or place her life in God's hands and die. The use of this symbol is not coincidental since it is at the end of each stanza of Tennyson's poem where Mariana wishes she were dead. As a way to connect this last idea, it is interesting to pay attention to the use of verbs in the poem and their transference to the painting. In the first stanzas, Mariana mostly employs the present tense, for instance, "The night is dreary, he cometh not" (lines 21-22) but as the poem progresses there is also a change in the use of the verbs in which Mariana makes use of the subjunctive mood, as can be observed in "Oh God, that I were dead!" (line 84). This change of attitude implies that Mariana has no reason to continue and the only solace she would find is in dying. While fellow Pre-Raphaelite Rossetti advocated one-to-one symbolism, Millais embraces a well-rounded approach, giving objects a natural presence while evoking Mariana's psychological state. In addition to symbolizing "consolation", the snowdrop is also the birthday flower for 20 January, St Agnes' Eve, when young girls pray to St Agnes for a vision of their future husbands. The poem may also be a reference to John Keats's "The Eve of St Agnes", which is also a narrative poem that deals with yearning.. The poem may also be a reference to John Keats's "The Eve of St Agnes", which is also a narrative poem that deals with yearning. The mouse in the right foreground is Tennyson's mouse that "Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked" or "From the crevice peered about" (lines 64-65) (see fig. 4). There is also a clear reference to Tennyson's poem "Mariana in the

South" by means of the miniature altar in the background, in which Mariana prays fearfully to the Virgin Mary.

Representation of women in Victorian times and separate spheres ideology

Around the second half of the nineteenth century, between the decades of 1830s-50s, there was a keen interest in the Middle Ages, which seemed to offer an alternative to the problems of the industrial capitalism of the Victorian era. As a matter of fact, the Victorians highly admired the medieval code of behaviour and the dedication to chastity and purity. As Stephen Fliegal points out, the Victorian years posed "problems of social order, industrialization, poverty, and crises of faith, [whereas] many Victorians believed the Middle Ages possessed romantic notions of chivalry and honour as well as a feudal order and monastic institutions" (n.p.).

In view of what has been stated, it is crucial to understand the role of women in Victorian society. We may bear in mind the separate spheres ideology, which was the paradigm for understanding gender relations during the nineteenth century. The Victorian era is associated with the idea of domesticity and the separation of the male and female spaces into the public and the private sphere. This ideology between public and private defined by gender exemplifies how society creates its own rules concerning gender and space. Women and men belonged to different spheres in which they were expected to perform certain roles. Men were associated with the public sphere, which was regarded as men's domain with paid work. Women were in the private sphere, which was seen as their domain. Women only had one role, which was to marry and attend to all their husband's needs. Before getting married, women learned household skills and later they were supposed to stay in the private sphere under male dominance. Victorian society was patriarchal and prevented women from having the same opportunities as men had; this is the reason why female labour was not well considered. Most women who were part of the lower working class worked as servants or in factories, indeed, the job as a maid is associated with the domestic sphere. This group of women had a basic educational background solely limited to sewing, knitting and reading the Bible. This notion of the private sphere is related to this aforementioned notion of confinement. Being confined at home, women were constrained to motherhood or housekeeping. In *Gender in English Society 1650-1850*, Robert

Shoemaker analyses the contemporary perceptions of gender differences in terms of the public and private sphere applied to the female gender. As he points out, "[...] Women's activities outside the home were often described at the time as private, or occurring in society, rather in public. While public women were seen as anomalous (and the term reserved for prostitutes), the expression public man was clearly redundant not used at all" (306).

Considering what has been discussed, the female figure was the core in Pre-Raphaelite painting, the virginal and virtuous woman as opposed to the sexually active woman (also known as *femme fatale*). These two antagonistic depictions of women would reinforce women's fight to assert their rights in terms of equality. As women were expected to be restricted to the private sphere, they were essentially limited to housekeeping and motherhood, and they were presumed to maintain a well-mannered behaviour and demeanour. The fact that women were relegated to the private sphere is associated with the Latin term "hortus conclusus" and Victorian ideals about women's place in society – residing indoors, performing some type of domestic task, and remaining eternally chaste.

In view of this according to Aristotle, men and women were physically and mentally different from each other. However, it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that Simone de Beauvoir suggested gender difference was socially constructed rather than biological in the words of one of her famous quotes "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (252) that that perspective was challenged. The idea that Millais interlaces the natural world with Mariana reasserts the notion of gender essentialism in the nineteenth century, and how femininity is biologised on psychological characteristics such as nurture and fertility.

In this sense, it is worth remarking that in Victorian middle class ideology, women should be confined to the home to better protect them from the immoral influences of the world, in order that they should exert their good influence on their husband and children and through them on society (Hughes n.p.) Women were ascribed the more feminine duties of caring for their home. They had to prepare themselves for what was to come of their lives and it determined their future. Therefore, if a woman did not fulfil the expectations of the Victorian male, she would end up single. Marriage meant a woman's maturity and respectability, but motherhood was a confirmation that she had entered the world of womanly virtue and female fulfilment. For a woman not to become a mother meant she was liable to be labelled inadequate, a failure, or, somehow, abnormal. Victorian women were asserted to be submissive, meek,

powerless, pious, and pure. Therefore, feelings such as anger and impatience were considered unfeminine. In the same vein, women were believed to be pure and quiet by nature and feelings such as rage or anger were not related to them. The perception of those women who did not fulfil this expectation led to the diagnosis of hysteria or female madness during the nineteenth century. This symptom was traditionally attributed to those women who belonged to the upper class and were dependent on their husbands or fathers. In contraposition to the idea of the angel woman, we find the image of the fallen woman. This notion refers to those women who were independent, sexual or dangerous. At this point, it is interesting to analyse the figure of the "fallen woman". According to the *Cambridge English Dictionary*, a fallen woman is defined as "a woman who lost her good reputation by having sex with someone before she is married". This definition fits the women who had lost their innocence and was closely related to the loss of their chastity. Rosalind White supports this depiction arguing:

> [The term 'fallen woman'] refers to an irrevocable loss of innocence, a concept originating in the biblical fall in the Garden of Eden; the characterisation of Eve as a temptress inextricably links her fallen state with the loss of sexual purity. During the Victorian period a woman's identity was indisputably intertwined with her sexual status; a woman was either an untainted 'maiden', a wife or mother (which placed her sexuality safely in the domestic sphere), or she was vilified by labels such as 'spinster' or 'whore', both of which had negative connotations, the former with sexual atrophy, the latter with deviant promiscuity. Essentially, any deviance from the paragon of ideal Victorian womanhood, the 'angel of the house', insinuated that a woman's fall was imminent (n.p.).

It could be said that both definitions of the fallen woman fit Mariana's depiction since she has rejected the gender roles designed by society and she is expected to accomplish. What Tennyson intends to offer and later Millais transposed to the canvas is the characterisation of Mariana as a fallen woman making us aware that she is neither married nor virginal.

As aforementioned, despite the fact that *Measure for Measure* was written in 1604, Shakespeare deals with the issue of marriage and later Tennyson extrapolates it to the nineteenth century. Women were discouraged from remaining unmarried. This was because they needed protection, as they were perceived as pure and weak. A married woman was completely under the

guidance and the supervision of her husband. Motherhood was an achievement in the life of women, but only formally. Mothers had to be submissive and meek. Therefore, Tennyson following Shakespeare's lead presents Mariana as an unmarried woman and Millais highlights this issue in the canvas. Mariana is banished from society and yearns for death. In doing so, Millais depicts Mariana as a woman contemplating her position in society without a husband. Unlike Shakespeare's Mariana, who will eventually marry and be accepted back into society, Millais's painting suggests that she does not have such a destiny. Jan Marsh argues that "the popularity of images of solitary girls, patiently waiting for their princes to appear. These women not only wait for their 'prince' but for their financial security and standing in society to be established through marriage and motherhood" (68). The seasons will continue to change but her position will not. Both Tennyson and Millais portray Mariana suspended in a state of longing. The cause of such loneliness is due to her lover's abandonment "He cometh not" (line 22) and the result of her loneliness is her desire to die. As Mariana is found in this place with no connection with the outside world, her inner world is a projection of her current state of mind and a reflection of her emotions. It could be said there is a contrast between the real world and the internal world. This dichotomy reinforces the idea of the passing of time and Mariana's mental and physical confinement. Being isolated from the external world, the window in the painting seems to be the only source of natural light; she is entrapped within the world of her imagination and a projection of her state of mind.

Indeed, as Hallam Tennyson mentions "Mariana's forlornness is not because her lover has abandoned her and she is pining for his return; it is in the nature of her being itself, a nature from which she cannot escape or be delivered, whatever change of fortune may take place, and this of course brings us into the presence of Tennyson's own sense of himself (189). The degree of her sorrow and loneliness makes her life "dreary". The autumn leaves in Millais's painting symbolise the passage of time (see fig. 3), as Mariana pauses in her embroidery of the garden outside the window. I might suggest that Mariana's tragedy might be linked to her retreat from the external world since she is constantly dwelling in a vicious circle. As Bronfen suggests,

> [A] woman not only stands for death in a multitude of ways, but death is also the agency on which a drawing of oppositions produces meaning even as it is also the value that such gendering helps destroy, at least conceptually. The conjunction of femininity and death is not just to be located on the

thematic but also on the structural, rhetorical level of a text. An elimination of the feminine figure is a way of putting closure on aspects of mortality allegorically embodied through her. (205)

This attitude reinforces the idea that she is copying a masochistic mechanism through which she is unable to move on and her pain is slowly consuming her to the point that her condition only produces a constant flow of tears. Her relationship with her absent lover has both exploited and frustrated her. Due to her unwillingness to leave the space of the farmhouse, the outside world is prevented from connecting to the internal world that is a projection of Mariana's current state of mind, as Isobel Armstrong suggests "the external world becomes both her psychic environment and an existence from which she is estranged […] it is difficult to say whether Mariana's condition is a violent protest or a passive response to such conceptions of the feminine" (14-15).

Concluding remarks

Despite their initial superficial differences, interfigurality and reverse ekphrasis are two terms that are correlated when we examine an artistic manifestation, in this case, a painting based on two literary texts. To understand them, we ought to reflect on the meaning of the terms themselves and to differentiate how other similar concepts might contribute to their interpretations. By contrast, the painting offers the visual description of that poem and it may fill some gaps that were not displayed, to the extent of providing additional details.

In the light of this analysis, we could conclude that interfigural and ekphrastic dialogue aims to differentiate Shakespeare's Mariana from Tennyson's Mariana. Through both processes, what we have to take into account is that Millais's painting is the result of both literary texts. However, it might be assumed that the character of Mariana ought to be regarded as unique in neither Shakespeare's text nor Tennyson's poem. We have seen that the character of Mariana is taken from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* in which Mariana is transformed from the dramatic discourse to the lyrical dialogue through the process of interfigurality. Conversely, Tennyson presents her a weary, nostalgic and apathetic woman who is continually waiting for Angelo's return. As we have also observed, Tennyson succeeds in offering the theme of desolation throughout the poem and it is pointless to analyse

Shakespeare's play to clarify Angelo's intentions and whether he comes back as he eventually does in the play. This is because through interfigurality, it is impossible to have two identical characters in two different literary works produced by two distinct authors. Therefore, what Tennyson offers is his own version of Mariana. In the same fashion, Millais reproduces Tennyson's words on the canvas by means of reverse ekphrasis. Mariana's story is taken word for word by Millais through reverse ekphrastic dialogue. In the canvas, we have nonetheless provided many details that help us to fill in certain gaps that are not addressed in neither the play nor the poem. We can conclude that none of the three versions of Mariana we have analysed are equal, as Müller argues, the "re-used figure" (107) can never be exactly the same as the "original figure" (107); since narrative characters are organic parts of an overall narrative, the perception of the character changes as the text generating it changes.

Likewise, as we have discussed, Mariana's portrayal in the painting is a clear example of how women were viewed during the Victorian era. Her characterisation as a fallen woman highlights the idea that she is neither virginal nor married since she has rejected the gender roles designed by society and that she is expected to fulfil. Nonetheless, as has been mentioned, Shakespeare's plays were a great source of inspiration for Pre-Raphaelite paintings, which were considered transcriptions of literary texts. Thus, through the application of the two terms we have analysed in this article, viewers can become familiar with Tennyson's poetry and read the full poem through the painting. Because of this, when the viewer views the painting, he is reminded of the emotions that were expressed by Tennyson. In the painting, the story and the atmosphere are both expanded upon and additional details are added that are not present in the poem.

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Appendix
(fig. 1) Millais, John Everett. *Mariana*. 1851, Tate Gallery, City of Westminster, London, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-mariana-t07553 [Accessed 24th December 2021]
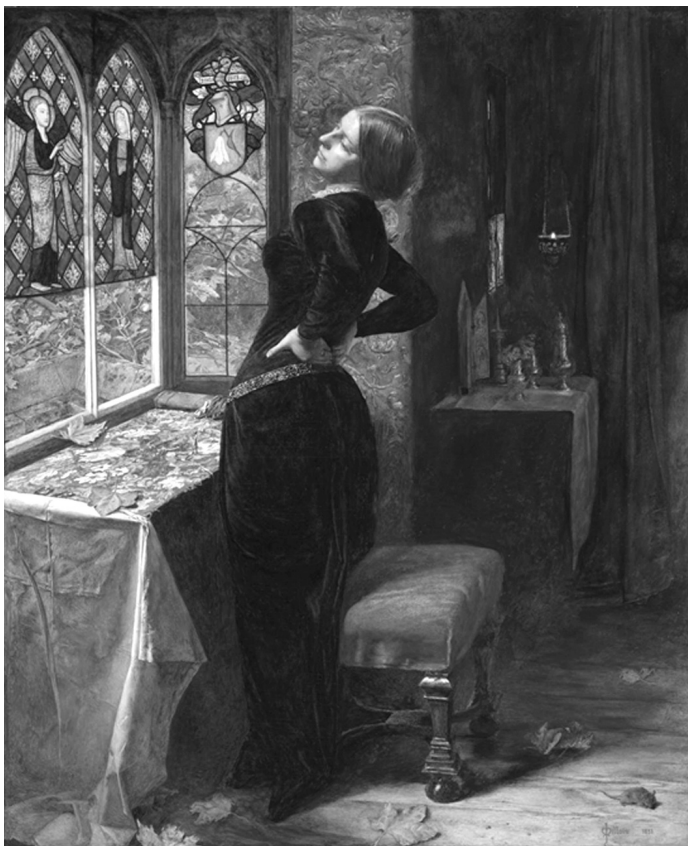
(fig. 2) Detail of the stained glass with the motto 'In coelo quies'

(fig. 3) Detail of the autumn leaves

(fig. 4) Detail of the "the mouse 'Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd'

(fig. 5) Detail of the stained-glass window showing the Annunciation

ROCÍO MOYANO REJANO is a Ph.D. student at Malaga University. She holds a degree in English Studies and also completed a Research Master's in English Studies, Multilingual and Intercultural Communication at Malaga University. She is currently studying for a master's degree in Teaching in Secondary Schools, Vocational Training and Language Centres at Universidad a Distancia de Madrid (UDIMA). She is pursuing a Ph.D. dissertation on the survival and prevalence of the character Ophelia in painting and English contemporary literature. The dissertation is primarily concerned with how this Shakespearean heroine has been represented in both art and literature in the last two centuries. Her research interests include Victorian poetry, Pre-Raphaelite painting, adaptation studies and Shakespeare heroines. Her first publication was on the portrayal of female empowerment in contemporary adaptations of *Jane Eyre*.
rocio.moyano.rejano@gmail.com