which will continue. I know that many members are avid readers of Pre-Raphaelite-related books, and hope that these will be of interest to you and inspire you to further reading. If you are interested in writing reviews for us, please get in touch with me or Katja.

This issue has been delayed due to personal circumstances, so I must offer special thanks to Sophie Clarke for her help in editing and proof-reading to enable me to catch up!

Serena Trowbridge

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Avoncroft Museum have kindly offered a FREE family pass for a PRS reader. To enter the prize draw, email the Editor, Serena, at Serena.Trowbridge@bcu.ac.uk by October 30th stating your name and contact details, and an entry will be picked at random.

Fanny Eaton: The ‘Other’ Pre-Raphaelite Model

Roberto C. Ferrari

Fanny Eaton, Jane Morris, Annie Miller, Maria Zambaco.

Anyone who has studied the Pre-Raphaelite paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, and Edward Burne-Jones knows well the names of these women. They were the stunners who populated their paintings, exuding sensual imagery and personalized symbolism that generated for them and their collectors an introspective ideal of Victorian femininity. But these stunners also appear in art history today thanks to feminism and gender studies. Sensational and scholarly explorations of the lives and representations of these women—written mostly by women, from Lucinda Hawksley to Griselda Pollock—have become more common in Pre-Raphaelite studies.

Indeed, one arguably now needs to know more about the Pre-Raphaelite model in order to better understand the paintings in which she appears. As Elizabeth

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1 This essay was the basis of my presentation ‘Pre-Raphaelite Exotica: Fanny Eaton and Simon Solomon’s Mother of Mist’ at the Pre-Raphaelite Past, Present and Future conference at Oxford University, 14 September 2013, but has been supplemented with new material. My thanks to Carolyn Conroy for her research support and editorial feedback, to Brian Eaton for his family history research and encouragement of my work on his great-grandmother, Fanny Eaton, and to his cousin Amanda Eyo for the use of the family photograph of her grandmother, Fanny Matilda Eaton Sleson, Fanny Eaton’s eldest daughter.

Prettejohn has noted: 'The individuality of each model [...] persists as an identifiable element in the final work.'

Among these models, one who has remained a mystery is Fanny Eaton. Born in Jamaica, a black woman of mixed-race parentage, Eaton appeared in numerous Pre-Raphaelite drawings and paintings from about 1859 to 1867, with her face making its public appearance in Simeon Solomon's 1860 Royal Academy work *The Mother of Moses* (Fig. 1). She also appeared in pictures by Rossetti, John Everett Millais, Joanna Boyce Wells, Rebecca Solomon, and others. Yet, until recently little has been known about her. This essay, then, considers Eaton's presence in a number of Pre-Raphaelite works, explores heretofore unknown information about her origins, and concludes with a survey of her life after she stopped modelling.

Eaton's story is important. Not only does she have a rightful place among these other models, but her life and visual presence also epitomize the 'Other' in Victorian society. Born in the British colonies, the daughter of a former slave, Eaton represented a social group who existed outside the traditional parameters of Victorian society, yet was a vital product of its industrial and mercantile successes, fundamentally underscored by slavery and colonialism. Thus, Eaton's presence in paintings, where she appeared as the main subject, not only focused attention onto the 'Other' in Victorian society, but also challenged assumptions of what a black woman could represent. Marsh has noted that blacks in Victorian art typically were decorative figures and rarely seen as models for ideal, classical beauty. They illustrated 'genre scenes, social comedy, historical and fictional figures, African exploration and anti-slavery images, [...] exotic fantasy and straight portraiture.' Eaton's appearance in Pre-Raphaelite art arguably

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4 Most of the Pre-Raphaelite models, including Eaton, came from working class families, so one could argue they all represented a collective form of socio-economic 'Otherness'. However, I contend that Eaton was unique in her 'Otherness' because of her mixed-race background, descent from slaves, and émigré status. The only Pre-Raphaelite models who compare to Eaton for this ethnic diversity would be Keomi, the gypsy lover of Frederick Sandys, and possibly the Greek artist/model Maria Zambaco, Burne-Jones's lover.


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demonstrates the exception to this rule, although whether she should be called a 'stunner' depends on the image she portrayed in each work.

Origins

Eaton records indicate that Eaton was born Fanny Antwistle on 23 June 1835 in St. Andrew, Surrey, Jamaica. She was baptized in the parish church on 15 November that same year. From the late 1600s, Jamaica was one of Britain's most important colonies because of its sugar production, resulting in a significantly high number of slaves from Africa. Catherine Hall has noted that 'by 1800 nine out of every ten people on the island were enslaved, and in 1805 Jamaica exported more tons of sugar than any other country'. In 1807 Britain abolished the slave trade, and then officially ended slavery throughout the British Empire in 1834. At that point, a period of apprenticeship was initiated, during which time former slaves were still bound to work for their masters. This forced labour ended in 1838, at which time all former slaves legally became British citizens. All children born during apprenticeship were officially emancipated, so Eaton was born a free citizen in a British colony.

Her mother was Matilda Foster. No father is named in Fanny's birth or baptismal records, suggesting she was illegitimate, but the difference between the mother's and child's surnames adds confusion to her parentage. It was common in the Church of England never to name the father if the parents were not married and thus to give the child the mother's maiden name. Matilda's maiden name may have been Foster and Antwistle her married name, but even if her husband had died he still should have been named as the father. Another clue to Fanny's parentage may be the

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10 Brian Eaton's family history research has shown that a British soldier named James Entwistle, aged 20, died in Jamaica on 4 July 1835 and was buried in Spanish Town. Emails to the author, 26 September 2013 and 1 February 2014. To date no marital connections between an Antwistle/Entwistle and a Foster have been found. The alternative spelling of Fanny's birth surname can be explained either by phonetics or simple error.

11 As will be noted further below, Matilda used Antwistle/Entwistle as her surname while she lived in England, as seen in the 1851 and 1861 censuses, but according to Brian Eaton she died as Matilda Foster. Matilda may have been born around 1815 on the Forster estate in Jamaica (hence the use of the name Foster in Fanny's birth/baptismal records). A girl named Matilda, b. Crecie, daughter of Bathsheba, is listed in the 1826 Jamaica property register for Eugene Frederick Forster, Esq., deceased, with these slaves going to his heir John Forster, Esq, National Archives, Slave Registers of Former British Colonial Dependencies, 1812-1834, http://www.ancestry.com, accessed 2013. Interestingly, the same source lists a Matilda of the correct age born on the estate of a Bertie Entwistle on Antigua, but little evidence supports the idea that this is the same Matilda.

12 According to Brian Eaton, past branches of his family explained away the darker pigmentation in their bloodline with 'stories of an "exotic princess" or Indian squaw" [...] or "Portuguese lady"! It would appear that due to the racism of that period the families were reluctant to acknowledge their true heritage'. Email to the author, 26 September 2013.

13 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, vol. 2, eds. Oswald Doughty and John Robert Wahl (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 566-67. Rossetti was writing back to Brown about Eaton as a model, wherein he also described her as having 'a very fine head and figure—a good deal of Venice [Moress]'. The confusion of Eaton as being 'Hindoo' is relevant to her 'Orientalism' and will be discussed in the section on her role as a model.

14 To reinforce this social taxonomy, other terms of mixed-race status were frequently used, such as quadroon (1/4) and octoroon (1/8) to denote to varying degrees the presence of black blood in a person.
Matilda and Fanny made their way to England probably in the 1840s. Few passenger ship lists from this period survive, and no statistics were kept to reflect potential emigration patterns, but a number of former slaves and free-born Jamaicans made their way to London in an attempt to better their lives.13 Because race was not recorded in British census records or parish registers (unlike in the United States, where it was legally required), it is nearly impossible to count the exact number of blacks in Britain during the modern period.14 But clearly a number of emancipated Jamaicans such as Matilda and her daughter Fanny found emigration a way to improve their economic situation.

Matilda and Fanny cannot be traced in the 1841 British census. If we assume that this is accurate and they were not in England by that date, then Fanny’s early years were spent in Jamaica and they emigrated after that date. They do appear in the 1851 census living in London at 9 Steven’s Place in the parish of St. Pancras. Matilda is listed as married, 37 years of age, and working as a laundress. Her daughter Fanny is 16 and works as a servant. Both list their birthplace as Jamaica.15 Fanny married James Eaton in 1857, although no record of their marriage has been traced.16 James’s race or ethnicity is unknown, but he was born 17 February 1838 in Shoreditch, one of seven children born to Henry and Mary Ann Eaton. James worked as horse cab proprietor and driver.17

James and Fanny had ten children. Their first child, Fanny Matilda Eaton (later Mrs. Arthur D. Sexton), was born in London on 9 February 1858. A surviving family photograph (Fig. 2) shows Fanny Matilda as an adult around 1920. She wears a stylish dress and hat, but there is just a trace of exoticism in her facial features that might suggest her Jamaican ancestry. After Fanny Matilda, the rest of Fanny and James’s children were born in London between 1860 and 1879. In the 1861 census the Eatons were living at 4 Brunswick Street (now Torbridge Street) in St. Pancras. Fanny’s mother lived close to them at 32 Cromer Street, where she continued to work as a laundress. Fanny herself was then 26 years of age and employed as a charwoman. Her daughter Fanny was three, and her son James was a year old.

13 One famous example from the Victorian period is Mary Seacole, who moved from Jamaica to London and eventually served as one of the most popular nurses during the Crimean War. Because Seacole was born a free woman (her mother was black and her father a Scottish soldier) and she traveled frequently, including taking a trip to England as early as 1821, it would be inappropriate to draw direct comparisons between Seacole and Eaton or her mother. Nevertheless, the fact that these mixed-race Jamaican women made new lives for themselves in England at the same time is noteworthy. For more on Seacole, see her Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands, ed. William L. Andrews (London: J. Blackwood, 1857; reprinted Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), and Jane Robinson, Mary Seacole: The Most Famous Black Woman of the Victorian Age (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2004).

14 Douglas A. Lorimer has estimated that about 15,000 slaves lived in England during the eighteenth century, and has proposed that such a number probably continued on without much of an increase even after the end of the slave trade. Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (Leicester, England: Leicester University Press; New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1978), p. 212. David Killingray subsequently has argued that blacks were commonly seen in all the major British seaports because of the slave trade, and thus suggests that their presence was relatively common, especially in London which had always been a major port. ‘Tracing Peoples of African Origin and Descent in Victorian Kent’, in Black Victorians/Black Victoriana, ed. Gretchen Hultgren Gerzina (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), p. 51.

15 National Archives, ‘Census Record for England and Wales 1851’, http://www.ancestry.com, accessed 2013. All subsequent references to the UK census come from this source. Note that in the 1851 census there is a transcription error in the databases listing their surname as McTvisle. Closer examination of the actual image shows that Matilda is actually listed as Mrs. M. Entwisle.

16 Lacking proof of marriage, one can speculate that Fanny and James lived as common-law partners. However, in the 1911 census Fanny’s response to the question regarding the number of years married was fifty-four, even though she had been a widow for thirty years. A mathematical calculation shows that fifty-four years earlier was 1857, so Fanny probably misunderstood the question. This year also fits with when the Eatons had their first child.

17 Brian Eaton, Email to the author, 1 February 2014.
It was during this period of Fanny Eaton's life as a new wife and mother that she began modelling for the Pre-Raphaelites. As noted above, Eaton's artistic face had its public premiere in London at the 1860 Royal Academy exhibition with the painting *The Mother of Moses* (Fig. 1) by the Jewish artist Simeon Solomon, then nineteen years old. The subject comes from the book of Exodus and shows Jochebed coddling her infant son Moses while his sister Miriam looks on, a scene of familial bonding just before the child is to be placed in a basket and floated up the Nile for his safety. The fact that Eaton had just given birth to her son James, and had a two-year-old daughter, suggests this painting may be seen as a visual representation of Eaton's own family, albeit in historical costume. Moreover, the painting references slavery through the use of a model who was born in post-emancipated Jamaica and whose own mother had been enslaved.

Solomon was known early on for his high-quality draughtsmanship, and the studies from life of Eaton are direct evidence of his skills. Three of these drawings are dated 7, 8, and 11 November 1859, and of these two were directly used for the painting. The 7 November drawing with Eaton's head looking down and to the right (Fig. 3) is a direct study for Jochebed, while the drawing from the 8th is a profile study for Miriam. Solomon thus used Eaton to portray both mother and daughter in this work. The naturalistic emphasis of Eaton's facial features and the thick, coarse quality of her hair show he was interested in capturing her as a woman of African descent.

How Solomon came to be one of the first of the Pre-Raphaelites to model Eaton is not known. For one example of what the Pre-Raphaelites thought about Solomon's draughtsmanship, see George Price Boyce’s journal, in which he wrote on 7th April 1857, ‘Saw some remarkable designs by [Abraham's] young brother (Simeon) showing much Rossetti-like feeling’, and subsequently on 19th February 1858, ‘Much interested with a book of sketches by young Simeon’. George Price Boyce, *The Diaries of George Price Boyce*, ed. Virginia Surtees (Norwich, England: Real World, 1980), pp. 17, 22. Eaton's daughter Fanny Matilda would have been about two years old and thus too young to be a model for Miriam, so the profile study must be of Eaton herself. A long-standing error that the title of the drawing is a portrait of one “Fanny C. h.n. [Cohen]” is a misreading of the inscription at the bottom of the drawing. Solomon included Eaton in other paintings over the years that followed. In *Judith and Her Attendants*, 1863, Eaton was likely the model for the attendant, and in *Habet*, 1865, Eaton can be seen as the slave of an uncertain race standing behind Roman women at a gladiator fight. In this work he may have reused the 1859 study for Jochebed because of the similarly downturned head and closed eyes.
draw Eaton is unknown. Solomon lived with his family at 18 John Street in Holborn, about one mile southeast from Eaton's residence, but his family had live-in servants. Fanny was a charwoman who probably worked in a number of homes, so she very well could have been discovered in the street by Solomon or someone else, in much the same way other Pre-Raphaelite models were found. New surprising information, however, has been discovered by Brian Eaton that shows his great-grandmother actually was a paid model at the Royal Academy. Petty cash receipts show that a Mrs. Eaton was paid to work there as a model on a number of dates at this time, such as on 13 July 1860. Solomon was no longer an RA student by then, so she likely modeled for him in another setting. Solomon at this time was part of a sketching club that included his friends Albert Moore, Marcus Stone, and Henry Holiday, so any of them may have discovered her, and thus they all may have drawn her at one of their meetings. Although no sketches of Eaton by these men are known to exist, Moore did paint Eaton into his Old Testament painting, *The Mother of Sim'a* (1861), showing her with great pathos as the warrior’s mother awaiting his return, unaware he has been killed in battle.

Eaton’s unique traits and appearance also made her a noteworthy model for two women Pre-Raphaelite artists. Rebecca Solomon, Simeon’s sister, depicted Eaton in her painting *A Young Teacher*, which was exhibited at Henry Wallis’s French Gallery in 1861. Here, Eaton is shown as an Indian ayah who charmingly plays along with the child’s attempt to teach her something from the book she holds. Joanna Boyce Wells also painted a portrait study of Eaton in 1861. This work was unfinished by Wells at the time of her death that same year, and over time the stunning portrait has been called *Head of a Mulatto Woman* (Fig. 4). It had been Wells’s intention to paint Eaton as an ancient sibyl seated in a throne, not unlike Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel sibyl. Her sketchbooks show a number of images of Eaton (Fig. 5), suggesting her planned painting would have depicted her model as a powerful, stunning black woman.

In 1865 Rossetti sketched Eaton from life, giving his model a look that

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23 For more, see Pamela Gerrish Nunn, “Rebecca Solomon’s ‘A Young Teacher’*, *The Burlington Magazine* 130, no. 1027 (October 1988), pp. 769–70.
shares much with the physical features of Jane Morris, such as a strong jawline, full face, and bushy hair. That same year he painted her as one of the background figures in The Beloved, Eaton and the other women merging with the child in the foreground to create an exotic Afro-Indian frame around the central white woman. Brown must have seen Rossetti’s work and inquired about Eaton in the aforementioned 1865 letter. Although there is no direct evidence that Brown used Eaton’s face in his paintings, Pamela Gerrish Nunn has suggested that he may have altered her gender and used her features for the figure of Levi in the centre of The Coat of Many Colours. Eaton also sat to John Everett Millais for his Old Testament painting Jephthah (1867). Here, she is seen as a generic ‘Oriental’ woman, possibly a servant, leading a girl away from the scene of despair as Jephthah realizes his promise to God now means sacrificing his daughter. In addition to these paintings, drawings by Frederick Sandys are identified as studies of Eaton, and an oil study by the little-known Australian artist Robert Hawker Dowling, who was active in London around 1860, shows he too had Eaton model for him as well.

In many of the pictures discussed here, Eaton was included to contrast her with the white-skinned figures who dominate Pre-Raphaelite art. However, in other instances, most notably Millais’s Jephthah, her presence also served to contrast with darker-skinned blacks in this picture. Indeed, in that instance, her face may have been altered to reflect the gypsy Keomi.


27 Jason Rosenfeld and Alison Smith, Millais (London: Tate, 2007), pp. 156-57.

28 Sandy’s drawings are undated but probably were made in the early 1860s. Betty Elzea has proposed that one of these drawings was an early study, in reverse, for what became his painting Morgan le Fay, 1864, but he altered the features to reflect the face of his mistress, the gypsy Keomi. Frederick Sandys 1829-1904: A Catalogue Raisonné (Woodbridge, England: Antique Collectors’ Club, 2003), pp. 122-24. The oil sketch by Dowling is in the Warrnambool Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia. It was identified as a representation of Eaton by Pamela Gerrish Nunn, and this information was shared by her with Brian Eaton. E-mail to the author, 27 September 2013.
Eaton's lighter complexion drew attention to her 'Otherness' as being neither white nor black. Her in-between features allowed the Pre-Raphaelites to represent her as numerous exotic characters, and indeed she was portrayed by them as Hebrew, Oriental, Indian, and so on. Her own lack of voice in this adoption of her mixed-race ethnicity is worth contemplating, for in truth we have no sense how Eaton may have felt about this interpretation of her personal being. That she modelled for nearly ten years suggests some level of compliance, but as a working-class family, Eaton and her husband were undoubtedly earning money any way they could. Ironically, of course, the one role no one ever painted her in was as a Jamaican, the one role for which she would have been obviously best suited.

Endings

During the time period while she modelled for the Pre-Raphaelites, Eaton gave birth to five children. The aforementioned Fanny Matilda and James were born respectively in 1858 and 1860. More daughters were born soon afterward: Amelia in 1862; Mildred in 1863; and Julia in 1864. Her next child, Miriam, was born in 1868, but Fanny apparently had stopped modelling by this date. Why she stopped, one can only speculate. Perhaps the Pre-Raphaelites moved away from Eaton because her age and physical appearance no longer made her suitable for their exotic subjects. However, geography could have been a factor as well. The 1871 census shows the Eatons were then living on Upper Winchester Street in Finsbury. Although not far away, even by Victorian standards, it still may have proven too far for a working-class mother with children or the Pre-Raphaelites themselves to travel.

Just six weeks before the 1871 census, Eaton gave birth to another child, Walter. Over the course of the decade, more children were born: Ernest in 1872; Cecily in 1876; and Frank in 1879. Then, on 17 February 1881, tragedy struck with the death of Eaton's husband, James Eaton, 43, died at home from erysipelas pyaemia, a combination of a skin rash and blood poisoning.29

The 1881 census shows the now-widowed Eaton working as a needlewoman, living with seven of her children in a multi-family dwelling at 191 Lancaster Street in Kensington.30

The 1891 census shows Eaton, now 54, living in Hammersmith at 36 Woodstock Road. She lists as her occupation housekeeper lodger, and indeed living with her and her four youngest daughters is a lodger named Frederick Rose, 20, a tailor born in Oxford. Perhaps not coincidentally, two of Eaton's daughters list their occupations as dressmakers, and indeed one of them, Mildred, married Mr. Rose two years later. Even more curious, considering Eaton's former connection to the art world, is that her sixth child, Miriam, 21, is employed as a sculptor's assistant.31

The 1901 census is a surprise in that Eaton, now 63, after decades of raising and living with her children, now is employed on the Isle of Wight as a domestic cook for a Hammersmith-based wine merchant and his wife, John and Fanny Hall. By the 1911 census, however, Eaton once again resided with family, this time in Hammersmith Fulham with her daughter Julia, son-in-law Thomas Powell, and grandchildren Baden and Connie Powell. After a long life as a working-class émigré with a large family, Fanny Antwistle Eaton died on 4 March 1924 at the age of eighty-nine from senility and syncope (unconsciousness).

As a mixed-race woman born to a former slave on a British colony, who struggled through the decades to raise her family in Victorian London, Eaton's story is remarkable in itself. To know that she also was an important model for a number of Pre-Raphaelite painters makes her life extraordinary.

Photographs of Eaton are known to survive, but her appearance in art as Jochebed, Sisera's mother, and numerous unnamed 'Others' at least helps preserve the visual memory of Eaton as one of the important models who made Pre-Raphaelitism the great art movement of its day.

29 Fanny Eaton's mother Matilda Foster/Antwistle probably died in the late 1860s, but her actual date and place of death are yet to be determined.
30 Her daughters Amelia and Julia were employed as servants and residing in homes elsewhere in Kensington.
31 The sculptor's identity is unknown. Miriam's employment with him was presumably short-lived, as she married William E. Prior, a wool merchant, the following year.
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Biography

Roberto C. Ferrari is the Curator of Art Properties at Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York, where he oversees the university’s art collections. He holds a Ph.D. from the CUNY Graduate Center and wrote his dissertation on the sculptor John Gibson. He has published numerous essays on Simeon and Rebecca Solomon. He is the creator of the online Simeon Solomon Research Archive, which he now co-manages with Carolyn Conroy.