

**Mutability and Deformity: Models of the Body and  
the Art of Edward Burne-Jones  
Caroline Arscott**

This essay concerns the resources for a conception of the extraordinary and the marvellous in relation to the individual. The ordinary had to be stretched and enhanced when the super-normal came into question. In the early-Victorian period the mechanised addendum or substitute for the human body was one locus which allowed Victorian culture to envisage both the monster and the super-hero. In the late-Victorian period metaphors relating to organic biological processes became more powerful; crucially, scientific developments allowed for revised conceptions of physical substance. New techniques emerged throughout the nineteenth century for looking at minute components of the organism, achieved by the treatment of samples in slides prepared for microscopes.<sup>1</sup> With these developments, including investigations into cells and germs there was a radical revision of the understanding of the body and its possible boundaries. I see the art of Burne-Jones as bridging two kinds of resources for fantasies about the human body: fantasies relating to the cybernetic and those relating to the bacterial. In this essay I start by considering the ‘machine-man’ fantasy and I go on to suggest ways in which that was displaced by a new, fully biological conception of the monstrous-heroic in the later Victorian period.

Burne-Jones’s approach to these issues always started from the issue of the damaged self, subject to damage and constitutionally compromised. In psychic terms and in terms of the physical envelope the male protagonist of Burne-Jones’s narratives struggles to hold himself together. A constant theme of his work is the frail and melancholic hero achieving his feats against the odds. The ferocity of the environment, the disruptive processes of time, growth and decay, and the corroding, destabilising effects of desire and regret seem to take their toll on the person of the warrior. We find an echo in his biography of this subject position. He represents himself as an emaciated, physically frail specimen, and his wife Georgiana recounts the alarming episodes of physical collapse that he was prone to throughout his life. His spells of weakness sometimes lasted for months, characterised by feverishness,

weakness, fainting, insomnia and depression explained, in later life, as recurrences of influenza or malaria.

In the caricatures that Burne-Jones loved to include in letters to friends we see him repeatedly picturing himself as a thin, ineffectual figure, melancholic, lanky but shrunken, overwhelmed by the volume of work. He sits hollow cheeked, huddled in front of stacks of canvases or peers out disconsolately over the huge pile of letters that he has to deal with at breakfast. The overlapping shapes of canvases or letters (the letters in their stack, slipping and sliding away from the body that they obscure) are like plates of a dysfunctional suit of armour: all platelets yet offering neither protection nor definition of shape. The stamps on the envelopes in the breakfast scene resemble nuclei in desiccated cells that are being shed. The figure of Burne-Jones is all cuticle (or epidermis) and no cutis (or dermal layer).

Burne-Jones's conviction of his own lack of substance is evidenced by a repeated motif in the story of his life as his wife records it. We gain a sense of his anxiety about the flaking of surface integuments and disintegration of the self as we hear first of the death of his mother days after delivering him and then of his unwitting destruction, as an infant, of the only existing image of his mother, a miniature painted on ivory. He by turn is threatened with annihilation for the rest of his life, his ill health repeatedly sapping his will to live and taking him into deathlike faints.<sup>2</sup> His mother, the ivory miniature and his own self have fallen under the same threat of destruction. His art activities emerge as his chance to make restitution or restore the eroded substance of his being. That ivory miniature was too fragile and its substance was merely epidermal; it could not carry the integral body. Throughout his career he sought to build solid pictures that would not be vulnerable in that way. There is evidence in his comments on materials and technique of a preoccupation with the building of firm substance in his work; he employed corporeal metaphors with respect to the body of the oil painting, its bones, flesh, skin and second skin.

A passage in the *Memorials* (1904), written by Georgiana Burne-Jones, records Burne-Jones's anxiety about the surface of his oil paint in 1873 when he was working on *Merlin and Nimue* (also known as *The Beguiling of Merlin* [1872-7]). He wrote to his patron Leyland about the danger of the paint flaking off in patches after the passage of a few years, explaining that he had to start all over again:

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I'm in a miserable plight; not with the design, but with the damnable paint which seems everywhere insecure. I have had three wretched days since I first discovered the nature of the danger, but to-day I am convinced that it exists, and that for some reason or another there are spots innumerable in it where the paint will not bite the canvas, and where eventually it will chip off and shew ruinous gaps. [...] I am so disheartened that I can scarcely think about it any more. Perhaps I even exaggerate the evil, but it is maddening to be the victim of some trumpery material in this way.<sup>3</sup>

It seems that the effort to achieve a well-secured fabric which will not open up at the seams is the correlate of an anxiety always felt by Burne-Jones, about the tendency to disintegration of the human body, and in particular his own body. The analogy between painting and the human body was one he reached for quite readily when he came to discuss the necessity for orderly procedures in completing a painting.

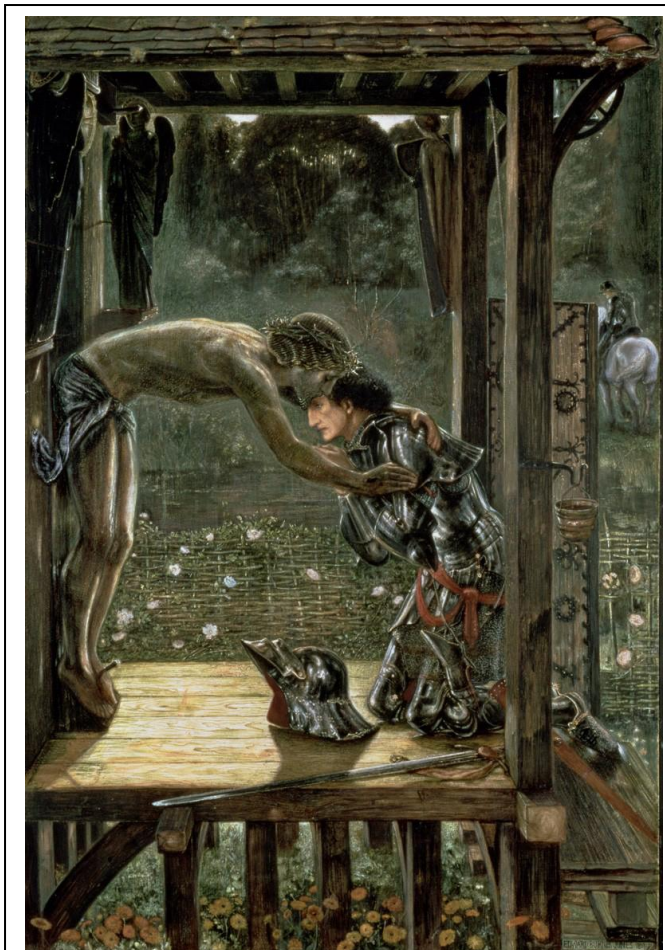
It won't do to begin painting heads or much detail in this picture till it's all settled. I do so believe in getting in the bones of the picture properly first, then putting on the flesh and afterwards the skin, and then another skin; last of all combing its hair and sending it forth to the world. If you begin with the flesh and the skin and trust to getting the bones right afterwards, it's such a very slippery process'.<sup>4</sup>

The constructive efforts in Burne-Jones's scrupulous technical procedures can be seen as the necessary investment in repair and armouring that accompany his vision of the fractured body.<sup>5</sup>

Alongside his resolve to build solid works of art, Burne-Jones expressed deep anxiety concerning the possible deterioration of the surface of his pictures. These ideas are then reduplicated by the inclusion of figures in the pictures whose substance seems to be compromised, who are lacking in robustness, shaky in their stance, apparently abraded and damaged on their surfaces.<sup>6</sup> These figures stand as the central protagonists in the pictures' dramas and seem perilously unequal to the challenges they face. The figures of St. George, the Merciful Knight, Perseus and the Knight in the story of the Sleeping Beauty are all examples of figures portrayed in this way in paintings. His male protagonists are usually slight and willowy, their features delicate, their poses uncertain and trembling. His antique and medieval heroes have elaborate, highly ornamented armour which is portrayed as being held together by little rivets, metal links and lacing. The equipment appears lightweight and made of dozens of elements, including overlapping plates like scales or leaves.

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The sensitive melancholic heroes hesitate, brood and quiver, displaying the flexibility and points of vulnerability in their metal and leather outfits. Where we see



**Fig. 1** Edward Burne-Jones, *The Merciful Knight*, 1863, Watercolour gouache on paper. 101.4 x 58.6 cm, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery. © Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery/The Bridgeman Art Library.

action there is agile, nervy tenacity in the face of terrifying, multiform monsters. The encounters are costly in terms of pain and damage; all Burne-Jones's heroes seem to be shredded and wounded by their experience. This persona, the persona of the fragile, emotionally intense hero was frequently denounced by critics as effeminate and unhealthy.

The armoured body appears in Burne-Jones's work from the outset of his career. So close was the correlation between the fictional figure in every case and the elaborate, potentially faulty equipment sported by him that there is some justification for

discussing the knights and heroes as constituting mechanised bodies. We can consider one particular work that Burne-Jones exhibited in 1864 at the Old Watercolour Society (see **fig. 1**). This was *The Merciful Knight*, and was his first contribution to that exhibiting institution. It is a picture based on a story in Kenelm Digby's *The Broadstone of Honour* (1822) in which a travelling knight stops to pray at an isolated shrine and becomes the focus of a miracle.

The picture shows the figure of a knight, more mature than the youthful figures Burne-Jones would later focus on. His somewhat gaunt and serious face is

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shown in profile at the miraculous moment when a wooden figure of Christ comes to life. The figure of Christ who embraces the kneeling pious knight is not entirely flesh nor fully wood; he leans forward stiffly, having detached his hands from the nails that fastened them to the cross. His feet are still nailed in place. Each nail head is highlighted with a little golden burst of light in this picture. The rivets and junction points in the knight's shining dark armour are also highlighted with gold. The stiff and heavy armour in this case seems to constrain the figure, locking the shrivelled warrior in his worshipful stance in a way that is similar to the way the inorganic wood and metal hamper the movement of the Christ figure. In effect the Christ figure and the knight too are composite entities: part-organic part-inorganic.

The oddity of this scene struck reviewers. The treatment of the faces was seen as mannered, the angularity in the presentation of the figures was seen as an affectation of medievalism that set aside grace and smoothness of line in the composition and ran counter to nature and truth, ignoring skeletal structure, plausible musculature and bodily form. The religious implications seemed suspect. Edward Clifford, an artist himself who came to be a great friend and supporter of Burne-Jones recalled his uneasiness at seeing the pictures at the Old Watercolour Society. 'I certainly did not like them. They were odd, and one of them, I thought, was even irreverent and painful'.<sup>7</sup> Improbable accessories intruded with an emphasis on their material substance. The *Art-Journal* reviewer in 1864 found the display of burnished metal in the knight's outfit excessive saying that he 'seems to shake in his clattering armour'.<sup>8</sup> These deficiencies were however accompanied by an intensity of feeling which was identified as being linked to glory in colour and a general sense of beauty.

The figure constituted by clattering armour takes over from a conventional functional neoclassical body in this early phase of Burne-Jones's art. The pose of solemn devotion that the knight adopts is awkward and contracted as he leans forward from the waist, angles his legs backwards at the knee, and pulls his elbows tight into his body. He is folded up like an expandable mechanism, pressed into this compact stance by the love of Christ, actually prevented from wielding his sword against his enemy who departs unharmed. The intensification of feeling is conditional on the folding in on itself of the mechanised body. The intricacy of the

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composition, the chopping up and partial blocking of perspectival space by the interposition of the slotted-together structure of the shrine, and the woven fence supporting the rose briar, produces not just a reduction in depth but a feeling of the undoing of singular and unified space in favour of multiple openings and pockets of visual stimulation: the patterns of the decorative iron work on the half-open door of the shrine, the roses on the fence in different areas of the picture and the vivid marigolds viewed under the platform all contribute to this effect. Burne-Jones's work for churches in stained glass and oil from the late 1850s, and his compositions in watercolour and pen and ink in this period, bear these compositional characteristics and can be seen as analogous to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's crowded and glowing watercolours of the late 1850s and early 1860s.<sup>9</sup>

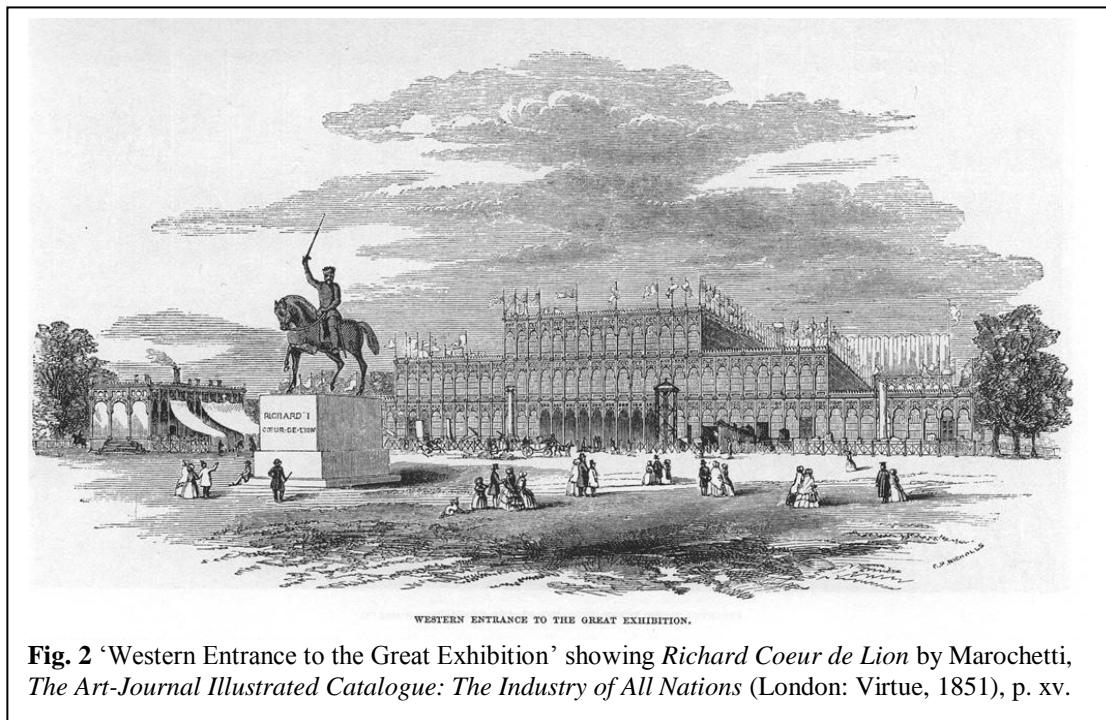
It is instructive to set fictions of this sort, relating to medieval chivalry, against the specifics of the modern military environment. The journalist Henry Mayhew transcribed evidence concerning garment workers' conditions, including those employed in the making of military uniforms, in articles written for the *Morning Chronicle* in 1849. Mayhew interviewed one aged needlewoman living in an attic:

I generally do the jackets, the trousers and the drill jackets for the marine soldiers that goes on board the ship, and they're 4½d each. The soldiers' great coats, with large capes and cuffs and half-lined, are only 5d to me, and there are eleven buttonholes to make in every one of them. I don't think I could do one in nine hours, they're such large ones. The men are five feet eleven and six foot and so on, and so I leave you to judge. [...] I couldn't live upon what I get if I didn't have a loaf now and then from the Scripture-reader that visits round about here. [...] I've done for the soldier from his gaiters to his cap, and I should like the Queen to see the state I'm in. I wish she'd come that's all.<sup>10</sup>

The Queen never did make a visit to the cramped attics where outworkers slaved over buttonholes and military stripes for the six-footers and near six-footers among the troops, but she did make repeated visits to the Crystal Palace to marvel at the products of industry – from textiles to armaments – and to reflect along with mainstream bourgeois opinion on the industriousness of the workforce and the inventiveness of the designers. In the Great Exhibition of 1851 there was a diverse and visionary presentation of mechanical ingenuity appropriated for the service of the nation. One visit was specially arranged so that Queen Victoria could examine

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the gigantic statue of Richard Coeur de Lion by Marochetti, sited immediately outside the West End of the Crystal Palace (see fig. 2).



Marochetti was the Queen's favourite sculptor and the artist whom she entrusted with the task of memorialising Albert on his death. The statue by Marochetti was a clay model of the figure later cast in bronze (in 1860) and placed outside the Houses of Parliament.

Dinah Mulock Craik wrote a poem on the topic of Marochetti's statue at the exhibition, called simply 'Coeur de Lion' (1851) drawing a contrast between the serene elevation of this type of chivalry and the gaping multitude and turmoil of the modern day crowds below. The scale of the gigantic figure is alluded to in the imagery of looking up at its head against blue sky. She saw the figure as the epitome of physical strength, stern self-control and leadership

Behold! what need that rim  
Of crown 'gainst this blue sky, to signal him  
A monarch, of the monarchs that have been,  
And, perhaps, are not?—Read his destinies  
In the full brow o'er-arching kingly eyes,  
In the strong hands, grasping both rein and sword,  
In the close mouth, so sternly beautiful:—  
Surely, a man who his own spirit can rule;  
Lord of himself, therefore his brethren's lord.<sup>11</sup>

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Later in the poem she switched gear and allowed that perhaps the contrast between the modern crowd and the leadership of the past could be reversed; to permit an acknowledgement of the ugly truths of the historical world and the obsolescence of autocratic ideas of leadership, in light of modern improvements imagined as physical, moral and political. In this view ancient nobility is corrupt and the modern popular is ethically superior. This is summed up in the second part of the poem in the idea that the air of ‘our living world’ is ‘far purer’.

How know we but these green-wreathed legends hide  
An ugly truth that never could abide  
In this our living world's far purer air?—<sup>12</sup>

Her conclusion was, however, that Marochetti's evocation of grand heroic days should be valued:

Stand—imaging the grand heroic days;  
And let our little children come and gaze,  
Whispering with innocent awe—‘This was a King’.<sup>13</sup>

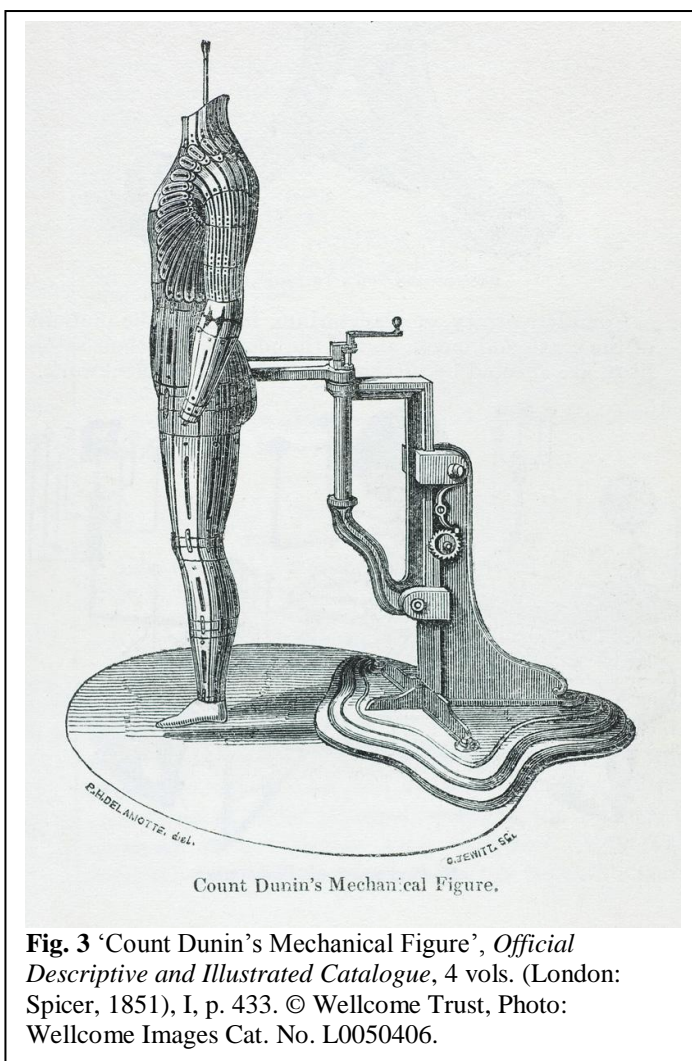
The justification is that the statue offers an image of majesty and an experience of awe to the innocent children of the present.

It is interesting that at this date, in 1851, it seemed necessary to Mulock Craik to shuttle between the lineaments of romanticised kingly heroism and a revised perspective of the modern everyman. My argument will be that a mechanical model of the fighting body permitted just such a shift in perspective: Burne-Jones's evocation of a folded-up man-machine drew on a store of imagery which was being elaborated in the mid-century. ‘The fine thing about a man is that he is such a splendid machine, so you can put him in motion, and make as many knobs and joints and muscles about him as you please’ said Burne-Jones in celebration of the potential for decorative and functional embellishment in the active male figure, signalling a commitment to elaboration and ingenious multiplicity of form that went beyond the single unified standard of the neoclassical ideal.<sup>14</sup> By looking elsewhere in the Great Exhibition, beyond the (admittedly numerous) literal presentations of chivalric heroism in its statues, all of which depended on firm limbs, decisive gestures and grandeur of scale, and deployed an academic visual vocabulary fundamentally neoclassical in its bases, we can find that alternative.

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Marochetti's figure was sited at the end of the building which was reserved for products of British industry. Inside the building at this end, in the gallery devoted to the display of philosophical instruments, was another figure that attracted some attention, the Lay Figure or Expanding Model Of A Man designed by the Polish exile and inventor Count Dunin, a medal-winner in the category of Philosophical Instruments and their dependent processes (see fig. 3). The Expanding Model was described by the *Illustrated London News* as 'a most singular mechanical invention [...] a marvel of human ingenuity'.<sup>15</sup> Details of the invention were given in the official catalogue where it was listed as a 'Piece of mechanism designed to illustrate the different proportions of the



**Fig. 3** 'Count Dunin's Mechanical Figure', *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, 4 vols. (London: Spicer, 1851), I, p. 433. © Wellcome Trust, Photo: Wellcome Images Cat. No. L0050406.

human figure: it admits of being expanded from the size of the Apollo Belvedere to that of a colossal statue'. It was explained 'this invention could be made applicable in the artist's studio' (in other words as a lay figure to present the pose of any figure); but the catalogue entry went on, 'its more immediate object is to facilitate the exact fitting of garments, more especially in cases where great numbers are to be provided for, as in the equipment of an army or providing clothing for a distant colony'.<sup>16</sup> The contraption allowed the total armed contingent to be described and acknowledged, this one metal body contained them all, in all their peculiarities or deformities, from a less developed, five-foot specimen to a giant of six foot eight

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inches.<sup>17</sup> Count Dunin envisaged a tailor's shop with three or four of these mannequins producing perfectly fitting uniforms for 'several hundred thousand men' without personal attendance. In a democratic age the vocabulary of the heroic had to become inclusive and this Expanding Man could admit the deformity of the individual as well as presenting the antique ideal.

We can correlate this to the imagery used by Charles Kingsley in *Westward Ho!*, his novel of 1855, a favourite book of Burne-Jones, in which the cast of characters includes the Apollo-like Frank (poet and hero), his giant brother Amyas (colossal in build and indomitable in battle) and the lesser figure the comic chaplain Jack Brindlecome, described as pig-like. Even Jack is allowed to be a hero driven by his love for the beautiful Rose.

'It is the old tale' said Frank to himself, 'Who will not love transform into a hero', and so it was, Jack's squeaking voice was firm and manly, his pig's eyes flashed very fire, his gestures were so free and earnest that the ungainliness of his figure was forgotten.<sup>18</sup>

The British officers like Amyas are not depicted as haughty and aloof like the Spanish officers in the novel but are described as befriending the men, mingling and exercising with them, leading from the front of the battle 'like Homer's heroes or the old Norse Vikings'.<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that in the world of Victorian colonial adventures this re-found epic stance is located in a real-life modern hero Rajah James Brooke of Sarawak to whom the novel is dedicated by Kingsley.<sup>20</sup> Brooke was campaigning in the 1850s to gain protectorate status for Borneo and to have his actions endorsed within the United Kingdom. Opinion was polarised over his hands-on, brutal expeditions to suppress piracy in north Borneo. He was a well-known figure whose bust by Woolner exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1859 was admired by the *Athenaeum* as 'epical in feeling', though the reviewer was disturbed by the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor's faithfulness of depiction which went so far as to indicate the facial scarring caused by smallpox.<sup>21</sup> At this stage in the 1850s the correlation of heroism and disfigurement caused uneasiness. Brooke's paternalistic regime in the territory of Sarawak was for a long time not embraced by the British colonial system. Burne-Jones became very friendly with Brooke's nephew, the subsequent Rajah, and the artist assuredly endorsed the retrospective assessment of James

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Brooke made by one of Burne-Jones's circle as having been 'The Last of the Vikings'.<sup>22</sup>

We can see the Expanding Man in the Great Exhibition as the forward-looking technological counterpart of Marochetti's fine art presentation of the national hero in 1851 and one that fitted better with the revised expectations of the heroic body in the democratic era. The mechanical device allowed for the linked platelets (made of steel and copper) to be rearranged, sliding behind each other as the overall figure dwindled and so pulling to the inside what had been external, and as the figure unfolded allowing the inner portions to be pushed outward.<sup>23</sup> The handle at the back could be turned to adjust the mannequin; it was claimed that any individual's measurements could be taken and transferred to the model which used a system of wheels, sliding plates, sliding tubes, adjusting screws and spiral springs to reframe the body. In one position it presented the ideal – when it offered the 'correct likeness of the Apollo Belvedere'.<sup>24</sup> This ideal form was shown when the contraption was less than fully extended; indeed anything less than the gigantic, including the ideal, contained hidden portions. The imaginative complex is one in which the bodily entity is seen as provisional and fractured, held together and functional, capable of deadly action but never fully stable, definitive or integral. The ideal and the monstrous are put into a continuum as the form undergoes variation.

Underlying this referencing of dissimilar body types in the multiplicity of the social order there is another imaginative construct which has to do with the enumerated elements going to make up the automaton. The catalogue entry on the device stresses the huge number of identical components: 48 grooved steel plates, 163 wheels, 203 slides, 476 metal washers, 704 sliding plates, 3,500 fixing and adjusting screws and so on. Upwards of 7,000 components are counted and these numbers are repeated with amazement in the press. The enumeration undertaken tallies up the standard components. The commentators marvel at the host of items employed. This, however, is a different kind of host to that represented by the physically varying soldiers in the humanistic vision of the British democratic military forces. A vision of not hundreds of thousands of differing individuals but of faceless mechanical legions is summoned up. This, I would maintain, is the necessary flipside in the 1850s of the comedic fantasy of the encompassing of

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infinite variety. In *Westward Ho!* the dastardly Spanish officers, mechanical, detached cruel and tyrannous, occupy this position. The Spanish commander, described as ‘in his glistening black armour, immovable as a man of iron’ is a double of Amyas the hero, and when Amyas operates under the urgings of resentment and hatred rather than love he comes to resemble the Spanish commander.<sup>25</sup> Kingsley in his novel is at pains to argue against this alternate mode. Nevertheless it has its presence in the novel and arguably in all the cultural explorations of the potentially deformed heroic body at this early Victorian historical juncture which saw the decentring of the neoclassical ideal. Counting no longer relates to the individual numerical values, instead numbers start to appear in a more abstract way in terms of their interchangeability as positions within a series. This kind of enumeration and multiplication relate to a cluster of factors: factory production, the division of labour and the production of exchange value rather than use value. The Victorian enthusiast for scientific inventions, John Timbs, in an account of automata published in 1860, describes the amazing intricate mechanisms of Vaucanson and others: the mechanical puppets or as they were known in French (and occasionally in English) ‘androides’ produced as shows or entertainments.<sup>26</sup> Timbs refers to Helmholtz’s view that eighteenth-century automata were marvels of invention and sagacity. Helmholtz commented on the eighteenth-century ability to produce machines that could duplicate the actions of a single man while the modern age, drawing technical lessons from these mechanical marvels, put its engineering skills to different use. ‘We no longer seek to build machines which shall fulfill the thousand services required of *one* man, but strive, on the contrary, that a machine shall perform *one* service, but shall occupy in so doing it, the place of a thousand men’.<sup>27</sup> We can read this, perhaps against Helmholtz’s literal intentions, as indicating not that there was a cessation of production of free-standing mechanical figures in the Victorian period, but that the fantasies connected with them came to encompass the depersonalised logic of factory production, the action of a steam-driven hammer performing a single action perfectly again and again, as well as the amazing resemblance to a single living being.

Inventions that relied on folding mechanisms abounded in the exhibition. The *Illustrated London News* reported on a mechanical bedstead that woke up the

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sleeper on a timer, shifting the head of the bed to an upright position so that the inhabitant was propelled forward at the due time, and a portable tent in the form of a huge umbrella, described as ‘really ingenious’ though a bit tricky to peg out properly.<sup>28</sup> We encounter an artist’s easel that could be folded up, secured by a large rubber band and fitted into a waterproof knapsack. Like Count Dunin’s expanding man the contraption went from large scale when every element from palettes, implement tray and stool was pulled out, to compact form when fully contracted. There were several sliding and swivelling parts in Major Little’s Artificial Hand, one among many artificial limbs displayed, leading to *Punch*’s musings on the advantages of substituting perfectly uniform mechanical limbs for all the dancers’ legs in the *corps de ballet*.<sup>29</sup>

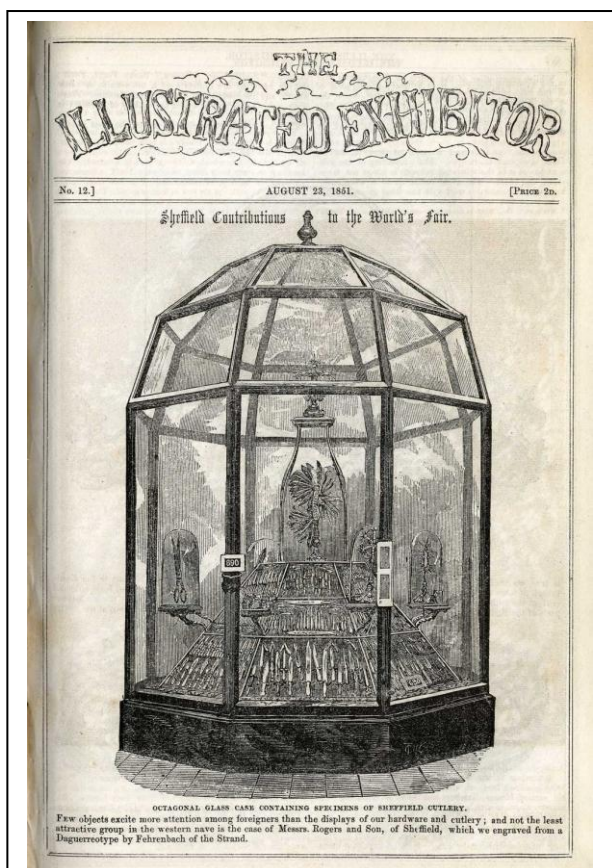
The exhibition building itself was of course a reconfigurable structure which was expressly designed to be dismantled at the end of the exhibition and re-erected in alternate form. The use of standard elements repeated within a unit structure – pillars, trusses, glazing bars, panes of glass, etc, in iron, wood and glass – meant that almost any form could be produced when reusing the elements. There was one unused proposal which suggested pulling the horizontal halls into a monstrous tower.

The *Illustrated Exhibitor* was vehement in asserting that ‘The genius of Great Britain is mechanism’.<sup>30</sup> This was linked to achievements in civil engineering and to mechanisation and ‘labour-saving’ in industrial processes but the magazine chose to highlight a perhaps unlikely speciality as the true instance of the mastery of mechanism: that of the cutlery trade.<sup>31</sup> The author was most enthusiastic about the ‘Immense Group of Cutlery’ exhibited by Messrs Rogers of Sheffield (see **fig. 4**).

In this, perhaps, as much as in any object in the building, is the peculiar ingenuity and indomitable perseverance of our countrymen exhibited. Other nations may make a boast about the grace of their statues, the polish of their furniture, the temper of their swords, the finish of their jewellery, the fidelity of their pictures, the brightness of their diamonds, and the flash, glare and glitter of whatever they please, — but in the matter of knives and forks we are preeminent; and in this particular we discover Great Britain’s true greatness, which consists not in show, but in substance; not in outward demonstrations of the beautiful, but in useful adaptations of great means to apparently small ends.<sup>32</sup>

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The cutlery trade was picked out for its ability to produce intricate precision-made crafted objects depending on the fitting together of many different parts. Even a table knife involved a number of processes but, in the making of a two- or three-



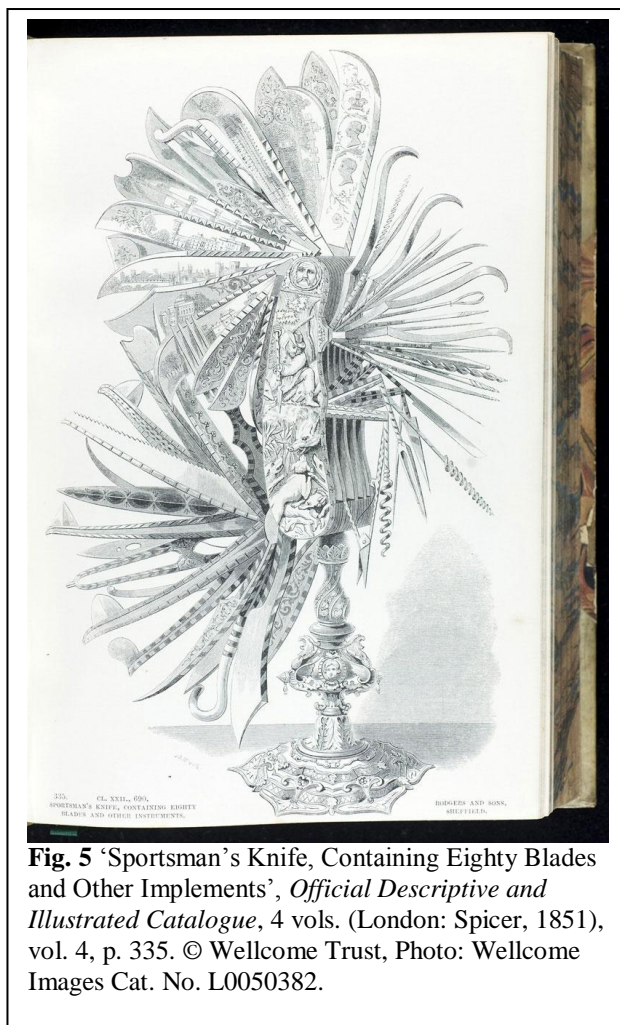
**Fig. 4** 'Octagonal Glass Case Containing Specimens of Sheffield Cutlery', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 23 August 1851, vol. 1, p. 201.

bladed folding knife, hundreds of operations were involved.<sup>33</sup> The workshops of Sheffield were celebrated for their division of labour and craft skills. The idea of the implements of the table is involved in the *Illustrated Exhibitor's* words, as the beef-and-bread foundation of British national strength is asserted, but there is an oddity in the idea of substance that attaches to this kind of object. The collapsible mechanised entity contains much beneath the surface but as the elements are revealed on their pivots the substance can all become surface. This becomes

apparent in a highly complex piece of cutlery such as the eighty-bladed knife shown at the exhibition (see **fig. 5**). If this knife, the expanding lay figure or Burne-Jones's clattering suit of armour is taken as the ideologically invested reference point for the body of the modern hero we find that it is actually a body where the idea of substance is overwritten by the idea of partition. The cuts have been inflicted, any jointing together or reassembly in cybernetic form can at best disavow the damage.

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Burne-Jones was intrigued to learn about developments in the study of the building blocks of the body. He enjoyed chatting to his scientific friends and learnt from Sir John Simon about advances in microscopy which produced greater insights into the way physical substance was made up of cells. Staining techniques allowed for the preparation of slides in which the junctures between cells showed up, as illustrated in the plates of Hassall's 1849 publication *The Microscopic Anatomy of the Human Body*.<sup>34</sup> In such investigations of the structure of the body the thinning out and detachment of the cells on the surface of the skin could readily be observed but so too could the cellular structure of the interior of the body, as in a plate showing portions of the human lung injected and magnified 100

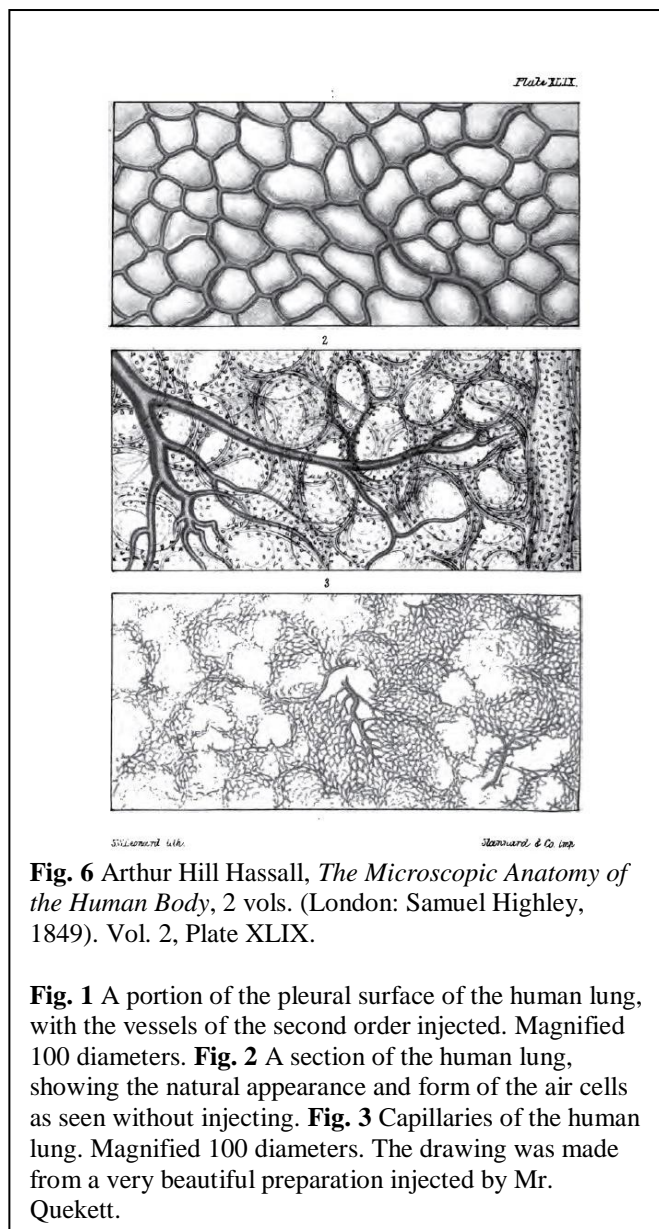


**Fig. 5** 'Sportsman's Knife, Containing Eighty Blades and Other Implements', *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, 4 vols. (London: Spicer, 1851), vol. 4, p. 335. © Wellcome Trust, Photo: Wellcome Images Cat. No. L0050382.

diameters (see **fig. 6**). In an illustration of the cartilage of the rib the compressed cells on the margin of the cartilage are pointed out and the location of the development of new cells is investigated. The picture of the human body that was available in this kind of study was one in which substance itself was seen to be formed not just of units but also of mobile units. Burne-Jones's wry response to being enlightened about 'molecular formation' shows that it was exactly this mobility that fascinated him: his wife's biography reports him as saying in 1862, 'Georgie, Mr. Simon has been here, and has told me that we are made of millions of little bits, and it's only of my shoulder's own mercy that it doesn't march off to Hampstead Heath this afternoon'.<sup>35</sup>

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In the 1850s and 1860s we can posit that physiology for Burne-Jones and others was imagined in somewhat mechanistic terms. As the century went on I



would suggest that this mechanical model was supplemented by a rather different sense of physical substance. Burne-Jones continued to encounter scientists among his circle, and to read about scientific developments as an interested layperson. He and his wife were friends of George Eliot and her partner the scientist and theoretician George Henry Lewes prior to Lewes's death in 1878. Through the woman, Maria Zambaco, with whom he had an affair in the late 1860s, Burne-Jones was introduced to the medical investigations of the expert in syphilitic and leprosy diseases to whom she was married, Demetrius Zambaco. Zambaco sought to establish the relationship between nervous disturbances and physical diseases, publishing on the effects of nervous perturbation on the development of gangrene in 1857<sup>36</sup> and on the interrelation between the nervous system and the syphilitic condition in a prize-winning work of 1862.<sup>37</sup> His later work centred on leprosy. Burne-Jones broke with Maria Zambaco but it is surely no coincidence that he became caught up in the late 1880s enthusiasm for the 'Leper Priest of Molokai', Father Damien. In Burne-Jones's work from the 1870s we can identify a shift from

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that early intensity of substanceless infolding (which I have been paralleling to the mechanical marvels of the Great Exhibition) to a sense of the spread and mutation of organic being through and beyond the self. In the remainder of this essay I will refer to physical features of the leprous body by way of a parallel to this second mode in Burne-Jones's work.

We can take the example of the first work to be completed and exhibited in the series presenting the adventures of the hero Perseus: *Perseus and the Graiae* (1877-8, Earl of Balfour) shown at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1878 (see **fig. 7**). This



work was completed as a bass relief in gesso: Burne-Jones also completed a later version in oil.<sup>38</sup> The picture realises the groping panic of the three crouching sisters, deprived by Perseus of their single eye. It evokes the uncertain mapping of

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topography solely through the sense of touch by means of the ridges and hollows of the swirling bass-relief design. Drapery and the hollows and sagging flesh of the sisters' bodies (and in the later oil version, the dents and swelling of the landscape) are equalised and rendered uncertain, barely knowable. The figure of Perseus is bowed and forms one more hump in amongst the forms. The bass relief was ornamented in metallic hues of gold and silver, producing a dazzling surface that set the possibilities of sight and beauty radically apart from the knowledge that can be ascertained by touch. The optical qualities of the metallic finish were hyperbolic, stunning, not yielding up the intellectual control associated with vision organised in a perspectival scheme.<sup>39</sup> The armoured body of Perseus is fused into this world where the secure positionality of agents and differentiation of organic and inorganic elements is brought into question.

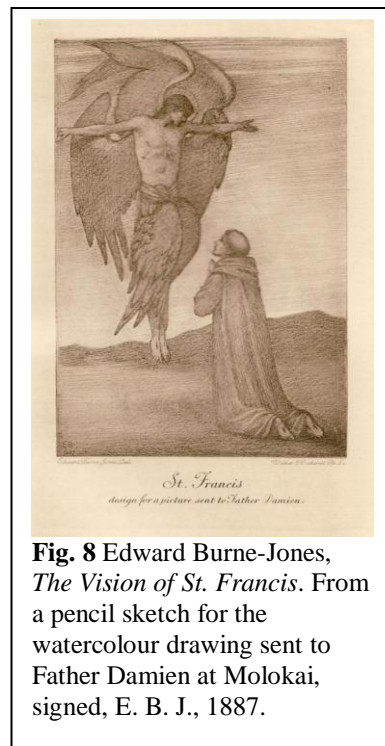
The ridges of this, in some ways, invisible work serve to produce a continuity between entities. Instead of an array of variation and a stress on the severing of one portion of the self from another there is the suggestion that the three Graiae, indeed the *four* bodies, are merged under a common skin just as they all are party to the single organ, that detached eyeball. Hand gestures are repeated, the tilt of the wrist and the stretch of the delicate fingers as if all are driven by a simultaneous impulse. Perseus is not set up as an opposite to these figures; his bare foot is analogous to the foot of the crouching figure to the left, indeed it falls under her skirt, his delicate build already feminises him, his hands are just like theirs and the fastenings and overlaps of his armour bear comparison to the tent-like garment fixed at points and stretching and draping across the shoulders of the left-hand figure.

To investigate the historical conditions that encouraged this way of imagining and picturing the hero in the late-Victorian period it is necessary to move from the fabled land of the Graiae to the Hawaiian Islands. The Belgian priest, Joseph De Veuster, known as Father Damien, volunteered to become a resident in the leper colony on the Hawaiian island of Molokai and contracted leprosy himself, dying in 1889.<sup>40</sup> Leprosy, now known as Hansen's disease, is caused by a bacillus (*Mycobacterium leprae*) first identified in 1873, and in its nodular form produces a thickening of tissue in the face in ridges across the brows and round the nose so that

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the sufferer comes to resemble a lion in his or her facial features.<sup>41</sup> One medical text describes ‘the deformity of countenance produced by the thickening, rugosity, and discolouration of the skin of the face. The heavy, lion-like brow is very remarkable’.<sup>42</sup> As the skin stretches over the nodules in the cutis the epidermis becomes shiny, it has a tendency to desquamate or shed an outer layer at the centre of the nodule and the appearance of the leproma becomes shiny, varnished and cracked.<sup>43</sup> These tubercles can shrink only to recur elsewhere in the body, or be accompanied by rubbery, keloidal overgrowth of tissue. At the ulcerative stage the tubercles can soften and produce pus. The 1870s saw a lively debate in the medical and general press about germ theory. The findings of Pasteur and Koch were publicised and disputed. By the late 1870s the germ theory of disease was well-established in medical circles so that Hansen’s discovery of the leprosy bacillus was acknowledged as a fundamental advance in understanding of the disease and the way it produces cellular alterations in the sufferer. By 1884, in an article on leprosy, the journal the *Nineteenth Century* maintained that society was now in a period of ‘the full blaze of germ theories, and the most complete microscopic discovery and demonstration of bacilli and microbes’.<sup>44</sup>

The voluntary submission of Father Damien to the distortion of his body’s form and the progressive disintegration of his being was the subject of voyeuristic admiration in the British and American press. It paralleled the popular fascination with the extraordinary form of Joseph Carey Merrick, known as the Elephant Man, who died in 1890. The *Penny Magazine* published Father Damien’s portrait.<sup>45</sup> *The Times* devoted column space to Damien’s death and the *Pall Mall Gazette* published his dying words and gave an account of the vanishing of his facial deformity after death.<sup>46</sup> Burne-Jones learnt of Father Damien’s efforts and sent a watercolour of St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata to Father Damien, via his friend Edward



**Fig. 8** Edward Burne-Jones, *The Vision of St. Francis*. From a pencil sketch for the watercolour drawing sent to Father Damien at Molokai, signed, E. B. J., 1887.

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Clifford of the Church Army who arrived on the island when Damien was affected by the disease, but prior to his death (see fig. 8). The work was gilded on its surface:

It is painted with umber and with real gold, so that its lights change and change as you look at it from different points. St. Frances kneels in front, and as he gazes with his rapt but pain-stricken face at the winged vision of our Lord, he receives the stigmata in hands and feet.<sup>47</sup>

We now only have an engraving after a design for the work but we can see the extraordinary manifold appearance of Christ's body endowed with six wings that spread in all directions. Burne-Jones is imagining not just lesions or ulcers and stigmata-like piercings but something equivalent to leprous swellings. Furthermore this physical rearrangement is enacted in the mutability caused by the shiny surface of the work itself. The surface binds in the substance of the work and is the vehicle for mutation. It is reported that, unlike other gifts and pictures brought by Clifford that went into the Church in the settlement, this image by Burne-Jones went into Father Damien's room. Burne-Jones was clearly articulating the parallel between the affliction suffered by Father Damien and the stigmata received by the saint, and previously by Christ himself. This was the official message of the Church-Army-sponsored visit: lanternslides of the life of Christ were taken over for the lepers to view so that they could parallel their own sufferings with those of Christ.<sup>48</sup>

Burne-Jones received in return a photograph of a sketch Clifford had made of Father Damien, his face disfigured by the leprosy that he had contracted while working in the colony (see fig. 9). As Clifford describes him

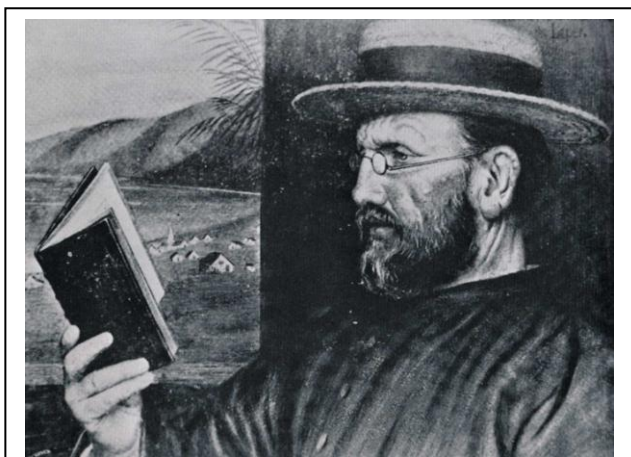
His forehead is swollen and ridged, the eyebrows are gone, the nose is somewhat sunk and the ears are greatly enlarged. His hands and face look uneven with a sort of incipient boils, and his body also shows many signs of the disease.<sup>49</sup>

As Rajah Brooke had been, Father Damien was hailed as a modern hero. Clifford compared Damien to heroes like General Gordon and Lord Shaftesbury and said 'In admiring heroes we take the first step to becoming heroic'.<sup>50</sup> The adulatory accounts of Damien's life, including the Catholic Truth Society's *Life and Letters* published in 1889, stressed his strength and simplicity, his ability to carry huge beams for construction, his physical fearlessness.<sup>51</sup> Clifford's own publication also came out in 1889.<sup>52</sup> The next year the cult was added to by the contribution of Robert Louis

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Stevenson who sought to defend Damien against imputations of immorality. Stevenson came up with a formula for rugged unconventional heroism which admitted some faults in the plain-featured priest of peasant background arguing that he had been too often depicted as a kind of waxwork saint with a ‘conventional halo and conventional features’.<sup>53</sup> The faults of bluntness, ignorance and irascibility were admitted as well as a lack of conventional handsomeness but not the sexual misdemeanours that were being used to explain his contraction of leprosy. We learn from Georgiana Burne-Jones that Burne-Jones kept the photograph of Clifford’s drawing of Father Damien permanently at the foot of his bed. It was the picture of the diseased man, with ‘poor marred face’ as Georgiana Burne-Jones described it, retained in preference to the idealised image of the young de Veuster that Clifford also included in his publication.<sup>54</sup>

On his trip of 1888 Clifford was carrying out a case of the brown sticky gurgun oil which, mixed into an ointment with three parts of limewater made an



**Fig. 9** Edward Clifford, *Father Damien in December 1888*. Sacred Hearts Archive, Louvain. Reproduced in Gavan Daws, *Holy Man: Father Damien of Molokai* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973; repr. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984).

ointment which many believed to be efficacious in limiting the effects of leprosy.<sup>55</sup> This is reminiscent of the substantial, pasty medium that Burne-Jones used to try to fend off the effects of disintegration in his oil painting. In the figure of Damien we see a consolidation of Burne-Jones’s fears concerning integrity of being and the hopes for a revised body – monstrous-

heroic – that could match up to the challenge. It seems that in the light of a bacterial threat to the integrity of the human body a new vision of the body of the modern hero evolved. The hero had to do more than hold together the perilously arranged platelets of his being. The cut or the scission between elements of being was no longer the sole issue once the bacterial infection produced a redefinition of physiological organisation so that cells were damaged, reorganised and reduplicated.

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One way to give an account of the change is to say that the definitive form of the Apollo Belvedere wasn't just challenged by the series of alternative shapes and sizes, potentially substitutes and equals, as in the 1850s, but was now challenged from within by a multiform, unpredictably eruptive organism. The emollient substance that prevented the bursting of the surface had always acted to counteract fragmentation in Burne-Jones's work, and continued to do so; it fetishistically closed up the gaps between the separate components of the mechanical man but it could, in the logic of the ridged distortion of the leper priest's face, be seen as a way to accommodate the swelling mutations of the organism. This is something beyond disavowal as the self allows itself to become hybridised.



**Fig. 10** Edward Burne-Jones, *Love Among the Ruins*, c. 1894, oil on canvas, Wightwick Manor, Staffordshire, UK/National Trust Photographic Library/Derrick E. Witty/The Bridgeman Art Library.

Burne-Jones kept trying to produce works with a technical make-up that fended off disintegration. We have a record of the extreme distress he felt when in 1893 a prized watercolour *Love Among the Ruins* was damaged by the technician preparing to make a photogravure from it. His agitated reaction is further evidence of his investment in the integrity of the painted substance. A layer of albumen was applied to the highlights, this layer adhered to the surface and tore away paint so that the work was devastatingly damaged. Burne-Jones's response was first of all

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extreme grief: ‘all gone as if the devil had hated it and had his way [...] it was mine, very of me’. However, later, when he was calmer, he not only restored the watercolour but painstakingly constructed a replica, this time in oil paint which would be more robust, finishing it in 1894 (see fig. 10).<sup>56</sup> It is very striking that the theme of the work seems to predict the ruin of the watercolour and the effort to replace it. It is a work that signals the developing interest that Burne-Jones had, once he moved away from the early focus on mechanical models of being, in organisms that expand and in which elements are displaced, pushing at the mantle of being. The title *Love Among the Ruins* relates to a poem in Browning’s *Men and Women* of 1855 (‘Love Among the Ruins’) which imagines lovers meeting in the grassed-over ruins of an ancient Roman site. The now-levelled structures were previously so vast that columns of men twelve abreast could march on the marble walls. The motif was also linked by Burne-Jones to a passage in Edward Fitzgerald’s translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam* (1859) starting ‘Sometimes I think that never blows so red/The rose as where some buried Caesar bled’.<sup>57</sup> The idea that comes across in *The Rubaiyat* is not just of a cessation of folly and bloodshed as in the Browning poem but more explicitly of an environment feeding directly on buried human remains. The composition of *Love Among the Ruins* was adapted to accompany the passage starting ‘Sometimes I think that never blows so red / The rose as where some buried Caesar bled’. In *Love Among the Ruins* the figures sit on a platform within the ruined architectural structure making of their entwined bodies a substitute for the ruined forms. We see the brutal chips in the ornament on the edge of the platform and the fallen portions of the column sliding away in the lower portion of the composition. But just as the portions of the architecture descend, so the clinging forms of the human figures and the springing rose briars allow volume to be lifted up, permit the living entities to expand, spreading their limbs (loosely draped in swathes of the cloth of their garments). On the right of the picture these figures expand and occupy the space. On the left it is the rose briar that grows up and describes the curves and overlaps seen in the figures. Both the lovers and the rose deploy themselves in emulation of the rotund clambering putti that swing from the carved festoons of drapery in the frieze on the lintel. Here chubby flesh proliferates and the putti decisively push and pull the drapery which, as a surrogate for skin,

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might indicate the limits of flesh. They challenge any such limit. This stands as a record of the embodiment experienced in the past, posited as a Roman past, refracted through familiar Renaissance depictions.<sup>58</sup> The lovers, hollow-cheeked and sunken-eyed don't achieve the boisterous mobility displayed in the classical carving. Their limbs can push at the cloth, envisaging the possibility of repositioning the integument, accommodating tubercular outgrowths, covering over lesions, but there is a question about any underlying vital solidity. The modern organisms (plants and people) feed on dead remnants and any volumetric presence that they achieve is marked by melancholy as the decay of this generation too is anticipated. The image reverberates in Burne-Jones's output, thematically announcing the processes that the disease-like rending of its surface and subsequent repair would seem to enact.

In his mature work Burne-Jones's warrior heroes seem to battle with uncontrollable multiform elements that are as much part of the hero's body as alien to it. The struggle then is to maintain the body's integrity in the light of its systemic tendency to erupt in strange monstrous forms. There is a way in which mutability and deformity are accepted and even celebrated in the late work, in line with new cultural patterns that in the late-Victorian period redrew the lineaments of the modern hero. Edward Clifford reached for a standard paradox in his lay sermon on Damien, delivered to the Christian Social Union, speaking of the lepers of Molokai he said 'their settlement has been called a Living Graveyard'.<sup>59</sup> The adoption of the dysmorphic body as a figure of heroic as well as monstrous capabilities had a macabre side to it. In straying from the neoclassical ideal of the hero, and progressively disturbing any stable polarisation between the integral, contained, shapely warrior and his protean, disintegrating foe Victorian culture intensified its commitment to the gothic. We might describe the gothic as a central rather than peripheral mode of the late-Victorian imagination. The gothic shifts from a mode concerned with alterity (against which a classical ideal self can be maintained) to a mode in which constitutive identity is explored. This article has proposed that in the late-Victorian period the biological metaphor takes over from the mechanical. Both the hero and his adversary distend and mass up, displaying unprecedented tubercles. Within the double state of living death morbidity and vitality coexist in animate form. The bacillus-infected tissue of the soldier-warrior may harbour dead cells

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resulting in fibrous indurations. Tubercles may shrink only to recur elsewhere in the body, or soften and leak pus. The prevailing fantasy is no longer of the organic fusing with the inorganic but of the unruly proliferation of the organic so that the organism bears this in vital and morbid states. The gothic hero of the late-Victorian period struggles in a melancholic state with a body that is unpredictable and unwieldy.<sup>60</sup> For all their slim and elegant build the heroes of Burne-Jones's late career are more akin to Father Damien (or indeed the afflicted Elephant Man) than to neoclassical presentations of Apollo.

#### Endnotes:

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*Thanks to Esme Whittaker for assistance in locating material for this essay and to Karin Kyburz for assistance with photographs.*

<sup>1</sup> The compound microscope was not available prior to 1840. Theodor Schwann (1810-82) and Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902) were key figures in the development of cell theory. See William Coleman, *Biology in the Nineteenth Century: Problems of Form, Function, and Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), especially chapters 1 and 2, and Ohad Parnes, 'The Envisioning of Cells', *Science in Context*, 13 (2000), 71-92. On the basis of these techniques the specialisation of histology developed.

<sup>2</sup> His health broke down again and his hold on life became tenuous following the stressful day of the delivery of Georgiana's first child Philip, in the course of which he had to act as midwife and nurse because the doctor and midwife did not arrive in time. Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1904; repr. London: Lund Humphries, 1993), I, p. 230. On occasion he would become extremely anxious about what he feared to be the imminent death of his daughter, whether on a journey or in childbirth.

<sup>3</sup> G. Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> G. Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, pp. 322-3. Remark made with reference to his painting *Avalon* (also known as *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*, which was commenced in 1881 and left unfinished).

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to compare Burne-Jones's anxiety about the body of the paint flaking away and losing its integrity with William Holman Hunt's anxiety about a poorly nourished paint surface discussed in terms of personal anxiety in relation to the nutrition of his infant son by Carol Jacobi. The fixation on materials is similar but the nature of the anxiety quite different. See Carol Jacobi, *William Holman Hunt: Painter, Painting Paint* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> There is a discussion of the psychoanalytic categories that can be associated with these figures in C. Arscott, *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings* (London and New Haven: Yale

University Press, 2008). My discussion draws in particular on Hal Foster, 'Tom Screen', in *Prosthetic Gods* (Cambridge, MA and London: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004) and Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* (Paris: Bordes, 1985), trans. by Chris Turner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Edward Clifford, *Father Damien and Others* (London: Church Army Book Room, 1905), p. 110.

<sup>8</sup> *Art-Journal*, June 1864, p. 170, cited in John Christian and Stephen Wildman, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, exhibition catalogue (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> Burne-Jones developed a vision of fortitude that involved the facing of threat in complicit exposure. Repeatedly he depicts his male protagonists as subject to the power of frightening and impressive female figures. From *The Wheel Of Fortune* (1875-83) to *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid* (1880-4) we see that the figures caught in the grinding pain of fortune or the sharp pangs of love are helpless and yet voluntarily helpless, complicit in their own suffering and displaying a joy in anguish. The stillness of the pictures, the inhibition of action can be linked to the underlying fetishistic structure of masochistic narrative. Where the female figures are positioned as domineering they can be said to follow the logic of fetishism which offers phallic investment of the female to compensate for the fear associated with their form. Elsewhere in his oeuvre the integrity of physical structures in the scenarios and the finish of the picture surface carries this fetishistic charge.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Mayhew, Letter VII, *Morning Chronicle*, 9 November 1849.

<sup>11</sup> Dinah Mulock Craik, 'Coeur de Lion' (1851), in *Poems* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866) pp. 107-8 (p. 107).

<sup>12</sup> Craik, p. 108.

<sup>13</sup> Craik, p. 108.

<sup>14</sup> Edward Burne-Jones, cited in John Christian and Stephen Wildman, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, exhibition catalogue (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), p. 234.

<sup>15</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 17 May 1851, p. 429.

<sup>16</sup> *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, 4 vols. (London: Spicer, 1851), I, p. 434.

<sup>17</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 17 May 1851, p. 429.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Kingsley, *Westward Ho!*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1855; repr. Glasgow: Collins and London: Heron Books, [n. d.]), ch. 8, p. 177.

<sup>19</sup> Kingsley, ch. 20, p. 353.

<sup>20</sup> The dedication reads: 'To the Rajah Sir James Brooke, K. C. B., and George Augustus Selwyn, D. D., Bishop of New Zealand this book is dedicated [... to] that type of English virtue, at once manful and godly, practical and enthusiastic, prudent and self sacrificing, which he has [I have] tried to depict in these pages, they have exhibited in a form even purer and more heroic than that in which he has [I have] drest it.'

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<sup>21</sup> *Athenaeum*, 21 May 1859, p. 684, cited by Judith Bronkhurst, 'Fruits of a Connoisseur's Friendship: Sir Thomas Fairbairn and William Holman Hunt', *Burlington Magazine*, 125 (1983), p. 592.

<sup>22</sup> Sebastian Evans, 'Rajah Brooke – The Last of the Vikings', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 36 (1877), 146-154. Evans defines the Viking instinct in the following terms: 'It is not merely a royal disdain of the good things of the world as compared with active energy in a free field; it is this blended with all the inward influences which determine the destiny of the sea rover, adventurer, discoverer, the possible founder on fair sea-boards of enduring kingdoms, gifted with large poetic insight, and an insatiable yearning for the free aspects of nature [...] a yearning dashed with the wild regret of crossed or hopeless passion' (p. 147).

<sup>23</sup> A nineteenth-century illustration of the figure, showing it in expanded form, was published in Kenji Kazama, 'The Interface Between Literature and Science: Scary is an Automaton 2', *Nature Interface*, 5 (2001), 90-91. I have not been able to trace the origin of this illustration.

<sup>24</sup> 'Besides the general adjustments described, each part of the figure has an independent and separate adjustment, by which it can be put out of its correct likeness to the Apollo Belvedere, and made to represent the deformities or peculiarities of form of any individual', *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, I, p. 433.

<sup>25</sup> Kingsley, ch. 20, p. 362.

<sup>26</sup> 'Albert Magnus [...] constructed an androide, a semblance of man, of such perfection that it could support an argument [...] the ecclesiastical puppets', in 'A Paper on Puppets', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1852, p. 131. See also John Doran, *Miscellaneous Works of Dr. Doran*, vol. 1 (New York: Redfield, 1857), p. 212 (same text). H. A. Kennedy in 'Wonderful Automata', *Notes and Queries* (1874), p. 454.

<sup>27</sup> John Timbs, *Stories of Inventors and Discoverers in Science and the Useful Arts: A Book for Old and Young* (New York: Harper, 1860), p. 82. Original emphases.

<sup>28</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 24 May 1851, p. 457.

<sup>29</sup> 'The corps de Ballet is much excited. Miss Bandinelli talks about chloroform and the knife [...] Mesdemoiselles Knox, Crookshanks, Spindle and Lanky propose to remedy the defects of nature by having recourse to this admirable American artist. Indeed Mr. Palmer thinks he can perfect his invention, and construct not only legs but whole bodies, which will perform perfectly; execute pirouettes, entrechats, and so forth; sigh, grin, pant, leer and ogle, as well as the very best coryhées.' 'Palmer's Legs', *Punch*, 21 (1851), p. 137.

<sup>30</sup> *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 1851, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> See Lara Kriegel, *Grand Designs: Labor, Empire and the Museum in Victorian Culture* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 90-101 for commentary on the high visibility of cutlery in the exhibition.

<sup>32</sup> *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 1851, p. 14.

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<sup>33</sup> *Knight's Cyclopaedia of the Industry of All Nations* (London: Knight, 1851), p. 710.

<sup>34</sup> Arthur Hill Hassall, *The Microscopic Anatomy of the Human Body*, 2 vols. (London: Samuel Highley, 1849). The preface or introduction to volume two references the contribution of [Sir John] Simon to the understanding of the cellular make-up of the human body. R. B. Todd and W. Bowman, *The Physiological Anatomy and Physiology of Man*, 2 vols. (London: Parker, 1845-56) is also referenced in admiring terms.

<sup>35</sup> G. Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, I, p. 175, referring to 1862.

<sup>36</sup> Eugène-Joseph Woillez, *Dictionnaire de Diagnostique Medicale* (Paris: Baillière, 1862), p. 390.

<sup>37</sup> D. A. Zambaco, *Des Affections Nerveuses Syphilitiques* (Paris: Baillière, 1862), based on an essay that won the Civrieux Prize of the Imperial Academy of Medicine, Paris. This is discussed in Thomas Reade, 'Tertiary Syphilis. – Third series; the Growth, Progress and Present State of Knowledge of Nervous Syphilitic Diseases', *Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science*, XXVI (1863), pp. 324-38. In the 1880s Zambaco was involved in debates concerning the leprosy bacillus, arguing that leprosy was hereditary rather than contagious. See D. A. Zambaco, *Voyage chez les Lèpreux* (Paris: Masson, 1891), and *La Lèpre à travers les siècles et les contrées* (Paris: Masson, 1914).

<sup>38</sup> Preparatory gouache study for the oil made 1877-80, now in Southampton City Art Gallery, oil completed 1892 exhibited at Paris Salon 1893, now in Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

<sup>39</sup> Louis Marin discusses the 'stupefying' effect of the emphasis on the purely visual and on surface mimesis (sundered from the frameworks of interpretation expected of classical painting) in his discussion of Caravaggio's *Head of Medusa* (1608, Uffizzi, Florence). The characteristics of the 'Medusa-effect', where light is said to function like a blind man's cane, are anti-narrative, giving an instantaneous moment where the violence and emotion are disconnected from a comprehensible code of gestures or perspectival space. Louis Marin, *To Destroy Painting* [1977], trans. by Mette Hjort (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), see esp. 109 and 163-4. It is interesting to see many of these characteristics in Burne-Jones's *Perseus* series working in the mid-nineteenth-century context against comparable standard modes of narrative art. This is discussed further in Arscott, *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones*, pp. 53-85. In my analysis, I assert that these effects work in two modes, one of which stresses mimesis and cohesion while another stresses intense visuality in conditions of blindness and disintegration.

<sup>40</sup> For British reactions to Father Damien's mission see Penny Moblo, 'Blessed Damien of Molokai: the Critical Analysis of Contemporary Myth', *Ethnohistory* (1997), pp. 691-726. Hansen's disease was introduced into Hawaii in the 1830s and 1840s. A segregation law was introduced in 1865; the settlement at Molokai was instituted in 1866. Moblo follows the evolving mythology of Damien through to the modern day efforts to gain full sainthood for him. There is an extensive literature on the Molokai colony, see for instance Gavan Daws, *Holy Man: Father Damian of Molokai* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973), Hilde Eynikel, *Molokai: The Story of Father Damien*, trans. by

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Lesley Gilbert (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1999) and John Tayman, *The Colony* (New York: Scribner, 2006).

<sup>41</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes a parasitic illness caused by a microbe discovered by Armauer Hansen in 1871 taking three forms: 1) nodular, 2) smooth or anaesthetic and 3) mixed. In the case of ‘lumpy excrescences’ there is a transformation of the features to look like a lion, the thickening of the skin of the face, the falling off of the eyebrows and the thickening and enlarging of the ears and nose. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11<sup>th</sup> edn. (1910-11), vol. XVI, pp. 479-481.

<sup>42</sup> Erasmus Wilson, *On Diseases of the Skin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Churchill, 1854), p. 308.

<sup>43</sup> George Thin, *Leprosy* (London: Percival, 1891).

<sup>44</sup> Agnes Lambert, ‘Leprosy Past and Present, 2’, *The Nineteenth Century*, 16 (1884), p. 211, cited by Rod Edmond, *Leprosy and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 84.

<sup>45</sup> *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 17 Aug 1889, p. 5 (with illustration). See also *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 1 June 1889, p. 6: ‘How valuable that life-work was – how full of noble self-sacrifice – is already known to my readers’.

<sup>46</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 June 1889 and *The Times*, 13 June 1889, cited by Edmond, pp. 92-3.

<sup>47</sup> Edward Clifford, ‘A Talk About Art’, in Clifford, *Father Damien*, p. 131.

<sup>48</sup> Edward Clifford, *Father Damien: A Journey from Cashmenre to his Home In Hawaii* (London: Macmillan, 1889), p. 76 and Edward Clifford, ‘Father Damien and the Lepers’, in W. Henry Hunt (ed.), *Preachers from the Pew: Lectures Delivered at St. Paul’s Church, Covent Garden Under the Auspices of the London Branch of the Christian Social Union* (London: W. H. Lord, 1905), p. 13: ‘We also showed them magic lantern views of our Lord’s life and death I had used in missions in India a few years before, which nearly all of them were able to understand.’

<sup>49</sup> Clifford, *Father Damien and Others*, p. 54.

<sup>50</sup> Clifford, *Father Damien and Others*, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> See Moblo, pp. 691-726.

<sup>52</sup> Clifford’s book was reviewed in the *Saturday Review* and the *Spectator* (reviews not located, these publications quoted in Macmillan’s publicity).

<sup>53</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Father Damien: An Open Letter to the Reverend Doctor Hyde of Honolulu* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1890), p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> G. Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, p. 175.

<sup>55</sup> Gurgun oil was the product of a fir tree growing in the Andaman Islands off the coast of Burmah. Clifford explains its use in E. Clifford, *Father Damien: A Journey from Cashmenre to his Home In Hawaii* (Macmillan, London, 1889). See W. Munro, *Leprosy*, John Heywood, Manchester, 1979, p. 92 for an extensive list of references to this therapy in the medical press of the 1870s. Clifford claimed that the oil alleviated Father Damien’s symptoms, Clifford, ‘Father Damien and the Lepers’, in Hunt, *Preachers from the Pew*, p. 15.

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<sup>56</sup> Letter from Edward Burne-Jones to May Gaskell, 1893, cited by Josceline Dimbleby, *A Profound Secret: May Gaskell, Her Daughter Amy and Edward Burne-Jones* (London: Black Swan, 2005), pp. 160-1. The oil replica is in the National Trust, Wightwick Manor Collection.

<sup>57</sup> A manuscript copy of the Edward Fitzgerald translation of the medieval Persian verses was made by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones in 1872. Edward Fitzgerald's translation was published in a first edition in 1859. See Wildman and Christian, pp. 162-4 and Michael Braesel, 'William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones and "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam"', *Apollo* (February 2004), 47-56.

<sup>58</sup> I would like to thank Paul Hills for pointing out various Renaissance sources that Burne-Jones may have drawn on.

<sup>59</sup> Rod Edmond draws attention to the recurrent characterisation of the leprous body as being in a state of living death, see Edmond, p. 81.

<sup>60</sup> For melancholy and masochism in late-Victorian fiction, focusing on Stevenson along with Schreiner, Kipling and Conrad see John Kucich, *Imperial Masochism: British Fiction, Fantasy and Social Class* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). It is interesting that Rajah Brooke was an important figure for Kipling and Conrad as well as for Kingsley, serving as a model for figures in Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888) and Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900) and *The Rescue* (1920).