

The Disputation: The Enduring
Representations in William Holman Hunt's
“The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple,”
1860.

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The Disputation: The Enduring Representations in William Holman Hunt's "The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple," 1860.

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Abstract

This interdisciplinary thesis problematizes the Jewish presence in the painting *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* (1860) by William Holman Hunt. This “Jewish presence” refers to characters within the painting, Jews who posed for the picture and the painting’s portrayal of Judaism. The thesis takes a phenomenological and hermeneutical approach to *The Finding* providing careful description and interpretation of what appears in the painting. It situates the painting within a newly configured genre of *disputation paintings* depicting the Temple scene from the Gospel of Luke (2:47 – 52). It asks two questions. Why does *The Finding* look the way it does? And how did Holman Hunt know how to create the picture? Under the rubric of the first question, it explores and challenges customary accounts of the painting, explicitly challenging the over reliance upon F.G. Stephens’s pamphlet. Additionally, it examines Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian religious contexts and bringing hitherto unacknowledged artistic contexts to the fore. The second question examines less apparent influences through an analysis of the originary Lukan narrative in conjunction with the under-examined genre of Temple “disputation” paintings, and a legacy of scholarly and religious disputation. This demonstrates a discourse of disputation informing *The Finding* over and above the biblical narrative. In showing that this discourse strongly correlates with the painting’s objectifying and spectacular properties, this thesis provides a new way to understand *The Finding*’s orientalism which is further revealed in its typological critical reworking of two Christian medieval and renaissance paintings. As a demonstration of the discourse, the thesis includes an examination of Jewish artists who addressed the theme of disputation overtly or obliquely thereby engaging with and challenging the assumptions upon which the disputation rests.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award at any other educational institution.

Word count (including abstract) 82,809

Candidate's educational background:

After taking a two-year art-foundation course, I graduated with a degree in Fine Art at Liverpool Polytechnic. I did some courses with the Open University, one of which was the third level course, Modern Art and Modernism (A315). My first MA was in Screen Studies at the University of Manchester (via Warrington Collegiate). As a distance learner, I took a graduate certificate in Religions and Theology at the University of Wales, Trinity St. David (Lampeter). This was followed by a second MA in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester.

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This thesis is, in many ways (not officially) the product of two universities, Manchester Metropolitan and the University of Manchester. It has been my pleasure and privilege to work within the auspices of both institutions throughout my doctoral research. I am grateful for the advice and guidance of Prof. Daniel Langton and Dr Colin Trodd. I reflect with some sadness that what began with them did not materialise as originally planned. However, it was the right decision to transfer institutions given the interdisciplinary nature of the project and ultimately, the thesis benefited greatly from the contrasting styles, unique qualities and resources of both universities.

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Some of this work has had a tentative pre-existence.

Part of chapter four appeared in a short essay in the *PRS Review* (The Pre-Raphaelite Society) Volume XXIX, Number 1, Spring 2021.

Part of chapter five was given as a paper for the Ehrhardt Seminar at the University of Manchester, February 27th, 2020.

CK

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*For R. Norman Zalud,
And all the rabbis.*

"Just as the artist - in Schiller's fine words - receives his rules from the object, meaning from nature, so should an art historian support his claims through the laws of the art work itself."
Max Liebermann¹

Introduction.

The principal artwork under consideration in this thesis is *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* (1854-60) (Fig. 1).² The painting is by William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) a founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, formed in 1848 as a rebellious student movement at the Royal Academy of Art, London.³ The painting is the starting point and subsequent anchor to a wide-ranging investigation into the painting's representation of Jewishness.

This complex painting depicts a busy scene with a dense group of seated figures on the left-hand side of the picture and a standing trio opposite. They are situated within an ornate Temple setting shown as open to the right-hand-side. This allows for the inclusion of an additional seated figure, a collection of further distant figures, and a view towards a landscape beyond. The scene is colourful and highly detailed. As Tim Barringer writes, Holman Hunt "recreates the scene with a garish vividness."⁴ The trio depicts the Christian Holy Family with the prominent figure of the twelve-year-old Jesus portrayed wearing a vibrant blue tunic. The scene is crowded with figures and symbolism including musicians, pillars, various ornamental features, musical instruments, scrolls, prayer shawls, a suffusion of oriental dress and patterning, all contributing to a noisy and disjointed tempo. Additionally, there are some smaller distant figures depicted at the rear of the Temple interior. Although their inclusion is

¹ Max Liebermann, 1907, in Marion Deshmukh, *Max Liebermann: Modern Art and Modern Germany* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2015) 71.

² Hereon in referred to as *The Finding*.

³ The three original members of the Brotherhood were William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) and John Everett Millais (1829-1896). Who should be classified as belonging to the Brotherhood is sometimes contested. It is commonly understood to consist of seven young men at its core, in addition to the above, Thomas Woolner (1825-1892), James Collinson (1825-1881), F.G. Stephens (1827-1907) and William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919). Additional figures include Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), Arthur Hughes (1832-1915), William Morris (1834-1896), Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) and Simeon Solomon (1840-1905). The circle additionally encompasses the Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood which includes Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862), Jane Burden Morris (1839-1914), Georgina Burne-Jones (1840-1920), Annie Miller (1835-1925), Fanny Cornforth (1835-1909), Alexa Wilding (1847-1884), Effie Gray Millais (1828-1897), Evelyn de Morgan (1855-1919), Maria Zambaco (1843-1914) and Marie Spartali Stillman (1844-1927). There is a dedicated website for the Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood [A Sanctuary for Sisterhood | Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood \(preraphaelitesisterhood.com\)](http://A.SanctuaryforSisterhood|Pre-RaphaeliteSisterhood.com) accessed 18th August, 2021.

⁴ Tim Barringer, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Reading the Image* (London: Everyman Art Library, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998), 123.

suggestive of depth, the larger figures portrayed at the front of the picture remain curiously compressed. In chapter three, I present a more detailed description along with further analysis.

Judith Bronkhurst's *Catalogue Raisonné* of Holman Hunt's works begins with accounts of *The Finding's* favourable reception. She cites Thomas Woolner describing its "prodigious success" in terms of there being "nothing like it in modern times..." and Charles Dickens who (according to Holman Hunt's own memoirs) remarked in person to Holman Hunt about the congestion in Bond Street caused by the painting's popularity.⁵ The painting caused a "very great sensation" according to one newspaper, and another mentions the many advance orders placed for the planned engraving.⁶ The painting was received positively and enthusiastically by the press both at the time of its initial exhibition and as it toured the provinces afterwards. Although some of the positive reviews emanated from the pen of Holman Hunt's friend and associate Frederic Stephens, not all of them did. Many of the subsequent press reviews write with conviction about the artist's ability to please "almost every class of critics" and describing *The Finding* as a "remarkable picture" having been painted by a "true genius."⁷ Press reviews focused strongly on the painting's religious themes with detailed descriptions of the painting tied in with references to the biblical texts. There is the additional focus upon Holman Hunt as a man who laboured and worked tirelessly to bring the picture to fruition. It is apparent that the painting was the cause of much interest and excitement in its time, and that it remains a work of some prominence.⁸

The Finding is renowned as a Pre-Raphaelite work and as an example of Victorian, English Protestant painting. There are two versions of *The Finding* which although very similar

⁵ Judith Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols. (London: Yale University Press, 2006), vol. 1, 3.

⁶ *Inverness Courier*, Thursday October 29th, 1863. The (unnamed) reviewer acknowledges the positive reactions to the painting with some gentle criticism as the review is concluded. "The painting is a splendid one, and many parts of it are really admirable, but after spending long time over it in the earnest endeavour to be satisfied, I feel compelled to dissent from the unqualified praise bestowed on this picture during the three years it has been before the public." The criticism appears to have resulted from the appearance and pose of the Christ figure who is perceived as petulant and moreover uninspiring as a disputant from the point of view of the doctors. On the demand for engravings, *Illustrated London News*, XXXVI, 13th October 1860, p. 337 cited in Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, 177, n 47.

⁷ *Liverpool Daily Post*, Saturday April 18th, 1863; *Fine Arts*, Monday April 23rd, 1860; and *The Norfolk News*, Saturday, March 2nd, 1867.

⁸ A small selection of publications mentioning or reviewing the painting in positive terms includes: *Birmingham Daily Post*, Monday, April 23rd, 1860; *The Lady's Newspaper*, Saturday, November 30th, 1861; *Glasgow Herald*, Saturday, December 5th, 1863; *The Derby Mercury*, Wednesday, July 13th, 1864; *Western Daily Press*, Monday, March 6th, 1865. Interestingly, *The Morning Post*, Monday July 23rd, p.5 carried the notice: "Their Royal Highnesses the Duchess of Cambridge and the Princess Mary visited the German Gallery New Bond Street, on Saturday, to see Mr. Holman Hunt('s) picture of "The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple" and the new pictures by Madle, Rosa Bonheur."

to one another, are not identical. The first of the two is housed in Birmingham and the second in the Sudley House museum in Liverpool. Both versions of *The Finding* are normally on display making them current objects of interest. Indeed, at the time of writing, *The Finding* is featured on the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery's website as one of the gallery's acclaimed works. This currency manifests as the preservation and celebration of artwork produced in the past (and one that is itself concerned with a notion of "the past") examined as meaningful in today's present. As Michael Ann Holly reminds us: "The materiality, the very physicality, of the works of art with which we deal is a challenge to ever seeing the past as over and gone. They exist in the same space as their analysts."⁹

I cannot recall with certainty my first encounter with *The Finding*. It seems to have pressed itself into my consciousness at some unguarded moment during a fairly unfocused gallery visit. The image of the blind rabbi in particular became a haunting, troubling presence in my thoughts. I can, however, be certain that my first sighting would have been the smaller Liverpool version of the painting viewed in the Sudley House Museum, then just over a mile from where I lived. My memory confuses this with excursions to the Lady Lever, the Walker and the Manchester Art galleries where a number of Holman Hunt's (and other Pre-Raphaelite) paintings reside, not to mention the ubiquitous reproductions of works in books. Suffice to say that from these combined experiences I had absorbed something enduring and unsettling. From time to time, the blind rabbi would come to mind as if a problem to be resolved or a reminder of unfinished business. The most dramatic appearance (if that is the correct term) came as I researched material for an MA paper.¹⁰ As a result of that search, a long process of thought was set in motion regarding what I then took to be the (re)construction of Judaism from a nineteenth-century Christian ideological position. After affording the painting more focused, considered attention, I see the painting as "strange" again, like a deeply complex and multi-faceted puzzle. Where there appeared to be a straightforward realism there is now paradox. The apparent clarity of the rendition has become cloudy and unreadable, and the oft-reported authenticity rendered counterfeit.

This thesis seeks to closely examine and problematise the central and most puzzling aspects of the work, that is, its Jewish presence. By this I mean more precisely, the presence of

⁹ Michael Ann Holly, *The Melancholy Art* (New Jersey: Princeton, 2013), 6.

¹⁰ The moment came when the MA class was prompted by a professor to research the idea of "constructed subjectivity." In what seemed like a flash of inspiration, the idea of the blind rabbi as a constructed subject appeared to me. This was not the subjectivity the professor had in mind, nevertheless, it led to a lengthy train of thought leading to the writing this thesis.

Jews as depicted, the presence of actual Jews who posed for the picture, and the painting's portrayal of Judaism. A central paradox of the painting is that *The Finding* is construed as a Christian painting and yet portrays almost entirely Jews and Judaism. Indeed, it is the depiction of Jews along with the clear view of Jerusalem as its chief site of production, that serve to underpin its renowned authenticity. It is the contention of this thesis that this presence has hitherto been underacknowledged, avoided or overlooked in art-historical (and other disciplinary) accounts to date. This neglect raises questions concerning what it means to re-present religion in the way that *The Finding* does because the issue is more complex than it first seems. As I show in what follows, Holman Hunt draws upon a tradition of artworks that were not, in their own time considered to be artworks; rather they were objects of devotion in themselves, not purporting to re-present some other phenomenon. Additionally, the overlooking of *The Finding's* Jewish presence is notable given the greater awareness of orientalism in the light of the publication of Edward Saïd's book *Orientalism* (1978).¹¹ This thesis will show that *The Finding's* Jewish presence presents the viewer with some disconcertment over the matter of orientalism because this is directly related to the painting's Jewish presence. Critics have alluded to Saïd's choice to use binary constructions that effectively marginalise Jewish oriental origins, thereby constructing Jews as essentially "western."¹² Furthermore, scholars cite Saïd's failure to situate British and western Europe's deep interest in biblical texts as an underpinning of a fascination with the "east" or the "orient." I return to this crucial subject in various chapters of the thesis.

To date, scholars have attributed Holman Hunt's renditions of Jews in *The Finding* as part of a wider orientalist schema; an acceptance of various claims concerning his diligent research, or a logical outcome to religious and artistic ambitions.¹³ None of this is untrue exactly. However, this mode of understanding relies upon identifying particular types of evidence to support interpretations of the painting and this I believe remains inadequate in accounting for this Jewish presence. Therefore, central to my concerns is *why The Finding's* Jewish presence has been overlooked. Of the accounts of *The Finding* that come close to identifying the conundrum at the heart of the painting, I would highlight Judith Bronkhurst's

¹¹ Edward W. Saïd, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978).

¹² Bernard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism", *The New York Review of Books*, 3 (1982) pp. 1-20. (Sourced online) <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1982/06/24/the-question-of-orientalism/>, Jeffrey S Librett, *Orientalism and the Figure of the Jew* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015, J. Teitelbaum and M. Litvak, "Students, Teachers, and Edward Saïd: Taking Stock of Orientalism," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 10:1 (2006), Ibn Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Saïd's "Orientalism,"* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2007), et al.

¹³ See especially Kenneth Bendiner, Judith Bronkhurst, Michaela Giebelhausen and Nicholas Tromans.

recognition of *The Finding* as a scene of “confrontation” in 1984, and 2006;¹⁴ also alluded to in the highly detailed treatment of Holman Hunt’s religious output by Michaela Giebelhausen.¹⁵ However, in writing that Bronkhurst’s observation is *corroborated* by F.G. Stephens, she fails to note that Bronkhurst’s *source* for her remarks is the very same document written by Stephens.¹⁶ The reliance upon this document to underpin accounts of *The Finding* is a point to which we shall frequently return in what follows. In this vein, I also highlight for attention Nancy Davenport’s description of *The Finding* as depicting “...two religions...conversing,” (2012).¹⁷ However, it is not, and cannot be, “two religions conversing.” This innocuous remark encapsulates in part, the conundrum I seek to explore in this thesis. Davenport can only have gleaned the idea of two religions conversing from her knowledge of the historical Jewish Christian dispute, rather than the Lukan text from which the painting takes its subject.

As a Christian painting, *The Finding* has been of marginal interest to Jewish studies - scholars and although it has not been ignored, there has been no insight into *The Finding*’s Jewish presence forthcoming.¹⁸ Additionally, the customary situating of the painting as a Pre-Raphaelite work appears to settle most questions about its appearance. Furthermore, as I shall discuss in what follows, the Pre-Raphaelites have tended to slip between the dominant strands of modernist and social histories of art. Therefore, in addition to *why*, I reflect upon *how* the Jewish presence in *The Finding* has been overlooked. In addition to the art-historical disciplinary contexts, the “how” involves a consideration of less easily quantifiable elements, set within a wide network of religious, political and cultural connections. Accordingly, the thesis will consider what the overlooking of the Jewish presence means in terms of the longer view of how the European West understands itself historically and philosophically. It would be simplistic to construe Britain and Europe as essentially Christian in this respect. However,

¹⁴ Judith Bronkhurst, “The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple” in Tate Gallery, *The Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition* (London: Tate Gallery Allen Lane, 1984) 158-160, and Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 176.

¹⁵ Michaela Giebelhausen, *Painting the Bible: Representation and Belief in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006) 165.

¹⁶ This is clear from the specific comments and citation given. Bronkhurst in Tate Gallery *Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition*, 159.

¹⁷ Nancy Davenport, “William Holman-Hunt: Layered Belief in the Art of a Pre-Raphaelite Realist,” *Religion and the Arts*, 16, (2012) 29-77. To be precise, Davenport was referring to Holman Hunt’s later (less confrontational) reworking of *The Finding* in 1887.

¹⁸ I construe Jewish studies here in a fairly broad sense given that it represents a wide field of scholarship. Relevant publications that do mention *The Finding* include Ezra Mendelsohn, *Painting a People: Maurycy Gottlieb and Jewish Art* (London: Brandeis University Press, 2002), 52, Théo Klein, Dominique Schnapper, Laurence Sigal-Klagsbad, Laurent Hélicher, Collectif. *Les Juifs dans L’Orientalisme*. Exhibition Catalogue, (Musée d’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme, France: Flammarion, 2012), 31, and Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 211.

the historical Christian underpinning of European cultural life is relevant and must be taken into account. It is a thread that runs throughout this thesis. Therefore, how Judaism has been thought about, approached and constructed from outside incorporates conceptions of identity formation and otherness and (paradoxically) togetherness. Judaism and Christianity are linked by their sharing of the Hebrew scriptures which for Christians form the Old Testament. Richard Lim has argued that this common factor is what makes debate between the two traditions possible or meaningful.¹⁹ Moreover, I find that in its foregrounding of Jewish-Christian opposition, it is possible to map *The Finding's* portrayal of binary opposition to the twin opponents of the *disputatio* or disputation. The relevance of this emanates from the painting's subject and forms a major theme explored in the thesis. I elucidate.

The Finding purports to depict the scene from the New Testament book of Luke (Luke 2:41-52) which describes an encounter between the twelve-year-old Jesus and the Temple elders.²⁰ According to Bronkurst's description, the picture shows Jesus and the Jewish elders, configured in many descriptions as "rabbis" as separate from, and *in conflict with each another*.²¹ The painting suggests (by various means) that the religion of Christianity will eventually overcome and replace the religion of Judaism.²² This concept of replacement is known as supersessionism. One way in which this idea is foregrounded is in the portrayal of the rabbis who are depicted as old, decrepit personifications of the past to be contrasted with sympathetic portrayals of Jesus and his parents as signifying the future. The painting is renowned for its plethora of symbolism. This will be examined in chapter three.

The New Testament episode in Luke describes the losing of Jesus on the part of Mary and Joseph on the return home after the Passover festival. They subsequently return to find Jesus in the Temple in discussion with the elders or teachers. The story has become known as the "disputation" in both textual and artistic forms. As such, *The Finding* follows, and belongs within a tradition of artworks depicting this scene in paintings, altarpieces and sculpted reliefs. This thesis will therefore bring to the fore a genre of "disputation paintings" which although clearly Western European (and Christian) in origin, is not organised by reference to a particular artistic style or nation. The scene (in art-forms) is alternatively known as *Christ Among the*

¹⁹ Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power and Social Order in Late Antiquity*, (California: University of California Press, 2019), 6.

²⁰ They are variably described as rabbis, doctors, elders, teachers and priests. Technically, the term "rabbi" is an anomaly given the position did not exist in the 1st century.

²¹ Bronkurst, in Tate Gallery *Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition*, 159.

²² Bronkurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 176, George P. Landow, *William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism*, 1979.

Doctors, Christ in the Temple with the Doctors, The Twelve-Year-Old Jesus in the Temple and variants around this theme. Examples include works by Heinrich Hofmann (1884) Rembrandt van Rijn (1654) Bernardino Luini, circa (1530) Albrecht Dürer (1506). (Figs.3,4,5,6)

The binary division of Jewish and Christian implied in *The Finding* and its sense of confrontation is not easily explained if we rely solely upon its purported Gospel origin. Recent scholarly research in the field of biblical studies establishes convincingly that there is no intended hostility within that biblical scene. As I will elucidate further in the second part of my thesis, the substance of the encounter between the twelve-year-old Jesus and the doctors is not the central point of Luke's Temple narrative. In brief, the episode draws attention to Jesus as intelligent and wise and signals his relationship to his parents and by implication, indicates to readers the matter of his relationship to his (or in Christian terms, the) father. Even without a knowledge of the Greek language in which the story was originally written, a close reading of the Lukan scene will reveal that it is not actually one of confrontation. The elders are described as amazed or astonished at the twelve-year-old's wisdom and knowledge. The Lukan text does suggest that a discussion is taking place because it says that Jesus is "listening to them and answering questions."²³ However, if we accept that the scene is known as the "disputation" we must acknowledge that this discussion has come to mean, for modern readers of the New Testament, a much later conception of disputation. It is debateable as to whether or not this new understanding has been influenced by paintings depicting the scene specifically. Nevertheless, whatever is understood about the episode by modern readers, given that the story is situated as a biblical event it can only be an inner-Jewish debate, not a Jewish versus Christian one. The thesis will show that *The Finding's* apparent air of confrontation emanates from what I refer to as a discourse of disputation rather than the biblical text. This concept forms a thread which connects a set of inherited ideas explored throughout the thesis. Accordingly, part of my recognition of a discourse of disputation is formed by an awareness that Jews as artists participated within it. Jewish artists whose work will be relevant to the discussion include Maurycy Gottlieb, Moritz Daniel Oppenheim and Max Liebermann whose own Lukan Temple painting was the cause of scandal in Germany 1879.

This brings me to the inextricable link between historical Jewish-Christian relations and the "disputation" as praxis. This obliquely refers to public events such as the renowned public

²³ See appendix ii for full the pericope. Unless stated otherwise, all biblical quotations derive from the NRSV.

disputations of Paris or Barcelona.²⁴ According to Alex Novikoff, the public nature of disputations results from the development of the technique as a means for debating and challenging Jews in the medieval period. As Jews were not permitted access to the university, the university had to leave its precincts in order to publicly dispute with them. Many of these public disputes were designed to ensure that Christianity could be seen to prevail over Judaism in the public arena.²⁵ *The Finding*, itself a visual spectacle, can be seen to function in a similar light. That the painting in question can be somewhat removed from and yet linked to methods of debate devised specifically for the purposes of disputing with Jews is pertinent to this study. By this I refer to the development of the disputation as a method of study within the medieval university. *The Finding's* relationship with these methods of scholarship is worthy of consideration due to the university's position of authority as the institution at the centre of knowledge formation. Moreover, we should take into account the extensive reach the disputation has had in the world beyond the university continuing to the present day. I explore this in more depth in chapter six.

An overarching theme in the thesis is the understanding of *The Finding's* relationship to the past. I configure this in a number of ways. Firstly, I understand it as a product of a British (mainly English) Victorian past from my own vantage point. However, it is also a work that attempts a vision of an imagined past *in its time*. Holman Hunt went to great effort to uncover, in an almost archaeological manner, the scene of a biblical story. It is no coincidence that archaeological digs were attempting to uncover and reveal the Bible's truths in the Victorian era. Furthermore, Holman Hunt's interest in the *art* of the past, in keeping with the teaching methods at the Royal Academy, results in a third way in which *The Finding* engages with the past. This can be recognised in the painting's links with earlier art historical periods. This is in addition to its connections with historical disputation paintings.

Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis makes a wide-ranging contribution to knowledge. I have produced a radical new reading of *The Finding* with its Jewish presence as the focus. In addition to addressing a lacuna in the field, this both expands and challenges the range and parameters within Pre-Raphaelite studies. This reading has been progressively formulated throughout my research. As I outline further in chapter three on method, I have approached this in several ways. I have

²⁴ Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputation in the Middle Ages*, 1996, rep.

²⁵ Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice and Performance*, 2013.

observed the painting, written, drawn from, compared and contrasted the picture, and discussed it with others, often with surprising and revealing results. The extensive meditation upon the painting results in a re-contextualisation of *The Finding* as a disputation painting, so called because the genre is more than a mere depiction of Luke's *Christ Among the Doctors*; rather it represents a worldview as spectacle. It is informed by the disputation as an historical scholarly practice that has shaped how we conceptualise the world in adversarial and objectifying terms. I refer to this as a discourse of disputation. In conjunction with these matters, the thesis engages with the painting's orientalism within that context of disputation further opening out the discussion. Additionally, my thesis presents crucial new findings for Pre-Raphaelite studies and art history regarding Holman Hunt's own engagement with art of the past by arguing for hitherto unrecognised links with two key examples of medieval/renaissance art.

Because my thesis includes a close examination of the short Lukan pericope in conjunction with a selection of many artworks that purport to portray it, it will augment a number of overlapping research interests. As such, this thesis contributes in a peripheral way to the fields of Biblical and religious studies insofar as it examines in detail a relevant biblical text and associated artefacts that are closely aligned with religious practice and biblical hermeneutics. Furthermore, given that the discourse of disputation is deeply entwined within Jewish-Christian relations and visual (and textual) portrayals of Jews and Judaism in a variety of media over many locations and centuries, the thesis contributes to the fields of Jewish-Christian relations and Jewish studies, in particular the areas concerned with the visual.

Augmenting the above, the thesis widens the discussion on how *The Finding* can be construed as orientalist. I posit that *The Finding*'s orientalism is inextricably linked not so much with a construing of a generalised "otherness" but a specific aspect of cultural and religious anxiety originating in Jewish-Christian relations and the discourse of disputation specifically. The thesis will ultimately demonstrate that *The Finding* does not merely "portray" or "reflect" or even "represent" the disputation (as such) rather, it is an active participant within an enduring debate. Paintings such as *The Finding* do not "reflect" society, they are part of what constitutes and thus lies within society.

Thesis organisation:

In order to address my concerns, it has been necessary to draw upon and subsequently organise a wide range of material, time periods and art works. For example, *The Finding*'s artistic contexts extend from Holman Hunt's own oeuvre to material and thought emanating

from centuries previously; and the range of disputation paintings spans centuries and places. At times, the thesis focuses forensically on one object, *The Finding*. At others, I step back to take a wide-ranging broader approach. This has been necessary at certain junctures to identify and discuss the matters in hand. Accordingly, the thesis has been organised to accommodate the varying elements and time periods.

The thesis takes a phenomenological and hermeneutic approach to *The Finding* involving careful description and interpretation. At the inception of my research, I asked two questions of the painting, and they served me so well that I continued to use them. They are, why does the painting look the way it does? And how did Holman Hunt know how to paint his picture? These questions framed my thinking and reflect alternative ways of configuring knowledge about the painting. We could articulate this as, what were the artist's conscious choices that account for the painting's appearance? And the second, what were the culturally inherited influences that informed the artist?

My literature review encompasses the interdisciplinary and intertextual nature of the Pre-Raphaelite movement and its particular place in art historical and literary scholarship. I take account of the Pre-Raphaelite's own writing in addition to the myths that surround the movement, and the frequent earlier emphasis on biographical material at the expense of their work. Despite strong engagement within interdisciplinary fields of biblical and religious scholarship, there exists a lacuna with regard to the painting's Jewish presence. I identify that this is a result of methodological issues which I subsequently address in my chapter on method.

Chapter three presents two accounts of *The Finding*. I begin with F.G. Stephens's pamphlet, which forms the underpinning of interpretations of *The Finding* to date. After discussing its impact, I respond by providing my own account and description of the painting which will show the painting in a radically different light. I then move to consider the various contexts in which *The Finding* may be placed in chapter four. This begins with *The Finding* as a Pre-Raphaelite work and how Holman Hunt's responses to criticism of his and fellow-artists' paintings impacted upon his work. I consider *The Finding* within the context of its being Victorian, English and Protestant. There then follows an extended discussion on *The Finding's* engagement with renaissance art. This part of the chapter will establish new insights into *The Finding's* appearance and provide significant new knowledge about the painting. This paves the way for a discussion on a worldview predicated upon objectivity.

In chapter five, we move further into interdisciplinary territory. Because the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus has become known as the “disputation” it is presumed to be a scene of hostility. It is crucial to disentangle the whole notion of what *dispute* is (or was) from the originary biblical scene. The chapter reconfigures the Lukan scene as a genre of disputation paintings that draws as much upon the enduring Jewish-Christian dispute as it does the biblical story. *The Finding* is thus recontextualised as a disputation painting.

This then takes me to chapter six where I explore the disputation as a practice of knowledge formation with a focus upon debate, truth and reason, authority and education, and spectacle. As part of this, I examine the manner in which the concept of religious and scholarly disputation has become embedded within European culture which leads to a clarification of my conception of a discourse of disputation. I consider how Jewish artists addressed this discourse in radically different ways.

Chapter seven examines the representation and misrepresentation of Jews in a range of images. It brings together many of the thesis’s wide-ranging themes. I have divided this chapter into two parts. The first part considers the longer historical tradition with an examination of medieval imagery and its link with biblical ideas. The second part presents a consideration of how Edward Saïd’s *Orientalism* (1978) both helps and hinders an attempt to understand the Jewish presence in *The Finding*. My conclusion will present *The Finding* not merely as an attempt to illustrate the Lukan story but as an engagement within a wider nineteenth-century Jewish-Christian disputation which can be seen as mapped onto notions of orientalism.

A remark about terminology. Throughout this thesis I refer to that part of the world known in modern times as Israel. However, in Holman Hunt’s time, what constituted Palestine or Syria was unclear, and furthermore, then (and as now in some cases) boundaries and nomenclature are ambiguous and contested. For ease of discussion, I have settled upon Holy Land as an all-embracing term which, given the many complications associated with that place (historically, religiously and politically), I trust will suffice.

*The need of reason is not inspired by the quest for truth but by the quest for meaning. And truth and meaning are not the same.*¹

Hannah Arendt

*Language is always too specific and discriminating...when it tries to mimic this first idiotic appropriation of the visual.*²

T.J. Clark

Chapter 1: Literature Review

My principal objectives in this review are to establish a context for the Pre-Raphaelites and to establish the extent to which existing scholarship can enable my investigation into *The Finding's* Jewish presence. As this is an interdisciplinary study, some of the material I have consulted, especially that which concerns the biblical and religious aspects of the research will be dealt with in later chapters where it is more relevant to the discussion at hand. The review takes a chronological approach setting out the scholarship on the Pre-Raphaelites within and outside the field of art history. It begins with an overview of Pre-Raphaelitism and the interdisciplinary nature of the movement including the Brotherhood's own writings. Additionally, I discuss the fairly entrenched popular narrative concerning the development of the Pre-Raphaelite phenomenon that many writers draw upon and in some instances challenge.³

1.1 Interdisciplinarity of Pre-Raphaelitism

I begin with the recognition of Pre-Raphaelitism itself as an interdisciplinary project. From the outset, the Pre-Raphaelites regarded themselves as both an artistic and literary movement, with a substantial and varied artistic and literary output. As Elizabeth Prettejohn writes in her introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, "Neither the literary nor the visual arts can be said to have taken chronological precedence; still less did

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (1971; repr., London: Harcourt, 1978), 15.

² Clark, *The Sight of Death*, 15.

³ I have found two instances where *The Finding* has not been discussed in terms of its Pre-Raphaelitism and is situated as a modern interpretation of the *Christ among the Doctors* genre. Norbert Lynton et al, *Looking into Paintings* (Milton Keynes: The Open University in association with Channel 4 television and Faber and Faber, 1985) 52-57, and Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, 211.

Pre-Raphaelitism set up any kind of hierarchy between them.”⁴ In the same volume, Isobel Armstrong discusses the group’s renowned *List of Immortals*, meant to “constitute the whole of our creed” according to Dante Gabriel Rossetti.⁵ It comprised of important writers, artists, political figures and Jesus, ranked with star ratings. This list, arguably the Pre-Raphaelites’ first historically relevant document, provides insight into what was to become a major artistic and literary movement. Brief examples of its literary work include the poetic works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, and the group’s initial attempts at publishing in their own publication, *The Germ* in 1850.⁶ There were however, just four issues of *The Germ*.⁷ It had been intended to become a vehicle for their ideas and creative writing. Although it wasn’t a commercial success, its existence testifies to the interdisciplinary nature of the Pre-Raphaelite project and the brotherhood’s keen interest in literature, writing and being published.⁸ Geibelhausen and Barringer writing in their edited collection of essays in *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, note a flowering of interest that can be attributed to the interdisciplinary nature of Pre-Raphaelite studies and the stimulation garnered from scholarly cross-fertilisation.⁹

Further to this, the art criticism of Frederic George Stephens, who was part of the early Pre-Raphaelite circle, forms an important point of departure for my study of *The Finding*.¹⁰ I will be focusing closely upon Stephens’s writing in chapter three. At this juncture, I wish to introduce the context into which a key document connected to *The Finding* emerged. F. G. Stephens had abandoned his own painting practice to commence a career as an art critic. He went on to write for the *Athenaeum* magazine, a prominent London based literary magazine published between 1828 and 1921. During the course of *The Finding*’s initial exhibition, the dealer presenting the work, Ernst Gambart, requested that a guide be provided for visitors. A key plate explaining the various objects in the painting was

⁴ Elizabeth Prettejohn, ed. *Cambridge Companion to The Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7.

⁵ Rossetti, quoted in William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1905), vol. 1, 159.

⁶ Isobel Armstrong, in *Cambridge Companion to The Pre-Raphaelites*, 15-31.

⁷ *The Germ* was so named to convey the idea of the germination of seeds in nature and ideas.

⁸ An important example of the interdisciplinary nature of Pre-Raphaelitism is explored in Raymond Watkinson. *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design* (London: Trefoil Publications, 1970).

⁹ Michaela Geibelhausen and Tim Barringer, eds., *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites: Text, Context, Subtext* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 5. Additionally, a short essay by Julie Codell stressed the necessity of interdisciplinary research in the study of Victorian art outlining the various steps taken (to date) to broaden the field and the problems often encountered within the academy. Julie F. Codell, “Interdisciplinarity and Historians of Victorian Art,” in *Victorian Review*, Volume 33, No. 1, 2007, 14-17.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org/manchester.idm.oclc.org/10.1353/vcr.2007.0026>

¹⁰ Frequently referred to as F.G. Stephens.

produced.¹¹ After some months, Stephens wrote the extended pamphlet explaining in more detail (and more persuasively) the “meanings” contained in the picture. Contemporary press cuttings were included and some of the reviews mirror Stephens’s words verbatim, strongly suggesting that they are, in actuality, his words.¹²

As a result, the key plate and accompanying pamphlet provide source material for a number of accounts of the painting. Examples include amongst others, Kenneth Bendiner’s book (discussed below), George Landow’s work on religious typology and in accounts by Judith Bronkhurst.¹³ Any credible account of *The Finding* would need to acknowledge and critically evaluate this document. In my view, where commentators draw attention to it they often fail to critique it sufficiently. The reason for this I surmise, is that due to the pamphlet having been produced during the time of *The Finding*’s original two-year exhibition, it is regarded as a key source of evidence that underpins and secures meaning. It has been conceived in this manner since the time of its original publication in December 1860. The continued reproduction, circulation and references to this pamphlet in addition to the key plate have, in my view, worked to undergird some of the negative prejudicial stereotyping of the figures described as rabbis in *The Finding*. Moreover, the general acceptance of the sentiments expressed appears to settle the matter of a Jewish presence within *The Finding* by providing what appears to be a coherent explanation for it. I challenge this approach in my account of the painting by presenting a critical analysis of the pamphlet in chapter three.

In addition to Stephen’s pamphlet, I include William Holman Hunt’s *Pre-Raphaelitism and The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 1905.¹⁴ Published in two densely written illustrated volumes, it comprises a detailed account of his own artistic adventures and exhibitions coupled with what he claimed was a definitive account of the movement’s origins and development. It forms another frequently cited source of evidence used to explain his work. What is presented as authentic memoir was not necessarily the product of writing in

¹¹ Reproduced in Judith Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 174.

¹² It is difficult to ascertain whose words are reproduced, i.e., has Stephens used the press cuttings, or did the press make use of information supplied? Examples include: *The Athenaeum*, April 21st, 1860; *Macmillan’s Magazine*, May 1860; *Fraser’s Magazine*, May 1860; *Once a Week*, July 14th 1860; *The Critic*, May 5th 1860; *Edinburgh News*, June 23rd 1860; *Morning Chronicle*, April 21st 1860; *The Examiner*, May 9th, 1860, et al. Cited in: Frederic George Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works: A Memoir of the Artist’s Life, With Description of his Pictures*, (London: James Nisbet & Co. 1860) (Kessinger Legacy Reprint, 2011)

¹³ Kenneth Bendiner, *An Introduction to Victorian Painting* (London: Yale University Press, 1985) Judith Bronkhurst, *Tate Gallery Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition*, 158-160, and Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 176. Landow, “*Typological Symbolism in Hunt’s Major Works*,” in *Typological Symbolism*, 61-139.

¹⁴ William Holman-Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vols I & II (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1905)

situ, however. Holman Hunt wrote his accounts as part recollection and part explanation to assert his version of the story behind Pre-Raphaelitism. Elizabeth Prettejohn's description is helpful. She describes them as a "legendary prehistory, concocted from oral tradition, distant memories, and wishful thinking."¹⁵ Nevertheless, as she concedes and I would concur, they provide a useful insight into his thoughts and ideas in addition to events as he understood them. I would briefly add here that in addition to their own literary attempts, Pre-Raphaelite self-conscious awareness of being "written about" is a factor requiring some attention. This is discernible in Holman Hunt's memoirs amongst other outputs. This was the focus of Michaela Giebelhausen's chapter in *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*.¹⁶

1.2 Pre-Raphaelite Mythology and Challenges to the Narrative

Pre-Raphaelitism has attracted interest from a wide range of academic fields. The reach of the Pre-Raphaelites is as long as it is broad, and what began with the youthful ambitions of a small core of rebellious students in London has flourished into something akin to a worldwide brand or genre.¹⁷

Additionally, it is useful to consider the mythology that surrounds both the Pre-Raphaelite movement itself in addition to the scholarly examination of Pre-Raphaelitism in the light of twentieth century art-historical discourse. This has been addressed in various places by William Fredeman, Thomas Tobin and Elizabeth Prettejohn and others. What follows is my brief summary:

The commonly understood narrative posits that the Pre-Raphaelites, originally known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, slipped into cultural irrelevance once the artists themselves had died and the Modernist era gained traction in the early twentieth century. Despite acknowledgement of its avant-garde and rebellious origins, the movement came to be regarded as reactionary or hackneyed. Subsequently the narrative follows a familiar line that claims that it was not until the 1960s that scholars and academics began to reevaluate the Pre-Raphaelites, preparing the ground for further research, culminating in the Tate's ground-

¹⁵ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate Publishing, 2007), 23.

¹⁶ Giebelhausen and Barringer, *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, 117-137.

¹⁷ Here I provide some examples to demonstrate the international interest: The *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* which began in 1977, is an academic vehicle for the dissemination of scholarly work relating to the broad field connected with Pre-Raphaelitism and is based in Canada. The 2005 volume, *Worldwide Pre-Raphaelitism*, (ed. Thomas Tobin) is a collection of essays that explore Pre-Raphaelite engagement with the wider world (e.g., Holman Hunt's sojourns to the near east) and the movement's impact upon global culture, including Croatia, India and the United States. *Pre-Raphaelite Art in its European Context*, published in 1995, (eds. Susan Casteras and Alicia Craig Faxon) understands the multi-way influence of Pre-Raphaelitism on European art and thought in addition to influences from abroad upon the Pre-Raphaelites.

breaking exhibition, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (7th March – 28th May, 1984). This major exhibition provided a focal point leading to further academic interest in the 1980s and beyond.

This particular construction of events is not accepted by all academics working in the field and it remains contentious. As Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock indicate in their review of the two books published as part of the 1984 Tate Gallery exhibition, the Pre-Raphaelite movement is one frequently and simplistically described in terms of three male “geniuses” on a quest to express their artistic prowess. Their critique points to the catalogue’s claim that the PRB revolutionary project acted to enliven a “moribund art world,” further presented as bracketed off from other cultural contexts. The authors lament the emphasis upon biographical stories, and in particular the emphasis upon the Pre-Raphaelite personalities and their bohemian lifestyles.¹⁸ The over-emphasis on biography, personality and lifestyle in terms of writing on the Pre-Raphaelites is a frequently cited area for contention, with which I would concur, and address this further in what follows.¹⁹

Notwithstanding, it is fair to surmise that perceptions of Pre-Raphaelitism and its associated scholarship have ebbed and flowed in academic fields. Elizabeth Prettejohn summarises these in an essay in *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant Garde*, the later Tate Gallery exhibition catalogue of 2012.²⁰ She challenges the oft-repeated narrative concerning the “irrelevance” of Pre-Raphaelitism to art’s history and its supposed “fall from critical favour.” She cites by way of example, Marcia Pointon’s introduction in *The Pre-Raphaelites Re-Viewed* which, in an unquestioning fashion, told of the 1960s rediscovery of the Pre-Raphaelites “as if it were a matter of factual accuracy.”²¹ Prettejohn claims that contrary to a

¹⁸ Elizabeth Prettejohn makes a forceful case challenging the dominant narrative in her chapter “Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood”, in *Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 17-65.; Thomas J. Tobin, ed., claims to “put to rest the traditional view of Pre-Raphaelitism – a brief, reactionary, and narrowly English artistic movement...” in *Worldwide Pre-Raphaelitism*, State of New York Press, 2005.; Alicia Craig Faxon, “A New View of Pre-Raphaelitism,” in *Pre-Raphaelite Art in its European Context* makes a case for revising such elements in Pre-Raphaelite scholarship; Dianne Sachko Macleod, “Pre-Raphaelitism: Progressive or Regressive” in *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, also raises the issue of dominant narratives surrounding the Pre-Raphaelites, especially surrounding the dominance of Modernism in art historical thought. A further challenge to the narrative from the point of view of the new art history came from Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock in their highly influential and critical review of the exhibition and its two publications edited by Leslie Parris. Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, “Patriarchal Power and the Pre-Raphaelites,” *Art History*, Dec. 1984, Vol. 7 Issue 4, p480-495. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8365.1984.tb00119.x

¹⁹ Deborah Cherry was to return to a number of these themes in an essay which revisits the 1984 exhibition with a discussion on the interrelationship between art historical scholarship and art markets in Giebelhausen and Barringer, *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, 17-51.

²⁰ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy* in Tim Barringer, Jason Rosenfield, and Alison Smith. *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant Garde* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing 2012), 231 – 236.

²¹ Marcia Pointon, ed. *Pre-Raphaelites re-viewed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989). Pointon’s book presented itself as a revision of the customary focus on the personality focused and bohemian elements of the artists’ lives and might therefore have been expected to examine the matter more forensically.

number of commonly held beliefs, the Pre-Raphaelites “have never been out of the public eye” and that however thought of in certain circles, the Pre-Raphaelites have had important exhibitions and publications “in every decade since their lifetimes.”²² She further identifies that the cumulative effect of these myths effectively works to deny the Pre-Raphaelites “a historical role in the lineage of modernist avant-garde movements.” I would posit that the reluctance to find room for the recognition of the movement’s more radical aspects forms part of the problem which this thesis attempts to address.²³ It remains difficult to explain the appearance of *The Finding* in terms of a Modernism that favours increasing painterly abstraction; nor a social history of art stance that focuses upon forms of identity such as gender or class. That is not to say that these matters are not important, however they are not the focus of this thesis. It can be argued that there is some residual tension within the field of art history regarding approaches to the Pre-Raphaelites.²⁴

The direction of travel in the development of the literature on the Pre-Raphaelites and Pre-Raphaelitism in the twentieth century is revealing. The segueing from an earlier, predominantly journalistic and biographical approach to that of the scholarly and critical is identified in William Fredeman’s seminal work *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* (1965). Fredeman’s venture marked the first serious attempt to collate and document the existing scholarship and other forms of literature associated with the movement.²⁵ It was this publication in addition to a high-profile exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite works in 1961 that prompted assumptions that the Pre-Raphaelites were in some way “re-discovered” in the 1960s. Jeremy Maas cites both these points in his account, *The Pre-Raphaelites: A Personal View*.²⁶ Fredeman’s book followed the completion of his doctorate on the Pre-Raphaelites in

²² Prettejohn, “The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy,” in Barringer et al, *Victorian Avant Garde*, 231.

²³ In addition to the matters of religious and racial identities to which I draw attention in this thesis, there is a relevance to gender and sexuality in *The Finding* in my view. However, this particular aspect falls outside the remit of this thesis. I refer to the appearance of the Jesus figure and the changing assumptions regarding his feminine or masculine qualities. Additionally, the figure of Mary who, in the Gospel text the painting purports to portray, has one of her only two speech roles in the New Testament. She speaks over and above her husband, and in the non-canonical version of the story, the doctors address her alone.

²⁴ The distinction between Prettejohn’s use of the expression “modernist avant-garde” and Modernism may require some hair splitting in its explanation in *Victorian Avant Garde*, 231. However, I maintain the Pre-Raphaelites cannot be satisfactorily explained in terms of an artistic and philosophical Modernism that rejects religion, Realism, Romanticism and ornament; that breaks with the rules of perspective and adopts a progressive flattening of the painted surface. That is not to say that the Pre-Raphaelites were not radical and innovative in their approach.

²⁵ William Fredeman, *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

²⁶ Leslie Parris, ed, *Pre-Raphaelite Papers* (London, Tate Gallery, Allen Lane, 1984), 233.

1956.²⁷ The compendium is a rich source of material and offers a useful outline of research and output as it stood in the mid-1960s. Additionally, this work prepared the ground for further critical study of the Pre-Raphaelites and associated research. In his introduction, Fredeman sets out one of the main conundrums concerning various perceptions of the Pre-Raphaelites, namely, were they authentically avant-garde or merely reactionary? It is a point to which the scholarship returns repeatedly.²⁸ Giebelhausen and Barringer write that the Pre-Raphaelites had until recently, been “condemned out of hand as an insignificant (sometimes even pernicious or perverse) episode in the history of English painting,” and accused of “derailing” the “train of artistic progress.”²⁹ The Pre-Raphaelites are often assumed to *unthinkingly* champion art from the past, rather than critique it; the name *Pre-Raphaelite* being the clearest signifier of that charge. Cumulatively, these matters have exacerbated general perceptions of the Pre-Raphaelites being backward-looking within a context of great societal and progressive change. This may be accounted for in part, by the choice to name themselves “pre”-Raphaelite with its associations rooted in European art’s more distant past with the associated attributes of Christian subject matter and unfashionable technique. All three members of the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood produced works with specifically Christian themes: John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1850), and Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *Found* (mid 1850s and unfinished at his death) and *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (The Annunciation) (1849-50). Additionally, there are links made between the Pre-Raphaelites and the German Nazarene group who similarly adopted a medieval-renaissance aesthetic style through which to explore Christian themes. This particular connection is most aptly ascribed to Ford Madox Brown who had encountered the German artists on a visit to Rome via Basel and Florence in 1845. However, an additional indirect influence upon

²⁷ According to Fredeman’s chapter *The Great Pre-Raphaelite Paperchase*, his was only the second ever doctoral dissertation on the Pre-Raphaelites, although it is not clear whether or not he means at his university or in terms of international scholarship. To further underline the point about the academic marginalisation of the Pre-Raphaelites, he claims it was only by chance that he was able to find a supervisor willing to take it on. The committee at the University of Oklahoma did not regard the Pre-Raphaelites as a “*bona fide* area of research.” In David Latham, ed. *Haunted Texts: Studies in Pre-Raphaelitism* (Toronto & London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 212.

²⁸ Barringer and Rosenfeld describe the avant-garde in relation to the Pre-Raphaelites as an “organised grouping with a self-conscious, radical collective project of overturning current orthodoxies and replacing them with new, critical practices often directly engaged with the contemporary world.” In *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde* (Tate Publishing, 2012), 9. Additionally, Charles Harrison explains that the term is associated with the “far-out and extreme,” and “The avant-garde artist is... seen as ... a wilful individualist outside normal society.” He then proceeds to link Modernism with avant-gardism which provides a useful indicator of why there have been difficulties with associating the Pre-Raphaelites as avant-garde, in *Modern Art & Modernism, OU course unit 1, Introduction*, rep. 1989, 61. It is not a requirement to take on the approach of Modernism to be considered avant-garde. Barringer and Rosenfeld’s claim that “Pre-Raphaelitism belongs among the very earliest of the historical avant-gardes,” is appropriate.

²⁹ Giebelhausen and Barringer, *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, 5.

Holman Hunt can be discerned via the many illustrations made by Johann Friedrich Overbeck for the *Pictorial Bible* he had been given by his father as a youngster.³⁰

Matters concerning the Pre-Raphaelites are confused by attempts to popularise the movement that result in a trivialisation of their output and thought. Fredeman introduces Pre-Raphaelitism as a deeply complex and at times, contradictory movement. He further identifies a problem concerning the literature produced during the artists' active years. The principal members of the "brotherhood," namely William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Everett Millais, never published (collectively at least) a definitive body of literature which might set out more coherently their aims and intentions. Cherry and Pollock draw attention to this in their criticism of the tendency expressed in the Tate's 1984 catalogue to conjure a Pre-Raphaelite manifesto from later memoirs and biographies.³¹ The lack of a specific manifesto of sorts creates a lacuna into which resulting inaccuracies and assumptions have taken root as other parties published their own perceptions of the artists' lives and works. The matter of relatives and descendants of the Pre-Raphaelites publishing sympathetic and uncritical accounts further adds to the perception that existing literature reflects inaccuracies and bias. There remains a residual argument concerning the use of such "evidence" to support various claims made by art historians concerning Pre-Raphaelitism. It is a point to which I have already alluded and shall return to in my discussion.

We have already seen that the Pre-Raphaelite nomenclature has contributed to the formation of negative associations. Fredeman brings to the reader's attention the matter of definitions. What is meant by Pre-Raphaelitism? He maintains that a slippage in terminology has led to assumptions that the Pre-Raphaelite project was a tightly honed movement with clear aesthetic agenda. The reality was much more complex. He advocates three broadly intersecting classifications, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the Pre-Raphaelite Movement and Pre-Raphaelitism. These headings correspond to his thesis that the movement was a sequential but not unified aesthetic development.³² The "Pre-Raphaelite" name along with

³⁰ *The Pictorial Bible* Vol 1. Notes by John Kitto. D.D. FSA. (Edinburgh and London: W. and R. Chambers 1836-37).

³¹ Cherry and Pollock, "Patriarchal Power," 487.

³² There is a case for a re-appraisal of the name "Pre-Raphaelite" to be understood as a follower of the art of an age. i.e., this is the age before ("pre") the *followers* of Raphael (i.e., Raphaelites) something to which Elizabeth Prettejohn helpfully draws our attention in the *Cambridge Companion*, 1.

their status as avant-garde or reactionaries, continues to be addressed time and again in commentary and scholarship.³³

Kenneth Bendiner's PhD thesis of 1979 followed by his (aforementioned) book, *An Introduction to Victorian Painting* in 1985 marked an attempt to forge a revived sense of seriousness towards nineteenth-century painting.³⁴ He cites the dominance of French art and the academic trends towards Modernism as reasons why English Victorian art was neglected somewhat within the academy. What enabled Victorian art to seem less irrelevant, he says was a return to "recognizable imagery" with the emergence of Pop art. It is Bendiner's chapter on Holman Hunt's *The Finding* that is most useful for the purposes of this thesis. Bendiner offers a detailed textual analysis drawing upon exhibition catalogues, biblical material in addition to Holman Hunt's own writings to provide an illuminating and rich account of the picture. However, in keeping with common practices I have identified, his reliance upon certain kinds of material evidence without apparent critical evaluation makes for a funnelling of meaning into what has subsequently passed for a stable, agreed truth. For example, Bendiner's reading of *The Finding* at certain points, repeats and reinforces Holman Hunt's preferred meaning, because it is from Holman Hunt's own carefully calibrated memoirs and Frederic Stephens's pamphlet that Bendiner locates his sources.

I find that this uncritical acceptance of Holman Hunt's memoirs, and other documents to reveal a weakness at the heart of some Pre-Raphaelite criticism. The Stephens pamphlet is indeed an important source of evidence (and what it evidences is open to debate). However, I would argue that it needs to be considered more critically within a wider examination of contexts. This point is supported by Giebelhausen and Barringer who suggest that art history was slow to interrogate historical records, regarding them unquestioningly as evidence to be taken at "face value."³⁵ By way of illustration, they note that literary scholars such as Laura Marcus sought a more interrogative approach to the treatment of source material in her 1989 essay on Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelites. In the chapter, Marcus draws attention to the existence of personal writings by and about the Pre-Raphaelites and highlights the dilemma

³³ Julie Codell writes of the fluidity of the term Pre-Raphaelites as an "arbitrary sign" which can allude to both rebel and old master, manliness or effeminacy, Britishness or cosmopolitanism, and tradition or modernity. Julie F. Codell, "Pre-Raphaelites from Rebels to Representatives: Masculinity, modernity, and National Identity in British and Continental art histories, c. 1880-1908," in Giebelhausen and Barringer, *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, 53-79.

³⁴ Bendiner, *An Introduction to Victorian Painting*, 4-5.

³⁵ Giebelhausen and Barringer, *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, 3.

about how to treat this material critically.³⁶ This will be a matter that I will necessarily return to.

Judith Bronkhurst's account of *The Finding* became part of what we now understand to be an important exhibition catalogue for *The Pre-Raphaelites* exhibition at the Tate Gallery London, in 1984.³⁷ The exhibition was the first comprehensive showing of Pre-Raphaelite works. To coincide, there were two publications both edited by Leslie Parris. In addition to the exhibition catalogue, there was another edited volume, *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*. Both publications provided a wide-ranging appraisal of the Pre-Raphaelites. However, part of what made the exhibition and accompanying writing appear to be such a landmark is the critical response to it. This has been attributed to the changes occurring within the art history world. Whilst some have interpreted the exhibition and its catalogue as something of a breakthrough in Pre-Raphaelite scholarship focusing upon the artwork rather than the lives and romances of the Pre-Raphaelite artists, others interpreted events differently. Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock's review of the publications for the journal *Art History* express exactly the view that there is, in this writing, an overemphasis upon Pre-Raphaelite biography and personality coupled with a detectable decoupling from social contexts. It has to be said that the oscillation of focus between the artists and their art, with considerably more attention given over to the artists as personalities, is a recognisable common thread within Pre-Raphaelite scholarship.³⁸ A subsequent volume of essays *Pre-Raphaelites Re-viewed* (1989) edited by Marcia Pointon addressed many of the points made by Cherry and Pollock's 1984 review article. The aim of the essays is to pose questions of cultural politics around the discourses surrounding the Pre-Raphaelites, marking a change in the direction of thought. Included in the volume was the aforementioned essay by Laura Marcus who makes a critical appraisal and deconstruction of the Pre-Raphaelites' own written material. Additionally, Marcia Pointon's essay on Holman Hunt positions his sojourns to the Holy Land in terms of colonial power and the discourse surrounding the Victorian travel narrative. I return to this essay in my later discussion on orientalism in chapter seven.

³⁶ Laura Marcus, "Brothers in their Anecdote: Holman Hunt's Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" in Pointon, *Pre-Raphaelites Re-Viewed*, 11-21.

³⁷ Now Tate Britain.

³⁸ It should be noted that Cherry and Pollock published twice on the Pre-Raphaelites in June and December 1984 in the journal *Art History*. Before the previously cited article they published this earlier work: Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, "Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: A Study of the Representation of Elizabeth Siddall," in *Art History*, Vol. 7. No. 2 June 1984.

The edited volume *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context* (1992), was the culmination of a symposium held in California at the Huntington Library and Art Gallery in 1991.³⁹ The title suggests the authors were sensitive to the criticism of the 1984 exhibition and publications with its focus upon contexts rather than biographical or commercial material. There are four essays and many illustrations which examine a range of themes and two catalogues of manuscripts and works of art. A particularly helpful essay by Malcolm Warner outlines the relevance of the London National Gallery for the Pre-Raphaelites as students and how its proximity enabled a substantial engagement with the collection. He notes the influence it had upon the young artists. This essay above all in this volume has proven to be invaluable for my own thinking about *The Finding* and certainly opened the way for my own observations regarding the influence of the collection which I discuss later in chapter four.

A further publication of note emanating from outside Britain is *Pre-Raphaelite Art in its European Context* (1995) edited by Susan P. Casteras and Alicia Craig Faxon. The volume avoids retelling the customary Pre-Raphaelite myth in setting out its revisionist approach which situates Pre-Raphaelitism within a Continental European context with influences flowing in both directions. According to the contributors, European art was influenced by Pre-Raphaelite art and literature as much as historical European art had influenced the Pre-Raphaelites. Norman Kleeblatt's essay on Simeon Solomon stands out as a relevant engagement with Jewish-Christian relations as exemplified within the Pre-Raphaelite oeuvre.

In keeping with the impetus to reconfigure the Pre-Raphaelites as objects for serious study, Ellen Harding's edited volume *Re-Framing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays* provides a wide range of essays focusing at times on one work, or one artist however with varying methodologies.⁴⁰ Its remit and scope both recall and are differentiated from its predecessor Marcia Pointons's *Pre-Raphaelites Reviewed*. Furthermore, I would concur with Beth Harris's review in that both volumes address some of the same subjects such as pictorial space and Pre-Raphaelite texts.⁴¹ However, there is a greater scope in the Harding with a wider range of approaches. Two essays take Holman Hunt as the focus, another considers Holman Hunt's setting up of an equivalent to the Impressionist counterpart to the *salon de refusés* exhibition in 1863. Julie Codell takes

³⁹ Malcolm Warner et al, *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context* (California: Henry. E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1992).

⁴⁰ Ellen Harding, ed., *Reframing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays* (Hampshire: Scolar Press, 1996).

⁴¹ Beth Harris, "Reviewed Work(s) Re-Framing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays by Ellen Harding," *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Summer, 1999), 185-186.

Holman Hunt's memoirs as a starting point for a discussion around masculinity and national identity and Judith Bronkhurst's examination of Holman Hunt's picture frames (I will return to this) widens the discussion outward from the painting in a pertinent reminder that a work of art is more than an image. Dianne Sachko Macleod explores the matter of patronage using a combination of psychoanalytical and historical frameworks in an essay which is concerned to address methodological issues within art history. I find her preliminary conclusions intriguing in terms of advocating a balance between using postmodern research methods and traditional archival work. A further essay to note in Harding's collection is Jan Marsh's "'For the Wolf or the Babe he is Seeking to Devour?' The Hidden Impact of the American Civil War on British Art," which focuses on Rossetti's *Beloved* (1865-6). Rossetti's painting, inspired by the biblical Song of Solomon, depicts six figures with differing ethnic characteristics. The essay considers the pictorial and political impact of the black figure in the picture's foreground. Marsh's work is an example of the discipline's critical engagement with representations of minority figures. An interdisciplinary pathway will frequently require a flexible approach to methods, and as such, the essays have contributed to this thesis.⁴²

Dianne Sachko Macleod additionally addresses the question of the Pre-Raphaelite oeuvre as "progressive" or "regressive" in *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity*.⁴³ The chapter examines ambiguity surrounding Pre-Raphaelite avant-garde status via the conflict between the artists and their Manchester patrons at the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition which took place between May-October 1857. What I find interesting is the discussion around perceptions on the part of the Manchester patrons and their keenness for modernity and to associate themselves with progress and change. Pre-Raphaelite paintings were perceived by patrons as modern, challenging and rebellious even. Once again, the matter of the name *Pre-Raphaelite* comes into the discussion. It was the "Pre-Raphaelite" name that patrons found off-putting, implying as it did, a look back to the past rather than a progression towards the future. Macleod's chapter provides a useful contextualisation of Pre-Raphaelite work which takes into account the subtleties of navigating a system of patronage, the formal artistic elements of their work and its links to art history. Additionally, she situates their work within the history of modernist painting and criticism. She finds them to be more radical and forward thinking than they previously have been presented. She writes that before the emergence of French

⁴² Jan Marsh returned to this theme in 2005 with *Black Victorians: Black People in British Art, 1800-1900* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2005).

⁴³ Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class*, 139 – 195.

Impressionism, English art had been considered “the more daring” positing that the Pre-Raphaelite movement is assessed within the wrong context. Rather than evaluate Pre-Raphaelitism (or English art) in terms of the French avant-garde, it is arguably more helpful to situate English art within its own context, and accordingly, the Pre-Raphaelites within that context.⁴⁴ Macleod is not alone in identifying a radical element to Pre-Raphaelitism as I will come to below.

In a further engagement with cultural contexts Tim Barringer’s volume *The Pre-Raphaelites* provides a rounded account less dependent upon dominant narratives and trends. It provides a thematic contextualisation of Holman Hunt’s work within a wider religious and social context. Under a heading of *Art, Religion and Empire*, Barringer acknowledges the religious impulse behind Holman Hunt’s painting *Light of the World* (1851-3) and Middle East paintings. He further identifies orientalism as a crucial aspect of Holman Hunt’s oeuvre. However, with regard to *The Finding*, it is notable that it is F.G. Stephens’s orientalist writing in the pamphlet accompanying *The Finding’s* exhibition that Barringer highlights for comment. This is a matter I address more than once in the thesis in chapters three and seven.⁴⁵

The approach taken by scholars and critics towards Pre-Raphaelitism is examined further in Elizabeth Prettejohn’s research article “Aesthetic Value and the Professionalization of Victorian Art Criticism,” where she demonstrates that the debates over Pre-Raphaelitism have existed since their formation. Prettejohn examines the emergence in the nineteenth-century of a professionalised art criticism that was strenuously tied to the coverage given to the Pre-Raphaelites. Her article brings to the fore the matter of the artist’s dependence upon art criticism for building a professional reputation. As she illustrates, a French counterpart could rely upon state patronage and prizes to accrue status. This meant that art criticism in Britain took on a significance that contrasted with that of other countries and became an essential tool in the quest for recognition as an artist. This was clearly understood by the Pre-Raphaelites themselves as they endeavoured to control commentary about their work. This is an important point to note given that much of the material produced during the Pre-Raphaelites’ active years was to be construed as evidence in future contexts.⁴⁶ According to

⁴⁴ Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class*, 149.

⁴⁵ Barringer, *The Pre-Raphaelites* and the revised edition, *Reading the Pre-Raphaelites* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Prettejohn, “Aesthetic Value and the Professionalization of Victorian Art Criticism 1837-78,” in *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol.2, Issue 1, 1st March 1997, 71-94.

Prettejohn, art criticism was also a source of education and taught readers of periodicals about the cultural values attached to the commentary. Commentary could be quite diverse and contentious. A nineteenth-century critic's reputation often involved taking a position on the Pre-Raphaelites because of their contentiousness. As we shall see with the crucial example of Stephens addressed in chapter three, many reviews of art in magazines or periodicals were published anonymously at first and only latterly was writing attributed in any definitive way.

Turning to more recent scholarship, Elizabeth Prettejohn's writing continues to make a crucial contribution to the field. She draws attention to the continuing enigma around the name Pre-Raphaelite in her introduction to the *Cambridge Companion* mentioned earlier.⁴⁷ The implied association with a pre-*Raphael* past has prevented the Pre-Raphaelites from taking their place amongst the ranks of the avant-gardes. Notwithstanding this, Prettejohn reminds us that the Pre-Raphaelite name remains enduringly successful. Who in the modern day has not heard of the Pre-Raphaelites? In its renown we overlook the strangeness inherent within the name and the radicalism associated with it. Citing Dickens, she points out the subversive tone of the movement's by-line, which Chloe Johnson understands as its *branding*.⁴⁸ By signing their paintings with the enigmatic "PRB," the young upstarts were mocking the conventions of the Royal Academy's signature "RA," standing for Royal Academician.⁴⁹

Prettejohn continues with her revisionist stance in *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, published (2000, 2007). This is a survey of Pre-Raphaelite art which affirms the growing relevance for the Pre-Raphaelites amongst academics and practitioners. She stresses that this volume is less of a "history" and more of an aesthetic criticism focusing on the artwork. She considers how the power of a group identity, or a "brotherhood" meant that their work progressed along certain lines and had the impact it did. Pre-Raphaelite history is one of "a collaborative practice" rather than a consideration of the individual artists. In a contrasting position to Cherry and Pollock's critique, Prettejohn singles out the 1984 exhibition for recognition as a pivotal event in establishing a canon of Pre-Raphaelite work; additionally, in addition to crediting the catalogue with stimulating much in the way of subsequent valuable

⁴⁷ Prettejohn, *Cambridge Companion*, On the Pre-Raphaelite name, see also Prettejohn, "High Renaissance Inspirations: Raphael and the Venetians," in Melissa E. Buron (et al) *Truth and Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters*, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 2018, 167.

⁴⁸ The enduring interest shown towards the Pre-Raphaelites is discussed in Chloe Johnson's recent research article, "Presenting the Pre-Raphaelites: From Radio Reminiscences to Desperate Romantics," *Visual Culture in Britain*, 11:1 (2010): 67-92, 68.

⁴⁹ Prettejohn, *Cambridge Companion*, 2.

research. She draws attention to the vast quantities of literature published both in Britain and abroad concerning the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, the scope of which occupies a wide temporal and thematic range. This includes literature by the Pre-Raphaelites themselves in addition to commentary from some of the leading avant-garde artists and thinkers in wider Europe. Prettejohn underpins these claims by drawing attention to the fact that in every decade “since their lifetimes” prominent authors have published about [the Pre-Raphaelites] and there have been frequent and important exhibitions of their work.⁵⁰ Time and again, Prettejohn challenges the inference that the Pre-Raphaelites occupy a trivial position in the history of art. Her writing demonstrates that there are many aspects of their work that have been overlooked, not least their insurgency. Radicalism manifests in varying forms and the Pre-Raphaelites continue to present challenges to audiences.

The major Pre-Raphaelite exhibitions to note include the already cited Britain’s Tate Gallery in 1984, and 2000, 2004 and 2012. In 2008-9 Manchester City Art Gallery held a major retrospective of William Holman Hunt’s work. Each of these exhibitions provided substantial catalogues which brought to the fore a clear academic interest in what can now be recognised as the radical nature of Pre-Raphaelite artists.

Carol Jacobi’s *William Holman Hunt: Painter, Painting, Paint* (2006), offers a consideration of Holman Hunt’s work as a practitioner that builds upon her earlier doctoral work of 1996. Additionally, Judith Bronkhurst’s *Catalogue Raisonné* on Holman Hunt is a substantial two volume set provides a wealth of contextual and historical information for any scholar of Holman Hunt’s work and it has proven invaluable to my research for this thesis. The entire process undertaken in the creation of *The Finding* is outlined with detail and clarity.⁵¹ It is work such as this which has enabled my own research to progress so deftly. Additionally, I have already referred to the edited volume *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, published in 2009, which provides a critical engagement with particular focus upon the textual outputs of the Pre-Raphaelites. I would note Giebelhausen’s critical examination of Holman Hunt’s writings which proved helpful in my research.⁵²

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Prettejohn, “The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy” in Barringer et al, *Victorian Avant-Garde*, 231.

⁵¹ Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 176.

⁵² Michaela Giebelhausen, “The Quest for Christ: William Holman Hunt and the Writing of Artistic Motivation,” in Giebelhausen and Barringer, *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, 117-137.

1.3 Critical Reworking - The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters

The following publications have been invaluable to my research for this thesis. In 2017-18 the renewed flurry of interest in the Pre-Raphaelites as an avant-garde and radical art movement was demonstrated in a number of publications. Elizabeth Prettejohn's book *Modern Painters Old Masters: The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War* (2017), examines the way in which Victorian artists made use of old master paintings to develop their own ground-breaking art. I find this publication especially useful for its critical engagement with art history's methods. For example, in the introduction, she explains that not all of her assertions can be "proved" in the usual manner (that is to say, by means of documentary or empirical evidence) and that they will necessarily remain "open to contention." This chimes with some of my own approaches and my identification of a number of historical influences consciously adopted by Holman Hunt. I discuss relevant aspects of my own working method in what follows, some of which enabled me to identify these influences in ways that distinctly harmonise with Prettejohn's approach. Additionally, I find her location of relationships between works of art intriguing and helpful in the light of my own attempts to link works of art not customarily appraised together. Chiming with one of Prettejohn's chapters (above) the National Gallery in London opened a tightly focused exhibition in 2018 entitled *Reflections* which demonstrated the influence of Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) upon the Pre-Raphaelites. (Fig 39) This was very helpful in demonstrating an examination of the critical and serious engagement with art from the past. In the case of Van Eyck, the use of symbolism to convey religious and spiritual truths was a significant influence upon Holman Hunt.

In 2018 there were two further notable publications stressing Renaissance and Northern European influences on the Pre-Raphaelites in addition to their radicalism. *Truth and Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters* published to accompany an exhibition at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco, focuses further on the historical artistic sources used by the Pre-Raphaelites. *Victorian Radicals: From the Pre-Raphaelites to the Arts and Crafts Movement* (2018) a book produced to accompany a touring exhibition in 2019-20, places the focus upon the radical elements surrounding the Pre-Raphaelites, stressing the forward looking and modern character of their project.⁵³ In addition to the above, two periodicals in particular have proved invaluable for my research and their contributions are cited where

⁵³ Martin Ellis, Victoria Osborne, Tim Barringer, *Victorian Radicals: From the Pre-Raphaelites to the Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Prestel Publishing Ltd., 2018).

relevant. They are the *Pre-Raphaelite Society Review* based in Britain and dedicated to sharing worldwide research, reviews and illustrations connected with the Pre-Raphaelites and their successors. And, *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, a university-based journal based in York University, Canada.

Of particular interest for my study is the consideration of Holman Hunt's connection to and interest in biblical narrative and religion.⁵⁴ George Landow's publications *William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism* and *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows: Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art and Thought* and published in 1979 and 1980 respectively provide a useful contextual background to understanding the biblical symbolism in Victorian painting, and Holman Hunt's work in particular. Landow draws upon biblical and art-historical references in addition to Holman Hunt's own writings which are treated, typically as supporting evidence. Landow stresses Hunt's religious conception of the "rabbis" in *The Finding* and makes claims for his lack of anti-Semitism. However, his explanation and descriptions of the rabbis emanating as they do from the perspective of Christian typology exposes a particular bias.

Continuing with biblical themes, Michaela Giebelhausen's substantial *Painting the Bible: Representation and Belief in Mid-Victorian Britain* (2006) charts the development of religious painting at a time of great change and flux. This interdisciplinary work has as its main focus the Pre-Raphaelites and the impact their ideas had upon wider aspects of Victorian art and thought. I find the focus helpful in navigating the subtleties of protestant concerns with the image coupled with the more formal artistic concerns, and the particular examination of Holman Hunt's endeavours to become a "painter of the Christ." The contextualisation of Victorian life in more general terms enables a consideration of how scientific and technological developments impacted upon religious and spiritual thought, and the many questions such developments raise. Her account has brought to my attention the role played by illustration in protestant bibles and the likely influence that this had on Holman Hunt's conceptions of his *Finding* painting. Further to this, Nancy Davenport's research article "Layered Belief in the Art of a Pre-Raphaelite Realist" charts Holman Hunt's developing attitude to and engagement with religious thought with a consideration of *The*

⁵⁴ Gertrud Schiller's *Iconography of Christian Art, Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 1. (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1971), 124-5, provides some useful background. There is little available literature on this genre of art and most accounts available online refer back to Schiller's text.

Finding.⁵⁵ She charts the evolving and fluid nature of Holman Hunt's religious position, challenging assumptions about the nature of his religious thought. I concur with her position that there was no fixed religious position in Holman Hunt's worldview. Indeed, the process by which he came to create *The Finding*, namely, his visits to The Holy Land, were instrumental in his religious development.⁵⁶

Both Giebelhausen's and Davenport's accounts move the discussion about Holman Hunt and his religious outlook into more serious territory than the frequent focus on the artists' lives. However, their accounts do rely upon familiar sources and approaches, for example, the now familiar reliance upon Stephens's pamphlet. There is little drawn out from the artwork itself. Additionally, there are only fleeting references to the Jewish presence within *The Finding*. As Marcia Pointon briefly notes about *The Finding*, there is the incongruity of a supposedly Protestant image comprising of "Jewish archaeological detail."⁵⁷ Bronkhurst, Davenport, Giebelhausen et al, all describe but do not interrogate the Jewish presence. This presents a lacuna which my investigation seeks to address.

1.4 Summary

In summary, the literature about the Pre-Raphaelites is fraught with issues surrounding their status as avant-garde artists and their place within art history. There have been substantive challenges to the dominant narratives, and recent research has looked again at how Victorian artists addressed and challenged the past with a radicalism hitherto neglected. There is a tentative acknowledgement of the Jewishness within a Christian painting, however, commentary regards the matter as settled and fails to see the conundrum it presents. This is compounded by the propensity to ground analysis upon F.G. Stephens's pamphlet.

There remains a lacuna concerning *The Finding's* Jewish presence within the literature on Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelites. In part, this is due to the requirements produced by disciplinary boundaries and methodological considerations prioritising and

⁵⁵ Davenport, "Layered Belief," 29-77.

⁵⁶ The extent of Holman Hunt's openness to alternative spiritual approaches is noted in a recent dissertation which documents Holman Hunt's attendance at a demonstration of mesmerism with Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1851. Cited in Anna Francesca Maddison, *Conjugal Love and the Afterlife: New Readings of Selected Works by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in the Context of Swedenborgian-Spiritualism*, (PhD diss., Edge Hill University, 2013) 63-64.

⁵⁷ Pointon, *Pre-Raphaelites Re-Viewed*, 37.

organising analysis in terms of objective distancing and approved types of evidence. In order to address the lacuna, I rethink the working process which I now turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Method

“*Questioning builds a way.*”

Martin Heidegger¹

This chapter begins with a discussion on the philosophical background to my examination of *The Finding*. I discuss phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches to encountering art as a rejoinder in part to previous treatments. I then explain my own approach in more detail. As my literature review attests, plenty has been written about Holman Hunt, his paintings and the Pre-Raphaelites. Much of this is helpful and interesting in pointing out something in the way of the story of the painting and the way in which writing about it shapes perceptions. And yet, I have identified that for whatever reason, the story stops short of examining the Jewish presence in the painting. Additionally, it is also apparent that much commentary refers to texts as much as (if not more than) the painting itself. As I began my research, I noticed that the customary reliance upon documentary evidence to explain works of art, whilst useful (and appropriate) in certain contexts, is less reliable for this thesis. Accordingly, rather than putting forward evidence to support a reading of the painting, I take the view that *The Finding* is itself evidence for what I subsequently characterise as a *discourse of disputation*. Precise definitions of this will seem fairly nebulous at this point; however, the matter will become clearer as the thesis progresses, and will be specifically addressed in chapter six.²

Given the pitfalls that could ensue from grounding my own responses upon the writing of others (whilst acknowledging that this is not completely inescapable) I began with the view that my greatest concern should be to engage with the painting; to become fully acquainted with it, to let it, for want of a better expression, *speak*. I felt this was necessary (if for no other reason) because of the sheer complexity of the picture. Given the picture’s intense quantity of detail, my treatment of it could be akin to a process of *reading* congruent with the painting’s own textuality. What I mean by that is the sense of having to decode all of

¹ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (London: Harper & Row, 1977), 3.

² Suffice to say at this point, the discourse springs from multifarious elements such as religious and cultural identity and a desire to secure a grounding for knowledge and truth. It is revealed (amongst other methods) by the artistic and textual engagements with it as I will demonstrate in what follows.

its meticulously rendered detail. However, the question follows, does Holman Hunt's coding of Jewish symbols and Christian typology apply universally across time and space? From the time of the exhibition doubts about the stability of *The Finding's* meanings existed. The process of decoding is one that viewers have undergone since the production of the original aforementioned key plate and pamphlet in 1860. Additionally, the painting is surrounded by *actual* text, in three languages; on its frame, on the inlets and within the picture itself. *The Finding* does not speak so much as *appears*; it shows itself. In what is more of a process than method, I pay close attention to what is present to me, and what is ultimately revealed or disclosed by the encounter.

2.1 Encountering Paintings and Opening up a World

If surrendering to the painting's revelations seems somewhat flocculent, I could claim to be in good company. There has been something of a return to encountering the artwork in both the academic and popular sphere of art writing. One example is a recent work by T.J. Clark. His *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing* marks something of a departure from his oeuvre of Marxian art history.³ The book describes his encounters with two works of art by Poussin to which he undergoes repeated visits whilst recording his responses. His treatment of the work of art and the relationship between it and the viewer is a significant step away from the expectation that a work of art underpins, or is used to underpin an ideological premise. I find Clark's documented experience intriguing and helpful not least because he refers to the process as an experiment, and from his perspective, something of a departure. One might ask, why should such a prolonged encounter with painting be considered an *experiment* by an art historian? The question is relevant to this thesis. It is rare to find extended treatments focused upon one work (in the case of Clark's study, two) and the book is presented as "steer[ing] art writing into new territory," with Clark's prolonged encounter with two paintings in addition to his diaristic approach. I would argue that the two go hand in hand.

Clark takes a step away from the artwork-as-written-about, and notwithstanding his own use of prose to do this, foregrounds the act of looking and the encountering with painting. So radical is this step, that reviewers commented thus. In Charlotte Kent's words, Clark's "...alternate writing style, (is) one that permits uncertainty, confusion, meandering

³ The preface makes this point explicit from the outset. T.J. Clark, *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing*. London: Yale University Press, 2006, vii-viii.

rather than the battle cry of the revolutionary.”⁴ Elizabeth Prettejohn asks whether or not the book is Clark’s palinode, and implies this may be so. To paraphrase, whereas Clark’s first “enemies” were the formalists and connoisseurs, his “new enemies are Clark’s own disciples,” by which she refers to those who, having learned from Clark’s fulsome social contextualisation of art, have extrapolated a simplified “notion of art being at any tawdry ideology’s service.”⁵ I believe we can agree here that context is important. As Clark himself writes, “...who now thinks it is not?” However, his discernment of a shift of emphasis in scholarship towards a “parody notion” of art “belonging to the world” and becoming incorporated into an “image regime,” suggests a recognition that his earlier aims and endeavours have been stretched beyond recognition, and have become systematized. It is time to return to the work of art and to its specificity, its material qualities and to acknowledge its distance from the verbal.⁶

In *The Sight of Death*, Clark writes about the changing impressions he perceives on each occasion he encounters the paintings. What transpires is the strong sense of experiencing the art and allowing the work to speak as it were, in a “record of looking.” This becomes more evident as he reveals that there was initially no plan afoot to compile a book, it simply occurred to him that what he was doing might work in this way. He writes of his hope that his notes would show that “certain pictures demand such looking and repay it...(and) astonishing things happen if one gives oneself over to the process...” At one point he remarks that “paintings are capable of getting in the way of our framing of them.” I find that point intriguing as I attempt to uncouple *The Finding* from the Pre-Raphaelite cortege.

Furthermore, I find echoes of Martin Heidegger’s thought in the use of the word “framing,” and it must be said, the echoes continue throughout. I hear them in Clark’s many references to, for example, *worlds* of meaning, “true thought,” and especially in the phrase “buzz of chatter,” chatter being Heidegger’s expression (in translation) for inauthentic speech. However, there are less trivial parallels.⁷ Clark’s mission to spend time with the paintings, to be open to what is disclosed by them mirrors Heidegger’s remarks on an (unnamed) Van Gogh painting.⁸ Additionally, Clark’s disdain for what he terms the “image

⁴ Charlotte Kent, “The Poetics of a Political Vision in T.J. Clark’s *The Sight of Death*,” *Word and Image*, 43:2, 176-186. DOI: 10.1080/02666286.2017.1396632.

⁵ Clark *Sight of Death*, 122, cited in Prettejohn, 2007, 770.

⁶ Clark *Sight of Death*, 121-2.

⁷ “World” in Heidegger’s conceptualisation of the word may be construed here as frame of reference, or shared world of understanding. We might even understand it to mean that a “world” is a *discourse* opened to us.

⁸ Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of a Work of Art” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, tr. A. Hofstadter, London, Harper & Row, 1971. 40. (Hereon in abbreviated to *PLT*).

regime” and his discernment of a slide towards putting art to work in the service of ideology, reverberates with Heidegger’s derision of the “art industry” and the associated commodification of art. More general reverberations can be heard in the many references to, and concerns with language. Additionally, quotations from Nietzsche, and an emphasis upon thinking, especially the idea of thinking for its own sake in the course of a project that emerged from that process of thinking. Most starkly, Clark’s concerns resonate powerfully around the “terrible moment” that we are living through “...in the politics of imaging, envisioning, visualizing; and the more a regime of visual flow, displacement, disembodiment, endless available revisability of the image...”⁹ Here lie anxieties, articulated by Heidegger in *The Age of the World Picture* and *The Question Concerning Technology* where questions of enframing and systematisation are understood as “worldviews,” representation, and totalizing objectivity. And what is the sight of death if not a concern for *being*, Heidegger’s most enduring of concerns, and *being towards death* at that?¹⁰

Clark’s yearning for focus and stillness laments the lack of time we are willing to give over to works of art within the busi-ness of modern life. As Heidegger puts it in a reference to the machinations of what he termed “the art industry,” an engagement with the work of art itself is in danger of being lost in “all this busy activity.”¹¹ I take a number of points from Heidegger’s remarks. Firstly, the commodification of art can get in the way of our understanding it. This is not restricted to the process of buying and selling, it includes the museum environment that provides a setting into context with relevant information to hand. Additionally, we are encouraged to view it in terms of aesthetics and moreover, subjectively. As Iain D. Thomson writes, we view works of art as subjects “confronting an external art object” meaning we can miss “the way that art works inconspicuously in the background of human existence to shape and transform our basic sense of what is and what matters.”¹² I take from this an understanding that aspects of *The Finding* become lost amongst the distractions of Stephens’s words enmeshed with the renowned story of the painting nestled within many professional accounts. We are not short of information or knowledge about the painting, but this does not necessarily translate into what is truthful. In her insightful study of Heidegger’s

⁹ Clark *Sight of Death*, 121.

¹⁰ By way of a brief explanatory note, Heidegger’s magnum opus, *Being and Time*, characterises human existence as one which is *being toward death*. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (1927; repr., Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962).

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *PLT*, 40.

¹² Iain D. Thomson, *Heidegger, Art and Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 73.

treatment of art, Lesley Chamberlain's summary is helpful: Artwork has the power to reveal truth, which is not concerned with "what we know, but what *is*."¹³

Heidegger's philosophical questions about art have helped my understanding of the disclosive potential of *The Finding*.¹⁴ His thought on art developed over a substantial (if turbulent) career and is not easily distilled into accessible segments.¹⁵ Additionally, he is not didactic and therefore never advocates a course of action for readers to pursue. It follows that there is no "method" to be gleaned, and there is nothing to be "applied" or "used" here. His preoccupation with *being* and his long-standing interest in art and technology offer considerable scope for understanding the snares that befall the art historian. Moreover, as this thesis progressed it became apparent that his renowned essay, *The Origin of a Work of Art* enabled (and indeed prompted) me to ask relevant questions about *The Finding* in addition to the process of working through the problem I had set myself.¹⁶ It is an essay to which scholars in various fields return for the purpose of discussion and furtherance of enthusiastic debate.¹⁷

In *The Origin of a Work of Art*, Heidegger begins with questions about the essence of art. In asking "what is art?" he does not propose the presence of a fixed substance underlying art that we can somehow detect. What we encounter in art is an "essential tension" (the word is frequently translated as "strife") that exists in the artwork and within the structure of all intelligibility.¹⁸ Heidegger draws attention to the *thingliness* of the artwork. By this we refer to its presence, its "being there," (its *da-sein*) which is shown (amongst other ways) by our

¹³ Chamberlain, *A Shoe Story*, 56.

¹⁴ For an account of my decision to work with Heidegger's philosophy in this thesis, see appendix iv.

¹⁵ As Julian Young points out, Heidegger's thought concerning art is not confined to his renowned essay on the *Origin of a Work of Art*, although many commentators restrict their commentary to this one work. He argues that although they are right to begin with it, Heidegger's thought on art had another "forty years to run" after the *Origin* essay. Furthermore, few acknowledge Heidegger's fairly intense engagement with modern art, including the work of (amongst others) Braque, Klee and Cézanne. Furthermore, Heidegger was gainfully concerned and involved with sculpture. Julian Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), also, Andrew J. Mitchell, *Heidegger Among the Sculptors: Body, Space and the Art of Dwelling*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ This is especially the case with regard to the matter of objectification which became increasingly significant as this thesis developed.

¹⁷ A basic university library search for Heidegger's "The Origin of a Work of Art," yields over 500,000 results for research articles; on the researcher website Academia.edu, for a search incorporating the previous five years, over 450,000 results are returned, of which over 60,000 were journal articles. (12th September 2021) This suggests that across a wide range of academic fields and geographical locations the essay remains a focus of scholarly interest.

¹⁸ Thomson, *Heidegger, Art and Postmodernity*, 75-76.

ability to point to it.¹⁹ An artwork is an object that may hang on a wall, but this is not, as Heidegger puts it, “like a rifle or a hat,” it is something more meaningful.²⁰ I believe that it is important to understand *The Finding* as humanly-made, and possessing material properties. However, this is not in order to tell the story of the artwork but to understand its *being*, how it comes to be and form meaning. A related point is to give credence to the making of the artwork, i.e., the work involved in the “work.” (I return to this presently) This is, in addition to its own properties, an important rejoinder to the image-led environment we currently inhabit, a point alluded to by T.J. Clark (above).

Heidegger rejects the idea of art as the product of an individual artistic genius. For the purposes of this thesis for example, we do not construe Holman Hunt as the *author* of *The Finding*. Although he *is* the artist who created it, its origins lie elsewhere within a network of shared understanding.²¹ The matter of the artist’s (or anyone’s) subjectivity extends to Heidegger’s own reluctance to define terms.²² He does not name the painting singled out for discussion in his essay, although it has been identified since as Van Gogh’s *Boots with Laces* (1886).²³ There is also the potential for the artwork to have a kind of subjectivity, because Heidegger sees it as having an effect in the world with its power to disclose. I will take a moment to open this up because it is relevant to the discussion.

In phenomenological terms, the phrasing of *artwork* incorporates the word “work,” which shows itself in both English and the original German as both noun and verb-like. Accordingly, Heidegger alludes to the “work” of art, not just the noun, but the verb, as in the making (working) of the “work” and its coming into being through its “working.” Heidegger asks, “what is... at work...in the work?”²⁴ In the case of the painting in question (Van Gogh’s *Boots*) Heidegger drives us towards the element of *work* that is implicated in the boots; the boots of the “worker” and to the work of the woman peasant he conjures in his

¹⁹ There are invariably multiple meanings and associations attached to words in Heidegger’s writing. He factors in the potential to echo other words thereby bringing additional concepts to the fore. *Dasein*, for German speakers is a normal word meaning “existence” and is not one of Heidegger’s renowned neologisms. However, I take the construction to point to the “there” aspect as much as the “being” aspect. In other words, we are not merely *being*, we are being *there*, at a particular time and place.

²⁰ Heidegger, *PLT*, 19.

²¹ It is clear that many strands of “new art history” make use of similar thought lines attempting as they do to contextualise the making of art. My issue is with any certainty regarding methodologies as reliable or resulting in truth. This is an issue for art historians such as Hammam Aldouri, Michael Baxandall and T.J. Clark.

²² Heidegger resists the scholarly convention of defining terms. In the *Origin* essay, he refers to a range of concepts such as “world” and “earth.” At this point in Heidegger’s oeuvre, *world* is a familiar term in his writing; however, “earth” is a new concept introduced in the essay. There is no statement that will tell the reader: “when I refer to earth, I mean this...” The reader learns its meaning via engagement with the essay.

²³ Alternately known as *A Pair of Shoes*.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *PLT*, 58.

responses.²⁵ The work extends to the toiling of the earth (soil) itself. What is *at work* (in the art-work) is also the material, the earthy-coloured *earth* pigments that are ground into paint. What has come from the earth, from the natural ground is material that is transformed into the cultural, world-ly thing, that we know as a painting. “Earth” is Heidegger’s new concept in this essay that he places alongside “world.” “Earth” and “world” exist in a dynamic tension, and we can understand this, in part when considering the visible brush marks that oscillate with the recognisable imagery of the boots. Lee Braver refers to this as the “Gestalt switch.” The earthy qualities draw attention to the material which is transformed into the *world* of the peasant woman. Lee Braver remarks that the artwork’s “createdness” reminds us of its very existence, and the possibility that it might never have been. It is the revealing of its creation that makes its drawing our attention to the worlds it opens up so poignant.²⁶ There is a further aspect to Heidegger’s concept of *earth* to explore here. It is Heidegger’s way of drawing attention to the way art works function to shape what is important in our world.

Turning to *The Finding*, if I consider the painting through this earth/world lens, I initially understand that Holman Hunt conceals the “earth” understood here as the materials used to make the painting. Hunt’s painting technique and naturalistic realism work to hide its painterly qualities. The “earth” recedes as the imagery (“world”) comes forward. In concealing his mark-making, Hunt chooses to foreground the written accounts of his “work” rather than let it be shown in the painting. Heidegger’s essay posits that *earth* is the necessary context in which every meaningful “worlding” emerges. Let us take this a little further. Heidegger’s examination of the *boots* painting demonstrates his premise that a work of art has the potential to *open up a world to us*.²⁷ It can bring into focus elements which are not noticeable in our everyday existence causing us to see things anew. In the case of *The Finding*, Holman Hunt’s depiction of Jewish paraphernalia or Jewish persons brings them into focus in a way that would not occur if we encountered the objects (or persons) in their everyday setting. In this sense, art discloses (brings out of concealment) something truthful to us. This is how George Steiner, on Heidegger’s thought, puts it, “Art is not, as in Plato or

²⁵ See also Chamberlain, *A Shoe Story* for a comprehensive examination of both Heidegger’s essay and the subsequent art historical fallout over the painting of boots specifically involving Meyer Schapiro and Jacques Derrida. Iain D. Thomson makes the point that Heidegger’s choice to discuss Van Gogh (who was hated by the Nazis) in conjunction with the idea of a *woman* labourer, which was to become an anti-fascist trope, demonstrates the extent to which Heidegger had moved away from Nazi ideology by 1935-6. Iain D. Thomson, *Heidegger Art and Postmodernity*, 71, fn. 8.

²⁶ Lee Braver, *Heidegger: Thinking of Being* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014) 189.

²⁷ World here is meant in Heidegger’s sense of the word which, for ease may be construed here as frame of reference, or shared world of understanding. We might even understand it to mean that a “world” is a *discourse* opened to us.

Cartesian realism, an imitation of the real. It is the more real.”²⁸ Hans Georg Gadamer, in his interpretation of Heidegger’s thought, explains firstly, that the (Van Gogh) boots contain “The whole world of rural life...” and that the artwork, which is not an object, “...rather stands in itself. By standing-in -itself it not only belongs to its world; its world is present in it.”²⁹

The opening up of a world does not merely concern what is pictorially representational or resembling in art. It is not simply an opening up of Holman Hunt’s version of Pre-Raphaelitism or Victorian religious anxieties (although they are present) it is for example, the disclosure of historical Jewish-Christian relations, or even an ambiguous, uncertain construing of orientalism. In this context, we might see that Stephens’s pamphlet is an attempt to conceal or circumvent what is unconcealed in the painting. Hence my own account is predicated upon what *appears* in the work rather than what was written about it.

2.2 Play: Gadamer’s Truth and Method

I have thus far set out a framework for my approach to the painting. I now segue to incorporate the thoughts of Heidegger’s former student, Hans Georg Gadamer into the discussion, which will form a pathway toward a working process. Gadamer’s *Truth and Method* (1960) is in my view, a much-neglected text within the broad fields of art history and criticism. *Truth and Method* was Gadamer’s *magnum opus* in which he develops certain strands of Heidegger’s thought on art. Both Heidegger and subsequently Gadamer, resist the Cartesian notion that the use of a correct method and rational procedures would lead to certainty in knowledge. They take issue with the idea that historical or objective distancing is ever possible. Additionally, they were concerned about an increasing dependence upon a system of thought within the academy that was indebted to scientific modes of thinking.³⁰ Understanding the world is not something a person does within the privacy of the mind, but rather through being within and experiencing the world.

In terms of an engagement with cultural texts (of all kinds) Gadamer refers to the concept of a *hermeneutical dialogue*. In its original sense, hermeneutics refers to the

²⁸ George Steiner, *Martin Heidegger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) 136.

²⁹ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Heidegger’s Ways*, trans. John W. Stanley (New York: State University of New York, 1994), 103.

³⁰ To understand this further I offer a brief point. The German *Wissenschaft* refers to the systematic study of a given subject area. It is often erroneously translated into English as “science.” And whilst it does not mean “science” in the manner that a native English speaker understands, the linguistic phrasing has embedded within a notion of reliable, measured truth, and method.

interpretation and understanding of scripture. The two concepts are interrelated in that all understanding involves interpretation.”³¹ However, any dialogue with tradition should not imply an acceptance or agreement with that tradition. Rather, hermeneutical dialogue can be understood as critical engagement from within the space in which we find ourselves. As our own engagement in turn invites challenge, creative works are continually seen and understood anew. In this way, Gadamer stresses that meaning in art is never settled or concluded. There can be no final “once and for all” meaning. Accordingly, in what follows, I do not claim to offer a (or “the”) “correct” reading of *The Finding*. Rather, in accord with Gadamer’s thought, I offer my reading as a critical contribution to an on-going dialogue.³² This is primarily taken to be the continuous discussion within tradition, here understood as (in part) “art history” or an historical cultural tradition more generally.³³ Taking a hermeneutical approach means that I interpret in order to understand.

Central to Gadamer’s thesis is the concept of “play” to be understood in its widest sense. Play suggests what is light-hearted or a game. However, he wants us to understand the concept of play in terms of flux, the play of machinery, to-and-fro movements, a staged play, a play on words, movement, activity, playing along with and even the playing out of a conversation. The work of art can only approach completion with its spectators who participate in the work as *event*. Event then can perhaps be better understood as interpretive “happening.” Another angle on this might be to recall the idea of the “work” in Heidegger’s sense (above) and move to a reconfiguring of the word *artwork* as a verb-noun rather than a noun. The artwork becomes something we *do* or participate *in* rather than a thing that objectifies and is in turn objectified. To play is to participate, and the point of such engagement for Gadamer is the destabilisation of the subject/object dichotomy. In doing this we give ourselves over to a world of understanding beyond our own subjectivity. All interpretation takes place within a contextual framework, what Gadamer refers to as a “fusion of horizons” which we can understand to mean a shared world of understanding. In this way, we are not subjects confronting objects, but participants within a dialogue. For the purposes of this thesis, I understand this concept of dialogue as offering the potential to disagree (and

³¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (1927; repr., Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962).

³² Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (1960; London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

³³ That the theme or content of the painting concerns what is construed as a dialogic process that has become known as the “disputation,” (itself a formal method of dialogue) adds an extra frisson of interest here.

to dispute) with (for example) Stephens, to interrogate his pamphlet and challenge the subsequent commentary grounded by his writing.

Much of Heidegger's and Gadamer's thought chimes with aspects of the debate Margaret Iverson and Stephen Melville set out to have in their recent book *Writing Art History: Disciplinary Departures*.³⁴ The book is a critically engaged art historiography that sets out a critique of the discipline's past and envisions a newly invented art history in the future. A notable theme running throughout is a critical argument with one of art history's founding figures, Erwin Panofsky. In summary, Panofsky's situating of the Renaissance as the "paradigmatic object of art historical knowledge" exemplified a particular view of the world as one divided into subjects (viewers) and objects (art). This is demonstrated in Panofsky's admiration for Albrecht Dürer's work which in turn formalised the theoretical study of human proportions and codified a system of perspective. This encapsulates the notion of subjectivity in the idea of the "vision of the beholder," and the idea of "historical distance."³⁵ It is as if the system of perspective itself provides a template for the art historian to construe the world as comprising subjects observing (art) objects, in addition to artists beholding objects and translating them into such objectifications. Furthermore, the blending of the idea of historical distance with an artistic system of perspective imbues the discipline with a sense of mathematical certainty, and thus, a construction that a type of empirical truth is attainable, and moreover attainable in *art*. It could be argued that this construction is the ultimate in objectification.³⁶

³⁴ Margaret Iverson and Stephen Melville. *Writing Art History: Disciplinary Departures*, (London: University of Chicago Press 2010).

³⁵ An unexpected element in my research comprises the repeated presence of Erwin Panofsky across the themes explored in this thesis. He is discussed in terms of his approach to perspective, renaissance art and Dürer's *Christ Among the Doctors*. Not confined to art history, his thought extends to the practice of disputation itself. Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, 1951. Cited in Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation," 3.

³⁶ Iverson and Melville note that Heidegger's explorations into technology not only provide further ideas regarding his understanding of art but demonstrate how the notions of distancing and objectivity inform the systems of university administration. In a sense, part of the problem of "method" lies within the typical current university structure into which academic enquiry of all kinds has become embedded. Humanities subject areas are obliged to navigate a research and knowledge production within a system of administration constructed within a social science framework requiring a specific approach to methodology. Iverson and Melville, *Writing Art History*, 174-200. See also: Martin Heidegger, *Was Heißt Denken? (What is Called Thinking?)* 1954, *Die Frage nach der Technik (The Question Concerning Technology)* 1954. Iain Thomson, "Heidegger and the Politics of the University," in *Heidegger on Ontotheology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 78-129).

As I have already written, this thesis is not concerned to construct a story of the painting, which has been quite thoroughly attempted by scholars on a number of occasions.³⁷ Neither is my intention to excavate details of the story of the painting for the purposes of deduction. The allure of construing the academic method as analogous to the process of deduction is alluded to by Elizabeth Mansfield in her chapter on “Art History and Modernism.”³⁸ Here, she draws a corollary between the literary genre of detective fiction and art history. Interestingly, both have their modern origins in the nineteenth-century. Both customarily involve an investigation incorporating the practice of close observation and the gathering of evidence. This then leads towards a process of deduction resulting in a dénouement. This process encapsulates the very essence of method with its proofs and grounding in empiricism. Although the practice of research can, at times, feel approximate to detective work, the playful motif of researcher-as-detective does art a disservice when seeking to work towards an answer to the question of interpretation by means of deduction, the solving of puzzles, the decoding of clues and the raking back towards a *whodunnit*. The questions I have about *The Finding* and its relationships to art, biblical texts, orientalism and Jewishness cannot be deduced from the range of evidence habitually cited. For example, Holman Hunt’s personal story recounted in his memoirs, Pre-Raphaelite mythology or even F.G. Stephens’s exhibition pamphlet. In other words, no amount of laying out evidence or setting out the facts will enable me to locate an answer to my questions about *The Finding*.

2.4 Hermeneutics, Practice and Dialogue

My engagement with *The Finding* begins with observational work which I have approached in varying ways. Unlike T.J. Clark, (above) I was not in a position to view the object of my enquiry so frequently. However, I combined visits, note-taking, the taking of some initial photographs with observations from a high-quality reproduction. It is axiomatic that I also read widely about the painting (the research opening up to me the lacunae I seek to address in the thesis) nevertheless, I resolved not rely solely on written accounts of Holman Hunt’s actions and correspondence for my exploration. This brings me to an important aspect of the process. This project was not intended to become a practice-based PhD. However, my own artistic background, and the fact that I was researching in the kind of institution that embraced practice-based work in addition to working alongside others who were undertaking

³⁷ Here I would begin with Holman Hunt’s own writings, those of F.G. Stephens, then latterly George Landow, Judith Bronkhurst, Nancy Davenport, Julie Codell, Carol Jacobi, et al.

³⁸ Elizabeth Mansfield, ed., *Art History and its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline* (London: Routledge, 2002), 11-27.

these programmes, was stimulus for my drawing and painting from the picture. Initially, I took this to be about slowing down the looking process and enabling a closer look at a very complex work. However, it soon proved to be a very revealing process leading to some startling observations. It allowed me to notice details I would not have otherwise; additionally, it has fostered some empathy with Holman Hunt as artist, and further allowed me to discern connections with other relevant works of art. I began to see this as a new experiencing of the painting, an immersion into another world. Moreover, I believe it was in keeping with Gadamer's wider sense of "play" and a Heideggerian sense of understanding the world through being in, and experiencing it. I was no longer only a detached observer, but a participant of sorts within its world; a world I began to know by immersing myself in a physical manner within it. I was looking, observing with both hand and eye in conjunction, tracing over the forms and details. In this way, I noticed Holman Hunt's inconsistencies, and how what we imagine to be there is often confounded upon close looking. That the painting, as I shall come to in the coming chapters, foregrounds the idea of seeing and looking, makes my encounters through drawing pertinent. From initial sketches, I developed further digital studies focusing upon particular details. I noticed that I saw the painting and its paraphernalia in quite different terms, and the slower paced looking allowed for further meditation on its complexities. This is not a painting that can be absorbed in fleeting look, and it resists the fast-paced superficiality of the "glance culture" of the modern day.

Intertwined with the practice of drawing was the habit I developed of carrying a reproduction of the painting with me. When others asked me about the nature of my research, it seemed easier to show them the painting than to name it and risk exposing any awkwardness on their part for not being familiar with it. However, doing this turned out to be fortuitous. These unplanned encounters often yielded insightful comments, questions and stimulating conversation. People found the painting and my enquiry interesting in the particular context of (for example) an academic conference. They were not required to *like* the picture but (momentarily at least) to *read* it.³⁹ I found it very helpful to witness their reactions and responses and took far more than I realised at the time from them. There were disagreements amongst people, sometimes scholars would find the picture very strange.

³⁹ I was often touched by the enthusiasm with which people engaged with this. One academic told me that he found it fascinating, and this was partly because it was so different from what he customarily engaged with. I reflect back on comments such as these and speculate that the painting is interesting in such situations precisely because it is so Jewish, and so textual thus providing two avenues of engagement for the disinterested Jewish scholar with no investment in its religious message.

Many mis-read the manly boy that many Victorian viewers saw for a feminine girl. Two rabbis expressed confusion about what they perceived as men and women being portrayed “together” in the Temple. Another, on a different occasion, claimed that the other rabbis had been wrong, claiming that this scene depicted a time before any formal separation of the sexes had been instituted. There were conversations about the strange sense of time with the painting’s compression of first, nineteenth and twenty-first-centuries. Many observers noticed the musicians whose appearance was reminiscent of renaissance paintings. Some recognised the typological symbolism. Invariably the blind rabbi was noted. Another expressed consternation at the splitting of the tefillin across two figures. That, and many other observations opened up further areas for thinking and research. I recall that sometimes the most innocuous of comments could set off a train of thought or a new revelation. I would resist the urge to tell people what I already knew about the work, unless pressed for information. This process was not systematic nor planned; however, I came to understand this as a helpful process of informal dialogue which began to inform my own interpretations. Later in my research I approached two orthodox Jewish ministers who were willing to extend some of these discussions further. Their questions, observations, knowledge and attention to detail resulted in further new insights that I share in the coming chapters.⁴⁰

The reproductions of *The Finding* were a most useful and necessary substitute for an on-going engagement with the painting. However, I do want to stress the importance of being in the presence of the artwork itself. The physical qualities of *The Finding* are of great interest and relevance. For instance, its frame is a significant aspect of the work, and there have been a number of interesting treatments of these details.⁴¹ Clearly Holman Hunt intended the frame to form a significant (and signifying) aspect of the work. The painting effectively spills outward into the frame, exacerbating the sense of *The Finding* as a three-dimensional object as something the viewer can experience in person but not so easily in reproduction. I found that in conjunction with my drawings (and informal conversations) my awareness of *The Finding*’s material qualities was crucial in stepping away from the concept of the painting as one in a vast quantity of “images” to one where awareness of the made

⁴⁰ I refer to Rabbi Aaron Lipsey and Rev. Yigal Wachmann whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged in the footnotes.

⁴¹ Judith Bronkhurst, “Holman Hunt’s Picture Frames, Sculpture and Applied Art,” in Harding, *Re-Framing the Pre-Raphaelites*, Lynn Roberts, “Nineteenth Century English Picture Frames: 1: The Pre-Raphaelites”, in *The International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, 1985, 4, 155-172, and Lynn Roberts, “Holman Hunt’s Frames,” *Pre-Raphaelite Society Review*, 30th Anniversary Edition, Vol. XXVI, Number 3, Autumn 2018, 72-99.

qualities came to the fore. It is this aspect that prompted my original questions, thinking about Holman Hunt's decisions and why and how those decisions emerge.

2.4 Conclusion

The first decision in terms of my working process was to make my research interdisciplinary drawing upon biblical and religious studies fields. I have then taken *The Finding's* own qualities and imagery as reference points for the questions that frame this thesis and the themes of its subsequent chapters. Therefore, in addition to its customary contexts, I took *The Finding's* wider artistic contexts, its Biblical and religious themes, the scholarly disputation and enduring representations of Jews as my themes for exploration. In addition, I undertook a number of comparative studies which find their place in this thesis.

T.J. Clark's experiment in art writing is not the only approach of its kind.⁴² In the popular sphere, there are two recent explorations which engage with one painting forming an alternative position to standard art historical treatments. Both I find to be useful in terms of studying and engaging with paintings and have informed my approach. The first, Julian Barnes, *Keeping an Eye Open: Essays on Art*, (2015) is a series of essays which explores a trajectory of modern art from Romanticism, Realism to Modernism. It offers what amounts to an alternative critical account of the development of art from the point of view of the actively engaged viewer. The essays weave historical, literary and artistic elements in conjunction with Barnes's personal response to pictures. They make unusual connections between works and challenge dominant accounts of art that have gained strong currency in recent times. The second, Kelly Grovier's *A New Way of Seeing: the History of Art in 57 Works* (2018) asks new kinds of questions about canonical art, especially works that have become so famous that we may have ceased to notice interesting details within them. It is Grovier's attention to the overlooked and the unusual, his ability to locate a strangeness in familiar that make his approach helpful.

Art historian Michael Jacobs's book *Everything is Happening: Journey into a Painting* (2015) charts his relationship with Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656) beginning with

⁴² I might include here Jeremy Maas, *Holman Hunt and The Light of the World* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1984) although this is very much the story of a painting. Additionally, Chamberlain, *A Shoe Story*, forms an extended philosophical treatment of the "Boots" painting, one of three examples of "art" discussed in Heidegger's "Origin" essay. (Discussed in this chapter and other places in this thesis) Although Chamberlain's book centres on the one painting, it is more concerned with the many public and scholarly discussions provoked by Heidegger's essay than with an engagement with the painting. Regarding novelist Julian Barnes's *Keeping an Eye Open: Essays on Art* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2015), I will forgive him his disdainful aside on the Pre-Raphaelites in the introduction, where he lists them as being amongst painters "you grow out of." 5.

his first encounter with it as a student.⁴³ The book was completed posthumously, and It begins with his first encounter with the painting and continues beyond the point of the author's death. Jacobs relates his personal frustrations with the discipline of art history because he believed that there was no mechanism that would allow him to produce the account he sought to make. He recalls a frequent reminder, "Remember you're an art historian not an art critic," whenever his interpretations failed to "be substantiated by historical fact or probability."⁴⁴

Jacobs describes the possibilities for looking at art with what amounted to (for him) a fresh philosophical interpretation as exciting. And this probably sums up my own approach. I am particularly taken by one detail that I find resonates with my own experience of *The Finding*. He cites a description of *Las Meninas* as having an "extraordinary sense of suspended animation...its evocation of a world in which everything is about to happen." This strikes me as poignant given the subject matter of *The Finding* which, in its depiction of the young Jesus leaping up, girding his loins in readiness for his mission, also purports to present a world where "everything is about to happen."

⁴³ Jacobs's interest was further influenced by reading the philosopher Michel Foucault's opening chapter in *The Order of Things* which introduces what might be termed a description of the experience of looking at or encountering the painting. Foucault's account draws attention to the disciplinary norms of art history precisely by not adhering to them. Foucault's account is notable for "a complete absence of any specific information about the painting" which Jacobs notes was intentional. Michael Jacobs, *Everything is Happening: Journey into a Painting* (Croydon: Granta, 2015), 42.

⁴⁴ Jacobs, *Everything is Happening*, 41-45.

Chapter 3: Accounts of *The Finding*

On *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*:

“...a jewel in a gorgeous setting.”

Millais¹

“...(a) wooden puppet-show...”

Rossetti²

Introduction

In this first part of my thesis, I ask the question of *The Finding*, why does it look the way it does? This chapter begins the process of answering that question with an examination of descriptions of the painting. In the first part of the chapter, I consider what is one of the first accounts of *The Finding*, that is the pamphlet commissioned by the exhibition dealer in 1860, written by Frederic (F.G.) Stephens.³ I then proceed with my own descriptions undertaken via observation, drawing and discussion as outlined in the previous chapter. My observations in part respond to Stephens and offer what I anticipate will form new insights into the painting. These are divided into two broad areas, The second part focuses on *The Finding's* imagery, and the third considers the more formal and technical aspects of the painting.

3.1 The Stephens Effect

We recall that F.G. Stephens was one of the original Brotherhood, but gave up painting for a writing career. Stephens wrote not only the pamphlet to accompany *The Finding's* exhibition, but additional reviews of the painting in contemporary periodicals. The pamphlet is an important document for appraisal because, as we have established, it is one of the foundational texts underpinning many art-historical and other accounts of *The Finding*. It is rarely examined in detail or cited from at length, however it is extensively (if selectively) drawn upon to underpin facets of the painting. Additionally, it is possible to understand the pamphlet's words as testament to the spirit of the age. In this respect, the language and syntax used by Stephens must be understood as products of his time and as such, some aspects are,

¹ Cited in Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. II, 193.

² Allen Staly, “Pre-Raphaelites in the 1860s: II,” *British Art Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring/Summer, 2004): 6-12, 6.

³ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*.

from a modern outlook, unpleasant and disagreeable. It is the very unpleasantness that we will have to examine in the thesis. Notwithstanding this, it is worth thinking critically about how texts such as the pamphlet function *as evidence* of that context and not merely as a means to explain the “story of the painting.” Is Stephens’s pamphlet drawn from factual or other kinds of knowledge? This is a question to which we shall inevitably return. At this point, it will be apparent from what follows that Stephens relies upon perceived truths garnered over long periods of time rather than knowledge. Furthermore, the question concerning knowledge formation, or the pursuit of truth remains relevant to our discussion. It is Stephens’s reliance on perceived truths that reveal what I will refer to as a “discourse” of disputation. This is a matter to which I return in chapter six where *The Finding’s* subject, the “disputation” will be examined along with the pursuit of knowledge and truth that were, in earlier times, bound up with Jewish-Christian relations. Furthermore, the matter of Stephens’s orientalist language is inextricably linked to that discussion. However, we need to cover more ground before we can begin to scrutinise these matters in detail.

Returning to Stephens’s pamphlet, it is my intention in this chapter to illuminate not only the particular quality of the interpretive (and rhetorical) nature of Stephens’s writing, but the subsequent follow-through on the part of those who have taken his output as grounding an authentic explanation of Holman Hunt’s work. In drawing attention to the contrast between Stephens’s words, their impact, and my own interpretation of *The Finding*, informed by a variety of approaches, I will highlight the lacunae into which the Jewish presence has slipped in established accounts of the painting. This will advance the discussion surrounding the question of why the painting looks the way it does.

F.G. Stephens was given the task of writing the pamphlet to accompany *The Finding’s* exhibition by dealer Ernest Gambart. It was entitled: *William Holman Hunt and His Works: Memoir of the Artist’s Life with (a) Description of His Pictures*, and was originally published anonymously; however, it remains firmly on record as Stephens’s work.⁴ As I have established. the pamphlet and the later key plate, published in London to coincide with the painting’s engraving, underpin many accounts of *The Finding*. It gains credit in part from Holman Hunt’s endorsement.⁵ Additionally, Stephens’s subsequent career as an art

⁴ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, originally unattributed, however, the modern imprint clearly identifies Stephens as the author. See also Fredeman, *Pre-Raphaelites: A Bibliocritical Study*, 134.

⁵ Julie Codell writes that Stephens “ventriloquised” Holman Hunt in the pamphlet. Julie F. Codell, “The Recovery of William Holman Hunt: A Review Article” in *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, Vol. 19, Fall 2010, 89-105, 90. Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 176.

critic and historian adds authority to his words in retrospect. Moreover, Stephens's close association with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood lends additional weight to his writing. Stephens was to become, in the words of Dianne Sashko Macleod, "...one of the most influential art critics in England, maintaining for forty years a post on the *Athenaeum*, to be replaced only by Roger Fry in 1901."⁶ Stephens's writing career began with *The Germ*, where he wrote two pieces pseudonymously. He also wrote for the *Critic*, the French periodical *Crayon*, *L'Art* and *Portfolio* in addition to the *Athenaeum* and others. Elizabeth Prettejohn, describes the *Athenaeum* post as "influential" and writes that Stephens was one of the first to earn a living from periodical art criticism.⁷

The Finding was exhibited at precisely the time when art criticism morphed into something more professional. The role of critic began to flourish at a key juncture in both Stephens's and Holman Hunt's careers. Prettejohn reminds us that until the role became established, much art criticism was written anonymously or as editorial copy.⁸ The art critic's voice was a more corporate or collaborative one, speaking on behalf of the publication. It is within this context that Stephens's work needs to be evaluated. One reason readers look back and regard the pamphlet as authoritative is due to Stephen's subsequent stature as an art critic. In its original context however, authority came from the perception of objective neutrality its initial anonymity conveyed. Moreover, the 1860s saw the emergence of the *qualified* art critic taking a specialist approach, as opposed to the more generalist commentator. John Ruskin, for example claimed his qualification as an authority by citing "twenty years of severe labour...devoted to the study...of Art...(which) have given me the right to speak on the subject with a measure of confidence..."⁹ As I alluded in chapter one, Prettejohn reminds us, that without the level of state patronage available in France in the nineteenth century, English artists such as Holman Hunt were increasingly dependent upon art criticism as a means to develop their reputations.¹⁰ Such dependence upon criticism was not restricted to artists. Potential purchasers also wanted some indication of quality and trends. Furthermore, demand from readers meant that over time it became incumbent upon periodical editors to provide for their readers credible, authoritative, and therefore *named* art critics.

⁶ Dianne Sashko Macleod, "F.G. Stephens, Pre-Raphaelite Critic and Art Historian," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.128, No. 999 (June 1986) 398-406, 398.

⁷ Prettejohn, "Aesthetic Value," 75-76.

⁸ Prettejohn, "Aesthetic Value," 74.

⁹ Ruskin, *Complete Works*, cited in Prettejohn, "Aesthetic Value," 73.

¹⁰ Prettejohn, "Aesthetic Value," 73.

Due to their own activities and writings, the Pre-Raphaelites become themselves the site of contention in artistic debate. As Prettejohn writes, declaring a position on the Pre-Raphaelites was one way to garner a distinctive critical voice.¹¹ The Pre-Raphaelites' own publications have furthermore entered the discussion. There can be little doubt that they were increasingly conscious of the power of commentary on their work and reputations. It is a curious blend of critical commentary and media interest that has subsequently been treated as supporting evidence in the appraisal and understanding of *The Finding* and the Pre-Raphaelite oeuvre. What follows is not an appraisal of Stephens's ability as an art critic or historian. What is of interest here is how his descriptions have informed and formed settled interpretations of *The Finding* that lock a set of ideas and images into place, especially regarding the Jewish presence in *The Finding*.

The Pamphlet

Stephens's pamphlet comprises of biographical material on Holman Hunt, and before moving to discuss his adventures in the Holy Land, it discusses a sequence of his paintings (including *The Scapegoat* (1854-55)). However, the greatest emphasis in the pamphlet lies on *The Finding* which is described and interpreted in detail. Introducing the painting, Stephens uses words like *novel*, *surprising*, *original* and *independent* to convey the distinctiveness of the picture.

*"There could be no more complete example of carrying out a set, firm principle, than the course pursued by Mr. Holman Hunt in the great work we now come to..."*¹²

*"...he has constructed, with immense labour and signal success, a whole new style of architecture."*¹³

*"...the aspect of the picture is perfectly novel, and indeed surprising. To a mind that...will not tolerate that which is unusual, the result may be...displeasing..."*¹⁴

Suffused throughout the text is a portrayal of Holman Hunt as the artistic pioneer for whom no difficulty is too much in the execution of his *Finding* painting, which is designed to bring the Saviour to life as a fully *realised* and believable historical person rather than an idealised ascetic vision of holiness.¹⁵ Stephens strenuously emphasises the painting's authenticity in his effusive descriptions.

¹¹ Prettejohn, "Aesthetic Value," 75.

¹² Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 56.

¹³ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 57.

¹⁴ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 61.

¹⁵ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 61, 71.

Additionally, Holman Hunt's workmanlike, devoted, and dutiful approach is enmeshed with his Englishness, and by extension his Christianity.¹⁶ This is further linked to ideas around Protestantism, work ethic and his personal engagement with biblical texts. Stephens sees the Christianity in the paintings he describes as rooted in the person Holman Hunt and his heroic battle with the "natives" in bringing his painting to fruition. He does not note any religious devotion in the Jewishness. Rather, his interpretation emphasises his perception of a dogged adherence to outdated concepts as judged from the appearance of the persons. Jewishness becomes perceptibly attuned to bodily characteristics for Stephens, a factor that becomes increasingly apparent in what follows.¹⁷

It is Stephens's account of the persons and characters within the painting that is of greatest concern to this thesis. Stephens's descriptions of the elders (he consistently refers to them as rabbis) are present not only in the pamphlet but additionally in his reviews of the painting for more than one contemporary periodical. Stephens's remarks about the appearance of Jewish people in a general sense reveal a range of assumptions and contradictions suggesting a level of confusion and ambiguity. He devotes some three pages of his discussion on Jewish physiognomy to an extended citation from Sir John Gardner Wilkinson whose book on the ancient Egyptians refers to many anomalies between what he discovered in Egypt and the content of biblical texts.¹⁸ It is clear from Wilkinson's words that ideas about the characteristics of Jews, ancient and contemporary, were bound up with a curiosity concerning biblical accounts and the question of Jesus's appearance. Stephens includes his lengthy citation to contextualise *The Finding's* supposed authenticity of biblical setting.

The inclusion of Wilkinson's words suggests that Stephens was leaning upon the then fashionable quasi-scientific conception of Physiognomy for his own descriptions. Physiognomy was a widely circulated notion in Victorian culture. Charles Dickens used Physiognomy to convey his characters, the figure of Fagin in *Oliver Twist* being a notable example. Dickens claimed that it was preferable to do this than to condemn a man for his religion. Racial labelling was understood as scientifically truthful. Thus, Jewish identity can be seen to oscillate between the religious, ethnic, and racial.¹⁹

¹⁶ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 61-62, and 71.

¹⁷ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 62.

¹⁸ John Gardner Wilkinson, Sir. *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, 1840, Vol. 1. 343-345.

¹⁹ Juliet Steyn, "Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*: Fagin as a Sign", in *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, eds. Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb (London, Thames and Hudson, 1995), 43.

Acknowledging that in order for the picture to succeed as an authentic portrayal of an incident of Jewish history, Stephens explains that:

*“[the artist] could not avoid painting those therein as Jews; and, what is more, Jews of the soil, where the physical peculiarities of that people are likely to have been best preserved.”*²⁰

The emphasis remains on the physical bodily characteristics of Jews. This continues with his treatment of the figures. Stephens’s descriptions of the musicians are interwoven with his portrayals of the rabbis. The red-haired musician who leans in between the third and fourth rabbis is described as having a “twinkle (in) his little, selfish, mocking eyes...” Stephens continues:

*“He seems to mock the words of Christ upon some argument that has gone before, and, with one hand clenched and supine, protrudes a scornful finger, hugging himself in self-conceit. He is a Levite, a time-serving, fawning fellow, - a musician, as we see from the harp he bears, who would ingratiate himself with his seated superiors.”*²¹

The musicians situated behind the rabbis to the left of the picture are portrayed thus: “One, a sneering, supercilious, but handsome personage” refers to the sistrum holding boy, further described as “looking upon the Virgin’s arrival” with “an insolent indifference.”²² The youth leaning in is considered to be “ingenuous” and “fascinatingly sweet by comparison.” The third, is an “angular-profiled, round-eyed, greedy-looking youth, who burning with curiosity, stares with all his might.” The reader is clearly directed towards a particular understanding of what transpires by these descriptions. Stephens writes that the first two rabbis have “markedly Jewish” features, notwithstanding his own acknowledgement of the diversity of Jewish characteristics throughout his discussion of the painting.²³ The elderly and blind figure is described by Stephens as “imbecile and decrepit” and “his hands palsied, as his open and slaving mouth is.” The blind old priest is not so much described as *interpreted* by Stephens to be clinging obstinately to “the superseded dispensation” the “old and effete doctrine” with a “pertinacious refusal of the new.”²⁴ “Blind, imbecile, he cares not to examine the bearer of glad tidings. But clings to the superseded dispensation.”²⁵ The second rabbi who displays “the same emotions” as the first, is deemed to be “a good-natured worldly

²⁰ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 62.

²¹ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 66.

²² Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 69-70.

²³ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 47- 51, 63-75. 64.

²⁴ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 63.

²⁵ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 63.

individual, with a feminine face.” The third is “eager, unsatisfied, passionate, argumentative, his strong antagonism of mind will allow no such comfortable rest as the elders enjoy.”

Stephens describes the fourth Rabbi as a “proud and self-centred man. Complacent and haughty.” He places a gloss onto the picture in both his Holman Hunt biography and periodical reviews by emphatically stressing the *argumentative nature* of the scene, lest his readers fail to grasp the point. Stephens states that the fourth Rabbi assumes himself as judge who “sums up on the fingers...the whole argument on either side” being a “Pharisee of the most stiff order;” and in the *Macmillan’s* review, the same figure is the “disputatious” Rabbi. By doing this he not only glosses the painting, he adds his gloss to an interpretation of the New Testament Lukan scene itself. This is an important point in the context of what I now find myself describing as “disputation paintings,” (for that is what *The Finding* and its many predecessors are). A closer examination of the biblical interpretation will be addressed in the chapter five.

Upon reaching the fifth rabbi, Stephens draws attention to the progression the notional viewer makes,

*“...through many forms of character, from the blindness of eye and heart of the eldest Rabbi, through the simple reposing confidence of the second, to the eager championship of the third, the self-centred complacency of the fourth, the indolent good-nature of the fifth.”*²⁶

He then continues with the sixth figure, who is described as “envious, acrid, a lean man who, having arrived late, is seated behind his fellows.” Stephens then proceeds to press the point by describing him as having “an obliquity of vision, ... an evil-looking, greedy-souled creature.” The seventh rabbi is characterised as a “mere lump of human dough” and “a huge sensual stomach of a man, who squats upon his own broad base...” It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Stephens bases his descriptions upon his own observations, embroidered prejudice, or the promptings of Holman Hunt. Nevertheless, as these descriptions have come down to us, they lend their weight to a range of interpretations, including those within the remit of art history and biblical interpretation. At this point the question arises, does Stephens take his descriptions from what he sees in the painting, or is he reliant upon a cultural discourse informing him about how to understand and interpret the individual rabbis? What is this cultural discourse, and where does it originate? We shall examine this further in what follows. It is further worth noting that notwithstanding the painting’s subject, Stephens does *not* explore the Lukan scene in any real detail. He pins his

²⁶ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 67.

exposition upon what he is supposed to know, drawn from the world of artistic and cultural interpretations of Jews, making use of, as Anthony Julius puts it, “what passes for (common) knowledge.”²⁷

Stephens’s Treatment of the Holy Family, and the Scrolls

Stephens’s introduction to the Holy Family begins with his careful description of Jesus as a “...robust youth, of splendid physique,” and whilst “divinely beautiful” is not “a feminine-featured child.”²⁸ Stephens proceeds to differentiate Holman Hunt’s rendition of Jesus from other examples by stating:

*“We agree heartily with Mr. Hunt in not rendering this a simple type of passive holiness or asceticism, or merely intellectual power. A man, he is cast in the noblest mould...also strong and robust...”*²⁹

Unlike his account of the rabbis, Stephens contextualises both Mary and Joseph within the Gospel story of Luke, animating his account with the quotations included within the inlays of the painting (Fig. 11). Mary’s features are described as “moulded appropriately in the purest Jewish type.” He continues with an emotional and dramatic tone to convey the story of the once separated family as now reunited.³⁰

The treatment of the objects in the scene affords Stephens the opportunity to extol the virtues of Holman Hunt’s research and endeavours to achieve authenticity. However, it is apparent that Stephens lacked some relevant knowledge. Stephens’s description of the *sefer Torah* mantle demonstrates confusion regarding the “mystic tetragrammaton” which he describes as “four triangles in an endless line.” I take this to mean that he refers to the eight-pointed star design embroidered on the mantle.³¹ However, the tetragrammaton actually refers to the Hebrew letters that are inscribed *within* the star design.³²

Turning to the rabbi who holds the one-handled scroll, it occurs to me that the most visible one-handled scroll in Judaism (in the present day) is the scroll of Esther known as the *Megillah*. It is read out at the festival of Purim, which comes after the Passover festival. The story of Esther recounts the thwarting of the attempted destruction of the Jewish people, thus saving Judaism. If Holman Hunt meant the scroll to represent the *Megillah* it would be ironic

²⁷ Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 209.

²⁸ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 70.

²⁹ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 71.

³⁰ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 72.

³¹ *Sefer Torah* refers to the scrolls of the *Torah* (teaching) that contain the five books of Moses.

³² Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 63.

given *The Finding's* supersessionist stance. This is because such a stance implies a replacement of Judaism with Christianity, which would thus render Judaism's completion.³³ Stephens's writing sheds light on this matter however, in his review of *The Finding* in *Macmillan's Magazine* (May 1860). In the midst of an extensive description of *The Finding's* dramatis personae he makes explicit reference to an "interested but disputatious and sceptical" rabbi unrolling "the Book of the Prophecies of Daniel, whereby to refute the argument."³⁴ However, it is not clear where the reference to Daniel originates. The exhibition key plate which was written by Holman Hunt at the later date of 1867 (to coincide with the painting's engraving) mentions only "A Roll of a single Book" and provides the information that "The Books of the prophets alone are written on separate rolls." An additional scroll is identified on the key plate and is barely discernible in the scene lying strewn upon the floor. The apparent lack of handle is explained as due to being "of the least expensive kind – being unmounted."³⁵ Notwithstanding the specifics of the smaller scrolls, the general point being made is clear. The scrolls represent and signify prophecy and can thus be presented to viewers as underpinning Christian typological interpretations.

The Impact of the Pamphlet

On the strength of Holman Hunt having approved the pamphlet commentators have regarded the explanations as facts to be cemented in place rather than interpretations with which they might choose to disagree. In his account of Holman Hunt's typological symbolism, George Landow cites extensively and uncritically from Stephens's pamphlet which he uses to substantiate his own account of *The Finding*. He writes: "In his careful portrayal of the Rabbis who resisted Christ's message, Holman Hunt chose to reveal the many ways in which the old faith had indeed corrupted itself and the world."³⁶ Landow proceeds to cite verbatim many of Stephens's descriptions and further suggests that the second of the rabbis represents in a universal sense "a good member of the Establishment of any age and place," however he (the rabbi) "chiefly explains the nature of those who opposed

³³ I am grateful to Rev. Yigal Wacchman who confirmed for me that in some orthodox synagogues in the present day, mono-handled scrolls such as these are in use for books of the prophets other than Esther. Rabbi Aaron Lipsey doubted whether the book of Daniel should be presented as it is because it is never read formally in the synagogue, however, in this context it may well appear in the form of a scroll given the time depicted is the first century. It is difficult to ascertain for sure how much about what is depicted in *The Finding* is the product of Holman Hunt's research or what was present to hand in his nineteenth-century context.

³⁴ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 92.

³⁵ Judith Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 174.

³⁶ George P. Landow, *William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism* (London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1979), 91.

Christ in his own time...” Landow describes the group of seven figures as a “gallery of psychological as well as physical portraits of the Pharisees of Christ’s time and of all ages,” blending his commentary closely with that of Stephens’s whose words are used to directly underpin Landow’s thesis. It is to be expected that in his discussion on typology Landow would advance the functions of typological symbolism from a Christian perspective. However, he offers no critical judgement in his protracted use of Stephens’s descriptions, nor does he reflect upon the Gospel of Luke to appraise the accuracy or not of Holman Hunt’s interpretation of the Temple discussion scene.

A scholar who does raise the matter of the contradiction in tone between *The Finding* and Luke’s Gospel is Judith Bronkhurst who has undertaken comprehensive studies of Holman Hunt’s work and having produced the catalogue raisonné published in 2006. In the catalogue for the aforementioned Tate Gallery’s 1984 exhibition, Bronkhurst states that by making the scene one of confrontation Holman Hunt “has departed from his source,” by which she means the Gospel story. Her subsequent description of the rabbis as “hostile” is substantiated by the use of Stephens’s words with the additional note that “Stephens’s pamphlet was vetted by the artist” to denote its authenticity and reliability as a truthful source. Her exposition is further developed in the catalogue raisonné which cites Stephens’s varied and many writings in addition to Holman Hunt’s to support the conventional understanding of *The Finding*.

I find Bronkhurst’s descriptions of Ashkenazi and Sephardi racial “types” to be somewhat problematic.³⁷ Firstly, to explain how Holman Hunt creates a sense of opposition, she contrasts the depiction of the (as she describes it) “Ashkenazi” Holy Family with Holman Hunt’s “biased depiction of the rabbis as swarthy Sephardis.” Her description that the Holy Family is “of the Ashkenazi Jewish racial type” is somewhat misleading given that the figure of both Mary and Jesus were painted from London based models, (likely although not necessarily to be of Ashkenazi descent; and in the case of the models for Jesus not even consistently Jewish) whereas the face of Joseph can be clearly connected with a drawing he made in Jerusalem³⁸ which was, according to Holman Hunt a study of a “racial type.”³⁹ By racial type, I take it that Holman Hunt refers to his notion of what he believes counts as a *Jewish* appearance. Granted, Holman Hunt had been surprised by the appearance of some

³⁷ Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 176.

³⁸ Study of Jew, Turban Removed, in Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. II, 1905, 25.

³⁹ Holman Hunt, “Painting the Scapegoat,” in *The Contemporary Review*, July 1st, 1887, 218.

Jews in Jerusalem who did not appear to him as he expected. In a letter to Christina Rossetti, he wrote that they were “not only eminently handsome, but a fair race: quite contrary to popular belief.”⁴⁰ What he would have interpreted as “racial” characteristics would not be credible in modern day thought, nor is the concept reliably translatable. The various denominations, sects and ethnic backgrounds of Jewish people do not conform to modern notions of race, which are also contested.⁴¹ It must be understood that both Holman Hunt and Stephens were making sense of the world at a time when religion and race were at the forefront of a discussion which remained inconclusive and unresolved. Moreover, such a discussion was rooted within a society that increasingly understood race as an empirical, tangible concept as opposed to the more nebulous or metaphysical world of religion. This is a point to which I shall return in the next chapter.

I now turn to the matter of the pamphlet’s orientalism. Both Holman Hunt and Stephens recount the many problems experienced during the visit, one example being the models’ propensity for not arriving for modelling sessions.⁴² As a result, work on *The Finding* was temporarily suspended freeing Holman Hunt to paint *The Scapegoat*. Stephens writes that the “difficulties with indolent and intractable natives were partially forgotten...” by the time Holman Hunt returned to *The Finding*.⁴³ This description, whilst coinciding with Holman Hunt’s own (much later) recollections nevertheless has the effect of compounding the negative tone he adopted for the description of the rabbis. It is as if the people themselves and the characters they “play” are one and the same. Additionally, Bronkhurst and others suggest that Holman Hunt’s hostility towards the rabbis is due to the contemporary scene where Jewish leaders in Jerusalem were perceived as neglecting their community. This further consolidates the confusion between a fairly arbitrary group of Jewish people (who as models, never even sat together) and the characters they were being paid to portray. Accordingly, in Stephens’s worldview, Jews become double representations of Christian prejudice firstly by representing 1st Century “rabbis” (or perhaps “Pharisees”) and secondly, by their representation of their own Jewishness. In this manner, the orientalism of the

⁴⁰ A. Harrison (ed.), *The Letters of Christian Rossetti*, Vol. 1: 1843-1873 (Charlottesville and Virginia, 1997), 113, cited in Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 176.

⁴¹ The matter is more complex than Bronkhurst suggests (above). Ashkenazi and Sephardi do not refer to race but to historical diasporic communities. Ashkenazi is the designation for Jews from Eastern Europe, Germany and Northern France, and Sephardim are Jews from Spain and Portugal. There is a further sometimes contested group, Mizrahi who come from North Africa and the Middle East. The Mizrachim are often incorporated as a subdivision of Sephardim. (Some reject the designation *Mizrahi* due to its orientalist associations because it translates from Hebrew as: oriental, eastern).

⁴² Holman Hunt expands upon this aspect in *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. 1, 445-7.

⁴³ Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 46.

painting is not so much about aesthetics or an “middle eastern” appearance. Stephens’s words construe the sense that Jews are always in some way *representative*. Additionally, Jews are assumed to be timeless and unchanging. And yet, in Jerusalem, Jews were not formed of one culturally homogenous group. It is taken from Holman Hunt’s own memoirs that Cairite, Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews were present in Jerusalem.⁴⁴ Therefore, if they – as individuals – were perceived to be “difficult” to manage and deal with as models, this becomes interlaced with the earlier descriptions of the imagined first-century rabbis.

This collapsing of Jewish identity into homogeneity suggests that Jews inhabit a problematical space that is both white and ethnic, Eastern and Western, Biblical and non-biblical, historically contingent, and timeless. This observation shares much with Edward Saïd’s *Orientalism* but for one crucial aspect. As I will explore in more depth in chapter seven, Saïd did not regard Jews as inhabiting the world of the oriental. Thus, this aspect of *The Finding* remains opaque and undeveloped in commentary. Scholarship seems comfortable in criticising Holman Hunt in general terms for his “orientalising” however, it has shown less inclination to regard Jews as the victims of it. The relevance and significance of this take on the painting’s orientalism will become more conspicuous as the thesis progresses, and as I have indicated, there are more avenues to explore before we will be ready to take that step.

The conflation of Stephens’s words and Holman Hunt’s painting into a cohesive yet complex set of meanings surrounding Jewishness and Christianity reveal the extent to which conventional accounts of *The Finding* depend upon written evidence for validity. Commentary and picture are sewn together, underpinned with Holman Hunt as an author figure alongside the written, documentary evidence. However, by grounding its account of *The Finding* with Holman Hunt and Stephens, the resulting *story of the painting* stops short of understanding the Jewish presence within the picture. It is inevitable that commentary and critique often become built into the commonly held understanding of a given work of art. Returning to the artwork itself can therefore open up the work to fresh insights, and it is to this element I now turn in my own reading of *The Finding*.

3.2 My Account of The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple

As I have already outlined in the previous chapter, my own account of *The Finding* uses an interwoven and multi-faceted approach focused strongly upon the painting itself. This

⁴⁴ Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol 1, 428.

draws upon my own observations which incorporate gallery visits, in situ notetaking, thinking and drawing from reproductions of the painting. In this first part, my approach is broadly iconographic with a focus upon imagery, content and subject matter. In what follows, I have allowed some of the immediacy of my initial observations to remain in the exposition. My aim is to pay close attention to what appears, what is noticeable and remarkable. My account draws attention to facets of the painting that have customarily been set aside, in particular, a more nuanced and informed understanding of the objects Holman Hunt selected to portray his conception of Judaism. In this sense, I have attempted to bring to the reader's attention to what becomes "unconcealed" or *disclosed* to me in *The Finding* in a way that would not in other more mundane circumstances. For example, it is one kind of experience to see a piece of jewellery on someone's hand, and another altogether when it is portrayed in a painting such as this.

The Finding is normally housed in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and is presented as one of their most significant holdings. On a number of occasions recently when I have been researching the painting, *The Finding* has been on tour and unavailable for viewing in Britain. During my master's research it was in Russia, and for part of my doctoral research time it has been touring the United States and will not return home until after I complete this thesis. There was an interlude within this hectic activity when I was able to spend some time with the original. The room housing *The Finding* is painted in a cyan-turquoise blue divided by a high-level skirting board of mahogany panelling (Figs. 7, 8). The room's décor provides a suitably contrasting background for the Holman Hunt paintings with their gold ornate and personalised decorative gold leaf frames. Its frame affords *The Finding* a strong weighty presence. From a distance, the impression is one of a small theatre set, or a cinema screen, (Fig. 7). The impression is enhanced by the white inlays which serve to differentiate the gold leaf of the frame from the extensive use of gold within the painting itself. The staginess is also suggested by the overall shape of the frame which forms a gentle apex at the top and incorporates two distinctly circular shapes to the top left- and right-hand sides. The quality of this staginess is significant because it has implications for the positioning of the spectator. Where are we situated as viewers in the scheme of things? As I shall revisit in the next chapter, the central figure of Jesus looks directly at us, involving the viewer in the drama. There is additionally the impression given of looking through a window on the world.

Continuing with the frame, the outer gold leaf frame is carved with intricate patterns and motifs. At the apex, the sun and the eclipsed moon are depicted with carved detailing,

flanked by three rows of alternate star motifs in a symmetrical organised design. Joined at the edges of the furthest star symbols are the aforementioned circular motifs contained within each of them a carving to represent the Christian cross. The cross on the left-hand side is entwined a serpent or snake, coiling down along the stem (Fig. 10). On the right-hand side, the cross is depicted with thorns. At the base of the frame, there are carved heartseases and daisies. Moving inwards towards the painting, the white coloured inlays which surround the painting are engraved with words from the New Testament Lukan scene which is the purported subject of the painting. At the top of the painting, the inlay provides the name of the painting: *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*. All inlay text is written in gold gothic script (Fig. 11).

On the left-hand inlay,

And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem seeking him. And after three days they found him in the temple;

And on the base:

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother Saïd unto him, Son why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, how is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And on the right-hand inlay:

And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

The inclusion of text on the inlays and within the painting alongside the portrayal of objects deeply concerned with texts (such as the *Torah*) within the painting is significant. Not only do they direct the viewer to consider the matter of *words* and thus the act of reading, but they sit alongside a collection of depicted objects that require translation and interpretation to understand the picture. It is possible to stretch this point to include those texts that lie, hypothetically at least, within the depicted biblical scrolls. These aspects increasingly point to the textuality of the painting. It is difficult to discern how much of *The Finding* requires a literal *reading* rather than experiential *looking*. Paul Barlow alludes to this point when he describes Pre-Raphaelite paintings as “visual crosswords to be decoded.”⁴⁵ Or as Chris Brookes says, “a realism of parts, not wholes.”⁴⁶ Carol Jacobi also describes the work of Holman Hunt as having a “disconcerting appearance” citing Tim Hilton who writes of “the

⁴⁵ Paul Barlow, *Time Present and Time Past: The Art of John Everett Millais* (Aldershot: Ashgate: 2005), 6.

⁴⁶ Chris Brooks, *Signs for the Times: Symbolic Realism in the Mid-Victorian World* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), 126.

devastatingly obvious fact about him. His paintings are not good-looking.”⁴⁷ From the outset, we are aware that we are entering into a textual realm rather than an aesthetic experience. I will return to the matter of texts within the painting. I now move to examine the imagery in the main body of the painting.

The Imagery in *The Finding*

As I have already alluded, *The Finding* (Fig.1) is a crowded complex scene that is difficult to take in one glance. There is depicted to the front left-hand side of the painting a large group of people, some seated, with others standing behind them. This group, comprising of doctors or rabbis, sits tightly together and forms an approximate semi-circle. To the right-hand side there is a trio of figures consisting of a boy, Jesus, to the front dressed in a striking blue costume, a woman, Mary, leaning in towards him and a tall man, Joseph behind them both. The figures of the Holy Family connect with each other, the boy has his hand on the woman’s left arm, she has her right arm around the boy, and Joseph encircles her arm and the boy’s shoulder. The figures situated behind the seated men are musicians with various instruments. Behind them there are sets of gold-coloured pillars forming a line which directs the eye into a perceived rear space, also populated with a variety of figures.

Returning to the seated figures to the front. To the left-hand side sits a figure holding a large scroll (known as a *sefer Torah*, literally, the book of Teaching) (Figs. 13, 14). He clasps it tightly to himself with his right arm holding it firmly. Draped across this arm and over his shoulders is a cloth with black stripes of varying thicknesses. The fabric appears to be quite weighty in substance, given its drape. This is a *tallit*, or prayer shawl. The rabbi in question appears to be wearing more than one prayer shawl, which is unusual. There appear to be three distinct examples. In addition to the one mentioned, there is one draped across his head with yellow stripes, and a further light blue example.⁴⁸ The point of this would appear to suggest excessive piety on the part of the old rabbi. Draped across the top of the scrolls is yet another prayer shawl which is in the process of being kissed by a young musician behind the rabbi whilst intent on looking at the scroll. (Fig.13) It is not clear whose prayer-shawl this is, it is unlikely to belong to the young boy musician who kisses it because he does not actually wear it (and is probably too young to do so). The scrolls themselves appear to be slightly

⁴⁷ Tim Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, World of Art (1970; repr., London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 93, cited in Carol Jacobi, *Painter, Painting Paint: A Reappraisal of the work of William Holman Hunt*, PhD diss., 1997, 10.

⁴⁸ I am grateful to Rabbi Aaron Lipsey for his observations on this and other matters.

exposed at the top.⁴⁹ Adorning the wooden handles at the top of the scroll are decorative silver finials trimmed with small bells known as *rimmonin*.⁵⁰ These decorative ornaments are likely to be modern constructions rather than authentic first century objects. This is because the bells that are featured on the finials are a *reminder* of the ancient Temple High Priest whose robe was believed to have been adorned with bells. Therefore, there can be no logic to their appearance in a painting that purports to portray the first-century. The scrolls are partially covered in what appears to be a velvet fabric with gold embroidery and stitching. This is difficult to discern precisely. The *sefer Torah* or scroll appears to be of an Ashkenazi style, which is customarily clothed in an embroidered *meil* or cover.⁵¹ This is a point worth making because Holman Hunt selected models based on their supposed oriental appearance which is more in keeping with Jews of Sephardic origin. This is but one of a number of paradoxes within the painting.

On the velvet cover there is an eight-point star shape comprised of interlocking triangles. This motif is highly unusual in this context, although it is not completely unknown in Judaism. The symbol has several associations. As the seal of Melchizedek, it forms a link to the priesthood.⁵² Holman Hunt's use of the motif can be attached to some elements he may

⁴⁹ I surmise from this that Holman Hunt wished to make a point about exposing the *Torah* scroll in some way, as it is highly unlikely that he witnessed such a thing in reality, as the scroll is normally treated very carefully and with great reverence.

⁵⁰ *Rimmonim* is Hebrew for pomegranates. Pomegranates have differing symbolic meaning in Judaism and Christianity. Holman Hunt has used the symbol elsewhere within the painting (in the Temple interior, symbolising the resurrection in Christianity) and it is unclear whether or not he was aware of the Jewish association with *Rosh Hashanah*. The pomegranate is (symbolically) thought to have 613 seeds coinciding with the number of *Torah* commandments. There are further associations with fertility and love, and they are mentioned in many Jewish texts and featured on ancient Jewish coins to symbolise the Jewish revolt against Rome known as the *Bar Kochbar* revolt in the second century CE. According to Bronkhurst the pomegranates on the pillar sixth from the left were based on biblical descriptions of Solomon's Temple, 2 Chronicles 3. 7: 4. 12-13. Bronkhurst in Tate Gallery *Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition*, 159. However, in Bronkhurst *Catalogue Raisonné*, 175, the pomegranates are further classified as Christian emblems of the resurrection.

⁵¹ The Ashkenazi scroll is ultimately housed within a holy ark or *Aron Kodesh*, a permanent fixture within a synagogue. By comparison, a Sephardi scroll is housed within its own richly decorated hard case, which makes it a portable object.

⁵² There is much discussion surrounding the various associations of the eight-pointed star symbol especially given that it has been enthusiastically adopted by the Mormon Church of Latter-Day Saints in recent years. The many associations include those adopted by Gnostics, Judaism and Christianity amongst others. Interestingly, the esoteric understanding specifies the inclusion of God's name *within the eight-pointed star*. Catherine Beyer, "What You Should Know About Octagrams - Eight-Pointed Stars." *Learn Religions*. <https://www.com/octagrams-eight-pointed-stars-96015> (accessed May 25, 2020). Furthermore, the eight-pointed star may be associated with the high priest Melchizedek because of the inclusion of the star within prominent artistic depictions of Genesis 14: 18-20, which recounts the story of Abraham's blessing after saving Lot. A notable example is *The Mosaic of Melchizedek, Abel and Abraham*, Basilica of St. Apollinaire. Within such pictures the uniting of righteous prophets from the past is meant to unite all of time and space. Melchizedek, it should be noted, was not an Israelite. He was the High priest of Salem which according to some rabbinic commentary means Jerusalem (Nachmanides and Ibn Ezra, cited in A. Cohen, *Soncino Chumash*). Additionally,

have wanted to explore. The story of Melchizedek the priest appears in both Jewish and Christian scripture. In Genesis 14: 18-20, Abraham receives a priestly blessing from Melchizedek after saving Lot. The geometric symbol is understood (and was so understood by Stephens) to form an Octalpa or eight-fold endless triangle to symbolise infinity or the infinite. Furthermore, the symbol is associated with Freemasonry. In this sense, symbolic meaning is tied to what is architecturally and mathematically true. Only what is true, and square can form the correct foundation to form the cornerstone against which other stones are aligned. The association with building and masonry is pertinent because Holman Hunt directly references the Jerusalem Temple cornerstone by depicting the builders pondering over (and supposedly rejecting) the stone in the right-hand side of the painting (Fig. 17).⁵³ This references Isaiah 28: 16-17 which uses the metaphor of the cornerstone to signify what is right and just. The New Testament further references this to situate Jesus as the chief cornerstone.⁵⁴ Jesus is the “stone the builders rejected” according to Mark 12:10. Here, Holman Hunt uses the motif typologically as a signifier of future events. It is notable that the timber frame mechanism the builders use echoes the painting’s *sefer Torah* star motif. Therefore, given the importance placed upon the notion of a Pre-Raphaelite “brotherhood” the Freemasonry reference becomes increasingly fitting.⁵⁵ Moreover, the eight-pointed star, when positioned at this angle, has the curious characteristic of forming the shape of a cross, which in the context of the painting is a fortuitous combination of Jewish star and Christian cross. This could have coincided with the beginning of Holman Hunt’s developing propensity to reconcile the Abrahamic faiths.⁵⁶ In the centre of the eight-pointed star which forms a diamond shape, there are some Hebrew letters incorporated into the gold embroidery. The letters spell out the tetragrammaton which is the unpronounceable name of God in Hebrew.⁵⁷ Above and below the star are some embroidered vine leaves in matching gold. I was initially

there are strong associations with the design within Islam. The Temple as pictured in *The Finding* sits in the location which is now the Dome of the Rock. Illustrations from Owen Jones’s *Grammar of Ornament* (which Holman Hunt made use of) also reveal the symbol as a motif within the designs of Alhambra in Spain (the copy of which, as part of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham in London (1854-1936), Holman Hunt based his version of the Temple in *The Finding*) (See also Fig. 32) I am grateful to Rabbi Aaron Lipsey for drawing my attention to the significance of the eight-pointed star.

⁵³ This is perhaps realistic for the nineteenth-century given that cornerstones eventually became more ceremonial and symbolic in function.

⁵⁴ Ephesians 2:19-21; 1 Peter 2:4-8; Mark 12:10, Matthew 21:44.

⁵⁵ It is apparent from Holman Hunt’s memoirs that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had no formal connection with Freemasonry, Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. 1. Chapter VI. However, the prevalence of artistic and fraternal brotherhoods did provide a context for the emergent Pre-Raphaelites. Laura Morrowitz and William Vaughan, *Artistic Brotherhoods in the Nineteenth Century*. Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2000.

⁵⁶ This can be seen in his inclusion of Jewish, Christian and Islamic symbolism in the third version of his painting *The Light of the World*, Maas, *The Light of the World*, 111.

⁵⁷ This is where F.G. Stephens’s was mistaken in his account.

surprised that it would be inscribed thus rather than spelling out the word *Torah*, or a dedication of some kind. It is likely that Holman Hunt was attempting to foreground God's literal "word" (understood as written in the *Torah*) to contrast with the Johannine Christian conception of the Jesus as Word-made-flesh. Additionally, it seemed strange and unsettling to see the *Torah* scroll positioned as being cradled in the manner that it is whilst the group is sat almost at floor level, given that one is supposed to stand in the presence of the *sefer Torah*. The scroll, which in Judaism is a sacred object, is not pictured in *The Finding* as opened for any scrutiny of the text or reading from the *Torah*, nor is it returned to an ark or a case for safekeeping.⁵⁸ I can only conclude that it is simply present to signify a material object of Judaism.⁵⁹ There is a further point to add here, and that is the implied orientalising on the part of Holman Hunt in assuming that, what is most likely to be a nineteenth-century *Torah* scroll would be appropriate for a scene depicting the first-century. Perhaps having seen such a scroll in local synagogue services he assumed it to be as unchanging and timeless in its appearance as the Jewish figures presented as "rabbis."

The Figures of the Doctors or Rabbis

The figure holding the larger scroll (the *sefer Torah*) is depicted as blind, with the appearance of suffering from cataracts. His eyes are pale; however, they are each obscured by a translucent film, and this makes them seem to stare out but see nothing. Additionally, they are sunk deeply into the sockets. The lids are dark, deep set and shadowed. The blind man's mouth is open, lips seem to be pink, pale, peeling and dry without speech. His beard is white and yellowing. The skin on his face is rendered and drawn with a papery and thin texture. This also is the case for his right-hand which appears to be parchment-like in texture. The bones are visible beneath the skin, the hand appears to be almost skeletal. The left hand, which is shrivelled in appearance, is raised slightly with the fringes of the striped garment lying across the fingers (Fig 14). There is a ring on the fourth finger. At the wrist sits a bracelet which is partly obscured by the fabric of the shawl. The figure's white robes seem to resemble his skin in that they are lightly wrinkled and textured. They are parted slightly at the knees to reveal a patterned shiny fabric. There is the appearance of a garment beneath the white robe. The blind man wears a hat which is encircled by a band of fabric, decorated in

⁵⁸ An ark is nowhere to be seen in *The Finding* because the scene is set in the Jerusalem Second Temple before its destruction. Such a scroll is not something one would sit with casually during a teaching and learning session such as this.

⁵⁹ Anthony Julius, remarking upon the plethora of Jewish objects in the picture described it as "Judaism's greatest hits," in conversation with the author.

white and gold. Lying across the headgear is a white shawl, trimmed with gold. On his feet, which emerge from underneath his garments are white slippers decorated with a leaf motif.

To the blind figure's left is another old man. He is similarly clad in white with slippers, only without the striped prayer shawl. The second man's right hand touches the blind man's wrinkled left hand as if to signal to him that he should pay attention. He leans into the blind man slightly, appearing to speak to him. This second man's beard is also white, long, bedraggled and yellowing. He also wears white robes which appear to be wrapped around his body. In his left hand, between thumb and fingers turned upwards, is a small black leather box, which is part of the *tefillin* or phylactery attached on top of a wider square shaped base. One side of the box has the Hebrew letter "shin" inscribed, with four instead of three vertical prongs.⁶⁰ Hanging down from the box are some black leather straps which curl downwards loosely. He wears a bejewelled ring on his right-hand forefinger. I noticed the yellowing side curls (known as *peyot*) curling downwards from the left side of his head. The second man's hat is like the blind man's, round in shape, stitched into segments and encircled with a striped headband. The headgear depicted is reminiscent of the renowned so-called "Jewish hat" as it appears in many historical artworks and images. As Sara Lipton and others have established, paintings are the most reliable source of information on this.⁶¹ I will return to the matter of differential clothing in chapter seven.

Whilst standing in front of the painting, I was able to note that the rendering of the hands in all of the figures is highly detailed and exquisitely achieved. This brings to my attention that the depiction and rendering of hands in disputation paintings seems to be important, the better for the portrayal of pointing, counterpointing, and gesturing. Whilst observing the painting in the gallery, I became aware that I had never really noticed the jewellery worn by the figures before in any manifest way. I cast my eyes across the *dramatis personae* and discerned that all of the figures on the left-hand side of the picture are wearing some kind of adornment, precious metal, or jewellery. The characters comprising the Holy Family do not. At the time, it occurred to me that I understood something by this, and additionally that I was possibly meant to understand the thing I recognised. That the Jewish figures, the rabbis as they are described, are conveyed as having in their possession gold and

⁶⁰ *Shin*, ש. In common usage, the shin is three-pronged, the fourth prong is a symbol that relates to the coming of the Messiah. The portrayal of the tefillin is accurate in the painting.

⁶¹ Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Henry Holt Books, 2014) and Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*.

jewels and therefore valuing the material over the spiritual. Furthermore, through this, lies the underlying trope of money. I could then see how a long-held stereotype that connects Jews and money is thus subtly woven throughout the painting. It is the absence of such adornment on the part of the Holy Family that confirms for me the presence of that stereotype. I was taken by surprise because I had never been aware of this until I stood directly in front of the painting, looking, slowly around its plethora of detail. Some questions began to form. I wondered if this (and by this, I mean the jewellery) was a nineteenth-century phenomenon rather than the result of research into first-century customs. In other words, did the Jewish models that Holman Hunt sought to pose for him, just happen to wear these trinkets? Or were they dressed by him? And did the other Jewish models, the ones who posed for the Holy Family relinquish their jewellery? Or did Holman Hunt, on seeing the exotic looking ensemble coming into being as he painted, decide on who should and should not be portrayed as wearing jewellery? These were questions that remained unanswered in that immediate moment.⁶²

The third and younger looking figure is pictured with dark hair and beard with swarthy toned skin. His *peyot* are lighter in colour and visible on both sides of his face. He also wears one of the round textured hats with a band of decorative fabric around the edge. He also wears a white overgarment and is seated cross-legged with arms resting on his knees. He holds in his hands a scroll with only one handle in his left hand. Some text is discernible, but not readable by the viewer. Visible underneath his left sleeve is a bracelet. The dark man is not party to the communication of the first two figures. It is very noticeable that he looks intently in the direction of the twelve-year-old Jesus figure.

I move now to the fourth figure whose appearance is darker still, possibly due to being depicted in shade. His eyes appear to be looking in two different directions, as if he suffers from a squint. He wears an ornate turban and has a bejewelled ring on the right hand. There is also a bracelet, and an ornate reflective metallic gold sleeve emerging from underneath a white and blue over-tunic. The tunic has an intricate blue design across the shoulders and at the hem of his tunic. The man's right leg is bent and drawn up, the other prone and lying on the seat. He wears another phylactery (*tefillin*) on his forehead, but not the

⁶² The circular nature of the jewellery in question brings to mind the Jewish ring of which Heinz Schreckenberg writes which comprised a badge in the form of a ring which was required wearing for Jews in Germany and other parts of Europe in the C13th. Some were inscribed: "*Der Juden Zeichen, Welches Sie ihren Kleidern zu tragen schuldig*" which translates as: "The Jewish badge of guilt which is their tragedy to wear." This is featured prominently in many images of Jews in Christian art. Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, 280-1, 292-3, 331, 227.

hand straps. It is noticeable that in their place, he has a pen or pointer which he uses to count the points of an argument on the left hand. At his feet there is an abaya lying folded on the floor.

I come now to the next figure in the painting. A fair-skinned red-haired musician leans down in-between the third and fourth figures. His clothing is highly ornate, dark fabric with contrastingly bright, intricate embroidered patterning. He is also looking towards the Jesus figure with the right hand turned upwards and pointing at the figure of Jesus. He appears to be communicating something to the tefillin wearing, counter-pointing rabbi. Additionally, he wears beads around his neck. The fifth rabbinical figure has a noticeably split white beard. He wears large turban-like head gear. He sits with one leg folded beneath him, and the other positioned folded upright with his bare foot on a low stool. He wears a bracelet on his left wrist and inserted beneath a cummerbund is what looks like a dagger. His trousers are trimmed with decorative edging. In his left hand he holds a shallow glass dish containing a beverage. He looks passively towards the Jesus figure.

The next figure crouches a little behind the main semi-circle. His expression is one of tension, with a wide-eyed, even fearful, pained expression. He appears to stare at the hands of the next figure. He sports one of the dimpled hats with a headband. He wears a ring on his right-hand which rests across his knees. The next figure is portly with a short white beard and white *peyot*, he wears a green turban, and his tunic is red. His expression is affable as he looks toward the action of the holy family. He wears a bracelet on the right hand which appears to be expressing something, although it is not clear what. The hand is not in repose, it appears to be making a kind of ameliorating gesture. What is it that the fearful character (positioned behind) sees in the gesture?⁶³ He sits in the shade of the Jesus figure. To the left of the blind elder, sits a child who waves a fly whisk around the *Torah*. The scene is clearly not set within the inner Temple because in keeping with the Lukan text the participants are mostly seated, and one did not sit when inside the Temple. This is congruent with accounts that place the scene in an outer portico of the Temple, a point I return to in chapter five.⁶⁴ Holman Hunt conveys the Temple as he imagined it was before its destruction in 70CE. One way he achieves this is by including musicians and instruments. The destruction of the

⁶³ The matter remains unresolved, yet interesting. In conversation with the author, R. Aaron Lipsey saw the gesture as possibly referring to John the Baptist, or the ritual of baptism. I do not concur with that. However, his subtle observation extends to the possibility that the quote written on the Temple door refers to Matthew's citation of the prophet Malachi (Matt. 11:10) in a further oscillation between the Old and New Testaments.

⁶⁴ This additionally settles the riddle mentioned earlier concerning men and women together; as this would be a place permitted to all.

Temple resulted in a state of mourning for Jews which meant that musical instruments were subsequently forbidden in rabbinic Judaism during prayer. There are anomalies to his vision however, with some signifiers of mourning for the destruction of the Temple in evidence, this being an event that was yet to occur at the time depicted within the painting.⁶⁵

The Holy Family in The Finding

The figures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph connect with each other and form a discernible unit. The overall shape forms a triangle with Joseph at the rear and Mary and Jesus at the front. The three-sided shape is likely to refer to the Trinity. The individuals are completely relational to one another, and therefore difficult to separate out in description. The Jesus figure is striking for his intensely blue costume and his red wavy hair lit from behind to suggest a naturally occurring halo effect. The tunic is striped in an intense ultramarine with a hint of magenta when seen close up, which makes the blue colouring appear quite startling. It makes him the dominant figure in a painting replete with figures. This contrasts with the duller, more grey-blue of Mary's costume. Mary is customarily pictured in blue, partly for ecclesiastical reasons.⁶⁶ More expensive than gold, lapis lazuli, the mineral that produces a brilliant ultramarine blue, was the most precious pigment and was thus reserved for Mary in religious renaissance paintings. However, here, acknowledging this tradition, the honour as such appears to be given over to Jesus. This suggests something of Holman Hunt's Protestant aesthetic, demonstrating reluctance to afford Mary the position she holds within Catholic theology.⁶⁷

The eyes of the figure of Jesus are unusually large, almost out of proportion, intensely blue and seem to look out directly at the viewer. The expression is one of stillness, calm, an

⁶⁵ It occurred to me furthermore that the appearance of the scroll suggests a product of the nineteenth century rather than anything that would have existed in the first century. In discussion, R. Lipsey also expressed a similar sentiment. This is partly due to the *rimmonim* - the bells of which are meant to symbolise and commemorate the priest's garments of a much earlier and past time. One might further add the black stripes of the tallit, being another sign of mourning for the destruction of the Temple. In a letter, Holman Hunt had expressed consternation at the kissing of the scroll (mediated via the prayer shawl) which he witnessed at a synagogue service for the festival of Sukkot. He viewed the practice as idolatrous. This was mistaken in my view. The practice is normative in the present day and is an expression of love and respect for what is taken to be on the part of the religious to be the word of God. William Holman Hunt, *Letter from Jerusalem to Millais*, Nov. 10, 1854 (British Library, London, Add. MS 41340, fol. 156). Cited in Bendiner, *An Introduction to Victorian Painting*, 156, fn. 15.

⁶⁶ There are a number of references to the signification of colour in the Bible. Because blue is the colour of the sky and sea, it has come to symbolise divinity. God ordered a veil to cover the Ark of the Covenant be made in the colours blue and purple and Mary is thought to be the Ark of the *New* Covenant. Blue is the colour incorporated into many Jewish prayer shawls although this has expanded in recent years to include alternative colours.

⁶⁷ It is widely understood that Holman Hunt was seeking to bring into being a Protestant inflection upon religious painting.

absence of passion, caught in a moment of reflection or realisation. Jesus's right hand is positioned so as to tighten the wide, red leather belt which has a cross shaped motif inscribed upon it. His left-hand rests upon the arm of Mary as she leans into him. His tunic is fringed, and he stands poised with one foot in front of the other, his attention is focused between Mary and the notional viewer. The pose is redolent of that of a martial arts figure, one that is ready for swift action.⁶⁸ As I look around the picture, the blue of his tunic continues to be noticeable for its luminosity.

The figure of Mary leans towards Jesus and their faces are touching one-another. Her arm is around Jesus as if to embrace him, but Jesus's focus appears to be upon us as viewers. Mary, who is pictured as leaning in towards Jesus, is depicted sporting curious red coloured fringes made visible by a gap made by the flow of her outer cloak which opens out to reveal an inner garment in white. The red fringes are very noticeable in part by their strangeness. The first aspect of this strangeness is the clear positioning of Mary as *Jewish* woman in a religious, specifically Christian painting (Fig. 17). The modern viewer is likely to have some awareness of the Jewishness of Mary. However, Holman Hunt here makes this an explicit aspect of her identity for the nineteenth-century viewer. Mary is presented as *unambiguously Jewish* by his doing this, and yet the presence of the fringes remains strange. Jews wear fringes which are known as *tzitzits*, however, although not technically forbidden, it is not customary for Jewish women to wear them. Therefore, he makes her an *exceptional* Jewish woman; a Jewish woman who does not conform to custom, or who breaks away from it.⁶⁹ This is a very subtle point, and probably undergirds an element of Holman Hunt's research into Judaism more than even his memoirs attest. That the fringes are red is disturbing. I speculate that this is meant to signify the sacrifice of Jesus to come, or that it may be linked with the symbolism of the red threads of *The Scapegoat* painting Holman Hunt undertook whilst painting *The Finding*.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ I am grateful to Todd Klutz for this illuminating observation.

⁶⁹ The wearing of *tzitzits* is technically only obligatory for Jewish males. The fringes function as a visual reminder for time-bound religious observances or *mitzvot*. Time-bound *mitzvot* are not obligatory for women. Women are not forbidden to wear them, but as they have become associated with men's attire, the public showing of *tzitzits* on women has been discouraged or even forbidden by most orthodox religious authorities because this could be interpreted as cross dressing. I am grateful to Rev. Yigal Wachmann for his assistance on this matter.

⁷⁰ The scarlet threads also reference Isaiah 1:18 "...though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." George Landow discusses the symbolism extensively on the Victorian Web: <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/whh/replete/scapegoat.html> (accessed August 5th, 2020)

Additionally, Mary is depicted as a woman mid-action. She has rushed into the Temple in search of Jesus and throws her arms around him in a state of relief. The Lukan text, clearly written into the picture via the inlays, relays the confrontation between the two. *Why have you done this to us?* In other words, why have you caused us so much worry? And we are meant to understand as a result, the emotional impact upon Jesus's parents at having found him. The painting is a scene of familial reconciliation as much as a discussion with elders. However, within the painting, Jesus is depicted as unperturbed. His expression, turning to us as notional viewers, seems dismissive of his mother's concerns. He has more important matters to attend to, now that he is approaching adulthood, and his impending mission. The scene of family reunion serves to ground the story in an everyday kind of encounter. It is one that many viewers, past and present, can understand. The grounding within a real context is meant to differentiate between an unattainable idealisation of religious imagery and the sense that Jesus and his family are real people in a real and comprehensible context. This is in keeping with Carlyle's direction as previously discussed.

Mary's sandals are slung around Joseph's shoulder as if hurriedly removed from her feet. Her outer garment in that dark greyish blue, is noticeable for its muted tone compared with that of Jesus's bright blue tunic. Her hair is covered with a scarf tied in a middle eastern manner. Joseph stands closely behind Mary and Jesus and presents with a tall, strong and manly appearance. He wears a red patterned turban and rust coloured red and white over-garments. His hair is also red. His right hand is positioned so as to cover Mary's hand as she holds Jesus. His left hand holds the cords that bind the sandals. His gaze is somewhat ambiguous, although he does appear to look towards the heads of Mary and Jesus. He carries figs for the journey which can be seen in the darkly shaded area between Jesus and Mary.

The motifs of looking, seeing and blindness are increasingly noticeable within the painting and between the viewer and the painting. To the right-hand side of the holy family, just outside the Temple itself, is seated a blind beggar figure upon the steps. He is dressed in rags and holds out his hand for money. He sits with his arm leaning upon a wooden crutch. There is no-one interacting with him, nor giving him money. The beggar appears to mirror the blind rabbi in an underscoring of the motif. The act of looking and seeing is further reflected back to the viewer in the gaze of the Jesus figure. It is startling how the encounter between the child Jesus and the notional audience is achieved. The enlarged eyes do not engage with Mary as might be expected. Rather, they look decidedly outwards towards the notional viewer. This could be Holman Hunt's attempt to convey the evangelical notion of a

direct encounter with Jesus. The eye-contact demonstrates Holman Hunt's awareness of the viewer's position. Additionally, there is the suggestion that he had considered what it is that Jesus "sees" from the standpoint of the picture. I will address this in more detail in the next chapter.

Behind the builders are the outer parts of the Temple precinct, and in the distance is a visible landscape which looks right out into the distance. (Fig. 17) Flying into the Temple, in an apparently orderly sequence, are some doves. I wonder if their number corresponds with anything symbolic. Perhaps there are twelve to correspond with the twelve tribes of Israel or thirteen to comprise the twelve disciples plus Jesus to come. However, I can count over fourteen. They appear to be flying in from a distance and we can see some of them flying around the Temple. A boy is tasked with waving them out. He flaps a robe to shoo them away. We can see him behind one of the musicians on the left-hand side into the distance. I assume that the doves are intended to represent the holy spirit and peace.⁷¹ There are many well-known paintings of Jesus's baptism which depict a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, descending towards the figure of Jesus. Perhaps the most renowned example that comes to mind is Piero Della Francesca's *Baptism of Christ* (1439). Here it is noticeable that Holman Hunt is consciously working within an inherited artistic tradition, one which he assumes his audience will have some awareness. The doves in the Temple are presumably meant to represent the holy spirit. The shooing of the doves out of the temple might then be interpreted as a negative or even an aggressive typological message contra the holy spirit and thus Christianity. That there are so many doves, as if to bombard the scene with a signifier of the holy spirit, is almost like a repeated message, lest we miss it. The dove is a motif that appears in Greek and Roman paganism in addition to both Old and New Testaments and is a feature of Jesus's baptism. However, the celebration of the dove appears in painting so frequently that we might reasonably conclude that it is a tradition of painting that is being referenced as much as the Bible.⁷²

There are additional figures in the painting suggestive of numerous happenings and goings on within the Temple. In the far-left hand side of the picture, immediately left from

⁷¹ There is a further tentative link with the non-canonical Infancy Gospel of Thomas where the young Jesus creates birds from clay and brings them to life. There is a renowned image on the ceiling in St. Martins Church, Zillis in Switzerland. The image can be seen on this website: [Switzerland: Zillis, Mistail, St Moritz, Graubunden \(the-silk-route.co.uk\)](http://the-silk-route.co.uk) (Accessed 14th September 2021)

⁷² Examples of paintings containing such a dove motif include Raphael, *The Annunciation*, Predella of the *Oddi Altarpiece* (1 of 3 scenes) 1502-3, The Vatican, Roger van der Weyden, *The Annunciation*, 1440, Louvre, Paris, Jan Baegert (Master of Cappenberg) *The Coronation of The Virgin*, 1520, National Gallery, London.

the musicians is a lamp-lighter. The differential in size of the figures suggests that the Temple is a large and grand space. More centrally, a little further from the dove chaser, is a rather feminine looking figure with what looks like a harp. Additionally, there are some figures in the background. A woman holds a baby, a priest performs a ritual with incense and a shepherd manages sheep in a pen. Multiple significations are possible. The man and woman bring their child to the Temple and a sacrificial lamb is offered in thanks. The parents echo Mary and Joseph with their child both in an earlier episode in Luke in addition to the moment currently portrayed.⁷³ The presence of the lamb foretells of Jesus taking on the role of the lamb intended for sacrifice.

The Temple itself is highly ornate with golden pillars. Each of the pillars is decorated with different styles of decoration carved in relief. There is lattice work which is highly intricate with multiple interlocking circular and criss-cross designs, highly reminiscent of Islamic designs. It is well known that Holman Hunt based his Temple design on Owen Jones's copy of the Alhambra at Crystal Palace.⁷⁴ The hanging lanterns are also highly ornate adding to a lively sense of colour and precious metal. Although not historically accurate, the Temple as Holman Hunt presents it suggests, in addition to both Judaism and Christianity, the oblique presence of Islam. The floor of the Temple in the foreground and to the left-hand side appears to be of red marble. There is a gradual change of tone noticeable as the floor reaches the right-hand side where Mary and Joseph have just entered. One of Mary's feet is placed upon the red marble floor, and the other on the ornate grey stone edging. The colour graduation suggests something meaningful, with the redness, perhaps symbolising blood, redolent of Jesus's sacrifice to come.

On the right-hand side of the painting is a narrow vertical band which portrays a view into the distance of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. The presence of the vertical band recalls a pictorial device used in some renaissance paintings and here, it indicates a temporal aspect to the painting. To the left of the painting embodied by the rabbis, is the past. The vertical band projects the narrative into the future where Jesus will eventually make the ultimate sacrifice at the Crucifixion. The temporal aspects created by the allusion to future events are examples of Holman Hunt's use of typology as a means of signalling the Christian

⁷³ Preceding the story portrayed, in Luke 2:21 Jesus is circumcised and named; in Luke 2: 22-24 Jesus is presented at the Temple as the first born "designated as holy to the Lord" and a sacrifice is offered on behalf of Mary and Joseph.

⁷⁴ Bronkurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 175.

message embedded within the picture. I will return to the matter of typology in chapters four and seven.

3.3 A Consideration of *The Finding* in terms of Technique or Formal Properties

In this small section, I describe and analyse the picture in more formal terms. This will involve a consideration of the structure and composition of the painting, the pictorial methods including colour and texture used to construct the work. The reader will notice that I have situated this aspect of my analysis after my treatment of the imagery because my interest is not to foreground formal properties and style over content or social context, nor is it to locate a genre we call Pre-Raphaelitism.⁷⁵ I find it helpful to consider the way in which the work is structured, to describe observations in terms of a visual language because I believe this, in addition to imagery and social context and communicates something vital concerning the questions I have about the painting's appearance and Holman Hunt's inherited cultural knowledge. This section will be followed by my analysis via drawing and painting.

In terms of composition, the painting is divided into a number of horizontal and vertical bands. The vertical shapes comprise of the pillars, the door, the standing figures and the band depicting the landscape into the distance. Converging lines in keeping with traditional one-point perspective exist in the division on the floor by Mary's feet (at the edge of the Temple door) and the first three of the seated figures. The lines can be seen as converging towards the small open window at the rear of the Temple. The ceiling is structured in rows of hanging lanterns and beams to suggest further depth also converging towards the open rear window.

To the left-hand side are the priests, rabbis, musicians and attendants. They sit in a semicircle that partly encloses the trio on the right-hand side. Although we understand them to be seated in a semi-circle, the actual effect is somewhat more compressed. This makes for a suggested horizontal mass shaped across the painting. This is set behind a triangular shape made with the Holy Family on the right-hand side of the picture. The suggestion of a strong horizontal band also contrasts with a sense of elongation emanating from the illusion of distance conveyed by the smaller figures in the far rear of the scene. It is this elongation, combined with the horizontal which if imagined from above that suggests the shape of a

⁷⁵ This is not a *formalist* analysis per se. The mention of formal properties brings a particular aspect of art history method to the fore articulated principally by Alois Reigl (1858-1905) and Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945). It is concerned to analyse works of art in terms of form and style over content irrespective of social conditions of production.

cross. In the next chapter I will show how Holman Hunt's choices regarding his composition demonstrate a meaningful sense of purpose linked to historical religious painting.

Colour, Texture and Rhythm

Holman Hunt makes use of textiles and clothing in addition to the gold-coloured Temple interior to create a myriad of colour and pattern. The tunic worn by Jesus stands out as the most vivid of blues and comprises of a blue ticking stripe with magenta. *The Finding* is rich with pattern which begins with the carving on the gold-coloured ornate frame separated only by the inlays, to be continued into the painting in the Temple pillars. The door to the Temple is further enriched with pattern and decoration as is the floor of the Temple. The patterning can even be recognised in the stripes of the prayer shawls wrapped around the blind rabbi figure in the foreground. The lattice work at the rear of the Temple further augments the presence of patterning with deeply intricate motifs and criss-crossed shapes. There are further ornamental patterns to be seen in the various items of clothing and head gear worn by the figures. The doctors' hats and turbans with their dimpled patterning or coloured stripes add further in the way of colour and texture. There is a sense of rhythm and movement and noise suggested in various aspect of the picture. The columns rhythmically punctuate the space on the left-hand side augmented by the ceiling's rows and hanging lights. The bells of the *rimmonim* and musical instruments suggest a cacophony of musical and metallic sound, the birds and chaser suggest flapping sounds and repetitive visual punctuation. Mary's strange *tzitzits* seem to dance about and form a visual echo with Jesus's fringed garment (Fig. 17).

Holman Hunt's paint technique skilfully conveys a range of textures. This is especially noticeable in the rendering of the textiles. In particular, the prayer shawl, the various headgear, the metallic effect of the Temple interior and the marble flooring. His smooth rendering of paint accomplished and designed to conceal itself contributes to the sense of realism. This works to create the illusion that the painting is not really a painting, it is more of a vision or a closely observed record of an actual historical event. This is further enhanced in the modern day by the technical knowledge displayed by Holman Hunt. When I viewed the painting, I was able not only to look closely at the painted surface (albeit through glass) I was also able to look closely at his other works. I was struck by the good condition of Holman Hunt's handling of paint by comparison with other artists whose works showed

cracked paint and had deteriorated over time.⁷⁶ Further aspects of the technical side of the picture come to the fore in my next section where I discuss my engagement with *The Finding* via the practice of drawing and painting.

Seeing through Drawing and Painting

As I have already indicated, my working process involved working from an enlarged reproduction of *The Finding*, drawing and painting from selected areas. This method causes a slowing down of the looking process and allowed me to notice many details afresh. In this way the painting begins to open up details that suggest or reveal something new. It is a way of making the painting strange and to move away from any consideration of aesthetics. The experience in this respect is not tied to sensation or feeling, but of looking. I understand this to be an active, experiential approach that allows for deep meditation upon the painting. The action of drawing closely (even from a reproduction) causes one to search for a resolution of problems because you are trying to resolve them yourself. It encourages the questioning of how technical problems arose and how they might have been resolved by the artist originally. It brings them to the fore, and highlighted (for me) the difficulties that the artist experienced and thus encourages empathy. The process is as if one is joining in with the creative process and walking with the artist. By undertaking this, I imagine that I can almost envisage things as Holman Hunt did. Although that cannot be true, I found it helpful to conceptualise this. When drawing in this way, one must consider what is actually there in front of one's own eyes (in the painting) and contrive to step outside the place of illusion that the picture works to create. This means that it is possible to locate ambiguities and unresolved elements. It also develops an awareness of the extent to which one, as a viewer, has been previously compensating for anomalies.

One of my initial observations concerned the use of light throughout the picture which conforms to something we can agree looks realistic. However, when drawing from the scene the process suggests otherwise. The light is calculated to flow from the right-hand side of the picture. Drawing from the scene enables me to notice the artifice. As I drew from the Jesus figure's face, I become more aware of how the model's head was lit. (Figs. 18-21) The lighting was revealed whilst drawing recalled a type of studio or indoor lighting. This is not what I might have expected from the scene before me. It is as though the figure was lit from the front and the side, and that at times there was no other figure (such as Mary) to block the

⁷⁶ In the same room was Simeon Solomon's *Bacchus*, 1867, which showed clear signs of cracking; and William Holman Hunt's *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus*, 1851 which was in very good condition.

light. I became aware through my attempts to resolve and create a true likeness from the image that the lighting is not naturalistic. It conforms to a set of *expectations* of naturalism. It seems to fit the logic of an open space to the figure's left-hand side (the viewer's right). However, Joseph's face does not pick up enough light to conform with the Jesus or Mary figures. I noticed the halo or nimbus effect and consider the artifice of it. For that effect to occur naturalistically, Jesus's head would have to be lit from behind and most of this area is shown as within shadow. I further realised that Jesus's eyes are much larger than they should be or would be normally. My first sketchbook painting reveals this to me when I reflect on it. I have somehow corrected Holman Hunt's proportions in my own drawing. This is because in my original drawing, the eyes seem to be in proportion, yet do not match the eyes as portrayed in *The Finding*. (Figs 18-19, 20, 22-24) In subsequent digital re-workings, I concentrated on the eyes and realised I would have to enlarge them significantly. When looking again at Holman Hunt's rendering, I noticed that the eyes become deliberately enlarged to the point where they become more childlike and feminine than I initially perceived them to be. The effect is rather like the application of eye make-up. In this case, drawing from the painting revealed something hitherto concealed. It is not that anything is invisible, rather, that actively looking through drawing brings elements into view in a manner that would otherwise not occur.

Drawing from the painting enables me to notice Holman Hunt's rendering of the hands which reveals a number of things. Firstly, that the hands are a prominent feature within this painting. They are rendered in detail and express a great deal. Secondly, noticing the hands in *The Finding* as I did, reminded me of the role hands play in other similar disputation scenes. The hands form part of the method of communication within the Lukan scene. Here, in *The Finding*, they point, they count, they gather, they touch, they play (Figs 14, 16). Holman Hunt's exquisitely observed hands convey age and youth, masculine and feminine, personality and role within the scene. Every figure is completing some important action by hand, be it playing a musical instrument, waving a flywhisk, holding a *tefillin* box or the *sefer Torah*. The blind beggar to the right of the picture also has prominent hands, one of which is reaching out for help (Fig. 17). That one musician points towards Jesus, and another counts the points of an argument on his hand bring this picture firmly into the realm of disputation, and the genre of disputation paintings. This is because the particular figure who is wearing the *tefillin* on his forehead appears to have had the corresponding *tefillin* hand straps replaced by the pointer in order to counter the notional arguments. I wonder if this was Holman Hunt's

way of bringing a clear signifier of the disputation into the picture, and that he found that he could only do so (and keep to his schema of realism) by replacing part of the *tefillin* on one of the figures.

Jesus is depicted tightening the strap on his belt with his hand. Drawing his right hand revealed to me the tension in the action and I can see this when I reflect upon my own drawing. I notice Mary's left hand, her arm gathered at the wrist by Jesus's left hand. It is neither affectionate towards her nor bringing her to him. He is almost pushing her away from himself. Through drawing, I notice further the eyes of the various figures and how their expressions convey different emotions and motivations. I spend some time drawing and painting the face of Mary and notice her features. After doing this work, I connect her face with other renditions of Mary that Holman Hunt undertook and feel sure that it is the same person modelling for him.⁷⁷

The main action taking place between the two groups depicted in *The Finding* is supported by the various bit-players in the drama of the scene. Although at first glance, they seem peripheral and unimportant, they all play a role in the symbolism of *The Finding*. None of these figures seems intended to be obscure or anonymous. As my viewing and looking time increases, every person depicted seems meaningful in some way. The shepherd at the rear of the Temple supplying lambs for sacrifice, the mother, dressed in blue in a way that is reminiscent of how Mary would customarily be portrayed with her baby in art. They are accompanied by her husband who has purchased a lamb, slung around his shoulder for the sacrifice of the first-born. These human characters allude to the story of Jesus in terms of his birth and future sacrificial death. In addition, there is a lamp-lighter, the dove chaser, the harpist and the aforementioned builders with their symbolic cornerstone. In the distance, as previously mentioned, the landscape also alludes to Jesus's future sacrifice on the cross.

Drawing from the picture revealed various anomalies or mistakes I judge Holman Hunt to have made. I have already alluded to the artifice of the nimbus around Jesus's head. Here I turn to the figure of Joseph whose physical stance is odd. Because the painting is so busy with activity and detail, this is something easily missed. Joseph's legs are splayed extensively reaching from beyond Jesus's feet to just behind Mary's feet. This makes the figure of Joseph seem disproportionately large. As I look at this detail, I find it increasingly

⁷⁷ This is especially noticeable in two versions of *The Triumph of the Innocents*, 1870, 1876. The model for Mary in *The Finding* was Mary Moccatta, wife of Frederick Moccatta a prominent Jewish philanthropist. See Bronkhurst in Tate Gallery *Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition*, 159 and *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1.

difficult to reconcile this arrangement into a realistic schematic pattern. It does not fit. Joseph's legs appear to me to be too widely positioned. So much of this area is painted so as to appear to be in the shade that this aspect is obscured. A further point to make is that given the preponderance of functioning, purposeful hands in *The Finding*, it is noticeable that Joseph's left hand is so small in comparison with the rest of his body and his right hand which shields that of Mary's.

By slowing down the looking process through drawing and painting, I am able to discern elements that are unresolvable and conflicting. Paul Barlow writes that we need to understand how Holman Hunt constructs visual experiences for his viewers. My observations through practice lead me to believe that he is right. Barlow says:

*“Hunt does not simply fill his images with symbols while following a programme of detailed visual documentation. He constantly creates visual conflicts...sudden strange juxtaposition of motifs ... clashing colours...repeatedly set against box-like frames ...”*⁷⁸

The direct engagement with the painting, conversing with others, and the process of drawing from it (in reproduction) have enabled me, in a sense, to make the painting *strange* again. This I believe has opened up avenues of thought and new insights. Taking this approach allowed me to note anomalies, composition and rendering. By looking more intensely at the picture and reflecting upon its qualities I began to think more deeply about its religious message, elements of its appearance and its relationship to other religious works of art. What resulted was significant, and I will return to this aspect in the next chapter.

3.4 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter presented two differing accounts of *The Finding*. I began with a contextualisation of Stephens's position as an art critic and the development of his textual authority over time. I considered some of the pamphlet's content and how it constructs Jewishness in a number of ways. Firstly, Jews were a necessary requirement for the subject of the painting given the artist's endeavours to achieve religious authenticity. Although there is every possibility that Holman Hunt could have achieved his aims without extensive travel to the Holy Land. As such, the Jews as the persons who modelled for Holman Hunt, become transformed into biblical resources. The various descriptions and contradictions regarding Stephens's (and Holman Hunt's) expectations about the appearance of Jews were exposed.

⁷⁸ Paul Barlow, “Druids and Sphinxes: Hunt's Visual Worlds of Threat and Delight.” *Pre-Raphaelite Society Review*, Vol XVI, No.2, (Autumn 2008) 42-56, 55.

Additionally, I noted Stephens's propensity for conveying Jewishness through physiognomy rather than by means of an examination of the material objects so carefully included in the painting. Furthermore, the Christian aspects were conveyed by Stephens with little or no examination of the Lukan text. By contrast, my own reading was concerned to engage in a direct manner with the painting using a range of approaches, with attention given to how Jewishness is conveyed in one section and a close consideration of imagery and formal elements in another. I address the matter of the biblical text in chapter five.

Acknowledging the historical context of the pamphlet, that it is a product of its time, I nevertheless critiqued it because it remains the grounding for many accounts of *The Finding* and Holman Hunt as an artist. As a valued document produced to accompany the exhibition of *The Finding*, Stephens's pamphlet remains a critical source for the purposes of serious examinations of the painting. However, questions may be raised as to what precisely it reveals about *The Finding* and the commentary that has made use of it with little critical interrogation. Overall, the reasons for the Jewish presence remain an accepted and settled proposition. The reliance on the textual will not reveal *The Finding's* origin nor explain its Jewish presence. In Heideggerian terms, the origin of this work of art lies not in Holman Hunt-as-artist, rather, in the complex layers that comprise the very subject matter of the painting, that is, a *discourse of disputation*. Further to this, there is the question of setting our understanding of *The Finding's* appearance within its artistic and social contexts. In other words, its appearance and comprehensibility are accounted for more within networks of cultural meaning rather than the results of repeated attempts at historically distanced objectivity. In the next chapter, I take the next steps in establishing relevant cultural networks attached to *The Finding* and continue to address the question of *The Finding's* appearance by extending the discussion into an examination of its artistic and social contexts.

Chapter 4: *The Finding's* Religious and Artistic Contexts

It is not the literal past that rules us...It is images of the past.

George Steiner¹

Introduction

Now that we have examined *The Finding's* imagery I now wish to consider three contexts for *The Finding*. The chapter will be divided into three parts. The first two parts set the painting within its Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian contexts taking a conventional approach by examining the background conditions that play a part in the painting's production and appearance. The third part will examine *The Finding's* deeper contexts and will be subdivided into four sections. By paying close attention to what appears in the painting I show that *The Finding* looks the way it does (in part) because of a longer artistic and cultural tradition that was accessed both knowingly and unknowingly by Holman Hunt. This part of the discussion incorporates the outcomes of informal discussions and drawing sessions. It includes a recognition of figures in *The Finding* that resemble renaissance figures and what that observation revealed. Additionally, I discuss the matter of systems of perspective and what this tells us about the worldview incorporated into *The Finding*. Furthermore, I discuss the relationship between *The Finding* and the *Christ among the Doctors* genre. This will then prepare the ground for the subsequent discussion in the thesis concerning the cultural inheritance informing Holman Hunt.

This thesis continues to ask, why does *The Finding* look the way it does? One way to begin answering this question is to contextualise the painting; understanding what surrounds its production and exhibition may yield important insights. However, this is not without the risk of falling into assumptions of cause and effect. The unguarded enquiry asks, does *The Finding* look the way it does because it is a Pre-Raphaelite painting? And if that is at all feasible, how could we subsequently discern the formula for a Pre-Raphaelite painting? How could Holman Hunt's (or anyone else's) artwork be measured for its conformity? Holman Hunt's writings attempt to control and nullify interrogation into this question. His claim to be the "true" Pre-Raphaelite and presentation of his account of artistic styles and events of the

¹ George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Re-definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971) 13.

day sum up a conceptualization of Pre-Raphaelitism. His writing is mined for its utility by historians and scholars. By reaching for his words, we sidestep the ability to answer our question concerning the Jewish presence within the painting. This is because we cease to be open to why (or how) it looks the way it does *to us*. We may presuppose that it looks the way it does because it is a Pre-Raphaelite painting (however conceptualised).² Indeed, we should *volte face* to suggest that Pre-Raphaelitism (as understood) exists *because of pictures like these*.³ The entire apparatus surrounding *The Finding's* creation emphasises the picture's representations and signifiers which lure the viewer away from letting the painting *speak*. The reviews, publicity, the exhibition pamphlet and the whole spectacle and event of the exhibition work harmoniously to this end. We are corralled and seduced into seeing the objects and the persons depicted as *representations*, instead of allowing the possibility of a disclosure of *The Finding* to unfold. We have become reliant on a way of thinking which classifies and settles questions about art before the artwork appears to us. Therefore, the question about the Jewish presence in *The Finding* is not asked from the normative position because *The Finding's* framework is assumed to be Pre-Raphaelitism and thus representative of its Victorian, English, Protestant Christian world. It is not possible to locate "the" context of *The Finding*, because it has existed (and exists) within a range of contexts or "worlds."

This thesis seeks to open up one of *The Finding's* worlds to expose it as one of *disputation* rather than merely an encapsulation (or re-presentation) of a religious story or Pre-Raphaelite style. Moreover, as this thesis unfolds it will become apparent that the disputation discloses *The Finding's* particular qualities of orientalism. However, there is much to explore before we reach that point. Therefore, I now take account of *The Finding's* closest contexts. The most immediate context in which to place *The Finding* is Pre-Raphaelite, accordingly that is where I now turn.

² I am not suggesting that there is such a thing as "a" Pre-Raphaelite style, especially given that the three original brotherhood members (in addition to others included as Pre-Raphaelites) worked in such divergent ways. The comment is intended to presage my subsequent remarks regarding the origins of things referencing Heidegger's *Origin* essay discussed in chapter two and briefly above.

³ Heidegger makes a correlative point in *The Origin of a Work of Art* (discussed earlier) when he reverses the concept of the artwork's origin, assumed to be the artist, to pose that there would be no artist without the artwork. This apparently redundant circular argument paves the way for Heidegger to declare that the origin of a work of art is not the artist but *art*. What Heidegger leads us towards is not a disavowal of the artist's presence or efforts, rather to understand that the system of significance that makes any understanding of art possible pre-exists both artist's and viewers' existence. It exists within (and as a result of) a shared world of understanding in which our conceptualization of "art" is present. Thus, we realise that *The Finding* has the propensity to open up a world of shared meaning to us by bringing meaningful elements out of concealment for our attention.

4.1 The Pre-Raphaelite Context

Notwithstanding the frequent discussions surrounding the name, the Pre-Raphaelite label naturally endures and offers scope for at least partially addressing the question of why the painting looks (appears) the way it does. Holman Hunt's rationale for the picture centred around his own religious questions and professional ambitions. Nancy Davenport charts his religious development, which was never static, and ranged from independent Anglican, muscular Christianity, to mysticism and low church Christian Socialism.⁴ Suffice to say, Holman Hunt's own religious position can be loosely understood as broadly protestant and he did not demonstrate loyalty to any particular denomination. Partly for reasons of space, I shall confine my remarks in what follows to Hunt's responses to the reception of previous Pre-Raphaelite works.

The Finding can be understood as a rejoinder (in part) to responses to two Pre-Raphaelite paintings. The first, Millais's *Christ in the House of his Parents*, (1849-50) (Fig. 38) and secondly Holman Hunt's own previous religiously themed work *The Light of the World* (1851-53) (Figs 36, 37). Criticism of Millais's portrayal of Jesus centred around the figure of Jesus's supposedly insipid appearance. Millais depicts a young, waif like, highly feminised Jesus leaning towards Mary. Holman Hunt, by contrast, was to depict Jesus as taking a step *back* from her. Far from meek and passive in *The Finding*, Jesus is pictured tightening his belt, girding his loins, ready for action in anticipation of his newly discovered mission. *The Finding* as a response to *The Light of the World* has further resonance. *The Light of the World* is, according to Jeremy Maas, "one of the most celebrated religious pictures ever painted."⁵ It became in Amanda Burritt's words, "an iconic image in Protestant visual culture throughout the British Empire."⁶ Holman Hunt went on to produce three versions of the painting, the latter of which was painted in 1900-4 and was executed by both Holman Hunt and F.G. Stephens.⁷ The painting was a much discussed "subject of conversation and general interest" according to William Bell Scott.⁸ It was to become a renowned emblem of Victorian faith and has entered the realm of popular culture having been reproduced and printed many times. Between 1905 and 1907 the painting toured throughout the British Empire and was

⁴ Davenport, "Layered Belief," 29-77.

⁵ Maas, *The Light of the World*, ix.

⁶ A.M. Burritt, *Visualising Britain's Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 149.

⁷ Stephens was engaged to work on the third version of the picture due to Holman Hunt's diminishing eyesight, Maas, *The Light of the World*, 50-54, 220.

⁸ Maas, *The Light of the World*, 58.

eventually seen by millions of people, confirming it as a public sensation. Maas writes that the painting's influence revealed itself in various ways. New hymns foregrounding the word "light" and the phrase "light of the world" were written. Works of art featuring sentimental subjects referencing the theme of locked doorways and thresholds were also in evidence.⁹

The popular explanation given for the concept for the painting was that it had been inspired by a religious vision on the part of Holman Hunt. Many years after its initial exhibition, Holman Hunt implied as much when he wrote to Scott alluding to *The Light of the World*'s origins as having been inspired by a religious vision leading to a conversion experience. Maas suggests that Holman Hunt's words have "been taken at just a shade too much face value."¹⁰ He reminds us that Holman Hunt was aware of the 1851 religious census which recorded the attendance at places of worship on 30th March of that year. The results of the census, made public just as *The Light of the World* was nearing completion in 1853, would have provided an indicator of potential markets for Holman Hunt according to Maas.¹¹ It implied at the very least that there was a middle-class audience receptive to the picture's conception of Jesus. Holman Hunt's granddaughter concurred with this sentiment, suspecting a "more material than spiritual motive."¹² It was not universally popular, however. Historian and Essayist Thomas Carlyle had criticised *The Light of the World* as "mere papistical fantasy" upon viewing it at the artist's studio:

*"Do you suppose that Jesus walked about bedizened in priestly robes and a crown, and with yon jewels on his breast, and a gilt aureole round his head? Ne'er crown nor pontifical robe did the world e'er give to such as Him."*¹³

Holman Hunt's memoirs recall Carlyle's comments about Bernardino Luini's *Christ Among the Doctors* (c. 1550) lamenting the qualities of the portrayal of Jesus in the Luini, then attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. In a prolonged exchange, (as recounted by Holman Hunt) he expressed frustration at the approach taken:

*"...and what could be more wide o' the mark? There's the picture of 'Christ disputing with the Doctors' in our National Gallery by Leonardo da Vinci, and it makes him a puir, weak, girl-faced nonentity..."*¹⁴

⁹ The most renowned perhaps being *Love Locked Out* (1889) by Anna Lea Merritt. See Maas, 78.

¹⁰ Maas, *The Light of the World*, 16.

¹¹ Maas deduces that Holman Hunt may have had qualms over the initial results of the census (implying lower levels of religiosity) however, would have felt some relief at realising that the majority of those deemed to have been in attendance at places of worship were middle class, the group that formed the main source of patronage for artists. Maas, *The Light of the World*, 17.

¹² Diana Holman Hunt in Anne Clark Amor, *William Holman Hunt: The True Pre-Raphaelite* (London, Constable and Company Limited, 1989), 9.

¹³ Cited in Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. 1, 355-56.

¹⁴ Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. 1, 358.

Carlyle's urging for an historically informed and believable image of Jesus, had a considerable influence upon Holman Hunt's subsequent endeavours to create an image of Jesus as a dynamic human force.¹⁵ Carlyle's highlighting the lack of realism was also a factor. *The Light of the World* is presented as conveying a spiritual meaning contra *The Finding* which is claimed as an attempt at truth via an authentic realisation of Jesus. Thus, it can be argued that *The Finding* looks the way it does and was begun with the purpose of addressing Carlyle's criticism. This appears to be borne out given some press responses. In the *Glasgow Herald* (1863), Holman Hunt's realism is directly compared to Carlyle's claiming that *The Finding* "approaches nearer to the reality (of what happened) than anything of the kind we have ever known."¹⁶ The *Derby Mercury* reflects a number of reviews that refer to the manly qualities of Jesus. Describing Holman Hunt as a "daring innovator" it goes on to say that Holman Hunt

*"does not represent the great Christ to be an effeminate, womanly man, but a strong limbed, well-proportioned, and noble youth; the eye full of inspiring thought; the lips firm, though round, and the magnificent countenance full of divine beauty."*¹⁷

It could be argued that notwithstanding the modern-day assumptions concerning the perceived feminine appearance of the twelve-year-old Jesus in *The Finding*, Holman Hunt gave careful consideration to the figure's stance and pose. When compared to the aforementioned examples, the figure stands out as a dynamic and vivid figure within the picture. Accordingly, much depends upon wider contexts of viewing to make any sort of judgement about the painting's appearance. A not insubstantial context for *The Finding* is the wider Victorian world to which I now turn.

¹⁵ Marcia Werner makes the point that Carlyle's previous enthusiasm for *The Hireling Shepherd* (1851-2) meant that Holman Hunt was "startled" at the subsequent denunciation of *The Light of the World*. The incident had likely made a deep impression on him, and she notes that he recalled the incident in five full pages in his memoirs. I would concur with Werner that although care must be taken in assuming accuracy with Holman Hunt's memoirs, the recollections ring true, and it is unlikely that Holman Hunt would misrepresent a conversation expressing such disapproval. Marcia Werner, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 225-6.

¹⁶ *Glasgow Herald*, Saturday December 5th, 1863. The full quote: "He has, we may say, applied to art the same principle that one of our greatest writers has followed out in history; and as in the vivid pages of Carlyle we have events set before us as one can suppose them to have actually happened, so on Mr. Hunt's canvas we see a rendering of a notable scene which, we feel approaches nearer to the reality than anything of the kind we have ever known."

¹⁷ *Derby Mercury*, Wednesday, July 13th, 1864.

4.2 The Victorian Context: 1860 as a point of departure

In this section I try to give a sense of the religious climate that dominated at the time in which *The Finding* was first exhibited. Before I begin this section, I feel it worth remarking on my reliance on secondary literature here. It would appear to belie my intention to avoid using texts to explain the picture (And I do not believe I am doing that *exactly*). It is helpful at this juncture to flesh out some of the key themes which I believe, to an extent account for some elements of the picture. I see *The Finding* as Holman Hunt's attempt to reconcile the tension and anxiety of his time. *The Finding* does exemplify much that concerned many in its own immediate world of 1860s England concerned with religion, the Bible, matters of truth and certainty. As such, it is possible to discern within the picture an impulse toward creating the very believability that Carlyle had urged (above), arising from an anxiety emanating from those concerns.

The year 1860 saw the exhibition of *The Finding* after six years in the making. The painting's religious subject matter was topical given that the year was the focal point of considerable discussion and debate concerning the matter of religion and the Bible. This focus is frequently described as the Victorian "crisis of faith," often accounted for by a developing scientific world view having an impact upon religious thought, or rather, the reliance and generalised *sense* of certainty around religious thought. Given the events that unfolded at that time, the perception of the year 1860 is one of rapid urgency. Josef Altholz writes that there was a "deceptive appearance of suddenness" about the so-called "crisis of faith," emerging as it did after a period of relative calm in the 1850s.¹⁸ However, this simplification belies the complexities of the time. James Livingston reminds us that for the Victorians, religion and the bible were assumed contexts for wide variety of discursive themes: creation, anthropology, ethnology, geology and history.¹⁹ As Reardon says, Victorians took the matter of religion seriously because it shaped so much of the thinking and practicalities of the day. In other words, religion formed the frame of reference for a wide spectrum of common understanding. And yet, Timothy Larsen suggests that the "crisis of faith" motif is one that is assertively framed around the idea of "doubt" to the point of serious

¹⁸ Josef L. Altholz, "The Warfare of Conscience with Theology," in *Religion in Victorian Britain: Vols I-IV*. ed. Gerald Parsons (Manchester: The Open University with Manchester University Press, 1988), Vol. IV, 150.

¹⁹ James C. Livingston, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: Challenges and Reconceptions*, (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 5.

imbalance.²⁰ Our understanding is improved if we consider these shifts in religious thought as more of an “adjustment” which was, Reardon says “slow and at times painful.”²¹ One explanation for the assumption of doubt might be the significance placed upon church attendance. In 1851, the religious census revealed that church attendance was not as it had been assumed in terms of numbers and denominational affiliation. According to Philip Davis, less than half of the population attended public worship, and only a quarter were affiliated to the national church.²² This, according to Davis, reflected a north/south and class bound divide. The Church of England had become the home of the rural middle-class southerner, and non-conformity was more popular in the north. It is noteworthy that as people rose up the social scale, their affiliations changed. They left religious dissent behind to join the established church.²³ However, as Davis points out, church attendance was not the only measure of religiosity. Notwithstanding the increasing secularization of the period, this was a time of religious creativity. Between 1836 and 1863, more than a third of published books were religious in some way, many enduring hymns were composed, and religious societies published millions of tracts and sermons in the many religious newspapers in circulation.²⁴ Therefore religion was a topic of interest in addition to a framework for understanding the world. Under the circumstances it seems reasonable to assume that the public would be positively receptive to *The Finding*.

Livingston sees 1860 as a point when the religious discussion took a step away from the dominance of the established Church of England as the certainties of an older order had been steadily dissolving for some time.²⁵ Moreover, the development of natural sciences and the evidence supporting them (in addition to questions about God’s place in the world) were growing more prevalent and could no longer be ignored. Attempts were made to steady the boughs. Just prior to 1860, Henry Mansel’s *The Limits of Religious Thought* (1858) challenged a growing liberalising tendency by attempting to situate the religious debate beyond the realm of rational critique. Mansel’s argument may be summarised thus: God is beyond all power of human reason to understand. Therefore, it is impossible to affirm or

²⁰ Timothy Larsen, *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 1-17.

²¹ Bernard Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: A Survey from Coleridge to Gore* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1980), 21.

²² Seven out of eighteen million according to Philip Davis, *The Oxford English Literary History Vol. 8. 1830 – 1880. The Victorians*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 98.

²³ Philip Davis, *The Victorians*, Oxford English Literary History Vol. 8. 1830-1880 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 99.

²⁴ Davis, *The Victorians*, 98-102.

²⁵ Livingston, *Religious Thought*, 1-6, 13-20.

deny God. Humanity only has the evidences of miracles and prophecies to hand and must accept these as evidences. Mansel's argument was regarded as a successful riposte to the forces of rationalism. However, Altholz suggests that this presented the religious world with a "state of false security" as the ensuing debate concerning religion deepened.²⁶

Notwithstanding Mansel's endeavours, change was in the air. Philip Davis cites John Henry Newman in his autobiography surveying the "hectic business" of materialist culture and likening the sensation to one of looking in a mirror and not seeing one's face. Newman describes a sense of "void" and a creeping thought that these were the signs of God's non-existence.²⁷ This example encapsulates the sense of disorientation that many felt as a result of the shifting emphasis away from previously secure religious certainties. What can further be discerned is a broadening of the discussion outwards from the jurisdiction of the established church to encompass an increased range of participants.

In the wider social sphere, Jews in Britain had achieved political emancipation with the Jewish Relief Act of 1858. The bill involved the deceptively simple matter of an amendment to the parliamentary oath for swearing in members of parliament. For professing Jews, this meant the ability to become a member of parliament. It did not concern for example, the freedom to vote, own property or conduct business freely.²⁸ This change was the culmination of some thirty years of wrangling in parliamentary debates. It had been hoped that Jews would be included with Roman Catholics (and other dissenters) who had been admitted to parliament in 1829 with the revised declaration. But the wording of the oath had effectively allowed only fellow (non-conforming) Christians to be admitted, with Jews as non-Christians effectively barred.²⁹ There had been no singling out of Jews as such until this revised oath was inaugurated.

Additionally, in common with other dissenters from Anglicanism, Jews were until 1854-56, denied admission to the ancient universities. A university education as such had not been entirely impossible however as Jews had been able to enrol at University College, London since 1828 at its inception.³⁰ As Israel Finestein observes, many of the positive changes Jews experienced were part of a general wave of progressive change cascading throughout

²⁶ Altholz, "The Warfare of Conscience with Theology," 161.

²⁷ Davis, *The Victorians*, 99-100.

²⁸ This would only have applied to males who were entitled to vote.

²⁹ U.R.Q. Henriques, "The Jewish Emancipation Controversy in Nineteenth Century Britain." *Past & Present*, No. 40 (July 1968) 126-146.

³⁰ Henriques, "The Jewish Emancipation Controversy," 2.

Britain. He cites the many changes ensuing from the industrial revolution and the advancement of the middle class. These changes became a driving force for social development beyond the confines of the relatively small Jewish community.³¹

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the debates leading up to and surrounding the Jewish Relief Act of 1858 reflect something of how seriously religious oaths and vows were taken, and how important and relevant this was perceived to be at the time. The arguments here are less about anti-Semitic feeling (although one would have to concede that this undoubtedly played its part) than about the central place of religious thought in the everyday life of the Victorian. The linking of religious belief with loyalty to the state and moral values generally, was not something confined to Jews, nor to the specific matter in hand. This structural understanding can be seen to underpin many of the assumptions of the Victorian mindset and remains an important element in setting the context for *The Finding*.

Acknowledging the tension and influences at play allows us to see Holman Hunt as a participant in a wider discussion. His *Finding* picture (and other Holy Land works) were completed precisely at this intersection of debate and questioning around religion and Jewish emancipation. Moreover, its exhibition occurred at the point of the two of the most topical publications in the debate, Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), and *Essays and Reviews* (1860). Both works require some remarks.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* was not intended as criticism of religious belief. However, its content was perceived as a threat to religious thought.³² Reardon notes that Darwinism became a synonym for "unbelief." Yet many theologians felt inspired by Darwin's thesis and embraced the challenge it presented. Brooke Foss Westcott, a future archbishop of Canterbury regarded Darwin's work as having potential as part of a "progressive theology." By the 1870s, the concept of evolution was to be broadly accepted if not embraced by theologians and they were able to reconfigure their religious language to accommodate it. It was quite possible to construe evolution as something that God had set in motion, and the account of creation in the book of Genesis could be recalibrated accordingly. When the

³¹ Israel Finestein, *Jewish Society in Victorian England: Collected Essays* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1993), 1-2.

³² Darwin's work was one that had been anticipated. This is because it was not the first publication to address the subject of evolution. In 1801, Jean Baptiste Lamarck published his doctrine of evolution which although drawing upon similar ideas to Darwin, concluded with a set of ideas which were later discredited. In 1844, a (then) anonymous author published "*Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*." This was later revealed to have been written by Robert Chambers, who, with his brother, gave his name to the *Chambers Encyclopaedia* (1860).

challenges extended further, and moreover at the hand of theologians, controversy ensued. This came in the form of *Essays and Reviews* to which I now turn.

The publication *Essays and Reviews* (1860) consisted of seven independently written articles from mostly clergymen, challenging traditional approaches to understanding biblical scripture. One of the essayists, Benjamin Jowett had exhorted readers to treat the Bible as one would any other work of literature. Baden Powell's essay concerned the treatment of evidence in understanding Christian miracles and supported the thrust of Darwin's recent work. Responses were not immediate as in the case of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. However, once set-in motion, they garnered traction and the ensuing arguments were sustained over a period of four years. The publication of *Essays and Reviews* can be seen as a climactic point in an on-going discussion concerning approaches to the Bible set in motion as a result of the challenges to orthodoxy emanating from German biblical scholarship with its more disinterested methods of scholarship. Such Biblical criticism began its analysis of the Bible without a presumption of any inerrancy, and furthermore regarded the Bible as an inspired set of texts developed by human endeavour.

Criticism of *Essays and Reviews* emanated from a diverse range of standpoints, yet Altholz suggests there was a consistency to the responses one might not have expected. Much of the criticism focussed upon the *essayists* themselves rather than any rigorous argument. The problem was a lack of consensus amongst the various religious denominations regarding the correct manner in which to interpret Genesis in the light of scientific developments. Accordingly, the criticisms fell into well-worn patterns consisting of *ad hominem* arguments focussed upon the essayists' positions as clergymen who criticised doctrines for which they were paid to uphold. Their "false position" and moral outlook took precedence over the issues which they raised. The essayists' challenge amounted to a thorough critique of traditional methodologies for interpreting the Bible. Interestingly, the perceived threat emanating from *Essays and Reviews* was not one of "science," rather it concerned the more nebulous issue of theology's own adaptation of the scientific method emanating from German Biblical criticism.

The essayists' collective challenge, emanating from within the religious world, was destabilising. Where the perceived threat from Darwin's scientific approach centred around a small proportion of the Bible (specifically parts of Genesis) these new forms of criticism challenged the *whole* Bible and thus its standing as a source of authority. Additionally, debates were no longer dominated by clerics and theologians via customary outlets

suggesting that ecclesiastical dominance was waning. This is demonstrated by the content of the print media of the day in the form of magazines such as the *Fortnightly Review*, *Contemporary Review*, the *Nineteenth Century* and others which had provided outlets for public debate and opinion.³³ The ground was shifting in the religious domain as it struggled to accommodate not only the progression of scientific thought, but the intrusion of the scientific method into its realm.

In the midst of this turbulence, Holman Hunt exhibited *The Finding*, with all of its religious detail and supposed authenticity to great acclaim. Its presentation of “truthful” realism formed an additional contribution to the swirling debate. *The Finding* was Holman Hunt’s attempt to present the Lukan story as an historical event, one that provided a degree of certainty. It additionally formed his own allusion to the scientific method utilising close observation and (in the words of Giebelhausen) “microscopic scrutiny” and the collection of Jewish specimens.³⁴ Not only was the world in which Holman Hunt inhabited one that discussed and debated matters of religion intensely, it was one that was suffused with, and anchored to particular notions of the Holy Land. This can be characterised as an orientalist bible-centred approach with a conception of Jerusalem fused with England in the imaginations of people. Eitan Bar Yosef’s recent study on this relationship between England and the Holy Land has proved pertinent for my own understanding of Holman Hunt’s *Finding* picture.³⁵ Yosef remarks upon the identity construction that is formed from a fusion of various threads including colonialism and protestant religious ideals. He demonstrates how ideas about the Holy Land have bonded with notions of England and construes this as part of a Protestant internalisation of biblical language such as, “Promised Land,” “Chosen People,” and the idea of “Jerusalem.” His thesis begins with an examination of Blake’s poem *Jerusalem* which became both a renowned hymn and English institution. The hymn has come to represent a curious blend of ideas. The dream of a lost, rural Eden, a pledge to rebuild Jerusalem – understood here as a “glimpse of heaven on Earth;” it further represents a utopian fantasy of a “socialist England” blended with a patriotic memory of England’s imperial greatness.³⁶ Blake’s own imagined building of Jerusalem in England was suffused

³³ Livingston, *Religious Thought*, 1-6.

³⁴ Edmund Gosse in *Father and Son* writes about going to see *The Finding* and likens the picture to “... a brilliant natural specimen.” Cited in Giebelhausen, *Painting the Bible*, 166.

³⁵ Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799-1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

³⁶ Yosef adds that in the twentieth century, popular cultural references and associations can be ironic as in the case of its use in the film *Chariots of Fire*. It is also cited as being the closest thing to England’s own national anthem as an alternative to the British national anthem, *The Holy Land in English Culture*, 1-2.

with a radical sense of social justice which could be appropriated into a range of worldviews. Jerusalem the *place* then becomes transformed into any one of many conceptual “Jeruselems.” For example, one that is nationalistic, patriotic, religious or socialist and yet rooted firmly within England. Yosef expresses this as two Jeruselems, the Jerusalem “here” (meaning England) and the Jerusalem “there” (meaning the Holy Land). The extent to which these conceptions rang true can be seen in the popular culture of the day.

Yosef’s survey of the Holy Land as depicted in popular culture considers a wide dissemination of imagery and language in magazines, newspapers and novels. Examples include illustrated magazines such as the *Penny Magazine* (1832-45) and the *Saturday Magazine* (1832-44). The *Penny Magazine* sought to present “useful” knowledge and avoided an overtly religious tone. In this respect any references to the Holy Land were couched in the language of utility, perhaps as part of the magazine’s favoured subjects connected with travel, geography and history. By contrast the *Saturday Magazine* adopted a more distinctively Anglican emphasis, embracing religious language and hymns. Both magazines aimed to provide affordable illustrated content for a wide readership. In a separate venture from the Penny magazine, publisher Charles Knight instigated the *Pictorial Bible* (1836-38) in collaboration editor John Kitto who had twice travelled to the East as a missionary.³⁷ The *Pictorial Bible* (reproduced in various editions) contains many images and drawings of flora and fauna present in the Holy Land. My own copy (1847) opens with an unfolding map of “Palestine in the Time of Our Saviour,” a highly detailed document claiming to include both “every known ancient site” and those that are “conjectural.” With the illustrations of all manner of wildlife, vegetation the geographical, topographical, botanical and zoological presence of the Holy Land is presented fully enmeshed with religious accounts. The influence of the *Pictorial Bible* (1836) upon Holman Hunt has been noted by Davenport, Maas and Giebelhausen.³⁸ Maas writes that Holman Hunt had access to his father’s library from an early age where he would have encountered those volumes. I am inclined to concur with his remarks that:

*“a perusal of its pages reveals a prefiguration not only of Hunt’s entire career but of the particular nature of that career: his determination to travel to the Holy Land...and his growing aptitude, both as an exegetist of the Scriptures and as the inventor of a new language of symbolism and...typology.”*³⁹

³⁷ Cited in Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture*, 113.

³⁸ Davenport, “Layered Belief,” 47-50, and Giebelhausen, *Painting the Bible*, 134-147, and Maas, 1987, 2-6, and 32-33.

³⁹ Maas, *The Light of the World*, 4.

There are two brief observations I wish to make in this respect. The first concerns the illustrations in the publication. It is noteworthy that some of the illustrations are derived from the work of the German Nazarenes (or Lukasbrüder).⁴⁰ In addition to the Ford Madox Brown connection referred to earlier in this thesis, this suggests a further avenue for Holman Hunt to have taken inspiration from the Lukasbrüder. The second observation concerns the tendency in the *Pictorial Bible* (in common with illustrated periodicals) to represent the Holy Land, in the form a distant landscape. This motif of is reminiscent of the Pisgah sight which refers to the limitations placed upon the Biblical Moses who is permitted only to view the Promised Land from the top of Mount Pisgah, not to enter it.⁴¹ Landow remarks that this motif had particular resonance for Victorian thinkers and writers who found its themes of reward and punishment, success and failure to be symbolic of confrontation between the human and divine, the temporal and the eternal.⁴² The “distant” biblical landscapes need not feature Mount Pisgah, merely the notion of something not yet given, something deferred, as Yosef indicates.⁴³ That Holman Hunt features the Holy Land landscape in *The Finding* so vividly as a view into the distance suggests his grasp of, in John Davis’s phrase, a “universal Holy Land visual literacy.”⁴⁴

Understanding the various fetishizations of Jerusalem (and the Holy Land) allows us to grasp the power of Jerusalem as an *idea* forming a crucial presence or *character* within *The Finding*. *The Finding*’s Jerusalem is not formed from observation in the manner of the French Impressionists, or the imagination, as so many nineteenth-century illustrations necessarily were. Holman Hunt and all of the contemporary literature makes it abundantly clear that this was a heartfelt and personally sought-out *real* encounter, a pilgrimage even. To what extent can we say that this immediate context explains *The Finding*’s appearance? *The Finding*’s context was one where religion was an important and credible topic of interest to Holman Hunt’s intended audience. Additionally, the Bible and religious thought were

⁴⁰ In Holman Hunt’s copy of the *Pictorial Bible* (1836) illustrations are introduced as: “Many Hundred Woodcuts representing The Historical Events after Celebrated Pictures. The Landscape Scenes from Original Drawings, or from Authentic Engravings,” implying an historically true representation of the Holy Land. The engravings in my (updated, 1847 copy) include steel engravings by Peter von Cornelius, Julius Schnorr and Johann Friedrich Overbeck, all members of the Nazarene Brotherhood. It should be noted that Overbeck is named as one of the creators of the “celebrated pictures” in the 1836 edition. Maas, 1984, 4. (Due to restrictions in place at the time of writing, I am unable to verify the inclusion of further Nazarene works in Holman Hunt’s copy of the *Pictorial Bible*)

⁴¹ Deuteronomy 34: 1-4.

⁴² Landow, *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows*, 204-231.

⁴³ Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture*, 107.

⁴⁴ John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 73, cited in Yosef, 2005, 107.

frameworks for understanding the world's history and the natural world. The shifting emphasis towards scientific explanations for the material world coupled with new methods of scholarship had a destabilising effect. As if to reassure himself within this turbulence, Holman Hunt made the most of the scientific methods at his disposal to realise a religious encounter and make it plausible. Additionally, the need for reassurance and the subsequent reach towards the "oriental" world in order to secure a scientific grounding for religious belief is a factor. I will explore this element further later in the thesis. At this point, it is fair to surmise that the concerns of the day are consistent with *The Finding's* imagery, and its realistic technique. Having thus far discussed the most accessible and immediate contexts that might explain why *The Finding* looks the way it does, I now turn to less apparent but equally compelling artistic contexts.

4.3 *The Finding* as an Engagement with the Renaissance

In what would appear to be a leap across time, I now present a case for the recognition of a more substantial influence of renaissance art upon Holman Hunt and his *Finding* painting than has hitherto been acknowledged. After my examination of the more immediate Victorian (and Pre-Raphaelite) influences likely to have shaped *The Finding's* appearance, this part of the chapter sets the painting within a wider artistic context which will consider what is loosely referred to as the Medieval or Renaissance. This broader contextualization will recast *The Finding* as a participating actor within a collection of cultural discourses. This ultimately paves the way to answer the second of my questions, how did Holman Hunt know how to paint the picture? This is because the answer to that question lies in a more diffuse, yet no less influential, cultural backdrop germane to the notion of disputation.

There has been a flurry of publications recently concerned with Pre-Raphaelite engagement with art of the past, be that regarded as medieval or renaissance. An exhibition at London's National Gallery entitled *Reflections* (2018) explored the intense influence upon the Pre-Raphaelites of Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434). Additionally, the catalogue for the San Francisco Fine Arts Museums exhibition entitled *Truth and Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters* (2018) explored a wide range of European medieval and renaissance influences upon the movement. Elizabeth Prettejohn's *Modern Painters, Old Masters: The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War* (2017) offers an in-depth scholarly treatment of how nineteenth-century artists interpreted and re-worked art of the past to create new, ground-breaking art.

Prettejohn observes that recent emphasis upon contemporary influences within art history has corresponded with a neglect of transhistorical relationships. At its most extreme, such scholarship has been criticised as “overly obedient to traditional hierarchies and insufficiently politicized.”⁴⁵ Prettejohn maintains such a stance unwittingly falls into line with strands of modernist art history which elevates the value of “originality” over allusion in art. She adds that the circumvention of visual allusion means that mechanisms available to the art history scholar remain undeveloped by comparison with literary scholarship. Concepts such as *intertextuality* and *allusion* seem more readily available (and necessary) to the literary scholar. As Prettejohn maintains, there is further progress to be made in this area. In what follows, I will present two specific examples of allusion recognisable in *The Finding*.

The recognition of Pre-Raphaelite allusions to art of the past was central to Malcolm Warner’s 1992 essay on the relationship between the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the National Gallery. We recall that the Pre-Raphaelites were students at the Royal Academy, which was housed together with The National Gallery in what was then a much smaller building than it is today. The proximity of the gallery and the style of teaching at the Royal Academy meant that the emergent Brotherhood as students of the Royal Academy were, as Warner puts it, “very familiar” with the gallery’s collection. The collection became increasingly inured to the Academy’s students and as Warner states, it can be seen as being “echoed...by all three leading members of the group...following the foundation of the “PRB” in 1848.”⁴⁶

The teaching at the Royal Academy, infused as it was with the philosophy of its first president Sir Joshua Reynolds, meant that Academy students spent significant time studying the art of past “masters.” This involved drawing from the works and incorporating elements into one’s own art. Reynolds’s maxim that one should make such borrowings “completely one’s own” indicates that this was not so much concerned with copying, but rather a learning process designed to result in critical innovation. As a result, any artistic borrowing on the part of the Pre-Raphaelites was never intended to be recognised by viewers. It would seem that notwithstanding the Brotherhood’s rejection of the man they were to name “Sir Sloshua” this was one aspect of Reynolds’s discourses they were content to countenance.⁴⁷ As Warner

⁴⁵ Prettejohn, *Modern Painters, Old Masters*, 4.

⁴⁶ Warner, *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context*, 1.

⁴⁷ The Pre-Raphaelites had nicknamed him so out of disparagement towards the looser paint technique he advocated.

indicates, the Pre-Raphaelite students' relationship with the works of art in the National Gallery is a significant element in Pre-Raphaelite development and thinking.

The Pre-Raphaelites were enthusiastic about medieval and renaissance art. We should take into account that when the Pre-Raphaelites were active, the term *renaissance* had not yet become part of common parlance. Then current terminology denoted works as *medieval* which have subsequently been categorised as renaissance. From a modern vantage point the Renaissance is thought of as a period which is broadly noted for its humanistic sense of discovery, of the world and of the human self or subject in addition to particular technical developments in art. The subject of renaissance art, or even the designation "The Renaissance" remains complex with a range of historical, philosophical, and geographical standpoints. As Peter Elmer points out, we cannot be certain that we are describing a period of time or a process of development.⁴⁸ For ease of discussion, I will here refer in broad terms to the artistic developments in northern Europe and Italy between the fourteenth and sixteenth-centuries. Notwithstanding definitional difficulties, it is clear from their writings and art that renaissance artistic styles and conventions became of interest to the Pre-Raphaelites. This interest was not limited to early Italian art, which their chosen nomenclature might suggest.

Jane Langley demonstrates that pictorial references to renaissance works differ between Pre-Raphaelite artists. She cites William Bell Scott whose autobiography tells of a visit in 1848 to the studio shared by both Rossetti and Holman Hunt where he noted that Rossetti's work followed the Italian tradition and Holman Hunt's the Flemish.⁴⁹ There is further to this, the impact of photography upon the Brotherhood's oeuvre. As the recent *Reflections* exhibition confirms, the artists were fascinated by Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434), a product of the Flemish Northern Renaissance. The highly illusionistic quality of the rendering and the strength of its use of symbolism came to influence much of their output.

By contrast with Pre-Raphaelite moderns, the majority of renaissance artists and craftspeople were engaged in production for the walls of palaces and churches and were thus subject to many technical constraints. Many designs for frescos and artworks capitalized

⁴⁸ Peter Elmer, Introduction, in Lucille Kekewich, *The Renaissance in Europe: The Impact of Humanism*, Open University, 2000, ix.

⁴⁹ Jane Langley, "Pre-Raphaelites or ante-Dürerites?" in *The Burlington Magazine*, August 1995, Vol. 137, No. 1109, 501-508, 504.

upon the emergence of perspective by depicting large spaces and architectural themes. Over time, technical developments, which included the use of oil-based paints, facilitated greater flexibility and portability of art works which allowed for an expanded range of subjects and themes, new audiences, and alternative contexts for viewing. Of additional relevance here, is the development of perspective which has the uncanny propensity to affect for audiences the positioning of a given “self” as I will elucidate below. The move from aspective (depiction of what is known rather than what is observed) to perspective visualisation marked a significant shift in thinking and observation. It is pertinent to note that there are differences between the Italian and Northern Renaissance perspectival methods. Italian systems were generally more tightly measured with one “vanishing point.” By comparison, the *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) (Fig. 39) possesses a number of vanishing points. Suffice to say here, both systems attempted to portray the world in a manner that conforms to our visual experience of it, with objects depicted in recession if meant to suggest distance. I now turn to focus on four aspects connected to the Renaissance period which I believe to be relevant to my enquiry into and subsequent understanding of *The Finding*. They are the Lorenzo *Adoring Saints* motif, Leonardo’s *Last Supper*, a sense of drama and theatre, and perspective and temporality.

Renaissance Influences: The Lorenzo *Adoring Saints* Motif

Through the practice of drawing from the various figures in *The Finding* and from conversations with others, I became increasingly aware of the faces of the musicians depicted, and how feminine they appear from a modern-day outlook. A consistent response in discussion with others were remarks about how the depicted musicians are reminiscent of figures in renaissance paintings. Initially, this is difficult to pin down with any certainty beyond a generalised aesthetic. Current examples from the National Gallery in London include *The Annunciation*, Fra Filippo Lippi (1445-50) (Fig. 41) and *The Combat of Love and Chastity*, Gherardo di Giovanni del Flora (1485-90) (Fig. 42) acquired in 1861 and 1885 respectively. As these works were acquired by the National Gallery at a later date than *The Finding*’s completion, it is unlikely that Holman Hunt had seen these particular pictures (unless in reproduction) and I include them here as illustrative of an aesthetic standard. Notwithstanding the Pre-Raphaelite students’ initial lack of direct encounters with Italian art, Holman Hunt certainly had some knowledge and understanding of the genre.⁵⁰ As students,

⁵⁰ It was not until after *The Finding* was exhibited that Holman Hunt got the chance to visit Florence and Naples.

the Brotherhood had access to reproductions of early Italian art. Their mentor John Ruskin revered Italian culture and frequently toured and painted in Italy. Ruskin's interests and influence upon the thinking of the burgeoning movement cannot be underestimated. From all directions their education and interests were suffused with the importance of the Italian Renaissance and its canonical status. However, I can more confidently link the appearance of the musicians in *The Finding* to another significant painting with which we know Holman Hunt was familiar, namely *The Adoring Saints*, by Lorenzo Monaco (1407-9), (Fig. 43, 45).⁵¹ The painting was part of a multi-panelled altarpiece for the Camaldolese monastery of San Benedetto fuori della Porta Pinti in Florence, later acquired by the National Gallery London.

The most conspicuous connection to *The Finding's* musicians emanates from the fair-haired figure wearing a crown who shares a likeness in type with the pair. This is suggested by the fair hair, the side profile stance, and the figure's position within the scene. Both musicians in *The Finding* have similarly curled hair to that of the Lorenzo figure. The bald figure in the Lorenzo could also form a correlate to *The Finding's* musician with both figure depicted as wearing green. However, it can be discerned that within the painting, there is a connection to the group of figures *as a whole*, relating to the entire group of rabbis in *The Finding*. In particular, we should note the interaction between the figure of St. John the Baptist (in pink) and St. Matthew (wearing blue and gold) as potentially corresponding to the two bearded rabbis or priests. The bearded figure to the front in the Lorenzo is St. Benedict who wears white and holds a book inscribed with his Rule or religious regulations.⁵² This correlates to the priest in *The Finding* who, holding a *sefer Torah*, also carries the *Torah* or teaching, conceived as "Law" in Christian thought. There are additional correlations. St. Benedict's face in the Lorenzo finds a counterpart in the younger "seeing" rabbi in *The Finding*. The figure adjacent to St. John the Baptist holds a pen similar to the *tefillin* wearing rabbi in *The Finding* who uses his to count the points of the "argument." Additionally, the presence of books links the scene to the Lukan story and *The Finding*.⁵³ The holistic effect of the ensemble is very suggestive of *The Finding's* grouping and positioning of the rabbis and musicians who are depicted as occupying a similarly compressed pictorial space. Moreover, *The Adoring Saints* panels are positioned either side of a panel depicting the figures of both

⁵¹ Originally attributed to Taddeo Gaddi.

⁵² The saints depicted were those that were important to the monks of the order, including Saint Benedict who wears white as did the Camaldolites. <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/lorenzo-monaco-adoring-saints-left-main-tier-panel> accessed June 28th, 2020.

⁵³ The presence of books and scrolls is a common motif within the genre of *Christ among the Doctors* (disputation) paintings.

Jesus and Mary where Jesus is crowning Mary Queen of Heaven. There is precedence for my claim.

The Lorenzo altarpiece panels were acquired by the National Gallery in 1848, two months before the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. As Malcolm Warner has indicated, this was a significant acquisition being the first of the early Italian paintings to be acquired by the National Gallery.⁵⁴ Warner identified an allusion between the right-hand tier of the Lorenzo and two Pre-Raphaelite paintings exhibited in 1849, namely, Millais's *Isabella or Pot of Basil* (1849) (Fig. 46) and Rossetti's *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (1848-9) (Fig. 47). The motif in question is the figure who turns to speak to another whose head is in profile which mirrors the Lorenzo's two frontmost figures, Peter and Romuald. Warner points to the folding fabric of Isabella's dress which references the folds of St. Romuald's dress as a further borrowing. Additionally, he notes the compressed perspective and "detailed and characterised heads arranged in simple rows."⁵⁵ His observations have garnered support and prompted further related observations. In more recent research, Holman Hunt was observed to have borrowed the same motif from the Lorenzo for his painting, *Rienzi* (1848-9), (Fig 48).⁵⁶ According to Jason Rosenfeld, the associations between the three principal Pre-Raphaelite painters and the Lorenzo became immediately apparent to the curators of the *Pre-Raphaelite Avant Garde* exhibition in 2006 when the paintings were seen together.⁵⁷ Furthermore, he notes that the Brotherhood also referenced the left-hand panel and alluded to the figures. Holman Hunt is said to have borrowed the fair-haired figure in blue and red (discussed above) for his portrayal of Adrian di Castello in *Rienzi*. The St. Benedict figure in the Lorenzo with a serious facial expression is echoed in the malevolent expression of Isabella's brother. Lorenzo's John the Baptist figure gestures inward which is mirrored by two of Isabella's brothers in *Isabella*.

If all three major Brotherhood figures can be said to have "borrowed" from the Lorenzo, and from both left and right panels, it is conceivable that Holman Hunt did so for a conception of *The Finding*. At the very least, he may have had the panel in mind (whilst not in close proximity to it) during his time in the Holy Land. A consideration of the paintings together strongly suggests that Holman Hunt referenced the *Adoring Saints* in *The Finding*. In

⁵⁴ Warner et al, *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context*, 1-11.

⁵⁵ Warner et al, *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context*, 4.

⁵⁶ Full title: *Rienzi* vowing to obtain justice for the death of his young brother, slain in a skirmish between the Colonna and the Orsini factions, 1849, Private Collection.

⁵⁷ Jason Rosenfeld, "New Art from Old: The Pre-Raphaelites and Early Italian Art," in. Buron (et al) *Truth and Beauty*, 2018, 73-80.

taking this step it could be argued that he recasts the *rabbis* as adoring saints with their books and focus on Jesus. Holman Hunt then radically refashions their role in a transformation befitting the artist's supersessionist stance. This then suggests a layering of meanings which is further compounded by the impact of another significant influence to which I now turn, namely Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

Renaissance Influences: Leonardo: Holman Hunt's Critical Re-working of *The Last Supper*.

Jason Rosenfeld writes that the Pre-Raphaelites consciously chose to avoid the influence of Leonardo da Vinci and other old masters. This may have been the case whilst students. However, I argue that for *The Finding* Holman Hunt found inspiration in Leonardo's *Last Supper* (c.1495 (Fig. 49). Additionally, the painting *Christ Among the Doctors* by Bernardino Luini (c.1550) depicting the same Lukan scene in London's National Gallery, may well have been of interest given that it was wrongly attributed to Leonardo whilst Holman Hunt was a Royal Academy student.⁵⁸ During the course of painting *The Finding*, correspondence between John Ruskin and Holman Hunt reveals that Ruskin had expressed concern to Holman Hunt about investing too much time on the picture. Holman Hunt referred to Leonardo taking seven years to complete *The Last Supper* and that he regarded *The Finding* as being as important to him as *The Last Supper* was to Leonardo da Vinci.⁵⁹ In stating this, he signalled something significant about his intentions.

The snippet of correspondence with Ruskin points to the extent of Holman Hunt's professional and religious ambitions. He sought to create a memorable and canonical work of art within a new, contemporary and Protestant religious tradition. The citing of Leonardo's iconic *Last Supper* represented more than a passing example to justify the time spent on a painting. I submit that Holman Hunt took more from this particular work of Leonardo than has previously been recognised.⁶⁰ One initial reason for adopting this approach is the recollection of Leonardo's favourable position on the renowned Pre-Raphaelite List of Immortals.⁶¹ It is worth noting here that Millais also referenced the *Last Supper* explicitly in *Mrs Wyatt and Her Daughter*, (1850) by depicting a reproduction of the painting on the wall

⁵⁸ Jason Rosenfeld, 'New Art From Old: The Pre-Raphaelites and Early Italian Art', in Buron et al, *Truth and Beauty*, 73-80.

⁵⁹ Holman Hunt, letter to John Ruskin, Dec. 1857, Huntington, MS. Uncat. LF.

⁶⁰ Norbert Lynton acknowledges the connection between the paintings, describing Holman Hunt's evocation of Leonardo (to Ruskin) as "unfortunate." Norbert Lynton et al, *Looking into Paintings*, Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1985, 56-57.

⁶¹ The List of Immortals was created by Hunt and Rossetti. It was intended as a declaration of admiration for those listed. It included literary figures such as Keats and Tennyson, and as such the list functioned as subjects for Pre-Raphaelite paintings. It appears in Holman-Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol 1, p. 159.

behind the twin portraits. Millais also implicitly referenced *The Last Supper* in *Isabella* in the gathering of twelve persons around the table.⁶² Further to this, Carol Jacobi adds that the image of the spilt salt forms a clear link to the Leonardo heralding from Goethe's account of the *Last Supper* which describes the spilt salt depicted as an evil omen.⁶³ In the light of these points, I conclude that Leonardo's *The Last Supper* was a significant work for the Pre-Raphaelites. I can further make a case for Holman Hunt's critical reworking of *The Last Supper*. The following points will further substantiate this claim.

In formal terms, it is possible to detect more than a nod in Leonardo's direction in *The Finding*. In relation to *The Last Supper*, *The Finding*'s deployment of a group of people surrounding the figure of Jesus would seem the most evident compositional characteristic. Furthermore, the tentative link with the Jewish festival of Passover connects the two pictures within the religious sphere. The last supper as conveyed in the New Testament Gospel of Matthew (26:17-30) is meant to have taken place at the Passover meal, and *The Finding*'s Lukan Gospel scene occurs after the seven-day festival has just ended. However, it is Holman Hunt's apparent construction of pictorial depth that is most pertinent here. The inclusion within the composition of a graduated set of pillars spaced in accordance with conventions of perspective corresponds with the pillars on either side of *The Last Supper*. In common with the *Last Supper*, the main action of *The Finding* takes place in the foreground which is both densely crowded and strangely flattened. As I noted above, this is in addition to the recognizable allusion to Lorenzo's *Adoring Saints*. Notwithstanding the compressed space in the foreground, logic tells any viewer accustomed to the conventions of perspective, that there must be a great deal of space in such a large interior structure. What I mean by this is that the nineteenth-century viewer and the twenty-first-century viewer share a proclivity for understanding the pictorial language of perspective. Holman Hunt makes use of a number of devices to suggest illusory depth. Firstly, there is the skilful handling of multiple figures in a compressed space. The artist's use of shading and tone contribute much to the appearance of naturalistic perspective concerning the dense group of figures. Additionally, the preponderance of pillars and the smaller figures at the rear of the Temple suggest to viewers

⁶² Mary Bennet, *Artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Circle: The First Generation*, Catalogue of Works in the Walker Art Gallery, Lady Lever Art Gallery and Sudley Art Gallery (London: Lund Humphries for National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1988), 119.

⁶³ Carol Jacobi, *Sugar, Salt and Curdled Milk: Millais and the Synthetic Subject*, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/18/sugar-salt-and-curdled-milk-millais-and-the-synthetic-subjectTate> Papers No. 18, Autumn, 2012. (Open Access article retrieved 29th July 2020).

an extreme, elongated space. The illusion is further emphasised by the long view into the landscape to the right-hand side of the picture. *The Finding's* combination of intense foreground action and long perspectival depth corresponds with that of *The Last Supper*. To further understand Holman Hunt's critical reworking of this iconic work, I now turn to examine the Leonardo.

In *The Last Supper*, the sense of pictorial space is achieved by means of a combination of mathematical and symbolic perspective. By mathematical I refer to a measured calculated perspective that corresponds to our sense of the rational and ordered, or real. By symbolic, I refer to a more spiritual notion of space to convey a concept of the irrational or ideal. In *The Last Supper*, the room within the fresco (i.e., the world of the painting) is depicted as being deeper than it is wide. This creates ambiguity. Is the *depicted* space meant to be an annexe to the refectory as pictured, or a continuation of the *actual* refectory in which it was painted? Like the renowned optical illusion that oscillates between duck and rabbit where the viewer can only perceive one at a time, the space depicted in *The Last Supper* can be perceived as working in two ways. The duality, the blend of the rational and symbolic are further reflected in Leonardo's use of theological symbolism whereby nourishment comes from both food and the spiritual, emphasised by the painting's refectory setting. This setting alongside the highly illusionistic style of the painting seems designed to afford the viewer the sensation of encountering the scene as if for real. In experiencing *The Last Supper*, the viewer must actively interpret a blend of biblical and artistic language. Furthermore, Leonardo regarded perspective as embedded within a wider system of spatial organisation within painting seeing it as part of a harmonious whole incorporating sound and colour. He said:

*"I will...make my rule [for perspective] as the musician has done with notes...arranging them in steps as first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and thus from step to step he has assigned names to the varieties of raised and lowered notes."*⁶⁴

Therefore, it is possible to speculate that the measured intervals between the pillars in *The Last Supper* correspond with musical interludes, that is, the measurement of spaces in terms of musical values.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Cited in Martin Kemp, *Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1981), p. 132-3.

⁶⁵ In 2007 Giovanni Maria Pala, an Italian musician and computer technician published a book which claimed to have detected a musical composition hidden within the painting, *La Musica Celata* (The Hidden Music) Vertigo, 2007.

Holman Hunt also makes use of measured perspectival techniques and the pillars in *The Finding* suggest a similar rhythmic division of the space to that of *The Last Supper*. Moreover, it is possible to see a strong correspondence between both paintings in terms of the positioning of the pillars. This might even be the same but for a slight alteration of viewpoint. This is demonstrated by imagining that as a viewer one had stepped a little to the right when looking at *The Finding*. This positioning causes the Temple's open door to obscure a complete view of the pillars to the right-hand side of the picture. Furthermore, Leonardo placed three window openings at the rear of the space in *The Last Supper* and similarly, Holman Hunt places a window opening at the rear of his Temple (Fig 50).

The symbolic use of colour is relevant to both works. Firstly, not all of Leonardo's choices are naturalistic. In *The Last Supper*, Jesus's clothing is more saturated in colour than that of the disciples. Holman Hunt also makes the boy Jesus's clothing intensely vibrant. And here, it contrasts with that of Mary's cloak, which whilst also blue (as is the custom for portrayals of Mary) it is much duller in tone than that of Jesus's tunic. This choice would be in keeping with Holman Hunt's desire to forge a Protestant aesthetic in his work by shifting the visual emphasis from Mary to Jesus. The spatial ambiguity discerned in the *Last Supper* is further echoed in *The Finding* by the positioning of the notional viewer in the latter. Indeed it is noticing the correlation that (in part) prompts the question. How are we positioned as viewers in Holman Hunt's schema? Conceptually, we may be on the outside of *The Finding's* world and looking in on the scene in the manner of a theatre audience. (I return to develop the point about the staged effect below) However, if, as I alluded in the previous chapter, the twelve-year-old Jesus's gaze is directed outwards, at us, then we as viewers are potentially included within the world of the painting. The scene is not, in that case, an enclosed world unto itself. The linking with and departing from forms of tradition is retrospectively echoed in Leonardo's own radical decision to exclude the halo around Jesus's head preferring the light emanating from the rear window to suggest illumination. With his symbolic realist technique, Holman Hunt also excludes the halo in *The Finding* and achieves a naturalistic nimbus effect by a similar highlighting of Jesus's hair.

The allusions I have described here demonstrate not only Holman Hunt's deep engagement with art from the past, but a highly refined visual punning, the equivalent of a play-on-words, or *jeu d'images*. That Holman Hunt drew upon two such contrasting, iconic works of art in the process of creating a radically new work is testament to a degree of sophistication he is not usually credited with having. From my observations I deduce that

there is purpose behind the strange compression of pictorial space amongst the figures in *The Finding's* composition. Moreover, this offers a substantial answer to the question concerning why *The Finding* looks (appears) the way it does. Firstly, Holman Hunt's critical re-working of the Leonardo. *The Finding* takes on the Leonardo-*esque* elements because Holman Hunt desired an elevation of his *Finding* painting to the status of Leonardo.⁶⁶ Holman Hunt's choice of the Lukan scene is often attributed to the lack of a requirement for female figures, and this may well have been the case. However, the fact that the Luini *Christ Among the Doctors* (1550) was then attributed to Leonardo should be factored into the decision. In the hitherto ardent discussions between Holman Hunt and Carlyle (alluded to earlier) over the importance of realism when depicting Jesus, a case could be made that Holman Hunt's intention at one point may have been to offer a reworking of what we now know was the Luini, Holman Hunt believing it to be a Leonardo. A case could further be made that Leonardo's *Last Supper* offered greater scope and largesse in its artistic standing than the Luini. However, Holman Hunt's decision could further be accounted for by the decision to incorporate a motif from Lorenzo's *Adoring Saints*.

Holman Hunt's compression of pictorial space has to function within his modern realisation of the Lukan scene, and therefore he makes the pictorial space around the figure flattened in its allusion to the *Adoring Saints*, however it is less extreme than that of the *Adoring Saints*. In a sense, he has flattened the space just enough for the allusion to work. It is helpful to recall that the Lorenzo had great personal resonance for the original Brotherhood when students as Warner and Rosenfeld have outlined (above). Both iconic works of art *combined* function as deep influences upon why *The Finding* looks the way it does.

As I alluded above, in a typological manner, Holman Hunt recasts the Temple elders as the adoring saints in a strange (and I concede rather clever) doubling that forms a conversion motif. In conjunction with the conversion narrative inherent in the painting, it forms a multi-layering of religious meaning. I would additionally factor in here the combined star and cross motif discussed earlier. This symbol is easily overlooked as it is not one commonly seen on the mantle of a *sefer Torah*, yet it is suggestive of a star, however, not that of the star of David. I suggested earlier that the eight-pointed shape could be construed as a cross in an amalgamated symbol. It conforms with Maas's remarks concerning Holman

⁶⁶ The matter has been considered and dismissed by art historians such as Norbert Lynton mentioned elsewhere in this thesis. Lynton's stance is understood here as deriving from the correspondence with Ruskin (mentioned earlier) rather than as the result of an engagement with the painting.

Hunt's developing ecumenical stance as indicated in his latest version of the *Light of the World*. My observations suggest a more subtle and thoughtful way of understanding Holman Hunt's creation of Jewish-Christian opposition in *The Finding*.

I posit Holman Hunt's gathering in of the Lorenzo and the Leonardo into his *Finding* painting as an example of the aforementioned critical reworking that Elizabeth Prettejohn and others have discussed in their recent publications. Therefore, what Holman Hunt does is not a matter of slavish, unthinking reproduction, but a forging of the new into being by means of re-working an inherited tradition. Moreover, the recognition and understanding of the Pre-Raphaelites' (often misunderstood) engagement with the art of the past enables me to situate *The Finding* painting more authentically as a disputation painting. (The presence of books in the Lorenzo is but one small indicator on this). However, as I shall elucidate in chapter six, it is not merely via imagery and subject matter that the connections can be made. The visual allusions and references Holman Hunt uses are a method of participating critically within a visual and artistic dialogue. As I continue with *The Finding's* further engagement with renaissance motifs I will show that this dialogue becomes attached to a worldview into which the disputation, or rather a discourse of disputation, sits.

Renaissance Influences: Drama and Theatre.

I now return to my earlier point concerning *The Finding's* appearance as a staged drama. The structure and composition of *The Finding* in its conveyance of both inner and outside spaces uses a pictorial device common to many Renaissance paintings. This habitually depicts an enclosed interior space, often framed in some way, with an opening such as a window or door to facilitate a view into the distance. Writing about *The Pre-Raphaelite Window*, William Blisset traces the window as an artistic motif back to Alberti, whose concept of a *window on the world* originated in his *On Painting* of 1435, in which he says: "I draw a rectangle of whatever size I want, which I regard as an open window through which the subject to be painted is seen..."⁶⁷ As Blisset suggests, this unemphatic maxim set in motion a train of thought and practice leading to the dominance of one-point perspective and close reading of the subject.⁶⁸

It can be understood that the historical development of glazed windows drew attention to outside spaces as *framed*. Thus, the landscape became a framed entity, which subsequently

⁶⁷ Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, (1435; London Penguin Classics, 1991), 54.

⁶⁸ William Blisset, "The Pre-Raphaelite Window" *Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, Vol. 13, Fall 2004, 5-16, 6.

became represented as framed in painting. This might take the form of a depicted frame within the painting (such as a window) or the frame of the painting itself. The open window then becomes symbolically meaningful by suggesting a framed view onto other places or worlds. As Blisset suggests, the motif carries the suggestion of literal and symbolic inner and outer worlds. The “perceiver” (or viewer) “...remains “here”, but “there” opens out to him in imagination and futurity, promise or threat.”⁶⁹ Moreover, the framed window as a device becomes widely understood and used in Christian symbolism to suggest spiritual hope. The concept of framing and the “window” as a structural device can be seen to advance both materially and in terms of the represented. We see it in the framing of theatre stages which are not in the round; in architecture and the organisation of public spaces. It then becomes the subject of painting depicting those public spaces. Additionally, the development of portable free-standing art as opposed to that which was site specific, would often carry with it a religious function, such as an altarpiece which itself opened up in the fashion of a window. The related associations with public church rituals further add to the sense of performance and theatricality.

Pre Raphaelite art works were not limited to depicting frames and window motifs. Their paintings were often framed with elaborate designs which more often than not contributed to the sense and meaning of the painting in question. Indeed, as Lynn Roberts argues, it is “inexcusable” to reproduce their paintings without the frames, so integral are they to the meaning of the work.⁷⁰ It is the inheritance of framing in the form of a window-like structure, or similar, that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood enthusiastically appropriated in such paintings as Rossetti’s *Dante’s Dream 1871*, and Millais’s *Christ in the House of his Parents, 1849-50*, *The Awakening Conscience* in addition to *The Finding* by Holman Hunt. Blisset points out that the inclusion of a window within a painted scene allows for a new source of light, and a “sense of recession friendly to the science of perspective.” This was recognised by Ruskin who said, “The painter of interiors feels like a caged bird unless he can throw a window open or set a door ajar.”⁷¹ The window is often meant to be symbolic of the world beyond which in *The Finding*, is characterised as Jerusalem. (Once again Eitan Bar Yosef’s model of Jerusalem “here” and “there” referred to earlier can be discerned). The

⁶⁹ Blisset, “Pre-Raphaelite Window,” 5.

⁷⁰ *PRS Review*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3., Autumn 2018, 72-100.

⁷¹ Blisset, “Pre-Raphaelite Window,” 6.

framework of the Temple within the painting, is of course *re-framed* again within the picture's own frame which emphasises again the sensation of theatrical staging.

It can be observed that Holman Hunt's formal arrangement of *The Finding* makes use of yet another renaissance compositional device. This comprises a dramatic scene with a cut-away section. An example of this type of scene can be observed in Giotto's *Annunciation of St. Anne* (c. 1305) (Fig. 51), which appears to be like a stage set, with one side open to the viewer. The theatrical effect in *The Finding* is conveyed through a number of elements. Firstly, there is a sense in *The Finding* that the theatrical "fourth wall" has been cut away to facilitate our view into the Temple. Secondly, the theatrical stage set style of *The Finding* conveys, rather than a single moment, a sequence of moments in time. The Lukan story tells of Jesus's parents returning to find him in the Temple whilst he is in discussion with the elders. *The Finding* then conveys, almost simultaneously, the discussion, the rushing into the Temple on the part of Mary and Joseph, the interchange between Mary and Jesus and the getting to his feet and realisation of his mission on the part of Jesus. A third further sense of drama is created by means of the ideological grouping of the dramatis personae into two opposing and thus confrontational groups, namely, the rabbis and the Holy Family. This brings me to the fourth element which relates to the idea of the public spectacle of performed disputation. The subject of the painting is meant to convey a disputation between Jesus and the rabbis. How this genre of painting has come to be known as portraying a "dispute" will be addressed in due course. I merely draw attention here to the increasingly public nature of scholarly and religious disputations which were a feature of medieval and renaissance life in Europe. I will return to this crucial area in chapter six.

Lastly, given the gaze afforded to the notional viewer by the young Jesus figure it seems pertinent to ask about the role the viewer plays in the organisation of *The Finding*. It is as if we are seated in a theatre awaiting the drama to proceed or continue. Indeed, it occurs to me that Manet and the Impressionists created paintings that suggest to viewers that the *artist* has come upon a scene by chance and painted it *en plein air*.⁷² Holman Hunt, however, wishes *viewers* to believe that *they themselves* have come across this scene which he has realised and created for them. Once again, we recognise that this is akin to the effect afforded by Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

⁷² The expression *en plein air* refers to the practice of painting outdoors.

A further motif is discerned by the inside/outside ambiguity which is created by the contrast between the interior of the Temple and the vertical band on the right-hand side depicting the outside. It is a compositional device used previously by Holman Hunt in an earlier Christian themed painting, *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids* (1849-50) (Fig. 53), which is also an ensemble piece. This painting depicts a shelter with openings for windows at its rear and the now familiar vertical band depicting a landscape to the right-hand side. *The Finding* also has windows at the rear of the Temple. Notwithstanding the seated, almost static rabbis, there is a suggestion of movement and more to come. On the floor, in the shade, is an abaya strewn and flattened. It is where Jesus is understood to have been seated until this moment. The Lukan text describes Jesus as “sitting in the Temple” and here, we can understand that *he was seated*. Until this moment.

The idea of “this moment” further marks the scene as one of tense, high drama. The action is conveyed by the writing on the inlays which, like a theatrical script, informs (or reminds) the viewer what the story is about. The conveyance of visual narrative becomes akin to animation which befits the idea of a theatre set with the audience observing, watching the action unfold. However, as we have established, the notional audience or viewer, sits somewhere within the schema. And here one of a number of ambiguities can be discerned. Are we, the viewers, situated inside or outside the Temple? This is one of a number of uncertain elements that, notwithstanding the tight organisation and detail, that the picture slowly reveals. I now wish to pay attention to how perspectival systems of representation are linked to notions of time, religion, subjectivity and a subsequent objectifying worldview.

Renaissance Influences: Perspective, Time, and the Construction of a Worldview

I have posited *The Finding* as drawing upon influences from the Renaissance in terms of renowned artworks and the theatre and stage in terms of its visual properties. The sense of the theatrical implies a performance which is time-based and structurally linear. This suggests a beginning and an end taking place across a duration of time. How both *The Last Supper* and *The Finding* as paintings achieve the sense of time passing is of interest. *The Finding* conveys a rapid sequence from the imagined teaching and learning discussion, the dramatic entrance of parents, a family reunion leading to the sudden realisation on the part of the twelve-year-old Jesus of his life’s mission upon rising from his abaya. Congruent with this, *The Last Supper* scene is not so much a single frozen moment but a series of successive moments where the apostles respond to Jesus’s comments, and various symbolic gestures are made to

convey the sequence of events portrayed in the Gospel of John. Both paintings display a sophisticated attempt to overcome the limitations of painting as a static medium in their use of symbolism whilst making use of and playing with systems of perspective. I continue here with the conception of time.

A commonly held Western conception of time sees a progression from the past to the future in a linear fashion usually from left to right. In *The Finding*, this sense of linear time is suggested by the most prominent of the elders looking towards the right-hand side of the picture. Additionally, the viewer's gaze hovers between the cast of characters and the strip of landscape to the right-hand side further accentuating this aspect. Furthermore, Holman Hunt suggests a sense of time by using symbolism to allude to the associations in the painting with the past, present and future. He does this firstly by the portrayal of the rabbis with their adherence to what he infers as the "old law." He further suggests the idea of the present with Jesus's gaze addressing the viewer in the moment. The future is suggested by the view into the distance, understood to be the Mount of Olives, the scene of Jesus's future betrayal. We are further meant to understand past, present, and future events involving Jesus's mission, by means of symbolic elements, such as the references to blindness alluding to one of the miracles of Jesus. We are further reminded of our own future in the world to come.

There is a further insinuation of the temporal contained within the symbols infused within the frame. The transition from Old to New Testaments is conveyed by the contrast between the cross supporting a snake on the left-hand side (representing Mosaic law, situated as being in the "past") and the cross of thorns with a garland of flowers on the right-hand side representing the future, the left and right configuration is in accordance with the Western tradition of constructing time. The Moon and Sun signify night and day. As the Manchester Guardian noted: "There are symbols everywhere... Nay the symbols have overflowed the picture, and expanded themselves all over the frame."⁷³

Stephen Prickett reminds us of how representations of the biblical world have transformed and formed certain worldviews. Firstly, he notes that Christianity was born of a critical debate about the nature and meaning of texts. For Jesus to be the prophesied Jewish Messiah, the Hebrew scriptures which underpin this claim had to be incorporated within the Christian canon. However, this required radical reinterpretation. This was because many aspects of the Hebrew scriptures were not in accord with the beliefs and practices of

⁷³ Manchester Guardian, April 24th1860, cited in Stephens, *William Holman-Hunt and His Works*, 115.

developing Hellenistic Christian world. Harmonization was achieved by adding to literal readings, a system of allegorical, tropological, anagogical, figural, and typological interpretations. *The Finding's* textual nature, its requirement for "reading" indicated by its own textual inclusions of biblical references, its plethora of symbolic content requiring decoding (with the help of Stephens's pamphlet) and the pictured scrolls containing scripture are directly referencing and drawing upon that critical debate.

For the purposes of this thesis, the most relevant aspect of these developments was the use of typology, that is, the reading of Old Testament stories as *pre-figuring* those from the New Testament. An example is Moses who becomes transformed into a "type" which prefigures Jesus. This is significant because as Prickett says, typology has the propensity to collapse time and space into a simultaneity of action. The sense of *timelessness* and prefiguration are important in our discussion, and we shall return to them. We see a construction of simultaneity operating in some panoramic medieval paintings which make no attempt to foster an illusory pictorial space. The simultaneity fostered a sense that the action appears to be happening simultaneously and that the viewer is incorporated within the world of the picture. It is often assumed to be incompetence on the part of the artist or maker by flattening the pictorial space. This is because progress is assumed to be made in a linear fashion moving on a trajectory from the past towards the present. Perspective becomes a signifier of progressive development, perceived as an improved ability to accurately picture the world.

The implications of a system of perspective for the positioning of the viewer are meaningful. In the sphere of religious art, within the systems of perspective, the viewer is no longer a participant in a divine order of things but an *observer* of an imaginary world. Your position is to be outside of the "window" on the world, separated from the action as it were. This becomes a condition of viewing. Perspective does not simply improve the "look" of pictures. It reveals a philosophical outlook. Perspective was a significant development not merely in the religious art of the Renaissance, but as Stephen Prickett writes, it becomes "a new way of ordering visual experience."⁷⁴ We speak of "having a perspective on something" as a means of expressing an opinion, further construed as a "viewpoint." A view or viewpoint then becomes a "*worldview*." As Heidegger further observes, this becomes what he describes

⁷⁴ Stephen Prickett, "The Bible in Literature an Art," in John Barton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion Biblical Interpretation*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, 160-178.

as the *world picture*, the world grasped and objectified as it is pictured.⁷⁵ In this sense, we humans position ourselves at the centre of everything. The world is conceptualised from our point of view, our *perspective*. Humans position themselves as subjects viewing the world, supposedly in a detached objective way. Where medieval art portrayed a timeless present in accordance with the simultaneity of experience, the use of perspective implies a frozen moment of time and a direct positioning of the spectator both visually and philosophically.

It is helpful to recall what perspective achieves in terms of human subjectivity. The illusion created by systems of perspective creates a sense of the viewer as-subject looking in a detached “objective” manner at a given thing, or objects. Instead of encountering the world as though one was part of a whole, a sense of detachment results. This brings us to the problems associated with the Panofsky inspired “vision of the beholder,” as alluded to by Iverson and Melville and the related myth of objectivity. In common with Heidegger’s circular argument about art and artists, (chapter two) it is difficult to discern whether or not perspective was the system that created a worldview or whether a worldview created perspective. This is directly relevant to my enquiry into *The Finding*. As a religious painting that so clearly draws upon iconic renaissance predecessors, *The Finding* creates and participates within a worldview that is stitched into and predicated upon a (Cartesian) subject/object dichotomy. I now elucidate further.

The Finding objectifies its constituent persons and phenomena. It brings into focus the elements that both unite and differentiate Judaism and Christianity. Its strange combination of pictorial spatial compression and renaissance perspective is augmented by a substantial adoption of typological symbols. Some of this symbolic material is intended to *re-present* semiotically. For example, the pointer held by the fourth rabbi discloses disputation by bringing to light (and “re-presenting”) the activity of *disputing*. Other markers take a more typological stance in that they draw attention to Old Testament themes as “types” that supposedly foretell events (and theological completion) in the New Testament. For example, the image of the sacrificial lamb, (shown situated at the rear of the Temple). The “types” are meant to foreshadow events in Jesus’s life. Additionally, the inclusion of the blind rabbi and the echo of that in the blind beggar foretell of Jesus’s healing of the blind man. The main point to grasp here is that typology as a system eliminates time and space. As Stephen Prickett explains, to see in the story of “...Jacob and Esau the type of Christians inheriting

⁷⁵ Heidegger, *PLT*, 17-87.

the blessing intended for the Jews, is to flatten history into a simultaneous panorama.”⁷⁶ Where such flattening occurs, it brings artwork using such devices into the realm of the pre-perspectival medieval arts. He includes music here, where phrases can be sung repetitively in the round, or out of sequence thus stressing simultaneity rather than linear progression. In formal terms, *The Finding* subordinates the typological in favour of the perspectival. (It is arguably one way in which the more flattened *Adoring Saints* motif remains so effectively concealed) However, so overwhelming and persuasive is the power of perspective as a *system* that it is difficult to overcome in order to see beyond its enframing and totalising grip.

4.4 Summary and Conclusion

As I conclude this chapter and part I of the thesis, it is worth taking stock before we move on. We have established that the Jewish presence in *The Finding* has been overlooked in scholarship. This is meaningful in terms of the history and development of Jewish-Christian relations, the subject of the disputation and the matter of orientalism. In my investigation into the Jewish presence in *The Finding*, my first question is, why does the painting look the way it does? And now that we have explored its appearance and its contexts, we are more equipped to answer that question. When we apply the knowledge we have from the material available to us, we find that there is much that can be explained about the painting’s appearance in terms of *The Finding’s* Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian contexts. Looking further into the artistic contexts, we see how they begin to shed more light on *The Finding’s* appearance. I connected *The Finding* to a longer artistic heritage especially to a complex period we call the Renaissance. The painting’s relationship to these historical artworks transforms our understanding of its appearance. The enmeshing of religious and artistic worlds sheds light upon the systems of representation at work in the painting that function to objectify those represented.

The matter of Holman Hunt’s professional interests and religious background, the importance given to representations of Christ, especially in Holman Hunt’s own portrayal in the *Light of the World* all contribute to the appearance of *The Finding*. Additionally, it is axiomatic that Holman Hunt’s sojourns in the Holy Land contribute, both in terms of appearance and publicity. The matter of *The Finding’s* orientalism is presumed *a priori* and yet the substance of this is potentially more firmly rooted within the words of Stephens’s pamphlet than in the painting itself. If we take the painting itself as our source, rather than the

⁷⁶ Prickett, “The Bible in Literature an Art,” 160-178.

pamphlet, questions still remain regarding its appearance, and in what follows I shed light upon these matters.

The next two chapters address the second of my questions, how did Holman Hunt know how to paint the picture? Taking cues from *The Finding* itself, I address the matters of the biblical text Holman Hunt is said to have portrayed. Additionally, in recontextualising *The Finding* as part of the *Christ Among the Doctors* genre and examining other paintings depicting the scene alongside the text, it will be apparent that there are discrepancies to account for. The reasons for the disparity are bound up with scholarly and religious disputations which will be examined in chapter six. This will enable me to identify a wider discourse of disputation informing Holman Hunt's work.

Chapter 5: Luke's Twelve-Year-Old Jesus in the Temple and the Disputation Painting

"Whoever meets Jesus Christ meets Judaism."
Pope John Paul II¹

Introduction

The first part of this thesis examined the question of why *The Finding* looks as it does in relation its Jewish presence. The settled quality of many accounts of *The Finding* result from contextualizing it as Pre-Raphaelite and a reliance on documentary evidence of one sort or another, be that Stephens's or Holman Hunt's writings, or derivations from them. We can categorize the aspects covered thus far as those that in broad terms Holman Hunt knew about and consciously chose. In the second part of my thesis, I ask how Holman Hunt knew how to paint his picture. This is an altogether different proposition, and not one concerned with the nuts and bolts of producing a competent work of art. Here, I am concerned to examine extant knowledge inherent within a received tradition required to make his painting both *conceptually* possible and for the notional viewer, *comprehensible*. This relates to a more elusive and disparate set of ideas as I will elucidate in what follows.

In this chapter I set out my case to demonstrate the chasm between Luke's Temple story and the works of art purporting to portray it. This is because the biblical scene does not portray a dispute. This will become apparent in what follows. I begin with an exegesis of the Lukan text followed by an extended discussion around a selection of artworks that purport to portray the scene. My choices are necessarily limited in number. Firstly, it is not possible to do justice to the numerous examples available within the scope of this thesis, therefore a honed selection is necessary. Additionally, the relevant artworks span several centuries and geographical locations. In art historical terms I am obliged to bring together paintings that are not necessarily grouped by style or art movement. This is, in a sense, part of my strategy of recontextualising *The Finding*, and identifying a genre of disputation paintings. I shall examine how the examples relate to *The Finding*.

¹ Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI (citing his predecessor) Cologne Synagogue Friday 19th August 2005. Web: [Apostolic Journey to Cologne: Visit to the Synagogue of Cologne \(August 19, 2005\) | BENEDICT XVI \(vatican.va\)](#)

5.1 Luke 2:41-52

It is to the Gospel of Luke 2:41-52 that we must turn our attention to in order to answer the question, how did Holman Hunt know how to paint *The Finding*? The narrative concerns the events surrounding the Holy Family's pilgrimage to the Temple for the Passover festival. On their return home, Jesus remains behind to debate with the scholars in the Temple. Mary and Joseph return to find him in the Temple. Mary admonishes him for causing them worry, and Jesus in turn asks them "did you not know I would be about my father's business?"

The first curious aspect to note here is that the substance of the teaching and learning activity between the twelve-year-old Jesus and the teachers is not the central point of Luke's Temple narrative. The story fulfils a number of functions. In brief, it draws attention to Jesus as intelligent and wise and signals his relationship to his parents and by implication, indicates to readers the matter of his relationship to his (or the) father. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that far from being a disputation between Jesus and the teachers, the scene is Luke's attempt to ground the life and mission of Jesus firmly within a Jewish context. He does this in the following ways:

Firstly, Luke reminds his readers/listeners that Jesus's parents are devoted and pious Jews making an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover festival, over and above normative requirements and expectations. Secondly, Jesus's place is shown frequently to be within the Jerusalem Temple, the authoritative centre of Judaism. Thirdly, Luke grounds the story within a Jewish social and religious tradition by making frequent allusions to Hebrew scriptures, in particular, 1 Samuel. The entire Temple story is rooted firmly within Judaism to the extent that it would lose coherence if it were otherwise so. Moreover, grounding the story in this way would mean that it would hardly make sense at this point in the Gospel narrative for a state of hostility to exist between Jesus and the teachers. The connections and allusions with Hebrew scriptures are significant because they tell us about the evangelist's intentions.² I outline some key points here.

In a substantial examination of Luke's use of the Old Testament, Roger David Aus identifies a number of similarities between the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple narrative

² Furthermore, it will become clear that through Aus and other scholars, I am reading *back* to the Hebrew scriptures and not reading typologically forward as alluded to briefly in chapter three. In other words, I do not regard the events of 1 Samuel as *prefiguring* events in the New Testament, rather, I understand the New Testament to refer *back* to earlier biblical texts.

and the Judaic traditions of the boy Samuel in the Temple in 1 Samuel, 1-3. This gives us an insight into the world of early Christianity and Luke's priorities. I will cite selectively here. Aus cites the emphasis on the phrase "going up." 1 Samuel 1:3 says that Elkanah used to "go up" year by year from his native city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord (in the Temple) at Shiloh.³ Raymond Brown also sees significance in the expression "going up" in the Lukan Temple story which he says anticipates Jesus's journey of public ministry as outlined in Luke 9:51 to 19:28.⁴ Concerning the matter of being God's *son* – there is a correlation between Samuel and Jesus. There is some ambiguity regarding the identity of Samuel's father.⁵ Samuel has *three* father-figures. Elkanah is Samuel's father and yet Samuel addresses Eli, the high priest as "father" in a tradition that understands a rabbinic teacher as a father figure. The Lukan Temple story foregrounds the issue of sonship by means of word play with the concept of "father" when Jesus answers Mary's question:

*"Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"*⁶

When Jesus says "did you not know" he uses the plural form of "you" to include his father (Joseph), thus magnifying the incongruity of the situation.⁷ Additionally, the effect of this upon a contemporary listening audience is to form the impression of addressing them directly, given that in antiquity, experience of scripture was largely an oral affair. It is clearly difficult to translate this level of nuanced connotation into pictorial forms. However, a preliminary observation to make here is that some artworks of the scene appear to actively address, and therefore include the viewer, a point to which I will return in what follows.

Luke makes recurrent use of the Old Testament in order to make the finding in the Temple story function as a bridge between Jesus's nativity, circumcision and presentation at the Temple and his later ministry. Moreover, this story is a further opportunity to place Jesus

³ In contrast with the Lukan story, Samuel's parents *intentionally* left him in the Temple. Aus suggests that the 1 Samuel story provides the scriptural basis for Luke to describe Jesus's parents as "going up" annually to Jerusalem, and on one occasion *leaving Jesus in the Temple*, albeit *unintentionally*. Roger David Aus, *Samuel, Saul and Jesus: Three Early Palestinian Jewish Christian Gospel Haggadoth*. Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, edited by Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, James Strange, Darrell J. Fasching and Sara Mandell, no 105. (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1994), 41.

⁴ Raymond E. Brown. *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (London: Doubleday, 1979), 485.

⁵ Aus, *Samuel, Saul and Jesus*, 41.

⁶ Verse 49.

⁷ This is arguably missed in translation for modern readers in English. I am not a Greek speaker; however, I have gleaned this from reliable scholarly sources and helpful discussions with scholars. I am grateful to Todd Klutz and Richard Burrige for their assistance here.

in the Temple environment. The importance of the Temple as a motif, apparent in the text, has a frequent presence in artistic renderings of the scene.⁸ The wider significance of the Temple in first-century Judaism is worth some brief remarks. Lanier clarifies that the Temple was, notwithstanding the presence of synagogues, the beating heart of religious Jewish life. Moreover, the Temple was the sacred place where God resided in whatever form that took. That presence for Jews, says Lanier, situates the Temple as the symbolic centre of the cosmos. As Jews were fervently hoping for God to dwell in the Temple once again, the questions that arise are: when will this happen and how will this happen? Lanier suggests that Luke's purpose here is to articulate the major theme of the return of God to the Temple in the person of Jesus, thus understood as a fulfilment of prophecy.⁹

In works of art, the Temple is a common feature when depicting the Lukan scene. This is denoted by pillars, scrolls, lecterns, and books. Moreover, it is meaningful for Christian viewers to see the transposition of the Temple into a church-like setting. Given that so much is predicated scripturally upon the hope of the return of God to the Temple, there is a natural link here with the very concept of "finding" Jesus in the Temple. Not only is Jesus found in the Temple, but he is described as sitting *amidst* the doctors. Far from an incidental detail, it signifies Jesus as a scholar and disciple. The description in Luke conforms to expectations of a scholarly discussion typical of the time of Jesus. When Jesus is described as *sitting amidst* the doctors, it is apparent that some licence is taken in pictorial representations. The elevation of Jesus in a throne-like chair (or by standing) might also be said to deviate, if not literally, then in terms of the spirit of the story because it suggests that Jesus is teaching the teachers. This is apparent in numerous works (Figs.54-57). According to Brown, being seated was the normative position for students or disciples as well as teachers. Therefore, although Jesus was described as "sitting" whilst teaching in later passages, such as Luke 5:3, where it says: "He sat down and taught the people," Brown maintains that Luke does not have him teach in this passage. In contrast with many pictorial representations of the story, the customary hierarchical positioning was eschewed by Rembrandt in his etchings of the scene (Fig. 6). Charles Rosenberg suggests that Rembrandt was influenced by Calvin's commentary on the Gospel which emphasised Jesus's lowly status. The doctors were

⁸ Scholars have noted the frequency with which Luke makes use of the Temple in his corpus. Gregory Lanier makes the point that Luke stands out among the synoptics for his use of the Jerusalem Temple to frame the narrative. Gregory R. Lanier, "Luke's Distinctive use of the Temple: Portraying the Divine Visitation." *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series, 65, no. 2 (2014): 433-62. Accessed December 6th, 2019. www.jstor.org/stable/43665437.

⁹ Lanier, "Luke's Distinctive use of the Temple: Portraying the Divine Visitation," 439.

sufficiently impressed as a result and so allowed Jesus to sit among (amidst) them.¹⁰ Luke's use of language and terminology is significant according to Brown. In the Temple story, the Jewish leaders/elders are referred to as teachers. This makes the scene one of conviviality and the use of the more neutral term of teachers underpins this. This contrasts with later passages where they are described more disparagingly as "lawyers" and "scribes." The scene may have been constructed to foreshadow later disagreements, he argues, but here, the emphasis is on Temple piety. At this point in the Lukan narrative Brown maintains that Jesus is a disciple, not a master.¹¹

The goodwill that surrounds the Lukan Temple narrative is further emphasized by contrasting it with its *re-written* version in the apocryphal Infancy Gospel of Thomas. As Brown has noted, when the Temple scene is added to the Infancy Gospel, in 19:2 a notion of hostility is introduced. This is because it says: "All paid attention to him and were astounded how he, a child, put to silence the elders and the teachers of the people."¹² I believe it is fair to conclude that the Lukan Temple scene, whilst describing a teaching and learning technique or discussion, does not convey Jesus as teaching the teachers, nor does it portray the participants as being in dispute or in a state of hostility. This is a crucial element in my discussion because the suggestion of enmity, and of Jesus as "teacher" is apparent in many artistic Temple scenes, and it is this disparity between the originary text and the works of art that forms the kernel of the disputation discourse.

Before concluding this aspect of the discussion, it is worth considering what Luke does *not* say. Luke does not outline what the issues are under dispute in the scene. He does not elucidate because it is not the focus of the story. There is just an implied discussion on a point of *Torah*. When Jesus speaks, it is to his mother, not directly to the teachers; and, it might reasonably be assumed, to the listening audience both within the story, (as others are likely to be present in the Temple) and without (the audience listening to the Gospel being read aloud). I suggest this because, as I previously noted, the plural form of "you" is used. Moreover, Luke does not describe the teachers as old, hostile, or menacing towards Jesus. Nor is any doctor described as blind. Rather, the doctors are amazed (or astonished) at his

¹⁰ Charles M. Rosenberg, *Rembrandt's Religious Prints: The Feddersen Collection at the Snite Museum of Art* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), 228.

¹¹ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 474-5.

¹² Alternatively, "put to silence" could be translated as "could interrogate."

knowledge. Furthermore, Luke does not indicate any “winner” of the dispute which is never described as anything other than a Jewish discursive event.

I conclude that the textual Temple scene was not designed as an illustration of hostility between two faiths, nor is it one of confrontation.¹³ Rather, Luke’s concern is to situate the developing Christianity within its Jewish roots as an authentic continuance of tradition. He seeks to portray Jesus as an intelligent and wise child and thus the story is centred around the specialness of the twelve-year-old Jewish Jesus and his destiny within Jewish tradition. Luke does this authentically by providing an echo of 1 Samuel which he assumes his intended audience will recognise. Now that I have established the tone of the Lukan scene as one which roots the Christian story within Judaism, we are in a position to evaluate how the story is relayed in works of art. The Lukan text provides a range of motifs we might expect to be present within the pictorial imagery of a given artwork. By establishing some parameters and trends in the genre, and relating artworks to the Lukan textual origins, it is possible to approach an answer to our question of how Holman Hunt knew how to paint *The Finding*.

5.2 The Lukan Temple Scene in Paintings.

In my examination of paintings that purport to depict the Lukan scene, I begin with a discussion exploring the genre of the disputation painting and its observable characteristics. I then consider some specific examples of the genre in more detail incorporating appropriate comparisons with *The Finding*. My priority is how the imagery within the artworks relates to the Lukan story. It is my intention to demonstrate that comparisons enable characteristics to “show up” and reveal themselves. One of my intentions is to draw attention to this hitherto fairly diffuse genre as pre-existing *The Finding* and therefore a formative element for its making and coherence of meaning. The naming of this type-scene *disputation paintings* is part of my strategy to bring the genre into view. A disputation painting is one that depicts the Lukan scene and prioritises the dispute over the Lukan narrative; the dispute here being the enduring Jewish-Christian dispute and not the imagined discussion in the Temple.

The genre of disputation paintings have been overshadowed by the more dominant religious genres such as the Nativity or Crucifixion notwithstanding their frequency of appearance. Its textual form is often regarded as a mere appendage. As one illustration of this, the former Pope Benedict’s book presents the story in the form of an isolated epilogue at the

¹³ Within the scene’s diegesis (or “world”), there can only be one religion or faith in evidence.

conclusion of his account of the Infancy Narratives, because it neither belongs with Jesus's "infancy" nor his adulthood.¹⁴ As a scene depicting Jesus's childhood, it is therefore taken as a minor, supporting event in the Christian story. In artistic terms, this frail identity could be responsible for shifts in emphasis in tone and meaning in addition to situational contexts of artworks. The scene remains something of an anomaly, frequently, the scene is submerged within a group concerning the life of the Virgin when part of an altarpiece and remains more of a stand-alone work in more modern settings. Over time, the many religious genres have emerged from the sacred spaces of churches and the like and are found latterly within the secular commercial and municipal art gallery context. Independent self-representing artists like Holman Hunt have chosen to depict the disputation scene (as with any religious genre) of their own volition. Whatever the contexts, my approach here is to understand disputation paintings by examining disputation paintings.

Artworks will foreground various elements and themes from the story, for example, the family reunion, the exchange between Mary and her son and/or the debate with the doctors. The various titles attributed to the works hint at the diffuse generic identity and alternative emphases. For instance, the *twelve-year-old Jesus*, (young and vulnerable, merely a child, a child approaching adulthood) or *Christ*, (the great saviour in the making) *sitting among, amidst*, (an equal participant in the proceedings or a follower, a disciple); *disputing, discussing* (arguing, correcting, reading *Torah* or expounding the doctrine of the trinity); in the *Temple*, (the centre of Judaism and Israel) with the *doctors, scholars, teachers, elders* or *rabbis* (alternately: educated, schooled, old or defunct). Titles of artworks include, *Christ Among the Doctors, The Twelve-Year-Old Jesus in the Temple, Christ Disputing with the Doctors* and variants around this theme.¹⁵ It is not always clear how titles are attributed, or in the case of foreign language titles, how these are translated. In some cases, this seems arbitrary and changeable. A given example may have various titles attributed to it.¹⁶

The earliest known example of a pictorial representation of the Temple scene is identified as a fifth-century ivory book cover with scenes from the life of Jesus (Milan) (Fig. 58).¹⁷ The theme frequently appears as part of various series concerned with the life of Christ,

¹⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, London, Bloomsbury, 2012. Additionally, Geza Vermes maintains that this story is one of many that are accepted as part of the genre of historically unreliable childhood tales "frequently attested in legends and folk literature" in Geza Vermes, *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 29.

¹⁵ Rembrandt depicted the Lukan scene three times in etchings. One example, *Christus en de schriftgeleerden* (*Christ and the Scribes*) translated into English as *Christ Disputing with the Doctors* 1654.

¹⁶ *Christ Among the Doctors* (1506) by Dürer is also known as *Jesus Among the Doctors*.

¹⁷ Gertrude Schiller, *Iconography*, 124-5.

especially infancy stories or the *Sorrows* and *Life of the Virgin*.¹⁸ Examples continue to be visible in the present day within sacred domains and as legacy artworks in galleries around the world.¹⁹ In terms of functionality, the scene is commonly featured as part of altar pieces and frescos in church settings in addition to the secular artistic context. Gertrud Schiller explains that the two parts of the Lukan narrative, that is, the discussion with the elders, and Mary and Joseph entering the Temple, became combined in the Middle Ages.²⁰ Within Roman Catholic liturgy, in addition to the *Life of the Virgin* the scene also forms part of the *Seven Sorrows of Mary* and the concept of “finding” Jesus in the Temple is the fifth *Joyful Mystery of the Rosary*. Accordingly, this suggests that culturally, the scene has developed a visual prominence that far outweighs its intended level of significance in biblical or theological terms.

Drawing upon a curious blend of biblical interpretations, religious and scholarly disputations, pictorial renditions change in style and substance over the centuries incorporating cultural norms and events of the day. One striking example is noted in Schiller’s remarks about how this Gospel scene is thought to parallel the Reformation period’s own theological debates.²¹ She cites by way of example Franz Franken’s altarpiece *Jesus Among the Doctors* (1587) which includes the figures of Luther and Calvin (Figs. 59,60). The Franken piece is, however, the only example she cites in this respect. For the purposes of our discussion, it is relevant to observe the foregrounding of the aspect of debate over other aspects of the narrative.

As I have already indicated, the Gospel story provides a range of leitmotifs potentially discernible within artworks. Notwithstanding the variables in pictorial interpretations, there are consistencies worth noting. The setting is the Jerusalem Temple, often complete with pillars indicative of the portico setting. (Examples, Duccio (1308-11), Giotto (1310), Giovanni di Paolo (1472), (Figs 61, 62, 63). Sometimes the Temple has the semblance of a church, making the scene more contemporaneous for beholders. This further augments the church’s stance on theological supersession. Jesus is often depicted as youthful, childlike and

¹⁸ Examples of Temple scene paintings can be seen via the link:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Paintings_of_Jesus_Christ_among_the_doctors

¹⁹ Interest has waned as a subject for self-representing artists, but not for religious illustration and art. The last high-profile work was completed by forger Han van Meegeren who produced a version of the Lukan scene in the style of Vermeer. The painting was given in exchange to Hermann Göring for other artworks. Van Meegeren was later prosecuted for collaboration with the Nazis. Jonathan Lopez, *The Man who Made Vermeers: Unvarnishing the Legend of Master Forger Han van Meegeren* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2009).

²⁰ Schiller, *Iconography*, 124-5.

²¹ Schiller, *Iconography*, 125.

(to modern eyes) feminine. His hair is frequently depicted as fair or red and this works to differentiate him from the elders. Additionally, Jesus is illuminated in some way, either by means of a halo or nimbus effect or alternatively with the contrivance of the natural appearance of light, (Examples include, Duccio (1308-11) (Fig.61), Giotto (1304-6) (Fig. 62) and others unnamed). The effect varies in subtlety. At times there is an unambiguous solid halo of gold, alternatively the halo is rendered as fine radiating lines. In some works, Jesus can be presented as a teacher and therefore is positioned as physically elevated above others. He is usually seated (as per the Lukan narrative) however, there are exceptions to this. For example, three nineteenth-century German examples, Adolph Menzel, Max Liebermann and Heinrich Hoffman portray him standing. Holman Hunt, in his attempt to depict the sequence of events in the story attempts to convey (or at least suggest) both sitting *and* standing. This is because we are meant to understand that in *The Finding* Jesus *had been* seated upon his abaya, only to rise upon the entry of Mary and Joseph into the Temple.

In some paintings, the seated element is rendered by portraying Jesus as seated on a throne or chair which could represent a Moses's Seat. According to Brad Young, such Moses seats existed at the time of Jesus. This is mentioned in Matt. 23: 2-3;

*"The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses's seat; therefore all that they say to you, do and obey..." The seat is a chair of honour and represents religious authority.*²²

The variously designated elders, teachers, scholars or doctors are sometimes old and ugly, and there are highly differentiated types.²³ This is especially noticeable in Dürer's *Christ Among the Doctors* (1506), known as the *Lugano* (Fig. 65).²⁴ Richard Stracke suggests that this could simply reflect a stereotype about scholars, but it may also reflect St. Paul's repeated use of "the old man" as a metaphor for the person one was before conversion to Christianity. This does not dismiss the doctors in the episode but makes them signs of hope for salvation:

(for)"our old man is crucified with him (meaning Christ), that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer" (Romans 6:6).

²² I further speculate that the Moses seat is the forerunner of the professor's "chair" in the medieval scholarly tradition.

²³ The doctors are sometimes referred to as rabbis, an anomaly given that no such occupation exists in the Hebrew scriptures and the title did not achieve prominence until after the year 70CE. (Moreover, scholarship on this matter varies considerably) I am grateful to Prof. Alex Samely for drawing my attention to this point.

²⁴ *Christ Among the Doctors*, 1506, Thyssen Collection, Lugano-Castagnolia and referred to as the Lugano panel.

Further motifs include the presence of scrolls and books. Stracke suggests that the presence of books reflects the assumption in medieval commentaries that what astonished the scholars in the Temple was the idea of Jesus as a boy introducing himself to the scholars as the fulfilment of scripture.²⁵ David Cartlidge and Keith Elliott see the presence of books as influenced by the non-canonical Infancy Gospel of Thomas where Jesus, when taking hold of a book is able to cite *Torah* without opening it.²⁶ Stracke questions this influence. However, I see this as entirely feasible. Given the dearth of accounts of Jesus's childhood it is unsurprising to discern an appetite for further stories of his childhood. Gertrud Schiller has also noted the manner in which the Infancy Gospel has infiltrated some iconographic images.²⁷ Although not officially recognized as authoritative in all Christian quarters, apocryphal works circulate in the manner of folklore and contribute to a general understanding of the canon. The Infancy Gospel has influenced a number artistic renditions.²⁸

Both Schiller and Stracke identify the presence of Mary and Joseph as figures that are depicted on the periphery in many works. In medieval works, they enter the scene on the left-hand side, but this can sometimes differ depending on the time period of the painting, as it does in *The Finding*. Arguably, their presence enables the foregrounding of the losing and finding motifs. Additionally, the Infancy Gospel's inclusion of the elders' praise for Mary could further be a factor in foregrounding her presence. The references to teaching and learning are plentiful and are relevant to the discussion because we are foregrounding the matter of disputation, a key method in scholarly and religious settings. A helpful point is made by Richard Stracke. Referring to artworks that emphasize the hostility of the scholars, he suggests that artists are taking a cue from St. Ambrose's characterizing of the episode as a "disputation" in a sermon and commentary on the Gospel.²⁹

As we step further away from the Lukan narrative's tone of friendly discussion where elders are impressed with the twelve-year-old Jesus, we move towards a more combative, disputive and increasingly violent "scholarly" environment. Nestled within the stories are

²⁵ Richard Stracke, Christian Iconography website <https://www.christianiconography.info/index.html> (Retrieved 08.09.20)

²⁶ David R. Cartlidge, and J. Keith Elliott. *Art & The Christian Apocrypha*. London: Routledge, 2001, 116.

²⁷ Schiller, *Iconography*, 124

²⁸ The Infancy Gospel of Thomas recounts a series of episodes in Jesus's childhood marked out by means of Jesus's age. He makes birds out of clay that come to life, and in doing so he breaks the Sabbath; he strikes people down, he brings others back to life. The Infancy Gospel concludes with the Temple story derived from Luke (2:41-51), with one crucial difference. At the conclusion of this version, the elders focus on Mary and praise her as Jesus's mother.

²⁹ Located in M.F. Toal, *Sermons of the Fathers*, (London: Longmans, 1957), Vol. 1. 251.

accounts of Jesus in strife with his father (understood here to mean Joseph) and his teacher, Zacchaeus. Jesus first comes into conflict with Zacchaeus in chapter six of the Infancy Gospel, aged just five. Jesus laughs at his teacher and amazes bystanders with his knowledge.³⁰ Verse 11 reads:

“The Jews, once they heard that the child was speaking like this, became angry but were unable to say anything in reply.”

The Infancy Gospel fills in the gaps left by the canonical account according to Christopher Frilingos.³¹ If the climax of the story is the discussion in the Temple with a group of elders, then the episodes with Zacchaeus serve to explain the incremental steps toward it. This is important for our discussion because the pictorial constructions of a hostile disputation between the elders and Jesus makes much more sense when seen additionally through the lens of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. The educational context continues. Frequently in pictures depicting the Lukan scene, figures are portrayed as pointing and counterpointing to suggest an argument in the spirit of the scholarly tradition. The pointing gesture is further understood as Jesus expounding the doctrine of the Trinity by pointing to his fingers in the manner of theologians as portrayed in art. An example of Jesus pointing to his fingers in this manner can be seen in Dürer’s *Lugano* which echoes that of St. Augustine in a similar fashion in the *Bruges St Augustine Altarpiece* (circa 1490) (Figs. 69-70).

To summarise, Luke’s Jesus is presented as a special, twelve-year-old, impressing his elders who are willing to sit with him. This is a means of grounding his significant status within Judaism which functions as a mark of authenticity. The imagery used in disputation paintings is concerned with depicting Jesus’s childhood and a retrojection of Jesus’s later teaching activities into portrayals of his early years. Some works foreground the disagreements between Jesus and the Jewish leaders and cast these back into his childhood. The scene has become an emblem of the wider Jewish-Christian debate with (at times) menacing undertones.

³⁰ Jesus humiliates Zacchaeus over a lesson concerning the alphabet. He accuses him of being an imposter and claims to teach the teacher more than the converse. Zacchaeus, in despair laments his position as a teacher who is unable to teach this boy. Jesus laughs at him again. After other short episodes with Joseph, the educational scenarios resume. Jesus is now eight years old. There is a physical altercation where Jesus is struck by his teacher, and he responds with a curse leaving him unconscious. In chapter 15, the adults are afraid of Jesus as he strides into the schoolroom, and he takes a book. Without reading from it, he is able to teach the Torah to others present.

³¹ Christopher A. Frilingos, “Parents Just Don’t Understand: Ambiguity in Stories about the Childhood of Jesus,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 109:1 (2016): 33-55.

I now present a range of examples for closer inspection. It should be noted that none of the examples is chosen for any formal or stylistic resemblance to *The Finding* (as in the previously discussed cases of the Lorenzo or Leonardo). Nor is it assumed that Holman Hunt had sight of the works, although we can be certain that he was familiar with *Christ Among the Doctors* (1515-1530), by Bernardino Luini (Fig. 4). The selections that follow are highly variable in terms of historical and geographical location. However, the logical flow of my choices, unified in the main by subject matter, will become apparent.

5.3 Disputation Paintings: Examples for Discussion.

Luini and Dürer.

I begin this discussion with the Luini, (Fig. 4) a painting we know Holman Hunt knew, I then move to discuss Dürer's *Lugano*, a much more significant painting that requires some extended discussion. I will do this with a combination of textual analysis and reference to criticism. I then turn to relevant nineteenth-century examples, specifically by Adolph Menzel and Max Liebermann. Accordingly, this discussion will facilitate comparisons with *The Finding* in furtherance of this thesis.

My own encounter with the Luini in the present day involved for me, the sensation of coming face to face with Jesus, so dominant a figure is he in the picture. The figure of Jesus is illuminated, but without a halo. He points very specifically to his fingers as though counting the particulars of an argument in the tradition of scholarly or religious disputation. My impressions concur with Carlyle's in so far as Jesus appears to be feminine, however, that sense is somewhat overridden by his more adult appearance and dominant presence. What can be thought of as feminine is further affected by context of time. In the sixteenth-century, the figure may have merely seemed beautiful, and thus deemed to epitomize moral goodness. The more adult appearance of Jesus is disconcerting given that he is meant to be twelve years old. Additionally, the most unsettling aspect of the Luini (for me) was a sudden awareness of being addressed by one of the bearded doctors pictured at the rear of the picture. The doctors look in all directions, and not at each other. The overall effect of the action is one of disquiet and disorder, unified and harmonized by the dominant figure of Jesus. The Temple is not depicted, nor are the figures of Mary and Joseph. The story is thus truncated to focus upon the Evangelist's lesser concern of the dispute or debate rather than the family drama or the grounding within Judaism.

Holman Hunt recalls that after his critical comment regarding Luini's portrayal of Jesus, Carlyle proceeded to extol the virtues of Albrecht Dürer's oeuvre, although specific works are not mentioned.³² It is pertinent to note the turn towards Dürer because the Luini Temple painting (*circa* 1515) has been linked to Dürer's *Lugano* (1506) due to its similar composition and attributes. The *Lugano* is a significant work to consider here for the following reasons. Firstly, it is a prominent painting of the disputation scene which unambiguously foregrounds hostility between Jesus and the Doctors.³³ Additionally, it is notable for connections with other such Temple scenes and is thus indicative of a network of artistic and cultural thought as I shall outline. These connections are formed via both imagery and formal means. Dürer's importance as an artist plays a part in the painting's prominence. Additionally, that he was an artist admired by Carlyle who brought him to the attention of Holman Hunt during a discussion about portrayals of Jesus also adds to the painting's interest as part of my thesis.³⁴ Furthermore, the *Lugano* has garnered compelling criticism and commentary, including treatments by Erwin Panofsky (1955), Jan Bialostocki (1959), Heinrich Wölfflin (1971), and more recently, Margaret Carroll (1995) and Andrew Benjamin (2010). As with *The Finding*, the *Lugano* is a work of art frequently on display affording it contemporary currency, and thus part of modern cultural life, not a cloistered, hidden historical artefact.

This strange and powerful painting was supposedly completed (as documented within the picture) "*opus quinque dierum*," meaning *made in five days*. As Jan Bialostocki writes, it "not only stands alone in Dürer's work" it has "few analogies" in sixteenth-century painting. Bialostocki clearly refers to formal matters with that remark, although Dürer himself described it as being "the like of which I have never painted before."³⁵ The painting is noted for its fusion of northern and Italian Renaissance styles, and thus contrasts significantly with many of his renowned works (such as *Melancholia* or even his own previous Temple works,

³² Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. 1, 359.

³³ *Christ Among the Doctors*, 1506, Thyssen Collection, Lugano-Castagnolia and hereon in referred to as the Lugano panel.

³⁴ Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. 1, 359.

³⁵ Hans Rupprich, *Dürer, Schriftlicher Nachlass*, I, Berlin, 1956, p.57 cited in Jan Bialostocki, "Opus Quinque Deirum": Durer's 'Christ among the Doctors' and its Sources. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol 22, No. ½ (Jan-Jun. 1959) 17-34, 17, n 1.

discussed below).³⁶ The use of half-length figures along with a central figure as a focal point was a feature of contemporary Italian painting.

The *Lugano* was completed in Venice at the same time as Dürer's *Feast of the Rose Garlands* (1506) and is one of three treatments of the Lukan scene by Dürer.³⁷ In addition to the *Lugano* there is another completed under the rubric of Dürer's workshop from the series *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin* (1494-95) (Fig, 68), and additionally, the woodcut of 1503 (Fig, 73). A striking characteristic of the *Lugano* is its drastic compression and flattening of space which, as Bialostocki points out, is worthy of our attention painted as it was by an artist renowned for his interest in the art of perspective. For example, there is a discernible contrast between this and Dürer's woodcut of the Lukan Temple scene (Fig 73). The crowded composition features at its centre, a configuration of hands which take on the formation of a wheel. By extension, the entire group appears to follow this formation into an outer wheel-like motif suggesting a degree of swirling movement and confusion.³⁸

The figure of a young red-haired Jesus is oppressively surrounded by the doctors, some of whom are painted as grotesques. It suggests a frightening event. This is especially noticeable in the figure to the left of Jesus whose hands conjoin to form the wheel motif. The grotesque's hands contrast sharply with those of Jesus in colour and texture. They are enlarged and contorted. The figure's face wears a menacing expression and yet looks beyond the proceedings as if seeing something outside the picture's frame. Perhaps we are meant to understand him as merely not seeing. This figure corresponds with the doctor to the right-hand side of the Luini who also looks beyond the frame in the same direction (Fig.4). The *Lugano* figure's teeth are gapped taking the appearance of fangs and the face has an air of deformity. The skin is wrinkled and marked. It folds and bulges. In contrast to the boy's smooth and gently formed skin, the grotesque figure's skin texture suggests an abhorrence of touch. This sensation is alluded to further in the action of the hands in the central circular

³⁶ This assumption and terminology emanate from the dominance of Erwin Panofsky's conception of what construes as "northern renaissance" and his foregrounding of Albrecht Dürer as an exemplar. See Margaret A. Sullivan, "Bosch, Bruegel, Everyman and the Northern Renaissance", *Oud Holland*, 2008, vol. 121, No. 2/3, 117-146.

³⁷ Indeed, it is possible to see the figure of the frontmost bearded, bald scholar depicted in the *Lugano* within the *Rose Garlands* on the left-hand side.

³⁸ The wheel could further be understood here as referencing a form of execution standing in for crucifixion in many medieval images involving depictions of the two thieves executed alongside Jesus. In various legends the good and the bad thief are imagined as exemplifying the redeemed and the wicked, respectively. The figure of the Jew became associated with the "bad thief" in parts of medieval Germany. The theme was addressed in woodcuts by Dürer and Cranach the Elder. See Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 186-197.

motif of the painting. As Jesus points to his fingers in debate, the heavy hand of the doctor touches Jesus's arm as the other counter-points. Jesus's gaze is upon the doctor whose hands rest lightly upon his closed book. This doctor returns the gaze as if to accede to Jesus's rhetoric. To the left of this figure is a scholar with his book open, revealing the Hebrew language. And yet, this figure is symbolically, doubly blind with his eyes closed, wearing a hat which almost obscures them. To the left of that figure in the background is a face whose expression is wary and threatening who, reminiscent of the "looking figure" in the Luini, returns the gaze of the beholder.

Erwin Panofsky describes the doctors as "surround[ing] the innocent beauty of the youthful Christ with the threatening nearness of a nightmare."³⁹ The grotesque aspects are reminiscent of Leonardo's renowned grotesque series (Figs. 71-72) which have long been thought to have influenced Dürer's approach. Panofsky underlines this point by stating that "The wicked old scholar can hardly be imagined without some knowledge of Leonardo's so-called 'caricatures.'"⁴⁰ It has further been suggested that Hieronymus Bosch's renditions of the elderly have been a source for Dürer. This could have been part of a wider fascination with the deformed and grotesque as Bialostocki alludes.⁴¹ Bialostocki further draws attention to the *moral* significance of the grotesque as understood by both Leonardo and Bosch. We are to understand the *Lugano* as depicting the "enemies of Christ" as ugly; ugliness signifying the immoral. Panofsky describes the doctors in a manner not dissimilar from F.G. Stephens's account of *The Finding's* rabbis discussed earlier. Their faces are, "...wicked, tense, self-righteous, sceptical, or tired, ... threatening..."⁴², and:

*"Only one of the Doctors – he alone whose face is a real caricature-takes an active part in the debate. Turned to full profile, he hisses his objections straight into the ear of Christ, and his gnarled fingers challengingly touch Christ's hands; so that the center of the composition is occupied by a group of four hands...a contrast between youth and old age, gentle firmness and contentious spite..."*⁴²

There are a number of points to note. Panofsky's animated account enlivens the intense contrast between the figure of Jesus and the scholars. It is not limited to description and clearly adds a gloss. It fails to offer any critique or comment regarding the dominant figure of the grotesque doctor. Panofsky prioritises two things here. He uncritically aligns his

³⁹ Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer* (Cambridge, (2nd Edition) 1945, 114-115.

⁴⁰ Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, 115.

⁴¹ Bialostocki, "Durer's 'Christ among the Doctors'" 21.

⁴² Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer* 114.

own description of the doctors and events within the picture with an interpretation of Luke wrenched from its Jewish moorings. Additionally, he consistently brings the discussion back to the formal qualities of the composition and its supposed Italian influence. The pointing and use of gesticulating hands is not so much indicative of a dispute, rather for Panofsky, “counting fingers is unquestionably Italian.”⁴³

Additional scholarly argument surrounding the picture is also centred around its formal influences. Where Panofsky understands the grotesques as deriving from Leonardo, Bialostocki urges caution on this point, only to direct the reader to an alternative formal source. Citing a lack of evidence for any direct connection to Leonardo’s grotesque series, Bialostocki points to a greater connection with Cima da Conegliano’s *Christ Among the Doctors* (1504) (Fig. 67). I would agree that it is possible to see a number of common features both formal and pictorial. The Cima is another crowded scene where Jesus is surrounded by a dense group of doctors. The doctors are once again, differentiated types, mostly bearded and wearing turbans or similar headgear. Jesus wears magenta and blue and points to his fingers as he looks towards the opened book sat on the lap of a bearded figure. He is seated yet elevated above the doctors. A bald figure to the left of Jesus looks thoughtful as his book lies closed upon his lap. This corresponds with the Lugano figure who also closes his book and is attentive and thoughtful. The Cima is thought by Bialostocki to be the instigation behind Luini’s *Christ Among the Doctors*, for many years assumed to have been painted by Leonardo. As this appears to be a slightly more compressed version of the Cima, it is thought that Luini had seen Leonardo’s cartoon of an unrealised Temple painting and taken inspiration from it.⁴⁴ There are qualities about the Luini work that derive from Leonardo’s style, for example, the rendering of the paint in the soft, *sfumato* method, Jesus’s facial type and, as we have established, the grotesque attributes to the figure to the beholder’s right-hand-side.⁴⁵ All these works are thought to connect with Leonardo via the use of caricature and Leonardo’s own writing now accessible via the *Trattato* or *Treatise on Painting*.⁴⁶ In the *Treatise*, Leonardo writes some guidance on representing someone who is speaking to many

⁴³ Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, 114.

⁴⁴ Bialostocki, “Durer’s ‘Christ among the Doctors.’” 26.

⁴⁵ *Sfumato* is a technique where edges of colours and tones are blurred and was frequently used by Leonardo.

⁴⁶ The *Trattato* or *Treatise on Painting* would have been a work in progress at the time Dürer worked on his Lugano panel. For a comprehensive account of Leonardo’s *Treatise*, see Richard Shaw Pooler, *Leonardo Da Vinci’s Treatise of Painting: The Story of The World’s Greatest Treatise on Painting – Its Origins, History, Content and Influence* (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2014).

people. It is assumed that such a scene will be centred on the matter of debate. Leonardo writes:

When you make someone whom you wish to be speaking to many people, consider the subject on which he must discourse, and adapt his actions so that they are in accordance with the subject. That is to say, if it be a matter of persuasion, then his actions should fit this purpose. If many different arguments are to be expounded, then he who speaks will grasp one of the fingers of his left hand with two from the right, having closed the two smaller fingers, and with his face turned in readiness towards the throng and with his mouth somewhat open, so that he appears to speak.⁴⁷

In Bialostocki's discussion the debate focuses on the extent to which the *mis-en-scene* of the *Lugano* conforms, or not, to Leonardo's *Trattato*.⁴⁸ It is worth noting that the *Trattato* is related to the *Lugano* in a way that the Lukan text is not. This reveals something about Bialostocki's method. He highlights selected textual underpinning of paintings, does not afford the same diligence to the biblical text which purportedly undergirds the very subject of the painting. Moreover, there is no impetus to put such cruel renditions to any critical analysis as I have already indicated. On the contrary, Bialostocki explains that Dürer's intention *was required to show unrest and unfriendliness* on the part of the doctors in contrast with the need to maintain the *opposite* qualities in the figure of Jesus. Bialostocki's expression of caution surrounding the grotesque figure and its supposed links to Leonardo sidesteps the matter of what it is that rationalises and normalises the appearance of the grotesque figure. This is because on one hand, by drawing upon the long-standing Jewish-Christian theological dispute, the matter is patently obvious. However, the blending of later Jewish stereotypes into that rationale obfuscates any precise meaning. In the ensuing confusion, investigation into the meaning of the grotesque becomes unnecessary to address, because whatever meaning arrived at is apparently settled.

Striking though the composition of the *Lugano* may be, it is the faces of the doctors *en masse* along with the figure to the left of the young Jesus (the viewer's right) that forms the strongest impact of the picture. The *Lugano*'s power is amplified by a later painting *Christ Among the Doctors* (late C16th) by Hans Hofmann (Fig.66) which is a re-working of and homage to the *Lugano*.⁴⁹ This can be attributed to the fact that Hoffman's artistic career

⁴⁷ BN 2038 21r (R594), Urb 126r-v (McM 424) in Martin Kemp, ed, *Leonardo On Painting: An Anthology of Writings by Leonardo da Vinci with a Selection of Documents relating to his career as an artist* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), 149-150.

⁴⁸ Bialostocki, "Durer's 'Christ among the Doctors,'" 20.

⁴⁹ *Christ Among the Doctors*, Hans Hoffmann (1530-1591) dated as second half of 16th Century. National Museum Warsaw. Hoffmann was known for his works derived after Dürer and was a representative of the "Dürer Renaissance."

was centred around copying Dürer's works. Here, he fuses many of the elements already discussed and the picture bears a strong resemblance, both in appearance and conceptually to the *Lugano*. It thus compounds its effects. Additionally, it amplifies many facets of the disputation genre by means of repetition of key motifs in addition to its resemblance to the *Lugano*. These include use of the half figure and the customary assembly of ugly and elderly doctors. It is, in common with the *Lugano*, a densely crowded scene, replete with some distorted faces of the doctors, caricatured to signify Jewishness. Once again, the motifs of the closed book and attentive doctor are in evidence. In this version, two of the doctors look out to the beholder, and Jesus as the central figure looks outwards towards the notional viewer as he points to his thumb in a similar configuration to that of the *Lugano*.

The traditional art-historical emphasis remains upon form and style rather than the cultural activity of debate and disputation, or any critical awareness of the implications of such representation. As Margaret Carroll writes, Panofsky, a German-Jewish exile from Nazi Germany did not address the question of why Dürer would have painted a picture that caricatures Jews in this way as "vicious antagonists of Christ."⁵⁰ She further points out that the *Lugano*'s portrayal is not warranted by the Lukan text nor earlier renditions of the scene, citing the example Duccio's *Disputation with the Doctors* (1308-11) (Fig. 62).⁵¹ Moreover, she could have drawn attention to Panofsky's glosses. Who is the "wicked old scholar" in Panofsky's schema? No such person is described in Luke's Gospel. Additionally, Andrew Benjamin observes, most of the other faces (in the *Lugano*) could be assigned to Christians. However, this face has an "irredeemable quality" that makes it not simply a Jewish face, but "the face of the Jew."⁵² Panofsky either did not see what is plainly visible, (what appears) or he simply regarded such critique of its appearance as beyond his remit as an art historian. This is deeply ironic given the allusions to blindness in the painting (discussed further below). What is disclosed in the appearance *as presence* of this face?⁵³ The preliminary answer cannot refer to an actual event because the Lukan story itself is legendary, nor can it be something found in the Lukan text. We are drawn to look elsewhere. Moreover, what asks

⁵⁰ Margaret Carroll, "Dürer's "Christ Among the Doctors" Re-examined." *Shop Talk, Studies in Honor of Seymour Slive* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Art Museums, 1995), 49-54, 50.

⁵¹ Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Disputation with the Doctors* (Scene 7) Maesta Altarpiece, 1308-11 Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena.

⁵² Andrew Benjamin, *Of Jews and Animals*, Chapter 8, "Facing Jews," (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 163.

⁵³ Here I distinguish between the appearance of ugliness per se, and the idea that the figure is present (appears) at all.

to be revealed is the realisation that to make the doctors ugly or grotesque is to infer something about Judaism rather than to interpret the Lukan narrative.

Returning to Carroll's point about earlier renditions of the Temple scene. Whilst it is the case that earlier examples of the genre were more sanguine in their approach to portrayals of Jewishness, it is not entirely correct to infer that there is no precedent for the *Lugano*'s approach. Whilst many examples are clearly not so extreme in their portrayals of Jews, they still differentiate between Jew and Christian.⁵⁴ It would be inaccurate to see Dürer's *Lugano* panel as adopting a completely novel stance except by comparison to his own oeuvre. This is shown by the picture's ability to make complete sense and achieve coherence of meaning. Additionally, the general proliferation of this *type scene* demonstrates its meaningfulness in the wider cultural context as a scene which, in many instances, has progressed in the direction of portraying a *hostile* dispute.

The Lugano and The Finding.

I will now relate the *Lugano* to *The Finding*. Ostensibly, it might be difficult to conceive of two more contrasting pictures. They hail from differing contexts in terms of time and geography; additionally, they completely differ in terms of formal qualities and style. Yet, contrary to what might be expected, it is remarkable how much *The Finding* has in common with Dürer's *Lugano* in iconographic terms. In both paintings Jesus has red hair and is dressed in blue. Both paintings suggest a halo effect around Jesus, the *Lugano* with radiating lines and *The Finding* by suggesting a backlit effect. Both figures of Jesus combine youth with a soft feminine appearance. In both pictures Jesus is standing and is the focal point of the picture. There is the presence of elderly bearded scholars, who are differentiated types. Both paintings suggest ugliness and old age as a means of identifying character traits of the doctors. Additionally, the foregrounding of hand gestures signals the disputation, as in the argument taking place. In both pictures, the presence of books or scrolls signify the Hebrew scriptures as unambiguous references to Judaism. They both include the Hebrew language to this effect. Both paintings have the attentive scholarly figure who pays attention to Jesus. In *The Finding*, this is the younger doctor who holds a scroll. Both paintings have

⁵⁴ Examples include: Giotto, *Christ Among the Doctors* (circa 1311), and (1304-6), Castillian school, *Christ Among the Doctors* (1500), Absolon Stumme, *Christ Among the Doctors* (1499), Jörg Breu the Elder, *Christ Among the Doctors* (1502).

the image of a doctor with *tefillin* or their equivalent.⁵⁵ In the *Lugano*, this is portrayed by the attentive scholar who has the relevant scriptural words written upon his hat.⁵⁶ In *The Finding*, this is shown worn on the forehead of the pointing doctor, and additionally by the elderly priest who holds a *tefillin* box. Interestingly, signifiers of blindness are featured in both works. Blindness is depicted explicitly in *The Finding* by means of the elderly priest, and implicitly in the *Lugano*, by the figure on the upper left-hand side whose hat partly obscures his sight. Furthermore, both figures who are meant to be blind hold either a book or a *Torah* scroll as if to compound the point that the blindness relates to scripture and the wilful inability to “see” what is there. In both pictures there is a doctor wearing a fearful expression and both have a figure who looks outward towards the beholder. Blindness, looking, seeing, not seeing, looking outwards at the beholder who returns the gaze are frequently notable features. Compounding this is the very nature of spectacle inherent in works of art intended for public display rather than private devotion within a sacred space. We shall see that the concept of spectacle will form a crucial aspect of the disputation discourse in the following chapter. Moreover there is a prominence of hands which play an important part within both pictures as they do in many disputation paintings. Both paintings suggest a crowded gathering surrounding the figure of Jesus. This is less about the number of figures and more about the atmosphere created by the respective artists.

It is notable that neither the *Lugano* nor *The Finding* was commissioned to function within sacred spaces, accordingly, they remain secular works with a religious theme. It follows that they were not created as part of any context of the life cycle of Mary within an altarpiece. Although *The Finding* foregrounded the idea of family reunion, the *Lugano* clearly does not include the presence of Mary and Joseph. It can be reasonably suggested that both pictures are concerned to foreground the idea of disputation, disagreement and a critique of Judaism. Given that the correlations between the two works occur too frequently to dismiss, the question arises (assuming he had never seen the *Lugano*) from which source could Holman Hunt have derived the motifs we can clearly see as part of two otherwise quite different works emanating from two very distinct time periods and continents?⁵⁷ Leonardo’s *Trattato* may have been a factor. Bialostocki draws attention to scholarship surrounding

⁵⁵ The commandment to wear *tefillin* comes from Deuteronomy 6:8, “You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for a reminder between your eyes.”

⁵⁶ The portrayal suggests that Dürer was aware of the biblical commandment, but not of the form the *tefillin* box takes.

⁵⁷ The *Lugano* was not acquired by the Museo Nacional Thyssen Bornemisza until 1934. Before that, it was with the Mercuria Gallery, Lucerne, and previously part of the Barberini collection from 1634.

Leonardo's *Trattato* yet suggests that there is no certainty that however plausible, that Dürer's *Lugano* is a realisation of some aspects of the *Trattato*. And yet, through a consideration of how *The Finding* and the *Lugano* share iconographic elements, it is possible to form the view that the text links them both. Dürer was known to have come under the influence of Leonardo, especially at the time of his Venetian visit.⁵⁸ Additionally, as previously discussed, my hypothesis that Holman Hunt borrowed from Leonardo's *Last Supper* for his *Finding* picture having clearly cited him as such in correspondence with John Ruskin. Furthermore, Joshua Reynolds refers to Leonardo's *Trattato* in his *Discourses on Art*, the blueprint for teaching at the Royal Academy in Holman Hunt's time.⁵⁹ Holman Hunt was open to the influences of renaissance art and was clearly interested in both Italian and northern styles. It is feasible that Leonardo's *Trattato* (in its various forms) was a source for both Holman Hunt and Dürer. My justification for this is primarily located within the paintings and texts themselves. I further believe that these observations form part of an overarching discourse of disputation which is more concerned with a foregone acceptance of the Jewish-Christian dispute than the subject of the respective pictures. To further develop our understanding of the discourse and how it plays out in paintings, I now turn to examine further examples.

Menzel and Liebermann.

I now move to examine two works produced in the nineteenth century. The characteristics of the disputation genre are further shared in (*Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel* (1851) (Fig. 74), by Adolph Menzel which is housed in the Hamburger Kunsthalle.⁶⁰ It is a pastel drawing and is not normally on display. This work contrasts stylistically from *The Finding*. My notes made upon viewing the drawing confirm that my first impressions were centred around the impact of the portrayal of the doctors. The notes recall that I regarded "the elder types (as) horrific." I further noted that the figure to Jesus's right-hand side reminded me of Nosferatu, or Dickens's Fagin from *Oliver Twist*.⁶¹ The figure's left hand hangs down like a giant claw. In common with the similarly positioned doctor in Dürer's *Lugano* he affects a gruesome appearance. Some of the other doctors gesticulate wildly and expressively, hands splayed, eyes and mouths wide. The piece presents an air of

⁵⁸ Bialostocki, "Durer's 'Christ among the Doctors.'" 20-21.

⁵⁹ See Shaw Pooler, *Leonardo Da Vinci's Treatise of Painting*, 248-9.

⁶⁰ I am grateful to Ursula Stunnus at the Hamburger Kunsthalle whose help was invaluable to my research.

⁶¹ As explicitly portrayed in George Cruikshank's illustrations for *Oliver Twist*. The established characteristics are consistently re-presented on stage and in film, especially the performance by Ron Moody who is thought to set the standard in Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* (1960).

cacophonous disorder, one which threatens to overwhelm the boy and simultaneously sets him apart from the company. In common with the Lugano, the hands have prominence as they do in other disputation paintings, although unlike the case with *The Finding* where almost every figure's hands are purposefully prominent, some figures are shown without hands displayed.

Jesus is the central figure in the Menzel drawing. He is depicted as pointing among the throng of wild and aggressive looking doctors. I was further struck by the appearance of the Jesus figure whose red curly hair, with its nimbus, adopting a standing position and wearing a distinctive belt was reminiscent of *The Finding's* portrayal. Mary and Joseph enter the scene as they do in *The Finding*, from the right-hand side. Mary's stance and dress resemble those in *The Finding*. There are scrolls lying around, abandoned. Present also are the customary pillars and a lectern. I notice additionally, the preponderance of reds and oranges in the colour scheme, and in particular (as noted in my own words) "a reddish shadowy figure in the background." Jesus is clothed in a bright white tunic adding to the overall glow surrounding him. There does not appear to be a figure who addresses the beholder in this work.

In common with Holman Hunt, Menzel had made a point of using Jewish models whom he recruited from his hometown of Breslau. Unlike *The Finding* however, Menzel depicted the figures as contemporary nineteenth-century Jews rather than adopt a semblance of biblical authenticity. Moreover, this was apparent to one reviewer who commented that the picture "really smells like garlic."⁶² There is a question arising concerning the reason for undertaking the scene in such a way. It is one thing to allude to contemporary concerns within an artwork depicting the past, quite another to reconfigure the temporal aspects of a biblical scene so that they conflate the Temple elders of antiquity with nineteenth-century Jews. The figure of Jesus, dressed in a tunic, appears to conform with conventional expectations of an orientalist biblical figure. Menzel draws upon a set of expectations and givens to make his picture. His conflation of biblical past and stereotypical present contributes to a curious reimagining of the Lukan story. Jesus becomes a constant figure pictured as if timeless yet also somehow from the past, amidst "doctors" from the contemporary present. Along with the biblical appearance of the Jesus figure, it is the symbolic collapse of the temporal into a notion of timelessness that is a noteworthy aspect of

⁶² Deshmukh writes that for viewers, there was no mistaking the demeanour of the figures as anything but contemporary Jewish people. Deshmukh, *Max Liebermann: Modern Art and Modern Germany*, 82.

the painting's orientalisering of Jews. It recalls a similar quality in *The Finding* discussed already and it is a point to which I shall return in due course.

Marion Deshmukh compares the Menzel work with that of Max Liebermann's later *Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel* (1879) (Fig. 76). This was an attempt to render the scene in a modern unidealized manner. The Liebermann Temple painting is also housed in The Hamburger Kunsthalle, and in common with *The Finding*, is considered to be a significant holding in the collection. Liebermann, a Jewish artist, had alluded to the "caricaturing" of Jewish people in Menzel's *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel*, and sought to address this.⁶³ He had familiarised himself with further disputation paintings, for example, Rembrandt's and Matthias Stomer's renditions of the scene are cited as influences upon Liebermann. Liebermann's rationale for his painting and the handling of the composition, form one element for discussion. The other, concerns the subsequent reactions to the painting's exhibition. The episode forms an important backdrop to the examination of this painting and will be addressed further in the next chapter.⁶⁴ At this point however, I wish to consider the properties of the Liebermann painting.

Max Liebermann *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel* (1879)

As with my treatment of *The Finding*, I spent time in the gallery observing and making notes on the Liebermann painting.⁶⁵ I also engaged in discussions and made drawings from reproductions of the work (Figs. 33,34,35).⁶⁶ The drawings highlighted for me the loose impressionistic mark-making and how boundaries were blurred between forms. There never seemed to be a well-defined place where a line could be unequivocally drawn. I further drew from this that that Liebermann was hesitant about some of the artistic choices, for example, elements of the composition appeared awkward. Prior to viewing the painting in its gallery setting, I had formed the opinion that in contrast with *The Finding*, Liebermann's intention was to nullify the painting's Jewishness in order to forge a more universal religious statement. Upon viewing the painting, the brightness of the *tallit* (prayer shawls) appeared to be the most prominent aspect of the work, which was not as apparent in reproductions. This parallels *The Finding's* attempts at authenticity by foregrounding something religiously

⁶³ Deshmukh, *Max Liebermann: Modern Art and Modern Germany*, 83.

⁶⁴ The Hamburger Kunsthalle held a themed exhibition focusing on the scandal in 2010.

⁶⁵ *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel* (1879). The title board stated: Acquired in 1911; sold 1941; acquired again with funds from the *Campe'sche Historische Kunststiftung and Kulturatiftung der Länder* 1989.

⁶⁶ As with my work on *The Finding*, I discussed the painting with other in a variety of unplanned situations. Notable exceptions include the meeting I had with Marion Koch at the Hamburger Kunsthalle in September 2017, and the archival research session with Ursula Stunnes, also at the Hamburger Kunsthalle in April 2018.

Jewish and as such, it presents a radical departure from many disputation paintings that pre-exist it.

The application of paint is impressionistic with rich scumbling on the left-hand side depicting the spare *tallit* under the lectern. (The paint has now cracked slightly) The colour palette was reminiscent of Dutch painting which is in keeping with Liebermann's artistic interests. He had spent time in Amsterdam making preparatory studies for his Jesus painting, additionally, he was a keen follower of Rembrandt's work. The picture was painted at a similar time to the *Net Meidens* (Net Menders) (1887-89), which also reflects a similar palette and paint handling. The Temple painting shows a foreshortening on the right-hand side where the perspective is compressed. I noticed that there are more figures on the right-hand side. There are no scrolls visible, which is in keeping with the modern Jewish practice of housing them securely within the synagogue ark. However, as is customary in the genre, books are a prominent feature.

The figure of Jesus is positioned on the left-hand side of the picture in front of two seated doctors, forming a trio. The trio are illuminated in keeping with an impressionistic rather than a classical style. The impressionist technique and setting echo Liebermann's support for modernization and Jewish religious reform. It is apparent from Liebermann's preparatory drawings, that he struggled to resolve the whole composition of the painting. Preparatory drawings suggest frequent changes to details and difficulties in resolving the picture's layout. The finished painting remains unresolved and retains an awkwardness not apparent in Liebermann's other works. To illustrate, the large figure to the right-hand side of the painting dominates the scene in many ways. His presence takes up a large proportion of the composition, almost one fifth of the space in a vertical shape. It is apparent that Liebermann struggled to satisfactorily place this figure and the drawings suggest a number of changes made along the way signifying some dissatisfaction and difficulty. The figure's stance is awkward with an unnatural hunched posture with his head turned awkwardly to face the child Jesus. In earlier drawings this figure is depicted wearing a top hat, however Liebermann altered this to show him wearing a *streimal* hat, one that is customarily worn by very religious (often *Chasidic*) Jews.

Within the painting, Judaism is represented in various nineteenth-century designations. This can be seen in the range of doctors present, from orthodoxy, exemplified by the *Chasid* on the right-hand side (wearing the *streimal* hat) to more liberal, less formally attired figures. Other, religious *Chassidim* wearing traditional orthodox dress are present but

peripheral to the main action. Only the *Chassidic* doctors wear head coverings. Others are shown with a lack of head covering such as the two figures who discuss with Jesus. Two seated doctors meet Jesus's head height. The customary approach in disputation paintings which places Jesus in an elevated position makes this noteworthy. Given Liebermann's secular status and loose modernist painting technique this might further be seen as emblematic of tolerance and acceptance. The synagogue setting appears contemporary. The spiral banister forms the *mechitzah* (partition) of the ladies' gallery, which offers a pictorial solution for positioning Mary. Joseph is pictured on the other side (in black). The scene is religiously inaccurate for the first-century however, mixed clergy apart, in keeping with the nineteenth.⁶⁷

The setting reflects a quietly radical shift from church to synagogue. Colloquially referred to as a *shul* it is, like the German *Schule* a place of learning, discussion, and debate. The world suggested here is one of Talmudic argument – integral to Jewish thinking and life. In many ways the disputation represented reflects the dispute within and between denominations of Judaism and not between Christianity and Judaism. Liebermann's scene presents a discussion which is intense and engaged. The atmosphere is calm rather than animated. The hands allude slightly to the idea of counterpointing but there is no *pointing* as such in this painting. Hands however are an expressive feature, in keeping with the tradition of disputation paintings. On reflection, there is a curious correlation with Leonardo's *Trattato*.

*“And if you make him standing, make him incline his chest and head somewhat towards the throng, whom you should represent as silent and attentive, all looking the orator in the face and making admiring gestures. And show the mouth of some old man marvelling at the opinions he has heard, with its corners dragged downwards amid his flabby jowls. His eyebrows will be raised where they meet, making many furrows in his forehead. Some will be seated, with their fingers clasped around their weary knees. Others will be cross-legged, with a hand placed on their knee which cups the elbow of the other arm, whose hand in turn, might support the chin of some stooped and aged man.”*⁶⁸

Jesus stands and inclines his chest towards two seated doctors. The seated doctor on the left has his hands clasped on his knee, loose enough to spread the hands so that all fingers are shown. His forehead is furrowed, his eyebrows are raised, and his jowls are “flabby.” The second doctor supports his chin with this right hand. All are looking admirably at Jesus as

⁶⁷ I am grateful to Marion Koch for her helpful remarks on the Liebermann work in this respect, and to Dr Kristina Calvert for facilitating our discussion. I am additionally grateful to Alex Calvert for assisting with translation.

⁶⁸ Kemp, *Leonardo on Painting*, 149.

orator. My original notes recall that the expressions on the two engaged elders are “captivated” by the boy. The scene confirms the attempt by Liebermann to re-assert the friendliness of the Lukan scene so as not to make it one of confrontation like *The Finding*. Furthermore, Liebermann made no attempt to orientalise the scene. On the contrary, he went out of his way to avoid overt Jewishness. As Katrin Boskamp has shown, in an attempt to shed the idea of his models “looking Jewish” (itself problematic) Liebermann altered Jesus’s facial features in both his preparatory drawings and the painting itself.⁶⁹ It is possible to detect the overpainting of Jesus’s feet and the lengthening of his robe (Fig. 77). Thus, Liebermann can be seen to have enhanced the presence of Judaism but played down Jewishness. It could be argued that his painting’s Jewish presence was problematised by Liebermann who sought to ameliorate difference. However, as I will come to in chapter six, it was Liebermann’s own Jewishness that the critics subsequently problematised.

5.4 Conclusion: The Finding as a Disputation Painting

The Liebermann, having been completed almost two decades later than *The Finding*, does not inform Holman Hunt’s *Finding* so much as point to the discourse of disputation that informs both artists. We are asking how did Holman Hunt know how to paint his *Finding* picture? The question directs us to think about relationships between works of art and the iconographic attributes they share. *The Finding* conforms to many of the characteristics I have identified in each of the examples examined above. There is the Temple setting, complete with pillars, scrolls, and differentiated teachers or rabbis. Age and infirmity as indications of negativity are associated with Judaism which is conceived by Holman Hunt as superseded by Christianity. Mary and Joseph’s presence, with Mary somewhat foregrounded, is a further aspect, as is the inclusion of two figures pointing with one counting the points of a debate. *The Finding*’s confrontational stance sets up the picture to conform to the notion of disputation as we understand it. This is done with the deployment of the two distinct “groups,” the blind rabbi, and underscored by the critical descriptions of the rabbis supplied by Holman Hunt and his associate F.G. Stephens in the pamphlet given to viewers at exhibition.

We have covered much ground in this chapter beginning with an examination of the Lukan text and its intention to root the child Jesus in his Jewish context. I demonstrated the discrepancy between the text and the many art works that purport to portray it. The genre has

⁶⁹ Katrin Boskamp, *Studien zum Frühwerk von Max Liebermann*, Hildesheim: Olms, 1994, cited in Deshmukh, *Max Liebermann: Modern Art and Modern Germany*, 80.

identifiable characteristics derived from within and outside the text and customarily places Christians and Jews in opposition to, and differentiated from, one another. I conclude that whilst deviating from the broad intentions behind the Lukan text (although not completely) Holman Hunt nevertheless, does conform with an artistic tradition in his *Finding* painting. Firstly, he conforms to a long tradition of depicting Jews in Christian art more generally. Secondly, he conforms with a genre of art which Christian iconographers frequently refer to as *the disputation*. The matter is not merely about how Jews are “represented” (although that is certainly relevant) I ask, to what extent does the *idea of disputation* as it has come down to us over time, inform the painting? That involves a deeper entrenchment of the concept of disputation to which I now turn.

Chapter 6 – Disputation

*Tradidit Deus mundum disputationi.*¹

*God made all things good in their time, And gave the world to disputing of them...*²

*He hath made everything beautiful in its time; also He hath set the world in their heart...*³

Introduction

We have seen from the previous chapter that in order for Holman Hunt to know how to paint his *Finding* painting there needed to be in existence a genre of paintings, loosely labelled *Christ Among the Doctors*. I re-categorised the genre as one of disputation paintings. because the subject of such paintings relied more upon the historic Jewish-Christian dispute than the Lukan text it purports to portray. This chapter will consider what is understood more broadly by *disputation* and how it helps to address the question concerning Holman Hunt's knowledge of how to paint *The Finding* picture.

The chapter is organised into three parts. I begin with an overview of the scholarly disputation locating it as a site for historical Jewish-Christian disagreement and debate. Additionally I touch upon recent scholarship in identifying the practice as something that finds its way into modern culture in a variety of forms. I then proceed to address key aspects of disputation practice with a view to establishing the wider ramifications for the Jewish-Christian dispute. All of this is important for understanding the discourse of disputation which is discussed in the second part of this chapter. Here I set out my understanding of this discourse which I believe plays out via works of art and thus informs *The Finding*. I drew attention to artworks portraying the disputation in the previous chapter. In part III of this chapter I move to consider how Jewish artists addressed the discourse in painting, whether or not by engaging with the Lukan scene.

We saw in the previous chapter how Holman Hunt's engagement with art from the past forms a critical response in *The Finding*. In artistic and professional terms, this is

¹ Inscription, *The Allegories of the Sciences*, Old Mathematical Hall, Prague: Oulíková 2006, 35-36, cited in Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 306-307.

² Ecclesiastes 3.11, Wycliffe Bible, cited in Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 307.

³ Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 3.11, *The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text: A New Translation*, (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1916), 989. A later translation reads: "He brings everything to pass precisely at its time; He also puts eternity in their mind, but without man ever guessing, from first to last, all the things that God brings to pass." Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler eds., *The Jewish Study Bible*, Jewish Publication Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1610.

exemplified in his reworking of iconic renaissance artworks into a modern statement piece. In religious terms, he forges a new Protestant interpretation of picturing Jesus. Furthermore, combining both artistic *and* religious elements, he achieves a modern reworking of the *Christ Among the Doctors* or disputation scene itself. What is less apparent however, is in the worldview both represented and constructed in disputation paintings. This chapter shows that it is the template of the scholarly disputation that exemplifies this worldview so effectively.

I have already established that as *The Finding* is part of a lineage of *Christ Among the Doctors* artworks there are clear indications of Holman Hunt's awareness of the generic tradition. It is possible to note the inclusion of its associated motifs such as the pointing/counterpointing gesture.⁴ The genre is thus connected to historical scholarly and religious disputations which are, as we will discover below, intimately connected with the enduring Jewish-Christian debate. This attachment is further noticeable when we recognise that the subject-matter of a given artwork is a *constructed hostility between two parties* rather than an encounter taking place within a Jewish religious tradition. At no point in the Lukan pericope does the text position any actor as one of two distinct religious or ethnic factions as many artworks insinuate. Therefore, if close correlation between the Gospel and the artwork is the purpose of disputation paintings, many would fall short of expectations. We might speculate that such correlation was not the intention behind many disputation artworks. The point becomes more relevant as we consider how the discourse is manifested in art that bypasses the Lukan scene, examples of which will be addressed in what follows. In addressing the question of how Holman Hunt knew how to create his *Finding* picture, we are concerned to understand Holman Hunt's cultural inheritance rather than to locate a source of information from which he derived knowledge. The scholarly disputation therefore is not a source, rather it is a worldview into which Holman Hunt (and his painting) is stitched.

It can be seen that St. Ambrose's fourth-century sermon alluding to "disputation" directs perceptions of the Temple scene away from the biblical world of Lukan Jewishness to the European public sphere where Jewish-Christian encounters played out in competitive disputes. These events were at times, hostile.⁵ The frequently public nature of disputation was an important aspect of its practice, and the implications of its spectacular properties are directly relevant to my thesis and will be addressed further below. What follows is a selective

⁴ Alternatively, given that some works are in relief or sculptural, we could easily refer to them as artworks.

⁵ Richard Stracke alluded Ambrose's sermon in an earlier version of his page on *Christ Among the Doctors* iconography and in a private communication with the author. [Christ and the Doctors: The Iconography \(christianiconography.info\)](http://christianiconography.info)

examination of the disputation with a view to setting the disputation painting genre, and therefore *The Finding*, into context. This takes the form of a wide-ranging thematic inquiry rather than a detailed chronological survey. Inevitably this forms something of a broad impression drawn from recent scholarly research. However, this apparent sketch of the disputation will point to its own likeness within *The Finding*. The historical sedimentation of both Jewish-Christian and scholarly disputation imparts crucial knowledge to Holman Hunt enabling his *Finding* painting not only to come into being but to be intelligible. At this point we pause from our analysis of *The Finding* to explore the phenomenon of disputation further, after which we will be in a better position to understand the ramifications for *The Finding* and the discourse of disputation.

6.1 Scholarly Disputation

The history and development of religious and scholarly disputations has been addressed widely in scholarship and continues to be an area interest for researchers. Recent publications by Olga Weijers, Alex Novikoff, John Martin, David Berger, Anna Sapir Abulafia, Hyam Maccoby, Daniel Lasker, Richard Lim (and others) have explored various aspects of the disputation including its history, uses and impact, and of necessity, the Jewish-Christian debate.⁶ Both Abulafia and Novikoff examine the disputation as part of the medieval cultural world of the West situated between 1050-1300 referred to as the long twelfth century or twelfth-century renaissance. However, the temporal range is considerably wider, as forms of disputation have been identified as playing a significant cultural role in Classical Antiquity. For example, it was then a part of daily life in terms of juridical procedures and more generally as an aspect of democracy. Aristotle succinctly describes the disputation as comprising a “dialectical duel debated in public.”⁷ He set out rules for dialectical disputation in Book VIII of *Topics* one of his six works on logic known as the *Organon*. Weijers writes that Aristotle’s philosophical discussions accord with the scholastic

⁶ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (London: University of California Press, 1995), David Berger, *Persecution, Polemic and Dialogue: Essays in Jewish-Christian Relations* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1995), Daniel J Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007), Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (London: Vallentine Mitchell & Co. Ltd., 1982, reprinted 1996). John Martin, “Dramatized Disputations: Late Medieval German Dramatizations of Jewish-Christian Religious Disputations, Church Policy, and Social Climates,” *Medieval Encounters*, 8, 2-3, (2002): 209-227.

⁷ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 30. In public could mean in front of a small group of students.

method of disputation with its aim of a search for truth.⁸ What is meant by truth is a point for discussion, and we will return to that below.

In terms of the substance of disputation, Olga Weijers writes that each academic discipline within the medieval schools developed its own disputation format. Techniques such as rhetoric, *disputatio*, debate, and others were at the disposal of participants depending upon context and convention.⁹ Accordingly, it is not possible to talk about one kind of *disputatio* or disputation. Moreover, as Weijers points out, the words dialogue and disputation are often confused by historians.¹⁰ Whilst precise definitions are interesting and meaningful, what is important for my thesis is to recognise the disputation's crucial presence as a developing form of discourse, one that takes the creation and affirmation of knowledge as its central concern. Additionally, the visual signs and symbols that have emerged from its practice subsequently inform artworks depicting the Lukan scene. Examples include pointing gestures, the presence of books and in the case of the Jewish-Christian debate, key signifiers in the form of particular hats and clothing.

Abulafia's focus on Jewish-Christian relations is illuminating with regard to the enduring debate between the two faith traditions. Her examination of what she terms the Christianisation of reason goes to the heart of the Jewish-Christian debate.¹¹ Yoram Hazony has also addressed related matters especially with regard to both biblical truth and reason, discussed below. Suffice to say, disputation was common practice in a variety of historical contexts. Surviving literary records of actual and fictitious disputations inform us about the development of thought concerning philosophical truth, scripture, theology and more. Alex Novikoff's more recent scholarship tells of the evolution of disputation from a university teaching method to become a feature of the arts and forms of entertainment. As Novikoff has set out, the reach of the disputation ranged from antiquity to the early modern era, and from problem solving processes, university teaching and learning techniques to the structuring of

⁸ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 23-44.

⁹ The range of dispute techniques is covered extensively by Olga Weijers in *A History of Disputation Techniques*, also: Olga Weijers, "The Various Kinds of Disputation in the Faculties of Arts, Theology and Law (ca. 1200-1400)" in: *Disputatio (1200-1800)*, ed. M. Gindhart, U. Kundert, (Germany: De Gruyter, 2010), 21-31., "The Development of the Disputation between the Middle Ages and Renaissance", in: *Continuities and Disruptions between the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. C. Burnett, J. Meirinhos, J. Hamesse, (Belgium: Louvain-la Neuve, 2008), 139-150. "The Medieval Disputatio", in: *Traditions of Controversy*, ed. M. Dascal, H-L. Chang, (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publication Company, 2007), 141-149. This represents a small selection of her publications on the subject.

¹⁰ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 45.

¹¹ Many of the anxieties regarding Jewish opposition to Christian tenets of faith concerned questions that many Christian scholars were also grappling with concerning doctrine. Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century*, Chapter 6, *Christianized Reason at Work*, 77-93.

musical forms. Evidence suggests that art forms such as architecture, poetry, and drama can additionally trace their roots back to disputation practices, and some forms of disputation themselves were influenced by art forms such as debate poetry.¹² Furthermore, the understanding of this cultural interweaving forms a helpful conduit for the recognition of relevant visual motifs and references within artworks. Such references are recognisable and comprehensible because disputations played a significant part in the evolution of western intellectual thought and the development of critical thinking since antiquity. Novikoff suggests that the study of the scholastic disputation offers the historian a useful paradigm of cultural history.¹³

As might be expected, medieval writing is replete with comment concerning of Jews and Judaism and the Jewish-Christian debate is conspicuous within records of medieval Christian thought. Novikoff explains that Christian identity and teaching was positioned “in contradistinction to Judaism” regarding the religious as an obsolete yet functioning witness to the truth of Christianity.¹⁴ Not only were there disputations between Jewish and Christian (and other) parties, but some Christians held disputations with fellow Christians standing-in for Jews. This is evident from surviving records of dialogues.¹⁵ Not only did the practice crystalize Christian theology for participants, it enabled the rehearsal and honing of ideas for future inter-religious disputations.¹⁶ Sometimes, one disputed with oneself as a method of constructing or refining an argument. By means of illustration, Novikoff draws attention to Peter Alfonsi who, as a convert to Christianity from Judaism (1106), is pictured disputing with his *former* self, Moses Sephardi (Fig. 78).¹⁷ In common with many portrayals of Jews at this time, Alfonsi as “Moses” is pictured in a religious manuscript wearing a “Jewish hat” and as “Peter” he points with one finger, signifying the singular strength of his reasoning. The framing of the pillars in the background recalls the pillars in many disputation paintings of

¹² I refer here to late medieval poetry in a dialogic style emphasizing emotion and contrasting binaries.

¹³ Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 4, 7.

¹⁴ He says: “From both a theological and a literary perspective, and undoubtedly a psychological one as well, Jews constituted the dialogical “other” par excellence, a construct in the very fabric of medieval Christian identity.” Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 172-173.

¹⁵ Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth Century*, 77.

¹⁶ Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth Century*, 77-79.

¹⁷ This refers to Alfonsi’s work of literature around 1110, *Dialogi contra Iudaeos*. As Novikoff points out, seventy-nine manuscripts of this work survive, “making it a veritable bestseller by medieval standards.” (A footnote explains that survival of a mere six copies would indicate success in this respect) The format of conversational dialogue was method of choice used in the work. The intention was to affect conversion to Christianity in readers. Moreover, Novikoff derives from the work’s introduction that it was further designed to function as a handbook for facilitating disputations. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 181-3 and fn. 37, 270.

the Lukan scene with the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple including the focus of this thesis, *The Finding*.

These “public verbal competitions” as Richard Lim has described disputations, were a significant aspect of intellectual and religious thought in the medieval period and beyond.¹⁸ Disputations were woven throughout teaching and learning activities within the university and comprised motifs and patterns that enabled enduring forms of dialogue and a variety of art forms to flourish out in the wider sphere. In order to understand the special significance this has for Jewish-Christian relations and subsequently our understanding of *The Finding* and its worldview, we need to delve further into the practice. As the subject of scholarly disputations is vast, I have identified areas of particular relevance and have grouped these under four broad headings to which I now turn. They are: Debate, Truth and Reason, Authority and Education and Spectacle.

Debate.

As Weijers has amply established, there are many forms of disputation.¹⁹ Notwithstanding its variety and wide temporal and geographical scope, the disputation consistently kept the characteristic of a “debate” between two (or more) persons or parties adopting contrasting pro and contra positions. The particular quality to note for the purposes of this thesis, is the institution of two parties in a competitive argument designed to identify a winner with a view to establishing truth about a proposition that would be invariably placed on record. The language of battle or the duel results in the requirement to defend one’s thesis against the other who attempts to bring about a contradiction. One format included debates arising from the *lectio* (reading) of texts, leading to questions and points put to argument.²⁰ In the case of Jewish-Christian disputations, hermeneutical readings of scripture and biblical texts formed the basis for argument. How the truth is determined concerning for example, the messiahship of Jesus or the functions of the Talmud, were grist to the disputation mill.

To what extent the Jewish teaching and learning event described in Luke correlates with the disputation as originating in Greek antiquity is open to question. Daniel Lasker tells us that Christian missionary activity was not the only catalyst for disputation as is customarily assumed.²¹ Furthermore, Jews invariably enjoyed debating and dialogue, and at

¹⁸ Lim, *Public Disputation*, preface, x.

¹⁹ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 149-175.

²⁰ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 85.

²¹ Daniel J. Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages* (1977; repr., Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007).

times instigated opportunities to attack Christianity. David Berger also makes the point that Christian polemical literature often responded to Jewish theological challenges.²² Moreover, the Talmud, itself the focus of many Christian disputations, is a record of Jewish arguments concerning commentaries on scripture in what can be seen as a Jewish history and tradition of debate and dispute.²³ It is clear that Jews took disputations seriously; and notwithstanding the encouragement to debate to win if participating, they were at times obliged to lose the debate in order to guarantee survival within the dominant community. By means of example, Hyam Maccoby has provided a comprehensive summary of three renowned Jewish Christian disputations, namely, Paris (1240), Barcelona (1263) and Tortosa (1413-14).²⁴ According to Maccoby's analysis, the Paris disputation was less of a disputation and more of an interrogation concerning alleged anti-Christian elements in the Talmud. Only the Barcelona disputation was conducted with any semblance of fairness, meaning that the Jewish side was able to make a case for its argument. Yet even here, the chief Jewish participant, Moses Nachmanides complained that he was not able to put questions to his Christian counterparts, he could only answer the questions put to him by his Christian opponents.²⁵ The Tortosa dispute was instigated by the Avignon pope Benedict XIII, who commissioned a Jewish convert to Christianity, Jeronimo de Santa Fe to conduct it. The dispute lasted over a year and was intended to be a persuasive attempt to press home the errors of Judaism and thus oblige the conversion of Jews. Both Christian and Hebrew records demonstrate that the Tortosa disputation was conducted in a spirit of fear for the families of the Jewish participants who were bullied and intimidated at length. Maccoby writes that they demonstrated "great courage" and powers of argument under great stress. As Freedman writes, at Tortosa, there were no new arguments or insights presented. Eventually, the Jewish side was worn down after a year with only one break in the proceedings. Freedman writes that the process was an exhausting and impoverishing ordeal for the Jewish delegates. The requirement to abandon their trades for a year meant that some decided to convert to Christianity "out of desperation."²⁶

As recalled in accounts of the Paris disputation of 1240, a chief focus of Christian criticism was the Talmud. The Talmud is a form of intergenerational dialogic debate.

²² Berger, *Persecution, Polemic and Dialogue*.

²³ Harry Freedman writes in his preface that "...the Church regarded the Talmud as the obstacle which prevented them from converting the Jews" in: *The Talmud, a Biography: Banned, Censored and Burned. The Book They Couldn't Suppress* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), ix.

²⁴ Maccoby, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*.

²⁵ Maccoby, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 12.

²⁶ Freedman, *The Talmud, a Biography*, 131.

Frequently, Talmudic dialogues reach no conclusion, being more concerned with the process rather than the outcome of any debate. No “winners” are declared within or without the text. Furthermore, Hershey Friedman reminds us that one’s Talmudic partner (the person with whom one debates a portion of the Talmud) was typically one’s “best friend” who participated in a form of “adversarial collaboration” through constructive argumentation. This included (at times) fierce insults and rebukes.²⁷ This was never intended to be taken personally and the process was designed to teach people how to manage conflicting outlooks. Notwithstanding the use of vibrant language, this clearly differs from the performative, competitive nature of the scholarly disputation with its more linear trajectory and finality of outcome. Furthermore, the Talmud itself takes account of the potential for heated disputes to lead to public humiliation. It is forbidden to publicly humiliate someone, and the Babylonian Talmud regards doing so as tantamount to murder.²⁸ There is an identifiable climate of debate and reasoning that permeated the cultural worlds of Judaism and Christianity and yet there is no certainty that both parties constructed their ideas of truth and reason in the same manner or within a common framework of understanding. Let us now turn to consider this aspect.

Truth and Reason

Scholastic disputation, with its classical Greek origins, was underpinned by a philosophical notion of truth predicated upon rational enquiry and the use of deductive reasoning as a tool for intellectual enquiry. Moreover, the disputation was concerned with “truth,” removing doubt and the correcting of untruths. In understanding the disputation as a means for exploring and determining truth, consideration must be given to what is meant when we speak of “truth” especially given that so much inquiry via disputation related to a notion of biblical truth. This raises questions concerning the nature of scripture as Jews and Christians conceptualize what is referred to as the Bible in quite different ways.²⁹ Because the matter of biblical truth impacts upon readings of *The Finding* as itself a form of biblical exegesis, in addition to our understanding of extant knowledge required for the creation of

²⁷ Friedman writes that the Babylonian scholars in particular were renowned for their insults, as recorded in the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 24a) They were described as *hoblim* (“injurers”) whereas Israeli scholars were *noam* (“pleasant”). Hershey H. Friedman, “Talmudic Arguments: The Use of Insults, Reprimands, Rebukes and Curses as Part of the Disputation Process”, n.d. Published on Academia.edu and retrieved 8th September 2017. www.academia.edu/26250387/Talmudic_Arguments_The_Use_of_Insults_Reprimands_Rebukes_and_Curses_as_Part_of_the_Disputation_Process.

²⁸ Babylonian Talmud, *Bava Metzia*, 58b. Cited in Friedman, *The Talmud, a Biography*, 50.

²⁹ It is not really possible to talk of “the” Bible. The Hebrew Scriptures are construed as the Old Testament in Christian Bible. Additionally, its books are organised in a different sequence to that of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Old Testament is therefore differentiated from the New Testament and albeit to lesser extent from the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Finding, this matter is worth further brief exploration as there is quite a lot at stake in this matter.

Yoram Hazony poses the question of truth in the Hebrew scriptures. Is it correct to assume that the Hebrew Bible understands truth in the same manner as Greek philosophy? This is a relevant question if Jewish and Christian parties are to debate the matter of scriptures that themselves present concepts of truth in contrariant ways. Because the Hebrew scriptures are gathered in as part of the Christian Bible, there has developed a conception of them as merely forming the first part of a *combined* work of religious revelation. This prevents readers from approaching them as a work of reason which Hazony contends they are. He identifies a reason/revelation dichotomy emerging from strands of Christian thought with its origins in the burgeoning world of the Greek New Testament. He notes that the Hebrew scriptures were composed some five centuries earlier than the construct of “reason versus revelation” was applied, and moreover they were written in an entirely different language. We are taught that Greek wisdom emanates from *reason*. This suggests that the knowledge derived from, say, Parmenides’s vision to be understood as a work of *reason*. This is set against the writings of for example, Jeremiah in the Hebrew scriptures to be categorized as *revelation* on the solitary grounds that the text is Jewish (and thus religious) and so beyond the bounds of reason.³⁰

Additionally, there is the problem of translation. Hazony proffers the example of the Hebrew word *lev* which is often construed as “heart” when it is more fruitfully translated as the ability to reason and think. Not only does this alter the perception of meaning in translation, it conceals the reason (as in *ratio* or rationality) at the core of the Hebrew scriptures.³¹ Although definitions of truth are complex, in Western thought, a common understanding of what is true emanates from the concept of truth as “agreement with reality” or truth-as-correspondence, and relates to what is said in speech.³²

³⁰ The modern research university is modern purveyor of this reason/revelation distinction by assuming that the Bible’s religious associations with its stories of God speaking (and acting) render it a work of fictional superstition. Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, 1-27.

³¹ Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, 25, 193-218.

³² Hazony maintains that the Hebrew Scriptures conceptualise truth as a quality of objects rather than speech. He provides examples. Abraham’s servant travels along a “true road” (*derech emet*); Moses is instructed to seek “true men” (*anshei emet*) and Jeremiah says that God planted Israel as a “true seed” (*zera emet*). The question is not whether Abraham’s servant travelled along a gravel path or a “true road” or if the road itself is capable of truth, nor is the question regarding true men concerning veracity of sex. In the modern era, we understand this idea of truth as reliability, as in the case of the expression, “true love” or a “true friend.”

Hazony claims that the Bible reveals what is true as “that which proves, through time and circumstance, to be what it *ought*.”³³ Sometimes, the scriptures advance ideas of a general nature in what he describes as “instructional narrative.” Unlike the New Testament which is underpinned by the notion of “what happened” (Jesus was born of a virgin, he rose from the dead, and so on) the Hebrew scriptures are more concerned to establish “what always happens.”³⁴ The consequences of actions are not readily apparent within a singular pericope and it is often much later in a narrative sequence when a dramatic episode is resolved.³⁵ As Hazony reminds us, the New Testament places emphasis on its juridic nature with its talk of witnesses and testifying to the facts. The use of the word “Testament” strengthens the metaphor further with its etymological root in the Latin *testari*, “to serve as a witness.”³⁶ Furthermore the use of the word “Gospel” meaning “good news” is redolent of reportage. The ultimate impression bequeathed to us is one of a sole narrative purpose transmitted through the Bible and coming to fruition in the New Testament. However, contrary to such enduring assumptions, there is no singular vision in the Hebrew scriptures. On the contrary, Hazony characterises the Hebrew Bible as “as an artful compendium, whose purpose is not – and never was – to present a single viewpoint.”³⁷ It is the combined Bible with the New Testament in the ascendancy that was the inheritance of the twelfth-century.

Authority and Education

In functional terms, the scholarly disputation was a means for the display of authority as a property of professional status as Doctors, Masters, Bachelors and students within the institution. Masters and Doctors were obliged to organise several disputations every week as part of their teaching duties. Naturally, what survives is a fraction of what took place in times past.³⁸ The final written versions of disputations were often compiled by Masters. These would be more tightly structured and crafted than the oral events. Not all accounts of disputations represent actual events, and it is not always possible to identify this. The format became a method of presenting polemic written in dialogic form, becoming what Novikoff

³³ Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, 202. (My emphasis)

³⁴ Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, 79. (Citing Leon Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) 10, 54).

³⁵ Judith Klitsner also refers to the complexities of biblical narrative referencing and claims that many biblical stories mine and *undermine* one another and furthermore, do so in a subversive manner. Judith Klitsner, *Subversive Sequels in the Bible: How Biblical Stories Mine and Undermine Each Other* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2009).

³⁶ Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, 51. Hazony goes on to highlight the words of Paul who emphatically underscores the importance of witnessing and testimony.

³⁷ Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, 41.

³⁸ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 129-135.

describes as “polemical weaponry.”³⁹ The written-up dialogue further has the effect of securing for posterity the correct understanding and authority of disputed texts. Additionally, disputation formed an important aspect of the examination system. To achieve a Bachelor’s degree, students were required to undergo a series of special disputations, and Bachelors were expected to undergo both private and public disputations in order to attain Master status. Final examinations and ceremonies also included disputations.⁴⁰ The most apparent legacy still practised in the present day is the PhD thesis and *viva voce* as a recognisable descendant of the disputation process.⁴¹ Weijers describes oral disputations as lively and animated exchanges, with the aim of teaching students to think critically about real problems of a given academic discipline. They were in this sense a form of collective research and often attracted large audiences. The educational, scholarly and religious institutions that hosted them formed (and continues to form) the intellectual heart of society, concerned as they are with the creation and establishment of knowledge. Therefore, such institutions become authorities, having as-it-were, the final word on a subject until and unless successfully challenged.

The status of disputants was significant. Public religious disputations were seen as belonging to the realm of the *professional* disputer rather than the lay person because it was believed preferable. For example, John Martin writes that in the ninth-century bishop Agobard of Lyon was worried that “unlearned Christians” might convert to Judaism as a result of outcomes to religious disputations. In Agobard’s words, “It has reached the point that simple Christians say that Jews preach better to them than do our own elders.”⁴² Additionally, papal writings of twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries convey similar concerns, making the case that religious disputations were best left to professionals. This was assumed to be “priests, bishops, and church scholars on the Christian side and rabbis and scholars on the Jewish.”⁴³ Lay persons could even be punished for transgressing this ruling. There was some precedent for Agobard’s approach. Richard Lim identifies the event which ultimately gave rise to Tertullian’s (155 CE-220 CE) *Adversus Judaeos*.⁴⁴ The occasion was a public dispute in the late second or early third century between a Christian and a Jewish

³⁹ Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 225.

⁴⁰ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 135-6.

⁴¹ Weijers, *A History of Disputation Techniques*, 130.

⁴² From Agobard’s *De Insolentia Iudaeorum*, cited in Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*, University of California Press, 1999, 125-27, 133-34. 127. Cited in Martin, “Dramatized Disputations,” 210, fn. 4.

⁴³ Martin, “Dramatized Disputations,” 210.

⁴⁴ *Adversus Judaeos* can more effectively be understood as a literary genre as explained in Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 16-17.

proselyte.⁴⁵ In front of spectators and partisan supporters, the event continued for a full day. On that occasion, the Jewish convert was declared the winner by the judges. The subsequent outcome was in the form of a rematch consisting of a written, composed dialogue, the aforementioned *Adversus Judaeos*. The aim of this dialogue was to set the record straight from the Christian point of view. This is relevant to the discussion because the events in question reveal that the notion of *verus Israel* was centred around interpretation of biblical texts. Moreover, the outcome was determined by those with the *authority* to interpret such texts.⁴⁶

The ability to command textual authority confers jurisdiction over how texts are *officially* interpreted in addition to the undergirding of religious belief. This enables the means to assert authority. Moreover, I would contend that in the case of the Jewish-Christian dispute, the authority to assert power over textual meaning confers the means for Christians to objectify Jews. I propose that this process can be conceptualized in three parts. Firstly, in terms of biblical texts, Jews become re-presented as characters in the “Old Testament” rather than inheritors of Hebrew scripture and descendants of its writers. Subsequently, and secondly, what is authoritatively decreed about biblical characters is confused with and superimposed upon the contemporary Jewish person. This means we have the objectification of Jewish people within the event of a dispute which is then further objectified as spectacle. This is the aspect to which I now turn.

Spectacle

Perhaps the most pertinent aspect of disputation in terms of this thesis is its public spectacular element. Novikoff draws attention to the sense of drama inherent within the disputation event and identifies the twelfth-century as the time when debates became more public in nature. Disputation in most forms can be described as an event that is performed before an audience of onlookers. In the university setting, students and graduates formed the audience. When the disputation-as-event moved from the university into the public sphere its audiences comprised of lay persons which is likely to have altered the intellectual

⁴⁵ Richard Lim, *Public Disputation*, 4-5.

⁴⁶ Notwithstanding Agobard’s perceptions, Jewish polemical works discouraged religious debate with Christians as it was thought to be a fruitless and potentially perilous activity. Both Christian and Jewish leaders attempted to nullify the influence of the other; be these Jewish approaches to scripture on one hand, or Christian missionary activity on the other. In this respect, it was deemed necessary to maintain some distance between the two communities. Nevertheless, given that disputations were judged in terms of winners and losers, Jewish disputants were advised that every effort should be made to win. Martin, “Dramatized Disputations,” 211.

dynamics.⁴⁷ In addition to bringing matters of debate into the realm of the laity the disputation became a more entertaining event with less scholarly acumen attached. The increase in public debate coincided with a rise in liturgical drama drawing upon a range of biblical texts and motifs including for example, the Passion or Nativity plays. Novikoff writes, “The dramatization of Jewish-Christian debates is but one powerful example of how an intellectual discourse can give rise to its performance.”⁴⁸ The renowned Paris and Barcelona disputations are emblematic of the development from the sheltered activity of biblical exegesis to what Novikoff describes as “performance art amid a growing class of professional debaters and invited onlookers.”⁴⁹ The transition was inevitable given the popularity and frequency of the Jewish-Christian dispute and the fact that Jews were not allowed entry into Christian universities.

The disputation as a public spectacle took place in the market squares of towns and cities, and frequently, in front of Cathedrals. Cathedrals such as Reims and Bamberg featured carvings and statues in relief of the figures of blind Synagoga and Ecclesia, the feminine personifications of the Jewish Synagogue and the Christian Church, respectively (Figs. 81, 82). Nina Rowe’s recent study of Synagoga and Ecclesia sheds light upon the symbolism of the figures and the particular connection with disputation. The pair functioned as a key visual device in the portrayal of the enduring dispute between Judaism and Christianity. According to Rowe, they emerged out of long-standing artistic and rhetorical conventions, and in part from a tradition of debate literature.⁵⁰

The image of the defeated Synagoga complies with Saint Augustine’s directive to tolerate Jews founded upon a particular construction of Jewishness as submissive, impoverished and downtrodden. However, this did not correlate with how contemporary Jewish people actually lived. Jews were occupied with a variety of professions and trades from the religious and scholarly to the agricultural and craft based. There were Jewish moneylenders, however, not exclusively as Christians also participated in the financial trades.

⁴⁷ Novikoff acknowledges the difficulty in defining what is meant by “public sphere” however, we can make the point that this refers broadly to spaces and participants outside of the formal worlds of the university.

⁴⁸ Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 174.

⁴⁹ Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 221.

⁵⁰ Nina Rowe, *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City: Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century* (2011; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 41, 49, 51, 61. In addition to their appearance as carvings and sculptures in public spaces, they were frequently portrayed as present at Crucifixion scenes. Examples include Stained Glass, Cathedral of St. Steven, Bourges (1210-15) St. Martin, Landshut, *The Living Cross* (1452), Benvenuto Tisi da Garofalo, Allegory of Old and New Testaments (Fresco, 1523), and a German Psalter of 1260.

It was to be Jews who remained associated with moneylending however, and it became an enduring cultural motif. Within this context, Jews were not an impoverished community. Furthermore, with their own traditions of exegesis they did not conform to Augustine's conception of Jews as "carrying" the Holy books on behalf of Christianity.⁵¹ There was an increasing lacuna emerging between the reality of Jewish life in comparison to the role they were meant to perform in submission to Christianity. Accordingly, blind *Synagoga* formed a striking image reminding the public of the "correct" position of the Jew.

We may recall here that the blind *Synagoga* as a motif is alluded to in both Dürer's *Lugano* and *The Finding* in the form of the blind rabbi or doctor. This forms an extra layer in the inclusion of disputation imagery which is not confined to the appearance of hands pointing and the presence of books, nor to the Lukan narrative. Furthermore, it is worth recalling that we are concerned with the extant knowledge Holman Hunt needed to create his *Finding* painting, itself a great spectacle at the time of its exhibition and beyond. We recall that at its initial exhibition it was exhibited as a sole work, where throngs of people crowded the street to see it in London's German Gallery. I have already remarked of its dramatic and theatrical qualities and the staginess of its appearance. *The Finding* takes its place as a modern theological and hermeneutical work in a tradition that reaches back centuries. Moreover, as a painting it continues to exist for the purpose of spectacle. In addition to forming spectacle, *The Finding* as a disputation painting also explicitly references the spectacle of disputation. Moreover, *The Finding* makes vision, sight, looking and blindness significant aspects of the work. In addition to the blind priest, we recall the blind beggar, the figure of Jesus looking out to the beholder and the younger doctor (rabbi) looking at the child Jesus. As spectacle we too, as viewers, are implicated by the act of *our* looking.

In addition to the intense theatricality and spectacle, it is the centrality of the Jewish-Christian element that informs *The Finding*. We understand the element of performance as a vehicle for being seen. As Sara Lipton has explained, the matter of sight, seeing and, moreover being seen are woven throughout the development of Jewish-Christian relations.⁵² It is as if the process by which the location of the truth about how things are for us becomes itself the subject of painting. That is, the disputation painting is not merely about the story in

⁵¹ Rowe, *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City*, 61-62.

⁵² Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 1-11.

Luke, but the foregrounding of a philosophical outlook. *The Finding's* “subject” is arguably less concerned with the Lukan story as it is with the Jewish-Christian debate.⁵³

What is significant for the purposes of this thesis is the involvement of Jews as performers within debates/disputations becoming transformed into characters within the spectacle formed of those debates. That is, Jews are understood and perceived as characters operating within a Christian narrative rather than displaying or portraying their own story derived from the Hebrew Bible. We are not presented with two groups of people of differing faiths in an equal debate about those differences. As I have suggested, Jews become representations of Judaism from within a Christian worldview. This is an unambiguous objectification of Jews and Judaism. *The Finding's* realism and purported authenticity as a realisation or “illustration” of the Lukan story conceals the painting's own *participation* within the discourse of disputation. We will return to this crucial matter of representation in the next chapter. Now that we have examined the scholarly disputation, we are ready to move forward with a discussion on the discourse of disputation.

6.2 Discourse of Disputation

Throughout this thesis I have referred to a *discourse of disputation* which I claim informs *The Finding* and other disputation paintings. My use of the word *discourse* is allied with its dialogic associations. Discourse additionally encompasses the language or apparatus required to facilitate a discussion or debate associated with any given shared world. I refer here to terminology, gestures, practices, signs and symbols that form the systems of disputation. As Novikoff has demonstrated, these are derived from an inherited *culture* of disputation that has grown out of the practice of religious and scholarly disputations.⁵⁴ The *discourse of disputation* has unfolded over time with the enduring Jewish-Christian dispute as an established theme, and frequently its *raison d'être*.

Although the principal concern of this thesis is with art, the artworks we are concerned with are intricately linked to texts. The artworks in question are not neutral in this context, they are themselves dialogic. Effectively, they are participants. I further understand *discourse* as referring to a *world* in Heidegger's conception. Accordingly, when Heidegger writes about the work of art as opening up a *world*, he infers a context of shared networks of

⁵³ Indeed, it is possible that we have come to interpret the Lukan story itself as becoming less concerned with the events surrounding the twelve-year-old Jesus and his family, and more concerned with the aspect of debate.

⁵⁴ Novikoff, “Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation,” and *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*.

meaning or understanding, discussed earlier in chapter two.⁵⁵ Art, and therefore *The Finding*, does not “create” or “reflect” a world. Art has no power to do this, it can only make visible a world which *already exists*. In this way, we understand *The Finding* as firstly opening up a world of mid-nineteenth century thought, and one that assumes a particular British orientalist element of Christianity. I will return to this.

The Finding can also be understood as opening up a world of Jewish-Christian discourse or disputation because it obliquely references a (and *the*) disputation. This in turn tells us more about how it was that Holman Hunt knew how to paint his picture. We have seen how the scholarly disputation has played a part in forming notions of debate as a means to control the power to exert authority over scripture and even what counts as knowledge. Holman Hunt’s *Finding* forms a spectacle out of a typological interpretation of scripture thus underlining the painting’s supersessionist stance. In a further strand to this, *The Finding itself* opens up a discourse. It does this by *participating* in the discourse of disputation. By this I mean that the painting is not a *neutral* illustration or mere representation because it clearly takes a position within the debate. It thus participates within the enduring dispute between Judaism and Christianity. However, there is yet a further layer of complexity here. *The Finding* also *pictures* a (or, more likely *the*) disputation and in so doing *enframes* (or objectifies) both the Jewish-Christian dispute along with the concept of scholarly and religious disputation. Moreover, all of this is embedded within the existence of a *generalised* cultural framework of disputation as posited by Novikoff.

Both wider and particular concepts of disputation rest upon the idiosyncratic relationship between Judaism and Christianity which is one of meaningful tension. Moreover, as we recall Lim’s words, this tension is what makes the dispute both conceptually possible and meaningful. The dispute, such as it is, functions beyond the realms of religious argument. There is a sense that the dispute is so overwhelmingly and unquestionably understood that it becomes common knowledge, or, recalling Julius’s phrasing, what *passes* for knowledge. Let us examine further.

As Alex Novikoff has recently demonstrated, the “discourse” of disputation, by which I mean here the concept of discursive, competitive (and at times hostile) debate, has seeped into wider culture and endures in customs and conventions up until the present day. The extent of the permeation into culture is remarkable. According to Novikoff, the disputation

⁵⁵ Heidegger, *PLT*, 17-87.

became one of the primary ways in which Europeans expressed themselves in the arts, literature and public life.⁵⁶ Additionally, Novikoff references medieval literary examples such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *Pardoner's* and *Prioress's Tales* which feature the disbelieving or murderous Jew. Such a figure, he says, becomes woven throughout culture as a constant subject for polemic and comment.⁵⁷ Additionally, as already noted, the dispute is also evident in Renaissance debate poetry, Gothic architecture, and drama.⁵⁸ Moreover, the Jewish-Christian dispute was a key driver of the development of disputation as a scholarly technique and a pastime amongst the general population. It is the seepage of disputation into everyday life, in addition to the inherited Jewish-Christian dispute as one of its driving forces that informs my conceptualisation of the discourse of disputation.

We cannot speak of Holman Hunt's personal intentions when we consider that the *picturing* of the disputation works to conceal the existing *culture of disputation* out in the world. *The Finding* is presented as one of many *Christ Among the Doctors* paintings which are always assumed to illustrate the Lukan scene which in turn is assumed to depict and describe a dispute. In both drawing upon and contriving to conceal the culture of disputation behind the veneer of the Lukan narrative, what is revealed or "unconcealed" is the rigged game at the heart of both spectacle *and* dispute. As with Barcelona, Paris and Tortosa, the outcome in *The Finding's* picturing and participation in the disputation is a guaranteed Christian "win" interpreted *a priori* for its audience and spectators. Holman Hunt's didacticism leaves no room for manoeuvre in a painting underpinned by the renowned accompanying pamphlet, which as we recall, continues to inform most accounts of *The Finding*. However, received meanings are further bolstered by the conventions of disputation with its roots in religious and scholarly authority and its veneer of truth and reason. And yet, notwithstanding its subject of "disputation" with its associative endeavour to critical thinking, the actions depicted and asserted in *The Finding* advocate religious or ideological truth rather

⁵⁶ By way of example, he cites the medieval development of musical polyphony which he identifies as the driver towards the popularity of disputations in Paris. This is because it was developed by the same scholars and teachers. He writes that this offers an "especially intriguing cultural manifestation of scholastic disputation because it emanates not only from the same time and place (late-twelfth-century Paris), but from the same circle of scholars and teachers." Novikoff cites recent scholarship, Andrew Kirkman, *The Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass: Medieval Context to Modern Revival* (Cambridge, 2010); and Oliver Cullin, ed., *La Place de la musique dans la culture médiévale* (Turnhout, 2007). Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation," 355 and fn. 107.

⁵⁷ Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 172.

⁵⁸ Indeed, Erwin Panofsky makes a claim about Gothic architecture which scholars find to be weak, yet it may have been strengthened had he referred to the Blind Synagoga statues installed as part of the facades of Cathedrals as discussed earlier in this thesis. Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, 1951. Cited in Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, 3.

than any discovered or reasoned truth. We learned from Yoram Hazony that dominant conceptualisations of the New Testament as *revelation* have eclipsed Old Testament potentiality as work of *reason*. As if to press that point home, the image of an eclipse is explicitly carved into *The Finding's* frame. Moreover, the painting's foregrounding of vision and sight makes the failure to "see" the culture of disputation within the painting especially poignant. The viewer, who is directed to "see" the Lukan scene, to condemn the spiritual blindness of the rabbi and to pity the beggar, is inadvertently prevented from seeing or recognising the culture of disputation that must inform the picture.

Following on from this, if we are asking about how Holman Hunt knew how to paint *The Finding*, we might also ask a corollary question, how are viewers able to make sense of it? This does not merely refer to the notional viewer contemporary to the painting's production. I am asking how does the beholder *at any point* in the painting's history make sense of it? The answer to this I believe is located within an inherited and *taken-for-granted* understanding of the culture of disputation, interwoven with the absorption of the Jewish-Christian debate. Given the painting's theme, does knowledge of the Lukan story assist comprehension? I would argue the contrary. I believe that the painting's coherence rests upon the enduring disputation between Christians and Jews, and it is the objectifying and picturing of this dispute that directs viewers to an understanding of the Lukan story. Therefore, it would not be excessive to suggest that the Lukan story as commonly understood, is itself informed by and constructed through the discourse of disputation.

My identification of a discourse of disputation is supported by David Nirenberg's claim that thinking about Judaism and Jews is surprisingly common in the long history of western thought.⁵⁹ In his recent publication *Anti-Judaism: The History of a Way of Thinking* he argues that Jewish questions (and questions about Jews) in the West were used to make sense of the world. He claims that there are frequent examples of how Judaism is used to think through various questions. He cites Martin Luther's changing position and latterly relentless attacks upon Jews. Luther's conceptualisations of God's relationship with creation were "achieved by thinking with, about, and against Jews and Judaism."⁶⁰ Nirenberg stresses that his book is concerned with the development of *critical thinking* rather than another history of the Jews, anti-Semitism, or the Holocaust. This is congruent with (and almost certainly part of) the world of disputation which, as Weijers *et al* have established, plays a

⁵⁹ David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The History of a Way of Thinking*, London: Head of Zeus, 2015.

⁶⁰ Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 267.

role in the development of critical thinking. In order to make his overall point that thinking about Judaism was central to the development of western thought, Nirenberg provides an historical overview that is “dauntingly, even laughably large” sweeping across swathes of time and places.⁶¹ He argues in one particular example that the existence of the concept of a “Jewish Question” illustrates his premise. Marx’s 1844 discussion on the *Judenfrage* concerned the debate around Jewish conversion to Christianity, then the procedure for Jews to gain legal emancipation and full citizenship. Marx’s utilization of Christian cultural ideas about the linking of Judaism with money removed the sense of Judaism as a religion belonging to a specific people and refashioned it as a way of conceptualising the world. Nirenberg writes that Marx’s insight that *concepts* could produce Judaism is worth probing. Notwithstanding the context of *critical critique* in which the discussion transpired, Marx, he says, was not critical enough. Marx could have thought more deeply about *why* Christian culture had forged the association with Judaism and capitalism in the first place which might have encouraged greater reflection. Nirenberg writes that Marx chose instead to exploit the stereotype and to put it to the service of his revolutionary project. In taking a messianic position (which Nirenberg points out is “itself quite ‘Christian’”) to liberate “the world from Judaism set sharp limits to the depth of his Jewish questions.”⁶² Whatever Marx’s motivations, his thesis meant that Jews and Judaism were subsequently conceptualised as a “problem” to be overcome. This secularized problematization could be understood as distinct from yet inherited through a Christian idea of Judaism. The *Judenfrage* and its multifarious associations can be understood as playing a part in the discourse of disputation. Additionally, the disputation especially as it figures in *The Finding*, forms for the modern viewer a dramatization and enactment of the *Judenfrage*. Nirenberg argues that through the *Judenfrage*, particular tropes and ideas have been mapped onto Jewishness and Judaism to the extent that thoughts about Judaism became a way of critically engaging with the world. As a result of this, he argues, Western thought began to produce the kind of “Jewishness” it

⁶¹ Nirenberg’s book provides a wide-ranging scope for consideration. In common with my own broad sweep across historical time and wide-ranging selection of artworks, I recognise this necessary step if the long cultural connections are to be made. The process can be likened to stepping back to view a painting in its entirety before focusing upon a detail; and realising that one cannot know the detail nor the whole without its corollary. Nirenberg begins with Ancient Egypt, the Exodus, the ancient world, then continues through the European Middle Ages, Spain, the Inquisition, Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment, the French Revolution, Modern Philosophy and Modernity.

⁶² Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 4.

criticised. Whatever this Jewishness was (or was not), it was certainly not the religion of Judaism nor the personhood of living Jewish people.⁶³

6.3 Jewish Participation in the Discourse of Disputation

Max Liebermann

I have argued that *The Finding* is informed by and participates within a discourse of disputation. One way to understand the manner in which the discourse of disputation plays out or reveals itself in artworks is to take note of Jewish artistic contributions to that discourse. Here I wish to examine some examples of Jewish participation within the discourse by means of artwork. Out of necessity the examples are selective. I have singled out three key examples from a wide range of practitioners.⁶⁴ My first example is Max Liebermann whose painting *Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel* (1879) (Fig. 76) was examined in chapter five where the focus was upon the painting, its imagery and the artist's painterly technique. I further noted a possible relationship with Leonardo's *Trattato*. Here I build upon those earlier observations and examine the background to the painting and its subsequent reception. This will identify not only the immediate link to the Jewish-Christian dispute inherent within the painting's subject matter, but to the wider discourse out in the world inhabited by the artist. I then move to discuss selected works by Maurycy Gottlieb and Moritz Oppenheim.⁶⁵

Marion Deshmukh describes Liebermann as "an ambivalent modernist" whose themes sometimes leaned toward the pre-industrial nostalgic yet whose techniques forged the way to painterly modernity. The impetus for his Temple picture emerged from various channels. He had visited synagogues in Amsterdam and Venice where the interiors appealed to him as a subject to render in drawing. He had also been inspired by Rembrandt's work, and was taken with the effects of light. Echoes of Liebermann's synagogue and Jewish quarter drawings can

⁶³ David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 2015.

⁶⁴ Examples of nineteenth-century Jewish artists include Tina Blau (1845-1916), Jacques Emile-Edouard Brandon (1831-1897), Vittorio Matteo Corcos (1859-1933), Vito d'Ancona (1825-1884), Jacob Meyer de Haan (1852-1895), Solomon Alexander Hart (1806-1881), Samuel Hirszenberg (1865-1908), Josef Israëls (1824-1911), Isador Kaufmann (1853-1921), Broncia Koller-Pinell aka Bronislawina Pineles (1863-1934), Maurycy Minkowski (1881-1930), Edward Moyse (1827-1908), Camille Pissaro (1830-1903), Abraham Solomon (1824-1862), Rebecca Solomon (1832-1886), Solomon J. Solomon (1860-1927), Lesser Ury (1861-1931). Source: Susan Tumarkin-Goodman, *The Emergence of Jewish Artists in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Merrill Publishers Ltd. 2001).

⁶⁵ I have not had sight of all of the works discussed in this section. The survey is fairly uneven. Furthermore, some works by Maurycy Gottlieb are only available in reproduction having been destroyed or lost.

be seen in the resulting Temple painting. For example, the small, illuminated window to the upper right-hand side is reminiscent of the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. The curved staircase in the painting emanates from the sixteenth-century Venice synagogue.⁶⁶

Deshmukh noted that this was a “frequently rendered Biblical motif.” Yet it is likely that part of the impetus for the work lay in the twin desires to address anti-Semitism and to reconcile Old and New Testaments. Deshmukh suggests that the inclusion in the painting of the *Chasidim*, representing tradition and orthodoxy alongside the modern Reform rabbis, and then to Jesus representing the “new” is evidence of this. It can be argued that whatever Liebermann’s intentions were for the painting in terms of his artistic interests, culturally the aspiration for a reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity played a part. As a secular Jew, Liebermann accepted the historical Jesus but rejected the Christ of the Christian faith. His stance chimes with (and was possibly influenced by) scholarship which had concerned itself with a discernible attempt to re-evaluate Jesus as a Jewish figure. One influential example to note here was Abraham Geiger, the renowned German Jewish rabbi, scholar and advocate of Reform Judaism. He had written about Judaism and its history and recontextualised Jesus as a Pharisaic Jew and the Pharisees as religious reformers in contrast to prevailing Christian interpretation.⁶⁷ Moreover, this reconfiguration of Jesus’s status formed part of a general wave of thought concerning relationships between the religions and the civic status of Jews more specifically. Geiger was a prominent figure within the emergent academic field of Jewish studies, known as *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. It is possible to see the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as a challenge to both orthodox Judaism in addition to extant Christian accounts of Judaism and interpretations of scripture. I might speculate that Liebermann’s painting tacitly attempted to acknowledge and reconcile multiple religious disagreements. An inner turbulence within the Jewish community is veiled by the presence of an apparently ecumenical group of clergy.

Like Holman Hunt, although for alternate reasons, Liebermann sought to render his figures in an unidealized manner, cognizant with his understanding of Jesus as an historical rather than spiritual figure.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Liebermann’s impressionistic application of paint

⁶⁶ Deshmukh, *Max Liebermann: Modern Art and Modern Germany*, 79.

⁶⁷ Abraham Geiger, *Das Judentum und seine Geschichte von der Zerstörung des zweiten Tempels bis zum Ende des zwölften Jahrhunderts. In zwölf Vorlesungen. Nebst einem Anhang: Offenes Sendschreiben an Herrn Professor Dr. Holtzmann*. Breslau: Schletter, 1865-71. (Translated as *Judaism and its history: in 2 parts*, Lanham: Univ. Press of America, 1985. See also Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁶⁸ Deshmukh, “Max Liebermann: Observations on the Politics of Painting in Imperial Germany, 1870-1914”. *German Studies Review*, vol 3, No. 2. May 1980, 171-206, 176.

imbued the picture with a strong modern aesthetic. In an apparent reversal of Holman Hunt's approach, and mindful of Adolph Menzel's rendition of the disputation scene referred to earlier, Liebermann chose non-Jewish models for his picture as discussed in chapter five. His avoidance of caricature and stereotyping extends to the figure of Jesus whom he had originally portrayed as a dark-haired Jewish boy in a more animated pose. As already noted, Katrin Boskamp's discovery of preliminary drawings indicates that the Jesus figure was transformed into quite a different figure in the final painting (Fig. 77).

The context into which the scandal erupted was one where, notwithstanding an increasingly secular society, artists still painted religious themes. Liebermann was not the only artist to set his biblical scene in a nineteenth century setting. As Deshmukh points out, progressive artists such as Bastien-Lepage, Vincent Van Gogh and Liebermann's teacher Munkácsy painted religious scenes with a modern social element. It is further worth recalling that Adolph Menzel's lithograph of the twelve-year-old Jesus also constructed the scene as though set in the nineteenth century (Fig. 74). The ensuing reaction to the painting was dramatic. At the exhibition, the initial response was enthusiastic and positive, the painting was considered by many of Liebermann's fellow artists to be the best in the show. One artist claimed that "such a picture has not been painted in Munich for fifty years."⁶⁹ However, the mood changed dramatically once the public and critics saw the picture. One critic writing for the French *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* described Liebermann's Jesus as a "terrible small street urchin" and the painting in its expressiveness as "exaggerated."⁷⁰ In the *Augsberger Allgemeine Zeitung*, Friedrich Pecht described the painting as:

*"among the...ugliest, impertinent young of young Jewish boys that one can think of, and the Rabbis, even though thought of as authentic Orientals [appear] as a pack of the greasiest Jewish thieves..."*⁷¹

More seriously, Catholic clerics objected to the painting's subject and artistic style. Additionally, church officials attempted to initiate legal proceedings against Liebermann citing a clause in the Reich Criminal Code protecting the Church from blasphemous attack.⁷² The Bavarian parliament attacked Liebermann on account that such a painting had been painted by a Jewish artist, seeing it as "flagrantly violating the religious sensibilities of good

⁶⁹ Deshmukh, *Max Liebermann: Modern Art and Modern Germany*, 80.

⁷⁰ Louis E.E. Duranty, "Munich et L'exposition Allemande," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 43:5 (1879) 457. Cited in Deshmukh, "Observations on the Politics of Painting," 176.

⁷¹ Deshmukh, *Max Liebermann: Modern Art and Modern Germany*, 84.

⁷² Specifically, paragraph 166 of the 1871 Reich Criminal Code. Cited in Deshmukh, "Observations on the Politics of Painting," 176.

Bavarian Christians.”⁷³ As a result the exhibition’s selection committee attempted to calm the situation by rehangng the work in a less visible part of the exhibition hall. However, the objections continued. Realizing that the situation had degenerated into an anti-Semitic attack, Liebermann recalled that the court preacher had spoken against the Jews because of his painting. He later wrote: “As I painted this innocent picture, I could not have dreamed that [this] would occur.”⁷⁴ Liebermann’s was not the only work selected for critique because of its loose, painterly technique. However, it was to be Liebermann’s Jewishness that added an extra frisson to the attacks. The impact of this episode had a profound effect upon him and how he and his work was received for some time afterwards. He refrained from tackling religious subjects for at least two decades.

With the exception of the standing Jesus and the nineteenth century setting, Liebermann’s painting remains in keeping with the essence of the Lukan scene. By this I refer to the collegiate, friendly scene all round. Liebermann’s portrayal of a reconciliation between the two faiths approaches the heart of the matter in hand. In his attempt to nullify the enmity between the two faiths Liebermann unconceals the discourse that customarily portrays the disputation as one of hostility. Additionally, Liebermann’s modern application of paint (which we have established was not unique to him) was attributed to his cosmopolitan “Jewish” lifestyle and was thus felt to be more French in approach and thus rendered un-German.⁷⁵ The rage that emanated from those whose stance was against Judaism (and Jews) meant their ire focused upon the identity of the artist and not the specifics of the biblical scene. I conclude that the scandal that befell Liebermann was not concerned with the Lukan scene so much as the enduring Jewish-Christian dispute.

Maurycy Gottlieb.

Maurycy Gottlieb (1856-79) a Galician Polish Jew found his artistic niche by establishing himself as Jewish history painter. Gottlieb made a career from making Jewish life the subject of many of his paintings. Additionally, as Larry Silver and Ezra Mendelsohn have observed, Gottlieb fashioned himself as a Jewish artist before such a concept existed. It is noteworthy that Gottlieb’s career was a short one. He died at the age of twenty-three leaving a strong and assertive body of work. His painting, *Jews Praying on Yom Kippur*

⁷³ Deshmukh, “Observations on the Politics of Painting,” 179.

⁷⁴ Hans Ostwald, cited in Deshmukh, “Observations on the Politics of Painting,” 179.

⁷⁵ Because Liebermann was German, he is not included in texts that explore Impressionism, deemed to be “French.” Additionally, one of the outcomes to the scandal is the lack of English language material on Liebermann, as Deshmukh outlines in her introduction to *Max Liebermann: Modern Art and Modern Germany*.

(1878) (Fig. 83), has become emblematic of nineteenth-century Jewish art being widely reproduced in books and catalogues. Gottlieb confronts the matter of Jewish-Christian relations and the discourse of disputation candidly in many of his works. He does this in a number of ways. He uses self-portraiture to draw attention to questions of identity, often overlapping with other genres in his work. His utilization and subversion of dominant Christian tropes further demonstrates this. Moreover, his portrayal of Jesus within synagogue and Temple settings presents an unequivocal awareness of the Jewish-Christian dispute and a desire to confront it. His approach, as we have seen in common with other Jewish artists, is redolent of his aspiration to reconcile the two faiths.

In response to anti-Semitic taunts as a student, Gottlieb painted himself as Ahasuerus, which he twin-titled *The Wandering Jew* (1876) (Fig. 84). The Wandering Jew is a legendary figure condemned to wander the world until the Christian Second Coming. It is a renowned figure of suffering and sometimes emblematic of a conception of Jewish evil as Larry Silver explains.⁷⁶ It has been utilised in a wide range of artistic and literary outputs. Gottlieb presents himself as one who is shunned as a Jew. However, he conflates this with the non-Jewish King of the Persians, Ahasuerus who was persuaded by Esther to spare the lives of the Jewish people in his realm.⁷⁷ Here, Gottlieb reconfigures the Wandering Jew as a noble, oriental king complete with crown and earring. In the same year, Gottlieb was awarded a gold medal for his painting of *Shylock and Jessica* (1876) a reconfiguration of Shakespeare's character of Shylock from the *Merchant of Venice*. Gottlieb was not the first to reinterpret Shylock as a more sympathetic character than the prevailing caricature. For example, Ezra Mendelsohn cites the contemporaneous example of Henry Irving's stage portrayal which presented Shylock as the victim of racial prejudice.⁷⁸ Additionally, Heinrich Graetz, whose *History of the Jews* had inspired Gottlieb, sought to contextualise Shakespeare's Shylock as a humanised figure whose rage is explicable within the narrative of the play. Moreover, Graetz cited the character as morally superior to the Venetian Christians.⁷⁹ Gottlieb's portrayal of Shylock presents him as a devoted father who will be betrayed by his daughter, a figure of suspicion amongst Christian society and a victim of its prejudices. As a result of his success

⁷⁶ Larry Silver, "Jewish Identity in Art and Art History: Maurycy Gottlieb as Early Jewish Artist," in Catherine M. Soussloff, ed., *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History* (London: University of California Press, 1999), 91.

⁷⁷ The book of Esther is known in Hebrew as the "scroll" (*Megillah*) and forms part of the *Ketuvim* or writings of the Jewish Bible (*Tanakh*). Esther also forms part of the Christian Old Testament in all main denominations.

⁷⁸ Mendelsohn, *Painting a People*, 124.

⁷⁹ Ritchie Robertson, *Heine* (New York: 1988), 86. Also, Heine Graetz, *Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen*, 1838, cited in Mendelsohn, *Painting a People*, 124.

with the picture, Gottlieb was commissioned by Friedrich Bruckman Publishing to produce illustrations for Gottfried Ephraim Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* (1779). The commission was not fulfilled, only seven or eight of the twelve were completed. Nevertheless, the images continue to gather interest and are used as illustrations to this day.

Much of Gottlieb's art engaged with the religious and political context of his day. *Christ Preaching at Capernaum* (1878-9) (Fig. 85), is a painting that collapses many traditional religious boundaries. Apart from Jesus being portrayed as an adult, the painting's subject closely approaches that of the *Christ Among the Doctors*, or disputation painting genre. Jesus, wearing a *tallit* is elevated and illuminated; he preaches to the other assembled figures; a range of rabbinical types are represented. Moreover, the very concept of different types responding to Jesus are at the core of disputation paintings of the Lukan scene. There are scrolls visible. The setting is the Jerusalem Temple complete with pillars. I could further make the case that Mary and Joseph are implicitly present at the right-hand side of the picture. Ezra Mendelsohn notes the female figure "praying along with the men" as a curiosity. However, she is positioned next to an older man in a manner suggestive of a couple. This is reminiscent of the Mary and Joseph figures in historical disputation paintings given that Joseph has traditionally been understood to be significantly older than Mary.⁸⁰ In addition, Gottlieb has placed himself in the picture next to this older man leaning in towards another figure who appears to whisper to him. The congregation is made up of many types of person, including a Roman figure wearing a toga. Mendelsohn describes it as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious scene.⁸¹ In the painting, Jesus is unambiguously Jewish, congruent with the already mentioned growing consensus around the acceptance of Jesus's Jewishness. It is an assertive and ambitious blend of the two traditions. Gottlieb's paintings seem replete with intentional coded signifiers and hidden messages. His practice of placing himself within the pictures forms a disruption to the assumed realism of a history painting adding further intrigue. Additionally, this aspect renders the painting highly personal in its tone. It seems somehow less detached to place oneself within a history painting. Gottlieb's confident identification with Judaism coupled with a recognition of what the faith traditions share makes for powerful and enduring pictures and demonstrates a clarity of purpose and a desire to see the end of discrimination against Jews.

⁸⁰ The age gap is less apparent in *The Finding*, although Mary and Joseph are present in Holman Hunt's reworking of the scene.

⁸¹ Mendelsohn, *Painting a People*, 135-6.

Moritz Oppenheim

I now turn to Moritz Oppenheim (1800-82) who was an artist renowned for a wide range of portraits, religious and Jewish family life scenes. His training with the Nazarenes is reflected stylistically in his earlier work. He painted a number of Christian scenes, for example, *Maria and Anna in the Garden* (1821-2) and *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (1823) in addition to many religious works depicting Old Testament and Apocryphal scenes. Many of these scenes formed Jewish equivalents to Christian genres. Having experienced an episode of anti-Jewish prejudice in the manner of Liebermann's scandal (above), Oppenheim chose a novel approach when he addressed the Jewish-Christian dispute in his renowned painting *Lavater and Lessing Visit Moses Mendelssohn* (1856) (Fig. 86).⁸² This painting is as remote as is possible from the Lukan scene of the typical disputation artwork. However, there is no doubt that the painting fully engages with the discourse of disputation being concerned with both theological and historical disputes. At first glance, the picture appears to be part of the artist's oeuvre of Jewish family life paintings, set in bourgeois interior domestic settings. The picture portrays an imagined encounter between Johann Casper Lavater, a Lutheran Swiss theologian, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the literary dramatist and philosopher, and Moses Mendelssohn, the acclaimed Jewish philosopher. All three were significant figures of the European Enlightenment. The events in question allude to a renowned public dispute between Mendelssohn and Lavater. The painting depicts events taking place over a chess game. Chess historian Daniel Johnson understands the appearance of the chess game as signifying the mutual pastime of both Lessing and Mendelssohn, which although true, somewhat underplays its significance.⁸³ Rather than playing chess as might be expected, Lessing is shown as overseeing events. As I shall elucidate, the chess game plays a crucial part in the picture; and in order to understand why, some background is necessary.

The figure of Moses Mendelssohn is significant. As a Jewish intellectual, he sought to navigate a way of maintaining his Jewishness whilst engaging positively with the non-Jewish

⁸² Upon winning a prize for his *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (1823) at the Academy of St. Luke in Rome, there were protests at Oppenheim being both German and Jewish. Georg Heuberger and Merk Anton, eds. *Moritz Daniel Oppenheim: Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century Art*. Exhibition Catalogue (Frankfurt am Main: Weinand Verlag, 1999), 137.

⁸³ Johnson writes that it is Chess that brought each into each other's acquaintance, describing it as a "fateful meeting of two remarkable minds...(and) two cultures." *Nathan the Wise* was its author's "...most enduringly popular work...(and) one of the high points of European civilization..." Daniel Johnson, *White King and Red Queen: How the Cold War was Fought on the Chessboard* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007), 6.

and secular world of eighteenth-century Germany. His bridging the divide between the still relatively closed world of the Jewish community and the wider German Christian society served as a model for Jewish enlightenment and emancipation. As such, Mendelssohn became a figurehead of Jewish modernity notwithstanding the very real negative prejudice he and his family experienced as Jews.⁸⁴ Determined to overcome religious and cultural obstacles, much of Mendelssohn's thought concerned the matter of religious tolerance. His abiding friendship with Lessing, also an advocate for religious tolerance, became emblematic of Enlightenment thinking. The painting depicts the presence of both Lessing *and* Lavater whose presence is pivotal to the matter in hand.

Johann Casper Lavater, a Swiss Lutheran theologian was also considered one of the leading figures of the Enlightenment. He came to admire Mendelssohn visiting him many times between 1763-64. On one occasion Lavater probed Mendelssohn on the subject of Christianity. Mendelssohn explained that he bore no animosity towards Christians and considered the historical Jesus to have been a moral person. Buoyed by these remarks and the possibility that Mendelssohn (as he saw it) might move towards conversion, Lavater was to later reconstrue the remarks in what amounted to a catastrophic public challenge to Mendelssohn. This resulted in the highly charged dispute to which Oppenheim's painting alludes.

The crucial event leading to this dispute unfolded five years after they last met. Lavater, having translated Charles Bonnet's *Palingenesie Philosophique* into German, included in its preface a public challenge to Mendelssohn that he should refute Bonnet's claims or concede to them and convert to Christianity.⁸⁵ As Jonathan Hess explains Lavater, a millenarian, hoped that Mendelssohn's acceptance of Christianity would lead to many more Jewish conversions that would usher in the messianic age.⁸⁶ Bonnet himself was embarrassed by Lavater's actions because he understood that such a public debate was situated within a context of political inequality. As Hess explains, Lavater's challenge may have been intended as theological however, the results were political. Lavater's advocacy of the dominant religion took advantage of Mendelssohn's powerlessness. Hess writes in the context of the

⁸⁴ Shmuel Feiner recounts an example of an occasion where Mendelssohn and his wife and children were attacked by youths chanting "Juden! Juden!" whilst strolling in Berlin. Shmuel Feiner, *Moses Mendelssohn: Sage of Modernity* (London: Yale University Press, 2010) 2.

⁸⁵ Bonnet's work was a critique of Mendelssohn's argument for the immortality of the soul in *Phaedon* and argued for the necessity of Christian truths. See Jonathan M. Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (London: Yale University Press, 2002) 98.

⁸⁶ Hess, *Claims of Modernity*, 98.

challenge: "...as long as Jews remain under Christian rule without political equality there can be no true theological dialogue."⁸⁷ Furthermore, Mendelssohn's civic position involved a philosophical commitment to "avoid all religious controversy and speak in public writings only of those truths that are necessarily of equal importance to all religions."⁸⁸ Lavater had effectively punctured Mendelssohn's careful navigation between his public persona as an enlightenment philosopher and his private self as a religious family man adhering to traditional Judaism. He had, in Feiner's words, "...brutally trampled the ideals of friendship, and challenged Mendelssohn's status as a citizen of the enlightened community, leaving him insulted, indignant, betrayed."⁸⁹ Mendelssohn spent months considering how to respond, knowing that he would have to at some point. He decided to write an open letter to Lavater explaining his position and this document became one of his most important texts.⁹⁰ In summary, the matter escalated into an on-going dispute via correspondence and public discussion becoming renowned as a crisis of Enlightenment ideals. As Feiner explains, the stress of the dispute made Mendelssohn quite ill, and likely contributed to his early death.⁹¹

I now turn to the presence in the picture of the figure of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Lessing was committed to enlightenment ideals and had experienced a degree of opposition to his own endeavours. The dramatist had his polemical pamphlets urging enlightened thinking banned and had accordingly taken to writing plays to convey his beliefs. He based the main character in his major and most renowned work *Nathan the Wise*, a play advocating religious tolerance, upon Moses Mendelssohn. Richard Cohen observes that Oppenheim's painting fuses several different moments into the one event as depicted. This results in a somewhat misleading or ambiguous impression.⁹² This is because the painting implies that Lavater "invaded" a chess game between Lessing and Mendelssohn, and is pressing the Bonnet book, (the book he was to have translated some five years hence) onto Mendelssohn with those demands to refute its "truths" or convert to Christianity. However, Lessing was not present at the original meeting between Lavater and Mendelssohn in 1763, and no attempt was made to convert Mendelssohn at that meeting. However, as a trusted friend of Mendelssohn, Lessing was to witness the acute distress that Lavater's public challenge caused him, and this is why his presence is important. Oppenheim skilfully encapsulates the

⁸⁷ Hess, *Claims of Modernity*, 98.

⁸⁸ Mendelssohn, JubA 7: 10, cited in Hess, *Claims of Modernity*, 99.

⁸⁹ Feiner, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 83.

⁹⁰ Feiner, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 87-89.

⁹¹ Feiner, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 105.

⁹² Cohen, R., *Jewish Icons*, 164.

entire sequence into one picture. In what follows I will demonstrate that the sequence of events can only partly explain how the painting conveys its message and that the Jewish-Christian dispute lies at the heart of its complexity.

With the necessary background in place, we can now turn to the painting. The painting depicts a salon interior with Mendelssohn seated on the left at a table, and Lavater to the right. Lessing stands behind the table in between the two figures. On the table, Lavater has his left hand upon a book which he appears to be pushing towards Mendelssohn, and his right-hand touches Mendelssohn's left arm. On the table sits a chess board in mid-game. To the right-hand side of the painting lies a doorway through which a woman enters the room carrying a tray of refreshments. We can deduce that the home is that of Mendelssohn. This is signified by the Hebrew script above the door, additionally, to the side, there is a small ritual handwashing dispensing tap and basin befitting Mendelssohn's orthodox Jewish status. Moreover, as Andrew Bush explains, it is also clear that this is Mendelssohn's home because as an orthodox Jew bound by dietary laws, it would not have been possible for him to have taken refreshments in non-Jewish homes.⁹³ The room is filled with books and pictures, the hospitality and congeniality of the scene apparent.

It is the presence of the chess game that I believe encapsulates Oppenheim's intention. Cohen interprets the presence of the game as an enlightenment marker of "civility" meaning it is there to signify a bourgeois pastime; and as we have already learned, Daniel Johnson ties the appearance of the game to the presence of Lessing.⁹⁴ Interestingly, Andrew Bush reminds us that chess plays a prominent role in Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* and yet further sees that the chess game allows Oppenheim to depict the adversarial relationship between the two seated players. However, one must assume that Bush refers to *Lavater* and not Lessing.⁹⁵ Which version of events is it? Are we to understand that Lavater has interrupted Lessing and Mendelssohn during their game, or are Lavater and Mendelssohn engaged in their dispute by proxy in the chess game with Lessing overseeing? In my view, it is the latter. Yet multiple readings are possible, and it is the layering of the meanings that allow us to arrive at some interesting observations and conclusions concerning the disputation. An examination of the painting is required.

⁹³ Andrew Bush, *Jewish Studies: A Theoretical Introduction* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2011) 16.

⁹⁴ Johnson, D., *White King and Red Queen*, 6.

⁹⁵ Bush, *Jewish Studies*, 14.

The body language of the three protagonists reveals much. We see a poised and confident Mendelssohn with his feet firmly on the floor. His delicately posed left hand rests lightly on his chin, and he looks directly at Lavater, giving him polite unagitated attention. He is almost smiling. By contrast, Lavater presses forward, touching Mendelssohn's arm and pushing a book towards him so keenly that it forms folds in the tablecloth. Lavater's legs are splayed out as if to balance himself as he leans in. He looks directly at Mendelssohn. Both seated men wear skullcaps as befitting their respective religious positions. Lessing, standing behind the table his eyes looking in the direction of Lavater, and perhaps slightly beyond him. He appears to be troubled and wearing a frown. He stands with one hand on his hip, and the other on an adjacent chair. Behind the trio are shelves of books, redolent of Mendelssohn's considerable engagement with both religious and intellectual spheres. It is ostensibly a scene of civility and hospitality as a woman (we do not know if she is Mendelssohn's wife or maid) brings a tray of refreshments. There appears to be a mezuzah on the door frame (although it would normally be placed on the right-hand side as one enters a room).⁹⁶

The chess game sits prominently upon the table. It is apparent that the board is not set up as a mere decorative feature in the scene. From the board's position, Mendelssohn plays white, and his opponent plays red (conventionally black). The game is visible, and with digital technology enabling a close focus upon the game, it is possible to discern that white, that is Mendelssohn, is winning.⁹⁷ Notwithstanding the apparently confident pose of Mendelssohn in the Oppenheim picture, in reality, Mendelssohn was deeply distressed by the sequence of events that Lavater had set in motion. The board presents a chess endgame study where few pieces remain on the board. This typically has an aesthetic value in and of itself and is a means for players to rehearse and develop chess strategies. Oppenheim painted many scenes depicting chess and it is likely that he knew the game well. This strongly suggests that Oppenheim set up the board in his painting to convey a specific type of endgame, one whereby the game is not over, it is not *yet* won. The winning side (in this case, Mendelssohn) still has to win the "won game." The message evoked is that all is not lost, no matter how negative the situation.

Oppenheim's choice to paint Mendelssohn has been linked to his teacher, the Nazarene painter Philipp Veit. Veit was a descendent of Mendelssohn and a convert to

⁹⁶ A *mezuzah* is a small ornamental case containing a parchment inscribed with Hebrew verses. It is affixed to doorways as a reminder of God's covenant.

⁹⁷ The finer details of the chess analysis may be read in appendix (iii).

Christianity who proudly embraced Catholicism.⁹⁸ Anton Merk suggests that Oppenheim intended to send “a jab” to Veit.⁹⁹ Oppenheim’s choice to foreground the figure of Mendelssohn can be understood in this way as directly addressing the Jewish-Christian dispute. That the encounter depicted was intensely focused upon the issue of Jewish conversion adds further weight to the idea. Cohen further suggests that Oppenheim chose the figure of Mendelssohn over the Dutch enlightenment philosopher Baruch Spinoza whose challenges to religious belief resulted in excommunication from the Amsterdam Jewish community. Mendelssohn’s ability and willingness to bridge Jewish and non-Jewish societies and remain religious appealed to Oppenheim.¹⁰⁰

My interpretation of Oppenheim’s game within the Mendelssohn painting and its significance is further substantiated by its uncanny allusion to Moritz Retzsch’s *Die Schachspieler* (*The Chess Players*) illustrations first published in 1831 (Fig. 87).¹⁰¹ Many versions exist and were widely disseminated; however, they amount to the same composition in essence. Retzsch, who had produced illustrations for Goethe’s *Faust*, was inspired by the play to create his chess picture. The *Chess Players* bears a strong pictorial resemblance to the *Faust* illustrations. Oppenheim’s training under Philipp Veit meant that he had plenty of access to the visual culture surrounding Goethe and Peter Cornelius’s illustrations of *Faust*. (Additionally, he was known as an admirer of Goethe and once sent him artworks in an effort to impress him) Let us consider the parallels.

The Retzsch painting depicts the Devil, (“Mephistopheles”) who has wagered the man his soul over a game of chess. At the point that the man (the Faustian figure) realises what he is about to lose, the painting implies that the Devil is about to win. The scene does not actually appear in *Faust* yet the meaning suggested by the picture is clear. The man who is willing to gamble his soul for all knowledge risks losing something eternal and precious. In Retzsch’s *Chess Players*, Satan’s black pieces represent vices, and Faust’s white pieces, virtues. The Faustian man realises that his queen is surrounded and many of his pieces are captured. Numerous other signifiers are placed within the picture to remind the viewer what is at stake. The spider, the sarcophagus, the skull, and of course the angel looking forlornly at the man. The parallels between the two paintings are uncanny. Mephisto’s hand rests

⁹⁸ In a further connection, this time to Holman Hunt’s oeuvre, Philipp Veit’s *Christus an die Seelentüre klopfend* (Christ knocking on the Door of the Soul) 1824 was an apparent (yet at times contested) source of inspiration for Holman Hunt’s *Light of the World*. Engraving by Gottfried Rist. (Städelsches Kunstinstitut. Frankfurt am Main.)

⁹⁹ Anton Merk in Heuberger, and Merk, *Moritz Daniel Oppenheim*, 54.

¹⁰⁰ Cohen, R., *Jewish Icons*, 165.

¹⁰¹ Also referred to as *Checkmate*, it is widely discussed among chess aficionados.

confidently on his chin, in some versions he wears red in common with Mendelssohn in Oppenheim's painting. The angel is synonymous with Lessing and both figures look in the same direction, toward the man in the *Chess Players*, or Lavater in the Oppenheim.

It would seem disingenuous that Oppenheim should cast Mendelssohn as the devil's counterpart. Yet, as I have alluded regarding the Oppenheim, it is possible to read the painting as a satire on both the encounter itself and Christian conceptions of Jews as devils (examples of which will be considered in the following chapter). Oppenheim has Mendelssohn playing white to Lavater's red (black) reversing the dynamic of Retzsch's painting, and playfully subverting perceptions. Yet, the point of both paintings is that all is not what it seems. Retzsch's painting can (and has been) be understood as a puzzle. In 1861 in Virginia, United States, Paul Morphy, a renowned chess player recreated the game only to discover that the king could make one move to win the game and beat the devil. The story is well known and documented.¹⁰² It is quite within the realms of possibility that Oppenheim also positioned his end game, as a similar puzzle. In the Oppenheim, Mendelssohn can win the game; however, you still have to win a won game.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I continued to address the question of how Holman Hunt knew how to make his *Finding* painting. Having contextualising *The Finding* as a disputation painting I turned to establish what the historical scholarly disputation entailed as a practice. I linked this to a worldview of enframing and objectivity. I further identified key attributes of truth, rationality, authority and spectacle and knowledge formation. I considered its cultural inheritance consisting in part of a genre of paintings tied into a practice of disputation as a scholarly, religious and competitive pursuit. The disputation, related imagery and the conception of the *Jewish question* have contributed to the development of a wider discourse of disputation that I believe informs *The Finding*.

The discourse may be nebulous and difficult to determine. I demonstrated that one of the ways to recognise the discourse is to consider the contribution made to it by Jewish artists and their contexts. The selected examples addressed various facets. In Liebermann's case, the discourse is disclosed by the responses to his Jewish identity. Gottlieb's assertive religious

¹⁰² The most useful online source for this story is: [One more Move--Paul Morphy Beats the Devil At Chess \(one-more-move-chess-art.com\)](http://one-more-move-chess-art.com) (accessed 13th April 2021).

paintings and self-fashioning as a Jewish artist took the interaction and connectedness of Judaism and Christianity as emblematic of his oeuvre. Oppenheim's more cryptic and satirical approach draws a number of threads into a tapestry that sidesteps the biblical whilst overtly attending to the multi-layered historical and philosophical Jewish-Christian dispute.

This second part of my thesis has been concerned with discourses and cultural knowledge that had to be in place in order for Holman Hunt to be able to create his painting and for viewers to be able to understand it. We have examined the disputation with its recourse to spectacle and objectification, attributes we recognise in *The Finding*. For Holman Hunt to be able to make his painting a further element had to be in place, that of the wider tradition of depicting Jews pictorially. This will be the subject of the next and final chapter.

Chapter 7 Enduring Representations

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Isaiah 9:2

Even when he does not regard me, he regards me.

Emmanuel Levinas.¹

Introduction

In our investigation of *The Finding's* Jewish presence, we are asking, how did Holman Hunt know how to paint his *Finding* picture? In seeking to set out the wider existing cultural knowledge that Holman Hunt would have needed to create his painting we have thus far considered *The Finding's* relationship to the Lukan New Testament narrative, scholarly and religious disputations and a sedimented culture of disputation which I have termed a *discourse* of disputation. In its contextualisation as a disputation painting, *The Finding* is part of this long enduring tradition of representing Jews as characters within a Christian narrative. We recall that the Jewish presence in *The Finding* includes the Jewish characters within the diegesis (the Biblical characters) the actual Jewish people who posed for Holman Hunt (Jews in reality) and the critique of Judaism implicated in the painting. This threefold understanding will inform the discussion in what follows. The substantive argument in hand is that Holman Hunt, situated as he was will have absorbed, *and drawn upon* this tradition in order to make his painting, and moreover, will have done so to make his painting comprehensible. *The Finding's* Jewish presence cannot be explained as part of a Pre-Raphaelite style (however configured) aesthetic or oeuvre. Nor does the Gospel of Luke assist understanding. Rather it is to the enduring cultural and religious visual tradition in which Holman Hunt finds himself to which we must turn. I do not make any claims that he somehow scoured such images in order to know how to paint his Jewish figures. Rather, the tradition makes itself known through the broader culture and repetition. I will proceed under two broad headings. First, I will discuss the historical tradition of representing Jews, where I discuss selected examples related to medieval religious portrayals. The second part will return to the subject of

¹ Emmanuel Levinas, in Sean Hand, ed., *The Levinas Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1989), 290.

orientalism to examine its deployment and attribution to *The Finding* and to works of art representing Jews more generally.

This chapter considers an enduring tradition of representing Jews. I use the word *enduring* in both senses, firstly as something long lasting, chronic, continual; as such representations are. Additionally, I intend to point to something that is endured, withstood, borne and sustained on the part of those represented. Because there is such a vast range of potential imagery to consider, I will necessarily be selective, and confine the discussion to a representative sample of themes and motifs.

7.1 The Historical Tradition.

There exists an abundance of historical images, illustrations, woodcuts, paintings, statues, sculpture depicting Jews that we could consider. These range from illustrated religious manuscripts plays, and novels traversing from the written word into further visual forms. Joseph Koerner reminds us that there is an underlying assumption on the part of art historians that art (in whatever form) *communicates* something.² That it is, somehow, a “medium” for something other than itself. Indeed, some images under consideration in this thesis were originally embedded within religious manuscripts, and therefore designed to augment a particular message in the text. And yet, as Iverson and Melville note, historically much of what is referred to as “art” was not made with our modern-day notions of “art” in mind, and it was not made by persons who thought of themselves as “artists” in the modern understanding.³ This is important, some art under consideration in this thesis was created to *be* rather than to mediate or re-present something else.⁴ Holman Hunt as a self-representing and rarely commissioned artist with a strong sense of his own subjectivity, peruses such art-objects, *objectively*. Moreover, there is a sense, carried in the very idea of “representation” that to *re-present* is to act on another’s behalf or to produce a sign in place of another. As Nirenberg suggests, it is to undertake something that is potentially deceitful.⁵ In what follows, we will touch upon the matter of Jewish figures acting as proxies for others whilst simultaneously mediating a confected essence of Jewishness.

² Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

³ Iverson and Melville, *Writing Art History*, 1.

⁴ That *The Finding* draws upon a tradition of made objects (such as altarpieces) designed for worship is of interest here.

⁵ David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 6.

The subject of historical representations of Jews in Christian art has been addressed in a number of scholarly treatments.⁶ Heinz Schreckenberg's extensive pictorial survey includes over a thousand images.⁷ Organised thematically to include a range of historical and theological matters, Schreckenberg devotes a section to the Lukan scene and a further section on the subject of Jewish-Christian disputes. His collection forms one of two instances where *The Finding* is situated within a context of Lukan disputation scenes.⁸ His summaries of Jewish-Christian relations form a helpful contextual framework for the copious examples of illustrations.⁹ Schreckenberg's analysis identifies a transition away from religious disputes as theologically redundant towards a more alienating discourse which might be construed in modern times as a form of racism. We can identify the mechanics of race at work. In medieval Europe, factors determining the constituting of difference were elusive, and in normal life, Jews and Christians were similar in appearance. Seeking to ensure differentiation between Jews and Christians in 1215, the Church ordained that Jews (and Saracens) in Christian lands should distinguish themselves by means of dress. For Jews, this meant a conical hat and full-length dress.¹⁰ Schreckenberg provides an extended description of the oriental Jewish "hat" and the Jewish ring, both visible and frequent signifiers of the Jew in medieval art.¹¹ In his remarks on the Lukan Temple scenes with the twelve-year-old Jesus, Schreckenberg notes the increasing tendency to differentiate between those figures who are Jewish (the doctors) and Jesus himself "...whose Jewishness seems almost completely to have been eliminated."¹² This is a characteristic we have seen with *The Finding* and other disputation paintings. Schreckenberg notes further that images undergo evolution over time, ranging from the highlighting of theological differences to outright defamation.¹³ Subsequently, Jews become aligned with a notion of an anti-Christ, or devil. Once the realm of the religious or theological is set aside, images become frequently concerned with social

⁶ In addition to Schreckenberg's survey and other works considered in this thesis, numerous treatments concerning multiple aspects of Jewish representations can be found in scholarship. Examples include: Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), Samantha Zacher, ed. *Imagining the Jew in Anglo Saxon Literature and Culture* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2016), Richard I. Cohen, *Place in Modern Jewish Culture and Society* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2018), Jeremy Cohen, *Christ Killers: The Jews and the Passion from the Bible to the Big Screen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Henry N. Claman, *Jewish Images in the Christian Church: Art as the Mirror of the Jewish-Christian Conflict 200-1250 C.E.* (Georgia, Mercer University Press, 2000).

⁷ Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*.

⁸ *The Finding* is referred to yet is omitted from the page. Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, 211.

⁹ The collection is presented as a European survey; however, it is clear that the majority are German in origin.

¹⁰ Fourth Lateran Council, 1215 where in addition to dress codes, the doctrine of transubstantiation was defined.

¹¹ The Jewish ring is described in Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, fn.145, 70.

¹² Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, 22.

¹³ Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, 22.

and civic matters such as the now familiar trope of the usurer. There are additionally images that build upon various legends. Perhaps the most egregious is the legend of the *Judensau* (Jews' sow). This comprises of the image of Jews suckling a female pig and engaging in obscene acts with her in a mockery of Judaism and the religious prohibition of pork. The *Judensau* can be seen in sculptured stonework in a number of European (mainly German) churches and cathedrals.¹⁴ The Jewish figures depicted are clearly identified by their hats, discussed further below. We now turn our focus to how portrayals of Jews have become attached to concepts of vision and blindness.

Sara Lipton's *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible Moralisée*, and *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* provide significant contributions to the field.¹⁵ *Dark Mirror* examines representations ranging from the benign, exoticized and those connoting wisdom to virulent cruel caricatures. Her extensive discussion of vision and blindness as recurring motifs has informed my thinking. Lipton highlights the issues around spectacle and the developing emphasis upon vision in Christian worship. Her remarks on the issue of appearances and how this translates into matters of seeing, blindness, being seen and, moreover, the impetus on the part of ecclesiastical bodies to assign how one *should* see is insightful.¹⁶ It becomes clear that the matter of seeing and blindness are not merely simple monikers or reductive signifiers. There is a deeper philosophical issue present here.

Lipton describes the appearance of Jews *qua* Jews in Christian art as a sudden phenomenon. For the first thousand years of Christian history there is no discernible presence of Jews *as Jews* in art. Only as Christianity adopted more vision-oriented modes of worship

¹⁴ In medieval Germany, a *Judensau* was supposed to deter Jews from settling in an area according to Verónica Zaragovia in the online Tablet Magazine, Oct. 31st, 2017.

www.tabletmag.com/sections/community/articles/martin-luther-anti-semitism (accessed 2nd June 2021).

¹⁵ Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible Moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), Lipton, *Dark Mirror*.

¹⁶ No pun intended; however, note that language denoting knowledge is often linked linguistically and conceptually with sight and seeing. For example, observation, vision, perception, apprehension, recognition and so on. Biblical language is steeped in this tendency. See Martin O'Kane's discussion in *Painting the Text: The Artist as Biblical Interpreter* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 1-33. Additionally, Martin Jay points to "some twenty-one visual metaphors in this [one] paragraph," in his introduction to *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, (California: University of California Press, 1993), 1-2, where he highlights a number of words derived from Latin and Greek words associated with the visual. Examples include, vigilant (*vigilare*, to watch), inspect (*specere*, to look at or observe), demonstrate (*monstrare*, to show) et al. His intention is to highlight the "sedimented importance of the visual in the English language," and his point extends to other European languages. Additionally, we can note that the ancient Greeks developed theories concerning the link between knowledge and sight. Notwithstanding the human tendency to link the two, there are discernible, particular matters of interest to do with blindness, looking and how to see that Lipton explores around the various visualisations and depictions of Jews.

did the appearance of recognisable Jewish figures emerge. What is meant by “art” here is equivocal. I discuss the “notional viewer,” yet Lipton’s initial examples comprise of manuscript illustrations integrated within texts rather than as objects positioned for the gaze of passers-by. We might therefore conceive of the past’s notional *reader* in addition to spectator. Furthermore, images that essentially lay within manuscripts became translated and developed into objects and pictures over time where the beholder experiences (and is confronted by) images in alternate ways and is thus transformed into a “viewer” or spectator.¹⁷

These images provided the notional viewer with a set of articulations of what it was to be a Christian, and therefore what it was *not* to be Christian. Thus, the figure of the Jew provided an example or “type” of non-Christian for beholders. The figure of the Jew was initially conveyed as wearing the Jewish “hat” or *Judenhut* (Figs. 78, 79, 80). The hat itself has no discernible origin, and Lipton notes that it is *art* that provides evidence for its existence. The earliest known configuration is an illustrated manuscript dating from around 1015.¹⁸ The illustrations within comprise two pages with upper and lower sections. In one section, Jewish figures wear pointed hats during their baptism. Lipton surmises that the figures are meant to be Judean religious leaders. A further illustration depicts a trio also wearing pointed hats which she associates with the legendary three wise men present at the Nativity. As there is no detail regarding the three wise men in the Gospels, the Church fathers speculated extensively as to their status and foundation. They are venerated in Christian tradition, imbued with an oriental, eastern quality suffused with mystical wisdom. Naomi Lubrich, responding to Lipton’s text notes that eventually, the pointed hat lost the prestige associated with the wise men and developed into a signifier of the non-seeing Jew who was “entwined in a discourse of visual fallacy.”¹⁹

The *Judenhut* marks the inauguration of differentiation of Jews from Christians in artworks. The *Judenhut* was imposed upon Jews by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). Curiously, as alluded above, there is no evidence to suggest that Jews had their own requirements for head covering prior to this enforcement. Contrary to assumptions, there is

¹⁷ In the present day our experience of images is ubiquitous, therefore it is appropriate to think of ourselves as viewers for the purposes of discussion. Part of that ubiquity is surely located in the abundance of online imagery which can further flatten out the origins of pictures in a typical image search.

¹⁸ Named the Second Gospel Book of Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim. Hildesheim Cathedral Treasury ms 18 (Dom and Diözesanmuseum DS 18) Cited in Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 25, 291, n 40.

¹⁹ Naomi Lubrich, “The Wandering Hat: Iterations of the Medieval Jewish Pointed Cap,” *Jewish History*, (December 2015), 203-244, 204.

no biblical injunction upon men to cover their heads in Judaism and it has been argued that rabbinical injunctions to wear a *yarmulke* (as decreed in the *Shulchan Arukh*) formed an attempt at defiance toward the papal decree.²⁰ With the imposition of the *Judenhut* the growing negative associations attributed to Jews became attached to the hat. As Lubrich notes, the hat migrated to the depiction of dwarfs who, via various folktales, became figures of deception, tricksters and *manipulators of vision* with the pointed hat being the principal signifier.²¹

The importance of vision as opposed to appearance is crucial to our discussion. It is not merely that Jews were thought to be blind to the messiahship of Jesus. Rather, the presence, or visibility of Jews in artworks taught Christians *how to see* and moreover to understand what seeing meant. This was done via Jews-as-mediators and thus the hat becomes not a signifier of Jewish identity, but what Lipton refers to as “an index of perception.”²² In the Christian visual panorama, Jews had to be visible at some level because their ancestors were the original witnesses to Christ. Therefore, their continued existence became part of testimony to Jesus’s life. Yet Jewish refusal to accept Jesus required explanation. The supposedly flawed vision of the Jew in not recognising Jesus as Christ was explained by Jewish attachment to the material and literal rather than the spiritual world.

The biblical underpinning for such strong emphasis upon the visual is located in both Old and New Testaments. David Nirenberg reminds us that discussions surrounding the biblical second commandment have influenced Jewish, Christian and Islamic art, and what is meant by it has been endlessly contested. Is all art forbidden or merely sculpture? Does it refer to art that depicts real things or those that are imagined? God’s many potential rivals mean that the requirement to teach ourselves “how to apprehend things properly” becomes foregrounded.²³ Martin O’Kane writes that notwithstanding its textual qualities the Bible presents a highly visual world in which the idea of visibility is very present. Many biblical narratives play on the notion of what is seen or hidden. God is presented as “all-seeing” and

²⁰ The *Schulchan Aruch* (lit. “set table”) is a compilation of Jewish Law, published 1565. Its primary author, R. Yosef Karo declared head covering mandatory for speaking the name of God and entering a synagogue. However, there were objections and to this day the wearing of the *yarmulke* remains a convention, i.e., lore rather than law. Lubrich cites Esther Juhasz on this point, “The humiliating Jewish *Judenhut* [transformed] in medieval Germany into a proudly worn mark of identity.” Juhasz, “Externally Fashioned Aspects,” 23. Cited in Lubrich, “The Wandering Hat,” 231, n. 83.

²¹ Lubrich, “The Wandering Hat,” 236.

²² Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 80.

²³ The point is prefaced by a reminder that concern about how humans distinguish between the real and the image (representation) predates Christianity. Kessler and Nirenberg, *Judaism and Christian Art*, 390.

yet remains “hidden” we are warned not to attempt a likeness of God, yet humanity is made in God’s image. Additionally, the affliction of blindness serves as a metaphor for ignorance. In the biblical world, it is sight that leads to insight.²⁴ The prophets allude to light and vision as metaphors for the knowledge of God. Lipton points to the Benedictine theologian Rupert of Deutz who equated light with grace, arguing for the devotional value of vision.²⁵ One illustration of this idea is the figure of Jesus configured and pictured as *light* of the world.²⁶ By way of example, O’Kane describes the book of Isaiah as a paradoxical yet highly visual text. It contrasts visions of God with the necessity for his hiddenness, and its essential contrasting of vision and blindness remain in an unresolved tension.²⁷ This requires brief elucidation.

Earlier in this thesis, we saw that Holman Hunt referenced the book of Isaiah in *The Finding*, and that Isaiah is very often treated as a fifth Christian Gospel. Jews and Christians each claim the Hebrew scriptures as their own, understanding and interpreting them differently, and so it is for the book of Isaiah.²⁸ Some Christian interpretations have used the allusions and references to sight and blindness to critique Jews. John Sawyer identifies what he refers to as a “sinister thread” in Christian sermons and commentaries running through such interpretations. This begins within the New Testament itself which cites or alludes to Isaiah on some 250 occasions.²⁹ Additionally, Jesus himself is thought to cite Isaiah, and indeed is thought to have “grown up” with Isaiah.³⁰ Sawyer writes that where Jews in exile in all ages took comfort from Isaiah, the prophet’s words were used against them by Christians.³¹

In addition to Isaiah’s significant contribution to the formation and development of Christianity, its influence continues to hold sway in the modern sphere. Phrases drawn from Isaiah permeate the English language and literature forming the backdrop to western

²⁴ Martin O’Kane, “The Bible and the Visual Imagination,” in *Painting the Text: The Artist as Biblical Interpreter*, 2007 (op. cit.) and a later edition in Martin O’Kane (ed) *Imaging the Bible: An Introduction to Biblical Art* (London, SPCK, 2008).

²⁵ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 75.

²⁶ Not least by Holman Hunt himself by naming his renowned painting of Jesus knocking at the door, *The Light of the World* (1851-3).

²⁷ O’Kane, “The Bible and the Visual Imagination,” 22.

²⁸ In the main, Christians will be reading from Greek, Syriac, Latin, German or English translations whereas Jews will read from the original Hebrew or the ancient Jewish Aramaic translation, (Targum) resulting in an alternative perspective from that of the Church, 5-6.

²⁹ John F. A Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996), 21.

³⁰ There is some residual debate on the precise citations. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel* 4, 23.

³¹ Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 35-41.

European culture. When we encounter phrases such as, “swords beaten into ploughshares” (2:4), “a voice crying out in the wilderness” (40:3), or that “there is no peace for the wicked” (48:22, 57:21), it is Isaiah we recall. Additionally, many great works of art and literature draw upon Isaiah. Isaiah therefore does not belong solely in some distant realm of the religious. Its frequent deployment of vision and blindness, images which figure prominently in the world of the Bible, have become stitched into the fabric of the modern world. Given the propensity to draw upon Isaiah to critique Jews on account of their supposed blindness to the spiritual message, there can be no mystery attached to the blind rabbi in *The Finding*. The motif of blindness cascades down from the world of the New Testament to the modern day, through art and sculpture. Such artefacts, which themselves require the sense of sight to experience, further seek to train the eye in *how* to see. The matter of sight and blindness was a concern for the New Testament writers. As Lipton summarises, Paul insists that it is possible for the true Christian to believe *without seeing*, yet this belief sits uneasily with the notion of God incarnated as Jesus as a visible tangible person, who was seen and witnessed.³²

We have already discussed (in chapter five) how, in the public sphere, the sculpted personifications of *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* crystallise the notion of Jewish blindness. As Jews were thought to be guilty of what amounted to a *wilful* blindness, Christians and Jews were to see and witness the correct social positioning of Jews as Augustine’s down-trodden, defeated Jews. Lipton makes the case that many portrayals were designed to teach the Christian individual how to see *correctly*, and how there was a “Jewish” way of looking to be avoided. We need to be clear that this does not merely concern how the Jew “looks,” (appears) but how the Jew “looks” as in the Jew’s *gaze*. Lipton observes how this shift towards the gaze can be seen in a prayer-book illustration of around 1170-75. The composite illustration contains the prominent figure of Isaiah positioned next to a figure trampling the “grapes of wrath” (Isaiah 63:1-6). It also positions a long-haired, this time *seeing* Synagoga (complete with pointed hat, unusual for a female figure) alongside a figure of *Mors*, the Roman personification of Death.³³ *Synagoga* and *Mors* are positioned on Christ’s left-hand (therefore, sinister) side. Synagoga’s gaze is construed as hostile and malevolent. Lipton coins this gaze as typifying the development of the Jew’s “lethal gaze.” Although this may

³² Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 6. Lipton also draws attention to Nirenberg’s discussion on Paul, in Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 53-68. On page 53 Nirenberg cites 1 Corinthians 1:19-24 which quotes Isaiah 29:14 on Jewish requirement of “signs.” Nirenberg also discusses the matter of blindness and aesthetics in Paul’s words citing Romans 9:22-23, 11:26 in Nirenberg, *Aesthetic Theology*, 9-12

³³ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 120-121.

seem to be an indictment of Jews, Lipton claims it is more concerned with helping Christians see Christ's sacrifice "in the proper spirit" with its curious binary juxtapositions.³⁴ Lipton identifies further cases of this "lethal gaze" with the deployment of Jewish hostile, glaring expressions. In some images, the "oppressive Jew" is not depicted as inflicting bodily harm but looks with derision at Jesus and his followers. The Jew then becomes one whose *gaze* attacks, derides and threatens. In this way, the Jew is transformed into an oppressor figure clearly differentiated from the good Christian, who is, in turn oppressed. Lipton further hypothesises that new depictions of Jewish types and scenes came into vogue because they offered opportunities to depict Jews in this way, with sneering and scowling figures.³⁵ It was not only the matter of the Jewish gaze that was utilised to convey a notion of evil.

The visibility (or not) of God provided substance for an on-going debate taking place across the argument for a spiritual, less material understanding of God. Constructions of the "unseeing Jew" were partly a means for instructing the laity. In this way, Lipton's discussion conceptualises the figure of the Jew as a *stand-in* figure for non-believing, ambivalent Christians. This has the potential to reveal the dynamics of *The Finding's* parallel construction of the non-seeing Jew standing in for the Christian, a point to which we shall return. The schism between the image, the re-presentation, and reality further forms a point of interest here to be discussed in what follows. The overwhelming focus upon vision became enmeshed with Christ's suffering and the beauty understood to be conveyed through that. If Christians struggled to see such suffering as a manifestation of beauty, Christian pictures were designed to recalibrate their senses, as Lipton puts it, "teaching the viewer to question his own preferences."³⁶ Medieval thought understood such concepts as ugliness and beauty as value-laden. Beauty was construed as an absolute value representing what is true and good.³⁷ This meant that the ugliness of the Jew became equated with evil. The concept of the "wicked Jew" has been noted by Dana Katz in her discussion on the Simon of Trent affair, also

³⁴ Lipton points out that the picture does not construe the lance bearer and sponge giver as Jews, and in doing this it is the "contemptuous gaze" that delineates the Jew and thus teaches the Christian how to "see." Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 122.

³⁵ Examples offered include the Pharisee grimacing in the Great Canterbury Psalter, Paris, BN ms. Lat. 8846, fol. 3v., and a sneering Jew mocking Jesus on the road to Calvary on the Balfour Ciborium. Cited in Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 123 and 319, n. 60 and 61.

³⁶ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 123.

³⁷ Roger Scruton's *Beauty: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) provides a helpful succinct discussion on this complex subject.

immortalised in images.³⁸ The background relates to the unfortunate death of two-and-a-half-year-old Simon Unferdorben who went missing on Good Friday, 1475.³⁹ Simon's story is not the only event of its kind, but it is one of the most documented. Legends of the so-called blood libel (whereby Jews were reputed to kill Christian children to obtain their blood for the Passover) were common, and Jews were blamed for Simon's murder. A circular argument developed whereby the stories of ritual murder of children served to justify the accusations, and to justify the ritual murder legend itself. Consequently, thirteen Jewish men were sentenced to death, including the community's leaders and two moneylenders. Simon was beatified, and venerated as a martyr.⁴⁰ Stephen J. Campbell notes that Simon's story became a cultic legend that spread across Italy, Austria and Germany with increasing momentum. This can be identified in cultural references, for example, Romanino's *Castragatti (Cat Castrators)* (1531-32) (Fig. 89), intended to be darkly comic, functions as a parody of the frequent images of Simon of Trent. Furthermore, the child is invariably pictured in images that confuse and conflate the Jewish *brit millah* ritual (circumcision) with the blood libel charge. The figure of Simon has been conflated also with that of Jesus at the crucifixion. Katz refers to an instance of a mural painting depicting Simon that was positioned in a typological relationship with the Crucifixion in a strange blending of legends and religious narrative.⁴¹ The idea that Jews were inherently evil emerged from the belief that Jews were responsible for the death of Christ. It is not too big a leap of thought to understand how the motif of the Jew-as-oppressor could become increasingly commonplace in medieval and renaissance images.

Gordon Mork refers to the juxtaposition of "wicked Jews" and "suffering Christians" in his discussion of the Oberammergau Passion play. This is a renowned cultural theatrical event performed periodically (every decade) since 1634 by the inhabitants of Oberammergau, Bavaria. We touched on the Passion play in the previous chapter in our discussion on spectacle.⁴² Mork introduces his discussion in terms of a psychological need to reverse the

³⁸ *Ritual Murder of Simon of Trent*, late C15th, Pian Camuno, Santa Maria della Rotonda, Giuseppe Alberti, *Martirio di San Simonino da Trento*, 1677, Daniel Mauch (Bottega attr.) *Martirio di Simonino da Trento*, 1500-10, Nuremberg Chronicle, Simon of Trent, Hartmann Schedel, 1493, 254v. In addition, numerous woodcuts, sculpted altarpieces, church carvings, illustrations and paintings that have been produced, many examples of which can be viewed with an online image search. See Dana E. Katz, *The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

³⁹ Translating as *Simon Immaculate*.

⁴⁰ Later rescinded by the Catholic Church.

⁴¹ Katz, *The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance*, 150. See also Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, 274-279.

⁴² See also J. Cohen, *Christ Killers*.

claims of victimhood, especially in the context of post WWII Germany. He contrasts the representations of Jews as the suffering victims of the Holocaust with the portrayal of Jews as the wicked agents against suffering Christians in this German Passion play. The focus of his essay, and that of James Shapiro's book *Oberammergau: The World's most Famous Passion Play*, is the tension surrounding modifications to the play as the new millennium approached.⁴³ Jewish organisations had criticised the play as anti-Semitic and inappropriate in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Additionally, they were keen to encourage a greater understanding of the Jewish context of Jesus and his followers.

The Passion play, which has evolved to be a major institution, attracts thousands of visitors to Oberammergau whose inhabitants have, in Shapiro's words, been "playing Jews for so long that visitors who share their stereotypes of what constitutes Jewishness have often commented upon the biblical aura of the villagers." It should be noted that no Jewish person has ever participated in the play, therefore the "Jewishness" in question approximates the kind of orientalising that applies to Sunday School renditions of the Nativity, however not quite. Strict rules apply to the *Oberammergau* mode of orientalising. No false beards, make up nor wigs are allowed. If playing the part of Jews, the villagers grow their hair and beards, and those playing Romans remain clean shaven in preparation for their roles. It is akin to a religious ritual for the villagers. Additionally, we see a similar kind of constituting of Jerusalem as both "here" and "there" as discussed earlier in this thesis. This suggests that as the *Oberammergau* play remains a predominantly Catholic affair, the pull of the *idea* of Jerusalem extends beyond the English Protestant imagination as discussed earlier. This is explicitly manifested in the transformation of the village into a hybrid Bavarian Jerusalem with houses painted with biblical scenes and street names reflecting key aspects of biblical narrative, such as Manna Street, Way of the Cross and Judas Street.⁴⁴ It is interesting to consider that at the time Holman Hunt set out upon his journey to the Holy Land to paint *The Finding*, visitors from England were making alternative pilgrimages to Oberammergau such was its renown.⁴⁵ The sense of timelessness attempted by the Oberammergau villagers contrasts sharply with the historical scholarship emerging in the wake of the Vatican II

⁴³ Gordon R. Mork, "'Wicked Jews and 'Suffering Christians' in the Oberammergau Passion Play," in *Representations of Jews Through the Ages*, eds. Leonard Jay Greenspoon and Bryan F. Le Beau, *Studies in Jewish Civilization* 8 (Nebraska: Creighton University Press, 1996) 153, James Shapiro, *Oberammergau: The Troubling Story of the World's Most Famous Passion Play* (London: Little, Brown & Co. 2000).

⁴⁴ James Shapiro, *Oberammergau*, 6-10.

⁴⁵ Shapiro helpfully reminds the reader that playing God on stage in Victorian England was considered blasphemous, hence the impetus to travel to see this surviving Passion play, *Oberammergau*, 113.

conference. The orientalisising costumes that had previously pitted “Pharisees” against Christians were no longer tenable. Actors that were cast as Priests wore horned hats, which were associated with the devil but surely have their origin in the pointed hats and other devilish apparatus that many historical woodcuts and illustrations depict. The wide gulf between what can be known of the historical Jesus and the essence of the Passion play reveals the extent to which Jews had come to be depicted as one-dimensional adversaries against the emerging Christian sect. The subsequent mapping of the idea of the malevolent “Pharisee” onto living Jewish people paves the way for what Shapiro describes as anti-Semitic distortion.⁴⁶ Moreover, in the way that *The Finding* conceals a culture of disputation, the *Oberammergau* Passion play can be seen to conceal the Jewishness of the characters it purports to be Christian. In turn, the Passion play holds a mirror to *The Finding*, which similarly attempts its own concealment of the same in its attempt at acknowledging and disparaging the materiality of Judaism. This concealment audaciously hides itself in plain sight amongst its portrayal of Jewish paraphernalia. The *Oberammergau* Passion play foregrounds the fictional quality of many representations of Jews.

David Nirenberg has written about the gulf between the *idea* of Jews or what we might conceive of as imaginary Jews, and the living Jews of reality. In his essay on *The Judaism of Christian Art*, Nirenberg reminds readers that “Jew” refers not only to “living adherent(s) of Judaism in any of its many forms,” it also includes “the many figures of Judaism imagined...from the outside: by Muslims and Christians...”⁴⁷ Nirenberg has made a substantial contribution to the particular and wider discussion on representations of Jews and Judaism. Three recent publications are of particular interest to this thesis. Two are predominantly concerned with art and aesthetics and the other, *Anti-Judaism* was discussed in the previous chapter. *Anti-Judaism* was concerned with the cultural formation of knowledge and critical thinking which Nirenberg claims developed out of thinking about Jews and Judaism.⁴⁸ He makes a correlative claim in his 2015 publication, *Aesthetic Theology and its Enemies: Judaism in Christian Painting, Poetry and Politics*, whereby practices of art and aesthetics were developed in the West in relation to Jews and Judaism. Some of this work developed from his contributions to the edited volume, *Judaism and Christian Art*, where he

⁴⁶ Shapiro, *Oberammergau*, 90. One can also see examples using Google street view.

⁴⁷ Herbert Kessler and David Nirenberg, eds, *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 388.

⁴⁸ Kessler and Nirenberg, *Judaism and Christian Art, and David Nirenberg, Aesthetic Theology and its Enemies: Judaism in Christian Painting, Poetry and Politics* (Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2015).

explores the conundrum concerning the inner and outer of fleshly and spiritual conceptions of God and humanity. According to Nirenberg, by exploring Christian theological issues by picturing Jews in artworks, Jews become a “medium” through which Christian cultures developed their religious ideas.⁴⁹

Nirenberg’s examination of Van Eyck’s *Fountain of Grace and the Triumph of the Church over the Synagogue* (c. 1432) (Fig. 90) offers further scope for understanding the mechanics of *The Finding*.⁵⁰ Nirenberg focuses upon the high degree of realism and the portrayal of Jews in this complex panel painting, which comprises of three different levels with God the father seated uppermost. At the base of the painting, positioned on the figure of God’s left-hand side, the presence of Jews affords van Eyck the opportunity to convey the proximity of unbelievers as a contrast to believing Christians. The Jewish figures are led by the high priest who is depicted as blindfolded. This element foregrounds the wilful nature of Jewish blindness. The Jews are shown turning away from the baptismal fountain and consulting scrolls painted to depict nonsensical Hebrew script. Was the text nonsensical because van Eyck’s school had no knowledge of the Hebrew language beyond its general appearance, or was it depicted so as to convey to the beholder the idea that this is how Jews read and interpret the Hebrew words, as meaningless, that is, to misinterpret? It is an unresolved point.⁵¹ However, as Nirenberg writes, the detailed foregrounding of *media* in the form of books, scrolls and also music (and the gestures of preaching) call attention to the “fleshy letter and its perils.” Further to this is the attention to detail placed upon the depiction of the high priest’s breastplate, a ritual obscurity, which required meticulous attention to the text of Exodus (39: 8-22) for its rendition. That it is done with such literalism is surely a paradox. Good Christians are depicted as transcending the letter of the law whilst the painter must adhere to it. Nirenberg notes the doubling aspect in this part of the painting. Whilst the artist Judaizes in his literal rendition of the high priest’s garb, he anticipates the inevitable critique by depicting the priest as blindfolded. The observant critic is thus ensnared and positioned as one who cannot see the spiritual message, becoming as if one of the Jewish figures who is “standing blind before the fountain of grace.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Nirenberg, *Aesthetic Theology*, 10.

⁵⁰ Attributed to the school of Van Eyck. It is worth recalling that Van Eyck’s painting *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) was of great interest to the Pre-Raphaelites as the recent exhibition in London, *Reflections* demonstrated.

⁵¹ This is especially difficult as the degree of knowledge of Hebrew amongst Christians is uncertain.

⁵² Nirenberg, *Aesthetic Theology*, 38-9.

We recall that Van Eyck was known to be an influence upon Holman Hunt. The blindfolded priest in the *Fountain of Grace* finds an echo in *The Finding's* blind priest (or “rabbi”). Additionally, the extent to which Holman Hunt can be said to “Judaize” with his meticulous rendering of Jewish paraphernalia correlates highly with Van Eyck’s own approach. More generally, it is apparent that Holman Hunt makes use of an ugly/beauty dichotomy in *The Finding* suggested by an additional blend of opposing old and young. In *The Finding*, the headgear on the figures who are signposted as “Jewish” can be traced to the *Judenhut* which is particularly noticeable in the manner in which they come to a point. As with the *Oberammergau* Passion play *The Finding* differentiates the dramatis personae into Jew and Christian whilst depicting a moment in time when the latter were not yet conceptualised. Moreover, Holman Hunt whilst foregrounding the matter of seeing, blindness and looking, arguably trains the beholder in a carefully choreographed exercise in what and how to see. Biblical and typological references are abundant as is an overt reference to the scriptures in scrolls, including the appearance of scripture itself, written in Hebrew (and Latin) text, implicated in the opened scroll held by the young “seeing” rabbi and engraved into the doorway. Perhaps one of the most ironic examples of Jewish material culture in the context of this discussion is the detailed rendering of the *tallitizim* with their stripes and fringes. The *tallit* is a modern derivative of the fringed garment worn by religious men.⁵³ Its purpose is to “discipline the lust of the eyes,” training one in how to “see” as outlined in Numbers (15:37-40).⁵⁴ As Nirenberg writes, the matter of idolatry is not confined to objects alone, but how we see and understand things.⁵⁵ It is not clear when the tallit as an *additional* garment came into use, however, there is some uncertainty as to its existence at the time depicted in *The Finding*.

I now turn to another example discussed by Nirenberg. In common with *The Finding* and other paintings we have considered in this thesis, *Ecco Homo* (circa 1515) (Fig. 91) by Quentin Massys breaks through the “fourth wall” by having a figure address the beholder directly. The painting depicts Christ being presented to the people by Pilate. Massys positions the action of the painting as taking place in two distinct part of the picture, above and below.

⁵³ Jesus’s own fringed garment is referred to in the accounts of the haemorrhaging woman in Matthew, 9:2-22, Mark 5:25-34, and Luke, 8:43-48.

⁵⁴ Numbers 15:37-39: “The Lord said to Moses: Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and to put a blue cord on the fringe at each corner. You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes.” (NRSV)

⁵⁵ Kessler and Nirenberg, *Judaism and Christian Art*, 390.

The viewer's natural gaze is thus positioning as though amongst the crowd at the foot of the picture. We are positioned behind a figure, in red who does not look where he supposed to, that is at the figure of Jesus. His hood covers his eyes as an additional marker of blindness lest we forget that he is meant to be a Jewish figure. The hooded man addresses the third figure on the lower right-hand side who looks outwards directly at the notional viewer. Nirenberg concludes that the viewer, or rather we, are made complicit in the proceedings as if to interrogate us into declaring if we are Jewish or Christian beholders in the events. This is highly reminiscent of the sequence of looking, seeing and blindness evident in *The Finding's* staging of an event as discussed earlier. As with Holman Hunt, Massys also creates a sequence of events into which we, as beholders, are included. Nirenberg notes that the rendering of the helmet worn by a soldier brings the matter of vision once again to the beholder's attention. Massys could have taken something from Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) (Fig. 39) with its renowned depiction of a realistic mirror. There is, as Nirenberg points out, a likelihood that the demonstration of artistic skill by depicting a reflective surface played a role in its appearance. Furthermore, this points to the power of painting in turn to reflect the world and address the viewer. In doing this, we return to the notion of objectification, and a particular conception of the world, discussed earlier in this thesis. Massys toys with the illusion of painting to the point of making the helmet *sculptural* in quality. The rivets of the helmet actually stand proud of the picture plane, and it is for the viewer in situ to discern the two or three dimensionality of the object. Nirenberg concludes that the meticulous attention to detail in the material components of the painting equates to a utilisation of Judaizing to represent Jewishness.

Our all too brief examination of the historical tradition of representing Jews has noted the importance of vision and spectacle inherent in these representations. The relevance of this is does not rest entirely upon unkind or untruthful depictions. Rather as both Lipton and Nirenberg allude, the figure of the Jew is utilised in a didactic and instructive approach in how to see correctly. It is apparent that something similar occurs in *The Finding*, with the conspicuous references to seeing, blindness and looking. The blind rabbi, the "seeing" rabbi, the blind beggar and the gaze of Jesus looking out at the notional viewer all construe a series of vision motifs as we have established. We saw how Dürer's *Lugano* panel (1509) (Fig. 65) made use of comparable motifs suggesting an understanding of both the Lukan inspired genre and the corresponding motif of seeing and non-seeing. The implied reference to blind Synagoga in both artworks serves to underscore a motif designed to be visible for in public

spaces. Thus, there is a reference to the idea of spectacle within works themselves forming spectacle. *The Finding* additionally differentiates Jews in terms of clothing with the presence of a Jewish hat, or at least its derivative. In this way it neatly divides the figures as nominally Christians or Jews without deviating from the mission to create a believable first-century scene.

The *Oberammergau* Passion play provides an insight into understanding *The Finding*'s orientalising. The *Oberammergau*'s strict rules on beards, wigs and make-up suggest an impulse towards authenticity in its realisation, as in bringing into being, of an *imagined* biblical world. There can be no overt artifice. The parallels are striking. Holman Hunt's determination to find what he deemed to be authentic models in addition to the setting for his painting has its corollary in the *Oberammergau*'s procedures. His attempted relegation of the appearance of artifice within his schema of symbolic realist painting technique is evident. This is not to suggest that the *Oberammergau* play was a direct influence upon Holman Hunt. Rather, what informs each is a shared network of cultural meanings developed over a long period of time. I have referred to this as a discourse of disputation which here operates as a mode of orientalising.

For both *The Finding* and the *Oberammergau* Passion play the associated acts of pilgrimage are worth noting. The *Oberammergau* play was (and remains) a locale for acts of religious pilgrimage. Arguably, the act of pilgrimage on the part of Holman Hunt in going to the Holy Land to make *The Finding*, and then subsequently on the part of audiences viewing *The Finding* as Shalini Le Gall alluded makes for a compelling parallel.⁵⁶ We can see Eitan Bar Yosef's conceptualisation of a construing of Jerusalem as both "here" and "there" at work in both *The Finding* as artwork and *Oberammergau* as cultural event. The impulse to do this emanates from the desire to connect the present to the *imagined* past via a symbolic chain of continuity. This results in a collapse of time and space into a timeless present where biblical orientalised figures operate alongside figures in the present day. As Nirenberg recognises, there is a gulf between the Jews of Christian imagination and the living adherent[s] of Judaism.⁵⁷ I see this splitting of Jews between biblical characters and living persons as a kind of orientalist *misrepresentation*. And it is to that aspect of orientalism that I now turn.

⁵⁶ Shalini Le Gall, "A Pilgrimage to Bond Street: William Holman Hunt in the Middle East," *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, 24 (Fall 2015): 63-77.

⁵⁷ Kessler and Nirenberg, *Judaism and Christian Art*, 388.

7.2 Orientalism and Misrepresentation

I have already alluded to *The Finding's* frequent attribution as “orientalist” which, in its critical sense refers to a recent debate, still ongoing, instigated by Edward Saïd’s book *Orientalism* (1978). Previously, Orientalism (as Oriental studies) had been understood as a branch of scholarship comprising of the wide-ranging study of the Middle East, Hebraism and other languages.⁵⁸ Separately to this, the school of Orientalist painting consisted of western European artists who travelled and worked from observation. Oriental scholar Bernard Lewis describes such artworks as rather “extravagant and romantic” in style, and it is within that tradition of painting that Holman Hunt is often (sometimes awkwardly) placed.⁵⁹ The attribution of “orientalist” to Holman Hunt is suffused with the tremors resulting from the highly charged debate that has resulted from Saïd’s book. In what follows, I discuss Saïd’s thesis and how, in the light of his book scholars have assessed *The Finding's* orientalism.

In summary, Saïd effectively re-defined and reconceptualised scholarly Orientalism as a constructed binary opposition between West and East or Occident and Orient, in a relational imbalance of power with the Occident positioned as superior. The various facets of orientalism have colluded to construct “the East” as the “mysterious orient” which is more of an invention of the Western European imagination rather than anything extant or objectively observable in any reality. Orientalism becomes a style of thought, a way of thinking about the “other” in a Western Eurocentric approach that is racist, prejudiced and essentialist within a discourse of imperialism. Not confined to scholarship, the oeuvre includes works of fiction, travel writing, epics, in addition to art, all of which are ideologically interlinked to form a structural dominance over the “orient.” This is regardless of intent on the part of the individual scholar who works within a framework that has at its core western scholarly claims to objectivity obscuring these unequal power relationships. Merely paying closer attention to one’s scholarly method and attempting to achieve ever more accuracy will not ameliorate matters.

⁵⁸ Much of its early scholarship entailed philological study of texts which then allowed for deeper exploration of philosophy, theology, literature and history.

⁵⁹ Bernard Lewis, “The Question of Orientalism,” *The New York Review of Books*, 3 (1982) pp. 1-20.

An example congruent with Saïd's critique is Malcolm Warner's essay in *The Orientalists* which includes *The Finding* as part of a discussion on religion and orientalism.⁶⁰ Warner ties the British fascination with the East with a Protestant search for biblical truth because the East was thought to form an unpolluted and untouched source of religious knowledge.⁶¹ A recent exhibition in France on the theme of Jews in orientalist painting yielded an extensive catalogue, *Les Juifs Dans L'Orientalisme* (Jews in Orientalism). The exhibition catalogue situates Jews and Judaism within a middle-eastern setting. Additionally, it situates *The Finding* and Holman Hunt's later reworking of the Lukan scene as prominent works amongst a wide range of art featuring Jews and Jewish oriental themes.⁶²

In some accounts of *The Finding* some awkwardness towards its orientalism is apparent. Tim Barringer acknowledges the religious impetus in describing Hunt as following in the footsteps of earlier artists such as David Roberts and David Wilkie and that this in itself makes Holman Hunt an orientalist. Barringer attempts to show that Holman Hunt, in line with Saïd's *Orientalism*, conformed to a way of constructing the Orient as timeless and inferior to the West. As I have mentioned briefly (chapter one) that Barringer locates *The Finding*'s orientalism chiefly within Stephens's pamphlet rather than discussing the painting's Jewish presence.⁶³ In common with others, recognition of the orientalisering of Jews is awkward or does not register. There are further examples.

Nicholas Tromans has written about Holman Hunt's orientalism and attitudes to events and people in the Holy Land. One focus centres around Holman Hunt's watercolour landscape work as a way of framing the Holy Land in English Protestant terms and political interests. In common with Barringer, Tromans acknowledges the religious impulse motivating Holman Hunt and has critically examined Holman Hunt's sideways step into political involvements during his sojourns. Much of this activity took Hunt away from

⁶⁰ Mary Anne Stevens ed., *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse, European Painters in North Africa and the Near East*, Royal Academy of Arts (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 32-39.

⁶¹ Holman Hunt's artistic predecessor the painter David Wilkie (1785-1841) called for a "Martin Luther" of painting. This was tied in with a Protestant sense that the "orient" was a place of authenticity. Warner in Stevens, *The Orientalists*, 32-39.

⁶² Also prominently featured are the works of Maurycy Gottlieb, *Les Juifs dans L'Orientalisme*, Exhibition Catalogue (Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, France: Flammarion, 2012), 148-155. Holman Hunt was to return to *The Finding*'s subject in his one and only commission which was for a mosaic for Clifton College Chapel in Oxford. This was planned as a reworking of *The Finding* this time entitled *Christ Amongst the Doctors*. The mosaic was never completed however; a small gouache painting exists of the proposed design. This newer rendition, whilst containing many of its predecessors' characteristics, nevertheless conveyed a somewhat less confrontational interpretation of the story. The figure of the twelve-year-old Jesus is in a semi-kneeling position surrounded by a more friendly group of doctors and other youngsters. See Bronkhurst, *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 2, 180-1.

⁶³ Barringer, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, 2012, 136-7.

painting periodically and was linked to both Protestant missionary activity and Jewish resistance to conversion. Woven throughout is a recognition of Holman Hunt's innate sense of English proprietorship and connection with Jerusalem congruent with Saïdian orientalist tropes.⁶⁴ In Tromans's essay *Palestine: Picture of Prophecy*, the importance of *The Finding* in Holman Hunt's first visit to the Holy Land is clear, Tromans describing it as his (Holman Hunt's) "major project," although a critical examination of its Jewish orientalism remains elusive.⁶⁵ For Tromans, Holman Hunt's orientalism is more fully directed towards Muslims and his religiously inspired Christian Zionism framed accordingly. As is so often the case when Holman Hunt's Middle East works are under consideration, the emphasis lies with his activities and attitudes towards others and religious or racial identity emanating from his writing rather than a close examination of the paintings. Additionally, in Tromans's (edited) book *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting*, a decision was made not to include *The Finding* amongst the examples of Holman Hunt's work proffered which I find curious given its importance in Holman Hunt's schema.

Shalini Le Gall examines Holman Hunt's sojourns in the Holy Land in terms of religious pilgrimage. Whilst Le Gall draws upon Stephens's pamphlet as evidence for Holman Hunt's activities, she bypasses its orientalism. Her most pertinent observation is a recognition of what I term a "pilgrimage by proxy." This refers to the opportunity that the public had to view *The Finding* in lieu of their own foreign pilgrimage. I would argue that this in itself can be understood as part of an alternative interpretation of orientalism in keeping with Eitan Bar Yosef's thesis *The Holy Land in English Culture* referred to earlier in this thesis. However, the point is passed over in the article along with any discussion on the orientalist treatment of the Jewish models.⁶⁶

In a further example, in the context of *The Finding*, Michaela Giebelhausen writes of Holman Hunt presenting himself as the brave explorer of a dangerous East. Holman Hunt she suggests, was privately "marred by doubt" according to his diaries which contrast markedly

⁶⁴ Tromans described Holman Hunt as politically inexperienced and presumptuous likening him to modern day celebrities making political gestures. In an amusing aside, he suggested that he was "the Bob Geldof of his day." Nicholas Tromans, lecture, *William Holman Hunt: Pre-Raphaelite and Orientalist* given at the University of York, 1st December 2016.

⁶⁵ I note the alternative description which does not refer to a rendition of the Lukan story, nor as one of many *Christ Among the Doctors* (or Disputation) paintings, but as one where Jews are electing whether or not to accept Christ. Nicholas Tromans, "Palestine: Picture of Prophecy" in Lochnan & Jacobi eds., *Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision* (Art Gallery of Ontario, 2008), 135-159.

⁶⁶ Le Gall, "A Pilgrimage to Bond Street," 63-77.

with his later published memoirs. In accordance with many writers, she frames the discussion around the themes identified by Saïd, namely the sense of timelessness to which Holman Hunt refers, and the idea of a sacred geography framing his ideas. As alluded to earlier (chapter three) Holman Hunt had based his Temple design on the Crystal Palace Alhambra copy. Despite the “oriental inaccuracy” of Holman Hunt’s Temple, Giebelhausen moves the discussion towards religious themes in her examination of *The Finding*, thus its orientalism continues to be understood in terms of its style and thematic attachment with other paintings made during that visit rather than its Jewishness.⁶⁷

Julie Codell associates Holman Hunt’s orientalism with his claim to be the “originator” of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood which as the centre of the “English school” is thus “culturally hegemonic in the West.” She alludes to confrontational episodes in the Holy Land with Holman Hunt “masquerading” or playing the role of an Englishman, adopting a performative stance in his dealing with others. This chimes with Saïd’s conception of a “positioned superiority” on the part of the westerner.⁶⁸ In common with Codell, Marcia Pointon’s critical reading of Holman Hunt’s journeys in the Holy Land focuses on his activities and written claims rather than the art he produced. In common with other commentaries, Pointon alludes to Holman Hunt’s disparaging remarks about Arabs, but fails to draw attention to similar attitudes towards Jews which are evident in both Hunt’s memoirs and Stephens’s pamphlet as discussed in chapter three. Curiously, Pointon shifts the emphasis away from *The Finding* in favour of *The Scapegoat*. Describing Holman Hunt’s travels with Thomas Seddon in 1854, her remarks suggest that Holman Hunt’s first journey to the Holy Land was in order to paint *The Scapegoat*. And yet, *The Scapegoat* was begun (in part) due to the difficulties Holman Hunt claimed to have endured at the hands of the Jewish models whilst working on *The Finding*.⁶⁹ Moreover, it is clear from Holman Hunt’s correspondence with Ruskin discussed earlier, that Holman Hunt prioritised *The Finding* as a (or the) significant work of the journey, referring to it as “my *Last Supper*.” Pointon’s all too brief discussion of *The Finding* is framed around his “deceit” in getting the Jewish men to sit for him. She does allude to the “plethora of specifically Jewish archaeological detail” which for the modern viewer, makes the perception of the national (English) Protestant character of the work “difficult.” However, this “archaeological detail,” rich in potential for a discussion on

⁶⁷ Giebelhausen, *Painting the Bible*, 127-187.

⁶⁸ Julie F. Codell, “The Artist Colonized: Holman Hunt’s ‘bio-history,’ masculinity, Nationalism and the English School,” in Harding, *Reframing the Pre-Raphaelites*, 219.

⁶⁹ Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol. 1, 446-7.

orientalism, is set aside. The exclusion or marginalisation of *The Finding* from discussions about orientalism forms a conundrum given the importance of the painting to Holman Hunt and the painting's appearance. This is in tandem with the frequently noted marginalisation of Jews in Saïd's *Orientalism*, and indeed may even be as a result of it.

At this point it would be helpful to take a moment to critically reflect upon Saïd's *Orientalism*. There is not the space here to present a complete account of the relevant criticism.⁷⁰ However, I will draw attention to relevant points. Firstly, Saïd's initial exploration of the religious element of orientalism is mostly confined to Christianity and Islam. His reference to "the Bible lands" is a tacit acknowledgement of the western nineteenth century urge to confirm and underpin a Protestant Christian understanding of biblical truth. However, this remains peripheral to Saïd. We can understand *The Finding* in exactly these terms. As Amanda Burritt writes, "For Holman Hunt, firsthand experience of the Holy Land was essential..." alongside a more generalised "Protestant desire for evidence, experience and the application of reason in matters of religion." It would be fair to affirm that Holman Hunt was not alone in this quest, as "...demonstrating Biblical veracity was a central motivator for many Victorian artists, archaeologists and travellers."⁷¹ Although it is fairly evident that Holman Hunt the artist falls into this well-worn groove, it is less apparent that *The Finding's* Jewish presence fits so easily. Saïd's treatment of Jews is scant, and where it is manifest, it is to construct Jews as a component of the "oppressive West," as ethnically "white" and therefore aligned with colonialism. However, Saïd's approach works not only to marginalise Jews and thus misrepresents (or at least only partly represents) them paralleling the very process he criticises, it also works against his thesis as I will elucidate. Insofar as Stephens's pamphlet *orientalises*, it is reasonable to understand anti-Semitism as a form of orientalism in precisely Saïd's terms. There is no doubt in my mind that *The Finding* is orientalist and is so in a pejorative sense. However, although Saïd opened up an opportunity

⁷⁰ Scholars that have contributed to the discussion include Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Daniel Martin Varisco in Ian Richard Netton, ed., *Orientalism Revisited: Art, Land and Voyage* (London: Routledge, 2013), Ibn Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Saïd's Orientalism* (New York: Prometheus, 2007) Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), Jeffrey Librett, *Orientalism and the Figure of the Jew*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), Irfan Khawaja, "Essentialism, Consistency and Islam: A Critique of Edward Saïd's Orientalism." *Israel Affairs* 13 (4) (2007):689-713. doi: 10.1080/13537120701444961. J. Teitelbaum and M. Litvak, "Taking Stock of Orientalism." For a useful survey and discussion around the Saïdian debate, Matthew Scott, "Edward Saïd's Orientalism." *Essays in Criticism* 58 (1):64-81. 2008. doi: 10.1093/escrit/cgm025.

⁷¹ Burritt, *Visualising Britain's Holy Land*, 149-154.

to examine this phenomenon, *The Finding's* Jewish presence (the location of its orientalism) presents a challenge to Saïdian thought.

Saïd's book is notable for crucial omissions including that of German orientalism with its scholarly investigation of Judaism. The division of the Orient and Occident into areas populated by Muslims and Christians only presents a simplistic and inaccurate conception. Ibn Warraq points out that "...non-Muslims, and even non-Arabs hardly exist and are never acknowledged as Orientals with a history and presence." This includes Copts, Maronites, Mandeans, Berbers and Jews. "The Orient for Saïd comprised of the Middle East and North Africa and is peopled with Arabs and Muslims on one hand and "all the others" on the other hand. All of those "others" can never be part of "the Other" about whose fate, at the hands of Western Orientalists and Imperialists, Saïd is so concerned."⁷² Saïd disparaged prominent Islamic and African American orientalists.⁷³ More pertinently for the purposes of this thesis, Saïd's neglect of German orientalism, which he acknowledges and passes over, forms a wide lacuna.⁷⁴ Saïd explained the omission of German orientalism as being due to the need for some delimitation in selecting from a vast archive. Additionally, unlike Britain and France, Germany lacked imperial holdings in the Near East. Furthermore, Germany had largely been under the influence of Britain and France who were guilty of the imperialism he sought to address, hence the need to focus the study in their direction.

Susannah Heschel identifies a theological model of colonialism in the Jewish-Christian relation. She writes that Protestant theology with its "historical investigation of the origins of Christianity, provided fertile ground for the adoption of colonialist thinking." She writes that since the first-century, the theological relationship between the two faiths had been one of, "annexation, subjugation...control of Jewish scriptures and central religious ideas." Heschel sees a pattern of thought emanating from this religious relation that legitimated European colonialism. It is an arresting idea to conceive of Jewish texts as colonised when gathered into the Christian Bible and that this should form a pattern of thinking understood in the colonial ideas of German orientalism.⁷⁵ Heschel goes on to discuss Saïd's bypassing of German orientalism which, as part of its remit, included the

⁷² In a further irony and contrary to what is often assumed given his work, Saïd was a Palestinian Protestant Christian, not a Muslim. Warraq, *Defending the West*, 49.

⁷³ Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism," 20, 8.

⁷⁴ Susannah Heschel, "Revolt of the Colonized: Abraham Geiger's Wissenschaft Des Judentums as a Challenge to Christian Hegemony in the Academy." *New German Critique*, no. 77 (1999): 61-85. and already cited, Teitelbaum and Litvak, "Taking Stock of Orientalism," Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism," Varisco, *Orientalism Revisited*, Warraq, *Defending the West*, Librett, *Figure of the Jew*.

⁷⁵ Heschel, "Revolt of the Colonized," 61-2.

scholarly investigation of Judaism. This naturally creates a chasm for the lack of focus upon Jews who are, for the nineteenth-century West, its central *oriental* figures. I would see this as going hand in hand with the European nineteenth century's intense desire to study the Bible and its perceived origins understood in terms of a geographical link to the "East" and with those textual origins inextricably tied to Jews. To further understand the importance of Jewishness for the critique of orientalism I now turn to consider selected facets of German orientalism.

According to Jonathan Hess, the origin of the term "Semite" is linked directly to Orientalist scholars such as Gottfried Eichhorn and Johann Gottfried Herder, and was coined to distinguish between religion and race. Ironically, it had its roots in Orientalist *theological* discourse on Semitic languages, peoples and "race." The word gained prominence amongst Orientalists who were enthusiastic scholars of the Hebrew Bible understanding it to be their link to ancient Israel. As a phrase that appeared within historical-theological and philological discourse, it was often set against other terms such as Indo-European, Indo-Germanic or Aryan, and became intricately linked with the concept of race. The Semitic "race" became situated as inferior, stagnant, outside from and other to the progressive West. Hess writes that the term anti-Semitism, when introduced in the later 1870s, "consciously gestured towards this discourse."⁷⁶ In a sense, we can understand this as one set of negative prejudices replacing another. We can further understand this brief encapsulation as chiming with Saïd's *Orientalism* thesis.

One compelling figure in German Orientalism, Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791) is only mentioned by Saïd as one of the orientalists Saïd will refrain from discussing. Yet, as a scholar of great importance, Michaelis not only had a considerable influence, he fulfils the definition of "orientalist" in all its senses. He was skilled in a variety of languages, Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic and Syriac. He was a highly regarded biblical scholar and was extremely knowledgeable about and sympathetic towards Judaism. Additionally, having authored the standard six-volume work *Mosaisches Recht* (1775) Michaelis regarded the figure of Moses as "an enlightened legislator." Michaelis was an authoritative voice in debates concerning Jewish emancipation, and notwithstanding his admiration for Judaism he opposed Jewish integration into German society. He held the view that as separatism was a cornerstone of

⁷⁶ Jonathan M. Hess, "Johann David Michaelis and the Colonial Imaginary: Orientalism and the Emergence of Racial Antisemitism in Eighteenth-Century Germany." *Jewish Social Studies* (2000): 6 (2):56, 57.

Jewish law this could not be compromised. In true orientalist style, he was an advocate of the travel narrative to further understand Hebrew. His quest for greater knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, however, was a means to enable greater cultural distance from it. Effectively, Michaelis sought to *de-orientalise* the Bible and unhinge it from its cultural moorings, to disconnect Christianity from its perceived oriental origins. Michaelis's quest was more akin to a political supersessionism to facilitate the liberation of the Occident from its oriental past. Michaelis's colonialist fantasies were posited by him as a practical solution to the Jewish question. He hypothesised that the "southern" Jewish race could be "put in its proper place" to work in a climate, such as sugar islands, that would make them economically productive. These fantasies need to be seen in a wider context of colonialist thought *and biblical studies* says Hess. Michaelis was able to oscillate between religious and racial discourses to propagate his orientalism and work against Jewish emancipation to put the Jewish race in "its proper place." There were no German "sugar islands," however notwithstanding, Jews were positioned as potential deportee colonial subjects in the Michaelis worldview.

Michaelis's de-orientalising schema can be seen as part of an "Aryanising" approach whereby Christianity could be "rescued" from its Hebraic roots in order to make Jesus into an Aryan figure. Ivan Davidson Kalmar writes about French orientalist Ernest Renan's writing which, in common with Michaelis, sought to uncouple Christianity from its Hebraic roots by positing Jesus as one who "rises up above his oriental environment." Inherent in this is the marginalisation of Judaism in the quest to produce a Western hegemony in precisely the way that Saïd remarks.⁷⁷

In a response to Saïd, and one that develops his thesis, Lourens Minnema demonstrates a model outlining different kinds of orientalism. She understands Saïd's conception as but one strand in a field of *orientalisms*. She identifies two principal typologies of orientalism with intersecting subdivisions. First, an overarching typology of *Historical* orientalism comprising the religious, philosophical, imperialist and artistic; and the *Intercultural Communication* typology of the oriental "other." This second incorporates two scales ranging from the "foreign to familiar" and "threatening to interesting." She argues that Jews and Judaism have come to be perceived in terms of an East/West divide, and that how this spatial structure operates is subject to shifting ideas of European identity. Over time, Jews have been perceived across the typologies and subdivisions. Sometimes, Jews were

⁷⁷ Kalmar in Netton, ed., *Orientalism Revisited*, 182-3.

included within a European identity as not native but “undeniably present” since the Roman invasions, and at other times, excluded as foreign. Jews were perceived as European or Oriental, and sometimes both simultaneously. This was dependent upon context, and what is more, Jews and non-Jews participated in this discourse. Minnema’s analysis of the artistic Romantic tradition sheds interesting light upon Holman Hunt’s and others’ artistic endeavours to which we shall return. She suggests that where artists made use of the East/West binary, they inverted its hierarchy with the Orient becoming “something positive, exotic, authentic, natural warm and wise, while the Occident became something negative, self-critical, artificial, unnatural, scientifically rational, soul-less, bleak, and cold.”⁷⁸ She describes a discernible change in some aspects of Christian art in the nineteenth century where biblical Israelites ceased being represented in the manner of turban wearing Turks, and were portrayed wearing Arab dress. This, argues Minnema, was embraced by Jews themselves who adopted a Moorish revival style to some European synagogues along with the Enlightened Jewish identification with Sephardic traditions including the teachings of Maimonides.⁷⁹ The Dohány synagogue in Budapest which opened in 1859 is one example, also St. Petersburg’s synagogue completed in 1893.⁸⁰ The Jewish presence in *The Finding* when seen in this context, demonstrates how difficult it is to pin down the authorship and wider origins of the appearance of the Eastern Sephardic garb of Holman Hunt’s Temple elders.

The Finding presents a conundrum with regard to its orientalism because it depicts its Jewish presence as oriental. To reiterate, this involves Jews as representations of the first century New Testament narrative, Jews in actuality who posed for Holman Hunt (in Jerusalem and London) and the religion of Judaism. In *The Finding*, it is the Jews as Orientals that cannot represent themselves. At this point we might further ask, how we make sense of Jewish artists such as Maurycy Gottlieb when placing their paintings in an orientalist context? Are Jews as artists representing themselves? Or are they appropriating a dominant cultural agenda? It is a point to which Norman Kleeblatt turns in an essay on Simeon Solomon, a British Jewish artist, known as the “Jewish Pre-Raphaelite.”⁸¹ Kleeblatt positions

⁷⁸ Lourens Minnema, “Different Types of Orientalism and Corresponding Views of Jews and Judaism: A Historical Overview of Shifting Perceptions and Stereotypes,” *Antisemitism Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Fall, 2020, 270-325, 303-304.

⁷⁹ Minnema, “Different Types of Orientalism,” 293-295.

⁸⁰ Mendelsohn, *Painting a People*, 90.

⁸¹ Solomon was known for his paintings of rabbis and Christian clergy along with other religiously themed works. (See Figs 92-95) Of further interest is his navigation through a Christian art world as an openly Jewish

Solomon as responding to Holman Hunt's biblically inspired work and infers that Solomon effectively falls into an ideological trap of reproducing Christian inspired religious stereotypes.⁸² My earlier discussion on Maurycy Gottlieb's work presented him as an assertive Jewish artist who frequently included his self-portrait in his painting dressed in oriental garb. Ezra Mendelsohn draws attention to Gottlieb's painting *Slave Market in Cairo* (1877) which can clearly be understood as falling into a genre of orientalist painting. Does the oriental Jewish theme have a personal meaning for him? The answer says Mendelsohn is an unqualified yes.⁸³ Mendelsohn draws attention to Gottlieb's Jewish European context which seemed pleased to accentuate its Sephardic roots and "difference." The principal impetus for Gottlieb's oriental themed paintings was biblical.

The blend of religious, biblical and racial configurations of Jewish people suggest strongly that Saïd's formulation of orientalism as a "secular de-Christianised" phenomenon along with his neglect of biblically inspired orientalism must be understood, not as a failure of knowledge on his part, but as a deliberate political choice. As scholars have shown, the relationship of Jews, Christians, Judaism and Christianity is *central* to any consideration or critique of orientalism. Its omission forms a grave error. As Jeffrey Librett has noted the decision to bypass German Orientalism does two things. Firstly, it allows Saïd to reduce (essentialise) scholarly orientalism to the matter of imperialism and colonialism in place of a more nuanced approach. Secondly, acknowledging a wider scope of orientalism would necessitate the inclusion of designated Aryan racial designations, (South Asian and Persian) and *their* opposition to the conception of a Jewish and Arab Semitic identity.⁸⁴ The binary divisions of Orient/Occident then culminate in the Aryan/Semite split, which has further divided into a good Semite and bad Semite narrative. This says Librett, is unhelpful with ramifications to this day.⁸⁵

artist and the orientalist themes he often portrayed. Solomon's religious works have been interpreted as an attempt at reconciling the two faiths. Although the most significant of Solomon's works postdate *The Finding*, his work dovetails with much of the Pre-Raphaelite oeuvre and in particular his addressing of religious and oriental themes closely identified with Judaism, biblical narratives, and Jewish and Christian ritual. Holman Hunt was said to have sought his advice in establishing accuracy in painting Jewish themes. Whilst there is no evidence concerning *The Finding's* rabbis it is intriguing to speculate that Solomon may have offered Holman Hunt some guidance on this. Debra N. Mancoff in Colin Cruise et al, *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Merrill Lynch, 2005), 25-27 and 31-37.

⁸² Norman L. Kleeblatt, "Jewish Stereotype and Christian Prototype: The Pre-Raphaelite and Early Renaissance Sources for Simeon Solomon's Hebrew Pictures," in Susan P. Casteras and Alicia Craig Faxon (eds.) *Pre-Raphaelite Art in its European Context*, (London: Associated University Presses, 1995).

⁸³ Mendelsohn, *Painting a People*, 89.

⁸⁴ Librett, *Figure of the Jew*, 21-22.

⁸⁵ Librett, *Figure of the Jew*, 266.

Librett conceives modern orientalism as a “typology.” Typology here does not refer to classification, rather the idea of the prefiguration of biblical or scriptural literature. This religious typology, is one of the devices used by Holman Hunt in *The Finding* as we have discussed previously, is one which understands the Old Testament in terms of the New, conceptualising it as *pre-figuring* the New. According to Librett’s treatment, which I radically condense, this way of thinking emerges as a result of a collective sense around the late eighteenth-century that Western modernity has no secure grounding or foundation. He cites Reinhart Koselleck’s analysis of the Enlightenment.⁸⁶ The Enlightenment project of “tolerance” situates faith as no longer absolute, nor objective which results in the idea that religion, having become privatised, is now something that people are free to choose for themselves. However, within the relativised secular state, religion being no longer absolute “is nowhere to be found.”⁸⁷ (Understanding this to continue into the nineteenth century, we recall here the Victorian “Crisis of Faith” discussed earlier). The ensuing uncertainty and anxiety results in a defensive disavowal of this lack then leading towards an appropriation of an alien other, the *oriental other* as the location of the West’s own origins. Modern orientalism then provides a *mechanism* that allows one to make one’s own origin in a place wholly outside oneself. This is realised by the application of a medieval typology or, in Auerbach’s phrase, *figura* to the East/West relation.⁸⁸ In other words, Librett understands the precedent set by the Jewish-Christian relationship as informing the orientalist. In typological terms, if we understand the Old Testament as prefiguring the New, or Moses as the *figura* of Jesus, these examples represent pre-figurations of what is to come and moreover, what will be *fulfilled* (hence the abundant typological references in *The Finding*). Librett argues for an understanding that the Oriental/Occidental relation is “conceived along exactly these lines.” A pre-figuring followed by a fulfilment. Librett sums up the pattern of *figura*:

“...the Jewish “dead letter” is always too material, too concretely specific (ceremonial etc.) but also too abstract (empty monotheism, rootlessness etc.) whereas the Christian spirit is always just concrete enough (God embodied as human in Christ), yet abstract enough to be truly spiritual (merciful rather than caught up in legal trivialities, etc.)⁸⁹

Thus, Western thought can be conceived as seeing the oriental “other” as its own origin, or the aspect of the orient that is its own, in its “familiar and interesting” form rather

⁸⁶ Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (1959, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1988).

⁸⁷ Librett, *Figure of the Jew*, 4.

⁸⁸ Librett draws upon “Figura,” in Erich Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays* (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1984).

⁸⁹ Librett, *Figure of the Jew*, 24.

than the “foreign and threatening,” to draw from Minnema’s earlier taxonomy. Librett explains: “The New Testamentary realization, the living spirit of Christian faith, becomes in Orientalism the model for the West...”⁹⁰ The West is the fulfilment and the realisation of what began in the East. For Librett, this means that modern orientalism cannot be studied fulsomely in isolation from anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism and vice versa. Many of the themes we have touched upon in this thesis resonate here. We can see a trace of Nirenberg’s observations concerning how the West has struggled to understand itself in terms of thinking about Judaism, in addition to his concerns about artistic representations of the Jew where the literal Jew is depicted as blind to the spiritual being entrapped in materiality. Additionally, we understand the artist, and by that here we refer to the Christian Holman Hunt who must use the material world to point to Jewish materialism and spiritual errors. In orientalist terms, the Jews of *The Finding* (imagined Jews from a biblical past and contemporary Jews who pose) are unable to represent themselves. However, we can further understand the disputation as an embedded trope within *The Finding* as a practice that sought, visually and performatively, to ground the Christian worldview in a typological *figura* in spectacle. Ultimately, Holman Hunt’s *Finding* painting portrays in forensic detail the very typological conception of Christian fulfilment to which Librett refers.

In this I find echoes of my discussion on the discourse of disputation earlier in this thesis. The scholarly and biblical undertones of the disputation can now here be reconfigured as related to the mechanism of orientalism. *The Finding* then arguably opens up a discourse about discourse. How do we now understand *The Finding* as an orientalist painting? *The Finding* arguably unconceals a blind spot in Saïd’s Orientalism. In not “Arabizing,” (refraining from working from non-Jewish Arab Muslims) Holman Hunt sought to portray the first-century (imagined) Jews via the nineteenth-century Jews who posed for him. In his insistence on portraying “authentic Jews,” he conceptualises the Holy Land as *supplementing* the Bible as Librett suggests.⁹¹ Holman Hunt brings to the fore both the orientalisising project of Christians towards Jews and Judaism, and the resulting conception of the “mysterious East.” Furthermore, the grounding that is so urgently sought and that cannot be found in religion explains the turn to scientific notions of race as a displacement concept. Race, in (nineteenth-century) scientific terms is the rational, objective (and inescapable) fulfilment of religion’s origin.

⁹⁰ Librett, *Figure of the Jew*, 10.

⁹¹ Librett, *Figure of the Jew*, 9.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter argued that in order for Holman Hunt to be able to make his *Finding* picture, there had to be in place an existing tradition of representing Jews. I showed how the idea of looking, seeing, blindness and not seeing are long enduring concepts when depicting Jewish figures and that this is intimately linked to biblical texts. The signifiers used to differentiate, such as the *Judenhut*, are detectable in *The Finding*. The Oberammergau Passion play which also draws upon such historical representations, unconceals the kind of orientalisering that occurs in *The Finding*. Holman Hunt believed the application of a scientific approach and style would ground his religious vision as a typological fulfilment of biblical prophecy. It was his attempt to ameliorate the anxiety associated with the impending loss of religious certainty as Holman Hunt was a seeker of faith, not one who was secure within it. Librett's thesis rings true here. If orientalism can be understood as a typology, in the figurative sense, then this chimes-with the discourse of disputation with its blending and oscillation between religion and race. Arguably, scholars who have pulled back from including *The Finding* in their discussions on orientalism have stumbled upon a blind spot within a discourse of orientalism and Jews. In terms of *The Finding*, this amounts to a misrepresentation of Jews beyond the inaccuracies within the painting we noted earlier. In terms of the enduring Jewish-Christian disputation, race appears as the fallback when the religious argument, effectively made redundant by rationalist discourse, can no longer be demonstrably won.

Thesis Conclusion

“*Hunt, I have always thought, was surely knocked completely off course by going to the Holy Land.*”

Jeremy Maas¹

1. Reflective Overview

Scholarly Lacunae – Situating *The Finding*

In this this thesis I set out to investigate the enigma of the Jewish presence in *The Finding* that scholars in various fields had, for a variety of reasons overlooked. I defined the Jewish presence as one comprising of characters within the painting’s depicted story, the actual Jewish people who posed for the picture and the painting’s portrayal and critique of Judaism. The Jewish presence was significant due to the painting’s customary attribution as a Christian painting. I saw this as a conundrum that required exploration. The Jewish presence had been taken for granted, a matter somehow overlooked or settled by originary texts (Stephens’s pamphlet), customary depictions of Jews throughout history and, or due to the Jewish-Christian disagreement. Furthermore, the Jewish presence as unexplored became strange to me particularly in the light of the painting’s oft cited orientalism.

My initial questions were concerned with the general themes of “how” and “why” this area had been overlooked. How could scholars *not* have found the incongruity of its religious juxtapositioning curious? As I outlined in my introduction, some writers had approached the conundrum, only to side-step or pull back from a detailed enquiry. This can, of course, be explained by the conventions of academia. The delimitation of subject boundaries and other constraints restrict scholarly enquiries to fit a specific remit. Moreover, as a single painting with particular characteristics (even within the artist’s oeuvre) it is difficult to find the most appropriate academic context. Where is the painting best situated? It is a matter I have had to contend with from the outset.

Certainly, scholars in various fields had provided fulsome accounts of the picture, mostly within wider examinations of the artist’s work. However, the more I thought about and meditated upon *The Finding*, the stranger some aspects of the scholarly treatments seemed. It became increasingly clear as I researched, that most accounts were ultimately

¹ Jeremy Maas, *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, 233.

underpinned by F.G. Stephens's and Holman Hunt's writings in 1860 and 1905. What seemed to be missing was an engagement with the painting itself. As Michael Baxandall says:

*"We do not explain pictures: we explain remarks about pictures – or rather, we explain pictures only in so far as we have considered them under some verbal description or specification."*²

The painting's appearance was rarely the focus of analysis. It was assumed to be illustrative, albeit in a novel form, of the scene in the Gospel of Luke.³ I found two examples, one of which aimed at the general reader rather than the scholar, that placed *The Finding* within the context of the *Christ Among the Doctors* genre.⁴ Why had scholars in art history not seen fit to explore this aspect further? Stepping away from art history for a moment, why had scholars in religious studies or the biblical fields not found it of interest?⁵ Moreover, nestled within the biblical field was the matter of the genre's eventual association with scholarly and religious *disputation*, whether as a specific incident as supposedly relayed in Luke's Gospel or, perhaps in the religious studies field, the historical dispute between Judaism and Christianity. This is because the "disputation" concept became intertwined with the enduring Jewish-Christian theological disagreement in addition to the painting's generic subject, *Christ Among the Doctors*, depicting the Lukan scene. Over time the genre garnered the moniker of "disputation." As such, the action of disputing is what is described and latterly understood as performed in the Lukan scene when visualised in art and then read back into the text. For my thesis, as a means to convey the Jewish-Christian theological difference it became an important part of the investigation.

Even the field of Jewish studies which, at times overlaps with aspects of biblical studies, had not interrogated the picture, the recent interest shown in New Testament literature notwithstanding. Some Jewish studies literature on art placed the painting on its horizon, as I indicated in the introduction to the thesis. One area I might have expected to

² Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, 1.

³ Luke (2:41-52).

⁴ This was part of a concise account in a chapter introducing narrative painting and presented only the briefest of descriptions. When alluding to Holman Hunt's correspondence with Ruskin regarding Leonardo's *Last Supper*, Lynton makes his disapproval clear. He writes: (about *The Finding*) "The result is a worthy work, but it is unfortunate that he should have evoked the name of Leonardo." Lynton et al, *Looking into Paintings*, 52-57, 56-7. The other example was the inclusion of Holman Hunt's *Finding* picture within a selection of Lukan disputation paintings in Schrekenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, 211.

⁵ Roger David Aus began his detailed treatment of the story in Luke with anecdotal remarks about paintings depicting the scene. Interestingly, he pointed to where paintings conformed with or differed from the text, before proceeding with his examination of the texts. Aus, *Samuel, Saul and Jesus*, 1-2.

materialise within the field of Jewish studies is the painting's orientalism given the range of literature on this as indicated in chapter seven. Perhaps scholars assumed, as I did in my initial assessment, that the matter of *The Finding's* orientalism appears to have been addressed, or at least alluded to sufficiently by art historians within or without the field of Jewish studies. However there remained some unresolved elements as if scholars were unsure as to the way in which *The Finding* is orientalist.⁶ At the conclusion of my research, I understand this lack of confidence to be the case. The thesis is, in many ways, an account of the journey to that understanding.

Accordingly, what had to be taken into consideration was not so much the identification of *The Finding's* orientalism which is not in doubt, but the confidence to understand the manner in which it orientalises. As I wrote in chapter seven, confusion and uncertainty prevails around the matter of Jews and orientalism. I had initially taken the matter of orientalism to be but one factor amongst a range to explore in *The Finding*, given my initial focus on the matter of disputation. However, upon concluding my research, the matter of orientalism as relating to Jews *specifically* emerged as a significant interrelating component in the inquiry. Furthermore, I now understand this quandary, which is connected with *how* the painting orientalises, to be a compelling factor in understanding treatments of *The Finding*. Accordingly, the thesis presents a critical new reading of *The Finding's* orientalism understood in conjunction with its focus and involvement with the disputation, via the Lukan narrative and the enduring Jewish-Christian debate.

Given the scholarly lacunae mentioned above, I understood that *The Finding's* Jewish presence had potential to be of interest to more than one field of study. Additionally, as an object of study, the painting had potential for an enquiry into cultural history, particularly the way in which what is thought of as "the past" comes down to us. This seemed especially appropriate for the inclusion and investigation of disputation (emanating from religious and scholarly practices) as an inherited concept with notable traces in the modern era (chapter six). I drew upon Alex Novikoff's research into the disputation in the medieval university in this respect. I was moved to reflect upon the *Christ Among the Doctors* artistic genre to understand it as a manifestation of how the practice of disputation became visible in culture outside the university environment (chapter six). Additionally, the disputation's propensity

⁶ On one hand, Holman Hunt can hardly stand accused of *Arabizing* when he so strenuously sought out Jewish models to pose for him. Yet the appropriation of features from the (copied) Alhambra court from the Crystal Palace (1854-1936) in London can clearly be taken as an orientalisising gesture, as are the costumes worn by the models in the picture (See chapter three of this thesis).

for constructing a worldview and (in part) as a method devised for debating with and interrogating Jews in the medieval era was relevant. It was therefore apparent that with the painting's many potential links to various academic fields, the thesis would benefit from being an interdisciplinary study. However, I conceded that the interdisciplinary approach would not be without some disadvantages. Although I have some background in relevant disciplines and fields, there was always the risk of a lack of depth in some aspects of the thesis, and a compensatory reliance on secondary literature. However, I understood that although there were potential limitations with an interdisciplinary thesis, taking a step in this direction would also reap benefits. Accordingly, I saw that the interdisciplinary approach allowed me to break through perceived boundaries and obstacles by utilising alternative frameworks within which to situate the painting. On further reflection, without the inclusion of the discussions on, for example, the biblical aspects (chapter 5) and the disputation (chapter 6) I would not have achieved the level of understanding that I did, nor made the discoveries and contribution to knowledge that ensued. Furthermore, methodological issues arising from my research, especially those committed to a notion of objectivity, became a relevant matter for discussion in the enquiry.

Experiential Working Process

I now wish to reflect upon my working process and how that enabled my thesis to progress and open up new knowledge. In keeping with phenomenological thinking which is less about method and more about close description based upon the experience of things, I chose to put the painting at the heart of the enquiry and to take careful note of what *appears*. It had occurred to me that if I were to make use of a method based upon conventions predicated upon an illusion of objectivity, I would be falling into the same mode of thinking that Holman Hunt had adopted, one that I would be looking to critique. Furthermore, much of the literature I encountered seemed to have been constructed in the manner of disinterested scholarship. Accordingly, it seemed incongruous to adopt the very kind of process that I took as responsible for the enframing qualities of *The Finding*. In other words, if I were to avoid the pitfalls that led to the problems I had identified, I needed to find another rubric. This is where aspects of Heidegger's *Origin of a Work of Art* and Gadamer's *Truth and Method* were helpful. In his discerning a change in the role of art, Heidegger posits the modern triumph of aesthetics as being the result of, as Julian Young puts it, "the imperialism of reason."⁷

⁷ Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, 14.

Whereas art was once understood to be a location of Christian truth; whatever “truth” is, is now accessed through science and “method.” (*Wissenschaft*). This is manifested in the Humanities as the attempt at objective, disinterested scholarship. It is this way of conceiving the world around particular parameters of knowledge, and knowledge informed in part by a tradition of disputation, that became increasingly relevant to the discussion at hand. In the case of *The Finding*, the knowledge of, and contained within Stephens’s pamphlet and accompanying key plate is what frequently informs the scholar, rather than what *appears* in the painting. Furthermore, the documentation itself is used to substantiate what is seen, *if* seen.

Heidegger’s pointing to art’s potential for *disclosure* was significant. Therefore, the situating of *The Finding* as a “disputation painting,” one that takes on the *Christ Among the Doctors* genre, brought forth (using Heidegger’s terminology) a disclosure of the disputation with its varying modes (chapter six). However, it was crucial to realise that this was not as a frozen performance of Luke’s Gospel story, rather, what I began to conceive of as a *discourse* (world) of disputation. A combination of approaches (chapter two) led to anticipated and unexpected contributions to knowledge. I see the primary contribution to knowledge is the fuller reading of *The Finding* that is woven throughout the thesis. As a “disputation” painting *The Finding* aligns with other *Christ Among the Doctors* paintings. Taking particular note of the Jewish presence highlighted the incongruities present. One example I drew attention to, was the conflation of nineteenth-century paraphernalia with a conception of first-century Temple life which, in its attempt at a timeless representation, is but one of the indicators of *The Finding*’s orientalism (chapter three).

Holman Hunt’s engagement with not only the past, but with a long tradition of art (however conceived) contributes to his making of *The Finding*. This was revealing. To account for the iconographic elements in common with (and so different from) Dürer’s *Lugano* panel was one indicator (amongst others) of the presence of a discourse of disputation. That Leonardo’s *Trattato* appeared to function as a linking element pointed to a network of shared meaning – understood as discourse. The connection with Leonardo further extended to understanding *The Finding* as a critical reworking of the *Last Supper* as I outlined in chapter four. The disparaging dismissal by Norbert Lynton referred to earlier (chapters two and four and above) reveals a way of thinking that serves to deflect such a comparison in scholarship. This was likely to do with the incongruity of comparing and contrasting the iconic Leonardo with the Pre-Raphaelite Holman Hunt. However, this is to

miss the point. By comparing the two, I was able to learn something about Holman Hunt's *Finding* painting, rather than to suggest that the two artists occupy the same cultural status. Although I had been aware of the correspondence between Holman Hunt and Ruskin, it was not until I observed the structure of *The Finding* via drawing from it and investigated further into Leonardo's writing that I saw a closer correlation between the two works. Once recognised, it becomes indisputable.

The other significant critical re-working I was able to draw attention to was Lorenzo's *Adoring Saints* panel. I was aware of Malcolm Warner's observations as discussed in my literature review and chapters three and four, from prior reading. However, it was a combination of drawing, observation and conversations with others that pointed to the Lorenzo as a key referent for Holman Hunt. I feel it is crucial to acknowledge that the engagement with the paintings themselves was a key factor in these discoveries. What I refer to here is the experience of observing carefully and using forms of drawing and mark-making to aid the process of looking. The resulting observations form an important part of the contribution to knowledge my thesis makes. I regard the Lorenzo example in particular as an extension to Malcom Warner's chapter (1992) on the National Gallery influence on the Pre-Raphaelites. During the course of my research, the essay, "New Art from Old: The Pre-Raphaelites and Early Italian Art" by Jason Rosenfeld in the *Truth and Beauty* catalogue was published (2018) which I discussed in my literature review. This essay confirmed for me the importance of the Lorenzo for Pre-Raphaelite scholarship. I felt animated by his anecdotal remark that in "a marvellous revelation" the glance motif he discusses from the Lorenzo right-hand panel was visible in three Pre-Raphaelite works. Moreover, that this was noticed when placing the works together in a gallery space for the first time.⁸ Rosenfeld further noted in his essay that the Brotherhood had worked from the left-hand panel and provided examples. *The Finding* was not included in those examples however, this confirmed that my observations were valid and moreover that my observations can be situated within this scholarship. I see this aspect of the thesis as augmenting Warner's and Rosenfeld's research. By extension, I would add here the work of Elizabeth Prettejohn, whose book *Modern Painters Old Masters*, discussed in my literature review, was also published during the course of my research.⁹

⁸ Rosenfeld in Buron et al, *Truth and Beauty*, 76-77.

⁹ Warner et al, *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context*, 1-11, Prettejohn, *Modern Painters, Old Masters*, 98-110, Jason Rosenfeld in Buron et al, *Truth and Beauty*, 73-80.

2. Key Research Findings

Jewish Presence/Christian Painting

Early in the thesis I established that a key aspect of the painting was its Jewish presence rather than falling into customary classifications and descriptions of *The Finding* being (simply) a Christian painting. I established that *The Finding's* Jewish presence consisted of more than mere “representations,” as I outlined above and in more detail in chapter three. One of the key points I had to establish and be confident in asserting was the overall message contained within the New Testament scene in Luke, which notwithstanding modern interpretations of the word “disputation,” is not a scene of hostile dispute. Rather it is the evangelist’s way of situating the young Jesus in his Jewish setting. As I discussed in chapter five, the scene is in keeping with what is understood to be an authentic Jewish teaching and learning experience of the time.

St. Ambrose’s fourth-century sermon instigated a shift in focus from the Temple as a backdrop to the world of scholarly disputations as public events. It is possible to discern that over time a modern idea of a competitive, sometime hostile dispute gained traction. The associated genre of painting frequently referred to as *Christ Among the Doctors* then becomes known as “the disputation” with all that entails. *The Finding* combines the artistic genre with the biblical narrative’s overt link with *disputation* to show that there is more than one drama being played out. Holman Hunt’s Jewish models perform the role of the doctors in the Lukan narrative, and they also play a part in the enduring Jewish-Christian disputation. This goes hand in hand with the painting’s implicit critique of Judaism. The ensuing foregrounding of hostility over and above the scene in question and coupled with the wider associations with scholarly disputation gave rise to my coining the idea of a *discourse of disputation*. It is this discourse which explains the coherence of disputation/*Christ Among the Doctors* paintings in their gathering in of scholarly debate, the Lukan scene and the enduring Jewish-Christian dispute.

As a means to illustrate this, I examined Jewish artists’ responses. In the one (known) example of a Jewish artist taking on the specific Lukan scene, Max Liebermann makes a significant departure from the frequent hostility conveyed in his attempt to paint a scene of reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity. On a subliminal level, one might claim he had missed the point of the genre. There is less emphasis upon looking, seeing and blindness. It can further be seen that Liebermann gets closer to Luke’s Jewish intentions than many

other paintings of the genre. The ensuing row, incorporating blatant antisemitism, castigated Liebermann's Jewishness as responsible for the painting's modern painterly technique and thus his "un-German" status, thereby revealing the discourse of disputation out in the world.

Further examples demonstrate a tendency for Jewish artists to address the discourse obliquely, avoiding the actual New Testament scene in question. My examination of Moritz Oppenheim's *Lavater and Lessing Visit Moses Mendelssohn* (1856) is a case in point. My interpretation and analysis incorporating both background context and painting offers a fresh account seen through the lens of the discourse of disputation. Moreover, it was initiated via an engagement with the painting and discussion with others, especially with regard to the depicted chess game. I located a connection with the Moritz Retsch *The Chess Players* work (in multiple forms) which supported my interpretation of the painting as communicating meaning through the chess game. I believe there is scope for further research into this particular painting. The picture itself depicts a renowned dispute. However, its cryptic multi-layered approach addresses the wider Jewish-Christian debate in addition to the power structures that underpin the context of the events it depicts. I further discussed the work of Maurycy Gottlieb whose work could be (and has been) construed as orientalising. However, it remains an unresolved point that pictorial orientalism manifested by a nineteenth-century Jewish artist might be an assertion of authentic identity. The matter further highlights the uncertainty that prevails around Jews and orientalism discussed in chapter seven.

Disputation and Spectacle

In chapter six I developed the discussion on scholarly disputations and suggested that the concept became mapped onto the Lukan narrative which has arguably affected its interpretation when read as a text. The Gospel scene became a convenient hook upon which to place the enduring Jewish-Christian disagreement. Additionally, drawing upon the work of Olga Weijers, the disputation as an historical scholarly practice is arguably tied to ideas about sources of authority, education, truth, reason and is performed as spectacle. It is then arguably *pictured* as spectacle in art in a further manifestation of spectacle. This is what I believe Holman Hunt has done with his *Finding* painting as discussed in chapter five.

I further drew upon the work of Alex Novikoff whose recent explorations of the scholarly disputation foreground the extent to which the format, in becoming a public and popular cultural practice, has influenced modern European culture. The disputation has come down to us as a way of thinking that is adversarial, utilising a construction of binary

oppositions which is transformed into a way of thinking and conceptualising the world. My thesis situates the historical paintings of the disputation and thus *The Finding* as part of this outgrowth of adversarial thinking and public display in the form of spectacle. Recalling the discussion in chapter four, I might also construe systems of perspective and the assumptions of correctness in picturing that are carried alongside, as part of this development. The disputation as spectacle, along with artistic systems of perspective serves as an objectification of the other. As we reached the final chapter, I connected the threads of these points to show how they consolidate on a pathway towards orientalism.

Discourse of Disputation

As I reflect upon my analysis of the disputation and its flowering into culture and as part of that, its presence in art, I recall Sara Lipton's and David Nirenberg's recent work. I drew upon two strands of Nirenberg's thought in the thesis, firstly, his argument concerning Judaism as a way of developing critical thinking in the West (chapter six) and secondly, Judaism as portrayed in art (chapter seven). As I conclude the thesis, I am mindful of the convergence of those ideas. In reminding us that the Jews of Christian thought diverge from living adherents of Judaism, Nirenberg demonstrates that art has shown this thought in action. Sara Lipton observes that the appearance of portrayals of Jews *as Jews* was seemingly quite sudden and coincided with Christianity's adoption of a vision and image-centred mode of worship. The increasing visual differentiation created a pictorial language which is carried down to later forms of art. Art that was once commissioned by ecclesiastical authorities creates a series of prototypes with a pictorial language for the use of latter-day self-representing artists such as Holman Hunt.

In chapter seven I made reference to Nirenberg's remarks concerning the Christian theological concern over Judaizing as applied to visual art. The struggle to reconcile material and spiritual echo the motifs of East and West, old and new and the differentiation and binary oppositions shown in *The Finding* (chapter seven). The fear of Judaizing is enveloped in the use of the figure of the Jew as a means to instruct viewers in how to see properly as Lipton and Nirenberg both assert (chapter seven). In this respect, *The Finding* is replete with references to vision and blindness. I drew attention to *The Finding* as unconcealing its portrayal of what is frequently referred to as the Jewish question as discussed in chapter six.

The Finding's Orientalism

The question of how *The Finding* orientalisises is often attributed to the portrayal of the Jerusalem Temple (the Alhambra copy discussed earlier) or to the costumes worn by the figures. Alternatively, Holman Hunt is seen as orientalisising as part of an oeuvre of Holy Land paintings, and with this I would concur. However, the Jewish presence disrupts some interpretations of orientalism. As I explained in my descriptions in chapter three, the inclusion within the world of *The Finding* (its diegesis) of nineteenth-century paraphernalia such as the *rimmonim* or the black striped prayer shawls strongly suggests that Holman Hunt assumed there were no substantive changes from the first-century to the (then) modern day. In this way he presumes an unchanging timeless world of biblical truth. This aspect over and above the decorative indicates Holman Hunt's orientalism. *The Finding's* orientalism manifests additionally in its typological symbolism, and further in its re-working of the Lorenzo. This is not merely a stylised device, nor a secret Brotherhood in-joke. By adopting a conversion motif, Holman Hunt both situates the rabbis in the past and at some future point whereby in a Protestant evangelical schema, Jews convert to Christianity. Furthermore, in his striving for authenticity, Hunt adopts the rationalised scientific thinking of the time by foregrounding the ethnic or racial status of the models as a means to convey a religious message.

A further element can be seen in the influence upon Holman Hunt of what Eitan bar Yosef terms *vernacular* orientalism, the everyday association of Jerusalem, the Holy Land as spiritually embedded in one's own English culture which I touched upon in chapter four. His impetus to travel as far as the Holy Land, almost in the manner of a pilgrimage, in order to follow the path taken by earlier orientalist artists reveals the power of this structure. Additionally, Holman Hunt's attempt to realise a biblical scene with authentic Jewish models is rooted in the tradition of the *Pictorial Bible* which orientalisised the Bible via images into a literary and visual vernacular (chapter four). Nestled within that, is the urge to read typologically and to introduce a range of symbols effectively reinterpreting Jewish scripture in a Christian key, arguably a further example of orientalisising. As I discussed in chapter seven, Jeffrey Librett's discussions on this matter are illuminating.¹⁰

Much of the orientalism attributed to *The Finding* is located in Stephens's pamphlet as Tim Barringer acknowledges.¹¹ I noted that authors had based their accounts upon

¹⁰ Librett, *Figure of the Jew*, 1-26, 68-72, 130-131.

¹¹ Barringer, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, 2012, 137.

Stephens's pamphlet, either by citing it directly or citing others who had cited it, and discerned that this was more of a methodological position rather than an ideological one. The details of the pamphlet are rarely quoted in commentary; nor is it critically analysed. However, it is used to substantiate interpretations of *The Finding*. Judith Bronkhurst's remarks about Holman Hunt having approved its contents lends the pamphlet an extra degree of supposed authenticity, and it remains *The Finding's* foundational document.¹² However, it is not merely the latter-day use of the material to underpin descriptions that is at stake here. Stephens himself relies upon objectifying and science-led, (if not proven) concepts of phrenology to form his descriptions. In the pamphlet we see the burgeoning racial classifications that were then thought of as "scientific" being used to describe the characters in the painting, the actual people who posed, and the religion of Judaism. Writers drawing upon the document do not agree with the language used nor the sentiments expressed. Yet the supposed truth of Holman Hunt's intentions in *The Finding* are grounded in it because the structure employed in the Humanities has often prioritised the use of this type of evidence if it is available. Stephens's descriptions of the rabbis meld with his descriptions of the "locals" who posed in a conflation of past and present. Additionally, he conveys the sense that Jews are somehow "representative" as discussed in chapter three. The most noteworthy aspect of the pamphlet for me, in addition to the disparaging descriptions of the Jewish models, became its tangible recourse to orientalism. This is because it highlights in particular the discernible relevance of orientalism as an issue for Jews and how problematic this has been in commentary (chapter seven).

Whilst I cannot deny Stephens's pamphlet its utility in the world of *The Finding*, my problem concerned the manner in which its usage appeared to *settle* any questions about the painting's Jewish presence. Moreover, we can only ever have the most fleeting of certainties regarding *any* attempt to reconstruct the past. We attempt it because it provides a cognitive framework in which to gather our thoughts and hypotheses (as I was obliged to do in the first part of chapter three). Its futility is mirrored in Holman Hunt's attempts to reconstruct a scene he imagined took place in the first-century with a myriad of inaccuracies to which I drew attention in chapter four. My own description of the painting's components and figures highlighted the contrast between what we see when we look closely at the painting, and how

¹² Bronkhurst, Tate Gallery *Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition*, 158-60 and *Catalogue Raisonné*, vol 1, 176.

that compares with the account we know was designed to instruct the viewing public with its glosses and interpretations.

These points demonstrate that *The Finding* must be construed as an encapsulation of orientalism in Jeffrey Librett's terms. This is because *The Finding* is understood as Holman Hunt's search for Christian origins, as his *own* origins, with the Holy Land as the depicted and *actual* backdrop of the painting. The Holy Land represents not merely the ground upon which Christ walked, but a grounding of sorts for the Christian West. Additionally, Holman Hunt's anxieties about religious truth chime with the myriad of uncertainties that were swirling around in his time associated with the perceived lack of metaphysical grounding. As Librett writes, "Oriental culture comes to supplement the Bible as source of absolute knowledge."¹³ Furthermore, *The Finding*'s many typological signifiers, including the references to Jesus as the lamb of sacrifice, Jesus's healing the blind man and the realisation of his mission as discussed in chapter three, demonstrate this aspect. The frequent references to blindness, sight and vision form a compelling part of the picture's emphatic typological approach. In his discussion on orientalism as typology, Librett points to Auerbach's essay on "Figura" which discusses typology as a conceptual framework that imagines a line of progression from pagan idolatry, through Judaism to Christianity.¹⁴ In configuring Christianity to have superseded Judaism this becomes construed as a binary opposition between Judaism and Christianity. In terms of reading scripture, what Jews read as the Hebrew scriptures, Christians have not merely renamed (and reordered) as the Old Testament, they have reinterpreted many of its narratives as foretelling the events in the New Testament (discussed in chapters six and seven) The reworking of scripture in this way forms a further example of orientalisating as I alluded in chapter seven.

3. Critical Reflections

It is my hope that scholars see the value in the increased foregrounding of the Jewish component of *The Finding* that has been presented in this thesis. I believe that this will lead to an increased confidence when discussing *The Finding*'s orientalism with regard to the inclusion of Jews and Judaism. I would further seek a change in emphasis regarding exhibition documentation and signage, in addition to increased awareness shown towards the relevant issues in research publications. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to see greater

¹³ Librett, *Figure of the Jew*, 9.

¹⁴ Erich Auerbach, "Figura," *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 11-76.

engagement with the painting's appearance and its imagery in addition to a more interrogative approach towards Stephens's pamphlet.

There are a number of avenues for further research that showed themselves along the way during my research for this thesis. I briefly indicated in the introduction that there were aspects concerned with sexuality and gender worth attention in *The Finding*. Some of this falls upon the figure of the young Jesus whose masculinity or femininity was frequently a matter for discussion during my research. A further focus is on the figure of Mary and her role as Holman Hunt's "exceptional" Jewish woman who speaks in the New Testament scene. In both cases, the interdisciplinary potential for biblical studies is strong given the historical connection art has with the Bible and Christianity.

Additionally, there is scope for a greater exploration of the *Christ Among the Doctors* genre as *Disputation* paintings. There has been little in the way of formal examination of the genre outside Christian iconography and given the modern interpretations that have emerged from self-representing artists, I believe there is potential here for further scholarly work. The connection with scholarly and religious disputation would be of relevance here. Again, I see the potential for interdisciplinary work with biblical fields of scholarship. Related to this is the relationship between Pre-Raphaelite and/or nineteenth-century art, and historical art, referred to as "Old Masters." There is much to be learned from artists' engagement with art of the past. This is an area of current interest in the scholarship of Elizabeth Prettejohn, Jason Rosenfeld and Malcolm Warner (and others) as indicated above. It remains to be said that each of the potential areas for further study I outline here can be connected to orientalism. There is a residual need to research further into *The Finding's* and other Pre-Raphaelite and nineteenth-century art including the work of Jewish artists with regard to orientalism in particular in relation to Biblical orientalism.

Furthermore, I would add that there was great value in choosing to focus upon one work in depth. My use of drawing from the painting (in reproduction primarily) allowed for close and deep observation resulting in a slower looking process, vital for such an involved and detailed painting. There is, in my view, much to gain by taking an experiential and practical approach to the engagement with a painting.

Closing Remarks

I have presented in this thesis a comprehensive new account of *The Finding* with a clear articulation of its Jewish presence. I examined it closely in the light of its purported

relation to the Lukan narrative purportedly about the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple. The story has become known as the “disputation” which is concerned above all with the Jewish-Christian relation, disputation, debate and, by implication the Jewish Question rather than the Temple story. It is an objectifying practice, concerned with authority and knowledge formation and above all, spectacle. The debate must be public and seen. The matter of sight, blindness, looking and gaze all form part of the discourse of disputation. The discourse of disputation forms a mechanism that presages orientalism. In the colonising of religious texts that lies behind the disputation, the orientalisating process is set in motion.

The orientalisating that occurs within *The Finding* is instigated via the vernacular orientalism which is inextricably linked to the Bible: the impulse to locate a ground for religious belief through archaeological means and bringing Jerusalem “there” into a picture thereby making it “here.” *The Finding’s* Jewish presence is not a peripheral matter that is explained and settled by Stephens’s or Holman Hunt’s writings. Rather, the Jewish presence is the gateway to the understanding of *The Finding’s* orientalism.

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Appendix (i) Glossary of Terms

Ark	Housing for the scrolls in a synagogue.
Aron Kodesh	Ark, housing for the scrolls in a synagogue.
Brit millah	Ceremony of circumcision.
Chasid (im)	Very religious Jewish person/persons.
Mechitzah	The division between men and women at prayer, for example a curtain or rope.
Meil	The cover or mantle covering a scroll.
Mezuzah	Small decorative case containing verses from the <i>Shema</i> prayer affixed to a doorpost.
Mitzva/mitzvot	A religious duty (or a kindness).
Mizrahi	Lit. Oriental (Jews from the middle east) .
Peyers/peyot	Side curls worn by men.
Rimmonim	The decorative finials placed over the wooden Torah scroll handles.
Sefer Torah	The scroll containing the five books of Moses.
Tallit/Tallis	Prayer shawl (two spellings).
Tallitzim/Tallitot	Plural of Tallit (masculine and feminine forms).
Tefillin	Phylacteries worn by men at daily prayers.
Teshuva	Repentance.
Tzitzits	The fringed garments worn by religious Jewish men. Also the fringes at the edges of the tallit.
Shulchan Aruch	Lit. "set table." A compilation of Jewish Law (Halacha) published 1565.
Shul	Colloquial name for the synagogue (Yiddish).

Appendix (ii) The Lukan Narrative

Luke chapter 2: 41-52

[41] Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. [42] And when he was twelve years old, they went up¹ as usual for the festival.² [43] When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. [44] Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to *look* for him among their relatives and friends. [45] When they did not *find* him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. [46] After three days they *found* him in the temple, sitting³ among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.⁴ [47] And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.⁵ [48] When his parents *saw* him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been *searching* for you in great anxiety." [49] He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you⁶ not know that I must be in my Father's house?"⁷ [50] But they did not understand what he said to them. [51] Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. [52] And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

(NRSV)

¹ Roger David Aus and Fr. Raymond Brown see significance in the use of the phrase "went up."

² "as usual for the festival", it was not a requirement to attend annually. This is Luke's way of denoting Mary and Joseph's piety over and above custom and practice.

³ Sitting denotes the position of the disciple at the foot of the master.

⁴ Jesus is depicted at this point as listening and asking as a student disciple would.

⁵ That Jesus is "answering" suggests that the elders are asking him questions which reveal Jesus's impressive knowledge.

⁶ The original Greek uses the plural form of "you."

⁷ Or "be about my Father's interests?"

Appendix (iii) Oppenheim's Chess Game



The chess game being played in the Oppenheim painting *Lavater and Lessing visiting Moses Mendelssohn* (1856) is recreated here, as close as is possible from a reproduction of the painting. Lavater is playing black (red pieces in the painting) Mendelssohn is playing white. The board shows what appears to be an endgame composition, a purposeful puzzle, almost like a work of art in its own right.

After recreating the game, the information was fed into a chess engine (computer) which analyses the game. If the analysis indicates a positive number, it means that White has the advantage. (Correspondingly, if the score is negative, Black has the advantage) The number represents a relative value of chess pieces. (E.g., 1 = pawn, 3 = knight/bishop, 5 = rook, 9 = queen) Therefore, a +1 score would indicate white has a pawn advantage. The chess engine also calculates tactical and positional aspects of the analysed position, giving points dependant on their strengths.

The composition was entered into a chess engine (computer - Fritz 10). The result was Black (Lavatar) resigning on move 4 due to White (Mendelssohn) having an overwhelming advantage of +6.61. This +6 score refers to material or tactical/positional worth.

For Mendelssohn, it is a “won” game, however, you still have to win a “won” game.

(My thanks to Kevin Gilligan for his invaluable assistance with this analysis)

Appendix (iv) On Heidegger

My choice to bring Martin Heidegger's philosophy into a project concerning representations of Jews might strike some as strange or even perverse. Notwithstanding that he remains one of the most important of twentieth century philosophers, his membership of the National Socialist party is a matter of inescapable and bitter regret. Yet, as many Heidegger scholars will attest, his philosophy is too important to cast aside, and one must navigate the invitation to follow his pathway with care and attention. The same is true when encountering other philosophers who have endorsed or excused highly questionable political systems. I have learned that the search for absolute purity is a fruitless endeavour.

At the outset of my research, I had no plan to bring Heidegger into my doctoral journey. However, alongside members of the reading group in which I participate, I have now read a range of his works. In them, I find a compelling teacher who was (to my initial surprise) worth the investment of time and effort. His work is uncannily prescient, especially the *Origin of a Work of Art*, *The Question Concerning Technology* and *The Age of the World Picture* which have greatly informed my thinking in the thesis. Additionally, *What is called Thinking* remains (for me) the most enjoyable and uncanny of Heidegger's writing to date. There were times when I had a glimpse of how his students might have regarded his tutelage, thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Walter Beigel and Hans Georg Gadamer, whose works I have additionally attempted to read. As I indicate in the thesis, it is Heidegger's writing that prompted many of my questions and enabled many insights to come to fruition.

The question Heidegger begins with in the *Origin* essay, what is a work of art? is a question we are still trying to answer. Heidegger's texts ask important questions concerning art and more broadly, about the way things *are*. Heidegger shows how a painting can open up its world. He is conscious of a persistent tendency for humans to overlook things, to forget. It was, in part, a kind of forgetting of our intellectual and religious origins that this thesis was concerned with. The legacy of disputation, Jewish-Christian relations, and even Holman Hunt's search for biblical origins (however, fruitless) were part of an attempt to reach and grasp what has been overlooked. There is also the matter of art history and its methods, and moreover, the intense focus in general on methodology in the humanities. Heidegger points not only to the opening up of worlds, but the problems of rationality and method incrementally edging us towards ever increasing systematisation and objectification.

Heidegger once declared "I am a theologian." He had, prior to switching to philosophy, been training to be a priest. Something prompted me to consider the extent to which Heidegger's philosophy chimes with aspects of Jewish thought. However strange that consideration seems, I am not alone in having that inkling. Peter Eli Gordon's book on the connections between Franz Rosenzweig, a leading German Jewish philosopher and Martin Heidegger, explores the deep intellectual affiliation the two philosophers shared.¹ Additionally, I took something from Elad Lapidot's research article, "Heidegger's *Teshuva*?" which identifies a number of allusions to Judaism in both Heidegger's oeuvre and discussions about that oeuvre.² *Teshuva*, a Hebrew word, refers to repentance and a return to God. Given the preponderance of German (and other) *mis*-representations of Jews informing *The Finding*, it seemed that however incongruous, it was symbolically reparative that Heidegger's thought should enable the interrogation of a (supposedly) timeless, orientalist portrayal of Jews and Judaism. Perhaps this could be, at the very least, a modest gesture towards an authentic *teshuva*.

CK

¹ Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (London: University of California Press, 2005).

² Elad Lapidot, "Heidegger's *Teshuva*?" DOI link: <https://doi.org/10.5840/HEIDEGGERSTUD2016323>

Appendix (v) The Pre-Raphaelite List of Immortals

We, the undersigned, declare that the following list of Immortals constitutes the whole of our Creed, and that there exists no other Immortality than what is centred in their names and in the names of their contemporaries, in whom this list is reflected:

Jesus Christ ****	Raphael *
The Author of Job ***	Michael Angelo
Isaiah	Early English Balladists
Homer **	Giovanni Bellini
Pheidias	Giorgioni [sic]
Early Gothic Architects	Titian
Cavalier Pugliesi	Tintoretto
Dante **	Poussin
Boccaccio *	Alfred **
Rienzi	Shakespeare ***
Ghiberti	Milton
Chaucer **	Cromwell
Fra Angelico *	Hampden
Leonardo da Vinci **	Bacon
Spenser	Newton
Hogarth	Landor **
Flaxman	Thackeray **
Hilton	Poe
Goethe **	Hood
Kosciusko	Longfellow *
Byron	Emerson
Wordsworth	Washington **
Keats **	Leigh Hunt
Shelley **	Author of Stories after Nature * [Charles Jeremiah Wells]
Haydon	Wilkie
Cervantes	Columbus
Joan of Arc	Browning **
Mrs Browning *	Tennyson *
Patmore *	

From Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, vol.1, 159

Illustrations



Fig. 1. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¾ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.



Fig. 2. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¾ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. (With frame)



Fig. 3. Albrecht Dürer, *Jesus Among the Doctors*, 1506, Lugano panel, Oil on panel, 64.3 x 80.3 cm. Museo Thyssen Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain.



Fig. 4. Bernardino Luini, *Christ Among the Doctors*, c. 1515-30, Oil on poplar 72.4 x 85.7 cm, National Gallery, London.



Fig. 5. Heinrich Hofmann, *Jesus among the Doctors*, 1884, Oil on Canvas, 67 x 90.5 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany.



Fig. 6. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ seated disputing with the doctors*, 1654, Etching 3 3/4 x 5 5/8 in. (9.6 x 14.3 cm Rijks museum, Netherlands.



Figs. 7-9. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¾ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

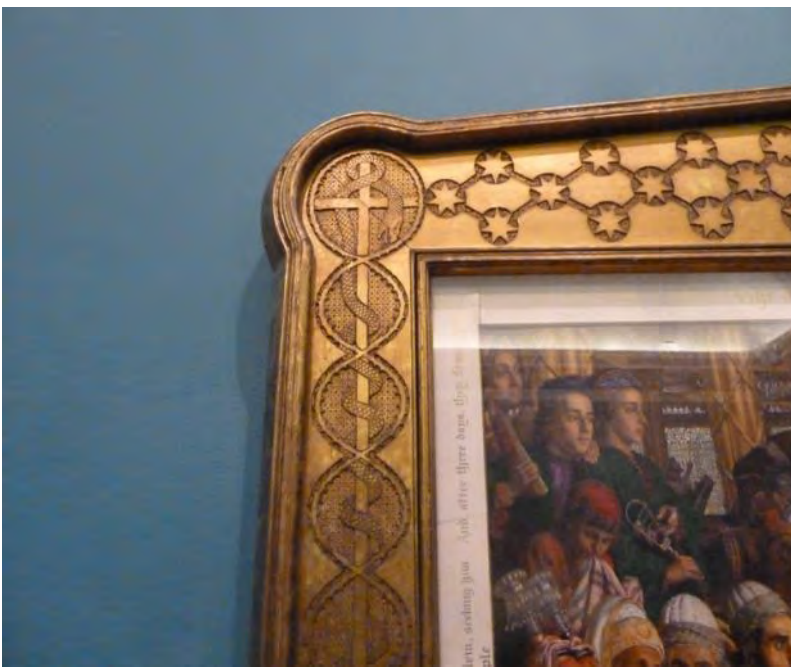


Fig.8. Detail of upper left-hand side.



Fig. 9. Detail of upper right-hand side.

Figs. 10-12. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¼ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

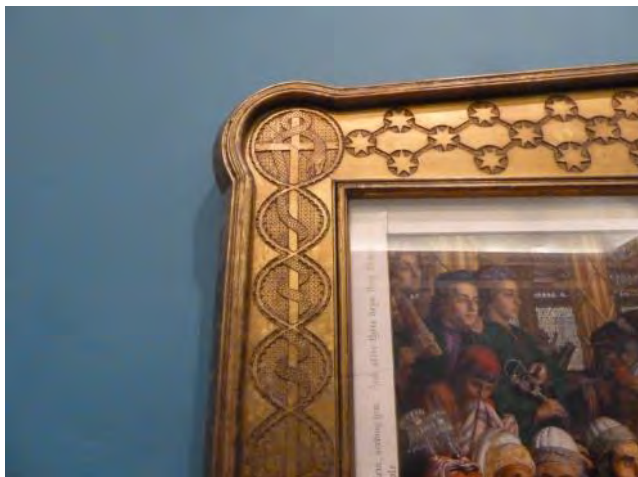


Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.



Figs. 13 - 16. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¾ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, details.



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.



Fig. 16.



Fig.17. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¾ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, detail.

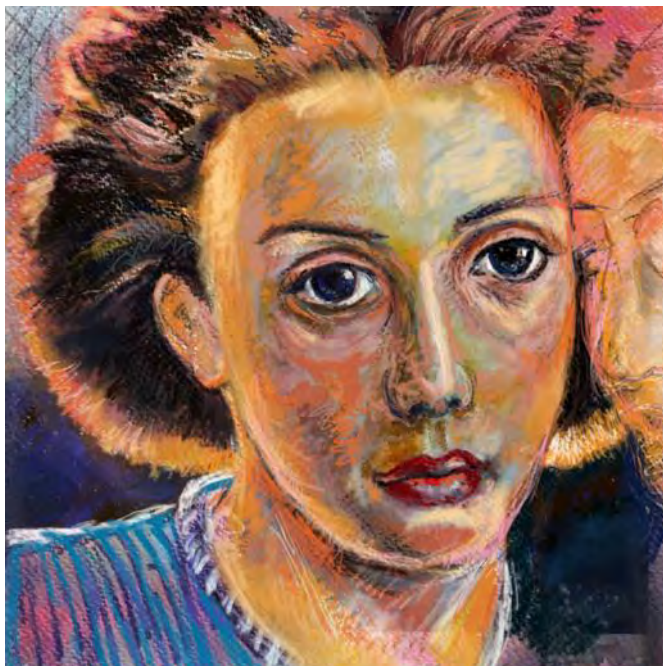
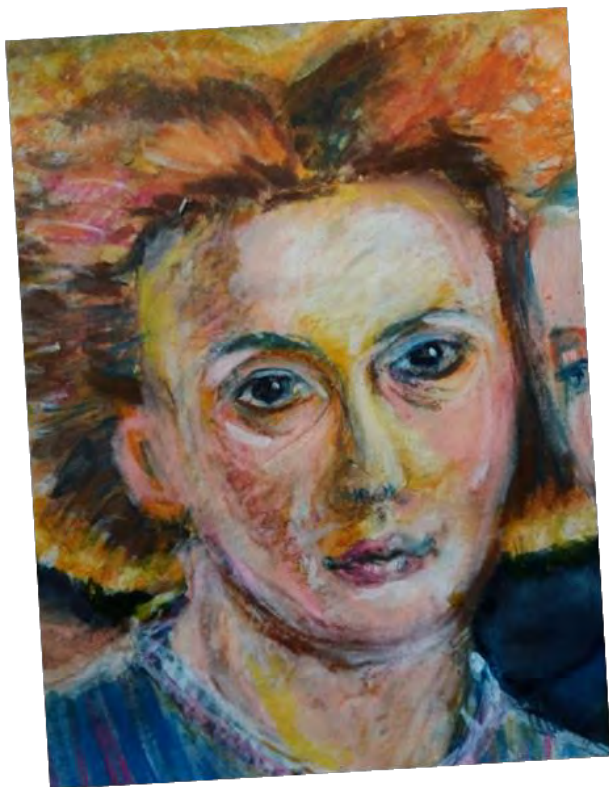


Fig.18. Caroline Kaye, drawing from William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, digital drawing.

Fig.18. Caroline Kaye, sketchbook drawing from William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860.



Fig. 21. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, detail for comparison.

Fig. 20. Caroline Kaye, sketchbook drawing from William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860.



Figs. 22 - 24. Caroline Kaye, digital drawings from William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860.

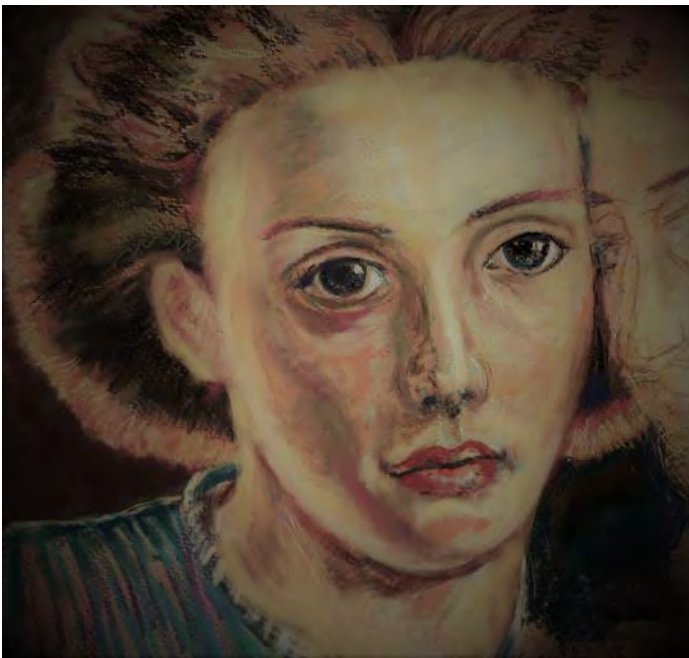


Fig. 23.

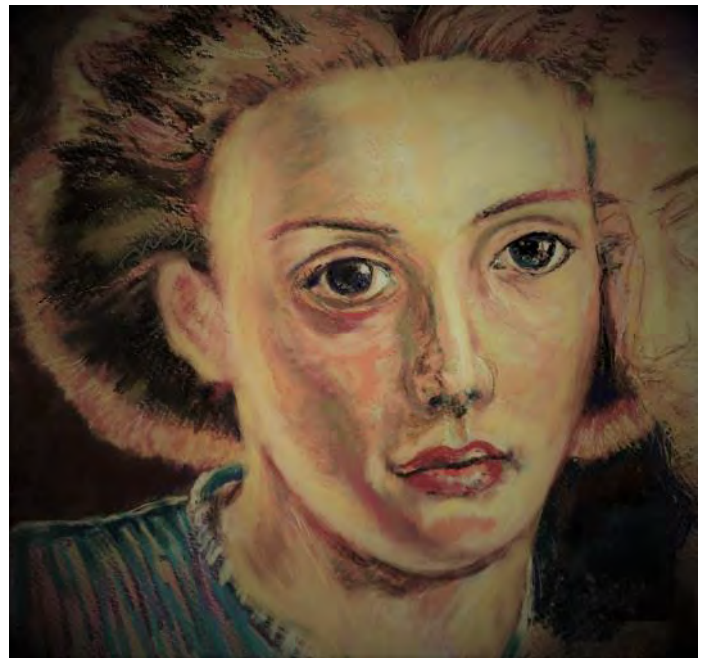


Fig. 24.



Figs. 25 - 26 Caroline Kaye, drawings from William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860.



Fig. 26.



Fig. 27. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, detail for comparison.



Fig. 28. Caroline Kaye, digital drawing from William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860.

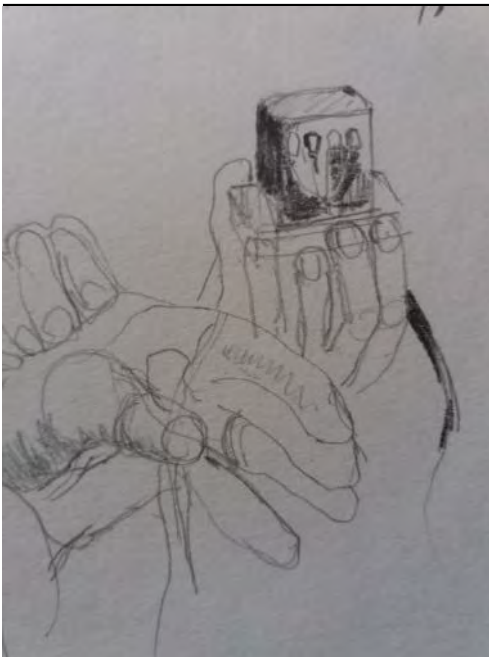


Fig. 29-30. Caroline Kaye, original sketchbook drawing for Fig. 28, from William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860.



Fig. 30.

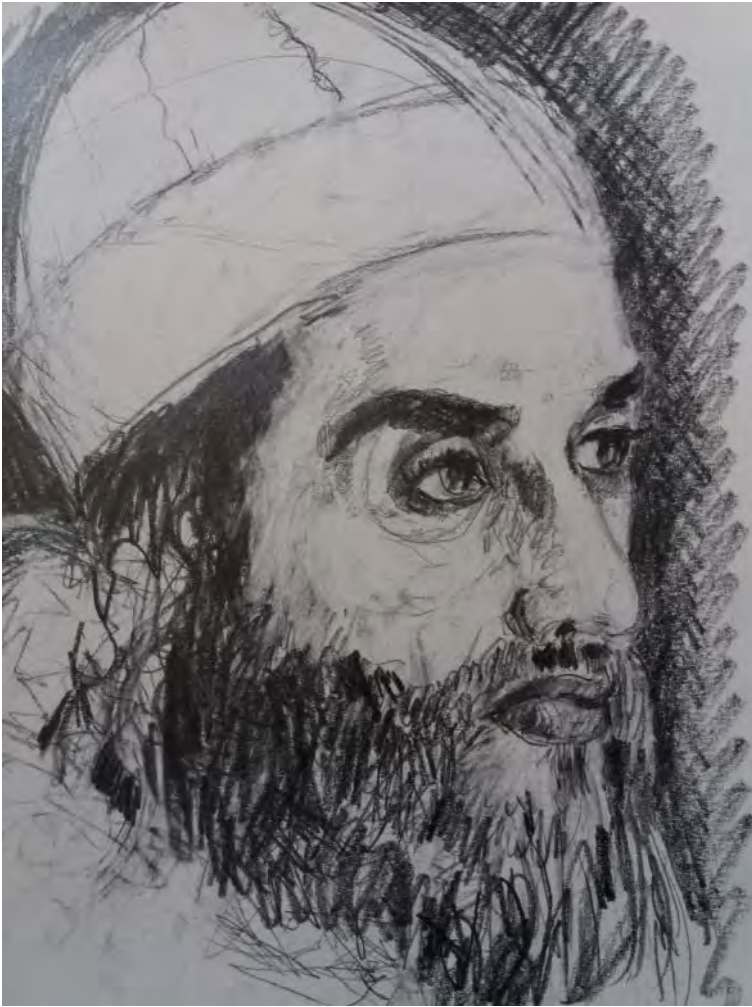


Fig. 31. Caroline Kaye, sketchbook drawing, detail from William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860.



Fig. 32. Owen Jones, wall decoration from the Alhambra Palace, drawing, c. 1883, Granada, Spain. Museum no. 9156K. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 33. Caroline Kaye, drawing from Max Liebermann, *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel*, 1879.



Fig. 34-35. Caroline Kaye, original sketchbook drawing from Max Liebermann, *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel*, 1879, detail.



Fig. 35.



Fig. 36. John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of his Parents*, 1849-50, Oil on canvas, 86.4 × 13.97 cm, Tate Britain, London.



Fig. 37. William Holman Hunt, *The Light of the World*, c.1900-04, oil on canvas, 233.7 x 128.3 cm (92 x 50½), St Paul's Cathedral, London.



Fig. 38. William Holman Hunt, *The Light of the World*, 1851-3, oil on canvas, 49.8 x 26.2 cm (19 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{2}{15}$), Manchester Art Gallery.



Fig.39. Jan Van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, Oil on oak , 82.2 cm x 60 cm National Gallery, London.



Fig. 40. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¼ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, detail.



Fig. 41. Fra Filippo Lippi, *The Annunciation*, 1445-50, Egg tempera on wood, 68.6 x 152.7 cm, National Gallery, London. Acquired 1861.



Detail



Fig. 42. Gherardo di Giovanni del Flora, *The Combat of Love and Chastity*, 1485-90, Tempera on wood, 42.5 x 34.9 cm, National Gallery, London. Acquired 1885.



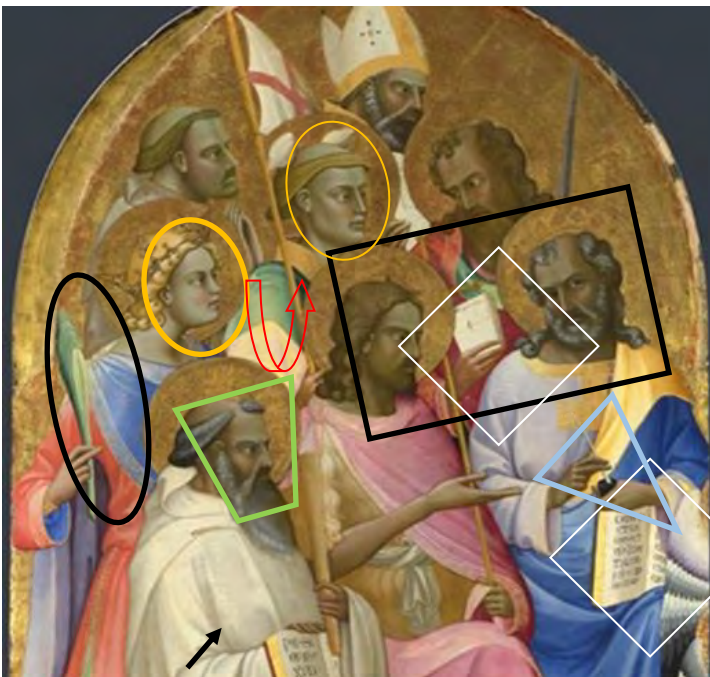
Detail



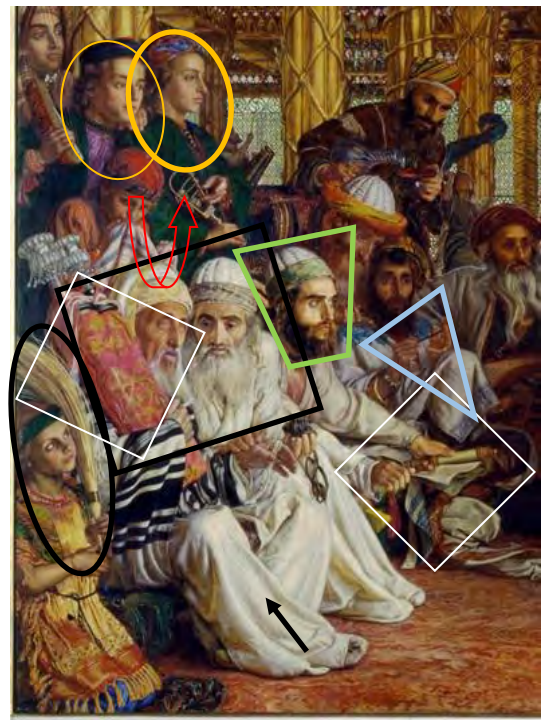
Fig. 43. Lorenzo Monaco, *The Adoring Saints*, Left Main Tier Panel, 1407-9, egg tempera on wood, 194.5 x 104.8 cm, National Gallery London, detail.



Fig. 44. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¾ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, detail.



As above, with shapes indicating the correlations between the two works.



As above, with shapes indicating the correlations between the two works.



Fig. 45. Lorenzo Monaco, *The Adoring Saints*, Right Main Tier Panel, 1407-9, egg tempera on wood , 197.2 x 101.5 cm, National Gallery London, detail.



Fig. 46. John Everett Millais, *Isabella or Pot of Basil*, 1849, oil on canvas, 103 cm x 142.8 cm, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.



Fig. 47. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848-9, oil on canvas 83.2 x 65.4 cm, Tate Britain, London.



Fig. 48. William Holman Hunt, *Rienzi (vowing to obtain Justice for the Death of his Young Brother, slain in a Skirmish between the Colonna and the Orsini Factions)*, 1849, oil on canvas, 83 x 117 cm, Ramsbury Manor Foundation.



Fig.49. Leonardo da Vinci, *The Last Supper*, 1495-8, fresco, 700 × 880 cm (280 x 350) Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Italy.



Fig. 50. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¼ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.



Fig. 51. Giotto, *Annunciation of St. Anne*, c. 1305, fresco, 200 x 185 cm Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.



Fig. 52. William Holman Hunt, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 141cm (33¾ x 55½), Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, with frame.



Fig. 53. William Holman Hunt, *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 111 x 141 cm, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



Fig. 54. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ seated disputing with the doctors*, 1654, Etching 3 3/4 x 5 5/8 in. (9.6 x 14.3 cm Rijks museum, Netherlands).



Fig. 55. Bernardino Luini, *Christ Among the Doctors*, c. 1515-30, Oil on poplar 72.4 x 85.7 cm, National Gallery, London.



Fig. 56. Diego de la Cruz, *Jesus entre Los Doctores*, 1476-1500, oil on board, 102 x 76 cm, Museum of Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid.



Fig. 57. Absolon Stumme, *Christ Among the Doctors*, 1499, tempera and gold leaf on panel, 214 cm x Width: 152 cm, National Museum, Warsaw.



Fig. 58. Workshop of Dürer, *Christ Among the Doctors*, Part of *The Seven Sorrows of Mary* series, 1494-96, oil on panel, 63 x 45 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.



Fig. 59. Jörg Breu the Elder, *Christ Among the Doctors*, 1502, tempera on panel, (dimensions unknown), Melk Abbey, Austria.



Figs. 61-62. Franz Francken, *Jesus Among the Doctors*, 1587, Oil on wood, 250 x 220 cm (centre panel), 250 x 97 cm (wings), Cathedral of our Lady, Antwerp, Belgium.

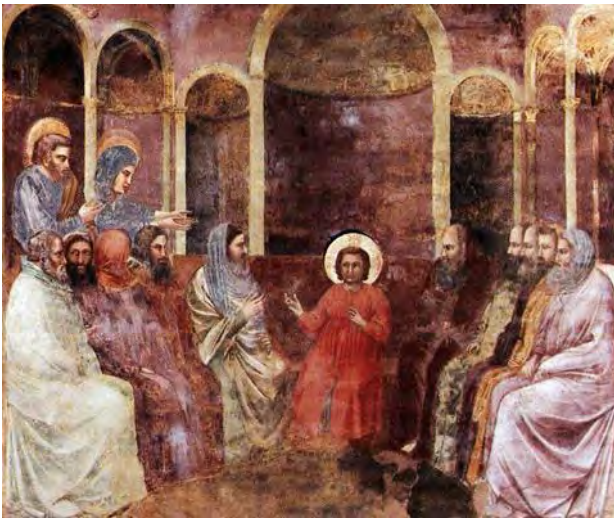


Fig. 63. Giotto, *Christ Among the Doctors*, 1304-06, fresco, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.



Fig. 64. Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Disputation with the Doctors*, tempera on wood, 1308 -1311, Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Siena.



Fig.65. Giotto, *Christ Among the Doctors*, c.1310, fresco, (dimensions unknown) Gothic church in Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi complex in Assisi, Perugia-Umbria, Italy.



Fig. 66. Paolo Veronese, *Jesus Among the Doctors*, 1560, oil on canvas, 236 cm × 430 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Fig. 67. Albrecht Dürer, *Christ Among the Doctors*, 1506, Oil on panel. 64.3 x 80.3 cm, Thyssen Collection, Lugano-Castagnolia, referred to as the Lugano panel.



Fig. 68. Hans Hoffmann, *Christ Among the Doctors*, late C16th, oil on lime panel, 87.8 x 118.2 cm, National Museum, Warsaw.



Fig. 69. Cima da Conegliano, *Christ Among the Doctors*, 1504, tempera on panel, 54.5 x 84.4 cm National Museum in Warsaw.



Fig. 70. Workshop of Dürer, *Christ Among the Doctors*, Part of *The Seven Sorrows of Mary* series, 1494-96, oil on panel, 63 x 45 cm Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.



Fig. 71-72. Master of Saint Augustine, *Scenes from the Life of Saint Augustine of Hippo*. c.1490, Oil, gold, and silver on wood, framed: 152.1 × 163.8 × 7 cm, 137.8 × 149.9 cm. The Cloisters Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bruges, Flanders, Southern Netherlands.



Details from above and fig. 67



Figs 73-74 Leonardo da Vinci, *Grottesque Heads*, c. 1493, ink, paper, 26.1 x 20.6 cm, Royal Library, Windsor Castle.



Fig. 75. Albrecht Dürer, *Christ Among the Doctors*, 1503, woodcut, 29.6 x 20.9 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.



Fig. 76. Adolph Menzel, *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel*, 1851, pastel and gouache on paper, 43 x 58 cm, Hamburger Kunststahle, Germany.



Fig. 77. Hans Hofmann, *Jesus among the Doctors*, 1884, oil on canvas, 67 x 90.5, Hamburger Kunststahle, Germany.



Fig. 78. Max Liebermann, *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel*, 1879, oil on canvas, 149.6 x 130.8 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany.



Fig.79. Max Liebermann, *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel*, 1879, oil on canvas, 149.6 x 130.8 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany. The painting is pictured alongside a photograph of the original painting before the re-working with the first dark haired model, right-hand side. Photograph Klaus-Dietmar Gabbert; deutschlandfunk.de



Fig. 80. Unknown, Dialogue between Moyses and Petrus, 13th Century Belgian Manuscript. Miniature at the beginning of a manuscript *Disputatio Petri Alfonsi contra Moysen pro defensione catholice fidei*, thirteenth century, Bruges, major Seminary, Ms 26/91, folio 1 recto.



Fig. 81. Johann von Armsheim, disputation between Jewish and Christian scholars, 1466-67, Printed 1483. Woodcut. Soncino Blaetter, Berlin, 1929. Jerusalem, B. M. Ansbacher Collection.



Fig. 82. *Ecclesia and Synagoga*, statue, Strasbourg Cathedral.



Fig. 83. *Ecclesia and Synagoga*, statue, Notre Dame.



Fig. 84. Maurycy Gottlieb, *Jews Praying on Yom Kippur*, 1878, oil on canvas, 243 x 190 cm, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel.



Fig. 85. Maurycy Gottlieb, *Ahasuerus, or The Wandering Jew*, 1876, oil on canvas, 63 x 53 cm, National Museum in Kraków.



Fig. 86. Maurycy Gottlieb, *Christ Preaching at Capernaum*, 1878-9, oil on canvas, 271.5 x 209 cm, National Museum in Warsaw.



Fig. 87. Moritz Oppenheim, *Lavater and Lessing Visit Moses Mendelssohn*, 1856, oil on canvas, 71.1 x 59.6 cm, Magnes Collection University of California, Berkley, USA.



Fig. 88. after Moritz Retsch, *Die Schachspieler* (The Chess Players), c. 1831, fresco, location unknown.

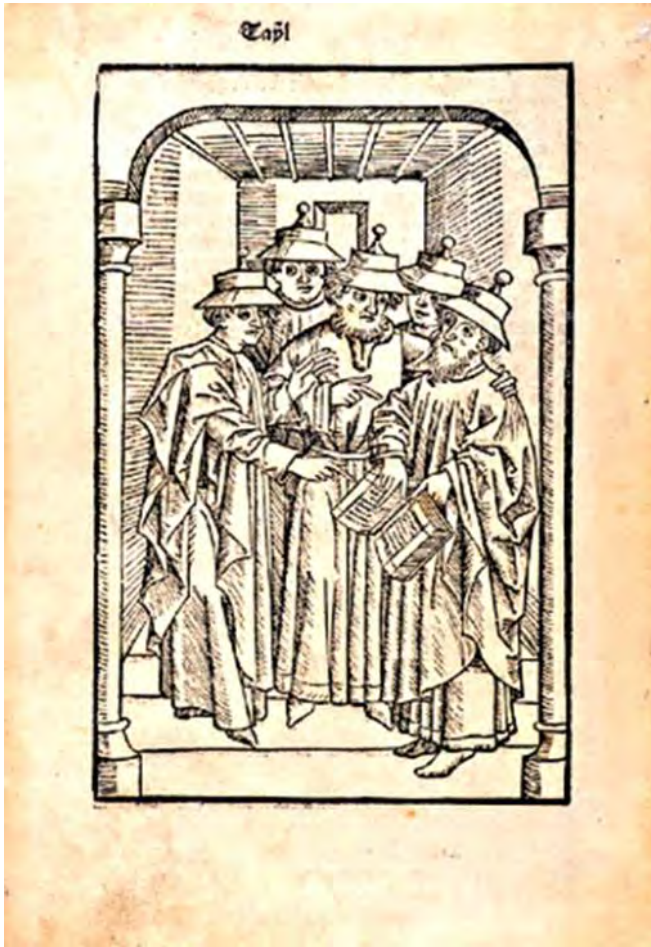


Fig. 89. Johann von Armsheim, woodcut, disputants with Jewish hats. *Der Seelen Wurzgarten*, Collection, Ulm 1483. Example of disputants wearing "Jewish hats." Collection *Der Seelen Wurzgarten*, Konrad Dinckmut, Ulm 1483.



Fig. 90. German woodcut, *Judensau*, c. 15th century, public domain.



Fig. 91. Romanino, *Scene of a cat castration*, 1531-32, fresco, (dimensions unknown) Castello del Buonconsiglio, Trento.



Fig. 92. Jan Van Eyck, *Fountain of Grace and the Triumph of the Church over the Synagogue*, c. 1432, oil on panel, 181 x 119 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid, detail.



Fig. 93. Quentin Massys, *Ecco Homo*, c. 1515, oil on panel, 160 x 120 cm, Museo Nacional Del Prado.



Fig. 94. Simeon Solomon, *Rabbi Carrying Scroll of the Law*, 1871, oil on canvas, 77 x 61 cm, Private Collection.



Fig. 95. Simeon Solomon, *Carrying the Scrolls of the Law*, 1867, Watercolour and varnish on paper, 35.5 x 25.4 cm. Whitworth Gallery, Manchester.



Fig. 96. Simeon Solomon, *Acolyte (Jewish King and his Page)*, 1873, watercolour, 21.6 x 21.6 cm, Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.



Fig. 97. Simeon Solomon, *Mystery of Faith*, 1870, watercolour; gum arabic; gouache; board; paper, 51.3 x 38.8 cm, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Merseyside.
