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'The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter': William Sharp and the Literary Network

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‘The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter’: William Sharp and the Literary Network

Molly Heaton-Callaway
School of Arts, Culture, and Language
Bangor University
2022

‘Yr wyf drwy hyn yn datgan mai canlyniad fy ymchwil fy hun yw’r thesis hwn, ac eithrio lle nodir yn wahanol. Caiff ffynonellau eraill eu cydnabod gan droednodiadau yn rhoi cyfeiriadau eglur. Nid yw sylwedd y gwaith hwn wedi cael ei dderbyn o’r blaen ar gyfer unrhyw radd, ac nid yw’n cael ei gyflwyno ar yr un pryd mewn ymgeisiaeth am unrhyw radd oni bai ei fod, fel y cytunwyd gan y Brifysgol, am gymwysterau deuol cymeradwy.’

Rwy’n cadarnhau fy mod yn cyflwyno’r gwaith gyda chytundeb fy Ngrichwylwr (Goruchwylwr)’

‘I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.’

I confirm that I am submitting the work with the agreement of my Supervisor(s)’

Dedication

To Keaton, without whom this thesis, and I, would be much the worse, and to all of us who have been forgotten, misremembered, and misread.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank my incredible supervisors, Dr Karin Koehler and Dr Michael Durrant, for their support, belief, and patience.

I'd also like to thank my parents for, among so many other things, their uncanny ability to find William Sharp books in charity shops.

This thesis would not be what it is without my partner's incredible proofreading skills and resource-finding wizardry.

Last, but very much not least, this thesis is deeply indebted to Lorraine Janzen Kooistra and colleagues for their incredible work on *Yellow Nineties Online*. Without their work, this thesis would never have happened, and I might still be a medievalist.

Abstract

William Sharp (1855-1905) was a journalist, poet, novelist, and editor largely remembered as a literary enigma because, halfway through his career, he began to write under the name *Fiona Macleod*. Macleod achieved the critical and artistic success Sharp had longed for, and Sharp's own cousin suggested that the pseudonym was an attempt to get around the critical bias against him. Scholarly attention has focused primarily on the identity shift between Sharp and Macleod, with little writing devoted to the other aspects of Sharp's life and career.

This thesis aims to write into that gap by focusing on the social connectivity that shaped Sharp's career. It builds on others in contextualizing Sharp in relation to his contemporaries, but also illustrates in greater detail the interactive, connective pressures that were present in his life and career. The thesis focuses primarily on mapping and navigating Sharp's interpersonal universe: his friends, acquaintances, and other connections across the literary world, especially those in positions of influence. The map of these acquaintances placed alongside shifts and developments in Sharp's career demonstrates the influence of the professional and social network on Sharp. His work also shows conscious awareness of connectivity; from his biographies, in which he situates others through reference to their own sociability, to his anthology *Sonnets of this Century*, in which he deliberately places people within his network in a more prominent position than other writers he did not know or writers who were no longer living, to his work in *The Pagan Review*, which camps the little magazine so beloved of his contemporaries.

Beginning with his hastily written but first commercially successful work, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study*, Sharp used his connections directly in many ways that were often received as gauche by his contemporaries. I use this work to also demonstrate that economic survival was an incredibly forceful pressure. The economic pressures that Sharp faced are directly at odds with the upper-class homosocial network he relied on to survive, making navigating the two a delicate task. Through exploring the way connectivity and survival were connected for Sharp, I present a new, recuperative narrative surrounding 'hack' writers.

The internal and external pressures Sharp faced also show the dark side of the network. His later, more artistic works were tainted in critical reception by his previous

reputation as a hack writer. To cope, he first struck out for a new audience in America; and then retreated into Fiona Macleod. Fiona Macleod gave him a textual space in which to explore not only his artistic desires, but also a feminine identity he had been confessing to envisioning in letters since the age of twenty-five. The network kept him alive, but the social structures he relied on to survive in some ways limited his exploration of his identity. The dissertation analyses Macleod as a textual body that provided Sharp a new identity as an escape from literary and social dysphoria, and uses her as a case study to examine narratives around feminine pseudonyms and transmisogyny.

In using Sharp as a case study, the dissertation explores and interrogates the concepts of literary networks, literary sociability, and literary connectivity as a whole. Sharp's gender, class, and nationality make him an unusually vivid demonstration of how the network functioned within Victorian literary society. In examining Sharp's life, we can understand more about the invisible structures that kept late-Victorian writers afloat – or sunk them.

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A Note on Pronouns

Throughout this thesis, I will usually refer to Sharp as *he* and Macleod as *she*. However, at points where it adds to my analysis and foregrounding of gender-variance, I may vary my pronoun use as serves my argument. Further, I follow a nonbinary understanding of gender: that is, one that reduces the link between pronouns and gender. It would be limiting to suggest that because William Sharp, as William Sharp, uses *he*, that he viewed himself as a man internally. There are many various reasons why a person may use certain pronouns in certain settings, as K.E. Callaway's work on gender-neutral pronoun use suggests.¹ Some, for example, use pronouns generally aligned with their assigned gender at birth because it is simpler, easier, or to express some control over their experience of that pronoun. This phenomenon was not unknown in the period: Sharp's contemporary, Jennie June, who expressed consistent desire to be a woman and underwent some medical transition, used the pronoun 'he' to refer to himself in his own writings.²

Thus, I suggest that when we use *he* for Sharp, we use it in the full awareness that this pronoun may not have been representative of his sense of his gender, but more representative of the ways he was read, or the ways he wanted to be read for social reasons – or perhaps that it reflected something key about late Victorian genderqueer or androgyne experience that now escapes us.³ To quote Sharp himself:

¹ K.E. Callaway 'From Ey to Ze: Gender Neutral Pronouns as Pronominal Change' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Georgia, 2022) <https://esploro.libs.uga.edu/esploro/outputs/doctoral/From-Ey-to-Ze-Gender-neutral-Pronouns/9949450930002959?institution=01GALI%20UGA> [accessed 07/07/2022].

² Jennie June (also known as Earl Lind and Ralph Werner) *Autobiography of an Androgyne*, ed. by Alfred W. Herzog (New York: The Medico-Legal Journal, 1918). <https://archive.org/details/autobiographyofa00lind/page/n17/mode/2up?view=theater> [accessed 07/07/2022] See p. xi and throughout. June was part of the Cercle Hermaphroditos, which Susan Stryker calls 'the first known informal organisation in the United States to concern itself with what we might now call transgender social justice issues' (Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* [New York: Seal Press, 2017], location 942. Kindle ebook). In a moment of queer connectivity, meetings of the Cercle Hermaphroditos took place in New York City from at least 1895; Sharp was in New York in 1896, staying less than an hour's walk away (William F. Halloran, *The Life and Letters of William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod"*, 3 vols [Open Book Publishers: 2018-2020] <https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/1194> [accessed 06/06/2022], Vol 2, p.222 and p. 264; for the location of the Paresis Club, a well-known gay club where meetings of the Cercle Hermaphroditos were held, see Tasha, 'LGBTQ History: Cooper Square and Bowery', *Off The Grid*, 4th December 2014 <https://www.villagepreservation.org/2014/12/04/lgbtq-history-cooper-square-and-bowery/> [accessed 11/04/2022]).

³ Riki Anne Wilchins is widely credited with coining the term *genderqueer*: the term encompasses all queer gender experiences; *androgyne* is here used in the sense it held at the fin de siècle, and the sense in which it was used by Jennie June – that is to say, to describe those who had non-normative gender experiences – rather than in its modern sense. Riki Anne Wilchins, *In Your Face*, Spring 1995, p. 4

If any man could comprehend the spirit, the idea, the teaching of the poem and not be the better of it, he wd. hardly be one we could call high-minded or of refined nature: and if any being (I cannot say man) should find in it nothing but sensual pleasure that gratified and fed his lowest appetites, then I say such a man makes it a mirror wherein his own foulnesses are focussed [sic].⁴

For Sharp, it seems, the pronoun *he* was not necessarily and inextricably attached to *man*, even *man* used generically. Sharp in this small extract – the full extent of which can be seen in Appendix C – self-consciously refuses to use *man* in the generic sense for rhetorical reasons but continues to use *he* as the generic pronoun. We cannot say, then, with definitiveness, that Sharp's use of the pronoun *he* to refer to himself necessitated that he considered himself a *man* over a *being*. Further evidence of Sharp's own flexible attitude to gender and pronoun can be seen in the following quote from W. B. Yeats, quoted in Terry L. Meyers' *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp*:

he [Sharp] had been somewhere abroad when he saw the sidereal body of Fiona enter the room as a beautiful young man, and became aware that he was a woman to the spiritual sight. She lay with him, he said, as a man with a woman, and for days afterward his breasts swelled so that he almost had the physical likeness of a woman.⁵

In this story, it becomes evident that a person with the physical likeness of a man may nonetheless be seen as a woman, through 'the spiritual sight'. The third use of 'he' is slippery and may refer to Sharp or Fiona, and this slipperiness continues throughout the rest of the extract. In the sentence 'She lay with him, he said, as a man with a woman,' the structure of the sentence connects 'she' to 'man' and 'he' to 'woman' and causes the final use of 'he' to become ambiguous. Sharp's own story, or at least a contemporary's retelling of it, reveals an essential quality of slippage to gender both in general and specifically with regard to Sharp and Macleod. It is, therefore, not too much a stretch of the imagination to consider that Sharp, when using 'he' for himself, did not necessarily understand that pronoun to reflect specific, permanent, and static gender experiences. In point of fact, particularly in this extract but also in others that will be referenced throughout this thesis, it

<https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/files/1831ck00f?fbclid=IwAR2ah-yZb92tmAoxDs0TNIItcs37U67OU6RQ7ojqOriz2ErQdkWRVITXLvVM> [accessed 29/06/2022]. For a community definition of *androgyny* in its modern usage, see <https://nonbinary.wiki/wiki/Androgyny>. The linked article uses she/her pronouns for Jennie June, though he used he/him in his own writings.

⁴ Letter from William Sharp to Vernon Lee; see Appendix C.

⁵ Terry L. Meyers, *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp: A Study of the Birth of Fiona Macleod, Incorporating Two Lost Works, Ariadne in Naxos and Beatrice* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 20.

seems that Sharp's gendered language struggles to contain the gender slippage that he expresses.

When I use *he* for Sharp, I do not imply by necessity that Sharp was a man. It of course follows that when I use *she* for Macleod, I do not imply by necessity that Macleod was a woman. However, the element of agency present in the choosing of the Macleod identity indicates that *she* may have had more internal meaning than *he*. Nevertheless, that is not a question for this thesis.

Further, some critics have used 'he' to refer to Macleod. This is not aligned with William and Elizabeth Sharp's pronoun practice.⁶ Instead, this rhetorical pronoun usage emphasises the perhaps erroneous assumption that Fiona Macleod was a man, and that William Sharp (assumed within this rhetoric to be a man) adopted a persona which in no way troubled Sharp's own understanding of gender, either within himself or within others in his community and moment. This practice, of using *he* for Macleod (a person(a) who never used it for herself and for whom it was never used by those who knew her best) is a process of misgendering for rhetorical purposes. I do not suggest that this misgendering is necessarily malicious, or purposefully used to de-emphasise the queerness of Macleod's existence. However, I do note that this rhetoric is inherently, though not necessarily purposefully, transphobic. At points in this thesis I may draw attention to this dynamic by using it in reverse: that is to say, using the pronoun *she* for William Sharp. This is, of course, subject to the same issues as using *he* for Macleod – but using male pronouns for figures such as Macleod, who at the very least we can describe as a female person(a) with the physical body of a person assigned male at birth, is often made invisible. Therefore, I make this rhetoric visible by, at points, using *she* for Sharp. I do not condone this practice as a general principle. I engage in it in order to draw attention to the ways in which mispronouncing has been used within the study of Sharp in service of certain rhetorics and in order to promote certain views about Macleod: that she was not a legitimate woman, that she was a masquerade, a trick, etc. In reversing this practice I instead suggest the view, equally supported by the evidence that we have, that William Sharp was not a 'legitimate'

⁶ See, as one example, E. A. S., V2, p. 140-141, where Elizabeth Sharp writes that 'F.M. yielded to the persuasion of her publishers'; Elizabeth Sharp generally uses 'he' for William Sharp and 'she' for Fiona Macleod, even when, as in this instance, she is discussing a writer who asserted that William Sharp and Fiona Macleod were one person. If there were any moment in Sharp's memoir where using 'he' for Macleod might be expected, it would be here; and yet Elizabeth Sharp continues to maintain the separation.

man, that he was a masquerade, a false presentation (in this reversed rhetoric, I am treating Sharp as a transgender woman, and thus suggesting that when she presented herself as a man, it was less accurate to her internal experience than when she presented herself as a woman). Both these ideas – that Sharp was a man and that Sharp was a woman – are supported by the evidence that we have. I am aware that this method of approach is a divisive practice; yet the grounds for the division is based in the erroneous assumption that the gender one was assigned at birth is more accurate and more correct than any other. In this practice of occasionally using 'she' for William Sharp, I ask that my reader, if they find themselves baulking in a way they do not at the use of 'he' for Macleod, question their own reaction. I do not ask that this reader come to the same conclusions as myself. I merely ask that they question.

In other circumstances, such as when referring to Macleod and Sharp when the two cannot be distinguished and seem best referred to as one person rather than two, I will use neutral pronouns. While this was not a practice modelled by William or Elizabeth or Fiona Macleod, it does nevertheless seem the clearest and most respectful approach.

Introduction

0.1: Introductory Note

In 1900, William Sharp (1855-1905) wrote a short semi-autobiographical piece on London's homeless. Two thirds of it were published in *Harper's Magazine*; it was published in its full form posthumously. It was titled 'The Hotel of the Beautiful Star', and in it, Sharp writes:

Well, on that March night, after I had sat at the summit [of Primrose Hill] for a bit, and had my fill of what I had come to see, I was slowly making my way downward, when abruptly I went headlong over a recumbent figure.⁷

This figure, a man who had been homeless for a week, first refuses Sharp's pipe and tobacco – we are told he prefers cigarettes – and then, after regaling Sharp with tales of his personal genius, goes home with Sharp and sleeps on his 'hardly luxurious but relatively comfortable' sofa for the night.⁸ Sharp tells us that this gentleman – who remains unnamed throughout the piece – was 'a remarkably true critic and prophet', and 'a clever writer, and a painter of excellent promise'.⁹ 'In less than a month from the date of our meeting,' Sharp continues: 'he was making from five to ten pounds a week by his admirable drawings for a popular periodical and by his various journalistic contributions'.¹⁰ More reliable money, in fact, than Sharp himself was making by similar means at the same time.

I have begun with this tale – tall or otherwise – because, as Sharp's wife Elizabeth (1856-1932) notes, it is 'reminiscent of the writer himself'.¹¹ She placed it as the final piece in her retrospective collection of Sharp's critical works, *Papers Critical and Reminiscent*, in which Sharp frequently eulogises his friends and acquaintances. 'The Hotel of the Beautiful Star', for Elizabeth, is a eulogy for Sharp: a key moment in his life, or a key collation of moments, or a key expression of himself if it did not reflect actual events. She seems to feel – she mentions her reasons for including this piece only in passing – that 'The Hotel of the Beautiful Star' evokes the person that Sharp was more clearly than any of Sharp's other

⁷ William Sharp, 'Hotel of the Beautiful Star', *Papers Critical and Reminiscent*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Sharp, (London: William Heinemann, 1912) p. 359.

⁸ Sharp, *Hotel*, p. 362.

⁹ Sharp, *Hotel*, pp. 361-2.

¹⁰ Sharp, *Hotel*, p. 362.

¹¹ Elizabeth A. Sharp, 'Bibliographical Note', *Papers Critical and Reminiscent*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Sharp (London: William Heinemann, 1912) p. 375 [references to texts by Elizabeth A. Sharp will henceforth be under the short form *E. A. Sharp* for first references, or *E. A. S* for later references].

works.¹² This is startling, but also intriguing, given that Sharp himself hardly appears in the piece. In this way, but also in others, I too find this piece reminiscent of the writer himself, though with a metatextual bent. Sharp begins with a strong sense of atmosphere and descends into second-hand quotes and the echoes of other voices. He discusses Dante Gabriel Rossetti extensively, incessantly. His references and allusions – to police officers, to Rossetti, to rough sleepers – fill the text with voices other than Sharp’s, but all of them mediated through him. Sharp is visible and invisible, an inveterate editor, present but always – in Pauline Nestor’s words – a ghostly interlocutor.¹³ Sharp’s presence is a vanishing one, always disappearing out of sight. He is continually, incessantly present through his authorial voice – but his authorial voice also consistently fades away in favour of a mixed-up, cross-class network of hearing and repeating, telling and being told, connecting and disconnecting:

“[M]ais voilà, mon grande maître,” as an old French playwright, a refugee from Paris, said to me once, ignoring the already admitted fact that he had never read a line of “ce devin Williams,” as his countrymen sometimes have it. [...] But no – let us leave this motley company, and the furtively unobtrusive “battalion of the unjustly fallen” as poor James Thomson of the *City of Dreadful Night* called the unfortunate [...] one may stand on London Bridge and think of Hood’s sad lyric [...] or of Rossetti’s picture of *Found* [...] On another occasion I was with a friend – a Kensington Gardens ranger – and after closure-hour walked idly through the vast glades [...].¹⁴

Sharp moves through London, referencing artists and poets as well as ‘the unfortunate, the outcast, the baffled and bewildered homeless’.¹⁵ In this way we can see the role of social connectivity in adding body, strength, and interest to Sharp’s literary works; we can see the way he uses social connectivity to promote his work and justify his presence. Yet we can also see the ways in which social connectivity vanishes Sharp – the way that such a powerful focus on connection diminishes and fades Sharp’s own presence. The piece rings and echoes with text, intertext, and reported voice. Two other Williams – Shakespeare and Wordsworth

¹² E. A. S., ‘Bibliographical Note’, pp. 374-5.

¹³ Pauline Nestor, ‘New Opportunities for Self-Reflection and Self-Fashioning: Women, Letters and the Novel in Mid-Victorian England’, *Literature & History*, 19.2 (2010), 18-35 (p. 23) <https://doi.org/10.7227/LH.19.2.2>.

¹⁴ Sharp, *Hotel*, p. 365-370.

¹⁵ Sharp, *Hotel*, p. 367.

– rub shoulders with the ‘French outlander in Soho’ and the Italian of Hatton Garden Way.¹⁶ Sharp’s friends range from Rossetti to a Kensington Gardens ranger; his reporters include homeless poets and river police. No text of Sharp’s illustrates the networks at play in his life as clearly as ‘The Hotel of the Beautiful Star’. Nor does any text of Sharp’s illustrate the wider topic of this thesis so clearly. In this text are represented the key ways in which Sharp’s connectivity developed and the ways he used text to solidify and render this connectivity. In this text are represented both the advantages, and the disadvantages, of connectivity.

¹⁶ Sharp, *Hotel*, p. 365.



Figure 1: William Sharp, 1894, from a photograph by Frederick Hollyer.

0.2: Biography

William Sharp was born on September 12th, 1855, in Paisley in Scotland.¹⁷ He came from a middle-class Scottish family, with ties mostly to the Scottish Lowlands and Borders. His father was a merchant, and his mother the daughter of the Swedish Vice-Consul in Glasgow.¹⁸ Sharp's father cultivated in him and his seven siblings a love of the Highlands – Sharp's obsession from childhood until his death.¹⁹ His nurse was also a Highland woman, and, according to Elizabeth Sharp, she encouraged Sharp's interest in Highland culture.²⁰ This led to a tension in Sharp between his Lowland cultural upbringing and his deep sense of connection to the Highlands; when Fiona Macleod materialised, she describes herself as 'born' in the Highlands. For Macleod, 'the heart still [lay] where the cradle rocked' – something that could never be the case for Sharp.²¹ Sharp's Lowland heritage, combined with his spiritual connection to the Highlands as expressed through Fiona Macleod, has led some critics to problematise his Scottish identity within a colonial context and his presentation of himself and his works.²² The questions Shaw and Stroh raise, for example, revolve around whether Sharp's Scottish identity was performed through a colonial lens.

At eighteen, for several months, he ran away into the Highlands with a traveller encampment, which Elizabeth Sharp writes was 'wholly in keeping with his temperament' – but he was eventually 'recaptured' and returned to the University of Glasgow.²³ When the

¹⁷ E. A. Sharp, *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod) A Memoir*, 2 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1912) V1, p.4. Henceforth, references to this text will follow the form E. A. S., V[number], [page].

¹⁸ E. A. S., V1, p. 5.

¹⁹ E. A. S., V1, p.5.

²⁰ E. A. S., V1, p.7.

²¹ Letter from Fiona Macleod to Katherine Tynan; William F. Halloran, *The Life and Letters of William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod"*, 3 vols (Open Book Publishers: 2018-2020)

<https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/1194> [accessed 06/06/2022] VII, pp. 323-4. Henceforth, references to this text will follow the form Halloran, V[number], [page].

²² Silke Stroh, *Gaelic Scotland in the Colonial Imagination: Anglophone Writing 1600-1900* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017); Michael Shaw, 'William Sharp's Neo-Paganism: Queer Identity and National Family' in *Queer Victorian Families: Curious Relationships in Literature*, ed. by Duc Dau and Shale Preston (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 77-96.

Stroh discusses the navigation of Celtic identity in Macleod's novel *Green Fire*, and its racist typology; see pp. 222 and 229 of *Gaelic Scotland in the Colonial Imagination* for an overview. Michael Shaw (see especially pp. 82-83), gives an overview of the complex intersection of Englishness and Scottishness in Sharp, and his often contradictory stance on Scottish nationalism and nationalism more generally.

²³ E. A. S., V1, p. 20.

teenage Sharp was returned safely, he began work in a lawyer's office at his parents' insistence.²⁴

This work was, due to Sharp's delicate health, apparently lighter than most people Sharp's age would be subjected to.²⁵ It was an attempt to push him into respectable middle-class work, and discourage him from the somewhat less reputable desire to become the new Algernon Charles Swinburne.²⁶ However, due to overwork – resulting not from his work in the lawyers' office but instead from his secret, late-night, artistic and literary studies – and the sudden death of his father, Sharp's health suffered and he was sent to Australia to recover.²⁷ This point in Sharp's life has the distinction of being one of his few periods of intellectual, and possibly physical, rest. Ill health plagued him throughout his life, though the biography indicates that he would work through his illnesses until that was impossible. Even then, he tended to dictate his work.²⁸ His Australian sojourn marks one of the few periods in his life when he took the need for rest to heart.

Upon his return from Australia, and after his ambitions to write were somewhat thwarted by a resounding dismissal from the writer Robert Buchanan (1841-1901), he began work at the City of Melbourne Bank in London.²⁹ Sharp was then twenty-two. He began to publish occasionally, placing poems largely in *Good Words*, and struggled to maintain both his much-hated paying work and his writing, which was inexperienced and frequently unsuccessful. Sharp's fortunes, however, showed signs of changing in the late 1870s. Aware of Sharp's desire to write, and of his fascination with the Pre-Raphaelite movement, Sir Noel Paton – a family friend – wrote an introduction for Sharp to Dante Gabriel Rossetti.³⁰

²⁴ E. A. S., V1, p. 21. Sharp left the University without finishing his degree.

²⁵ E. A. S., V1, p. 21 – quoting Sharp's own words. An air of self-derision suffuses them and so they ought not be taken as absolute fact.

²⁶ Terry L. Meyers, *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp: A Study of the Birth of Fiona Macleod, Incorporating Two Lost Works, Ariadne in Naxos and Beatrice* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996). Meyers writes that Sharp's earliest works are marked by an intense fascination with, and copying of, Swinburne. See p. 27 and p. 37 especially. Also see E. A. S., V1, p. 33.

²⁷ E. A. S., V1, pp. 23-24, pg. 32. E. A. S. writes that during the time spent working at the lawyers' office, Sharp would sleep only 4 hours out of 24, and indicates his tendency to work to the point of breakdown.

²⁸ Ernest Rhys, 'William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod"', *The Century*, 74 (1907), 111-117
<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000544996> [accessed 01/07/2022] (p. 113).

²⁹ E. A. S., V1, pp. 40-41.

³⁰ E. A. S., V1, pp. 54-55. Paton, 1821-1901; Rossetti, 1828-82. It is perhaps suggestive of Sharp's early life and literary-artistic diet that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was older than he was, and, by the late 1870s and early 1880s, not as relevant as it had once been. Sharp had only been introduced to Rossetti's poetry in the 1870s, and there is a distinct sense that young Sharp was out of time – the artistic-poetic world he saw himself as part of was some twenty years past.

Once he had received this introduction, Sharp, suffering from a chronic lack of decorum and humility, barged his way into Rossetti's house, frightening a servant in the process. Rossetti, however, was charmed by Sharp's insistence on 'shaking [Rossetti's] hand before [he] die[d],' and Sharp was invited into the circle of young poets and artists for whom Rossetti was the sun.³¹ In August of 1881, due to his lack of commitment to his paying work, Sharp was fired from the Bank and began to live by his writing.³² This led to Sharp living a comparatively hand-to-mouth existence, relying heavily on advances and loans.³³

In 1882, upon the death of Rossetti, Sharp's first work of note was published: *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study*. This was followed by other biographies and anthologies, alongside some poorly received books of poetry: *The Human Inheritance*, published with Rossetti's encouragement in 1882,³⁴ and *Earth's Voices* in 1884.³⁵ These did not end Sharp's economic struggles, though his books of poetry and steady journalism work as art critic for the *Glasgow Herald* gave him enough security to marry his cousin, Elizabeth Sharp, to whom he had been engaged for nine years. They married in 1884, and Sharp's economic security was possibly somewhat exaggerated; Elizabeth Sharp writes that she had an income of £35 a year, and he had '£30 in his pocket'.³⁶

In 1885, in addition to his *Glasgow Herald* post, Sharp was also on the staff of *The Academy* and a frequent contributor to *The Athenaeum* and *The Examiner*.³⁷ Sharp's relationship with the publishers Walter Scott also began in 1885, and after writing and

³¹ E. A. S., V1, p. 55.

³² E. A. S., V1, p. 83-5. He had a post at the Fine Art Society, but this fell through eventually and in late 1881 or early 1882 he survived only on his writings – see E. A. S., V1, p. 91.

³³ E. A. S., V1, pp. 123-4, p. 91.

³⁴ E. A. S., V1, p. 114.

³⁵ See [Anon.], "'The Human Inheritance, The New Hope, Motherhood'", *The Athenaeum*, 3 June 1882, p. 693-694

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/9108752/2E3334E38651465FPQ/3?accountid=14874&imgSeq=1&parentSessionId=0%2FWvIbZwnzQ1c5mUzIR%2BZVO%2B7Bgn3gBMA%2Bi7xOytq88%3D> [accessed 29/06/2022] and [Anon.], "'Earth's Voices'", *The Athenaeum*, 26 July 1884, p. 104-106 <https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/9514748/A4B1B0BBAB7F4AB1PQ/1?accountid=14874&imgSeq=2> [accessed 29/06/2022].

³⁶ E. A. S., V1, p. 160. For comparison, the National Archives Currency Converter suggests that Sharp had, in modern terms, £2000, and Elizabeth an income of £2300 a year. It is unknown how much Sharp earned annually at this point, but it is possible to surmise that he had "in his pocket" well under one year's average wage for the mid-1880s, and that Elizabeth Sharp's own income of £35 a year also fell below an average annual wage.

³⁷ E. A. S., V1, p. 163.

editing various books for them, he became editor of their *The Canterbury Poets* series.³⁸ His first novel for adults, *The Sport of Chance*, was published in 1888, and his second, *The Children of To-morrow*, was published in 1889. The latter was poorly received for its melodrama and illogical plot, but in that melodrama, its exploration of tensions within nationality and ethnicity, and preoccupation with thwarted love, it laid the groundwork for the novels to come.³⁹ In 1892 Sharp wrote, with Blanche Willis Howard, the novel *A Fellowe and his Wife*; Sharp wrote the wife's part, and Howard the 'fellowe's'. 1892 was an auspicious year for Sharp. He wrote the first (and only) issue of a new periodical, under various pseudonyms, and named it *The Pagan Review*. It was poorly subscribed to, but, as will be explored later, it marked a departure from his pot-boiling past and set the scene for Fiona Macleod.

The seeds of Fiona Macleod had been growing for some time. The first suggestion of her appears in 1880, when Sharp wrote to his friend John Elder to forgive him if sometimes he appeared more a woman than a man.⁴⁰ This ambiguous statement is clarified by Elizabeth Sharp's reference to Sharp's early days in London, roughly the summer of 1881. She states that he told her that he wandered London trying to understand a woman's perspective and see through her eyes.⁴¹ This attempt led him to state that 'sometimes I forget I am not the woman I am trying to imagine' – a sense of bodily displacement or duality that flowed through Sharp's whole life.⁴² However, it was not until the early 1890s that *Fiona Macleod* turned from a hesitant, hazily formed and largely unexpressed desire of Sharp's and became a person in her own right. The claim that Fiona Macleod in some way represented Edith Wingate Rinder, a close friend of the Sharps and a woman with whom Sharp may have been having an affair, has been so frequently repeated as to be all but proverbial, despite the fact that the primary sources are ambiguous. Rinder was a Celticist,

³⁸ E. A. S., V1, p. 174.

³⁹ See [Anon.], 'Novels', *The Saturday Review*, 29 June 1889, p. 794-5 <https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/9497279/88DBAE76BB854991PQ/2?accountid=14874&imgSeq=1> [accessed 29/06/2022], and William Wallace, 'New Novels', *The Academy*, 36.896, 6 July 1889, pp. 5-7 <https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/8171370/54611748EF394615PQ/3?accountid=14874&imgSeq=3> [accessed 29/06/2022].

⁴⁰ E. A. S., V1, p. 51.

⁴¹ E. A. S., V1, p. 82.

⁴² E. A. S., V1, p. 82. Elizabeth Sharp's narrative skips backwards and forwards, and so dates are rarely entirely secure. However, this appears in the chapter 'Early Days in London' and is followed almost immediately by Sharp's dismissal from the City of Melbourne Bank.

translator, and writer, and the primary evidence that Sharp and Rinder were having an affair is this Celtic affinity between the two, along with some veiled suggestions in Sharp's letters to his friends. Whatever its particular character, the relationship with Rinder gave Macleod space to grow, and she grew rapidly until she could no longer be subsumed as she had during Sharp's early years in London.

In 1894, Fiona Macleod wrote her first novel, *Pharais*. Unlike Sharp's novels, *Pharais* was well-received.⁴³ Macleod's second novel, *The Mountain Lovers*, followed in 1895, and was published by John Lane in his *Keynotes* series. At this point, both John Lane and Aubrey Beardsley – who designed the covers for the *Keynotes* series – were associated with *The Yellow Book*. This was the closest to the artistic cutting edge that Sharp had ever been: at this point, Sharp and Macleod were operating in separate literary spheres. Sharp, haunted by his pot-boiling past, stayed largely in the middle-brow with occasional forays beyond – but Macleod was gradually carving a place for herself in the high-brow. Macleod also published in Beardsley's next project, *The Savoy*, in 1897.

From 1894 onwards, there were two outputs coming from the same hand. Sharp, in his late thirties and early forties, began to gain more critical respect; his *Madge o' the Pool* and *Silence Farm*, published in 1896 and 1899 respectively, were better received than his earlier work.⁴⁴ Gossip about the relationship between Macleod and Sharp was frequent, and had to be stamped out repeatedly by both Sharp and Macleod. However, the desire to keep

⁴³ See [Anon.], 'New Books' *York Herald*, 16 July 1894, p. 6 <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/apps/doc/R3215372443/BNCN?u=bangor&sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=44af3903> [accessed 23/06/2022] Also [Anon.], 'Fiction' *The Speaker*, 2 June 1894, p. 618-619. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/6413198/E478794D9B1A4A48PQ/8?accountid=14874&imgSeq=2> [accessed 01/07/2022].

⁴⁴ For *Silence Farm*, see [Anon.], 'Reviews', *Pall-Mall Gazette*, 11 July 1899, p. 3 <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/Y3200491381/GDCS?u=bangor&sid=GDCS&xid=71f15cdb> [accessed 01/07/2022].

This article in *The Bookman* links Sharp's work to that of Thomas Hardy:

[Anon.], "'Silence Farm'", *The Bookman*, 16.95 (1899), 139 <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/3020119/400D2E39C4CB47C5PQ/1?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022].

For *Madge o' the Pool*, see [Anon.], "'Madge o' The Pool, The Gypsy Christ, and other tales'", *The Academy*, 6 March 1897, p. 280

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/historical-periodicals/madge-o-pool-gypsy-christ-other-tales/docview/8200393/se-2?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022]

and [Anon.], 'Fiction', *The Speaker*, 17 April 1897, p. 438

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/6417298/3CC1D8486D374812PQ/2?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022].

Sharp and Macleod separate led him to attempt to produce two people's worth of work, and not only that, but to produce that work around illnesses that grew gradually more frequent and dire. Sharp had suffered a heart attack in 1895, whilst giving a lecture at Edinburgh University's Summer School, and he was on borrowed time for the next decade.⁴⁵ While his and Macleod's work was prolific during the 1890s and early 1900s, his health suffered more and more. Psychological and physical strain led to increasing amounts of time spent at his friend Alexander Nelson Hood's house in Sicily, where he died in 1905, at the age of fifty. Edith Wingate Rinder, in accordance with Sharp's wishes, delivered the news of Sharp's death and the secret of the identity of Fiona Macleod to the newspapers, while Elizabeth Sharp sent pre-written notecards to Sharp's friends revealing the same.⁴⁶ Elizabeth Sharp outlived her husband by some way, and in the years following his death she oversaw the production of collected works by Fiona Macleod and William Sharp, as well as writing a biography of both. Elizabeth died in 1932.

0.2: Thesis Aims

My work takes a new approach to Sharp. While I build on others in contextualising Sharp's work in relation to his fellow writers, my approach focuses on the social connectivity that shaped Sharp's career. Already, in the preceding sections, this connectivity is visible. Sir Noel Paton and Dante Gabriel Rossetti were influential figures in connecting Sharp to his fellow writers and artists, and I explore the social processes that brought Sharp to these figures and others in order to not only situate him but also illustrate the interactive, connective pressures that were present in his life and career. This means that my work focuses on mapping and navigating Sharp's interpersonal universe: his friends, acquaintances, and other connections across the literary world, especially those in positions of influence. In mapping these acquaintances and seeing them alongside shifts and developments in Sharp's career, I demonstrate the influence of these acquaintances and their enormous impact on Sharp. I explore Sharp's awareness of these processes, and the ways in which he became a

⁴⁵ E. A. S., V2, p. 52.

⁴⁶ E. A. S., V2, p. 332. That E. W. R was telegraphed to tell the newspapers is mentioned in Halloran's third volume of the Life and Letters, p.397.

central connective figure for others in the way that Sir Noel Paton and Dante Gabriel Rossetti had been for him.

By virtue of my focus on Sharp's relationships and how those relationships developed, my work is rooted in Sharp's own words and own experiences as far as they can be rendered and understood. In consequence, this work also acts as a recovery effort: an effort to clear away the many versions of Sharp that have been created and recreated in the critical imagination, and return to the Sharp evident in his own texts. Thus, this thesis explores Sharp's relationships, with others but also with himself and his texts, with a queer eye. This approach frames Sharp's intense relationships, with both men and women, and his personal social connectivity along a path of queer interrelation. I show that Sharp's social, connective practices are often queer, and that Sharp can, by consequence, queer the literary forms with which he built his career – such as the biography or anthology. This queer eye also turns to Fiona Macleod, navigating Sharp and Macleod within a genderqueer context. This genderqueer context is one that is extremely pressing, both within Sharp's career and at my time of writing. It has also been rarely studied. Those like Michael Shaw, Terry L. Meyers, and William Halloran, who do mention genderqueer potential, engage with that potential in pursuit of other critical goals. Others, like Virginia Blain and Flavia Alaya, suggest it in ways which can now be read as prejudiced and transphobic. Yet it is my case that the genderqueer element in Sharp/Macleod is not a side-issue, an issue worthy of note but ultimately detachable from Sharp's life and work, but is instead a key influence on the ways in which Sharp lived, worked, socialised, developed, and was posthumously received.

Sharp is a marginal figure, with a marginalised gender/sexual identity. I navigate this marginal figure through the margins of their output and the margins of their texts. My work is framed by Sharp's letters and those of others – letters that form the associated detritus, rather than the core, of Sharp's literary products. I also study Sharp's nonfictional works, which have overall received very little attention. I analyse them as products that carry evidence, in their content and forms, of Sharp's connectivity and networking, much as I do the letters. His life has, with few exceptions, been marginalised by critics. His work and its influence have been pushed to the margins.⁴⁷ I explore his position as marginalised person

⁴⁷ For an assessment of Sharp's influence, see Grant F. Scott, Terry L. Meyers, and Isobel Murray: Grant F. Scott, 'Writing Keats's Last Days: Severn, Sharp, and Romantic Biography', *Studies in Romanticism*, 42.1 (2003),

in gender terms, look at the metaphorical margins of his actual physical productions, and rebuild him in the critical imagination.

I interrogate and discuss the ways in which survival was a constant and consistent pressure for Sharp, where it was not for his more well-remembered contemporaries, both economically and personally. This survival pressure, I argue, was equally responsible for Sharp's cheap pot-boilers as it was for Fiona Macleod. My analysis of social connectivity frames this fight for survival, showing both the advantages and disadvantages of connectivity. The relationships and connections that allowed his economic survival – through those cheap potboilers – disallowed his personal-emotional survival and forced her to create another path.

Where other critics have homogenised Sharp and Macleod – in multiple and various ways – I return to the source texts and to marginal echoes of both to illuminate them as potentially separate figures: either two individuals, or one person who saw themselves as having two distinct sides that required distinct social practices. I argue that Sharp navigates social connectivity differently from Macleod; that Macleod and Sharp reacted to different pressures, and in different ways.

0.3: Critical Approaches

There are very few major works of criticism on Sharp. This section will focus primarily on three full-length works and then illustrate the recent direction in studies of Sharp. Given that there is very little work on Sharp, this section serves as a general overview of the work that exists, rather than a narrowed overview of the work especially pertinent to this thesis. It is heavily focused on approaches to Sharp's gender experience for two reasons: firstly, this is a uniting thread throughout criticism on Sharp, and secondly, this is an area of Sharp criticism that, in my opinion, requires in-depth discussion, given the ways that previous work on Sharp's gender reflects prejudiced or limited perspectives. The following section on my key terminology will engage with other literature key to this thesis involving networks

3–26 <https://doi.org/10.2307/25601600>; Terry L. Meyers, *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp: A Study of the Birth of Fiona Macleod, Incorporating Two Lost Works, Ariadne in Naxos and Beatrice* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996); Isobel Murray, 'Children of To-morrow: A Sharp Inspiration for Dorian Gray', *Durham University Journal*, 49.1 (1987), 69-76.

and literary sociability. A full bibliography of the critical work on Sharp will feature in Appendix B. The three major pieces of work on Sharp this section will cover are Flavia Alaya's *William Sharp – Fiona Macleod, 1855-1905* (1970),⁴⁸ Terry L. Meyers' *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp* (1996),⁴⁹ and William F. Halloran's *The Life and Letters of William Sharp and Fiona Macleod* (3 vols; 2018-2020).⁵⁰ My analysis of Alaya's work focuses primarily on the ways in which Alaya discusses Sharp, and how her rhetorical choices have formed a lasting, but not always accurate, picture of Sharp. My exploration of Meyers traces the ways in which Meyers shifted the critical landscape on Sharp, expanding and problematising Alaya's work as it applies to Sharp as a queer figure. Halloran's work shifts the focus of criticism on Sharp from Alaya's sometimes inaccurate portrait back to the Sharp that can be extrapolated from his own writings. My own work is an expansion of Halloran's, and thus my later exploration frames Halloran's work as both starting point and dataset.

Alaya's work is a critical biography, covering Sharp's life and work and exploring various psychological strains that Alaya sees in Sharp's work. She writes that she hopes her study will 'illuminate a period of transition in English Literature that has long proven problematical and difficult to define'.⁵¹ In a sense, Alaya's work and this thesis have some commonalities. Alaya uses Sharp as a case study to illuminate the literary transitions of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Similarly, this thesis seeks to use Sharp as a case study to illuminate the literary-social mechanics of the same period. Alaya's argument is that Sharp's career illustrates in microcosm the transition from high Victorianism towards modernism and much of her work is spent exploring that transition. However, as she does not seem to see much of value in Sharp's work, the argument about the relevance of Sharp to the wider oscillations of the literary world is questionable. Alaya also devalues, in no uncertain terms, the contemporary opinion of Sharp/Macleod. The following extract illustrates her approach:

It would be egregious to suggest that, despite the fine quality of some small portion of his work, he can be restored to anything resembling the reputation he had as Fiona Macleod in his own time. No one would now even wildly surmise, as some of his contemporaries did, that Fiona Macleod and William Butler Yeats were the same

⁴⁸ Flavia Alaya, *William Sharp – "Fiona Macleod" 1855-1905* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁴⁹ Terry L. Meyers, *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp: A Study of the Birth of Fiona Macleod, Incorporating Two Lost Works, Ariadne in Naxos and Beatrice* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

⁵⁰ William F. Halloran, *The Life and Letters of William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod"*, 3 vols (Open Book Publishers: 2018-2020), <https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/1194> [accessed 14/4/2021].

⁵¹ Alaya, p. 16.

person. It would take a very fervent apologist to claim him a writer of vital importance and pardon his obvious shortcomings [...]⁵²

This tepidity inflects much of her work. Ending her introduction with such cautious, apologetic language prepares the reader to watch for Sharp's shortcomings and limitations, and limits both Alaya's and the reader's perception of Sharp and his works. Alaya's approach, dressed as it is in such lukewarm language, decentres Sharp in a work which professes to focus on him.

Alaya does her best to explain Macleod, but as Meyers notes, this is the weakest part of her work.⁵³ The way Alaya writes about Macleod, the suggestions she makes, and the rhetoric she uses pin an identity on Sharp with much supposition and little evidence. The purpose of the following analysis is not to speculate on Sharp's identity, but rather to unpack Alaya's assumptions in order to demonstrate the process of recovery in which more recent studies of Sharp have engaged.

Alaya starts her attempt at answering the ever-present question of Macleod with a then in-vogue speculative psychoanalysis:

Was there anything in [Sharp's childhood] that might have urged him to identify the "illegitimate" part of his nature as female? [...] His father's stern authoritarianism was a quality of manhood [that] William must early have found distasteful.

She goes on to suggest that Sharp's being the eldest of eight is the root of his 'sympathy for the suffering of women', which he 'repressed [...] together with the secret visions of his inner life'.⁵⁴ According to Alaya, 'when those visions emerged, they emerged with a feminine cast upon them'.⁵⁵ Here, Alaya presents her opinion through layers of speculation – each speculative statement is dependent on the last, but, through that layering, she builds an argument that appears more solid than the evidence can support.

There is extremely little evidence that David Galbraith Sharp, William's father, was, in fact, such a stern authoritarian, and that evidence itself must be interpreted broadly in order to reach such a conclusion. That David Sharp was unenthusiastic about William Sharp's flightiness and desire to be a writer is supported; that Sharp speaks little about his childhood is true. However, to presume from those facts that David Sharp must have been a

⁵² Alaya, p.16.

⁵³ Meyers, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Alaya, p. 27.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 27.

stern authoritarian is more dependent on modern stereotypes of mid-Victorian fatherhood than on the evidence. To presume further that Sharp's femininity itself comes from that authoritarianism suggests that Alaya could not conceive of an attachment to femininity that did not stem from an authoritarian, implicitly abusive, father and a detachment from masculinity in consequence. While this perspective presumably comes from the Freudian strain in the literary criticism of Alaya's moment, her evidence for such a diagnosis is still limited and frequently circular. Alaya's only evidence that Sharp was exceptionally affected by his mother's pregnancies and the births of his siblings is his alleged 'sympathy for the suffering of women' and the recurrent focus in his writings on illicit sexual activity and childbirth. While these two pieces of evidence are suggestive, the lack of concrete evidence means that Alaya's argument rests on ungrounded assumptions. Alaya notes herself that there is little information on Sharp's early life, but nevertheless, through the use of cherry-picked evidence and subtle rhetorical choices, paints a picture of a young boy burdened by family traumas, both paternal and maternal, which emerged later as gender instability.

Alaya appears to be working backwards from the emergence of Fiona Macleod; she seems to have already decided that Macleod is the product of a repressed self and traumatic memories and builds up her image of Sharp's childhood to match her opinion on Macleod. While one could certainly hypothesise as to why William and Elizabeth Sharp pay so little attention to his childhood in their writings, the lack of evidence itself means that any theories must be treated as speculative. Alaya's language displays that she is conscious of how much she is creating – her assertions are hedged with cautious or questioning phrasings: 'was there...?' 'whatever the origins' 'probable source' 'must have', 'no doubt', 'may easily'.⁵⁶ Yet she still builds up these hypotheses and speculations into assertions. At no point does she weigh options that do not fit with the narrative she presents, even to disagree with them. This allows her to present a consistency in the Sharp/Macleod narrative that is not necessarily fully supported, so that she can later describe Macleod exclusively as a psychological complex. For my own work, while I find the Sharps' silence on William's childhood suggestive, I begin when Sharp begins his self-narratives – in his early 20s – and refer only to those facts of his younger years that he or Elizabeth volunteer.

⁵⁶ Alaya, p. 27.

Early on in Alaya's work, she refers to Sharp's assertion that 'at times I am more a woman than a man' as a 'notion [that] took hold of him early'.⁵⁷ Her use of the word 'notion' delegitimizes Sharp's view of himself, as her later analysis will go on to do more fully. Rather than framing Sharp's consistent sense of their femininity as an *aspect*, *conviction*, *assertion*, or other more neutral or legitimising terms, she instead uses *notion* alongside other similar delegitimising terms and in doing so she primes the reader to see the testimonies she later explores in the same way that she does: as illusory products of a traumatized imagination.

Alaya begins her later discussion of Macleod with the same delegitimising rhetoric: 'the Sharp/Macleod division [...] is therefore not difficult to explain as a dramatization of opposing forces which Sharp recognised in his own character'.⁵⁸ While this statement is compatible with Sharp's own words on the Sharp/Macleod divide – for example, his testimony that he is 'more a woman than a man' – the wider context of Alaya's work, in which she considers the Macleod identity as an illegitimate 'notion', means that the word 'dramatisation' takes on rhetorical power and adds to the framing of Macleod as illegitimate and falsified. Alaya goes on to say that 'we have only frequent private testimony that Sharp thought he contained such sexual tensions within himself, that he felt a deep sense of identity with woman and her problems'.⁵⁹ By 'only', she means that this tension does not make it into his written work as far as she analyses it; her suggestion seems to be that Sharp's personal testimony would be more convincing had she been able to read it in his work. He 'thought he contained' sexual tensions within himself – but Alaya subtly posits through her language that his testimony is unreliable because this tension is, as far as Alaya reads it, not on display in his published writing.

The next major work in Sharp studies is Terry L. Meyers' *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp*, tellingly subtitled 'A study of the birth of Fiona Macleod, incorporating two lost works, *Ariadne in Naxos* and *Beatrice*.' Meyers argues that these two lost works '[involve] a number of tensions and dualities prominent not just in William Sharp but in Victorian culture as well', and much of his critical effort goes to illustrating these dualities.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 27.

⁵⁸ Alaya, p. 111.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.112.

⁶⁰ Meyers, p. 37.

In so doing, he claims to expand Alaya's earlier critical biography, writing that 'of all the themes and influences Alaya traces so skilfully, she explores the question of sexual identity less than she does the others.'⁶¹

Meyers' work explicitly places itself as a direct answer to the question of sexual identity from the very start: the blurb tells us that 'Meyers uses gay and gender studies to examine Sharp's place in the late Victorian crucible for modern constructions of sexual roles'.⁶² This points to a queer construction of Sharp that places his critical importance in what he represents for modern conceptions and constructions of gender and sexuality. This is distinct from Alaya's version of Sharp; for her, such queer questions of sexual identity were either unavailable or unanswerable. Nevertheless, the two remain in dialogue; Alaya's opening to her chapter 'Woman: An Unexplored Country' seems to anticipate Meyer's book, or at least some of his ideas:

That this compassion [for women] developed thereafter into a tendency to homosexuality could possibly be inferred from his frequent expressions of disturbing pain at 'what a woman can be made to suffer' as well as from his habit of associating the sexual relationship with violent or fatal consequences in his fiction.

Yet the use of such a term as 'homosexual' ultimately tells us little and is in fact misleading, owing to the vast spectrum of latent and overt behaviour it is made to cover in careless modern usage. In its narrowest sense, 'homosexual' has little application to a man who, in his actual relations with men and women, did not at all deviate from the norm.⁶³

It is this kind of dismissal that Meyers refers to when he notes that Alaya traces the question of sexual identity with less skill than is used in the rest of her work.⁶⁴ Meyers concentrates on exploring the very possibilities which Alaya dismisses out of hand. His use of the word 'trans-gendering' suggests that Meyers is coming to Sharp from a nuanced, queer understanding of gender articulation in the Victorian period.⁶⁵ Meyers works from the conception that Sharp's 'cryptic utterances about himself',⁶⁶ such as his assertion that 'in some things [he is] more a woman than a man', are evidence of that form of genderqueering, or trans-gendering, which was seen as part of the experience of Victorian

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 3.

⁶² Ibid, back cover.

⁶³ Alaya, p.116.

⁶⁴ Meyers, p. 3.

⁶⁵ Meyers, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 4.

homosexuality.⁶⁷ However, Meyers limits his initial queering of gender by viewing Sharp and the genderqueer Victorian moment solely within that narrative of male homosexuality – his nuanced understanding is stifled by what Hugh English refers to as a perspective which presents identity as ‘a set of fixed names for coherent, unchanging types of people,’ in this case the assumption that, while the names themselves were in this case not fixed, gay male identity remained coherent and unchanging.⁶⁸ Meyers’ perspective suggests that it is merely methods of articulation that have changed and that gay male identity has remained stable at its core.

Meyers’ analysis explores in great depth – startling depth for the length of the study – the late Victorian crisis of masculinity, but for him the ‘key’ to Sharp’s place in this crisis is a specifically male homosexual discourse.⁶⁹ Meyers then goes on to place Sharp within a homosexual social network, referring to ‘Sharp’s known associations with John Addington Symonds, Walter Pater, Walt Whitman, and Oscar Wilde’, building a ‘dimly documented’ (in all its evocative phrasing) grouping which ‘reflected [Sharp’s] sexual dilemma [...] and the strain of double life’.⁷⁰

Meyers examines Sharp’s relationship with each of these men in greater detail, beginning with a particularly evocative portrait of his relationship with Symonds – pointing to a ‘rapturous’ visit to Venice during which he and Symonds enjoyed, as Elizabeth Sharp puts it, ‘frequent companionship’.⁷¹ Meyers proposes a greater relationship between the two than ‘shared antipathy to the whole range of Victorian Grundyism’, expressing in tones of some disappointment that correspondence between the two is ‘not now available’, and noting that ‘the relationship [...] is difficult to determine’.⁷² Meyers suggests that Symonds’ congratulatory letter on Sharp’s engagement is an ‘affirmation of heterosexuality’, but complicates this by adding that ‘Symonds’ praise of Sharp’s introduction to *The Songs, Poems and Sonnets of William Shakespeare* [in which Sharp ‘confronts the sonnets’ homoeroticism directly] seems to suggest a shared understanding’.⁷³

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Hugh English, ‘Learning and Unlearning Historical Sexual Identities’, *The Radical Teacher*, 66 (2003) 5–10. (p. 5).

⁶⁹ Meyers, p. 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 6.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 6.

⁷² Meyers, p. 7. In light of this phrasing of Meyers’, Sharp’s tagline for *The Pagan Review*, “Sic Transit Gloria Grundi”, takes on a queer suggestiveness. The letters in question seem to have been destroyed.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 7.

This back and forth between heterosexual and homosexual identities that Meyers writes into Sharp's 1880s, the affirmation of heterosexuality against a 'shared understanding', enforces a line between the two identities.⁷⁴ The double life of Meyers' Sharp is one of heterosexual versus homosexual life, of homosexual versus heterosexual network. Deborah Lutz notes, however, that Victorian sexual identity/practice is far blurrier than Meyers' narrative of 'double life' suggests.⁷⁵ Meyers' analysis, even without mentioning his eventual disregard of the genderqueer qualities of Victorian homosexual identity and sexological discourse, comes close to applying stable, discrete categories where those categories may largely not have existed.

Meyers follows this discussion of Sharp's queer network with an analysis, centred on *A Fellowe and His Wife* and *The Pagan Review*, of Sharp's 'discontent and instability'.⁷⁶ He concentrates on Sharp's expression of heterosexual attraction from a female perspective in *A Fellowe and His Wife*, noting that '[the female character] contemplates Vanni's [a male model for the female character's art] discomfort [at being viewed as a sexual object] in tones which deepen as we recall Sharp's being behind the female mask'.⁷⁷ Here Meyers is putting Sharp within a space of masked same-sex desire. He continues this method of situating Sharp when he names Sharp's poem "The Twin-Soul" as the inspiration for Lord Alfred Douglas's line 'I am the Love that dare not speak its name'.⁷⁸ Meyers also presents Sharp's introduction to *The Pagan Review* as a text where homoeroticism 'is difficult to decide'.⁷⁹ There is certainly, according to Meyers' reading, a homosocial bent to the introduction, and Meyers illuminates both Sharp's homoerotic rhetoric and the way in which he tempers that same rhetoric with reassurances on the position of marriage.⁸⁰ My own exploration of queerness in *The Pagan Review* can be found in Chapter 4.

Meyers' section on Macleod repeatedly engages with gender variance; he notes how '[the creation of the Macleod pseudonym] was eerily associated with a death of

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁵ Deborah Lutz, *Pleasure Bound* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011) Location 2267. Kindle ebook.

⁷⁶ Meyers, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 12.

⁷⁸ Meyers, p. 11. The line in this poem that Meyers pulls out as prefiguring Douglas is 'the name that shall not be spoken at all'. Interestingly, Isobel Murray suggests that Sharp's *Children of Tomorrow* may have been an influence on Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Between them, Murray and Meyers begin to centralise Sharp's position in the queer literary world of the early 1890s. While it is not a direct questioning of Alaya's work, it raises interesting questions for Sharp's influence, which Alaya rhetorically limits.

⁷⁹ Meyers, p. 14.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 14-15.

masculinity’.⁸¹ Meyers also draws on an especially illuminating quote from Yeats, wherein Yeats is relating a story relayed to him by Sharp, which quite explicitly describes a genderqueer experience:

he [Sharp] had been somewhere abroad when he saw the sidereal body of Fiona enter the room as a beautiful young man, and became aware that he [Meyers notes that it is unclear whether this pronoun refers to Fiona or Sharp] was a woman to the spiritual sight. She lay with him, he said, as a man with a woman, and for days afterward his breasts swelled so that he almost had the physical likeness of a woman.⁸²

However, overall, Meyers draws the Macleod pseudonym back to ideas of male homosexuality, leaning on a contemporary connection between transvestitism and homosexuality drawn by French ethnographer Élie Reclus. Meyers also takes note of sexologist Havelock Ellis’s connection between ‘the homosexual temperament and unusual psychic [...] powers’, as Alaya did previously.⁸³ However, the earlier landscape that Meyers has drawn – a queer landscape through which one can trace gay male identity as consistent through vicissitudes of gender – casts the section on Macleod in the same gay male light even as it talks of ‘a death of masculinity’.⁸⁴ The conclusion that Meyers does not explicitly state but which is evident in his rhetorical choices is that homosexual identity troubled masculinity; that to be haunted by homosexuality is to doubt one’s own access to masculinity.

Meyers’ analysis centres male homosexuality to the degree that the ‘key’ to understanding Macleod is to place Sharp within a homosexual context. He writes that ‘Sharp’s trans-gendering represents the playing out of psychological strains’; these strains, he suggests, are primarily motivated by same-sex desire.⁸⁵ Thus he implies that female identity as expressed by Sharp (and, implicitly, other late-Victorian figures) is masked evidence of male homosexuality and a justification of same-sex desire. The ‘trans-gendering’ is a symptom of a (cisgender) sexual crisis, and not the crisis itself. The expression of womanhood is therefore exclusively a homosexual articulation, and Fiona Macleod is

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 22.

⁸² Ibid, p. 20; the second note in square brackets is mine.

⁸³ Meyers interprets this more charitably towards Sharp than Alaya does.

⁸⁴ Meyers, p. 22.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 4. Both Alaya and Meyers conceptualise Fiona Macleod as ‘psychological strains’ – in essence, Macleod is always ‘about’ something other than gender. For Alaya, childhood trauma, and for Meyers, homosexuality.

written as a creation caused by buried gay masculinity. The suggestion that arises from Meyers' work is that the idea of a 'woman's soul' dwelling within gay men (that, in Victorian discourse, caused sexual preference) is specifically and exclusively an expression of homosexuality.⁸⁶ The 'woman's soul' thus in and of itself becomes irrelevant except insofar as to illustrate discursive shifts; the gay masculine is centred over the queer androgynous.

Halloran's *The Life and Letters of William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod"*, the first academic biography of Sharp and the most recent long-form critical work to focus exclusively on him, marks a shift in critical approach. It is a collection of Sharp's letters, bracketed and informed by a detailed biography with a wide focus: Halloran frequently moves from Sharp into short explorations of Sharp's correspondents, their role in Sharp's life, and their influence on him. Halloran covers similar ground to Meyers and Alaya, but in more depth, and structured and framed by Sharp's own words. Each section of the biography outlines Sharp's life, publications, and connections. Halloran also explores certain difficulties in Sharp's character, much as Alaya did: Sharp's economic position and his dissatisfactions with his literary output, his complex position on Scottish nationalism, and his gender. Halloran overall avoids much analysis and conjecture, though he provides potential ways to navigate certain ambiguities in Sharp's own words: for example, Sharp's hints about his relationship with Edith Wingate Rinder. Unlike Alaya, and in some ways unlike Meyers, Halloran accepts Sharp's own navigation of his own gender and the pressures he experienced. Halloran notes that Sharp's society required him to be either man or woman – he could not be both.⁸⁷ Halloran's work underpins much of this thesis, both for his careful biography which makes order out of the chronological uncertainty of Elizabeth Sharp's work – for example, the uncertainty over the year in which Sharp met Rossetti – and for the letters he has collected.⁸⁸ Halloran's work provides the primary dataset that this thesis works from. As such, his work will be discussed at length in forthcoming chapters.

Remaining work on Sharp can be found in journal articles and chapters. For example, Silke Stroh considers Sharp within the context of what Stroh calls 'racist reversals' – essentially focusing on the ways in which the Macleod work can be seen to support colonial

⁸⁶ Jennie June, *Autobiography of an Androgyne*. See pages vi and vii of the Introduction. I have cited this specific text over others because of its explicit genderqueering context.

⁸⁷ Halloran, V2, p. 88. See also V1, p. 463, p. 470.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Sharp's biography, while comprehensive, has frequent moments of slippage where dates and relationships become unclear.

ideas about 'the Celt', failing to challenge to the colonialist perspective and project.⁸⁹

Michael Shaw, in the chapter 'William Sharp's Neo-Paganism', explores similar ideas from a different perspective, demonstrating Sharp's complex and deeply nuanced position in relation to cultural nationalism and anti-nationalism, as well as the often queer ways in which Sharp and Macleod explored, supported, and criticised the colonialist project.⁹⁰ This is expanded on in Shaw's book, *The Fin-de-Siecle Scottish Revival: Romance, Decadence and Celtic Identity*, which contextualises Macleod and Sharp within the wider context of fin-de-siecle Scotland. This wide-ranging work particularly focuses on Sharp's complex and entangled approach to nationalism and Celtic identity, especially in the context of Macleod's neo-pagan writings, and on the influence of Belgian literature on Sharp and the Scottish revival more generally.⁹¹

Virginia Blain also approaches Sharp and Macleod with a queer lens; Blain's 'Period Pains: The Changing Body of Victorian Poetry' centres on the patterns of inclusion and exclusion at play in the canon of Victorian poetry, as well as the changes in the practice of anthologising.⁹² Sharp is a side-issue for Blain, an exemplar of sorts. Blain begins promisingly in her section on the Victorian poetry anthology and the study of Victorian poetry:

The way to go here, in my view, is not to isolate 'queer' poets or even 'queer' poetry, but to open our minds to perceive some of the fascinating intersections between gay and straight even in the heartland of high Victorianism.⁹³

She continues:

My own current project aims to examine Victorian poetry at moments of intersection between gay and straight, not for the purpose of biographical innuendo, but rather to examine some of the more interesting because disruptive transitional moments of gender anxiety in the poems themselves.⁹⁴

Yet, as Blain continues, cracks begin to appear and transphobic rhetoric begins to emerge.

The following quotation is on Swinburne:

⁸⁹ Stroh, *Gaelic Scotland in the Colonial Imagination: Anglophone Writing 1600-1900* (Evanston, Illinois: 2017) pp. 213-246 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt22727mv> [Accessed 14/04/2021].

⁹⁰ Michael Shaw, 'William Sharp's Neo-Paganism: Queer Identity and National Family' in *Queer Victorian Families: Curious Relationships in Literature* ed. by Duc Dau and Shale Preston (New York: Routledge, 2015) pp. 77-96.

⁹¹ Michael Shaw, *The Fin-De-Siècle Scottish Revival: Romance, Decadence And Celtic Identity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020) <https://doi.org/10.3366/J.Ctvs3z8j.6>.

⁹² Virginia Blain, 'Period Pains: The Changing Body of Victorian Poetry', *Victorian Poetry* 42.1 (2004), 71-80 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40002729> [accessed 01/07/2022].

⁹³ Ibid, p. 76.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 76.

That is to say, the erotic direction of his verse, in all its sado-masochism, seems to move in quest of female/lesbian sexuality, the feminine as desired by the female, in a way that is strongly suggestive of the transbian (a male who undergoes sex change to female, not in order to pursue an erotic desire for the male, but rather, for the female: "transbian" is a more precise term than "male lesbian").⁹⁵

This moment is followed by an assessment of Sharp:

There is another poet writing a little later than Swinburne whose poetic solution to a similar quandary was strikingly different. This is William Sharp, who did not have a fetish for being flogged, but who does seem to express through his writings a similarly transbian desire. The outlet chosen by Sharp was the invention of a female poet whose voice he ventriloquized: the mysterious lonely figure of Fiona Macleod, whose verses caught hold of the public's imagination even as she flitted like a shadow further and further into the Celtic twilight. It had been Matthew Arnold who so strongly pointed out the affinity of the Celtic with the mystique of the feminine; Sharp was able to cash in on this alignment and make it work for him. He transformed himself, by so doing, from a hack poet read by very few, into a cult "poetess" with a keen following. There was a moment when I would like to have included Fiona Macleod in my anthology of women poets: I decided against this perversity on the grounds that a manufactured female voice might appear to travesty the rest of the collection.⁹⁶

There seems very little reason for Swinburne and Sharp to be included in Blain's article. The extent of the conclusion she makes is that Swinburne and Sharp demonstrate the necessity of integrating Victorian men's poetry with Victorian women's, rather than maintaining the distinction. Yet these extracts are striking in that they could have appeared in Alaya's work, and in fact follow some of the same rhetorical patterns: Sharp is 'cashing in', is 'ventriloquising'.⁹⁷ We may remember here Alaya's pointed use of 'notion' – a word that, while problematic, is more sympathetic to Sharp than Blain's language, despite the thirty-four years between the two pieces of scholarship. Notwithstanding the article's earlier focus on queer perspective, the viewpoint suggested in these two extracts is one which uses exclusively transphobic language, not one that uses and develops then-contemporary explorations of genderqueer theory. More specifically, Blain relies on the idea that trans women who are attracted to other women are 'transbians', a word which suggests that transgender lesbians are less legitimate as women and as lesbians.⁹⁸ Further, she considers the inclusion of Fiona Macleod, who, in Blain's article, is potentially considered as a

⁹⁵ Blain, p. 76.

⁹⁶ Ibid, pp. 76-77.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 77.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 76

‘transbian’ (that is to say, a transgender woman who is attracted to other women), in her anthology to be a ‘perversity’.⁹⁹ These statements delegitimise transgender womanhood. Regardless, however, of her language, we can see that Blain – at least in this article – does not take Sharp and Macleod’s gender experiences seriously.

For an alternative, and more respectful, approach, we may think of Halloran’s assertion in the recent *Life and Letters*; that Sharp’s central conflict, not in himself but between himself and his wider society, was that ‘the norms of his society dictated that he be [man or woman], not both’.¹⁰⁰ Blain’s article ‘Queer Empathy: Or, Reading/Writing the Queer in Victorian Poetry’ covers broadly similar ground to ‘Period Pains’, though at points both more and less sympathetic, even more and less empathic, toward Sharp.¹⁰¹ She states outright what had been largely implicit in Alaya’s work and in ‘Period Pains’:

Despite his own consuming desire to feel ‘with’ women, he is effectively denying women a voice of their own by usurping their speaking position in a ‘dishonest’ way, that is, by posing as a ‘real’ woman author.¹⁰²

The specific process by which Sharp’s pseudonym denies other women space to speak is unclear, particularly given the fact that some people identified Macleod with Sharp regardless of how close Sharp tried to keep the secret. However, at points, Blain in ‘Queer Empathy’ explores the meaning that feminine identity may have had for Sharp beyond the economic, a more nuanced approach than we see in ‘Period Pains’:

Yet it seems that Fiona meant much more to William Sharp than the income she brought him. [...] Sharp felt a feminine side within himself that he could not channel into expression through his everyday persona. Unlike Swinburne, he was tall, handsome and masculine-looking. He needed to separate his inner urge to femininity from his usual self and express it through a kind of mystic soul-writing.¹⁰³

Notably, more recent work is moving towards a more flexible approach to Sharp’s gender experience. The Yellow Nineties Online Personography classes Sharp’s assigned sex as ‘other’, which indicates that ‘historical information indicates fluidity of sex identity’.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 76-77.

¹⁰⁰ Halloran, V2, p. 88.

¹⁰¹ Virginia Blain, ‘Queer Empathy: Or, Reading/Writing the Queer in Victorian Poetry’, *Literature Compass*, 1.1 (2004) <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2004.00059.x>.

¹⁰² Blain, p. 9-10.

¹⁰³ Blain, p. 6-7.

¹⁰⁴ Alison Hedley et al, *Yellow Nineties Personography Ontology Specification (2.1)*, <https://personography.1890s.ca/data-model/> [accessed 11/05/2023].

Some work on Sharp, however, has asked different kinds of questions. Halloran is, perhaps, what Alaya calls an ‘apologist’: in ‘William Sharp as Bard and Craftsman’ he reclaims Sharp’s poetic skill and literary value.¹⁰⁵ Isobel Murray’s ‘Children of To-morrow: A Sharp Inspiration for Dorian Gray’ concentrates on Sharp’s pre-Macleod novel *Children of To-morrow*, and navigates ideas of literary debt between Oscar Wilde and William Sharp.¹⁰⁶ While Murray is not an apologist – ‘the novel has plenty of flaws as a finished piece of fiction, which it would be pointless to enumerate and detail’ – the article details convincingly the parallels between *Children of To-Morrow* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.¹⁰⁷ This is especially interesting because it is paralleled in Terry L. Meyer’s connection between one of the poems in Sharp’s *Romantic Ballads* and Alfred Douglas’s ‘Two Loves’, which features the line ‘I am the Love that dare not speak its name’. The work of both Murray and Meyers repositions Sharp in the literature of the 1880s and 90s, and the lingering sense of connection and interconnection present in both their work is an important context and germ for the work that follows in this thesis. Benedicte Coste and Koenraad Claes’s work on *The Pagan Review* also shows the growing awareness of Sharp in the field of periodical studies and recognition of his value to late Victorian literary studies more generally; Coste studying *The Pagan Review* analytically as an artistic object,¹⁰⁸ and Claes considering it in the wider context of the Victorian ‘little magazine’.¹⁰⁹

0.4: Thesis Overview and Key Terminology

In this thesis, I shift the approach to Sharp that has thus far been taken. I develop and build on Meyers and Halloran, situating Sharp within a literary community. I demonstrate that the mediocrity Alaya sees in Sharp is as much based in poverty or insecure employment as a lack of skill or talent, and I show that Sharp’s integration into the literary community was a result

¹⁰⁵ William F. Halloran, ‘William Sharp as Bard and Craftsman’ *Victorian Poetry*, 10.1 (1972), 57-78, <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/stable/40001614> [accessed 01/07/2022].

¹⁰⁶ Isobel Murray, ‘Children of To-morrow: A Sharp Inspiration for Dorian Gray’ *Durham University Journal*, 49.1 (1987), 69-76.

¹⁰⁷ Murray, p. 71.

¹⁰⁸ Bénédicte Coste, ‘Late-Victorian Paganism: The Case of the Pagan Review’, *Cahiers Victorien et Édouardiens*, 80 Automne (2014) <https://doi.org/10.4000/cve.1533>.

¹⁰⁹ Koenraad Claes, *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctv7n0bhk>> [accessed 16 November 2018].

of his own work rather than chance. Further, ‘mediocre’ writers had their own literary circles, their own dynamics of literary sociability, that were part of the same literary sociability fabric as those of ‘Authors’. These were not wholly distinct circles, but instead operated on and within one another. As part of this demonstration of interacting circles, I show that despite the sense in earlier criticism that, except in one or two instances, he was influenced but never influencing, he was influential and important in his own ways. Literary influence is not a trickle-down process; the middle-brow literary circles also influenced the formation of canons and influenced the dissemination of literary cultural capital, and Sharp in particular was aware of his own potential as disseminator of cultural capital.

I use middle-brow here to refer to those works, and the mechanisms of literary production associated with the same works, which are aimed at a middle-class mass market. These works may have been written with the intention of ‘educating the reader or democratizing high culture’,¹¹⁰ or, in the words of *Punch*, may be aimed at those who ‘are hoping that some day they will get used to the stuff they ought to like’.¹¹¹ John Guillory notes that ‘Middlebrow culture is the ambivalent mediation of high culture within the field of the mass cultural.’¹¹² I focus most on the productions associated with middle-brow culture and consumption, and show the ways in which this was not a separate sphere of sociability and production but instead a sub-sphere of a wider literary community, the boundaries of which were subject to permeation and flux.

I show, more widely, that literary sociability was a major influence on the creation of literary work, and that networking was a key part of surviving as a writer both in terms of having continued work and opportunities, and in terms of physical survival. I show that networking can operate in person and through letters, and that being established in a career could reduce one’s reliance on in-person networking. All of these things I trace in the career of William Sharp. I argue that literary productions are created by sociability and social interactions, and that this applies equally to the middle-brow and the high-brow. I argue

¹¹⁰ Elke D’hoker, ‘Theorising the Middlebrow: An Interview with Nicola Humble’, *Interférences littéraires/Littéraire intertextuelles*, 7 (2011) <http://interferenceslitteraires.be/index.php/illi/article/view/564> [accessed 07/05/2023] pp. 260-261.

¹¹¹ Quoted. in Mary Grover, *The Ordeal of Warwick Deeping: Middlebrow Authorship and Cultural Embarrassment* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009) pp. 35-36.

¹¹² John Guillory, ‘The Ordeal of Middlebrow Culture’, Review of *The Western Canon* by Harold Bloom, *Transition*, 67 (1995), pp. 82-92, p. 87.

that figures like Sharp were integral to these social interactions, and that middle-brow writers may have frequently acted as nodes between high-brow writers. In doing so, I show that, while there was a sense in Sharp's period of a division between the middle-brow and high-brow, the hack and the Author, this division was permeable and fluid, and frequently more reliant on sociability and social work than on skill and talent.

Further, I study Sharp's non-fictional works. These works have received little attention. Grant F. Scott has studied Sharp's biography of Joseph Severn, but otherwise the non-fictional works have largely not been considered.¹¹³ Through my chapters on Sharp's biographies and anthologies, I correct this imbalance, and show that non-fictional works such as these played a major role in literary sociability, specifically the construction, legitimisation, and maintenance of social connections. I suggest that the literary work that these texts do is important, as it is ultimately constructive and intensely relational. I suggest that, while relationships between people are evident in fictional texts and the construction of those texts, non-fictional, sometimes ambiguously original, texts have at least as much, if not more, to say about the importance of literary sociability to a writer's survival. My work is intensely connective. I do not – as Alaya does – seek to situate Sharp with reference to canonical authors, to justify my study of him by linking him to the 'big names' of the period: I instead treat 'connective' as a more general term, demonstrating wider practices of connection.¹¹⁴ I do not stop at connecting Sharp to a contemporary figure or movement. Instead, I demonstrate his constant processes of connecting; his constant push for creating connection and showing connection in his work. I focus on demonstrating a social, connective process and its results and consequences, rather than *per se* situating Sharp in his contemporary moment, or situating Sharp in relation to a movement or style.

I argue that Sharp was, in some ways and in some contexts, a central node, a threshold through which other authors pass. In the chapter on Sharp's anthologies, I show this threshold quality most clearly. In other contexts, it is not entirely clear whether he was

¹¹³ Grant F. Scott, 'Writing Keats's Last Days: Severn, Sharp, and Romantic Biography', *Studies in Romanticism*, 42.1 (2003), 3–26 <https://doi.org/10.2307/25601600>. Recently, Michael Shaw has considered William and Elizabeth Sharp's art criticism for *The Glasgow Herald*; see Michael Shaw, 'Contested Cosmopolitanism: William and Elizabeth A. Sharp's *Glasgow Herald* Reviews of the Paris Salons 1884-1900', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 48.1 (2022) 37-47 <https://doi.org/10.51221/sc.ssl.2022.48.1.5>.

¹¹⁴ I borrow this Barthesian term to draw attention to the ways in which some authors are given greater priority than others, or are assumed to be more important simply because they are more famous. See Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by S. Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 146.

a central node – that is to say, whether he actively connected writers to publication opportunities and to one another, both literally and socially or textually, within production – or merely had a centralised position – that is, that he knew and was socially intimate with a large number of people in literary London. His centralised position, however we interpret it, shows the degree to which he was embedded in the literary community, and shows both his influence and influences. I show that Sharp was equally embedded in low-brow and high-brow literary production, and argue that this exposes the way in which literary community is not made of canonical authors exclusively, but also of transitional, liminal figures who float between literary worlds that we retrospectively separate.¹¹⁵ I argue that many of Sharp's productions were shaped by his personal connections, and that they followed an opportunistic trajectory. I show the ways in which Sharp used his social connections, and that these ways suggest a kind of leap-frogging from one opportunity to the next. I also demonstrate that Macleod uses social connections and networking in a similar, but not identical, way to Sharp. Sharp's networking activities are inscribed on his books and embedded in their production. The intensity of his networking gave him a reputation for gaucheness: this shaped the opportunities he could access, and those opportunities shaped his career.

I base my analysis first on concepts, particularly the idea of centrality, drawn from social network analysis. Primarily I use social network analysis to easily render Sharp's social connections and show the ways in which those connections grew. In this way, concepts from social network analysis allow me to clearly show the potential of Sharp's social relationships. I can trace Sharp's distance from certain central or influential figures, and further trace his possible paths to them. The use of some social network analysis principles here allows me to express in detail the explosion in Sharp's connections and illustrate his networking process. My understanding of social network analysis comes from John Scott's *Social Network Analysis: A Handbook*,¹¹⁶ and was further influenced by Jana Smith Elford's 'Recovering Women's History with Network Analysis'.¹¹⁷ This thesis uses fewer specific SNA concepts than the latter article. This was not the initial intention; however, over time it

¹¹⁵ Nathan K. Hensley, 'Network: Andrew Lang and the Distributed Agencies of Literary Production', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.3 (2015), 359–82 <https://doi.org/10.1353/vpr.2015.0045>.

¹¹⁶ John Scott, *Social Network Analysis: A Handbook*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2000).

¹¹⁷ Jana Smith Elford, 'Recovering Women's History with Network Analysis: A Case Study of the *Fabian News*', *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 6.2 (2015), 191–213 <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/610156>.

became clear that this thesis was best served by using SNA as a principle by which to gather data, rather than the principle through which to express my results. Another important influence on the current project is *Mapping Victorian Literary Sociability*, a digital humanities project that literally maps the lives of literary figures, showing their propinquity, or their physical proximity to each other. This allows a mapping of the ways in which physical proximity was a key part of the development of literary and artistic careers.¹¹⁸

Network here is a key term. With the critical dissatisfaction with the generalised usage of the word *network* in mind, I attempt to narrow my use of the word.¹¹⁹ As Andrzej Gasiorek and Daniel Moore note in their introduction to *Ford Madox Ford: Literary Networks and Cultural Transformations*, ‘the word “network” is open-ended’, and can be used equally to describe ‘loosely connected’ individuals who share ‘broad values’, ‘individuals who work in tandem’, and ‘more tightly structured brotherhoods, fellowships, and societies’.¹²⁰ Similarly open-ended is Andrea Stewart’s definition of ‘networks of connectivity’ as ‘relationships’. However, Stewart also shows the necessity of such an open-ended definition by noting, in J. Stephen Murphy’s words, ‘any medium that groups writers together has the potential to turn writers into conduits through which other writers can be discovered’.¹²¹ I use the term *network* to refer to the relationships between people – however structured or unstructured – within this literary sphere which were, or could be, both personal and professional. Similarly, I use ‘network’ to indicate these processes of discovery, both our discovery and those contemporary discoveries of Sharp’s. However, I use the term primarily to suggest its verb sense; *to network*, *to create networks*. Here I evoke Sharp’s process of connecting, of *collecting*, *collating* connections. *The network* is the resulting web of connections that Sharp creates. *The Network* is not an autonomous peasouper floating over London; it is an actively created web of combined intimacy and professionalism. *Network* is an active verb. With *literary sociability* I refer to the processes of social connection between

¹¹⁸ The *Mapping Victorian Sociability* project is available here: <https://victorians.ucalgary.ca/> and an overview is available here: Karen Bourrier, Hannah Anderson, Sonia Jarmula, David Lapins, Kaelyn Macaulay, Peter Peller, Ingrid Reiche, John Brosz, Dan Jacobson, ‘Mapping Victorian Homes and Haunts: A Methodological Introduction’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 26.2 (2021), 300–309, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jvcult/vcab003> [accessed 23/04/2023].

¹¹⁹ Hensley, quoting J. Stephen Murphy, p. 365.

¹²⁰ Andrzej Gasiorek and Daniel Moore, ‘Introduction: Transitions, Continuities, Networks, Nuclei’ in *Ford Madox Ford: Literary Networks and Cultural Transformations*, ed. by Andrzej Gasiorek and Daniel Moore (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008) p. 24.

¹²¹ Andrea Stewart, ‘“The Limits of the Imaginable”: Women Writer’s Networks During the Long Nineteenth Century’, *Victorian Review*, 45.1 (2019), 39–57 (pp. 39–40) [doi:10.1353/vcr.2019.0030](https://doi.org/10.1353/vcr.2019.0030).

authors, readers, editors, and publishers as a whole, in person as well as within text, and in using such a definition I follow Betty A. Schellenberg, who describes literary sociability as ‘sociable literary practices’,¹²² and Peter Kirkpatrick and Robert Dixon, who express literary sociability as literary community and its processes as well as the ways community is sustained by, and sustains, reading and writing.¹²³ *Literary community* applies to the resulting net of interconnected individuals. *Networking* can allow individuals to be part of several different communities, literary and otherwise – as Sharp’s ‘The Hotel of the Beautiful Star’ demonstrates – but I primarily treat networking as a process that connects people and pockets of people in one larger literary community.

While *network* may in some instances be an overused term, as Nathan Hensley asserts, for Sharp networking and the network had a pressing reality.¹²⁴ As one explores Sharp’s life, work, and the role of community within it, the image emerges of a writer who was more acquainted with ‘the grind’ than those around him. We see this in Sharp’s relationship to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The image we see in works about Rossetti – be that Deborah Lutz’s examination of the Rossetti circle, or Sharp’s works, or the letters written by members of Rossetti’s circle themselves – is an image of intense literary focus and the economic freedom to write, to paint, to talk about painting, to talk about writing, to run naked through Cheyne Walk and to be shut into a china cupboard.¹²⁵ Sharp’s engagement in this sphere, his aching desire to be a brush-stroke in this image, resulted in him being fired from his job, and having to engage with reality. Where for other members of Rossetti’s circle, who were not such workaday things as bank clerks, the *network* (in all its overused glory) and its linkages may have been abstractions, or inherent and so invisible features of modern London upper-class literary life, for Sharp it was a mode of survival. In this way, I do not discuss ‘the network’ because it is a word *du jour*. Nor do I use it because it gives a sense of ‘what the real [Victorian] world [was] really like’.¹²⁶ Instead, I focus on it as a

¹²² Betty A. Schellenberg, *Literary Coteries and the Making of Modern Print Culture: 1740–1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) doi:10.1017/CBO9781316423202.008 (note: no page numbers were given on Cambridge Core, but this is from early in Chapter 7).

¹²³ Lucinda O’Brien, ‘Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia, edited by Peter Kirkpatrick and Robert Dixon’, *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 12.3 (2012) <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/JASAL/article/view/10116> (again, no page numbers given, but this is from the first page of the review).

¹²⁴ Hensley, p. 365.

¹²⁵ Lutz, p. 149.

¹²⁶ Hensley, p. 367.

contemporary pressure, a mechanism for survival, a lifeline. Rather than rendering visible a previously invisible chain of actors and causalities, I draw attention to a chain of actors and connections that was visible to those actors, and was actively conceived, used, and exploited for middle-class, middle-brow, literary-economic survival.

Critically speaking, the idea of a web of interconnection moves between the real and physical, such as in the project *Mapping Victorian Literary Sociability*, where the interconnections are rendered real and physical through reference to location and physical distance, and the imaginary and non-physical, such as the ‘transatlantic imaginary’ suggested by Guy Reynolds.¹²⁷ Other connections are rendered physical through other means – for example, the proximity of one person to another in a published anthology, or two texts placed together in an online archive. This thesis is focused on all these various forms of interconnection, from the real and physical to the non-physical to the textual. In this, it requires several different forms of approach.

I start from a physical rendering of connectivity, one based on actual interpersonal relationships. This requires building a base set of connections that Sharp had, and following as closely as possible its key shifts and changes. In this way, I show the necessity of the literary circle to publishing in this period. In order to explain and manage my gathered data, I use principles of social network analysis. This renders complex and difficult connections into simpler graphs and allows complex connections to be described concisely. This base of data supports and grounds the later explorations of non-physical and literary connections. The connections that Sharp makes in person support, define, and delimit the ways in which he can exploit literary and non-physical connections. Thus, the data that I collect, when read through social network analysis, shows the way in which this human, social scaffolding that defined and supported Sharp’s career was built.

The data for this project comes largely from letters, from Sharp and others. For the Sharp letters, I use Halloran’s abovementioned *Life and Letters of William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)* as my corpus. For others, I use the collections held at the National Archives. I have focused on bodies of letters, defined by the National Archives Online Catalogue, over

¹²⁷ Guy Reynolds, ‘The Transatlantic Virtual Salon: Cather and the British’, *Studies in the Novel*, 45.3 (2013), 349–68 <https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA351610532&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=00393827&p=LitRC&sw=w&userGroupName=anon%7Ebc7d1dcc> [accessed 01/07/2022].

individual letters, in order to make sure those connections I draw are reflections of strong, ongoing relationships of potential influence. While single letters can have great influence, they do not necessarily reflect the social structures that are so key to my analysis at this point. Other data includes Elizabeth Sharp's memoir, and the published writings of other figures to whom Sharp was close. These sources allow me to navigate the social relationships at play in Sharp's life and the ways they may have developed.

However, letters are not the only sites in which we see Sharp's connectedness and networking. As indicated, we can also see them in Sharp's literary texts. This can involve looking at who edited who and who published who, and thus tracing a web of literary relationships, contracts, and favours. This can also involve paratexts. Within my analysis, the paratext is both a key form of data and a key methodology. I approach all the 'things' around the text, from typeface to preface to the author's social face, as potential places for Sharp's literary connectivity to be visible, and potential ways for him to network. In order to demonstrate the variety of 'things' around the text that I consider, I refer here to Gerard Genette:

But this text rarely appears in its naked state, without the reinforcement and accompaniment of a certain number of productions, themselves verbal or not, like an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations. One does not always know if one should consider that they belong to the text or not, but in any case they surround it and prolong it, precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb, but also in its strongest meaning: to make it present, to assure its presence in the world, its "reception" and its consumption.¹²⁸

I argue that networking and interconnection are essential to a material text's presence in the world, and that paratexts, as presence-makers, are fundamental sites of connection. Genette's *epitext* contains: 'all the messages which are situated, at least originally, outside the book: generally with the backing of the media (interviews, conversations), or under the cover of private communication (correspondences, private journals, and the like).'¹²⁹ Here, I will note that all the data previously mentioned on pages 49-50 can be defined within *epitext*. I refer continually to correspondences, private journals, and other semi-external messages (such as Elizabeth Sharp's, Richard Le Gallienne's, Belford Bax's, and Ernest Rhys's memoirs, which render visible the same kinds of intimacies of Sharp's life as are visible in

¹²⁸ Gérard Genette and Marie Maclean, 'Introduction to the Paratext', *New Literary History*, 22.2 (1991), 261–72 <https://doi.org/10.2307/469037> (p. 261).

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 264.

correspondence and diaries). In this thesis, I use epitextual material – hereafter, epitext will be referred to with the conventional umbrella term paratext – to interrogate the ways in which texts, and lives, are shaped by literary community, connection, and sociability, and the ways in which ‘reception and [...] consumption’ are similarly shaped.

0.5: Chapters Overview

This thesis focuses on the role of interpersonal networking on the growth of Sharp’s career. In consequence, I largely focus on Sharp’s output that is, itself, concerned with people outside himself, or relies on some sort of external connection for it to be created. This also includes collaborative works. Fictional and poetic work is less of a concern, as its connection to the interpersonal network is, while present, less direct.

There are innumerable possible networks which could be studied here, and many of his texts could be used as representative of these networks or could show spaces in which these networks could be built. However, to cover all of them in the space at hand would be impossible. Thus, I have narrowed my focus specifically to those networks and texts which surround key shifts and changes in Sharp’s career. This is intended to give an overview of the ways in which these networks shaped Sharp’s career and texts, and the ways his texts were sites in which he developed his networks. To my reading, his nonfictional and periodical works are the sites in which his socially connective processes were most clear, and that is why – alongside the fact that his nonfictional texts have been understudied in general – I have chosen to focus my energies on those texts specifically. This is not to say that his fictional texts did not also act as sites of personal and interpersonal connection. They most likely did do so. Nevertheless, his critical work was fundamental to the growth of his career and the changes in his trajectory, and so it is that on which I have focused. As a result, I have focused on the networks which shaped these texts and the networks that were evident within them. There are many other possible networks well worthy of study which I have not focused on, and I do not mean to suggest these are less important or valuable.

The works that I consider are Sharp’s biographies, which I cover in Chapter 2, his anthologies, in Chapter 3, and the periodicals in which he appeared and which he helped to produce, addressed in Chapter 4. All of these forms rely on his connections and

relationships on a level which influences the construction and creation of the work. His biographies rely on personal and social relationships, with either the biography's subject or their family. His anthologies rely on a process of curation that requires social connectivity. His periodicals are mostly created through collaboration and are thus social products. Sharp was, during his lifetime, best known for his non-fictional works, and so these works shaped his career and the public perception of his career. This dynamic is explored further in Chapter 5, when I move from consideration of Sharp into consideration of Fiona Macleod. At this point in the thesis, I look back on Sharp's career, and illustrate his discomfort with it. I look back at the way that the external forces operating on Sharp forced him into a specific mould that he then tried to break with Fiona Macleod.

Chapter 1 establishes my methodology and the way in which Sharp began to develop his social connections. I begin when he has few connections outside his family and family friends, and trace Sharp's integration with Dante Gabriel Rossetti's social circle. This sets out much of the context for later chapters, as it illustrates the sudden and extreme growth of Sharp's social circle, a circle which grew far more slowly in following years. Chapter Two explores Sharp's biographical writings. This chapter centres on Sharp's first major work, 1880's *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study*, whilst also analysing some general trends in his biographies. The process by which *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study* was commissioned and published is important for the study of literary networking, as personal relationships led to its production. It was also a key gateway for Sharp, as its publication led to him being appointed editor of Walter Scott's series of biographies. Chapter 2 explores the impact of this editorial role on Sharp's integration into more high-brow literary circles. It discusses the idea of social face, homosocial knowledge practices, and the impact of class on the ability to access these knowledge practices. Sharp is here explored as a disruptive figure, who, by virtue of his class, does not engage with the expected knowledge practices. This leads into a further exploration of the ways in the Walter Scott series of biographies encouraged the dissemination of cultural capital.

The third chapter explores Sharp's poetry anthologies. In this chapter, I explore his *Sonnets of this Century* (1886) and *American Sonnets* (1889). My exploration of these anthologies builds on the idea from Chapter 2 of Sharp as disseminator and elaborates on his relationship with the building of the Victorian literary canon. *Sonnets of This Century* is a collection made up largely of figures with whom Sharp was connected, and it acts as an

attempt to canonise Sharp's personal circle. This, I argue, was a method of networking that consolidated (or attempted to consolidate) Sharp's connections. The chapter also explores the differences between Sharp's anthology and previous anthologies as well as subsequent ones. *Sonnets of This Century* sold well over thirty thousand copies during Sharp's lifetime, and arguably shaped subsequent anthologies, and, like the biographies, could have disseminated cultural capital. *American Sonnets* shifts this narrative slightly. The process of collecting sonnets for *American Sonnets* was a process of making new connections rather than taking advantage of pre-existing ones. This section explores Sharp's relationship with the American market and Sharp's growing dissatisfaction with his career and its direction.

The fourth chapter illustrates the ways in which Sharp tried to shift the direction of his career, and how he used and developed his network to achieve this shift. This chapter concentrates on three periodicals: *The Pagan Review*, *The Evergreen*, and *The Savoy*. This is not the limit of Sharp's periodical work in this phase; however, these three demonstrate the uses, nuances and shifts in Sharp's literary network most clearly. *The Pagan Review* was Sharp's own creation from start to finish, and this chapter explores the ways in which *The Pagan Review* symbolises a failure of Sharp's literary network, and the ways that it can in fact be seen as a parodic, camp exposure of the paratextual networks evident in other 'little magazines' and in Sharp's earlier work. *The Evergreen* was the first magazine in which Fiona Macleod published. This section shows the way in which Sharp used the connections he had made in order to bolster Macleod's career, and the way Macleod's greater artistic ability allowed Sharp access to what was an influential periodical at the cutting edge of the Celtic Revival. The section on *The Savoy* further shows the ways in which social connections influenced opportunities to publish. It discusses the relationship between *The Pagan Review* and *The Savoy*, and demonstrates Sharp/Macleod's movement into politically powerful, aesthetically desirable work.

Over the first three chapters, I trace Sharp's feelings toward his own career and his dissatisfactions with it. Focus is given to the ways in which, often being at risk of genteel poverty, Sharp's career was defined by taking any opportunity wherever it arose, and the way in which this necessary opportunism limited the growth of Sharp's career and similarly shaped his reception. I trace the ways in which he attempted to break out of the box opportunism had pressed him into, especially in the fourth chapter which traces how he

used *The Pagan Review* and *The Evergreen* to access aesthetic value, access he had previously lacked.

The final chapter focuses on *Fiona Macleod* – the ultimate answer to the questions with which Sharp wrestled. She, I argue, symbolises a ‘boiling over’ within Sharp – that is to say, a point at which he could no longer suffer within the bounds his opportunism has forced on him. This is not to say that, like Alaya, I consider Fiona Macleod a playing out of psychosexual strains: in this chapter, I show that Macleod – under different names and in different contexts – was a continual and consistent pressure throughout Sharp’s life, and the ‘boiling over’ is the point at which Sharp firstly could no longer bear the external pressure of his life, and secondly the internal pressure of his femininity. Throughout his life Sharp had weighed the advantages and disadvantages of making his femininity visible, and for almost forty years had erred on the side of repressing her until the effort became too much. This repression is, at least in part, the reason for his personal and professional dissatisfactions – Fiona Macleod was the ‘answer’ to Sharp’s problems because, at least in part, repressing her caused those problems. In the way I explore this, I differ from both Alaya and Meyers in that I allow Macleod to be, as I earlier expressed it, the crisis itself rather than representative of something else. She symbolises a ‘boiling over’ because what was subsumed was inner femininity; she is the ‘result’ of the themes with which Sharp wrestled because what he wrestled with was, in the broadest terms, how to accurately be and represent himself. Fiona Macleod may have been a surface representation of Sharp’s womanhood, a pseudonymous surface protecting a slightly different woman below. She may have been the woman entire. Her appearance came at the point that Sharp could no longer stop her from becoming present, and much of what Sharp wrestled with was, often obliquely, Macleod herself.

While this chapter, in exploring Fiona Macleod, covers more biographical ground than the earlier chapters, I do return to the concept of connectivity and networking. I argue that it was Sharp’s personal, social and literary networks that allowed Macleod to ‘come out’: the avenues she found to publication at first came through Sharp, and her social-professional support came from the ranks of Sharp’s friends and acquaintances: people like George Meredith, W.B. Yeats, Theodore Watts Dunton, and Katherine Tynan. Further, by this stage in his career, Sharp’s network had taken on an intimate tone – he was no longer constantly looking outward for the next chance, the next connection. This intimate tone

gave Fiona Macleod the chance to spill out – for her to be revealed to intimate friends, for the pressure of the literary grind to be relieved, for her to take over the outward focus and the constant vigilance that had, until this point, defined Sharp's career.

In the final chapter, I argue that Macleod must exist as her own person, in order for Sharp to break free of the tight bonds of his network-created career. She was a clean slate, a fresh start. This meant that Macleod too must become a networker and create her own networks. I analyse the similarities and differences between who Sharp and Macleod network with and how. This chapter primarily revolves around Macleod's letters, and I explore and analyse her relationship with Sharp as well as with her social circle. I explore the ways in which Macleod presents and creates herself through her letters, and what this means for her literary network. This provides potential cues for further study of Macleod and Sharp, and the influence of presented gender on the creation and maintenance of literary-social networks. I approach Macleod in the terms suggested by the Sharps' writings, and explore her relationship with Sharp. I analyse the evident differences in Sharp and Macleod's letters, and the way they both engaged with networking. I focus on the way in which a private, homosocial network such as that mentioned in the first chapter allows a contemporary, potentially queer conception of Macleod amongst those with whom Sharp shared the 'secret' of Macleod. I illustrate the ways in which this homosocial knowledge space largely protected Sharp and allowed space for Macleod.

With this approach, I intend to shift the academic presumptions that have dogged Sharp since his death. What other critics, such as Alaya and Christine Lahey-Dolega have read as mediocrity, I read as poverty and insecure employment limiting the opportunity for creative expression.¹³⁰ Further, Alaya – and to an extent Isobel Murray and Christine Lahey-Dolega – find Sharp's integration into the literary community almost inexplicable, treating Sharp's presence in the literary sphere with subtle incredulity. I show that his presence was a result of his own work rather than chance, and that this social work was difficult but necessary for survival. Further, I trace the ways in which Sharp was important and influential within his circle and the ways in which Sharp's influence still echoes even today. I show the fluidity between 'hack' and 'canonical author', but also the fluidity of gender and sexuality in the late-Victorian period and how that interplayed with literary-aesthetic skill and value.

¹³⁰ Christine Lahey-Dolega, 'Brief Observations On The Life And Work Of William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)', Ball State University Forum, 21.4 (1980), 18–26.

Chapter 1: Dante's Explosion: The Growth of Sharp's Network

This chapter begins with the first major events of Sharp's networked life. It largely skips over the development of his early friendships with siblings Adelaide and John Elder, and the writer Mona Caird, who were all friends of his cousin – later his wife – Elizabeth Sharp. While these connections were important at these initial stages of development, the surviving evidence of their reach – in terms of the degree to which their personal connections could bolster Sharp's literary career – is limited. The same is true of Sharp's trip to Australia in the 1870s. While these relationships, and Sharp's visit to Australia, were influential on him, the surviving evidence suggests that they were by and large disconnected from his literary career. The most important feature of these early years was Sharp's friendship with Rossetti, because, as expressed in the title of this chapter, the friendship with Rossetti caused an explosion in Sharp's pool of social resources, an explosion of connectivity. In becoming friends with Rossetti, Sharp was woven into a social fabric (a process of, we may say, *social net-work*).¹³¹

The first part of this chapter explores how Sharp became connected to Rossetti, and the social consequences of that connection. It focuses on Sharp's social life, and as such refers to Elizabeth Sharp's biography and Sharp's own letters. At points, the dating of each connection is not quite secure, as Elizabeth Sharp's dates are sometimes inaccurate. In order to secure these dates as closely as possible, I refer to Halloran's *Life and Letters*. Thus, there may occasionally be differences in date between Elizabeth Sharp's words and the date I give in my analysis.

Further, not every connection will be developed in full. The number of acquaintances Sharp gained in this period is dizzying, and so to fully situate every single one would confuse and obscure the central aims of this chapter, which are to establish the ways by which Sharp became enmeshed in the connective fabric of literary sociability. The work of this chapter is general and demonstrative, not, in most cases, individualised and specific.

The secondary aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how Sharp used these connections, as far as he could at this point in his career. I explore the way in which the socially connective fabric, created by interpersonal networking, became a safety *net*,

¹³¹ This chapter is indebted to John Scott, *Social Network Analysis: A Handbook*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2000). The graphs in this chapter were made using SocNetV-2.4.

catching Sharp when he needed it. It is important to note that this safety net mechanism is as much a result of personal privilege as it was careful social work: this can be seen in the example of Simeon Solomon, who at the very same point that Sharp was being rescued by the network was living in poverty in Paris.¹³² Solomon was a key, if not central, figure in the Pre-Raphaelite circle, and was openly queer, Jewish, and, by virtue of that Jewishness, had limited, if any, access to whiteness.¹³³ Where the social relationships Sharp developed rescued him from poverty, the social and personal relationships Solomon developed did little to insulate or rescue him from poverty. Thus, while Sharp's safety-net was certainly the result of intense and focused social work, his whiteness and ambiguous sexuality bolstered his access to it.¹³⁴

The first part of this chapter explores Sharp's social beginnings in London and the interpersonal mechanisms by which Sharp came to meet Dante Gabriel Rossetti. I trace Sharp's connections, and the way each connection could further encompass, and bring into Sharp's orbit, important and socially influential literary figures. I then demonstrate the huge explosion of social and literary access available to Sharp following his introduction to Rossetti. His constellation of friends and acquaintances increased dramatically. I further explain the impact of these friendships on Sharp's life: how, overwhelmed by his new-found centrality, Sharp lost his middle-class job and was thrown into a literary life. I trace the way in which his social connections supported his career but also the places in which he was not, or could not be, supported. I end on a transitional point: the death of Rossetti. While Sharp never seemed to wholly recover from Rossetti's death, it was a pivotal event for him. Once again, through the influence of his social connections, Sharp was able to turn Rossetti's death into an economic opportunity.

William Sharp met Dante Gabriel Rossetti in September 1879.¹³⁵ Sharp had been distantly aware of the poet and artist since 1877, when his friend Adelaide Elder gave him a volume of Rossetti's poetry for his twenty-second birthday. Before that point, Rossetti had

¹³² Conroy, Carolyn, 'Solomon's Life after 1873', *Simeon Solomon Research Archive* <https://www.simeonsolomon.com/simeon-solomon-biography.html> [accessed 01/07/2022].

¹³³ See Deborah Lutz.

¹³⁴ By 'ambiguous sexuality' I mean that it is impossible to know Sharp's sexuality, and more to the point impossible to know how that sexuality was read by his peers. What I mean to suggest is that, unlike Solomon, Sharp – if he was attracted to men – did not by and large disrupt the expected social mores or invite scandal with regards to his sexuality, if not his gender.

¹³⁵ Elizabeth Sharp's memoir features both 1880 and 1881 as options for Sharp's meeting Rossetti, but William F. Halloran uses Sharp's letters to demonstrate that 1879 was more likely.

been 'quite unknown' to him, and Sharp's literary adoration had been saved for Swinburne and Tennyson.¹³⁶ Becoming aware of Rossetti, as he himself states, changed the course of his life.¹³⁷ This limitation of his literary universe – adoring Tennyson and Swinburne, who exist decontextualised from their literary environments – was echoed in the limits of his social environment. Sharp had lived in Scotland up until his trip to Australia, and then when he returned, he spent some time in London for what is seemingly the first time. His cousin Elizabeth's family lived in London, and, friendless and new to the city, Sharp spent most of his time with her and her friends. These included Adelaide and John Elder, whose father Alexander was connected with the City of Melbourne Bank, for which Sharp came to work. The Elders were important in this point of Sharp's life, but the greatest impact of their friendship lay in introducing Sharp to the poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Elizabeth Sharp was also great friends with Mona Caird (1854-1932), who later became known for her feminist novels and essays. This group – Adelaide and John Elder, Elizabeth Sharp, William Sharp, and Caird – are presented in Elizabeth Sharp's memoir to be a close-knit unit, and both Sharps remained friends with Caird and the Elders for many years.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, this limited group, with limited economic and literary opportunities, left Sharp restless.

Sharp convinced himself that his best option to soothe his life-long restlessness was to enlist in the war between Russia and Turkey, but due to the efforts of Adelaide Elder's father Alexander, Sharp's life did not take a military turn. According to Elizabeth Sharp, the promise of a steady, respectable bank job from Alexander Elder tempted Sharp into a steady, workaday life, and into remaining permanently in London.¹³⁹

Elizabeth Sharp writes that at this point in Sharp's life, 'he had no influence to help him; and no friends other than those he had met at my mother's house'.¹⁴⁰ This is, very broadly, true, but does rather misrepresent the case. In Sharp's social circle was long-time family friend Sir Noel Paton (1821-1901), the prominent Scottish artist, who was connected to – though not an official member of – the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Further, Sharp was taught at the University of Glasgow by, and subsequently remained friends with, John Nichol

¹³⁶ Halloran, V2, p. 508.

¹³⁷ Halloran, V2, p. 508.

¹³⁸ E. A. S., V1, p. 38

¹³⁹ E. A. S., V1, p. 41.

¹⁴⁰ E. A. S., V1, p. 42. By this she most likely means siblings Adelaide and John Elder, and Mona Caird.

(1833-1894) – biographer and friend of Swinburne. Sharp at this time was also friends with the journalist Belfort Bax (1854-1826) but given Bax’s virulent antifeminism and both Elizabeth and William Sharp’s feminist sympathies and friendships with such influential feminists as Caird, it seems unlikely that Bax was enmeshed in the Sharp circle for long. Bax disappeared from Sharp’s recorded social circle around 1880, whereas Caird was a far more resilient presence. Bax did not seem to particularly like Sharp; in *Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Mid and Late Victorian*, Bax comments on Sharp’s lack of any ‘real interests outside pure literature’, saying that ‘he had no special convictions on political or social matters’, and writes that:

his ambitions were purely literary, and one felt in his case what Morris used to say of Swinburne, that he ought to have been born between two calf covers. My general impression of Sharp was that while his literary faculty was obvious, he was an inconstant, uncertain, and whimsical person, liable to moods and affectations of moods, that often made themselves apparent alike socially and in his literary efforts.¹⁴¹

Bax seems not to have been a particularly sympathetic friend, but there were possible advantages to his friendship: he was acquainted with Henry Fox Bourne (1837-1909), once editor of, and possibly still connected with at the time of Sharp’s early literary work, *The Examiner*. Through Bax, Sharp had begun the process of making important literary connections. These connections were, however, still very limited. Halloran’s collection of Sharp’s letters reveals only letters to Elizabeth Sharp and John Elder prior to the first letter to Rossetti (January 31st, 1880), and directly after that letter one to Mona Caird, the familiarity of which supports Elizabeth Sharp’s assertion of Caird’s presence in the pre-Rossetti Sharp circle. While this should not be seen as wholly conclusive, it does suggest that Sharp’s circle was small and his opportunity for socially connective work was limited.

Before Rossetti, then, there were a scant eight people in his social circle. We can visualise these connections this way:

¹⁴¹ Ernest Belfort Bax, *Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Mid and Late Victorian* (New York: T. Seltzer, 1920) p. 219. It is worth noting, also, that this sets up Bax’s own explanation of Macleod.

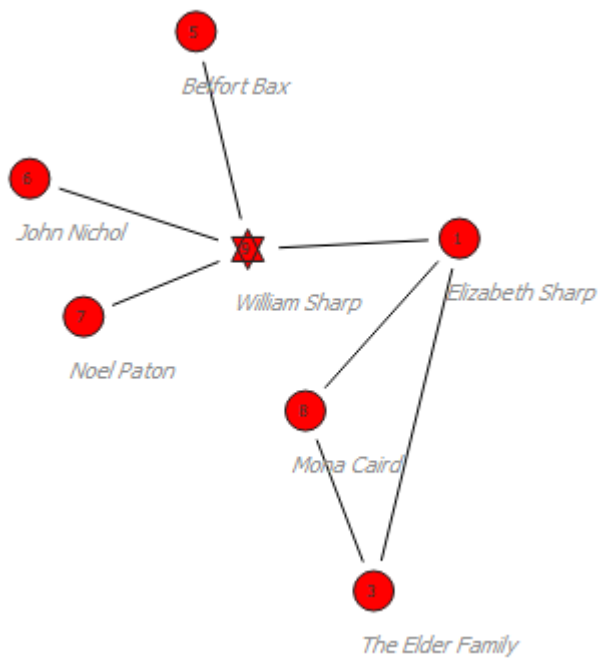


Figure 2: This image shows the limited connections Sharp had in his first days in London

We can note that Sharp, represented by the central star, has direct connections to Belfort Bax, John Nichol, Noel Paton, and, unsurprisingly, Elizabeth Sharp. He has indirect connections – in that he came to those connections through the intermediary of Elizabeth Sharp – to Mona Caird and the Elders. The Elders are united under one point for simplicity's sake. Figure 2 thus represents Elizabeth Sharp's assertion that Sharp has no connections to speak of. As she notes, most of his friends are those he met 'at [her] mother's house'.¹⁴²

¹⁴² E. A. S., V1, p. 42.

However, if we include some of the wider connections that figures such as Noel Paton and John Nichol have, the graph develops thus:

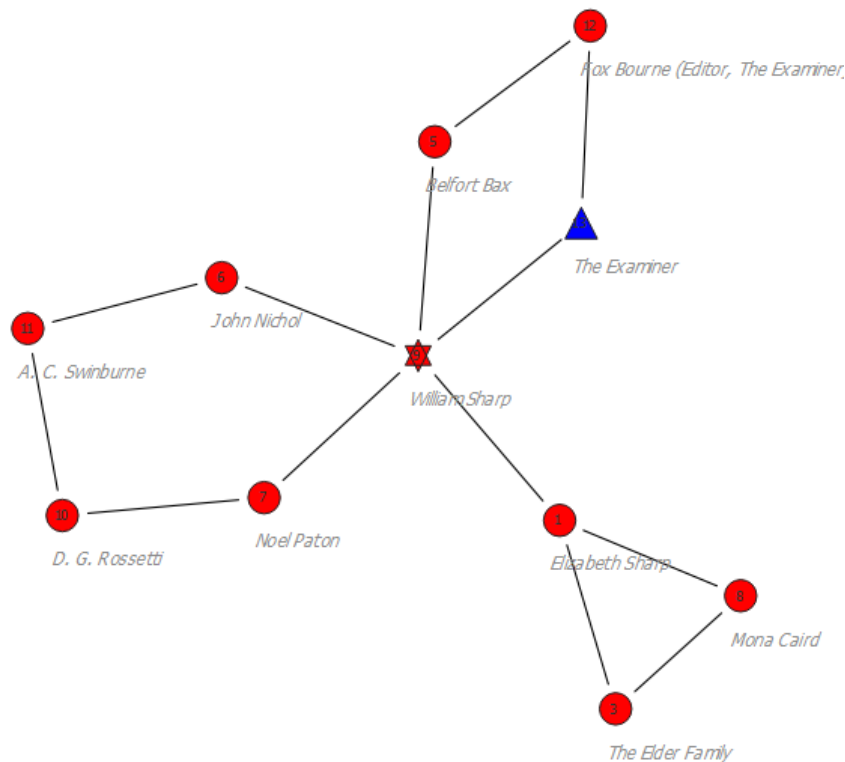


Figure 3: A graph showing Sharp's social access.

I have added Swinburne and Rossetti here to demonstrate that while Sharp knows only a few people, those people have access to wider social circles and so Sharp is not quite as detached as Elizabeth suggests. I have also added in Bax's friendship with the editor of *The Examiner*, and the magazine itself, as Sharp had a sonnet published in the same in September of 1879. It cannot be said with certainty whether Sharp's friendship got him that publication – he also, in 1878 and 1879, published in *Good Words* and *The Secular Review*, and I cannot find any personal connections to those publications – but it indicates that while Sharp had a limited social circle, he nevertheless has the kinds of connections that he could, at least hypothetically, leverage. While the leveraging of Bax and Bourne's friendship cannot be proven, Sharp's leveraging of Noel Paton can. Knowing Sharp's all-consuming new love of Rossetti, Paton provided Sharp with a letter of introduction. This one letter served as the catalyst for all that followed.

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, neither Sharp nor Elizabeth are especially forthcoming on the topic of Sharp's childhood. We do, however, have the following incident, which Elizabeth puts forth as especially indicative of the young Sharp. As

will be shown, it is also indicative of the older Sharp and his meeting with Rossetti in late 1879:

One snowy day, when he was five years old, and he was tired of playing with his baby sisters, who could not sufficiently rise to the occasion and play the distressed damsels to his deeds of knightly chivalry, he determined to sally forth in search of adventure. He buckled his sword above his kilt – it was afternoon and the light was waning – stole downstairs and out of the house, hatless, with flying curls, and marched down the street to lay siege to the nearest castle. A short distance away stood the house of a friend of his father, and upon that the besieger turned his attack. It loomed in his mind as the castle of his desire. He strode resolutely up to the door, with great difficulty, on tiptoe, reached the handle of the bell, pulled a long peal, and then demanded of the maid that she and all within should surrender to him and deliver up the keys of the castle. The maid fell in with his humour, was properly frightened, and begged to be allowed to summon her mistress, who at once promised submission, led the victor into her room, and by a blazing fire gave him the keys in the form of much coveted sweets, held him in her lap till in the warmth he fell asleep, rolled him up in a blanket, and carried him home.¹⁴³

It was nineteen years later that this marauding spirit found its most important expression, and the similarities between the two tales are amusingly uncanny:

On the 1st of September, 1881, William Sharp presented himself at the door of 16 Cheyne Walk.¹⁴⁴ The housekeeper explained that Mr. Rossetti could receive no one. The importunate stranger persisted and stated that it was of the highest importance that he should see Mr. Rossetti, and so impressed her that she not only went to report to Mr. Rossetti but came back with orders to admit him. On seeing his eager visitor, the poet-painter naturally asked him what he wanted so urgently, and the visitor answered promptly, "Only to shake hands with you before you die!" "Well," was the answer, "I am in no immediate danger of dying, but you may shake hands if you wish."¹⁴⁵

At this point, Sharp produced the letter of introduction from Sir Noel Paton. Seemingly impressed by his candour, Noel Paton's good opinion, or Sharp's Dionysian, 'sun-god' looks, Rossetti took him into his studio and showed him the paintings *La Donna della Finestra* and *Dante's Dream*; Rossetti then read his own translation of *La Vita Nuova*.¹⁴⁶ As Sharp writes in a letter to Elizabeth: 'Was it not kind of him to give so much pleasure to one, a complete

¹⁴³ E. A. S., V1, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁴ This is likely to be in error, as their meeting appears to have taken place in 1879 since Sharp had been writing letters to Rossetti since January 1880.

¹⁴⁵ E. A. S., V1, p. 55.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Le Gallienne, *The Romantic 90s*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1925) p. 148, and E. A. S., V1, p. 56.

stranger?’¹⁴⁷ A stranger, indeed, who had frightened a servant, misrepresented himself, and been so tactless as to suggest that Rossetti was at death’s door. Sharp continues:

He told me to come again, and shortly before I left he asked me for my address, and said that he would ask me to come some evening to talk with him, and also to meet one or two. This was altogether unexpected. Fancy having two such men for *friends* as Sir Noel Paton and Dante Gabriel Rossetti! I went out in a dream. The outside world was altogether idealised. I was in the golden age again. To calm myself, I went and leant over Chelsea Embankment, where there were many people as there was a regatta going on. But, though conscious of external circumstances, I was not in London. The blood of the South burned in my veins[.]¹⁴⁸

It was more, however, than ‘one or two’ that Sharp met once he had access to 16 Cheyne Walk. In a letter to Caird some time later, he mentions being given introductions to the poet Philip Bourke Marston (1850-87) and critic William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919), and meeting poet, critic, and erstwhile friend of Swinburne, Theodore Watts-Dunton (1832-1914). The relationship with Bourke Marston flourished into a strong friendship but also, in part via another of Paton’s introductions, facilitated a friendship between Sharp and Marston’s godmother, the popular novelist Dinah Maria Mulock Craik (1826-87) as well as her husband George Lillie Craik, partner in Macmillan & Co.¹⁴⁹ Also in this year Sharp met novelist and journalist Robert Francillon (1841-1919) and Julian Hawthorne (1846-1934), writer, journalist and son of Nathaniel.¹⁵⁰ Through them he met the writer David Christie Murray (1847-1907), and, over the span of an evening at the Oasis Club, apparently some thirty discreetly unnamed others. Some of these unnamed others may find themselves in Elizabeth Sharp’s list of his acquaintances from around this time:

Among the literary houses open to him were those of Mr. and Mrs. William Rossetti, Miss Christina Rossetti, Mr. and Mrs. William Bell Scott,¹⁵¹ Mr. and Mrs. Francillon, Mr Madox Brown,¹⁵² Mr. William Morris¹⁵³ and Mr. Holman Hunt,¹⁵⁴ and Sir Frederic

¹⁴⁷ E. A. S., V1, p. 56.

¹⁴⁸ E. A. S., V1, pp. 56-7. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴⁹ Macmillan published Sharp’s first major work, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study*.

¹⁵⁰ Francillon was a contributor to *Blackwoods* and *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, and an editor of *Tatler* and later *The Globe*.

¹⁵¹ William Bell Scott (1811-90), Scottish artist and part of the Pre-Raphaelite Circle.

¹⁵² Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), Pre-Raphaelite painter. His daughter Lucy married William Michael Rossetti.

¹⁵³ William Morris (1834-1896), designer, poet, and Arts and Crafts pioneer.

¹⁵⁴ William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), Pre-Raphaelite painter.

Leighton¹⁵⁵; and among his intimate friends he counted Mathilde Blind,¹⁵⁶ the poet, Louise Bevington,¹⁵⁷ Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton,¹⁵⁸ Belford Bax and others.¹⁵⁹

Figure 4 demonstrates the first few provable connections that Sharp made after meeting Rossetti.

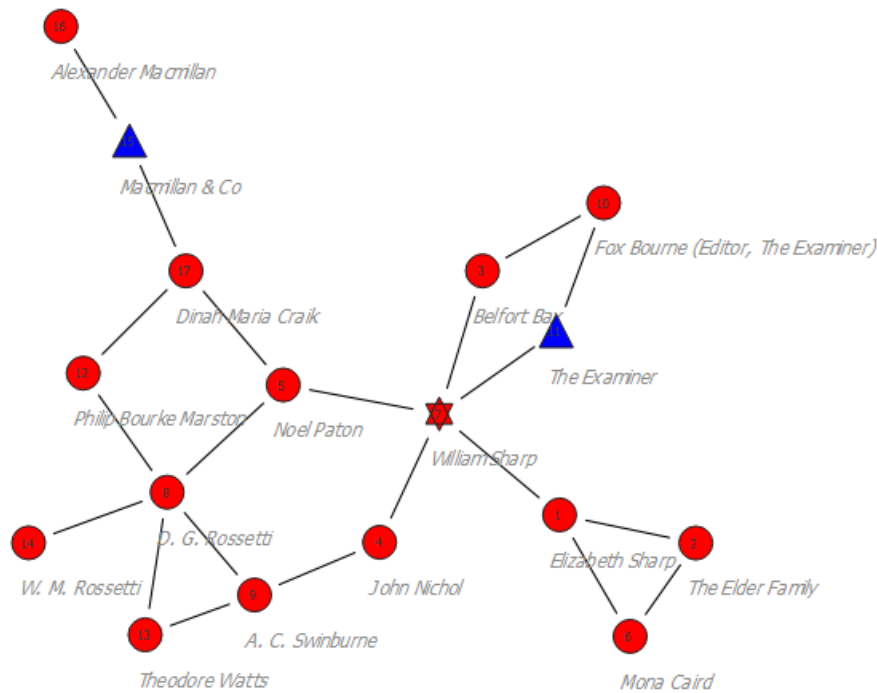


Figure 4: This graph shows Sharp's first connections through Rossetti

We could presume, given the timing and the particular makeup of the social group in which Sharp found himself (featuring a large number of Pre-Raphaelites and those in the circles around them) that these connections were made through Rossetti. Further, most of those listed are older, more established writers and artists. While it does seem that Sharp gravitated to those older than him, these graphs are based primarily on Elizabeth Sharp's work, and she may have focused her efforts on those more illustrious and well-known figures who would come across more impressively than, for example, the novelist Hall Caine

¹⁵⁵ Sir Frederic Leighton (1830-1896), painter associated with the Pre-Raphaelites.

¹⁵⁶ Mathilde Blind (1841-1896), New Woman writer and reviewer for *The Athenaeum*.

¹⁵⁷ Louisa Bevington (1854-95), poet.

¹⁵⁸ Louise Chandler Moulton (1835-1908), American poet and critic; her relationship with *Harper's Magazine* and *The Atlantic* are of especial interest for Sharp's connectivity, and she may have been a key component of the growth of Sharp's reputation in America; see *The American Volta*.

¹⁵⁹ E. Sharp, V1, pp. 80-1.

(1853-1931).¹⁶⁰ This means that Figure 4 may be biased by Rossetti's own centrality and Elizabeth Sharp's potential focus on more established writers.

Figure 5, below, steps away from Elizabeth Sharp's work. For this graph, I have used the letter collections held by the National Archives to fill out Sharp's map of connections. The National Archives database contains assorted collections of letters, many of them with named recipients and dates. These collections thus allow the clarification of the connections between actors. I have thus used these collections with named recipients and dates to discover who was socially connected to who, and fill out the previous connectivity graphs. As I have focused primarily on collections of letters, rather than individual letters, the graph is far from exhaustive but each connection is robust. I have limited the map to letters from before 1880, so that each connection certainly predates Sharp's acquaintance with the various figures included. This means that rather than clustering everyone around Rossetti into a visually literal 'big bang' of social connectivity, we can draw a slightly less homogenous graph. The data in the letter collections has also necessitated adding in a few new actors who connect many of the known points – for example, Edmund Gosse. What I mean by this is, essentially, that, if the National Archives holds a collection of letters from Swinburne to Robert Browning, Browning has a red dot. If there is a collection of letters from Mathilde Blind to Richard Garnett, then Garnett gets a red dot. If there are letter collections from both Garnett and Browning to Edmund Gosse, Gosse gets a green square. These green squares indicate the plausibility of individuals being present in or accessible to Sharp's circle, but indicates that this presence is not proven at this point in time (that is, 1879-1883).

¹⁶⁰ Hall Caine was a popular and well-known novelist at the time, though it seems not quite illustrious enough for Elizabeth's rhetorical purposes.

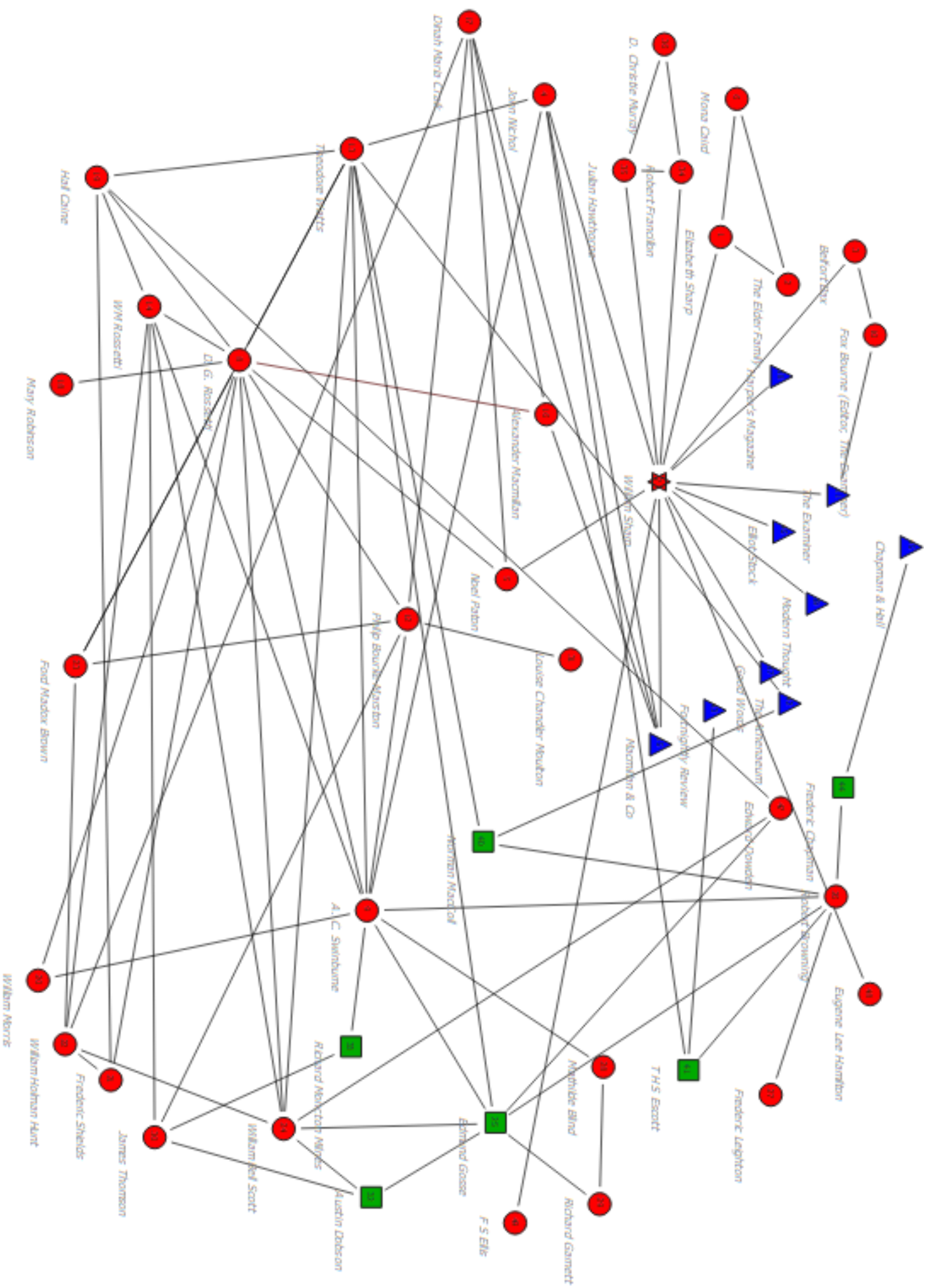


Figure 5: This graph shows some of Sharp's more extensive connections.

This developed graph proves that Sharp had at his disposal three routes to most, if not all, of the points on the graph. Dinah Maria Craik has fewer connections than Dante Rossetti or Swinburne, but the points of connection she has can be proven to allow her, and thus Sharp, access to many of the same points as those other, better-connected figures. This tightens his social circle, making it extremely likely that he was well-acquainted with, or at least familiar with and familiar to, these multi-connected actors. It also shows what I may call Sharp's centrality by proxy: he has become closely acquainted with a variety of very central figures, such as Dante Rossetti and Theodore Watts-Dunton, and so by virtue of those connections he has access to their centrality.¹⁶¹ His having, for example, three routes of reaching a person makes it more likely that he will be in social contact with them and shows that he has graduated beyond a peripheral position within his circle. The more routes one person has to another, the less peripheral they are. It should be noted again here that this graph is cautious, conservative, and not exhaustive, so this analysis should be taken as indicative of the way literary connectivity works, rather than necessary facts of Sharp's social life.

Through the use of the National Archives collections, rather than running all of Sharp's connections through Rossetti like a production line of acquaintance, we can produce more detailed lines of connection. Some will, nevertheless, form a direct line back to Rossetti (Bell Scott, for example). There are, however at least three ways of getting from William Sharp to Robert Browning, the shortest of which goes through John Nichol. It is perhaps more likely to be a cumulative connection, with Sharp plausibly being in greater social contact, or finding social contact easier, with Browning, the more 'routes' there are. Without the added information from the National Archives, the network becomes a clique by necessity, centralised around Dante Gabriel Rossetti by necessity. However, this graph shows a balance between centrality – Dante Gabriel Rossetti clearly connects to most of the figures – and diffusion, where a variety of figures are similarly central and similarly well-connected and the same connections can be made without the constant, watchful mediation of Rossetti. This indicates Sharp's own centrality by proxy, where his multiple

¹⁶¹ *Centrality* here refers to how directly connected someone is across the graph. Someone who is connected directly to thirty other people in a graph is more central, or has greater centrality, than someone who is connected directly to only ten.

routes indicate a strategically cultivated web of connection. That these connections can be made without Rossetti's mediation suggests Sharp's ability to maintain, and continue developing, these connections, after Rossetti's death in 1882. Further, we can see from the fact that many of these connections did survive past Rossetti's death that these connections were, to a degree, independent of Rossetti. While Sharp was Rossetti's protégé, the picture that this chapter and subsequent ones paint is not of a Sharp who relied on Rossetti to create and maintain valuable friendships, but of a Sharp who used the opportunity of Rossetti's personal centrality to establish and maintain his own relationships. This is evidenced not only by Sharp's attempts at gaining social connections before Rossetti, and the continuation of many of those relationships after Rossetti's death, but also the fact that, as I will show throughout the thesis, Sharp continued to make and maintain valuable professional relationships throughout his life. Nevertheless, this is the only point in Sharp's life when his social connections increase so dramatically, and so Rossetti's role of introducing the debutant Sharp to literary society is a key one.

Almost a year later, in February 1881, Sharp's relationship with Rossetti had deepened, though Sharp's excitement and incredulity at Rossetti's liking him make it appear as though the friendship is still fresh. He writes to Elizabeth:

[Rossetti] has asked me to come to him again next Sunday. Isn't it splendid – and ar'n't [sic] you glad for my sake? He told Philip [Bourke Marston, a friend of Sharp's to whom he was introduced by Rossetti] that he thought I "had such a sweet genial happy nature." Isn't it nice to be told of that. My intense delight in little things seems also to be a great charm to him – whether in a stray line of verse, or some new author, or a cloudlet, or patch of blue sky, or chocolate-drops, etc., etc. Have you noticed this in me? I am half gratified and half amused to hear myself so delineated, as I did not know my nature was so palpable to comparative strangers. And now I am going to crown my horrid vanity by telling you that Mrs. Garnet met Philip a short time ago, and asked after the health of his friend, the "handsome young poet!" There now, amn't [sic] I horridly conceited? (N.B. – I 'm pleased all the same, you know!)¹⁶²

Also in February 1881, he writes again to Elizabeth:

On Monday evening (from eight till two) I go again as usual to Marston's. I called at his door on my way here this afternoon and left a huge bouquet of wall flowers, with a large yellow heart of daffodils, to cheer him up. He is passionately fond of flowers.¹⁶³

¹⁶² E. A. S., V1, pp. 73-4.

¹⁶³ E. A. S., V1, pp. 79-80.

The impression Sharp gives in these letters and others is of a 'golden age'¹⁶⁴; that southern air that filled him at the first meeting with Rossetti swirls through these letters, and Sharp's excitement at his newfound literary life spills through in constant mentions of names that would, he hoped, impress Elizabeth - and at points others - with his success, his new worldliness.¹⁶⁵ As well as both Dante Gabriel and William Michael Rossetti and Philip Bourke Marston, he writes about making Theodore Watts-Dunton's acquaintance (being sure to include why he is an important connection to have made), and that of Frederic Shields, Robert Francillon, David Christie Murray, and Julian Hawthorne. His letters are full of their 'jolly talk' and 'Bohemian' nights; but these Bohemian nights, enjoyable as they are, make his position in London rather precarious.¹⁶⁶ His social life, full of late nights and wanderings, left him with little time, nor care, for the job that Alexander Elder found for him. Quoted in Elizabeth's memoir, he says:

I did not take very kindly to the business, and my employers saw it. One day I was invited to interview [with] the Principal. He put it very diplomatically, said he didn't think the post suited me (I agreed), and finally he offered me the option of accepting an agency in some out-of-the-way place in Australia, or quitting the London service. 'Think it over,' he said, and give us your answer to-morrow.' I think I might have given him my answer there and then. Next morning the beauty of the early summer made an irresistible appeal to me. I had not heard the cuckoo that season, so I resolved to forget business for the day, seek the country, and hear the cuckoo; and I had a very happy time, free from everybody, care, and worry. Next day I was called in to see the Principal. 'I should have sent word - busy mail day,' he said. 'Was I ill?' he asked. 'No,' I replied, and explained the true cause of my absence. 'That's scarcely business,' he said. 'We can't do with one who puts the call of the cuckoo before his work.' However, his offer still held. What was I to do? I left the bank."¹⁶⁷

One wonders to what extent his 'forgetting business' was impacted by his extremely late Bohemian nights.

After leaving the bank, Sharp was thrown on his own resources. His resources, however, happily included a few well-placed people. It was George Lillie Craik who found Sharp his next (unfortunately ill-fated) job, a position with the Fine Art Society Gallery, curating an exhibition. The promise of this job allowed him to spend some months in preparation, training himself in the subject of the exhibition - German and English etchings

¹⁶⁴ E. A. S., V1, p. 56.

¹⁶⁵ Other letters include the February 1880 letter to Mona Caird (Halloran, V1, p. 21-23), and the letter to Elizabeth dated January 24th, 1881 (p. 30).

¹⁶⁶ Halloran, V1, p. 30, p. 27.

¹⁶⁷ E. A. S., V1, pp. 84-5.

– and away from the drudgery of the bank, which he didn't seem to drudge at very much anyway. But the promise of being saved from the life of a poor jobbing writer did not last long. The Fine Art Society didn't, in the end, put on the exhibition, and the position fell through. Sharp, so recently saved by his network, was thrown back on its mercy. Elizabeth Sharp, with some dryness, describes that time in a few lines:

The outlook was very serious, for he was still practically unknown to editors and publishers; and during the following two years he had a hard fight with circumstances. No post of any kind turned up for him and he had to depend solely on his pen, and for many months was practically penniless; and many a time the only food he could afford, after a meagre breakfast, was hot chestnuts bought from men in the street.¹⁶⁸

It will be noted, however, that 'practically unknown' here means that he is but a few steps from the editor of *The Athenaeum*, Norman MacColl (through Robert Browning and Watts-Dunton) and the soon to be editor of *The Fortnightly Review*, T.H.S. Escott (through Browning again, and John Nichol). He also was only a few steps from Frederic Chapman (through, as usual, Browning), a partner in publishers Chapman & Hall. His friendship with the Craiks, partners in Macmillan, has already been mentioned, and it is highly likely that as a result he was in contact with Alexander Macmillan himself. Nevertheless, Sharp's career floundered slightly at this point. One sonnet, 'Spring Wind', appeared at this time, published in *The Athenaeum* and subsequently included in Hall Caine's *Sonnets of Three Centuries*. Rossetti and Sharp had been discussing Caine's anthology for some time, and much of Sharp's poetry had been rejected by Rossetti for inclusion in Caine's anthology, but finally one had been chosen.¹⁶⁹ Before the publication of this poem, Sharp had published seven poems between 1879 and 1880, publishing none in 1881.¹⁷⁰

After the death of Rossetti in 1882, Sharp was able to bolster his unhappy career with the help of his social connections. Soon after Rossetti's death, Sharp told Elizabeth that 'he loved me, I know – and believed and hoped great things of me, and within the last few days I have learned how generously and how urgently he impressed this upon others.'¹⁷¹ Who these others are is unknown, but Sharp's closeness with Rossetti was well enough

¹⁶⁸ E. A. S. V1, p. 91.

¹⁶⁹ It is unclear whether Caine or Rossetti chose which poem would be included.

¹⁷⁰ These poems are 'Night', in *Good Words* (Feb. 1879); 'Because Life Is Filled with Sorrow and Tears' in *The Examiner* (July 1879); 'Lo, in That Shadowy Place' in *The Examiner* (July 1879), 'Religion' in *The Examiner* (Sept. 1879); 'Retrospect' in *Modern Thought* (Jan. 1880); 'Am Meer', two sonnets in *Good Words* (1880).

¹⁷¹ E. A. S., p. 98.

known among enough people that he was commissioned by Macmillan and Co. to write his *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study*.¹⁷² This was Sharp's first work of any length, and his first criticism – it is hard not to read the workings of connectivity, even nepotism, in the background. That is not to suggest, however, that it is only connectivity that allowed for the success of this 'first serious effort'.¹⁷³ Probably to increase the likelihood of other commissions, Sharp rose to the occasion by working hard from June to December, and he became the very stereotype of the jobbing writer:

[A]t the end, I wrote practically without a break for thirty-six hours: i.e., I began immediately after an early breakfast, wrote all day except half an hour for dinner, and all evening with less than ten minutes for a slight meal of tea and toast, and right through the night. About 4 or 5 AM my fire went out, though I did not feel chilled till my landlady came with my breakfast. By this time I was too excited to be tired, and had moreover to finish the book that day. I was only a few minutes over breakfast, which I snatched during perusal of some notes, and then buckled to again. I wrote all day, eating nothing. When about 7 PM I came to 'finis,' I threw down the pen from my chilled and cramped fingers: walked or rather staggered into the adjoining bedroom, but was asleep before I could undress beyond removal of my coat and waistcoat [...] For three weeks before this I had been overworking and I was quite exhausted, partly from want of sufficient nourishment. It was the saving of my brain, therefore, that I slept fourteen hours without a break, and after a few hours of tired and dazed wakefulness again fell into a prolonged slumber, from which I awoke fresh and vigorous in mind and body.¹⁷⁴

Dante Gabriel Rossetti – A Record and a Study, however, nearly caused a fracture in Sharp's social life. Hall Caine, also writing a work on Rossetti at this time, sent Sharp an irate letter, and although we only have Sharp's reply, its tone, so at odds with his usual 'bubbly' style, suggests the strong terms of Caine's letter. It is interesting to note that Sharp came to know of the specifics of Caine's volume through Elliot Stock, who at this time was also publishing Sharp's first volume of verse, rather than through Caine himself, or the Rossettis. This fracture is fully explored in the following chapter – see pages 79-80 for the letter in question.

The mood between the two had lightened a few months later, and his social life healed, when Sharp writes to Caine:

Tho' overwhelmed with work I must send you a line of congratulatory welcome for your book. It is a most fascinating volume [...] I have to thank you for your very kind

¹⁷² William Sharp, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1882) <https://archive.org/details/dantegabrielros03shargoog> [accessed 06/07/2022].

¹⁷³ E. A. S., V1, p. 100.

¹⁷⁴ E. A. S., V1, pp. 101-102.

reference to myself on p 291 – just saying what is most pleasing to myself: not only that he [Rossetti] appreciated my work but also that I cheered him up a bit. He often told me this, but I am glad to have it confirmed[...] P.S. I caught it from Mrs. W M R for my “unqualified abuse” of Madox Brown in re his etching.¹⁷⁵

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study was not Sharp’s only work to materialise about this time. His first book of poetry, in preparation before Rossetti’s death and probably written under his influence and guidance, was released through Elliot Stock.¹⁷⁶ By Sharp’s own admission it received little attention beyond a flattering notice in *The Athenaeum*, written by his friend Theodore Watts-Dunton, and another in *The Yorkshire Post*.¹⁷⁷ Sharp asserts that while he is flattered by *The Athenaeum* notice, the one in *The Yorkshire Post* is better ‘as criticism’.¹⁷⁸ His opinion is validated by the fact that Watts-Dunton barely discusses the poems themselves, as poetry, and instead spends over half the review indicating that the work is worthy of attention because it introduces the reader to the Australian landscape.¹⁷⁹ The article in *The Yorkshire Post*, concentrates on Sharp as a poet, rather than giving Sharp the role of tour guide to the Australian landscape. Their friendship perhaps explains Watts-Dunton’s reticence to critique Sharp as a poet and give him a different role that requires less personal criticism. The critic for *The Yorkshire Post* starts very frankly: ‘There is nothing poetically very new in Mr William Sharp’s book.’¹⁸⁰ The critic points out, with the kind of laughing pointedness that Sharp seemed to appreciate in a review, that:

[h]e sometimes works [insects, birds, flowers and plants] into his theme with remarkable point, and never seems tired of working them into his category of

¹⁷⁵ Halloran, V1, p. 90. Mrs W. M. R was Lucy Madox Brown, daughter of Ford Madox Brown and aunt to the later writer Ford Madox Ford.

¹⁷⁶ William Sharp, *The Human Inheritance; A New Hope; Motherhood* (London: Elliot Stock, 1882) <https://archive.org/details/humaninheritance00sharrich/page/n3/mode/2up> [Accessed 02/05/2022]. The copy from which this citation is taken also features, signed and in William Sharp’s hand, the following dedication: *To Elizabeth, 17: May: 82, these poems which she was ever first to see in manuscript are no[w] given to her as they first appeared in [print], W.S.*

¹⁷⁷ E. A. S., V1, p. 123.

¹⁷⁸ Halloran, V1, p. 80. In this letter to Hall Caine, Sharp contradicts Caine’s notion that he dislikes the *Athenaeum* notice. He writes that ‘I am exceedingly grateful to Watts for it’. The *Athenaeum* notice is unsigned, and so I get my attribution from Sharp’s letter.

¹⁷⁹ Theodore Watts-Dunton, ‘*The Human Inheritance, A New Hope, Motherhood*, by William Sharp (Stock)’, *The Athenaeum*, 2849 (3 June 1882), pp. 693-4.

<http://ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-periodicals/human-inheritance-new-hope-motherhood/docview/9108752/se-2?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022].

¹⁸⁰ [Anon.], “‘The Human Inheritance and Other Poems’” *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 31 May 1882, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000686/18820531/078/0003> [accessed 01/07/2022] (ll. 1-2).

Nature's charms, perhaps at times without considering the extent of the reader's enthusiasm, or want of it, in the same direction.¹⁸¹

The rest of the review continues in much the same style, pointing to Sharp's poetic flaws. 'We also grow tired of and begin to wink at the artful echo of either Mr Rossetti or Mr Swinburne,' writes the critic.¹⁸² They end, however, on a kinder note: "'The Human Inheritance and other Poems" is a fresh, vigorous, hopeful, and helpful volume.'¹⁸³ It is by no means a stretch to see why Sharp preferred it to *The Athenaeum* notice, despite that magazine's greater reputation. Where *The Athenaeum* notice seems to avoid the matter of Sharp's poetic sensibility altogether, the review in *The Yorkshire Post* gives Sharp material that he can use to improve his work.

After this, however, Sharp was once more prostrate upon London's fine mercy. *The Human Inheritance* did not get him very far, *Athenaeum* notice or no *Athenaeum* notice, and appreciative comments from friends did not turn into money in his pocket. His connections, as always, dug him out of trouble, which Sharp explains with characteristic lightness and colour:

Happily, [*The Human Inheritance*] seems to have fallen into the hands of the editor of *Harper's Magazine*,¹⁸⁴ for some time afterward I received a letter from him asking me to let him see any poems I had by me. I sent him all I had and the matter passed from my mind. Months went by, and I remember how, one day, I had almost reached my last penny. In fact, my only possession of any value was a revolver, the gift of a friend. That night I made up my mind to enlist next morning. When I got up on the following morning there were two letters for me. The usual thing, I said to myself, notice of 'declined with thanks.' I shoved them into my pocket. A little later in the day, however, recollection impelled me to open one of the letters. It was from the editor of *Harper's*, enclosing a cheque for forty pounds for my few *Transcripts from Nature*, little six-line poems, to be illustrated by Mr. Alfred Parsons, A.R.A. That money kept me going for a little time. Still it was a struggle, and I had nearly reached the end of my resources when one day I came across the other letter I had received that morning. I opened and found it to be from a, to me, unknown friend of one who had known my grandfather. He had heard from Sir Noel Paton that I was inclined to the study of literature and art. He therefore enclosed a cheque for two hundred pounds, which I was to spend in going to Italy to pursue my artistic studies. I was, of course, delighted with the windfall, so delighted, indeed, that I went the length of framing the cheque and setting it up in my lodgings. I tried to get my landlord to advance me the not very ambitious loan of a needed sovereign on the spot, but he

¹⁸¹ [Anon.], ll. 36-42.

¹⁸² [Anon.], ll. 84-86.

¹⁸³ [Anon.], ll. 93-95.

¹⁸⁴ Sharp published 'Birchington Revisited' in *Harper's* October 1882 edition and was thenceforth a fairly regular contributor.

only shook his head knowingly, as if he suspected something. However, at last, he risked a pound, and I think I spent most of it that afternoon in taking the landlady and her family to the pantomime.¹⁸⁵

It is unknown how *The Human Inheritance* found its way into the hands of the editor of *Harper's Magazine*, though it is worth noting that Sharp was connected socially to multiple people who published in *Harper's Magazine* prior to 1882. These were Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, A. Mary F. Robinson, Louise Chandler Moulton, Julian Hawthorne, Richard Monckton Milnes and Austin Dobson. As noted, Sharp's first publication in *Harper's Magazine* was 'Birchington Revisited', in September 1882, so he may not have needed someone to deliver *The Human Inheritance* into American hands, though it seems most likely that there was outside influence on the publication of 'Transcripts from Nature'. These poems were published in the April, May, July, and August issues from 1884. Mulock Craik had published almost 80 works in *Harper's*, beginning in 1856 and ending in 1886. Chandler Moulton published 56 works with them, beginning in 1858 and ending in 1908. Julian Hawthorne published 42 works in with them, beginning in 1871 and ending in 1904. Between them, the remaining three published 16 works in *Harper's*. Thus, I would hypothesise that, if it were any of Sharp's circle who delivered *The Human Inheritance* into the hands of the *Harper's* editor, it was Mulock Craik, Chandler Moulton, or Hawthorne; as Chandler Moulton was one of Sharp's 'intimate friends', I would suggest that she is the most likely of the three.¹⁸⁶

While many actors in the fabric of literary sociability were men, it is important that we do not then suppose that it consisted solely of men. We can note that much of the interpersonal support around Sharp at this point in his career was coming from women. Elizabeth Sharp not only introduced Sharp to women who deeply influenced his life – Adelaide Elder and Mona Caird – but further frames these acquaintances in a feminine social light: 'those he met at my mother's house'.¹⁸⁷ Rhetorically, Elizabeth Sharp frames her mother's house as a site of social connection similar to William Michael Rossetti's 'literary re-unions'.¹⁸⁸ It is Elizabeth's labour that renders so many of William Sharp's social connections visible, and it is worth noting the way she centres women in her description of

¹⁸⁵ E. A. S., V1, p. 124.

¹⁸⁶ E. A. S., V1, p. 80.

¹⁸⁷ E. A. S., V1, p. 42.

¹⁸⁸ Halloran, V1, p. 22.

Sharp's connections at this time: '[A]mong his intimate friends he counted Mathilde Blind, the poet, Louise Bevington, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, Belford Bax and others'.¹⁸⁹

It is interesting to note that Sharp's 'intimate friends' are primarily women; to Elizabeth's list of New Women and female anarchists we can add Adelaide Elder and Mona Caird. Belford Bax's early disappearance from Sharp's intimacy makes this list even more indicative of the importance of women to Sharp's social and literary life. The importance of female connectivity to Sharp's life again becomes clear when, in Chapter 5, I analyse Fiona Macleod's own circle of female friends who supported and encouraged her career.

Though this chapter constitutes a conservative survey of Sharp's relationships over a short period (approximately 1877-82), much of what I explore in this chapter underpins what follows. In this chapter I show the degree to which singular social connections can have enormous influence (Sir Noel Paton's introduction to Rossetti, for example) but also the way in which singular social connections are never as singular as they may appear. Further, I demonstrate that personal connections can shape the publicised perception of texts, for example the way that Theodore Watts-Dunton's personal relationship with Sharp likely shaped his review of, and thus had the potential to shape public perception of, *The Human Inheritance*. In the following chapter, I will expand both on the ways in which social connectivity can create, support, and shape a literary career, and what consequences arise from this shaping as well as from Sharp's conscious textual explorations and presentations of connectivity itself.

¹⁸⁹ E. A. S., V1, pp. 80-81.

Chapter 2: Men of Letters and Paintbrushes: Sharp's Biographies

What Sharp obscures in his reports, and what Elizabeth Sharp, characteristically, glosses over, are the consequences of *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study*.¹⁹⁰ This biography led to a stream of biographies, and began Sharp's inauspicious, middle-brow career with which he later became dissatisfied. This chapter will explore how this first biography came to be in more detail. It will discuss the consequences, positive and negative, pre- and post-publication, of the biography. It will also explore the ways in which Sharp disrupted and re-navigated biographical writing and biographical tropes, and what this did for his career, his literary environment, and his social life. Further, this chapter will read Sharp as a disruptor of homosocial knowledge space and knowledge practices, and of the then still developing Victorian canon.

In the first section, I detail how Sharp came to write *A Record and A Study*, and go through the economic and social pressures that acted on Sharp in the writing. I look at the economics of biography, and how Sharp and his fellow Rossetti-biographer Hall Caine, both early in their careers, used biography to bolster themselves and perhaps were used by the publishers for whom they wrote. I also parallel the way in which these two writers struggled with their social debt to Rossetti, whilst also struggling with monetary pressures. In the second section, I compare the way in which Sharp and Caine's biographies illustrate the shifts and changes in what was expected of biographical representation, and how this too impacts the authors' social position, standing, and reception. In the third section, I show how Sharp represented the process of networking in his biographies. He did not shy away from exposing the workings of sociability in his work, and in fact I argue the networks he represented in his work became a selling point, or mechanism through which his publishers could sell further works (often, but not always, written by Sharp himself). These representations of sociability became a key tool through which Sharp, and the series of biographies that he edited, became a disseminator of cultural capital and disrupted knowledge-transmission. In the final section I return to the social world surrounding Sharp, and discuss the way in which Sharp's biographies indicated a pressure of surveillance. This

¹⁹⁰ William Sharp, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1882) <https://archive.org/details/dantegabrielros03shargoog> [accessed 06/07/2022].

surveillance ruptured the sanctity of the homosocial knowledge-space, and impacted Sharp's own social relationships and reach.

2.1: Biographical Economy and the production of *Record*

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study is a peculiar little piece of prose: a short but perhaps – given the brief time between Dante Gabriel Rossetti's death and its publication – simultaneously startlingly long work, consisting of a biography and a critical response. It is also an extended epitaph, a piece written in mourning before the ground had even settled. Oscar Wilde took offense at the speed with which Sharp wrote: 'when a great man dies,' he is supposed to have later said, when Sharp replicated this speed for his biography of Robert Browning, 'Sharp and Caine go in with the undertaker.'¹⁹¹ The multiple forces of a lost friend, limited economic resources, and a social connection with the Macmillan publishing company, led to a speedily written biography and the carving out of a career-beginning, in some ways career-defining, niche. No matter what the actual failures or successes of the work in and of itself – Sharp himself later considered it deeply immature – as a starting point for his career, *A Record and A Study* [hereafter *Record*] was an unqualified success. Its writing marks a turning point for Sharp, not necessarily in terms of his economic success, but in terms of the kinds of opportunities that open to him. Not only was Rossetti Sharp's key to London during the painter and poet's lifetime, he remained the key even after his death.

Sharp, as shown in the previous chapter, was well connected with Macmillan. The publishers were embedded in Sharp's social circle: both Dante Gabriel and William Michael Rossetti had long correspondences with Macmillan, as did Sir Noel Paton, and Sharp had a personal connection with the firm through his close friend Philip Bourke Marston. It seems likely that, as Sharp was an unknown quantity at this point, having published very little, he was commissioned on the basis of his social connections. Sharp's inexperience may also have been an economic advantage for Macmillan. His name may not have sold books, but he was young and struggling; he later notes that he felt his youth and inexperience were

¹⁹¹ Halloran, V1, p. 231.

taken advantage of when publishing 1886's *Sonnets of this Century* and so it is plausible that the same may have happened with *Record*.¹⁹² It is easy to imagine that it was cheaper to get a book out of someone in Sharp's position fast enough to profit from Rossetti's posthumous popularity than it would have been to approach Theodore Watts-Dunton or William Michael Rossetti, both of whom were contemporaneously considered better options as biographers of Rossetti than Sharp.

Sharp's fellow Rossetti-protégé, Hall Caine, was also working on a book on Rossetti at this time. His *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* was presented as a memoir, rather than a critical estimation, as Sharp's was advertised.¹⁹³ However, the distinctions between the two are vague enough that comparing them sheds light on Sharp's work as a biography, and on his peculiarities as a biographer.

Hall Caine was also early in his career, though he had a longer publishing record than Sharp. He had recently released *Sonnets of Three Centuries*, and before that a few books of criticism.¹⁹⁴ From a publisher's perspective, given his publication record, Caine was far more of a known quantity than Sharp. His name, while not necessarily well known, was better known than Sharp's among the reading public. There was also the question of intimacy: as will be discussed later, early Victorian biography was often written by someone who knew their subject personally. Caine's longer acquaintance with Rossetti and his longer record of publication made him, at least in his own mind, better suited to the process of literary memorialisation than Sharp, judging from his reaction to Sharp's work. This question of suitability generated a bitter argument between the two, as documented in Sharp's letters. Caine's part of the argument has not survived to my knowledge, but the general thrust of it is evident in Sharp's reply, which is much less amiable than usual:

I write this note in case you shd. be out when I call.
If you had made yourself acquainted with the matter as it really stood, you would not have written me the letter I have just received, containing as it does expressions which I cannot but feel insulting.

¹⁹² Halloran, V3, p. 33.

¹⁹³ Thomas Henry Hall Caine, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Elliott Stock, 1882). Page references are from the Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1898 edition.
<https://archive.org/details/recollectionsofd00cainrich/page/n7/mode/2up> [accessed 01/07/2022].

¹⁹⁴ These include 1877's *Richard III and Macbeth: The Spirit of Romantic Play in Relationship to the Principles of Greek and of Gothic Art, and to the Picturesque Interpretations of Mr. Henry Irving: a Dramatic Study*, 1879's *The Supernatural in Shakspeare* [sic] and *The Poetry of Dante Rossetti*, and 1880's *The Supernatural in Poetry and Politics & Art*.

In the first place, my projected book is not to be a biography at all. After the Harper's affair fell through I did think of writing a Memoir of Rossetti, but the moment I learned that you intended such a work I threw up my plans, both because I thought you had a prior claim and were in a better position to do it well than myself. When E. Stock told me of the volume, I knew at once he meant you, and I informed him at once that I wd. be quite willing to miss out the biographical portion altogether. As it is, the book Macmillians are to bring out, is a Study of the Poet-Artist – for in deference to your own work I determined to make the biographical portion consist of only about 10 pp or so. At most, this chapter (the first – “Life”) will not be more than a *réchauffé* of already disseminated information. The main portion of the book will be a critical study of his poetic work. Now, as I understand your book is to be purely a biographical Memoir, with correspondence, & – I fail to see where the two clash. Stock himself saw this in the same light, & wd. have been willing to have brought out both books if I had agreed to his terms.

Do you know, I had somewhat hastily & foolishly concluded I had won your friendship? But I am now disillusioned – otherwise you could not have so insulted me as to infer that I sent the announcement of my book in order to annul the effect of an announcement of your own. And how, moreover, could I know that there was any announcement of yours previously sent at all? I never dreamt you wd.

misunderstand the matter. I thought it a fact that your book wd. be out 2 mos. or more before my own, so that, if anything, it wd. be you damaging me instead of the contrary. Whatever I may be in a literary sense, I hope at least I am a gentleman.

I regret you have withdrawn your announcement. I had been looking forward with the greatest interest to reading your book.

I give you the benefit of the doubt in supposing you did not intentionally insult me by your reason there for. As a known friend of Rossetti's I have no need to 'claim intimacy' with him. You will excuse me if I say that your sneer seems to me to cut both ways.

I have much more reason to object to Mr. Tirebuch's writing on the same lines as myself. But I don't, & will welcome his contribution to our knowledge of R's art and influence. With either Theodore Watts, Wm. R. or yourself, I would not contend – each being far fitter than myself for a biographical Memoir. But I have a right to my own opinions as to his art and poetry, & if I choose to publish a book engaged by a firm of publishers, embodying those opinions, I do not see that you or anyone else need object. Doubtless your critical faculty is more developed than mine – but despite, in your own words, 'your enormous superiority' over myself for the work in question, I may perhaps be vain enough to consider my own judgment not wholly worthless.

Frankly, I must tell you I exceedingly regret this matter having come between us: for I had come to like you, & to hope that our friendship would grow and fructify. But if you consider my conduct only in the light of what you designate as “journalistic sharp practice”, then there must be an end to this friendship.

With every good wish for the success of your book, which I hope you will still proceed with [...]¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Halloran, V1, pp. 82-3.

The two writers were, apparently accidentally, in competition with one another; they argued over, superficially, the 'journalistic sharp practice' of scooping one another: however, at the heart of their conflict is their intimacy with Rossetti.¹⁹⁶

The cultural dynamic that triggered this fight was one where the deeper and truer the intimacy, the less economic the motivation was supposed to be. Thus, where a relationship was deemed shallow, texts rising from that relationship were automatically suspect due to the economic motivation behind them. Trev Lynn Broughton notes that throughout the nineteenth century, biography moved from an intimate labour which only close relatives were deemed fit to undertake, to a market-responsive, commercial labour.¹⁹⁷ While, by virtue of their protégé-ship, Sharp and Caine nominally undertook the process of intimate, as opposed to commercial, labour, they both occupied an unstable space where their productions were suspect due to their own limited means and the supposedly unsatisfactory intimacy they shared with Rossetti. Both acknowledged that Rossetti's brother, William Michael Rossetti, would be a better, more *fit*, biographer than them, yet both of them were filling that place for commercial reasons. Aware of the commercial necessity of their labour and its economic value, Caine and Sharp still show discomfort with the reality of selling their friendship with Rossetti to survive as writers and critics.¹⁹⁸ To justify their occupation of this role, they argued over whose relationship with Rossetti was more intimate, valuable, and worthy of record, and which was saved by that intimacy and value from sordid economy. Thus, their fight over their respective intimacies with Rossetti has particular force because it can be read as justifying their work within a non-commercial context and obscuring their contribution to the 'market exchange in intimate relations.'¹⁹⁹ Whose intimacy with Rossetti was deepest and truest? Who was simply using his friendship with Rossetti to make money, and who truly wanted to honour Rossetti's memory out of love? The competition was not merely economic; it was also a competition for legitimacy within the homosocial network. The desperation to their infighting suggests that both were aware but unwilling to face that they were, by necessity, profiting from the death of their mutual friend, and that this was clear to their friends and readers. Despite their effort, both

¹⁹⁶ Halloran, V1, p. 83.

¹⁹⁷ Trev Lynn Broughton, *Men of Letters, Writing Lives* (London: Routledge, 1999) p. 11.

¹⁹⁸ Halloran, V1, p. 231.

¹⁹⁹ Broughton, p. 11.

were judged as commercial and crass by at least one other member of their social circle: as noted, Wilde wrote that Sharp and Caine 'go in with the undertaker'.²⁰⁰

Record was published late in 1882, the year of Rossetti's death, by Macmillan. Sharp had no long-standing publishing relationship with them and did not develop one. Hall Caine's *Recollections* was published in the same year by Elliot Stock, who published his *Sonnets of Three Centuries*; Stock also published Sharp's first book of poetry, which was in progress at the time *Record* appeared. Stock, apparently, was interested in releasing *Record*, though Sharp did not agree.²⁰¹ The two books were supposedly different, though, as the letter quoted above shows, these differences were vague. On paper, Caine's is a deeply personal memoir of the last year of Rossetti's life, where Sharp's is a retrospective critical evaluation of his work. However, Sharp's contains personal observations and a long biography, limiting the differences between the two works. The following section explores the way in which these two works show contrasting approaches to the representation of their subject, and how their approaches illustrate the wider questions of representation within the development of biography as a genre.

2.2: Biographical Representation

Caine and Sharp's texts, despite their similarities, respond to the two sides of a contemporary debate surrounding what biography is supposed to do, and what it is supposed to be. This debate is most clearly demonstrated by those acting in opposition to what they saw as Victorian failures of biography; the below quotation from Harold Nicholson's *The Development of English Biography* (1927) highlights very vividly the late Victorian struggle of how to represent a life.²⁰² Nicholson writes that:

[...] with earnestness hagiography descended on us with its sullen cloud, and the Victorian biographer scribbled laboriously by the light of shaded lamps [...] the art of biography is intellectual, not emotional. So long as the intellect is undisturbed by emotion you have good biography. The moment, however, that any emotion (such

²⁰⁰ Halloran, V1, p. 231.

²⁰¹ See Sharp's letter on page 80.

²⁰² Harold Nicholson, *The Development of English Biography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927).

as reverence, affection, ethical desires, religious belief) intrudes upon the composition of a biography, that biography is doomed.²⁰³

He further describes Victorian biography as ‘the complete rejection of truthful representation’, though he notes that the Victorian period ‘created the professional biographer and the official biography’.²⁰⁴ Nicholson indicates a Victorian horror of the ‘truthful’ biography, and the indication is that the Victorian view – with allowances made for the bias of Nicholson’s tone – was one wherein the Victorian biographer made a ‘saintly life’ of a more ordinary, perhaps ‘disagreeable’ man.²⁰⁵ While this opinion cannot be taken without its pinch of salt, it does clarify some of the conflicts within the late-Victorian biographical sphere. Froude’s *Life of Carlyle* (1882), which created something of a kerfuffle by presenting, in Nicholson’s terms, a biography rather than a hagiography, indicates the existence of such a conflict at the same moment that Sharp and Caine were publishing.²⁰⁶

The cultural shift regarding biography was not sudden, nor was it a change that can be pinned to a single slice of time, but the questions and expectations surrounding that shift are present in Sharp and Caine’s writing and are most visible in the critical reception of their work. I argue that Sharp was aware of a shift in biography that was, both inside and outside the text, moving from private and personal to social and open. I will later explore the way in which Sharp used concepts of sociability to help frame his biographies, disseminate cultural capital, and advertise further biographies in his work. I will for the moment refer to this as a capitalistic impulse, and with what follows I show that this capitalistic impulse was one which could only truly take place within a depersonalisation of biography. Sharp and Caine’s struggles with their Rossetti biographies show the pressures of the biography as a form, and show the way that the professionalisation of biography, which took place at the same time as a pressure to be ‘truthful’, allowed biography to become – even more than it already was – a genre upon which publishers could capitalise. Sharp was at the forefront of this reform of the biographical genre.

The socioeconomic complication of ‘truthfulness’ is evident in Margaret Oliphant’s reaction to Froude’s biography. Oliphant took Froude’s biography as a sign that ‘biography

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 110.

²⁰⁴ Nicholson, p. 113, p. 127.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 126. Nicholson quotes this title of JM Dent’s 1900 series of biographies with some irony, echoing as it does his perception of Victorian biography as hagiographic. Ibid, p. 129.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 129-30.

motivated by “warmth [...] generosity [...] and devotion” died with Thomas Carlyle in 1881.²⁰⁷ We are led to ask: what is biography motivated by now? Biography lacking warmth, generosity, and devotion may be cold, dismissive, and vindictive; it may be economically motivated, sensationalist, exposing; it may be characterless and impersonal. While there is, as Nicholson frames it, the question of realism versus reverence, realism is not the only consequence of a lack of ‘devotion’.²⁰⁸ We can see this in Sharp and Caine’s questions to each other surrounding fitness and ‘sharp practice’, as well as in Macmillan’s commission and Elliott Stock’s attempt to scoop the commission.²⁰⁹ In their texts themselves, both Sharp and Caine clearly struggle with a pressure to honour Rossetti while representing him accurately; they also struggle with the knowledge that whatever they do with their work, and however hard they try to honour Rossetti, they will be unable to escape their economic motivation. The struggle represented in the critical responses to Sharp’s *Record* and Hall Caine’s *Recollections* is one that once again asks questions of reverence versus ‘truth’. The silence in the reviews on both works on the matter of economic motivation – very present socially – is suggestive, for *The Academy* and *The Athenaeum* have a vested interest in the continuation of the biography market. Nevertheless, the reviews in *The Academy* and *The Athenaeum*, with their internal division over reverence versus independent criticism, demonstrate the wider shift within biography in miniature.²¹⁰

Caine’s text was, in both, received a little better: his longer publishing experience had apparently stood him in good stead. John Addington Symonds, in *The Academy*, talks laudingly of Caine’s reverence for Rossetti and the above all appropriate quality of his authorial touch,²¹¹ though an anonymous reviewer for *The Athenaeum* speaks more

²⁰⁷ Amber K. Regis, ‘Un/Making the Victorians: Literary Biography 1880-1930’ in *A Companion to Literary Biography*, ed. by Richard Bradford (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018) pp. 63-86 (p. 63).

²⁰⁸ Regis, ‘Un/Making’ p. 63.

²⁰⁹ Halloran, V1, p. 83.

²¹⁰ With regard to *The Athenaeum*, it should be noted that both Sharp and Caine note in their books and personal papers that Theodore Watts-Dunton would have been a better biographer of Rossetti than either of them, and that at this point Watts-Dunton was editor of the literary portion of *The Athenaeum*. One wonders, therefore, if the negativity of the reviews of both texts in that magazine served a greater purpose, or was indicative of a certain bitterness on Watts-Dunton’s part.

²¹¹ J. A. Symonds, ‘Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti’, *The Academy*, 28 October 1882, pp. 305-306, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/8219681?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022].

dismissively of his modesty and the limited scope of the biography.²¹² *The Athenaeum* calls *Recollections* 'pleasant', but Caine's style is apparently 'often slipslop'.²¹³ Here we recall Nicholson's words that a biography is doomed the moment that emotion colours it; for Symonds, this colour is desirable, though the reviewer for *The Athenaeum* seems more uneasy.

Where *The Academy* likes Caine's reverence, it also admires Sharp's detachment: 'It might have been expected', writes J.M. Gray, '[t]hat a young author like Mr Sharp, brought into such intercourse with a personality so magnetic and fascinating as that of Mr Rossetti, might have been overmastered by it...[but] he writes in a spirit distinctly critical and impersonal'.²¹⁴ Here, Sharp, despite scribbling by a shaded lamp, and despite his personal adoration of Rossetti, is headed in a more independent, even perhaps modern, direction. *The Athenaeum*, on the other hand, is once more the bearer of faint praise: 'Enough of independent judgement is there to save the whole from the charge of being continuous and uncompromising eulogy'.²¹⁵ This sentence, ending on a negative, makes that negative the overriding impression. Sharp's work is not marked by critical detachment, but instead barely saved from eulogy by *some* critical judgement. For *The Academy*, Sharp manages to succeed at modern, Freudian detachment, but for *The Athenaeum* he falls short. The appeal to reverence on the one hand and the dismissal of it on the other, between Symonds on Caine and Anon. on Sharp, indicates a conflict in what was expected of biography. This conflict has been under-explored by critics, but we can see in the work of Hermione Lee,²¹⁶ Trev Lynn Broughton,²¹⁷ and David Amigoni the silhouette of the conflict; that is to say, while the process of movement from reverence to critical, impersonal detachment is unclear, we can

²¹² [Anon.], "'Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti'", *The Athenaeum*, 4 November 1882, pp. 590-591 <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/britishperiodicals/docview/8967078/79212263D7DB45A6PQ/2?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022].

²¹³ [Anon.], p. 591.

²¹⁴ J. M. Gray, "'Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study'" *The Academy*, 6 January 1883, p. 1 <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/8118271/fulltextPDF/FD49D4A4D1EF40E3PQ/2?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022].

²¹⁵ [Anon.], "'Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study'", *The Athenaeum*, 13 January 1883, p. 50 <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/8959625/FD49D4A4D1EF40E3PQ/1?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022].

²¹⁶ Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf's Nose* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) p. 3, p. 12-13; Hermione Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. xiii, p. 2-4, p. 9-14.

²¹⁷ Broughton, pp. 10-11, p. 22, p. 24, p. 46, p. 59, p. 63, p. 78, p. 111, p. 136.

see that a movement did occur, and that it was the subject of social debate.²¹⁸ Further, Amber K. Regis notes the modernist impression of Victorian biography as an ‘amorphous mass’ in ‘two fat volumes’ made up of ‘granite’: the modernist idea of Victorian biography is one which embodies the stereotypical dull solidity of the Victorians themselves.²¹⁹ Yet, intriguingly, a return of the idea of market relations in biography is evident in Regis’ work on Woolf. Regis pointedly quotes Woolf’s own quotation of Roger Fry:

Fry paints a bleak picture of the contemporary art scene: debased at the hands of snobbery and commercial trade, the artist is subject to market forces, producing work to order and selling beauty “as the prostitute professed to sell love” [...] [h]e is thus a “pseudo-artist,” his work being imitative and beholden to profit.²²⁰

What Woolf quotes as applied to visual art and artistry, Regis applies to early-twentieth-century biography, especially Woolf’s sense of it. I note, however, that this can be equally applied to the late Victorian conflict in biography, where, as Broughton also notes, market relations and being ‘beholden to profit’ influenced and shifted the ethics of biography.²²¹

Victorian biography is ‘formal and remote’ yet on the edges of Victorian biography, in their paratextual surroundings, we can see emotion, intimacy, and the vicious defence of those emotions and that intimacy.²²² For Margaret Oliphant, as quoted by Regis, Froude ushered in a new age of biography that lacked that warmth, that generosity, that devotion.²²³

According to Regis, ‘the biographer-editor was caught between duties to the subject, to posterity, and the wants and whims of the reading public’.²²⁴ Biography is a pressure. The biographer – especially the poor biographer whose career has hardly started – is beholden to the market, but also beholden to the social dynamics that gave them access to the life they narrate to start with. Warmth, generosity, and devotion as cornerstones of biographical practice were still present, in this late Victorian moment; but detachment and ‘truth’ in all its ambiguities are jostling for position.

²¹⁸ David Amigoni, *Victorian Biography* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1993) p. 1, p. 14, p. 37.

²¹⁹ Amber K. Regis, “‘But Something Betwixt and Between’ *Roger Fry* and the Contradictions of Biography” in *Contradictory Woolf*, ed. by Derek Ryan and Stella Bolaki (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012) pp. 82-87 (p. 82).

²²⁰ Regis, ‘Betwixt and Between’, p. 84.

²²¹ Regis, ‘Betwixt and Between’, p. 84.

²²² Regis, ‘Betwixt and Between’, p. 84.

²²³ Regis, ‘Un/Making’, p. 63.

²²⁴ Regis, ‘Un/Making’, p. 64.

Required to write in order to survive as critics and as people, Caine and Sharp struggle with a cluster of contradictory pressures: the pressures of the market; the pressure of reputation, both their own and Rossetti's; the pressure of their own intimacy with Rossetti and the pressure of the other's intimacy with him; the pressure of warm representation and truthful representation; the pressure of the social world in which they must continue to exist and survive. The ultimate tension is between the network, a complex interrelation of people who could make or break one another's careers, and the market, which could do the same. To survive in one means to risk the rejection of the other. We see in Sharp and Caine's works a rejection of the network in favour of market survival: and we see in Wilde's words and in Sharp and Caine's careers the consequences of this rejection. Sharp, especially, was relegated to middle-brow opportunities for much of his career, partially because of the choices he made at this early point.

It is easy, therefore, to see Sharp and Caine as positioned on the same side of the conflicts in biographical discourse. Both make the same economic choice; that they both remain in the middle-brow literary sphere is suggestive of the potential consequences of that choice. However, while both are experiencing the same biographical *motivation*,²²⁵ Sharp and Caine are struggling with different forms of biographical *representation*. Caine, I argue, writes Rossetti with an obscuring 'warmth', while asserting that he has 'drawn' Rossetti truthfully.²²⁶ In his assertion that he 'extenuat[es] nothing' and 'exhibit[s] his many contradictions' we can see Caine playing rhetorically with Froude's lack of decorous disguise of Carlyle.²²⁷ Further, his use of words like *drawn* and *exhibiting* echo art and artistry, which we can read as an assertion of artistic representation. In this we can subtly see the future of biography and the modernist focus on the creative, narrativized depiction of the subject that lacked Victorian 'granite' and embraced truth as far as truth is possible when depicting a life.²²⁸ Yet Caine does, as I will show, ultimately return to classical Victorian forms of representation, using the suggestion of the exhibit to disguise his own editorial presence.

Sharp, on the other hand, struggles to disguise Rossetti. His portraits, at points, evoke Rossetti vividly: his very warmth and generosity and clear love of Rossetti war with

²²⁵ That is, economic survival.

²²⁶ Thomas Henry Hall Caine, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1898) p. viii.

²²⁷ Caine, p. viii.

²²⁸ Regis, 'Betwixt and Between,' p. 82.

both an apparent desire to be accurate and correct and an immature lack of control of his material, which results in a potentially more disruptive portrait of Rossetti (see pages 88-89). Sharp's biography of Rossetti is more interesting for this lack of control because the contemporary conflicts in biography are continually leaking out.

Caine's introduction appears to lay out his intentions for his presentation, and while they contradict some of Nicholson's preferences they do not at first seem wholly at odds with Froude's apparent truthful bent:

I have drawn Rossetti precisely as I found him in each stage of our friendship, exhibiting his many contradictions of character, extenuating nothing, and, I need hardly add, setting down naught in malice. Up to this moment I have never inquired of myself whether to those who have known little or nothing of Rossetti hitherto, mine will seem to be on the whole favourable or unfavourable portraiture; but I have trusted my admiration of the poet and affection for the friend to penetrate with kindly and appreciative feeling every comment I have had to offer.²²⁹

The final sentence, with its 'admiration' and 'appreciative feeling', clearly suggests the emotion that Nicholson so decries. The earlier part of the paragraph is also suggestive of the struggle in late Victorian biography. He writes that he has exhibited Rossetti's many contradictions, a phrase which quietly begins the process of sanitisation, and continues to claim that he has extenuated nothing. Caine presents himself as giving the reader a truthful Rossetti, and he suggests a kind of disclaimer: he has not assessed whether his portrait is favourable or unfavourable but trusts that his feelings have led him in the former direction. These two sentences suggest that his portrait could, at least theoretically, be taken as unfavourable; this increases the apparent veracity of his Rossetti. In other words, Caine says that his portrayal of Rossetti is that of an affectionate but honest friend. He pre-empt's criticism by suggesting that any unfavourableness comes from a place of friendship, whilst also priming the reader to presume he is avoiding hagiography: thus, Rossetti really is as saintly as Caine suggests. The wider purpose of this paragraph is to create, in a demure, delicate way, an impression of Caine's authority. He has at this point already deferred to the greater appropriateness of Watts-Dunton and William Michael Rossetti's writing a biography of his subject, imbuing himself with the appropriate humility.²³⁰ This paragraph balances that humility. He asserts that he has been accurate, but also that he bows to the

²²⁹ Caine, p. viii.

²³⁰ Caine, p. vii.

tendency towards kind appreciation that, if Nicholson can be believed, suffuses all Victorian biographers but Froude.

The duality here – that to be accurate is to be kindly appreciative – suggests a sanitising, sanctifying impulse. It is interesting to note that Sharp's work contains no such disclaimer, and no justification of his approach. That is not to say the impulse was not there in his work – we can see it in *The Athenaeum's* reaction – but Sharp either felt no need to defend his portrayal or made a *faux pas* in not including a defence. The latter seems slightly more likely when we look at the ease with which Caine navigates Rossetti's flaws, and Sharp's awkwardness with the same. Caine writes:

Rossetti was king of his circle, and it must be said, that in all that properly constituted kingship, he took care to rule. There was then a certain determination of purpose which occasionally had the look of arbitrariness, and sometimes, it is alleged, a disregard of opposing opinion which partook of tyranny: but where heart and not head were in question, he was assuredly the most urbane and amiable of monarchs. In matters of taste in art, or criticism in poetry, he would brook no opposition from any quarter; nor did he ever seem to be conscious of the unreasonableness of compelling his associates to swallow his opinions as being absolute and final. This disposition to govern his circle coexisted, however, with the most lavish appreciation of every good quality displayed by the members of it, and all the little uneasiness to which his absolutism may sometimes have given rise was much more than removed by constantly recurring acts of good-fellowship, indeed it was forgotten in the presence of them.²³¹

We can see in this quotation a constant back and forth on the topic of Rossetti's flaws. There are both favourable and unfavourable readings available here, to take Caine's phrasing, and, at a few points, there is room to read malice. For example, where Caine writes 'the unreasonableness of compelling his associates to swallow his opinions', the strength of his wording contrasts against a passage which is otherwise full of withdrawals and couched assertions: 'All the *little* uneasiness,' [emphasis mine]; 'may sometimes'; 'occasionally'; 'sometimes, it is alleged'.²³² This is not to say that Rossetti comes away unscathed – the impression one gets of Rossetti here is not altogether favourable. Nevertheless, Caine's couching of flaws in such delicate language makes them overall appear small and inconsequential, and they blend easily into the fabric of his biography.

²³¹ Caine, pp. 12-13.

²³² Caine, pp. 12-13.

Conversely, Sharp's protestations on Rossetti's flaws linger somewhat more forcefully:

Not infrequently has it been remarked to me that [...] Rossetti had yet little capability of deep affection and certainly no demonstrative emotion: I know that personally I found him ever affectionately considerate, and generous of heart [...] I have heard him again and again, and down to my very last visit to him, speak of Mr. Theodore Watts, for instance, in terms of love and trust that could have come from no other than a loving nature; and that his friendships were not limited to artistic or literary circles is manifest in his having welcomed as intimate acquaintances [a variety of gentlemen] not directly associated with the arts. It is true indeed that he was not always quite equal to himself for [chloral and a 'ruined constitution'] frequently made him say unjust words that rose as it were on the surface and not from the depths – and on such occasions he was afterwards more grieved than any one concerned, and more than ordinary allowance should be made for anyone who suffers from this well-known effect of chloral. Another thing must be taken into consideration, namely, the irresistibly imaginative groove in which his thoughts moved and which made it often difficult for him to resist the temptation of exaggeration in recounting any personal narrative and in praise or denunciation. He offended many by this recklessness, but those who really knew him overlooked these minor inconsistencies and forgave much where they gained much more.²³³

Sharp's words are more vivid and specific than Caine's, both in terms of Rossetti's positive attributes and his negative ones. Caine speaks in generalities that only vaguely suggest specific instances of disagreeableness from Rossetti, but one gets from Sharp's words a clearer picture of how these flaws manifested. Both writers end on a similar assertion: that those who knew him ignored these flaws. Caine's words, however, are more forceful and lingering in this final moment than Sharp's: 'lavish appreciation of every good quality', 'constantly recurring acts of good-fellowship'.²³⁴ These strong terms allow Caine to rhetorically diminish Rossetti's flaws. Caine's closing argument overcomes his earlier disguised bitterness, where Sharp's closing argument is more defined by Rossetti's causing offense than by the forgiveness of his friends. In this, it is Sharp's Rossetti who needs forgiveness; Caine's does not.

Caine's advantage, and the aspect that most clearly indicates his greater control of his material, lies in the brevity of his assessment, and the fact that he gives very little space to the expansion of these flaws. Caine's assessment pretends toward balance; Sharp's, however, reads as an apology and a justification. Sharp reasons away these supposed flaws,

²³³ Sharp, *Record*, pp. 30-31.

²³⁴ Caine, p. 13.

thus validating the suggestion that they exist; Caine refers to these flaws in much less concrete terms. We might compare Caine's somewhat vague 'a disregard of opposing opinion which partook of tyranny' to Sharp's assertions that Rossetti sometimes spoke cruelly, without thinking, and tended to exaggerate.²³⁵ Sharp evokes what it was like to talk to Rossetti in more concrete and direct terms than Caine. Sharp's apologies for Rossetti's flaws suggest, more strongly than any other part of the biography, Sharp's hero-worship, and thus backfire. Sharp's evident hero-worship calls his intended critical detachment into greater question. Ironically, Caine's irresolution keeps his biography at a constant pitch of detachment; his authority remains even and balanced throughout. This does not necessarily suggest that Sharp's presentation is more 'true', in Nicholson's terms; however, his unease and his attempt to present a reason for, rather than a denial of, Rossetti's flaws, does show an urge towards an accurate presentation that conflicts with an urge towards delicacy that elides what we may call, in a very Caine-ish way, the difficulties of Rossetti's character. This conflict we see visibly on Sharp's pages: the presenting of one side and then the other is written into the structure of his sentences. He misses many of Caine's 'alleged's, and 'may's in favour of a more direct argumentative style. Caine undercuts the prosecution; Sharp accepts the validity of their case.

This attempt at balanced, 'true' assessment is far less visible in Sharp's *Life of Browning*,²³⁶ and Grant F. Scott convincingly enumerates the various falsities, both intentional and merely careless, in Sharp's *Life of Joseph Severn*.²³⁷ The difference, however, aside from greater maturity and experience, between the *Rossetti* on the one hand and the *Browning* and *Severn* on the other, is Sharp's greater knowledge of the former. He knew Browning, though not well, and Severn died in 1879, before Sharp had attached himself to literary London. While not taking Sharp's assertions as to his closeness to Rossetti as read, it is clear that of the three, it is Rossetti that Sharp knew to such an extent that he could access from direct personal experience the conflict between accuracy and delicacy. Further, Sharp's inexperience may have led him to taking a more truthful tone, where greater

²³⁵ Caine, p. 13.

²³⁶ William Sharp, *Life of Robert Browning* (London: Walter Scott, 1889).

²³⁷ Grant F. Scott, 'Writing Keats's Last Days: Severn, Sharp, and Romantic Biography', *Studies in Romanticism*, 42.1 (2003), 3–26 <https://doi.org/10.2307/25601600>; William Sharp, *The Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1892).

experience showed him that truth is not always what an audience, a publisher, or a reviewer, wants.

The different ways in which Sharp and Caine set up their biographies are also suggestive of their differences as biographers. Caine begins his with a conceit – ironically, in the face of his claims of accuracy, as we saw in the quotation on page 89 – that, given its content and tone, appears almost ludicrously false. It is a conversation he reports having had with Rossetti, and this reported conversation takes up the first page of his preface:

One day towards the close of 1881 Rossetti, who was then very ill, said to me: “How well I remember the beginning of our correspondence, and how little did I think it would lead to such relations between us as have ensued! I was at the time very solitary and depressed from various causes, and the letters of so young and ardent a well wisher, though unknown to me personally, brought solace.”

“Yours,” I said, “were very valuable to me.”

“Mine to you were among the largest bodies of literary letters I ever wrote, others being often letters of personal interest.”

“And so admirable in themselves,” I added, “and so free from the discussion of any but literary subjects that many of them would bear to be printed exactly as you penned them.”

“That,” he said, “will be for you some day to decide.”²³⁸

This dialogue sets Caine up as a custodian of an important piece of Rossetti’s *oeuvre*, explains why the reader should be interested, and gives himself the authority – through ventriloquising Rossetti – to pursue his project. Immediately following his reported dialogue, Caine writes that:

[...] though I must have withheld [the letters he prints in *Recollections*] for some years if I had consulted my own wishes only, I yielded to the necessity of publishing them at once [...] what I have just said will account for the circumstance that I, the youngest and latest of Rossetti’s friends, should be the first to seem to stand in relation to him as a biographer.²³⁹

Oscar Wilde’s quip that ‘when a great man dies, Caine and Sharp go in with the undertaker’ seems to loom large over this self-conscious moment from Caine.²⁴⁰ Aware of the probability of his being accused of profiting from his friend’s death, Caine clearly hopes that this section – followed by the assertion that he, like Sharp, is not in fact a biographer, and

²³⁸ Caine, pp. v-vi. This conversation is followed by a second which outlines the size of the body of correspondence Caine possesses.

²³⁹ Caine, p. vii. The elision of Sharp here, Caine being two years Sharp’s senior with perhaps a year’s further acquaintance, is most likely deliberate given the two men’s falling out over their two competing biographies.

²⁴⁰ Richard Le Gallienne, *The Romantic 90s* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co, 1925) p. 49.

that Theodore Watts-Dunton would be far better placed to pursue that project – will absolve him. He asserts indirectly that he gets his authority on Rossetti from Rossetti himself, that it was given ‘in trust’ to him, and that as much as he may be the youngest and latest of Rossetti’s circle of young writers, he has nevertheless been selected by the king of his circle for this worthy task.²⁴¹ The reported conversation upon which he bases this defence, however, rather weakens his presentation of himself as a young man who only wants to throw Rossetti’s letters into the world for others’ benefit rather than his own. The conversation lacks realism: Rossetti asserts his own letters are of literary and personal interest, lines which would not be out of place in advertising copy. This barely-disguised advert for the text that follows undercuts Caine’s self-presentation as a mere messenger uninterested in profit. The humble worthiness that Caine presents himself as possessing is of a piece with the accusations Nicholson levels at Victorian biography: it positions the biographical subject so far above the biographer that reverence is built into the very set-up of the biography.

That this reverence is an affected generic convention can be seen if we turn to the letter sent to Caine by Sharp, after Caine has railed against him for publishing *Record*. In it, there is no sign of the humble Caine who only hopes his audience may consider him a reticent young man executing his more laudable friend’s last wish. Instead, in Sharp’s letter, we see the Caine who did, in fact, go in with the undertaker; the Caine who, whether or not it was his primary motivation, wrote the book with an eye to profit, and the Caine who, however much he denies it in his preface, attempted to scoop Watts-Dunton and William Michael Rossetti by writing a biography rather than the critical selection of letters he presented himself as publishing.²⁴² Whether this was an accurate view of Caine is not clear; but it is the Caine to whom Sharp responds.

Sharp’s counter-attack is reproduced on pages 79-80 of this thesis. In it we see the economic concerns – the ‘damaging’ timeframe, the accusations of ‘journalistic sharp practice’ – that Caine most likely suggested in his letter.²⁴³ He asserts, if we can trust Sharp’s quotations, the very same authority in this letter that he denies in his preface – he is casting

²⁴¹ Caine’s presentation of himself as the youngest and newest member of Rossetti’s circle is false. Sharp is younger and later.

²⁴² Halloran, V1, p. 231.

²⁴³ Halloran, V1, pp. 82-3.

Sharp here as the young pretender, rather than himself. He does the same with his ‘critical faculty’ – the Caine we see in this letter is the absolute reverse of the one we see in the preface. Interestingly, in this letter Sharp positions himself in relation to Caine in the same way that Caine positions himself in relation to Rossetti: seceding authority, minimising his contribution. It is an apologetic gesture, but it is nevertheless only a gesture, as Sharp’s later sarcasm (‘I may perhaps be vain enough’) suggests. The false humility as written in *Recollections* and as echoed in Sharp’s letter is a somewhat ironic and self-referential gesture delivered for the reader and the other potential writers more than for the elevation of the biographical subject.

2.3: Biography and Network-as-product

Caine and Sharp differ in the framing of their biography as well. Where Caine frames his biographies with reported conversations that give him, rhetorically, the authority to pursue the biographical project, Sharp frames his with social connectivity. I quote an example from his *Browning*, in which Sharp returns to his rhetorical network:

The lustrum which saw the birth of Robert Browning, that is the third in the nineteenth century, was a remarkable one indeed. Thackeray came into the world some months earlier than the great poet, Charles Dickens within the same twelvemonth, and Tennyson three years sooner, when also Elizabeth Barrett was born, and the foremost naturalist of modern times first saw the light. [...] Lepsius’s birth was in 1813, and that of the great Flemish novelist, Henri Conscience, in 1812: about the same period were the births of Freiligrath, Gutzkow, and Auerbach, respectively one of the most lyrical poets, the most potent dramatist, the most charming romancer of Germany: and, also, in France, of Théophile Gautier and Alfred de Musset.²⁴⁴

Sharp continues at length; over three pages he covers seventy-seven individuals that he uses to indicate that ‘the epoch expend[ed] itself in preparation for [Browning].’ This emphasis on connectivity is a theme of Sharp’s biographies, appearing also in a small way in his *Shelley*;²⁴⁵ it is the entire reason that his *Life of Joseph Severn* exists, as that biography is as much about John Keats as it is about Severn himself.²⁴⁶ The only one of his biographies

²⁴⁴ Sharp, *Life of Robert Browning*, pp. 12-13.

²⁴⁵ William Sharp, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: Walter Scott, 1887).

²⁴⁶ Ibid, *The Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co. 1892).

that does not include it as a primary introductory element is his *Heine*, which may be explained by Heine, and the figures that would exist in his network, possibly being less immediately familiar to Sharp's audience than his other subjects.²⁴⁷

Sharp most often made use of what I will call the *rhetorical network*. This means a sphere of centralised connectivity that is not 'real' or 'present'. It is not, for example, a representation of a network that exists contemporaneously with Sharp's writing. Instead, these networks are often imaginary and ideological as distinct from the real concrete world of sociability from which Sharp is worked. The rhetorical network was a device Sharp used to give authority to the biographical subject and to Sharp himself, by forming imaginary links between figures, or relying on a past moment in which those links exist.

I have identified two different forms of the rhetorical network in Sharp's work:

a) those members of a once-real network who have died, where their social circle still leans on their previous participation, with Rossetti being the current pertinent example. By this I mean the practice of using a posthumous figure such as Rossetti as currency in social relationships. This may manifest as, for instance, Sharp referencing Rossetti's belief in Sharp's own work in order to make himself appear a more desirable product in himself. We also see this in Caine's work, when he tries to ventriloquise Rossetti and leverage his own position in Rossetti's social circle to make himself look more authoritative.

b) figures who may not be a direct part of a network, but who can be claimed for it in that they are connected to several figures in that network and who offer social, artistic, or ideological validity. These would be individuals who do not operate within the network, or who operate within it rarely, but whose peripheral position can be called upon to strengthen the network's standing. Sharp's biography of Browning begins with a list of such figures (see page 97). This also includes historical figures who are frequently referred to in reference to a current social circle or network. Sharp uses Dante Alighieri as a such a figure for Rossetti.

Sharp places these rhetorical devices in a similar location structurally to Caine's prevarications, quotations, and disclaimers: they appear in the introduction to his works.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Ibid, *Life of Heinrich Heine* (London: Walter Scott, 1888). Connectivity in the other biographies is a process of situating figures in their contexts, and situating Heine may have taken more exposition than was plausible.

²⁴⁸ Caine's tendency to introduce his works via quotation becomes visible when he uses it in a more protracted way in his other biography, his 1887 *Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*.

This is interesting when read in light of Nicholson's assertion that all Victorian biography is hagiography; the network as Sharp writes it increases the authority of the biographical subject and positions them within a literary network, which, while not necessarily contradicting the presentation of the biographical subject as a saint, does contradict the image of them as a lone figure, a unique talent. Contextualising figures within a literary sphere of influence strips them of their individualised, singular genius, which problematises their saintliness. Sharp's conscious presentation of networks contrasts against the way in which many biographies isolate their subjects. André Maurois, in his *Aspects of Biography*, explains this convention as follows: 'The biographer takes an individual man as a central figure and makes the events of the period begin and end with him; they must all revolve around him.'²⁴⁹ In both *Record* and *Recollections*, Rossetti is the 'king' of his circle. In *Record*, however, Rossetti is contextualised through both his concrete, real social circle, and through rhetorical networks. Sharp's focus on networks of various forms limits the degree to which the events of Rossetti's period can begin and end with him – we are too aware of the other actors for that gambit to be successful.

Sharp first contextualises Rossetti within a historically focused rhetorical network, referring to da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and Dante – 'pre-Raphaelite' becomes again a distinct positioning in a transtemporal network, rather than merely the name for a circle of once-trendy, once-young men. The meaning of *pre-Raphaelite* is centred ideologically, reaffirming its meaning and recontextualising the Brotherhood with reference to an earlier ideological brotherhood made up of da Vinci, Dante Alighieri and others.²⁵⁰ Sharp's *Record* begins as follows:

At rare intervals in the records of memorable lives we come across the names of men who seem to have been gifted with an almost too disproportionate amount of talent in whatsoever they laid their hands to, men who, like Lionardo [sic] da Vinci, take a foremost place amongst their contemporaries, and to whom painting, poetry, literature, or science seem equally familiar. It is very often supposed that diversity of gifts means mediocrity in all, but a glance at the histories of many well-known lives tends to disprove any such supposition, while on the other hand it may be admitted that multiplicity of talents has too often militated against the due fulfilment of some special bent. Lionardo, one of the most powerful and subtle intellects as well as one of the greatest painters of his time, is an example of one so gifted and at the same time so restrained by temperament and varied interests as never to reach the

²⁴⁹ André Maurois, *Aspects of Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929) pp. 93-4.

²⁵⁰ Itself transtemporal, given that the life spans of the figures did not always meaningfully intersect. This Raphaelite Brotherhood is itself an ideological product.

supreme position in art he might have attained. We know that Michel Angelo was a painter, a sculptor, an architect, and a poet; that Raffaello's [sic] spirit found other than merely pictorial expression; that Dante was an artist as well as the author of an immortal epic; but we never hesitate in deciding the first to be less great in verse than in the plastic arts, the second to be a painter above all else, – though indeed of this we can hardly judge, considering that the often-referred-to sonnets "dinted with a silver pencil, such as else had drawn madonnas," have not come down to us, – or in recognising the author of *The Divine Comedy* as less excellent with his brush than his pen. But certainly in this century the number of diversely-gifted men of genius amongst our countrymen alone has been remarkable, and amongst those still with us such instances may be mentioned as William Morris, poet and artist; Mr. Woolner, at once sculptor and poet; Sir Noel Paton, at once painter, sculptor, and poet; and William Bell Scott, an accomplished art-critic and painter as well as poet.²⁵¹

As this long extract exemplifies, Sharp situates Rossetti in context before even mentioning Rossetti's name. First, there is the rhetorical network of da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Dante Alighieri, working to situate Rossetti ideologically within their number. This is also indicated by the strategy of listing Dante last rather than, for example, going by chronology (Dante Alighieri died over a hundred years before the other three were born, though Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci were roughly contemporary). Sharp chooses the order and the phrasing that will elide temporal boundaries between Dante *Alighieri* on the one side and Dante *Rossetti* on the other. This is then followed by a representation of Rossetti's (and Sharp's) social circle, placing Rossetti within a second sphere of multiply gifted men. While not all these figures are themselves pre-Raphaelites, Sharp is presenting a modern network as a mirror to a historical, ideological network. Rossetti is being presented as the modern Dante. As much as the figures in Sharp's first historical, transtemporal, network were not themselves in a real literary community with each other, the implication is that we are seeing a new, reborn, network of eminent, diversely gifted men, and that, not only have we lost Dante *Rossetti*, we have lost a reborn Dante Alighieri in the process. Drawing a parallel between the two indicates Rossetti's worthiness and historical value, strengthening his canonical status. Sharp further indicates this with the following, in his first mention of Rossetti:

An acknowledged leader in both [literature and art], Rossetti attained a position amongst English poets and amongst English artists that will appear more remarkable

²⁵¹ Sharp, *Record*, pp. 1-2.

as it will gain more general recognition in days to come. His recent death is a loss greater than is at present realised, except by a comparative few.²⁵²

It is worth noting that the final line (specifically, the phrase ‘comparative few’) turns Rossetti into a commodity, a product; to view the loss of Rossetti as great is to place oneself within a circle of good taste. The implication is that this book, halfway between biography and critical assessment, will bring the full weight of Rossetti’s loss, and the advantages of taste that come with feeling that loss, home to the reader. The represented network is an extension of that same teaching of taste; the way it positions the biographical subject within a network of other luminaries does not just aggrandise the subject but gives the reader other figures and avenues to follow, and, by extension, other biographies to buy.

The introduction is not the only point at which Sharp sells Rossetti’s network. With every mention of Rossetti in a social context comes reference to another name. In the over-long section on Rossetti’s father, Sharp drags our notice to the celebrated Admiral Sir Graham Moore and his wife Lady Moore, and in the section on Rossetti’s birth mentions his partial namesake, ‘Mr. Charles Lyell (father of the well known Sir Charles Lyell, the geologist), a frequent visitor and friend at [the Rossetti residence]’.²⁵³ Further segments on the network abound, largely but not exclusively relating to the various noteworthy friends, visitors and acquaintances of Rossetti’s. These references to his social circle – very many, comparative to the size of the *Life* itself – situate Rossetti firmly in his period and make it more difficult for him to be presented as the beginning and end of the mid-Victorian world. These references have the secondary impact, towards the end of the *Life* when Sharp refers to his own position in Rossetti’s circle, of situating Sharp; but as Sharp refers to himself only rarely, especially as compared to Caine, that cannot be said to be his primary motivation. The positioning of Rossetti is a constant and consistent assertion of context, of a grounded quality that Nicholson would suggest Victorian biography misses. That is to say, the grounding of Rossetti in a time and place that asserts him not only as transtemporal exemplar – Sharp does not quite manage to avoid that particular aspect of Victorian biography – but also as a man, with a position and a place.

²⁵² Sharp, *Record*, p. 3.

²⁵³ Sharp, *Record*, p. 4, p. 7.

Variations on this grounding through rhetorical use of social connectivity, both functional and ideological, can be seen in several of Sharp's other biographies. Ideological networks open his *Shelley*:

There are certain luminaries in whose flames critics delight to singe their wings. Goethe and Heine, Shelley and Rossetti have been and will remain stars to fascinate, perplex, and overcome many a critic-moth.²⁵⁴

They overflow – and are over-stretched – in his Browning, where he goes on for three pages about the many illustrious figures either born in the general temporal vicinity as Browning or who were still living when he was born. Sharp writes that:

It is not unadvisedly that I make this specification of great names, of men who were born coincidentally with, or were in the broader sense contemporaries of Robert Browning. There is no such thing as a fortuitous birth. Creation does not occur spontaneously, as in that drawing of David Scott's where from the footprints of the Omnipotent spring human spirits and fiery stars. Literally indeed, as a great French writer has indicated, a man is a child of his time...the way was prepared for Browning as it was for Shakspeare [sic]: as it is, beyond doubt, for the next high peer of these.²⁵⁵

Forgiving the apparent contradiction between there being no such thing as a fortuitous birth and the way having been prepared for Browning, this is Sharp's strongest assertion of his ideological network. It places Browning, as Sharp earlier placed Rossetti, within a networked *space* if not within the network itself. In another work on Browning, Sharp describes his death as adding another constellation to the night sky; here, in his biography of Browning, the reader is presented with a whole map of luminaries and is invited to read into it.²⁵⁶ As with Rossetti before him, this listing is an orientation both of Browning and for the reader. A man is a child of his time, Sharp writes, prefiguring Maurois' concerns about biography lending a man too much credit for the development of whichever epoch he belongs to; Sharp lists so many people that centring Browning as a man on whom a whole poetic or artistic constellation depends becomes impossible. Instead, the point of focus – acting as an introduction, this constellation suffuses the book – becomes not Robert Browning as a man alone, but Robert Browning as a man among many.

As a stratagem, this also has its publishing potential: a fair number of the mentioned names in Sharp's three-page listing have books about or by them listed in the publisher's

²⁵⁴ Sharp, *Shelley*, p. 11.

²⁵⁵ Sharp, *Browning*, p. 15.

²⁵⁶ Sharp, *Papers Critical*, p. 18.

advertisements at the back of the volume. Drawing the reader's attention to other actors in the rhetorical network has the potential to advertise other works in what is in this case a biographical series alongside other serialised collections, including *Great Writers*, *Canterbury Poets*, and *The Scott Library*. Granted, not all of the advertised books will have been released at the time of the first edition. However, as Sharp was editor of the *Canterbury Poets* series, and had influence over Ernest Rhys's *Camelot Series* (also published by Walter Scott), there is a strong possibility of intent.

Figure 6, below, shows one of the possible mechanisms by which readers were encouraged – before even entering their volume – to purchase other Walter Scott volumes. It shows an advertising note, pressed into the binding immediately after the title page, directing the reader to the catalogue of other volumes at the end of the given book. I cannot say for certain that this mechanism was used in the *Great Writers* series, as the book in question is *Song-Tide*, a collection of the poetry of Philip Bourke Marston edited by William Sharp for the *Canterbury Poets* series. However, the advertising note is not securely attached, seemingly folded into the binding rather than stitched, and so such insertions may have not generally survived.

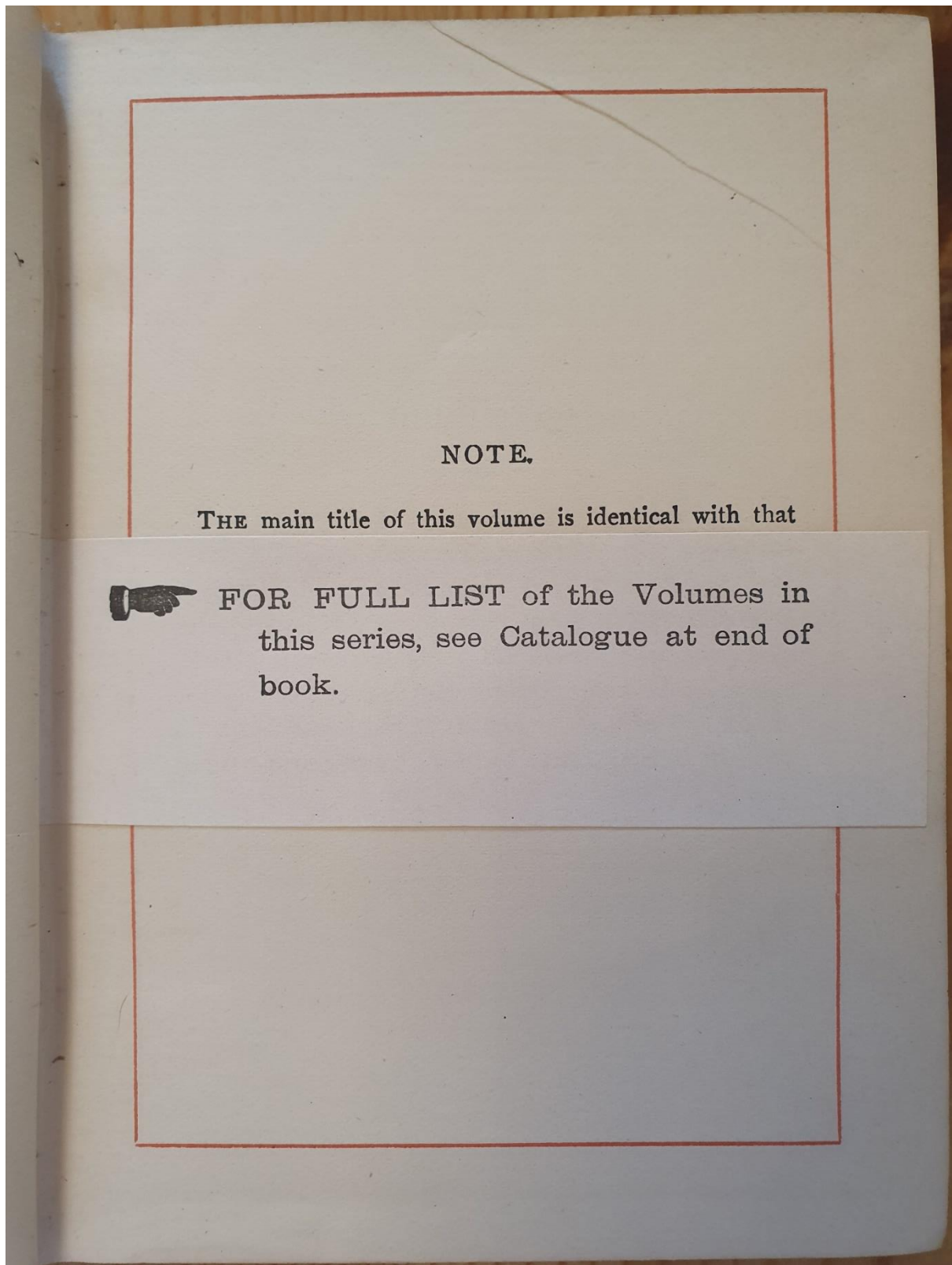


Figure 6: An 1888 edition of Song-Tide, with advertising note still evident.

This self-conscious selling of other work is evident in the way Caine situates his Rossetti biography and the way Sharp and Caine discussed their work between themselves.

Caine's preface pokes holes in his own work: his assertions that William Michael Rossetti and Theodore Watts-Dunton would write a better biography than he can himself opens the door to the existence of, and necessity of buying, these products. Caine suggests within his own work the space that subsequent writers can fill. A further line from Sharp's letter is interesting in this light: '[Elliott] Stock...[would] have been willing to have brought out both books if I had agreed to his terms'.²⁵⁷ Stock also brought out William Tirebuch's essay on Rossetti, which is similar in purpose and topic to Sharp's, but published earlier than either his or Caine's. The holes that these humble openings indicate are not, or not just, the consequences of the humility of a writer wanting to appear a good Christian in the face of a literary saint, but also a mechanism by which a publisher can bring out a whole range of works that profit from the death of said saint without damaging the sales of any of their other books. It allows other publishers to come in and fill these gaps, too; it has the potential to turn Rossetti-biography into a self-sustaining market.

In *Victorian Biography*, David Amigoni discusses the late-Victorian biography as 'forming [...] master-narratives of Victorian culture'.²⁵⁸ He writes that 'A look at the contours of the academic disciplines in which these master-narratives came to be embodied would suggest that the role of biography was considerable'.²⁵⁹ To look at these master-narratives, Amigoni discusses what we might call the highbrow – the literary biographies that he looks at, for example, are to be found in Macmillan's *English Men of Letters* series, which Harold Nicholson called, as Amigoni reminds us, the 'wheat' of Victorian Biography.²⁶⁰ Amigoni's analysis centres on the biography tradition as written by an Oxbridge-educated 'liberal-Comtean' 'elite', and demonstrates the rhetorics and discursive strategies that created master-narratives and, through them, the disciplines (this word choice, for Amigoni, carries considerable weight) of history and literature.²⁶¹ Sharp was not part of this pattern of Oxbridge elites (he didn't finish his degree at the University of Glasgow) but his literary output, and the output of the publishers with whom he associated, suggest that the late-

²⁵⁷ Halloran, V1, p. 82.

²⁵⁸ David Amigoni, *Victorian Biography* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), p. 2.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ Amigoni, p.14.

²⁶¹ Ibid, p.37.

Victorian tendency to narrate, its writing of master-narratives, was not the preserve of the 'elite', and in fact entered middle-class literary discourse as well.²⁶²

Sharp involves himself in this process of cultural narration in his *Record*, which itself references previous narrations, talking of stories from Rossetti's life that, according to Sharp, have already been exhaustively told.²⁶³ Further, Sharp accepts – or self-consciously presents himself as accepting – that he is not the correct narrator of Rossetti's cultural positioning. The pressures of who narrates and how, and the awareness of multiple narrators all jostling to speak, are in evidence in Sharp's work. Cultural narration is seen again quite distinctly in Sharp's final biography, his *Life of Joseph Severn*, which Grant F. Scott explores as a successful and influential attempt by Sharp to rescue Keats from the blow his reputation suffered after the publication of the Fanny Brawne letters.²⁶⁴ Scott's article recalls Amigoni's line that 'university courses in English Literature told the story which Victorian culture narrated'.²⁶⁵ Sharp's biography of Joseph Severn aligns with the story that university courses in English Literature subsequently told about Keats. The process of cultural narration is also seen elsewhere in Walter Scott's bibliography, in the seemingly endless lists of biographies, anthologies, and general libraries – whole overarching shilling-narratives of art, literature, culture.

The analysis which Amigoni largely limits to the *Dictionary of National Biography* and Macmillan's *English Men of Letters* can be broadened to include imitations of the latter, here most relevantly Walter Scott's *Great Writers*. As much as Nicholson may have considered them 'chaff', and as much as they may, accordingly, not have been 'pure' biography in both Nicholson's sense and Amigoni's discursive sense, they too contribute to a pattern of construction: the making of textbooks and thus of disciplines and canons.

Amigoni writes:

[...] democracy would be managed by an educated elite who would control the content of popular education; the universities [Oxford and Cambridge are previously specified] would be the centre of culture from which the members of this elite would be drawn, so what was taught at university would have a direct bearing on the decisions made relating to popular national education, and ultimately popular national sentiment. This can be seen as an attempt to popularise elitism. But through

²⁶² Amigoni, p. 37.

²⁶³ Sharp, *Record*, p. 4.

²⁶⁴ Grant F. Scott, 'Writing Keats' Last Days: Severn, Sharp and Romantic Biography' *Studies in Romanticism*, 42.1 pp. 3-26 (p. 13, p. 24).

²⁶⁵ Amigoni, p. 2.

which discourses and institutional supports was the elitism of a regenerated university culture to be popularised?²⁶⁶

Amigoni is leading here into a discussion of biography and discourse, and the ways in which the biographies of 'great statesmen', as written by members of this elite to which he points, popularised the 'elitism of a regenerated university culture'.²⁶⁷ This is echoed in biographies of what one might call the great statesmen of literature. Amigoni notes that:

In claiming that 'English Men of Letters' are 'biographies for students', Nicholson informs us that the project was implicated in the business of pedagogy, and consequently knowledge producing institutions. In this sense, these late nineteenth-century biographies can be seen in the context of the rise of disciplines in the humanities, such as English literature and history. For Nicholson, these biographies exemplify the values of balance, detachment and objectivity.²⁶⁸

These values are those which, Amigoni writes, are fundamental to the 'rise of disciplines in the humanities' and suggest a success of the above-mentioned elitism and regeneration.²⁶⁹ This elitism results in what we might call, looking at *English Men of Letters*, a kind of double-canon: the biographical subjects and the biographers themselves. In the biographical subjects we see such figures as Samuel Johnson, Shelley, Milton, Chaucer, Keats; in the biographers we see a second canon, made up of thirty separate writers. Eleven of these did not attend Oxford or Cambridge; of these, six had no university education. However, all were well-established by the time they wrote for *English Men of Letters*.²⁷⁰ The biographers include such names as Leslie Stephen, Henry James, and Anthony Trollope, among others. Amigoni's university elite, and the domination of an elite discourse within biographical writing, is in full evidence.

Sharp published in Walter Scott's *Great Writers* series, a series which operated as a knock-off version of Macmillan's *English Men of Letters*. Walter Scott's biographies were published in monthly shilling volumes, less than half the price of Macmillan's. The Walter Scott biographies attracted, by consequence of the limitations of the lower price, reviews which consistently noted their sloppy editing and cheap production. Eighteen of the thirty-two biographers for this series were not Oxbridge alumni, and of those eighteen, eleven

²⁶⁶ Amigoni, p. 37.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 37.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 14.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 14.

²⁷⁰ For evidence to support this point and others on the publication dates and demographics of both series, see Appendix D and the associated bibliography.

either had no university education, or their education is unknown. That means 66% of the writers for *Great Writers* were university educated, compared to 80% of the writers for *English Men of Letters* (if we limit ourselves to Oxbridge, the numbers are 43% to 63%). These biographies of Scott's focus on many of the same figures as the Macmillan series, and are largely written by university graduates, though they may not be Oxbridge elites. As noted, Sharp himself was not an Oxbridge alumnus, and he did not complete his degree at the University of Glasgow. His and his fellows' lack of an Oxbridge education may have made them more appropriate for *Great Writers*, as their rates may have been cheaper than those of the Oxbridge alumni. Further, Eric S. Robertson, the editor of *Great Writers*, was already a good friend of the Sharps before William Sharp published in the series, having been best man at their wedding in 1884.²⁷¹ Sharp's connections once more may have bolstered his opportunities.

The cheaper rates, frequent use of less established or less academically qualified writers, and faster and more prolific production suggests a decentring of the elite educative and disciplinary system that Amigoni demonstrates is at play in bibliographic writing. Yet the fact of *Great Writers* copying the set-up and fairly often the actual line-up of *English Men of Letters* suggests also dissemination, an investment if not in the academic and cultural discourse which Amigoni discusses, in its economic value.²⁷² The following extract from the *Saturday Review* for November 26th, 1887, acknowledges in crisp, knowing tones *Great Writers'* tendency to mimic its more expensively produced predecessor. It begins:

The brief note of preface in which Mr Rossetti explains how it is that his Life of Keats follows so rapidly on the heels of Mr Sidney Colvin's biography is not especially pertinent [...] It is perhaps not a very severe condemnation to say that Mr Rossetti's book is less satisfactory than Mr Colvin's, or that it ranks with the worst specimens of barren superfluity to be found in the series to which it belongs.²⁷³

Superfluous as it might be, and economically motivated, this second Keats biography in four months indicates rather clearly the dynamic at play between the elite discourse of *English Men of Letters* and the dispersion and potential middle-class renavigation of that discourse

²⁷¹ E. A. S., V1, p. 160.

²⁷² *English Men of Letters vs Great Writers*: Coleridge in '84 vs '87; Dickens in '82 vs '87; Johnson in '78 vs '87; Scott in '78 vs '88; Keats in '87 for both; Shelley, '78 vs '87; Burns, '79 vs '88; Bunyan, '79 vs '88; Milton, '79 vs '90; Byron, '80 vs '90; Hawthorne, '79 vs '90; Thackeray, '79 vs '91.

²⁷³ [Anon.], 'Mr Rossetti's Keats', *The Saturday Review*, 64.1674 (1887), 737-738 <https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/britishperiodicals/docview/9488127/487CC0ED08C64C0FPQ/1?accountid=14874&imgSeq=1> [accessed 01/07/2022] (p.737).

in *Great Writers*. However, this dispersion, diffusion, and middle-class renavigation of cultural discourse has social implications for the writers who partake in it. However, thus far, I have only approached biography as an economic and cultural event: biography, as I will show, is also a social and cultural activity, an ongoing social project and a pressure on social interactions and bonds.

2.4: Biography as Activity

Broughton 'consider[s] late nineteenth-century Life-writing as a social and cultural activity rather than exclusively as a literary event: as context and intertext rather than simply as text'.²⁷⁴ The biography, in these terms, is a social event; the commission, research and writing of a biography is a social activity, and 'biography' as a concept is one which no man of letters can avoid, a spectre which lingers over his life. *Memento mori* is no longer the pressing concept. Instead, the man of letters must remember not that he will die but that he will be memorialised. *Memento memoriae*, perhaps. Broughton indicates this difficulty in discussion of Leslie Stephen's awareness of his own coming memorialisation through biography:

[A]nd what of Stephen's circumspection, his almost obsessive vigilance over the terms of his own posthumous reputation? Does he secretly find in the possibility of biography, of Life after death, a saving grace – a glimmer of hope on an arid secular horizon?²⁷⁵

While Stephen's difficulty takes place after Sharp's biographical writings, the thirst for biography and the sense that any man may be memorialised is present and current at the time of Sharp's writings. This is indicated not least by the *English Men of Letters* series and the *Dictionary of National Biography* itself. Sharp's Rossetti biography is interesting for the way in which it marks the shifting position of biography in the social sphere. Where, as Broughton writes, 'for most of the century, literary sons, sons-in-law, nephews, admirers and intellectual protégés, and, more rarely but increasingly, daughters, wives and nieces produced biographies as part of the fabric of social obligation,' the closing decades of the century brought a change: '[biography-writing] appears to have become less a direct

²⁷⁴ Broughton, p. 12.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 10.

extension of trusteeship and more a means of regulating and profiting from what Richard Sennett has called the “market exchange in intimate relations”.²⁷⁶ The Rossetti biography operates within both of these positions. Sharp is an admirer and to an extent a literary protégé, yet he writes the Rossetti biography on commission from Macmillan and at great speed, resulting in his credentials as literary protégé being ignored in favour of the implication that he is profiting from Rossetti’s death when his grave is barely grown over. The Caine and Wilde criticisms of Sharp’s biography suggest they are, hypocritically in the case of Caine, both dismissing Sharp’s fitness for the biographer’s role in light of the trusteeship model of biography and decrying the new, more visibly economic, model of biography. To further analyse how this impacts Sharp’s reputation, we can turn to a visualisation Broughton puts forward of the social world of Leslie Stephen’s *Dictionary of National Biography* output. She writes that:

the auto/ biographical culture Stephen himself had helped to create took on many of the lineaments of the late Victorian metropolitan club...The DNB, as we shall see, was a club of sorts, engendering its own forms of homosociability as well as its own attenuated versions of family.²⁷⁷

The expanded network to which Rossetti introduces Sharp, and the connections Sharp makes in consequence, operate as another sort of metropolitan club; not precisely formalised, but part of a social sphere that operated on similar rules of elite homosociability. The social act of biography carries a tension in this sphere. As Broughton puts it, the ideal biography will operate ‘without jeopardizing (by exposing) the circulation of information among experts, the dynamics of élite male homosociality or the relationship between the intellectual aristocracy and the State’.²⁷⁸ Sharp’s position in this sphere is already difficult, lacking as he does full access to the qualities of a gentleman – Englishness, money, an Oxbridge education, amongst other things. His access to ‘elite male homosociality’ is tenuous as it relies on social connectivity which, as a mutual social act, could always be denied. The risk of biography in this period is exposure; the growing public thirst for the biography increases the risk.

Broughton further explains: ‘in an economy of meaning in which effort and reserve (think labour and capital) were frequently mystified as ends in themselves, writing should

²⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 11.

²⁷⁷ Broughton, p. 14.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 55.

not come too easily, especially when that writing was by and about men.²⁷⁹ The speed at which Sharp wrote the Rossetti biography, and further the speed at which the *Great Writers* series was published (contrasted against the slower rate of *English Men of Letters*), indicates Sharp's disruption of this economy of meaning. The question, ideologically speaking, must be asked (and perhaps was asked within his network): if he disrupts *this* structure of meaning, how many others may he disrupt? Sharp, with his precarious economic position, for whom commissions are a godsend, is a weak link within the homosocial sphere. Extending the concept of the economy of meaning, Broughton goes on to say that 'the mid-Victorians represented literature as a special kind of work, at once embedded in and "transcending" the contradictions of market relations, and hence as "the site at which the alienation endemic to all kinds of labor under capitalism simultaneously surfaced and was erased"'.²⁸⁰ Sharp, who occupies an economic space he cannot, by virtue of its precarity, transcend, makes it particularly clear that literature is embedded in the contradictions of market relations. He makes visible the fact that literature is as capitalistic an enterprise as any other. In doing so, he troubles the supposed safety and privacy of the late-Victorian metropolitan homosocial knowledge-space, which for Broughton is symbolised by the club, but might for Sharp be symbolised by the literary salon.²⁸¹

Sharp's presence at the literary salon – whether a physical salon, metaphorical, or paratextual – is troublesome for a variety of reasons, primarily the disruption to the homosocial space. Sharp could, and possibly in the case of *Record* did, sell the lives of his associates to a publisher; and, perhaps worse, he did not respect the 'economy of meaning' while so doing.²⁸² Sharp's hastily-written, hastily-produced biographies are a good step for his career, but a bad step for his position in the *coterie*. Sharp's *Record* makes obvious to his fellow acolytes that they move and operate 'within a proliferating network of biographical texts, professional rivalries and mutual surveillance',²⁸³ and Wilde's quip – writing Sharp as a man who 'goes in with the undertakers'²⁸⁴ – shows 'a heightened sense of the need to regulate the value of biographical information'.²⁸⁵ In this new biographical age, anyone may

²⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 20.

²⁸⁰ Broughton, p. 111.

²⁸¹ Ibid, p. 111.

²⁸² Ibid, p. 20.

²⁸³ Broughton, p. 55.

²⁸⁴ Halloran, V1, p. 231.

²⁸⁵ Broughton, p. 55.

write your biography. Your biographer may be the man without investment in the mores of your class position, who has been watching and remembering without respect for the protective homosocial transactions. It may be that the publisher of your legacy does so for a shilling and six, and with your words misreported and littered with errors.

Broughton also provides another way of understanding Sharp through reference to Leslie Stephen: 'Stephen almost incidentally defends the claims of "second rank" men – the diffusers as opposed to the originators of ideas and social movements – as an important tier of "forgotten benefactors"'.²⁸⁶ She continues to say that 'their place in, or as, the national conscience, regulating both what gets remembered and what forgotten, renders [second rank men] crucial to the cultural scene.'²⁸⁷ Sharp is the very definition of a 'second rank' man; someone who rarely, if ever, originated ideas or movements, but someone who operated on the edges of what Stephen might have called the originating class, and who reached via his productions into the aspirant middle classes. Sharp's position as the editor of the extremely popular *Sonnets of this Century* puts him in a particularly diffusive position, where he can use his connections within the originating classes to compile and then diffuse the Victorian canon.

Broughton writes that 'it is worth pointing out, for instance, that both the editors [of the DNB] regarded "private affection" for one's subject such as one might have for a relative as a serious disadvantage in the writing of biography.'²⁸⁸ Private affection is, at least in part, an admitted impulse behind Sharp's Rossetti biography, and yet this private affection operates within the homosocial sphere; Sharp's affection is allowable, as are the affections of many writers, because they operate within that more acceptable sphere. The affection of male writers for their male subjects is given, by the metropolitan homosocial knowledge-space, a protective veneer. A queered reading of biography in general and Sharp's biography of Rossetti in particular may pick out the ways in which queer affection is economically productive by virtue of its ability to operate within homosociality and without domesticity, having a form of private (semi-domestic) affection while maintaining the fiction of homosocial middle-distance. We can also look inside the biography itself to see its queer potential. Broughton explains the ideal biography as containing strategies which place the

²⁸⁶ Broughton, p. 58.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 59.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 36.

biographical subject as the only 'moving and feeling figure' against an otherwise flat fabric.²⁸⁹ Sharp's networked style of biographical writing results instead in a fabric of moving figures, reflective of the connected and connecting world in which he found himself. This is reminiscent of the anxiety of exposure which Broughton discusses as being an important part of life-writing, wherein Sharp's incessant tendency to show, at least in some form, what convention would have remained hidden, carries especial and potentially queer weight.

The exposing impulse to represent in biography the processes of literary connectivity that shape people, both professionally and socially, further disseminates cultural capital. This representation of connectivity proves the value of networking, and decentres the 'big name' author or painter (an individual who achieved their position through talent and skill), showing them instead as a person who built their career through, or was blessed by, social connection. In his biographies, Sharp exposes the value of connection to the development of canonical figures such as Rossetti, Browning, and Keats. This process of exposure shares social knowledge with the reader, and the entire libraries – representing the lives of each member of a connected literary community – give a proxy access to this community. David Amigoni and Trev Lynn Broughton postulate a protected sphere of knowledge, supported by elite social positionings and the mutual protection of homosocial knowledge. Yet, Sharp, with his 'second-rank' position, his practical knowledge of the value of connectivity, breaks this private, protected sphere of knowledge.²⁹⁰ His middle-brow, middle-class exposures were, or had the potential to be, as influential on the twentieth-century development of the Victorian canon as the elite narratives Amigoni discusses. This influence, however, was not limited to Sharp's biographies. The following chapter will discuss Sharp's movement into anthology, and the way that his *Sonnets of this Century* continued and developed Sharp's destabilisation of the still-developing canon and further disseminated cultural capital.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 52.

²⁹⁰ Broughton, p. 58.

Chapter 3: 'Now In Its Thirtieth Thousand': Sonnets of This Century

In the previous chapter, I explored what led Sharp to write *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study*, and the consequences the book had for his career and social standing. This chapter follows a similar structure. I begin with an exploration of how Sharp's career developed after *Record*, and how the choices he made in that period set him up for the writing of *Sonnets of this Century*.²⁹¹ Then I explore the ways in which *Sonnets of this Century* was constructed, exploring the social relationships Sharp used and developed in the process of collating it. Further, I explore *Sonnets of this Century* [hereafter *Century*] as an artefact of connectivity, a reflection of Sharp's social universe, a 'group manifesto': Sharp's networking efforts encoded, preserved, in text. In earlier centuries, sonnet sequences revealed and encoded social relationships, such as those between patrons and authors.²⁹² In the 1880s, the sonnet was still a tool of connection, still a form that proliferated through the literary social sphere, but the forms of connection we can find, through Sharp's collection of sonnets, differs from the forms of connection we can see in the sonnet in earlier centuries.

However, *Century* was not only a snapshot of the 1880s middle-brow literary sphere but also a tool used to network. This will be shown with regard to its creation, where Sharp solidified his social connections via flattery, but also with regard to its textual existence. This is an unusual step at least as regards poetry anthologies; other, surrounding anthologies, such as Francis Turner Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury*, Hall Caine's *Sonnets of Three Centuries*, Samuel Waddington's *English Sonnets by Living Writers*, David Main's *A Treasury of English Sonnets*, and Arthur Quiller Couch's *Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, were not quite as forcefully and visibly networked productions as Sharp's *Sonnets of This Century*. Even Sharp's own *American Sonnets* operated, as we will see, somewhat differently.

²⁹¹ William Sharp, *Sonnets of This Century* (London: Walter Scott, 1886).

²⁹² For poetry, especially sonnets, and community, see Mary Anne Myers, 'Unsexing Petrarch: Charlotte Smith's Lessons in the Sonnet as a Social Medium', *Studies in Romanticism*, 53.2 (2014), 239-263 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24247354> [accessed 07/07/2022]; David Schalkwyck, 'What May Words Do? The Performative of Praise in Shakespeare's Sonnets', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 49.3 (1998), 251-269; Ben Labreche, 'Patronage, Friendship, and Sincerity in Bacon and Spencer', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 50.1 (2010), 83-108 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/372988> [accessed 07/07/2022]; Arthur F. Marotti, "'Love Is Not Love": Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order', *ELH*, 49.2 (1982), 396-428 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2872989?seq=1> [accessed 07/07/2022].

Sharp's editorial notes, for example, continuously promoted the previous texts of the poets they discussed.²⁹³ In some instances, they form explicit evidence of networking processes. In Sharp's editorial note on Edward Cracroft Lefroy, Sharp explains that he discovered Cracroft Lefroy through the efforts of his acquaintance Andrew Lang. Cracroft Lefroy is also an interesting case study for the impact of Sharp's *Century*, and, later in this chapter, I discuss how we can use Cracroft Lefroy to see the impact of *Century* on work which followed it.

Further, just as the biographies in the previous chapter troubled and destabilised class lines, *Century* is troubling in class terms. It was a cheap anthology from a cheap publisher, collated by a still barely known, and in some ways disreputable, critic.²⁹⁴ I explore whether Sharp lacked the authority to collate an anthology of this type, and consider the fact that some of his fellow writers, even if they were his friends, did not trust him with their reputations. I argue that, in the recording of his network at the moment of its existence, Sharp was engaged in pre-emptive recovery work.²⁹⁵ In doing so, he was acting as a recorder of poetry that otherwise may have disappeared into magazine archives, but as a result of his *Century* reached thirty thousand people who otherwise may never have known it. We can read this pre-emptive recovery and dissemination as Sharp showing self-awareness regarding his own career. I argue that Sharp's promoting of his friends' work, and his recovery of the work they published in penny magazines and pamphlets, was an attempt to provide for others what he wished would be provided for himself. While John Nichol may have considered being placed in a penny magazine an insult to his reputation, for Sharp, whose necessary economic opportunism shaped his understanding of class boundaries and

²⁹³ This is also present in Bertram Stevens' *An Anthology of Australian Verse* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1906) <https://archive.org/details/anthologyofaustr00stev/page/n7/mode/2up> [accessed 07/07/2022]. I am unsure as to whether Sharp, in *Sonnets of This Century*, is originating a process or participating in an existing but not especially common process.

²⁹⁴ *Sonnets of This Century* sold for one shilling, and as seen in the previous chapter, Walter Scott had a reputation for speedy and inexpensive productions. Sharp, in the introduction to *Sonnets of This Century*, commented on its cheapness. Elizabeth Sharp's own poetry anthology, *Lyra Celtica* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1896) sold for six shillings. It is difficult to pinpoint an average price point for anthologies of this type, but in the previous chapter it was noted that Macmillan's biographies sold for twice the price of Walter Scott's, and this combined with Sharp's comments and Patrick Geddes and Colleagues reputation for more artistic and more costly productions suggests that 1s was in the lower range (this was also the price for 'yellow jacket' novels, themselves famously low-cost) and 6s was in the higher range.

²⁹⁵ I choose this phrase specifically because Sharp appeared to be self-consciously saving, salvaging, or recovering work which was not yet technically in need of saving. This sense in which he jumped the gun is important to the way his efforts were read by his peers.

rules, this may have been an attempt to protect and support the livelihoods of those to whom he was close.

This chapter then goes on to explore Sharp's next poetry anthology, *American Sonnets*. I illustrate Sharp's relationship with America in this section, and the ways in which he replicated the social, connective processes that he had used earlier in London to enhance and support his American reception. This 'American Volta', however, ends on a different note, and marks a shift in the approach of the thesis as a whole. It is during a trip to America that Sharp became aware of the disconnect between his career – as explored in the sections on *Record* and *Century* – and the writer he felt he ought to be. Thus, after this point, Sharp's connectivity shifted. He began to use his connections in more discerning ways, in order to sell his new direction and, after a couple of years, to sell Fiona Macleod. After the 'American Volta', then, this thesis shifts too, to explore these more discerning ways of using connectivity, and to show Sharp's slow integration into the homosocial knowledge space that, as discussed in this chapter and the one before it, Sharp disrupted and exposed. In the 'American Volta', we start to see Sharp struggling with the concept Belford Bax articulated years earlier: that Sharp gave the impression of being born between two calf covers.²⁹⁶ In America, Sharp became aware of himself as a readable property, of his body as a form of text in itself. Born between two calf covers, Sharp was framed and delimited by readings: readings of his work, his motivations, his physical body. It is this awareness of the way he was being read that led him to embark on the self-fashioning, self-rewriting, that led to the publication of Fiona Macleod.

3.1. Origins and Contexts

After the publication of *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and A Study*, and his first book of poetry, *The Human Inheritance*, Sharp floundered a little. Neither book brought in much money, and he was in much the same economic situation as before the publication of *Record*.²⁹⁷ Eventually, however, the editor of *Harper's Magazine*, who somehow came into

²⁹⁶ Ernest Belford Bax, *Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Mid and Late Victorian* (New York: T. Seltzer, 1920), p. 219.

²⁹⁷ William Sharp, *The Human Inheritance* (London: Elliot Stock, 1882).

possession of *The Human Inheritance*, wrote to him to ask for any other poems he had that remained unpublished.²⁹⁸ Here, in Elizabeth Sharp's biography, the presence of social connectivity is elided; however, as earlier noted in Chapter 1, it seems likely that a friend of Sharp's, possibly Louise Chandler Moulton, was responsible for this twist of fate. Sharp sent on these other poems, and apparently thought no more of it. In the meantime, his money ran out. He began to consider drastic options:

I remember how, one day, I had almost reached my last penny. In fact, my only possession of any value was a revolver, the gift of a friend. That night I made up my mind to enlist next morning.²⁹⁹

However, connectivity and yet another mysterious, elided benefactor rescued him from enlistment:

When I got up on the following morning there were two letters for me. The usual thing, I said to myself, notice of 'declined with thanks'. I shoved them into my pocket. A little later in the day, however, recollection impelled me to open one of the letters. It was from the editor of Harper's, enclosing a cheque for forty pounds for my few *Transcripts from Nature*, little six-line poems [...] That money kept me going for a little time. Still it was a struggle, and I had nearly reached the end of my resources when one day I came across the other letter I had received that morning. I opened and found it to be from a, to me, unknown friend of one who had known my grandfather. He had heard from Sir Noel Paton that I was inclined to the study of literature and art. He therefore enclosed a cheque for two hundred pounds.³⁰⁰

As a result of this windfall, Sharp spent most of 1883 travelling in Italy and Scotland, with a brief break in London to take up his new post as art critic for the *Glasgow Herald*. Work was still intermittent and slow: in 1884 his second volume of poetry, *Earth's Voices*, was published by Elliott Stock, and in 1885, Sharp was appointed to the staff of *The Academy* – his good friend John Addington Symonds was also on the staff at this point – and wrote occasionally for *Good Words*, *The Examiner*, *The Athenaeum* and *The Art Journal*.³⁰¹ In that year he also edited and arranged, for Walter Scott's *Canterbury Poets* series, *The Songs, Poems and Sonnets of William Shakespeare*.³⁰² This marked a turn from irregular, fragmented work to consistent and stable, if not artistically satisfying, work. Halloran writes:

²⁹⁸ E. A. S., V1, p. 123.

²⁹⁹ E. A. S., V1, p. 123.

³⁰⁰ E. A. S., V1, p. 123-4. The timing of this is very appropriate, from a narrative point of view. It may be that the timeline has been collapsed to make better reading, or perhaps that the story Sharp tells is a sanitised version of actual events.

³⁰¹ William Sharp, *Earth's Voices* (London: Elliot Stock, 1884).

³⁰² William Sharp, *The Songs, Poems and Sonnets of William Shakespeare* (London: Walter Scott, 1886).

The care Sharp exercised in arranging the poems and writing the Introduction for *Songs, Poems, and Sonnets of William Shakespeare* in the fall of 1885 led the Walter Scott Publishing House to accept his proposal for a book containing a selection of the best sonnets of the century and to appoint him, in 1886, as general editor of the Canterbury Poets.³⁰³

Sharp started the *Shakespeare* before late July 1885; a letter from Sharp to Edward Dowden, Sharp's primary academic source for the *Shakespeare*, suggested he was deeply embedded in the construction by at least the 22nd of July that year.³⁰⁴ The speed at which both Sharp and the Walter Scott Publishing Company moved is suggested by the fact that *Sonnets of This Century* had been pitched, accepted, and was being collated by November of the same year. That November, Sharp was already writing to William Allingham to ask him to contribute to *Sonnets of This Century*; the *Shakespeare* was out in December of 1885.³⁰⁵ The writing, collating, and general production of the two books overlaps by a distinct margin. This indicates that Sharp was a valuable and reliable resource for Walter Scott. As quoted above, Halloran suggests that his diligence in editing the *Shakespeare* netted him the *Sonnets of this Century*, but it seems likely that Sharp's largely unformed reputation and his financial desperation were at least equal draws. Reviews of Walter Scott publications frequently mentioned the sloppy editing and very evident speed of production. This would suggest that diligence was a less important quality than inexperience – and the naivety surrounding the economics of publishing that may come along with that inexperience. That Sharp himself felt that his inexperience and naivety played a role in Walter Scott's reliance on his labour is indicated by the fact that later in life, he complained about being taken advantage of by the publisher.³⁰⁶ *Sonnets of this Century* was released well into the 1900s under the title *Sonnets of the Nineteenth Century*, getting to at least thirty thousand copies, and Sharp complained to Theodore Watts-Dunton that he could have made a lot of money on it, had he fought for royalty payments rather than accepting a flat fee:

PRIVATE: It's a little hard that for this book I got £10 – & that all I ever had from it since was £5 for preparing a special reprint!! It has gone into innumerable editions – & in all forms has sold to an unprecedented extent for a book of the kind, here & in

³⁰³ Halloran, V1, p. 135.

³⁰⁴ Halloran, V1, p. 145.

³⁰⁵ Halloran, V1, pp. 141-2, p. 155.

³⁰⁶ Sharp wrote, collated, or edited, 16 books for Walter Scott from 1885-1903, as well as being the general editor of their Canterbury Poets series.

America etc. At even a royalty of 1d a copy I'd have had over £400 – so imagine what Scott's profit must be!³⁰⁷

Sonnets of this Century was begun before November 1885, and published in early January, 1886.³⁰⁸ It is notable that Sharp's sonnet anthology followed Hall Caine's *Sonnets of Three Centuries*, published in 1882, given the trouble the two writers had over their respective Rossettis.³⁰⁹ However, Caine's *Three Centuries* is not the only collection of the form that lurks around Sharp's; Sharp himself lists several in his introduction to *Century*,³¹⁰ including David Main's *A Treasury of English Sonnets* (1880),³¹¹ and Samuel Waddington's *English Sonnets by Living Writers* (1881).³¹² As the reviewer of *Century* for *The Spectator* said: 'We have a strong impression that the reading public, as a whole, is becoming rather tired of sonnet anthologies.'³¹³ Sharp, however, provides something rather different from Caine's, Main's, and Waddington's, as this chapter will show.

Sharp himself defended his addition to this stack of 1880s sonnet anthologies by asserting, somewhat implicitly, that his was a cheaper edition than the others listed:

[one of the reasons for producing this anthology is] to place a selection from the best sonnets of this century [...] in the hands of many to whom *Editions-de-luxe* or even comparatively moderately priced books are more or less difficult of attainment'.³¹⁴

In consequence, perhaps, the reviewer for *The Spectator* noted at the end of the review that the number of misprints and errors was 'simply shocking'.³¹⁵ The anonymous reviewer was proven wrong, however, on the matter of the public's appetite for sonnet anthologies: a second edition was released before the 15th of February 1886, not even a month and a half after the first edition. While the number of printings and editions that the book went

³⁰⁷ Halloran, V3, p. 33. For one pence a copy, £400 works out to 96,000 copies. However, it is unlikely that Sharp's maths is absolutely accurate, given the letter's informal tone. This may suggest that *Century* ran to more copies than this. For the £15 Sharp received, at one pence a copy, Sharp has been 'paid' for 3600 copies – only one tenth of what the book sold in its first couple of years.

³⁰⁸ William Sharp, *Sonnets of This Century* (London: Walter Scott, 1886, and 1887).

³⁰⁹ Thomas Henry Hall Caine, *Sonnets of Three Centuries* (London: Elliott Stock, 1882) <https://archive.org/details/sonnetsthreecen01caingoog/page/n6/mode/2up> [accessed 07/07/2022].

³¹⁰ Sharp, *Century*, pp. 22-3.

³¹¹ David Main, *A Treasury of English Sonnets*, (Manchester: Alexander Ireland and Co, 1880) <https://archive.org/details/atreasuryenglis00maingoog> [accessed 07/07/2022].

³¹² Samuel Waddington, *English Sonnets by Living Writers* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1881).

³¹³ [Anon.], "'Sonnets of This Century'" *The Spectator*, 6 March 1886, pp. 321-322 https://archive.org/details/sim_spectator-uk_1886-03-06_59_3010/page/320/mode/2up?view=theater [accessed 01/07/2022] (p. 321).

³¹⁴ Sharp, *Century*, p. xxvi, emphasis Sharp's.

³¹⁵ [Anon.], p. 322.

through is unclear, by looking at Sharp's correspondence we can see that by the 3rd of February Sharp heard that there was 'a great run upon the book', and then by the 15th a reissue was printed.³¹⁶ This came forty days after the book was published. We can infer the speed of Walter Scott's operations from Sharp not mentioning a second run in his 3rd February letter, but having it printed and almost in hand by the 15th. By August, Sharp was working on another edition for publication that October.³¹⁷ In November 1886, Sharp wrote that 'it has been a great success, I am glad to say' – this is in contrast to what he told Frederick Langbridge before the book is published, saying that: '[Walter Scott] look upon it more as a splendid advt. than as a paying thing'.³¹⁸ In December, he wrote to Robert Louis Stevenson (who did not appear in early editions, but does appear in later ones, as indicated in the letter):

Over a month ago I sent you one of the few copies which the publisher placed at my disposal of the large quarto edition deluxe of my *Sonnets of this Century*. I hope it duly reached you. [...] The publisher is shortly going to reprint the book in the small form (similar to that which I sent to you before) at 1/-. This reissue is to follow the text (which was much revised & improved in the Introduction & notes, and contains several new sonnets, with others improved) of the large quarto. The book has had a very great success. Within about 10 months 15, 000 copies have been sold – (i.e. seven 1/- editions of 2, 000 each, and the quarto edition at 12/6 & 20/-) and the reissue is to consist of 10, 000 copies, most of which the publisher expects to clear speedily. Who can say after this that sonnets are unpopular, or that poetry is a mere drug in the market?³¹⁹

While it cannot be determined how far this exceeded Walter Scott's expectations, Sharp's boasts about its sale numbers suggest that it exceeded at least his own. Far from a temporary 'splendid [advert]', *Sonnets of this Century* became something of a perennial, being reprinted at least into the 1910s under the name of *Sonnets of the Nineteenth Century*. An 1887 edition (published after October 31st) contained a note which suggested that in the intervening one year and ten months since the initial publication, there had been twenty-five thousand copies printed.³²⁰ This edition, with the preface note, was also published in America by White and Allen, possibly in 1888, although it is impossible to say

³¹⁶ Halloran, V1, p. 163 and p. 165.

³¹⁷ Halloran, V1, p. 166.

³¹⁸ Halloran, V1, p. 171, p.161.

³¹⁹ Halloran, V1, pp. 172-3.

³²⁰ The edition in question seems to have been a run of five thousand, suggesting that Walter Scott does not believe sales to be slowing particularly.

whether this publication was authorised or not. From Sharp's words to Watts-Dunton, years later, it is clear that an American edition was authorised in some way at some point, but whether the White and Allen edition was that authorised printing is unclear. In *Keepers of the Code*, Robert Lecker quotes Ralph Thompson, who writes that 'it is well known that Americans had no qualms about reprinting entire British volumes that promised to sell'.³²¹ 'Promised to sell' is the key phrase here: an American publication, whether authorised or not, indicates that *Century* was successful well beyond expectation, and was expected to be popular with audiences in America as well as in Britain. *Sonnets of This Century* seems to have been a viral sensation, as far as sonnet anthologies went. This was likely due to the price, but other factors may have included the broad selection of poets in a pocket-sized book, the alphabetical by surname ordering which may have made it more convenient as a reference work, the focus on modern poets, and the prefatory critical exploration of the sonnet as a form. That the alphabetical listing was seen, at least by Sharp, as a unique advantage, is seen in the introduction:

It then occurred to me that the novelty of an alphabetical arrangement [as opposed to being grouped according to type], would be agreeable, and on trial I speedily discovered that a greater variety and freshness could so be given to the collection.³²²

Further, the exterior and interior of the book itself, even of the copy that sold for one shilling, is attractive and eye-catching. This may have been what Sharp was referring to when he suggested that Walter Scott proposed *Century* as a 'splendid [advert]'. While there are no interior illustrations, the design of the book – the use of red and black ink, the font choice, and the red borders around the text – encourages the reader to see each sonnet as a framed work of art. Future editions were simpler, perhaps reducing production costs.

³²¹ Robert Lecker, *Keepers of The Code* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013) p. 27.

³²² Sharp, *Century*, p. lxxvi.

Timeline, July 1885 – December 1886

July 1885: Shakespeare started.

November 1885: Century being collated.

December 1885: Shakespeare published.

Early January 1886: Century published.

Feb. 3 1886: News of popularity of Century

Feb. 15 1886: Century 2nd ed.

August 1886: Working on October special edition

October 1886: Special Edition published

November 1886: Book 'a great success'

December 1886: Smaller reprint published, updated. 15,000 copies plus sold.

November 1887 (roughly): 30,000 copies plus sold.

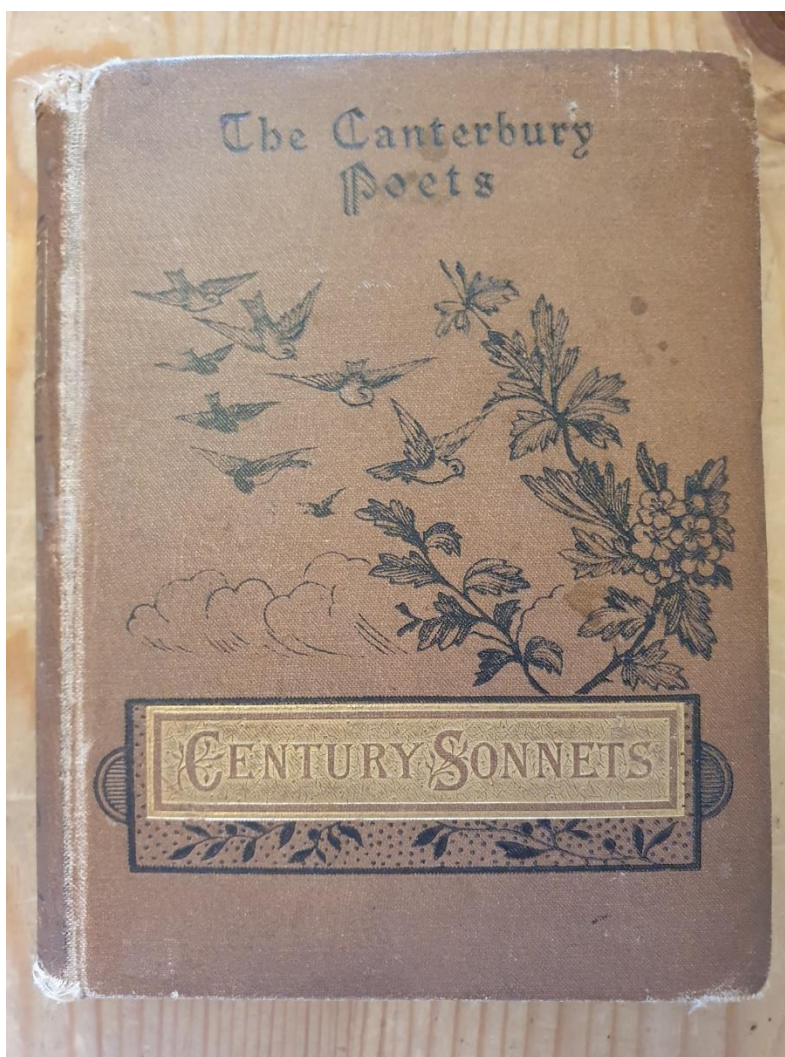


Figure 7. This shows the front cover of the February 1886 version of *Sonnets of this Century*.

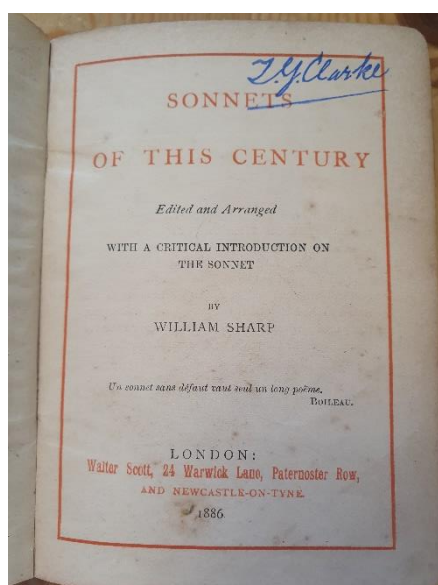


Figure 8: This shows the title page of the Feb. 1886 edition of *Sonnets of this Century*.



The Sonnet:

ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND HISTORY.



OR the concise expression of an isolated poetic thought—an intellectual or sensuous 'wave' keenly felt, emotionally and rhythmically—the Sonnet would seem to be the best medium, the means apparently prescribed by certain radical laws of melody and harmony, in other words, of nature: even as the swallow's wing is the best for rapid volant wheel and shift, as the heron's for mounting by wide gyrations, as that of the kite or the albatross for sustained suspension.

To bring this more clearly home to the mind of the reader unacquainted with the true scope of our sonnet-literature and of the technique of the sonnet itself, and to illustrate its development and capacities, is the aim of this brief note. For comparatively brief this introductory essay must be, not attempting to be anything more than a broadly executed free-hand sketch, certainly not a complete and minutely-finished study. The latter I hope in

Figure 9: A second, more decorated, page from the Feb. 1886 edition of *Century*. The echoes of Aesthetic design, simplified and genericised, are shown here.

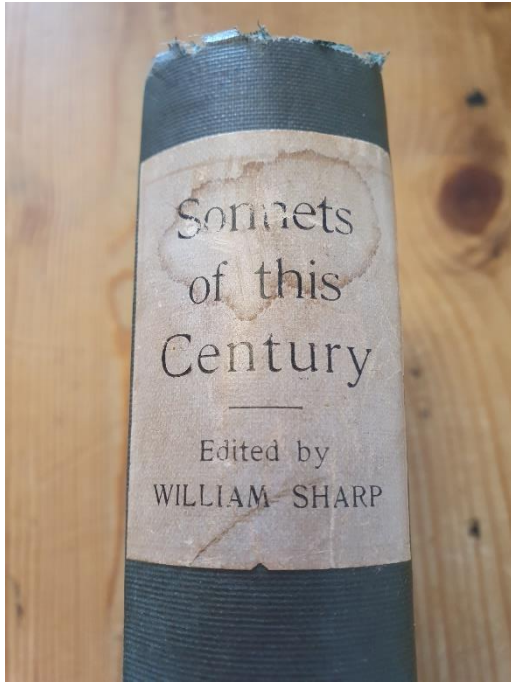


Figure 10. This image shows the November edition. It is simpler and less portable in design.

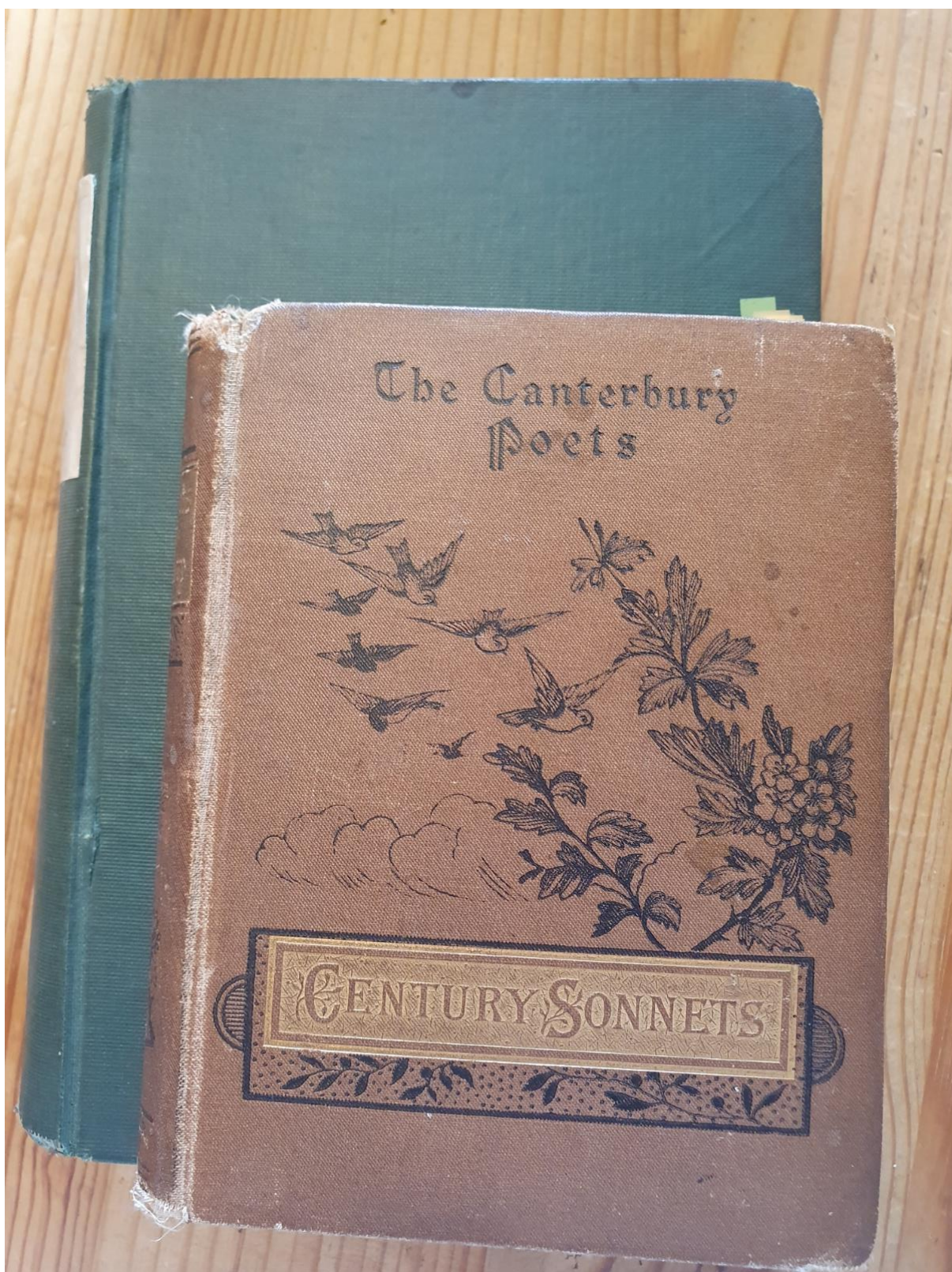


Figure 11: This image compares the Feb. 1886 edition of *Sonnets of this Century* with the later edition, the spine of which is shown in Fig. 7. The cover of the later edition is plain; the earlier edition does not obscure any cover embellishment.

LXI.

THE ARMY SURGEON.

OVER that breathing waste of friends and foes,
The wounded and the dying, hour by hour,
In will a thousand, yet but one in power,
He labours through the red and groaning day.
The fearful moorland where the myriads lay
Moves as a moving field of mangled worms :
And as a raw brood, orphaned in the storms,
Thrust up their heads if the wind bend a spray
Above them, but when the bare branch performs
No sweet paternal office, sink away
With helpless chirp of woe,—so, as he goes,
Around his feet in clamorous agony
They rise and fall; and all the seething plain
Bubbles a cauldron vast of many-coloured pain.

Figure 12. This image is of the interior of the Nov. edition. It is simpler than the Feb. 86 edition.

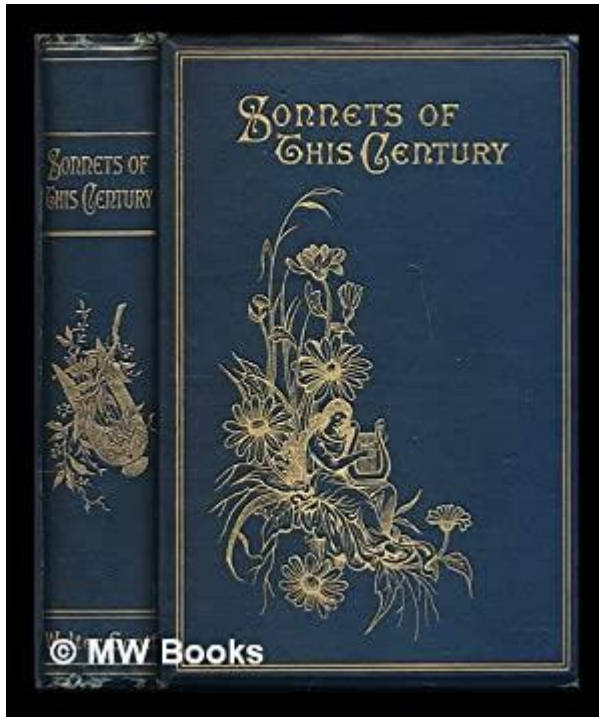


Figure 13. An image of the front cover and spine of the 1886 special edition of *Sonnets of this Century*.

We can explore how far beyond expectations *Century* went by looking at the available publishing numbers for other anthologies. Francis Turner Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, which Sabine Haass calls 'a real bestseller among poetry anthologies', sold 9,000 in its first year.³²³ Anne Ferry writes that 'the reception of *The Golden Treasury* was remarkable: four printings the year it came out; twenty-four more before the end of the century; countless reprintings and expansions since'.³²⁴ Sharp's anthology sold approximately 1136 copies a month, based on the numbers suggested by the 1887 edition. Although it is not a perfect comparison, *Golden Treasury*'s sale numbers work out to 750 per month in its first year. Haass writes that *Golden Treasury* sold 61,000 copies between 1861 and 1884.³²⁵ While it is not known how many copies *Century* eventually sold, the fact that *Century* in its first two years sold almost half of what it took *The Golden Treasury* over twenty years to sell may be indicative, though the differing market conditions in 1861 and 1886 must be taken into account. A copy of Sharp's 1889 *American Sonnets* has an advertisement which tells us that *Century*, now being sold in 1s and £2 2s editions, is 'now in

³²³ Sabine Haass, 'Victorian Poetry Anthologies: Their Role and Success in the Nineteenth-Century Book Market', *Publishing History*, 17 (1985), 51–64 <https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/1297999057?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true&imgSeq=1> [accessed 07/07/2022] (p. 55).

³²⁴ Anne Ferry, *Tradition and the Individual Poem*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001) p. 45.

³²⁵ Haass, p. 55.

its thirtieth thousand'.³²⁶ Given that the note from the late 1887 edition also mentions thirty thousand, we can infer that sales did slow down, going from around twenty-five thousand in the first year and a half to only a further five thousand in the following (approximate) two and a half years, if that. However, there were further editions of *Century* into the 1900s and 1910s, suggesting that the book was still profitable, even if not quite so popular. Further, it is unknown how the sale numbers were tracked after *Century*'s first couple of years, and 'thirtieth thousand' may have remained in the advertisement copy as an impressive number that was inaccurate but good enough to sell more copies, and not worth the trouble of updating. This seems a likely option, given Sharp's complaint to Theodore Watts-Dunton in 1900, which suggests that *Century* sold closer to 100,000 copies. By Sharp's calculations, *Century* sold over 7,000 copies a year for fourteen years. *The Golden Treasury* sold 61,000 copies over thirteen years; *Century* outsold it by two thirds.

Sharp began work on his *Sonnets of this Century* perhaps expecting a 'splendid [advert]' that nevertheless fizzled out, much like his *Shakespeare*.³²⁷ A month after publication, however, it became obvious that *Century* is a 'paying thing'; two years later at most, *Century* had sold tens of thousands.³²⁸ Sharp's collection disseminated widely, with its constant prints and reprints. The following section will look at the actual contents and construction of *Century*, to understand the kind of 'miniature canon' which Sharp then disseminated.³²⁹

3.2. Creating the Anthology

Looking through Sharp's letters, we find a pattern in the way he presents his construction of *Century*. I present here letters to William Allingham,³³⁰ Wilfrid Scawen Blunt,³³¹ James

³²⁶ William Sharp, *American Sonnets*, (London: Walter Scott, 1890) p. 295.

³²⁷ Halloran, V1, p. 162.

³²⁸ Halloran, V1, p. 162.

³²⁹ Karen Kilcup, 'The Poetry and Prose of Recovery Work', in *On Anthologies: Politics and Pedagogy*, ed. Jeffrey Di Leo (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

³³⁰ William Allingham, 1824-1889. (Halloran, V1, pp. 151-2).

³³¹ Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, 1840-1922. (Halloran, V1, p. 153; emphasis Sharp's).

Ashcroft Noble,³³² Edward Dowden,³³³ and John Addington Symonds.³³⁴ The number of sonnets by each author that Sharp prints in the first edition of *Century* is given in brackets.

To Allingham: I am about to bring out a selection of the Best Sonnets of this Century, giving to all save the very foremost sonneteers (Wordsworth, Rossetti, Mrs. Browning) an average of two representative sonnets. I have always much admired your work in this direction, and should be glad to see you represented by three. [prints three]

To Scawen Blunt: I have allowed an average of two to each writer of genuine standing, but in your case I have determined to give *five*. [prints five]

To Ashcroft Noble: I have already (subject to your approval) marked down “A Supreme Hour” – but if there is any other you would rather be represented by I would be agreeable. I might be able to print two but cannot fix anything definitely just yet. [prints two, neither of them ‘A Supreme Hour’]

To Dowden: I have always greatly admired your sonnet-work, and give practical proof thereof in the fact that while I am giving each writer (with the exception of Wordsworth and Rossetti) an average of *two*. I have selected *five* of your sonnets [prints five]

To Addington Symonds: I am giving an average of *two* to each writer of standing, but in your case I have allowed for *five*. [prints six, and a seventh in the notes]³³⁵

Flattery abounds, and with it a slight misrepresentation of the eventual makeup of the anthology. The implication is that all these writers are, or are only the scantest step below, ‘the very foremost’. Sharp treated each of these correspondents as if their poetry was special and desirable and he was being extremely selective. His letter to James Ashcroft Noble is also interesting for the way in which he handled someone who, going off the Symonds letter, he was not classing as ‘of genuine standing’: the tone is more apologetic, blaming production constraints and not mentioning the space given to other writers. When we look at the twelve sonnets from Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the thirteen from William Wordsworth, the space constraint excuse gets less believable as truth and more visible as rhetorical technique.

The numbers themselves show the differences between how Sharp presented his anthology while developing it and how it eventually worked out. His suggestions in the letters imply that we may expect most writers to be represented by two sonnets, with a

³³² James Ashcroft Noble, 1844-1896. (Halloran, V1, p. 153-4).

³³³ Edward Dowden, 1843-1914. (Halloran, V1, p. 154-5; emphasis Sharp’s).

³³⁴ John Addington Symonds, 1840-1893. (Halloran, V1, p. 155-6).

³³⁵ Halloran, V1, pp. 151-156.

very few exceeding this. However, the actual numbers (taken from the Feb. 1886 printing) are as follows:³³⁶

Number of poets	Represented by X sonnets
46	1
27	2
15	3
4	4
10	5
5	6
1	12
1	13

This results in 109 poets represented by 266 poems. It is, indeed, a mean average of two; but the numbers are spread rather more than Sharp suggested in his letters. The plurality of poets are represented by one sonnet, and 80% are represented by three or less. Where Sharp implied that Allingham would have an above-average placing, with three poems, 15 other poets also have 3 sonnets. Addington Symonds, however, is placed in the top seven poets.

Between the February 1886 and the November 1887 editions, Sharp made several changes. He added fifteen poets and moved one from the notes to the main body. He also promoted Philip Bourke Marston and William Bell Scott, who both went from five sonnets to six. However, he also took out nine sonnets, demoting Sir Aubrey de Vere (from five to three), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (from two to one), Eugene Lee Hamilton (from five to four), Lord Hanmer (three to two), John Nichol (from three to two), Marc André Raffalovich (likewise), Archbishop Trench (from two to one, apparently to make room for F. Herbert Trench's 'In Memoriam' dedicated to Trench), and Oscar Wilde (from two to one).³³⁷ The new numbers, from the November edition, are represented in the following table:

³³⁶ This table discounts poems included only in the notes, as these do not form the main body of the anthology. These poems are instead part of *Century's* paratext. In this, however, they may have shaped the way the anthology was read and so must not be discounted entirely.

³³⁷ *The Spectator's* review singled out the missing Wilde poem ('On the Sale of Keats' Love Letters') for criticism, which may explain Sharp's removing it.

Number of poets	Represented by X Sonnets (Nov. 87)
67	1
25	2
14	3
4	4
8	5
5	6
1	12
1	13

This table results in 125 poets and 270 sonnets. Again, the mean is two, but most poets (53%) are represented by one; 85% of poets are represented by three or less. However, the same number of poets have four and six poems in the anthology. The difference between the ‘prominent’ (four or more sonnets) and ‘less prominent’ (less than 4) poets is a little starker in this edition; while 14 poets have been added, the number of poets with four or more poems in the anthology has dropped. Sharp was being more selective with those he considered prominent, though what that meant for him is unclear. Sharp tells us in his introduction that he has chosen his sonnets for ‘individuality’ and ‘adequacy of sonnet motive’, though these factors are not well-explained.³³⁸ Further, he was socially connected to all but one of the living ‘prominent’ poets, and so there was most likely an element of sociability in his definition of ‘prominent’. These curatorial choices do not necessarily accord with those considered most prominent earlier in the decade. Sharp created in his anthology a different vision of the sonneteering canon than we see in earlier years. The ‘canon’ that Sharp curated is primarily focused on people he knew, who are in or close to his social sphere. Defining those poets who have four or more poems in the collection as Sharp’s ‘canon’ of prominent poets, the following table illustrates how many are in Sharp’s circle. The first column shows the ‘canon’ in the original 1886 edition, and the second column shows how this ‘canon’ has been revised for the 1887 edition. An asterisk

³³⁸ Sharp, *Century* (1886), p. lxxiv.

means they are deceased and a plus sign means they are in Sharp's social circle. The number in brackets indicates how many poems this poet is represented by in the anthology.

1886	1887
Alfred Austin (4) (+)	Alfred Austin (4) (+)
Emily Pfeiffer (4)	Emily Pfeiffer (4)
Edmund Gosse (4) (+)	-
Edward Cracroft Lefroy (4) (+)	Edward Cracroft Lefroy (4) (+)
*Elizabeth Barrett Browning (5)	*Elizabeth Barrett Browning (5)
*Sir Aubrey de Vere (5)	-
Aubrey de Vere (Younger) (5) (+)	Aubrey de Vere (Younger) (5) (+)
Edward Dowden (5) (+)	Edward Dowden (5) (+)
Eugene Lee Hamilton (5) (+)	Eugene Lee Hamilton (4) (+)
Philip Bourke Marston (5) (+)	*(that year) Philip Bourke Marston (6) (+)
Wilfred Scawen Blunt (5) (+)	Wilfred Scawen Blunt (5) (+)
Christina Rossetti (5) (+)	Christina Rossetti (5) (+)
William Bell Scott (5) (+)	William Bell Scott (6) (+)
Algernon Charles Swinburne (5) (+)	Algernon Charles Swinburne (5) (+)
*Hartley Coleridge (6)	*Hartley Coleridge (5)
*John Keats (6)	*John Keats (6)
John Addington Symonds (6) (+)	John Addington Symonds (6) (+)
*Charles Tennyson-Turner (6)	*Charles Tennyson Turner (5)
Theodore Watts (6) (+)	Theodore Watts (6) (+)
*Dante Gabriel Rossetti (12)	*Dante Gabriel Rossetti (12)
*William Wordsworth (13)	*William Wordsworth (13)

This table shows that Sharp's favoured sonneteers are primarily living poets – 61% (1886) and 63% (1887) – and, almost without exception among those living, members of his social circle. As far as I can discern, Emily Pfeiffer was the only person not in Sharp's social circle. Further, Sharp dropped Sir Aubrey De Vere and Edmund Gosse out of his canon, and that he took one sonnet each from the deceased poets Charles Tennyson-Turner and

Hartley Coleridge, and gave one each to poets William Bell Scott and Philip Bourke Marston, both friends of his (at the publication of the 1887 edition, Bourke Marston had recently died, and so this additional poem may have been in tribute). We see here Sharp's prioritisation of his friends over more established poets. Anne Ferry writes that:

Beginning with John Dryden, or even earlier with George Gascoigne in the 1570s, poets have made anthologies as showcases to display work of their own and increasingly of their congenial contemporaries as well. This kind of anthology – Pound called it “a sort of group manifesto” – proliferated in the twentieth century.³³⁹

The preceding table shows Sharp's *Century* as a part of this tradition of 'group manifesto', though Sharp's was individually manufactured. Sharp's canon was centred not on dead poets whose reputations are mostly proven, but instead on poets whose reputations were still developing. Sharp's tendency to 'fancy he is doing [his friends] a favour' is in full evidence here: he was promoting, or trying to promote, the work of his friends.³⁴⁰ In this, Sharp's anthology is a 'material [expression] of a kind of community'.³⁴¹

Sharp's 'group manifesto' is not defined by a shared ideal or shared style, but by what Sharp seems to have seen as a shared position in the literary hierarchy. Sharp brings together poets who were less well known and who had little experience of the literary industry from the poet's perspective (though they may have had experience as editors and publishers). We may read Sharp's manifesto as one where the guiding principle was the value of those poets who may not have the chances or privileges afforded to more economically stable or marketable poets, but it is important to note that Sharp curated this group: it was not a community endeavour.

In order to demonstrate how far Sharp used *Century* to promote his friends, I will here pull out some of Sharp's most interesting picks. These include John Hogben (a colleague of Sharp's with Walter Scott, who, according to Sharp's notes in *Century*, 'has as yet published little verse, and that only in magazines or weekly journals');³⁴² Eric Sutherland Robertson (Sharp's close friend and best man at his wedding, who is 'another one of those who have not published their poems in book-form');³⁴³ and Ernest Rhys (another friend and

³³⁹ Ferry, p. 20.

³⁴⁰ Terry Meyers, *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p.59.

³⁴¹ Lecker, p. 8.

³⁴² Sharp, *Century* (1886), p. 290.

³⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 306.

colleague, and ‘probably the latest recruit to the great army of literature’).³⁴⁴ These three men are interesting for how closely their position echoes Sharp’s before the publication of *Century*. Sharp seemed to be using *Century* to draw attention to his unpublished friends, and it is easy to see the similarities between this communal, promotional effort of Sharp’s, and Rossetti’s efforts to get Sharp into Hall Caine’s *Sonnets of Three Centuries*. Sharp learned nepotism from his mentor, but seemed to be taking it to an extreme.

The importance of the network to *Century* is also visible in how Sharp handles the notes at the end of the anthology. Several times he uses them to advertise the non-poetic work of his friends. For Hall Caine, he mentions *Sonnets of Three Centuries*, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, and the recently published novels *The Shadow of a Crime* and *She’s All the World to Me*.³⁴⁵ For Edward Dowden, he mentions the soon to be published biography of Percy Bysshe Shelley.³⁴⁶ For Ernest Rhys, he mentions the ‘forthcoming valuable series of prose works, *The Camelot Classics*’.³⁴⁷ Further, he mentions in his notes specifically that he has used his connectivity to build the anthology, noting that Andrew Lang brought Edward Cracroft Lafroy to his attention.³⁴⁸ From this, we see that Sharp was aware of the value of products such as this to the careers of smaller poets. We can hear, in Sharp’s attempts to bring his friends to the attention of others, an echo of the potential trail of interconnection that led to Sharp’s poetry falling into the hands of the editor of *Harper’s Magazine*.

3.3. Pre-emptive Recuperation

Sharp’s use of connectivity, and the social consequences of it, are suggested in a letter of May 26th, 1888, from John Nichol to Algernon Charles Swinburne: ‘I have finished [writing] a book (for God’s sake dont [sic] tell Sharp or he will put it in a penny magazine and fancy he is doing me a favour)’.³⁴⁹ While there is no other evidence of Sharp acting as unwanted agent for his friends, this quote of Nichol’s – coming two years after the publication of *Century*,

³⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 306.

³⁴⁵ Sharp, *Century* (1886), pp. 276-77.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 282.

³⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 306.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 295.

³⁴⁹ Terry Meyers, *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 59.

while Sharp was still navigating the new opportunities his newly-made reputation has afforded him – suggests that Sharp had a habit, seemingly already evident in the number of friends he printed in *Century*, of over-using connectivity to a gauche degree.

Nichol's derisive tone suggests Sharp had a precarious position in the network, and we can look again at *Century* in light of Karen Kilcup's comment that 'the questions of who determines excellence and by what standards are [...] too often elided'.³⁵⁰ In the previous chapter, I explored Sharp's social position within the economic and social dynamics of biographical writings. Sharp, as I explored, existed on the margins of the upper-class coterie, and his opportunism, seen as disrespectful by some, cemented his marginal position. This marginality partly caused and was partly caused *by* his limited acceptance, or knowledge of, the social 'rules' of that upper-class coterie. The inability to follow the social rules was evident in Nichol's letter, in the way he complained about Sharp placing his novel in a 'penny magazine'. Sharp was not observing the 'proper' hierarchy, seeing opportunity without thought to the attendant 'class' – in any sense. Sharp was seen as not having, or being, the same kind of class as many of those with whom he shared the network. Some, like Hall Caine, or Ernest Rhys, were in a similar position to him: semi-marginal figures who do not necessarily follow the same artistic rules as more central figures.

The question *Century* posits is one that recalls Kilcup, and one which recalls the Rossetti biography: was Sharp *allowed*, socially, to express the kinds of judgements that an anthology requires? There was no suggestion in the reviews of *Century* that Sharp was stepping outside his bounds, although nor was there in the reviews of his *Record*. The lack of such a suggestion does not mean Sharp did not step outside his bounds: as I showed in the previous chapter, there was the spectre of social consequences for Sharp's opportunism in *Record*. We find within Sharp's anthology a curious imbalance, perhaps advocacy, in favour of smaller names: both in terms of inclusions and exclusions and in the number of sonnets given to the writers. Most telling for the appropriateness of Sharp's anthology is the fact that while Sharp's critical reputation began to solidify, his social reputation, one which relied partially on class positioning, did not improve. He became gradually more bankable for magazines, journals, and publishers, but socially speaking his disruptiveness had not been forgotten. We can see the memory of his disruptiveness and his subsequent

³⁵⁰ Kilcup, p. 113.

marginalisation from the literary upper echelons in the comment from Nichol from 1888, but also in another comment from William Butler Yeats to Katharine Tynan in 1890:³⁵¹ ‘Have you heard Oscar [Wilde]’s latest good thing? He says Sharp’s motto should be [...] “Sharp is the descent to hell”.³⁵² The consistency of his class reception suggests that while Sharp’s critical reputation improved enough to allow him to live more comfortably, his disruptive potential had not been forgotten.

Similar kinds of anxieties proliferated in the anthologising sphere as in the biographical sphere. Robert Lecker writes that one underexplored area in the study of anthologies is the way in which ‘anthologies manufacture and transmit cultural capital’; echoing his work with his biographies, Sharp was transmitting and reshaping cultural capital.³⁵³ Sharp’s letters, in which he limited the ‘foremost sonneteers’ to three dead poets (‘Wordsworth, Rossetti, Mrs. Browning’) suggest an awareness of the social responsibility inherent in these disseminatory positions: that is, to validate and reproduce the opinions of earlier critics, and continue the critical consensus that creates cultural capital.³⁵⁴ However, when we see his actual ‘foremost sonneteers’, we see that they include not only what he considers the irreproachable choices, but also more unusual choices taken from his network, like Cracroft Lefroy or Eugene Lee Hamilton. These choices imply the fragility of Sharp’s relationship with the rules of cultural capital. As Lecker writes:

The challenge is to read these anthologies through the anxieties that haunt them [...] They [the anthologies] act as matrixes that display the tensions, doubts, and ideals attached to crucial historical moments in the cultures that produce them. In this sense, they are narratives in their own right. Every anthology tells a story about how it came into being, and about how it means to be.³⁵⁵

We can read the tensions of the anthology in its inclusions and how much weight is given to each poet, but we can also read these tensions in the difference between the projected anthology in the letters and the actual product that resulted. We can read Sharp’s understanding of the difficulty of succeeding in the literary sphere in his advertising; we can

³⁵¹ Julian Hanna, ‘Manifestos at Dawn: Nation, City and Self in Patrick Geddes and William Sharp’s *The Evergreen*’ *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, 8 (2011) <https://www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk/issue8/hanna.htm> [accessed 03/05/2022].

³⁵² Paddy Lyons, John Miller, and Willy Maley, *Romantic Ireland: From Tone to Gonne; Fresh Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013). p. 176.

³⁵³ Lecker, p. 6.

³⁵⁴ Halloran, V1, p. 152.

³⁵⁵ Lecker, p. 8.

read his networking impulse in his strong bias toward living poets and members of his social circle. *Sonnets of this Century* renders visible the tensions and anxieties of being a young critic whose ability to create social connections was his greatest asset, while being unable to access unimpeachable social standing. For Sharp, everyone – including John Nichol, his old university lecturer – is caught in a literary struggle to survive, and *Sonnets of this Century* is inscribed with Sharp's survival mechanisms. His impulse to create and maintain networks is an impulse to survive, but also an outward-facing impulse to help his friends and colleagues to survive. Yet this outward-facing impulse ultimately forms a network in which Sharp is centralised, thus becoming circular: Sharp's promotion of other writers ultimately becomes a promotion of himself.

Sharp's editorial processes form a complex kind of recuperative effort. At this time, Sharp's anthology was not a direct reflection of the canon – his two primary influences, Main and Waddington, produced works which differed greatly from Sharp's. Instead, given the bias towards his social network, we can read *Century* as a record of a particular network at a particular time. Far from replicating only the acceptable dynamics of 'class', or sticking purely to the 'first-rank', Sharp created an anthology which replicated the complicated interweaving of the social universe which connected, for example, Alfred Lord Tennyson to Ernest Rhys in the earliest years of his career. This recording of the network results in what *The Spectator* calls a 'very catholic' selection, but also leaves room for the reviewer's musing that there are several writers who may be unfamiliar to audiences, and who have been 'published only in forgotten numbers of magazines and journals'.³⁵⁶ The recording of the potentially-forgotten illustrates a recuperative impulse in Sharp, and one with relevance to his own career. While he had, by this time, released two of his own books of poetry, several of his earlier poems were only placed in magazines or journals and have now either disappeared, or have only recently come to light with the help of searchable online archives such as Hathi Trust, the British Newspaper Archive, and Proquest. With *Sonnets of this Century*, Sharp was attempting to record and archive those poets in similar positions to himself. In Sharp's notes to the anthology, we can see that he believed that without his efforts, his friends and associates might be relegated to 'forgotten [...] magazines'. Whether

³⁵⁶ [Anon.], "'Sonnets of This Century'", p. 322.

this effort was necessary and appreciated, or seen as presumptive and gauche, may depend on the individual poet as much as on any particular feature of the anthology itself.

As Jeffrey Di Leo writes in the introduction to *On Anthologies*, ‘just as one does not question the atlas’s placement of cities and countries, one does not question the anthology’s mapping of authors and writings’.³⁵⁷ While Di Leo is discussing the modern critical anthology, rather than something like *Century*, *The Spectator*’s review of *Century* echoes the understanding of the anthology as an atlas, noting that *Century* overlooks nothing and nowhere, even if it does focus on Dante Gabriel Rossetti a little too strongly.³⁵⁸ The low price and high sale numbers of *Century* suggest a high level of dissemination, and thus a wide spreading of Sharp’s vision of the poetic landscape. Sharp was creating a cheap anthology for a not especially reputable publisher, and, by including lesser known and previously little or un-anthologised poets like Ernest Rhys and Eric Sutherland Robertson in the 1886 edition, and Robert Louis Stevenson and Edith Nesbit (‘a new writer of exceptional promise’) in the 1887 edition, Sharp was decentralising, if only to a small extent, the poetic sphere of the late 1800s.³⁵⁹

Many previous anthologists limited themselves to poets with established and longstanding reputations. Where Waddington, for example, limits himself to fifty-nine living sonneteers (Main, drastically, limits himself to twenty-four), Sharp includes seventy-nine in the 1887 edition of *Century* (there are three mentioned as living in Waddington who died by the time of the 1887 *Century*, which would bring the total up to eighty-two).³⁶⁰ Sharp’s collection skews distinctly towards the living: of 116 poets in the 1886 edition, sixty-eight are living (59%), and of the 131 poets in the 1887 edition, seventy-nine are living (60%), and most of these poets are in his social circle. Sharp is connected to seventy percent of the living writers he features, and to all but one of those he considers ‘more prominent’. Sharp’s strong bias towards living poets, most of them personally known to him, and it being a cheap edition for a cheap publisher, suggests that *Century* is not the poetic establishment slapping itself on the back, but instead a memorialisation of a particular moment in the

³⁵⁷ Jeffrey Di Leo, ‘Analysing Anthologies’, in *On Anthologies: Politics and Pedagogy*, ed. by Jeffrey R. Di Leo (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004) p. 1.

³⁵⁸ [Anon.], “‘Sonnets of This Century’”, p. 321.

³⁵⁹ Sharp, *Century* (1887), p. 305.

³⁶⁰ David Main, *A Treasury of English Sonnets*, (New York: R. Worthington, 1881) <https://archive.org/details/atresuryenglis01maingoog/page/n8/mode/2up> [accessed 07/07/2022].

network, placing lesser-known names beside better-known and reflecting the dynamics of the literary circle of the time more than limiting only to the well-known or well-appreciated.

When Kilcup notes that recovery into the canon is work mostly shaped by anthologies,³⁶¹ we can note the largely-unknown Edward Cracroft Lefroy's inclusion in *Century* and the subsequent inclusion of Cracroft Lefroy in Arthur Quiller-Couch's *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*.³⁶² John Addington Symonds, in an essay first featured in *In the Key of Blue* and later in Wilfrid Austin Gill's *Edward Cracroft Lefroy: His Life and Poems* and *Echoes from Theocritus*, writes:

Lefroy's sonnets originally appeared in four paper-covered pamphlets. In 1885 they were republished in a single volume with the title "Echoes from Theocritus, etc". Mr Andrew Lang and Mr William Sharp were among those who discussed their merits.³⁶³

The Spectator's review of *Century* suggests Cracroft Lefroy's 1885 publication made little impact. In a search of Proquest's Periodicals Archive, nothing comes up in a search of his name until June of 1886, after the publication of *Century*, and even that is in *The Academy*, which had Sharp on staff at the time.³⁶⁴ That Cracroft Lefroy made so little impact but is yet featured in Quiller Couch's *Oxford Book*, which also features Sharp and Macleod, suggests that Sharp's *Century* did operate as recovery work aided by literary connectivity. We cannot directly prove Sharp's influence on Cracroft-Lefroy's survival – yet the data that we have is suggestive. Were we to take the view that Sharp, and *Century*, did impact Cracroft-Lefroy's literary survival, we can see that *Century* became part of the anthological fabric upon which later anthologies – and thus, the developing Victorian canon – were built.

The first part of this chapter explored the events leading to the production of *Sonnets of this Century*, demonstrating Sharp's precarious position. While it might not be a factually true tale, the undercurrents of Sharp's story of the two letters that saved him from enlistment suggest the anxieties at play in Sharp's career before the publication of *Century*. After *Century*, however, while still suffering dire economic straits, Sharp's reputation and prospects improved. As this chapter then explored, Sharp's use of connectivity both in compiling *Century* and in its physical text was important to the growth of his reputation and

³⁶¹ Di Leo, p. 15.

³⁶² Arthur Quiller-Couch, *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935).

³⁶³ Edward Cracroft Lefroy, *Echoes from Theocritus* (London: Selwyn & Blount, 1922), p. 6.

³⁶⁴ [Anon.], 'Some Volumes of Verse' *The Academy*, 5 June 1886, pp. 394-395 <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/docview/8163354?accountid=14874> [accessed 01/07/2022].

prospects. Sharp built his anthology primarily as a record of his social circle, including a high number of lesser-known poets, many of them personal acquaintances, and further uses his 'Notes' to *Century* to advertise on behalf of the said friends. I argue that this intense focus on his friends made *Century* a recuperative effort, and that, through the example of Edward Cracroft Lefroy, it becomes clear that Sharp's efforts influence his successors. We may also recall here Sharp's influence, as Grant F. Scott explores, on the canonical perception of John Keats. While the network, and Sharp himself, cannot save Edward Cracroft Lefroy from obscurity, we do see the potential influence of Sharp's work and network stretching at least into the 1930s, when Cracroft Lefroy may otherwise have faded entirely some forty years earlier. The exemplar indicates the potential for other such instances, not only within Sharp's work, but across contemporary anthologies more generally.

Volta: American Sonnets

Like several British and Irish poets and authors, Sharp decided to take the opportunity during his 1892 trip to America to visit Walt Whitman. This visit recalls the first time Sharp visited Rossetti, ‘to shake your hand before you die.’³⁶⁵ Where Rossetti, however, was ‘in no immediate danger of dying’, Whitman was then only two months from death.³⁶⁶ At the earlier point, where the twenty-something Sharp bounds into Rossetti’s studio, Sharp casts himself as a single node approaching the locus of the network. When Sharp meets Whitman, however, the process is reversed, with Whitman being cast as the single node, and Sharp the locus. Elizabeth Sharp writes:

When the younger man bade him farewell Whitman gave him a message to take back with him across the seas. “He said to me with halting breath: ‘William Sharp when you go back to England, tell those friends of whom you have been speaking, and all others whom you may know and I do not that words fail me to express my deep gratitude to them for sympathy and aid truly enough beyond acknowledgment. Good-bye to you and to them – the last greetings of a tired old poet.’”³⁶⁷

Whitman’s words, or rather Sharp’s relaying of them, placed Sharp in the same position that Sharp placed Rossetti back in 1878: the position of disseminator. He is presented as more centrally placed than Whitman and thus better able to spread Whitman’s ‘deep gratitude’ and his ‘last greeting’.³⁶⁸ Were it published in Sharp’s lifetime we might call this a rather egregious act of self-promotion, such as that by Hall Caine in *Recollections*. As this story is posthumously published, however, such unequivocal statements are difficult to justify. As with many of Sharp’s self-promotions, how much is down to Sharp himself, how much is down to Elizabeth, and how much is wholly unintentional is difficult to ascertain.

Nevertheless, this part of the memoir shows a gradual centring of Sharp within the network. Sharp’s new central position, whether actual or narrative, shows the impact of both networking and of using the resulting connectivity to develop long-standing relationships. For Sharp to have met Whitman requires certain connections. Halloran explains:

When Sharp wondered if it might be possible to meet Walt Whitman, who lived in Camden, New Jersey across the Delaware River from Philadelphia. Stedman’s son

³⁶⁵ E. A. S., V1, p. 55.

³⁶⁶ E. A. S., V1, p. 55.

³⁶⁷ E. A. S., V1, pp. 311-12.

³⁶⁸ E. A. S., V1, p. 312. This greeting echoes Hall Caine’s patently false reported conversation in *Recollections*, though the falseness of the greeting may merely be an issue of delayed reporting.

Arthur, who knew Whitman, offered to write a letter of introduction. Whitman was a revered figure in the literary circles Sharp frequented in London, and the possibility of actually meeting him was enormously attractive. After arriving on Wednesday, January thirteenth Sharp went by train to Philadelphia on the fifteenth and the next morning he called on Stoddart to discuss possible articles for publication in Lippincott's. When Sharp said he hoped to meet Whitman, Stoddart immediately contacted Horace Traubel [Whitman's primary caretaker] who clerked in a nearby bank. Unable to get his letter of introduction to Sharp before he left New York, Stedman sent it to a Philadelphia bookseller for Sharp to retrieve. Traubel said a letter of introduction was unnecessary and offered to take Sharp to Camden that afternoon to meet Whitman who was bedridden, but able to receive guests.³⁶⁹

Sharp himself explains the letter's journey through the network to Arthur Stedman:

The most friendly & generously worded letter which you addressed to Walt Whitman on my account is safely in my hands. By the way, it seems that its non-receipt by me is, so far as your father is concerned, entirely my own fault. He says he explicitly told me that it was waiting me at Mr. Henderson's. Unfortunately, I had to go to Mr. Traubel's first, so as to catch him ere his bank closed: then I was detained sometime by Mr. Stoddart at Mr. Child's and by that time Mr. Henderson's office was closed. Saturday morning I was engaged with Mr. Stoddart, & while on my way to Mr. Henderson's learned from Mr. Traubel that if I were to see Walt Whitman at all I must go down before the afternoon. By the time that, accompanied by my fair companion (tautological, but never mind) I had returned to Philadelphia, I found that as it was Saturday, business places had all closed early. Hence my not seeing Mr. Henderson at all.³⁷⁰

We can see here the movements of the network, and the pulling of strings involved in getting Sharp to a position where he can meet with Whitman. It started with Arthur Stedman's father, Edmund Clarence Stedman. From there, the letter of introduction as written by Arthur Stedman to J.M Stoddart, the editor of Lippincotts, who delivered Sharp into the capable hands of his friend Horace Traubel, and then, free of any need for the letter, to Whitman. While a letter of introduction is a tangible signifier of the network, the actual social connections themselves work informally in the letter's place. This system, the replacing of a letter of introduction with a network of friends, requires social work.

The social work that resulted in Sharp at Whitman's bedside went back several years, at least to the collecting of Sharp's *American Sonnets*, when the relationship between Sharp and Edmund Clarence Stedman solidified. Halloran writes that:

Sharp surely corresponded with Stedman in 1888 as he prepared his anthology of American Sonnets. His dedication of that volume to Stedman – "the Foremost

³⁶⁹ Halloran, V1, pp. 359-60.

³⁷⁰ Halloran, V1, p. 380.

American Critic” – was an expression of gratitude for Stedman’s help in choosing the poets and poems for the volume.³⁷¹

I cannot corroborate that Stedman actively assisted in the choosing of poets and poems. Nowhere in *American Sonnets* does Sharp credit Stedman with personally bringing a poet to his attention, as he did for Andrew Lang in *Century*. However, Stedman and Sharp first corresponded in at least late 1887, after Stedman featured Sharp in his revised *Victorian Poets*, and Sharp was collecting the material for *American Sonnets* in mid-1888. It is very possible that Stedman was able to give Sharp direction, but there is no evidence that he was as active a part of the selection process as Halloran suggests. There is also evidence that Sharp personally undertook the social work of the collecting, which implies that Stedman may have acted as a connecting node between Sharp and the writers in question – perhaps informally introducing Sharp to them, providing their addresses, and so on – but did not *per se* act on his behalf as Halloran suggests. After the publication of *American Sonnets*, Sharp sent copies, with an accompanying letter, to two poets: Clinton Scollard and Frank Dempster Sherman. No correspondence with either poet survives that predate these letters, but the tone of both letters suggests that there had been previous correspondence. The sending of a copy of the anthology, one which, unlike several of Sharp’s previous Walter Scott productions, was apparently unavailable in America, suggests either a sense of debt to Sherman and Scollard, or a solidifying of relationships that Sharp felt might come in useful later. It thus appears from Sharp’s correspondence that the process of collecting *American Sonnets* followed at least something of a similar trajectory to the collecting of *Century* – that is, using a variety of pre-existing connections and creating others.

While Sharp and Stedman were extremely close by the time Sharp was collecting *American Sonnets* – Halloran calls Stedman a ‘father figure’ to Sharp, and Stedman is one in a repeated pattern of Sharp forging intense emotional friendships with older men – Sharp was nevertheless using the selection process to personally add other connections to his network rather than relying on Stedman.

The friendship between Stedman and Sharp started either in or before October of 1887. They were close friends by May of 1888, when Sharp wrote to Theodore Watts-Dunton that:

³⁷¹ Halloran, V1, p. 223.

A few of the poems have already been seen by friends. Of a short one entitled "The Deathchild," Stedman – for instance – writes that he knows nothing more weird and original & imaginative in recent modern poetry.³⁷²

This echoes the way in which Rossetti supported and mentored the younger Sharp, and it seems that Sharp's friendship with Stedman was equally as intense as Sharp's friendship with Rossetti. Sharp's relationship with Stedman grew close enough that Stedman's house in New York was his base in America for his first visit (in 1889), his second (in 1892) and possibly his third (in 1896). In October of 1889, immediately after leaving New York to return to Britain, Sharp sent the following letter to Stedman:

This, along with some flowers, will reach you on the morning of your birthday, while I am far out on the Atlantic. May the flowers carry to your poet-soul a breath of that happy life which seems to inspire them – and may your coming years be full of the beauty and fragrance of which they are the familiar and exquisite symbols. You have won my love as well as my deep regard and admiration – and so I leave you to understand how earnestly and truly I wish you all good. Once more let me tell you how deeply grateful I am to you and Mrs. Stedman for all your generous kindness to me. We have all, somewhere, sometime, our gardens, where – as Hafiz says – the roses have a subtler fragrance, and the nightingales also a rarer melody; and my memory of my last "fortunate Eden" will remain with me always. But I shall not be content till I hear (not by letter but by Postcard) that you have had your long delayed holiday, and have gained new vigour. Do be careful of yourself: You, who have done so much, have yet so much to say and to do – so, at least listen to that plea. I shall always think of you, and Mrs. Stedman, and Arthur, as of near and dear relatives. Yes, we *are* of one family.³⁷³

Stedman's reply was equally intimate: "Tis quite surprising," the reply begins, "the severity wherewith you have been missed, in this now very quiet household."³⁷⁴ Sharp's canniness with regard to networking is suggested by Stedman's following words:

Nor can one have your ready art of charm and winning, without a good heart and comradeship under it all: even though intent (and rightly) on nursing his career and making all the points he has a right to make – Apropos of this – I may congratulate you on the impression you made here on the men and women whom you chanced at this season to meet.³⁷⁵

Of Sharp's gesture – which, it appears from Stedman's letter, was rather more than 'some' flowers – Stedman writes:

³⁷² Halloran, V1, p. 211.

³⁷³ E. A. S., V1, p. 247.

³⁷⁴ E. A. S., V1, p. 248.

³⁷⁵ E. A. S., V1, p. 249.

At 56 [...] one is less than ever used to the melting mood, but you drew a tear to my eyes. The roses are still all over our house, and the letter is your best autograph in my possession.³⁷⁶

Sharp's first visit to America was initially planned as a lecture tour, a new form of self-publicisation for Sharp. The plan for Sharp to undertake an American lecture tour was decided prior to February of 1888, when he wrote to a correspondent that 'I intend to accept the invitation to lecture in New York, Boston, etc. early in 1889.'³⁷⁷ Due to Sharp's health issues, however, it had to be cancelled. Who arranged or proposed the lecture tour is unknown. The timing of the lecture tour seems to coincide with the publication of Sharp's *American Sonnets*. However, according to *The Critic*, *American Sonnets* could not be published in America, at least in 1889, and thus it seems unlikely that the tour was to be part of the promotion effort for that work specifically. However, Sharp had many pieces reviewed or mentioned in American magazines in 1888-9, including his *Sonnets of this Century*, his *Shelley* and his *Heine*, and the tour could have been motivated by these texts instead.

Amanda Adams, in *Performing Authorship in the Nineteenth Century Lecture Tour*, opens with the concept of the author speaking for, and standing in for, their work through various media, especially the lecture tour.³⁷⁸ Adams writes that 'many nineteenth century authors threw themselves into self-promotion', and that 'such tours were a central aspect of nineteenth century authorship'.³⁷⁹ Sharp's American lecture tour, then, was an important piece of his self-promotion. He had done some lectures in Scotland previously, but this was the first sizeable piece of self-promotion of the type that he was attempting to undertake.

Sharp, thus far, was used to more personal methods of self-promotion: a face-to-face networking process, with a side of personal correspondence. The lecture tour was a new quantity, but Sharp, used to speaking and standing in for his work – 'he once went into a publisher's office, and gave so alluring an account of a long-meditated book that the publisher gave him a check for £100, although he had not written a word of it', as Ernest

³⁷⁶ E. A. S., V1, p. 249.

³⁷⁷ Halloran, V1, p. 206.

³⁷⁸ Amanda Adams, *Performing Authorship in the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Lecture Tour: In Person* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd, 2014), p. 1.

³⁷⁹ Adams, pp. 1-2.

Rhys wrote in *The Century* – was excited for the prospect.³⁸⁰ Sharp was known as a critic in America, largely through Thomas Whittaker's Walter Scott reprints, but his other works were only known through the occasional magazine publication. While his plans for the lecture tour remain obscure – if he even had plans; his lectures seemed frequently to have been composed on the fly – he may well have intended to use the tour to promote not only his published and in-progress works but also those works, eventually published under the Fiona Macleod pseudonym, which were at this point only theory and intention. He was, as the quote from Ernest Rhys suggests, very good at promoting work that was only theory and intention. When the lecture series was cancelled due to Sharp's ill health, however, Sharp still attempted to go ahead with the self-promotion, only in another more familiar form: that is, by using the same networking methods as he used in London. His American tour operated as a refined and concentrated version of the way he built his relationships in London. In the absence of the lecture tour, Sharp used previously tested methods to build his connections. Some of these connections come from his London acquaintances such as the father of his friend, the author Grant Allen. Others were people he knew from the construction of *American Sonnets*, mirroring the process by which he built connections through *Century*. Still more he met through Stedman. Some of those that he met through Stedman took him to several New York writers' clubs, just as Robert Francillion and Julian Hawthorne had taken him to the Oasis Club some nine years earlier.

The success of this method is suggested by the fact that it is only after his visit that his fiction and poetry begin to gain traction in America. Previously, only his Walter Scott publications had been available in America, but now American publications began to rack up. His American audience increased so hugely that after his death the American company, Duffield and Co., published Elizabeth Sharp's memoirs and the *Collected Works* simultaneously with Heinemann in Britain. Sharp's first American publication not of Walter Scott extraction was the *Flower o' the Vine*, a collected edition of *Romantic Ballads* and *Sospiri di Roma*, published by Charles Webster and Company. Sharp had no personal connection to Charles Webster and Co., but Arthur Stedman acted as Sharp's agent, using

³⁸⁰ Ernest Rhys, 'William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod"', *The Century*, 74 (1907) 111-117 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000544996> [accessed 01/07/2022] (p. 115).

his own connections to get first *Flower o' the Vine* published.³⁸¹ *Flower o' the Vine* was made more attractive to audiences with a preface by one of Sharp's friends, the American writer Thomas Janvier. Sharp's next work, *Vistas*, was published simultaneously by Stone and Kimball in America and Frank Murray in Britain. Sharp's collaborative novel, *A Fellowe and His Wife*, written with the American author Blanche Willis Howard, was also published simultaneously on both continents in 1894. In total, between 1892 and 1912, Sharp published nine works in America under his name and twenty-two under Macleod.³⁸² In Britain in the same period, he published thirteen under his name and seventeen under Macleod.

The main difference between this publishing explosion and the one that happened after he met Rossetti is that Sharp no longer had to validate every publication with some reference to his unofficial patron – while *Flower o' the Vine* is validated by the presence of Thomas Janvier, those that follow stand alone. Sharp also used fewer publishers in America in the same period than he did in Britain: in Britain, twelve publishers under his own name and nine under Macleod, and in America eight under his own name and five under Macleod.³⁸³ This suggests that Sharp developed a closer, more reliable relationship with American publishers. One of these was Thomas Mosher, a publisher and sometime literary pirate who produced his books as pieces of art, focused on beautiful printing and binding. Robert Spoo refers to Sharp as one of Mosher's 'favourites', noting that Mosher paid for at least two of Macloed's works rather than pirating without a courtesy payment as Mosher did with Andrew Lang's books.³⁸⁴ This close relationship between Sharp and his publishers, exemplified by but not limited to Mosher, suggests that the American publishers saw more value in continuing to publish Sharp and Macleod texts than British publishers. For American publishers, Sharp and especially Macleod were valuable commodities.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Arthur Stedman was the son of Edmund Clarence Stedman. Arthur Stedman was four years Sharp's junior, and the two were close friends, though seemingly not as close as E.C. Stedman and Sharp.

³⁸² Publications from 1905 onwards are posthumous.

³⁸³ There is crossover – some of the same publishers published both Macleod and Sharp, but have been counted separately here.

³⁸⁴ Robert Spoo, *Without Copyrights: Piracy, Publishing, and the Public Domain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) p. 17.

³⁸⁵ Why Sharp and Macleod were so valuable, and why they both saw such success in the American market, is unclear. It is possible that Sharp saw similarities between himself – a Scottish person living in England and largely working within the English literary market – and white immigrant Americans, or that his Celtic productions spoke to a desire within white American audiences to connect to a culture they had left behind in

Sharp's expansion of his personal market into America was in development since the publication of 'Birchington Revisited' in *Harper's Magazine* in October of 1882. Despite this long history, prior to his 1889 visit his American magazine contributions were in the single digits. However, after the visit, and after meeting the editors of *Harper's* and *The New York Independent* through Stedman, there was a sharp uptick in the number of his productions for American periodicals. He published in a variety of American magazines regularly from 1889 onward, though it appears that his most fruitful relationships were with *Harper's*, *The New York Independent*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Sharp's other attempts to widen his presence in the American publishing industry prior to his visits involve agreeing to act as literary agent ('when it suits me!') for the American publisher Appleton and Company.³⁸⁶ This arrangement does not seem to get far, since Appleton do not publish or reprint any of Sharp's books, and there is no evidence that he was a successful British agent for them. His final other attempted route is to get a novel serialised in an American magazine. In 1888, prior to his first visit, he writes to the editor of *The New York Independent*, asking if they could place one of the boys' stories he serialised in *The Young Folks Paper*.³⁸⁷ He is refused, but his relationship with the editor did not seem to suffer as they met during one of his American trips. He also writes to *Century Magazine*, offering his latest novel *Children of Tomorrow* for serialisation. His selling techniques are rather obvious:

Dear Sirs

I write to ask if you would care to purchase the American rights of a one-volume novel by me. It is to be published by Messrs. Chatto & Windus in the late Spring (probably about the end of April). That firm commissioned the book, on what I consider very good terms, without having seen a page of it or even knowing its plot, or what it is about. They only know that it is a romance upon which I have expended great care, and for which I hope much [...] It is only fair to add that I have written by this mail to two other American houses with a similar proposal.³⁸⁸

While Sharp later, post-visit, managed to cultivate a relationship with *Century Magazine*, publishing various articles and poems with them over the next several years, the selling

the colonial process. It may be that American audiences were more open to Celtic art than London audiences were, or it may be that Sharp's methods of self-promotion, sometimes received poorly by English audiences, were received more positively by Americans. There may be no one specific reason for it at all.

³⁸⁶ Halloran, V1, pp. 198-199.

³⁸⁷ Halloran, V1, pp. 205-206.

³⁸⁸ Halloran, V1, pp. 232-233.

techniques he used prior to his first visit are largely unsuccessful. In every letter he sent to an American publisher or magazine, he was trying to sell himself as a known quantity, often by referring to the work of his London publishers, by indicating his reputation as a critic, or by writing a sketched resume beneath his signature. These techniques largely failed to place him in American contexts. It is only after a more direct relationship was set up, through Stedman, that Sharp's American connections started to solidify.

The similarities between the way that Sharp, through Rossetti, was able to set up his London network, and the way in which he set up his American network through Stedman, are distinct. The making of the American network is a reframing of the way he made his London network: a microcosm of meetings, flatteries, and the buying of flowers. After having formed his London network slowly and experimentally over a matter of years, Sharp was able to repeat the process in America over a matter of months. This may be due to Stedman's knowledge of important literary centres, Sharp's experience, or some other element. By identifying a central node (Stedman) and following from him to a selection of influential writers and editors, Sharp left America with another set of friends and buyers ready to publish both him and, in a few years' time, Fiona Macleod.

However, these are not two discrete networks, but, in the words of Guy Reynolds, a 'transatlantic salon'.³⁸⁹ Sharp's literary connections spread and proliferated through several centres, creating through his correspondence a virtual salon that stretched through Europe and across America. With his connections through several bridges – Stedman, Louise Chandler Moulton, Grant Allen, Blanche Willis Howard, etc. – Sharp found his connections radiating across the European and American literary centres. This virtual salon connected across Sharp's literary world, bringing together more connections than any one physical salon. When Sharp made his American connections, he consolidated the transatlantic salon and used it to support his identity creation(s). Where he used the physical London salon to assert his identity as a writer – when it was in conflict only with his identities as a merchant's son and a bank clerk – in the early 1890s, he had to resort to a wider salon, a new collection of relationships that had not been too strongly tainted by those earlier identities. The transatlantic salon both grew and shrank Sharp's world: it allowed him greater connections and drew those connections closer, making it easier to sell his work and

³⁸⁹ Guy Reynolds, 'The Transatlantic Virtual Salon: Cather And The British', *Studies In The Novel*, 45.3 (2013), 349–68. (p. 349).

increase his reputation. The virtual salon eroded borders, and Sharp's later career existed both in multiple individualised national contexts as well as across borders. Sharp's transatlantic salon made the world 'not [...] vast geographical expanse but negotiable space'.³⁹⁰ The 'space' of Sharp's world becomes negotiable rather than geographically overwhelming because of small social steps that end up stretching halfway across the world.

The connections that Jessica DeSpain draws between the text and the body, wherein an author's books metaphorically functioned as a representation of their body, offer a fruitful perspective on Sharp's relationship with his American publications. Within the culture of transatlantic reprinting, Sharp would have little control, if any, over his own texts. While the lecture tour, as explored earlier with reference to Adams, allowed some representative control, and Sharp's networking was a smaller-scale attempt at the same, the development of his American market, which happens only after a shift in international copyright law, allows the texts to be controlled representations of his body. In this period too, Sharp became more interested, and perhaps even obsessed with, the idea of the text as representation of his soul.³⁹¹ This is a common conceit; we may think here of the transatlantic Benjamin Franklin, and his self-penned epitaph:

The Body of B. Franklin, Printer; like the Cover of an old Book, Its Contents torn out, And stript of its Lettering and Gilding, Lies here, Food for Worms. But the Work shall not be wholly lost; For it will, as he believ'd, appear once more, In a new & more perfect Edition, Corrected and amended By the Author.³⁹²

Further, this concept of Sharp as text is one that goes back to his earliest years in London, when Belfort Bax notes that Sharp ought to have been born between two calf covers.³⁹³

It is here, in America, that Sharp became disenchanted with the difference between his covers and his content. Feeling misrepresented by the critical reception of his texts and perhaps aware of the disconnection between the body he presented physically to editors and publishers and the texts that he wrote for them, he began to consider the virtues of the pen-name. As evidence of this disconnect, we can turn to *The Critic*:

³⁹⁰ Alison Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade, 1870-1895: Tangled Networks* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p. 10.

³⁹¹ Jessica DeSpain, *Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Reprinting and the Embodied Book* (Routledge, 2016), p. 1.

³⁹² Benjamin Franklin, *Epitaph*, 1728. Text given here <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/franklin/bf-trans61.html> [accessed 03/05/2022].

³⁹³ Ernest Belfort Bax, *Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Mid and Late Victorian* (New York: T. Seltzer, 1920) p. 219.

[H]e by no means realizes the conventional ideal of the poet or literary worker, his mould and manner being those rather of a man whose life has been lived in the open air, to whom the cricket bat “comes handier” than the pen, and who would rather pull an oar than push a paper-cutter any day of the week.³⁹⁴

The first text that Sharp wrote after his second visit to America is emblematic of this struggle between content and covers.

Vistas is a sequence of poetic dramas inspired by the Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck, and Sharp intended two things for it.³⁹⁵ First, that it would be published all-but privately, and secondly that it would be published under a pseudonym.³⁹⁶ These factors meant that Sharp was reticent to publish it too quickly, looking for the right moment. Responding to Sharp’s concerns with frustration, Arthur Stedman called his attitude ‘shabby’, since Sharp was, to Stedman’s understanding, delaying unnecessarily and being overly picky.³⁹⁷ Sharp clarifies, and Stedman appears to back off. However, *Vistas* was published a couple of years later under Sharp’s own name, by Frank Murray as part of the *Regent Library* in Britain and by Stone and Kimball in America. It is an attractive text; it features an etching of a William Blake by William Bell Scott, and the short dramas are printed with a lot of surrounding blank space. Even a hundred and thirty years later, the paper itself is still thick and robust. With *Vistas* Sharp was able to produce a more artistic text than any he had thus far managed, at least in terms of its paratextual elements, and was able to pursue a level of artistic experimentation he had thus far not had the ability to chase. However, while he could achieve some of his goals, others remained beyond his grasp. Publishing under his own name meant that *Vistas* was still attached to the old Sharp, whose content was, at least to some, incongruous with his presented self. It was not the clean break from the old Sharp that Sharp had initially desired, a desire we can see in his initial conception of *Vistas* as pseudonymous.

³⁹⁴ [Anon.], ‘The Lounger’, *The Critic*, 12.301 (1889), 64-5 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000057828> [accessed 01/07/2022] (p. 164).

³⁹⁵ William Sharp, *Vistas* (Derby: Frank Murray, 1894) Pictures and references are to my own 1895 edition.

³⁹⁶ Halloran, V1, p. 383.

³⁹⁷ Halloran, V1, p. 383.



Figure 14: A photograph of an imprint, seemingly a crowned skull, in the paper of the author's ca.1895 edition of Vistas.

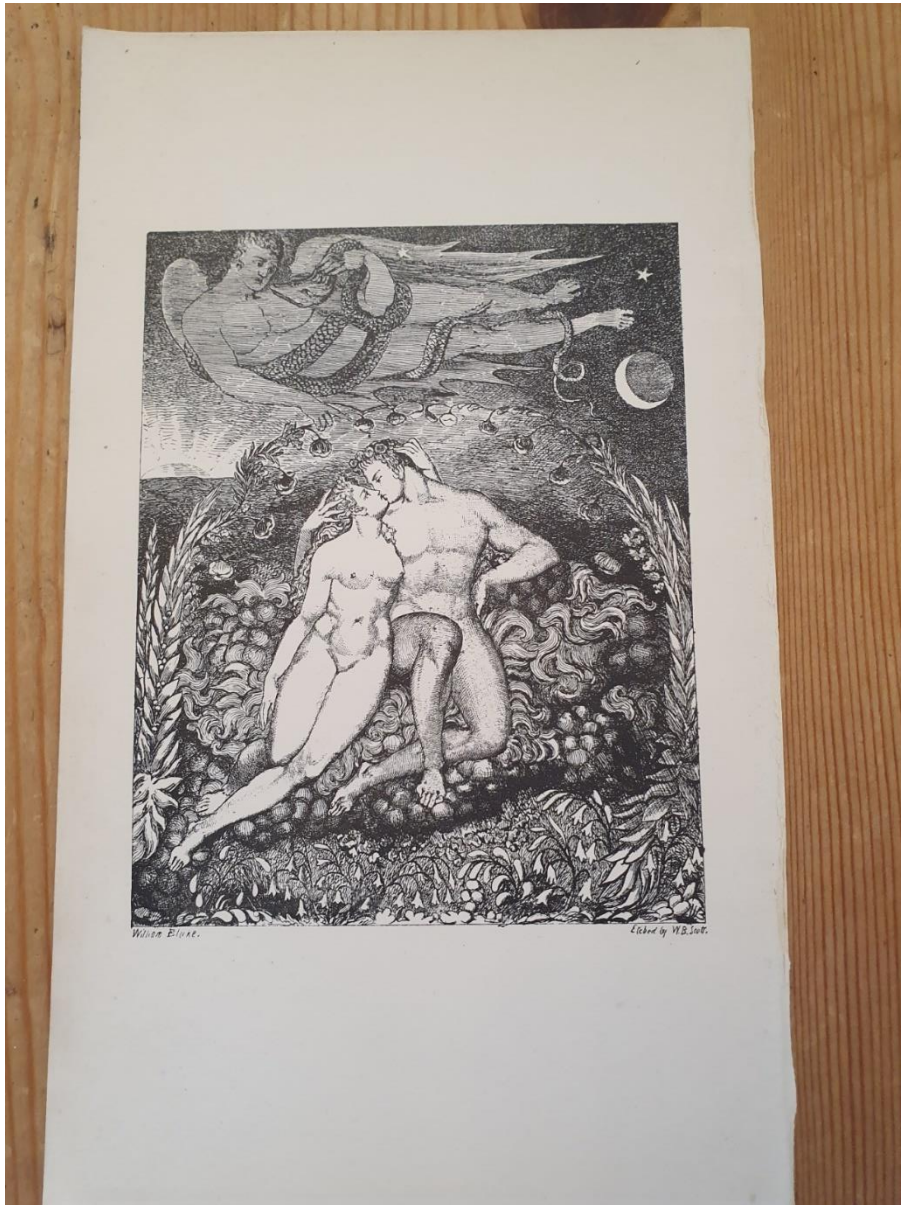


Figure 15: This shows the Blake, included in Vistas. The image came free as the photograph was being taken.

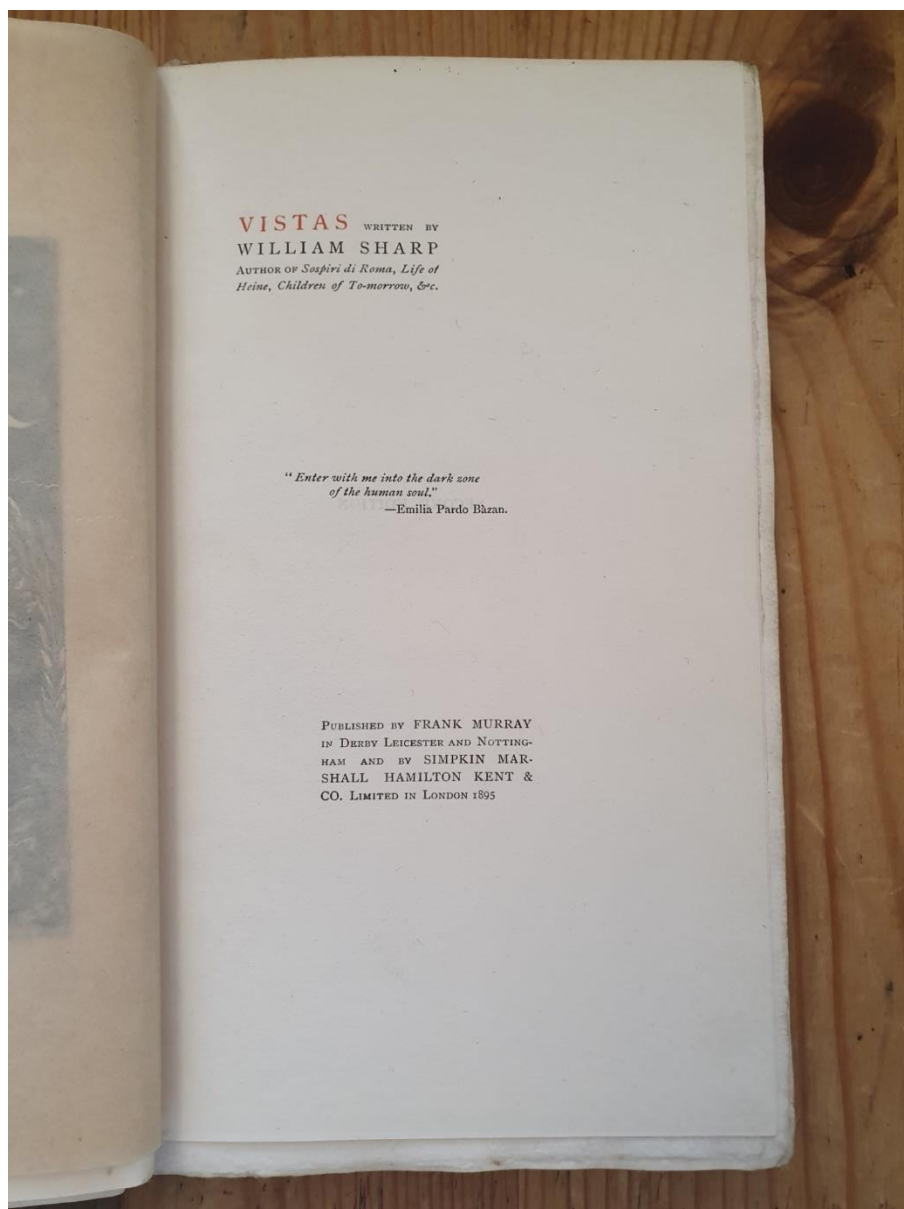


Figure 16: The title page of *Vistas*.

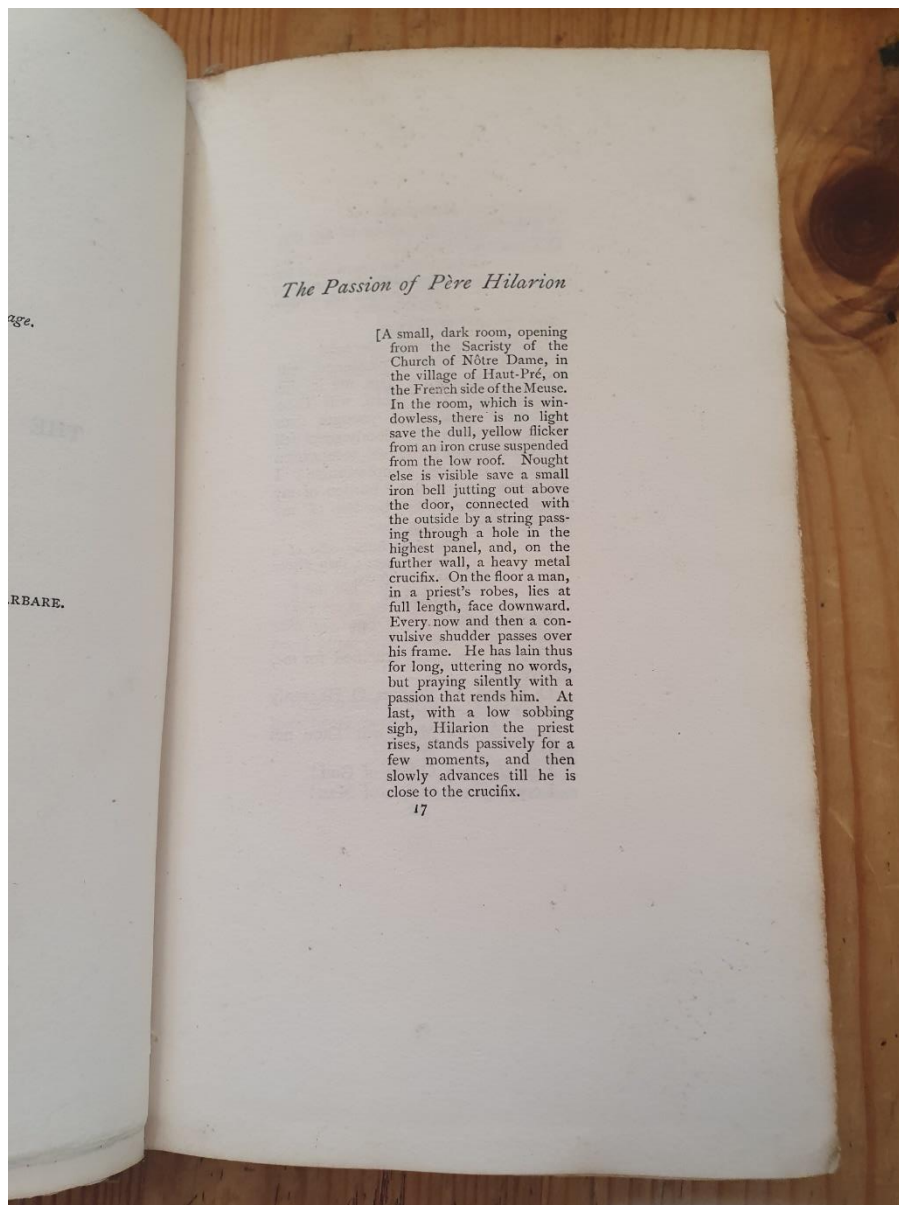


Figure 17: One of the pages from *Vistas*, showing the layout of the prose.

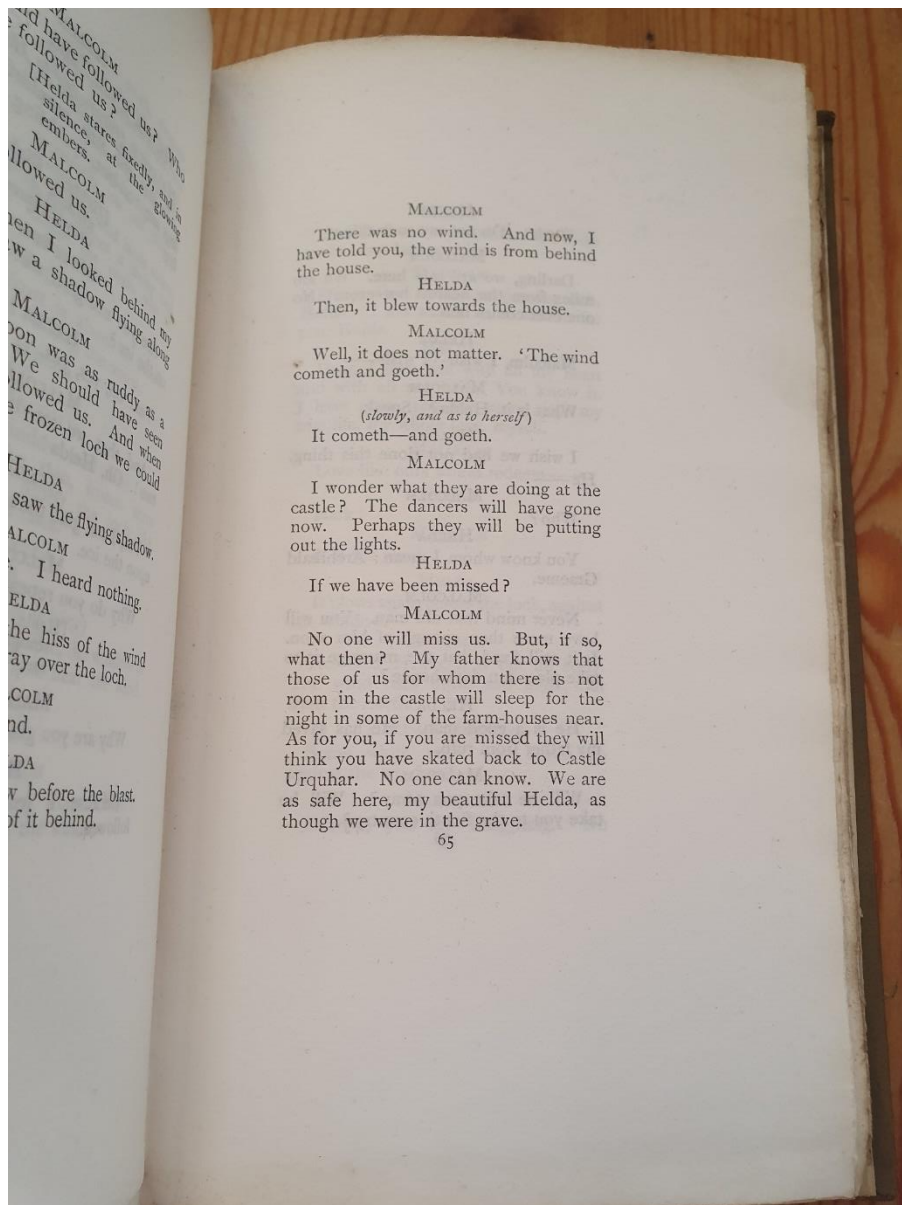


Figure 18: Another page from *Vistas*, showing the layout of the dialogue.

In the intervening period between the writing of *Vistas* and its publication, Sharp attempted to navigate the possibilities of book-as-body with the publication in 1894 of *The Pagan Review*, a short-lived periodical which featured seven contributions written pseudonymously by Sharp. In *The Pagan Review*, we see the same attempts at self-representation that we also see in his letters to Thomas and Catherine Janvier, when they refer to one another as 'pagans'.³⁹⁸ In their navigations of identity, *Vistas* and *The Pagan Review* prefigure Fiona Macleod.

³⁹⁸ Halloran, V1, p. 336, p. 395.

This section is expressed as a ‘turn’ because a turn is what it signifies: both in Sharp’s life and the thesis itself. Within Sharp’s life, we see in the first three chapters an expansive, furious attempt at developing his social circle and using his connections to scramble to a place of financial stability. His texts up until this point were fixated on presentation and representation, on opportunity and exposure. His exposing impulse – to expose the workings of sociability, to expose the real person behind the idea of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, to expose the work of his friends to a wider audience – turned into a drive to protect and defend himself and to protect and defend Fiona Macleod. What America signified for Sharp’s career was a turn towards more artistic and more experimental productions that were fixated on both protection (of the Macleod identity) and representation (of his most truthful self, which may or may not be the same as the Macleod identity). He turned from a critic whose creative work was seen as unimportant and second-rate to a writer of best-sellers who carried and shaped the Scottish arm of the Celtic Revival.

With this chapter, the thesis also turns. Sharp’s networking remained important to his career, but he began to play with the very concept of sociability. I explore the way in which Sharp engaged in self-parody in *The Pagan Review* in Chapter 4. He began to be able to relax, and not continually approach and pitch: Fiona Macleod was approached, commissioned – perhaps even well-paid. Also in Chapter 4 I discuss Macleod’s presence in *The Evergreen* and *The Savoy*, and the way in which she added to their reputation, rather than using them to add to her own reputation as Sharp had in earlier years. Chapter 5 focuses on Fiona Macleod herself, and the relationship between her and Sharp as well as her social relationships. This turning-point, then, allows both Sharp and I the time to reassess our direction, and to come to terms with Fiona Macleod.

Chapter 4: French Bastards and Scottish Nationalists: The Periodicals

When Sharp returned to England after his second visit to America, he returned full of refreshed and revitalised artistic ideals. Where he had, in the preceding decade, let go of some of his early artistic hopes in order to survive economically, by the early 1890s his income was stable enough that he could pick up the experimental thread that he had largely dropped after the death of Rossetti. Demonstrating this change from economic stability to artistic experimentation is the explosion of the 'little magazine' into Sharp's literary output.³⁹⁹ Much of his career had been built on magazine output, but those magazines had been mainstream and his contributions had been rather safe. The 'little magazine' output, instead, is outside of the mainstream and comparatively daring. First of his 'little magazine' ventures, in 1892, was his *Pagan Review*. Second, in 1895 and 1896, he published under his own name in *The Evergreen*. In the same years, Fiona Macleod was published in *The Evergreen* and *The Savoy*, and from 1898-99, *The Dome*. Sharp and Macleod's contributions to these magazines marked their movement towards an artistic output more in line with the younger Sharp's hopes. Where Sharp had earlier leaned on a Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic visual intertext in his non-fictional work, in these 'little magazines', and Sharp and Macleod's works within them, it is difficult not to see, especially in *The Evergreen*, an echo of 1850's *The Germ*, the magazine that began the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

This chapter will focus on three of the 'little magazines' that Sharp and/or Macleod contributed to. These are *The Pagan Review*, constructed entirely by Sharp; *The Evergreen*, a Scottish Nationalist project aimed at promoting Scottish identity, culture, and art within an international context; and *The Savoy*, the short-lived and controversial successor, at least in terms of decadent energy and the career of Aubrey Beardsley, to *The Yellow Book*.⁴⁰⁰ This chapter will use these 'little magazines' to explore the new, creative, and more discerning ways in which Sharp used connectivity. In the previous chapters, I showed the way in which Sharp connected to as many figures as possible as quickly as possible, and took advantage of that connectivity and the opportunities it gave. In this chapter, building on the previous

³⁹⁹ For an exploration of the 'little magazine', see Koenraad Claes, *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

⁴⁰⁰ William Sharp, *The Pagan Review* (Buck's Green: Self-published, 1892) https://1890s.ca/pagan_review/; William Sharp, ed., *The Evergreen* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1895-97). <https://1890s.ca/evergreen-volumes/>; Arthur Symons and Aubrey Beardsley, ed., *The Savoy* (London: Leonard Smithers, 1896) <https://1890s.ca/savoy-volumes/>.

work on *Sonnets of this Century*, I will show Sharp's self-awareness surrounding the way connectivity works and could be represented in text, as well as the way in which Sharp narrowed his focus, following specific paths 'through' his social universe to place and promote his work.

These periodicals are grouped together because they all demonstrate ways in which connectivity was important to their production, though each differs from those that come before or after. In section one, which focuses on *The Pagan Review*, I explore Sharp's theatrical play with networking and connectivity, as well as his repeated use of visual and textual intertext. I argue that *The Pagan Review* camps the 'little magazine', and parodies connectivity, whilst also taking connectivity wholly seriously. In my use of the term camp, I follow Mark Booth's definition: camp 'is [...] a matter of "expressing what's basically serious to you in terms of fun and artifice and elegance" of "making fun out of" what you take seriously as opposed to making fun of it.'⁴⁰¹ When I say that *The Pagan Review* camps the 'little magazine', I mean that Sharp expresses what is important to him about the 'little magazine' – the artistic experimentation, the miniature manifesto, the record of a coterie – in terms of fun and artifice. *The Pagan Review* is playful, theatrical, queer: but it is still, nevertheless, a testing ground for the ideas and themes that Sharp and Macleod would subsequently explore. Further, I argue that *The Pagan Review* prefigures *The Savoy*, exploring the way in which the ideas surrounding sexual freedom and liberation, and colonial anxiety expressed in *The Pagan Review* were subsequently a key part of *The Savoy's* guiding principles. In this I suggest that Sharp and Macleod's artistic direction was in keeping with the Decadent turn in the 1890s.

In section two, which focuses on *The Evergreen*, I explore the shift, played out in its entirety in this one magazine, from William Sharp to Fiona Macleod. Fiona Macleod was key to *The Evergreen's* success, and in this section, I explore her contributions and the way in which they were received. I illustrate that Fiona Macleod was a critical darling for her work in *The Evergreen*, in a way that Sharp had never been. I show the way in which connectivity led Sharp to a friendship with Patrick Geddes, and how – slowly, and with care – this friendship was built up. This, I argue, is a change from Sharp's previous connectivity for

⁴⁰¹ Mark Booth, 'Campe-Toil: On the Origins and Definitions of Camp', in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*, ed. by Fabio Cleto, (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 66–79 <https://doi.org/10.3366/j.ctvxcrp56.9> (p. 66).

opportunity's sake. While the friendship with Geddes did lead to opportunity, this was opportunity that Sharp in part created. It is at his suggestion that the *germ of The Evergreen* is planted.

Sharp played a key role in Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, similar to the role he played – and continued to play – for Walter Scott, but in playing this role for Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, Sharp became a key player in a more artistically - and aesthetically - influential coterie. Working with Patrick Geddes gave Sharp and Macleod more artistic freedom than they had previously enjoyed.

In the final section on *The Savoy*, I explore the aesthetic-ideological relationship between Fiona Macleod and *The Savoy*. I first explore the fact that the editor of *The Savoy* requested Macleod's contribution to the magazine through W.B. Yeats, a mutual friend. Once again, this is not a connection driven by connective opportunism, but is connectively passive: the relationships are in place, and opportunities develop naturally, rather than being hunted down. Further, I explore *The Savoy* as a publication that is in sympathy with Macleod herself and with her output, by tracing the ways in which her contribution to *The Savoy*, 'Morag of the Glen', was coherent with *The Savoy's* other contributions, as well as the way in which *The Savoy* implicitly toyed with queer gender experiences through the art and writing of the magazine's art editor, Aubrey Beardsley.

Further, all three of these texts navigate their cultural moment in specific ways, informed by different forms and contextualisations of marginality. Cosmopolitanism is parodied in *The Pagan Review*, and the text subtly echoes with sexual, racial, and ethnic tensions. These elements perhaps indicate Sharp reflecting on the position of the material text as a medium through which to reflect on Victorian Grundyism, and through which to offer questions regarding empire, gender, imperialism, and sexuality. We further see that Sharp expressed in parody what Macleod took seriously in *The Evergreen* and *The Savoy*: questions of colonialism in Scotland, of pre-colonial history, of gender and sexuality and what it meant to be, at least in some ways, a marginalised Victorian. Reflections on Victorian Grundyism and reflections on patriarchal violence, gender, colonialism, imperialism and sexuality are especially clear in *The Savoy*. Interpersonal, literary connectivity and the material text become the means by which it is possible for these questions to be posed and

reflected on. These texts also, as magazines, allow these questions and the ruminations thereon to be disseminated.⁴⁰²

4.1: The Pagan Review

While Sharp was fascinated with and championed the Belgian Movement,⁴⁰³ Koenraad Claes argues convincingly in favour of reading Sharp in this period as focusing primarily on French Symbolism.⁴⁰⁴ The *Pagan Review* shows a marked Symbolist influence, despite its tongue-in-cheek assertion that it is ‘not a French bastard’, from its simple cover design (see page 164 and 167) and its review of Stuart Merrill, to pseudo-French pseudonyms and the presence of Léon Vanier, the Symbolist editor, as (supposed) European distributor.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰² As regards *The Pagan Review*, its dissemination of ideas was deeply limited. However, it did allow William Sharp to connect with Robert Murray Gilchrist, a queer writer sympathetic to Sharp’s ideas, and so there was some, however small, dissemination. Gilchrist submitted a story for the second edition of *The Pagan Review*, and while the second edition was never released, Sharp and Gilchrist became friends.

⁴⁰³ A literary movement of the late 1800s, asserting a Belgian literary identity. This movement in some ways gave Sharp the vocabulary to express his own opinions on the role of Scottish literary identity within the British, or even world, stage. Sharp tips his hand in his article ‘Le Jeune Belgique’ for *The Nineteenth Century*, and we can read there Sharp’s doubled perspective – discussing the Belgian Movement whilst also implicitly discussing Scottish writing. The goals of the Belgian Movement – as Sharp expressed – were ‘not to create a particular poetic school, but to bring about a reaction against literary ignorance, disorder, and general backbonelessness’; that this was read as an anticolonialist effort can be seen from the same source’s assertion that, in becoming a key figure of the Belgian Movement, Maurice Maeterlinck went from a ‘hero in Paris’ to ‘a barbarian, a foreigner, a Teutonic dreamer, a tiresome person whose chosen tongue happens to be French, but whose mind is Flemish, whose manner is Walloon: a mediocrity, and – for there is depth beneath depth – a Belgian mediocrity.’ That Sharp used the phrase ‘Teutonic dreamer’, a phrase Elizabeth Sharp only barely stops short of using to refer to her spouse, suggests the degree to which Sharp read the Belgian Movement and Maurice Maeterlinck as a parallel to Scottish literary identity and his own pressured role within it (see p. 257). It is easy to read self-deprecating irony into Sharp’s description of Maeterlinck as a ‘tiresome person’ and a ‘mediocrity’, and this approach perhaps suggests one reason Sharp kept Fiona Macleod so separate from himself (see Chapter 5): to avoid her becoming inflected with Sharp’s ‘mediocrity’. See William Sharp, ‘Le Jeune Belgique’, *The Nineteenth Century*, 34. 199 (1893), 416–436 (pp. 416–417) <http://ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-periodicals/la-jeune-belgique/docview/2643427/se-2?accountid=14874> [Accessed 27/05/2022]. See also Clément Dessy, ‘Belgium: Decadent Land, Barbarian Language’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Decadence*, ed. by Jane Desmarais and David Weir (still undergoing publication; <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190066956.001.0001>) [accessed 27/05/2022]. Michael Shaw also explores Sharp’s interest in the potential for Belgian literature to serve as a model for the Scottish Literary Revival, and the influence of Belgian literature on Sharp; see Michael Shaw, *The Fin-De-Siècle Scottish Revival: Romance, Decadence And Celtic Identity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020) <https://doi.org/10.3366/J.Ctvss3z8j.6> (pp. 98–112).

⁴⁰⁴ Koenraad Claes, ‘The Little Magazine as a Periodical Portfolio: The Dial, the Pagan Review and the Page’, in *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine*, by Koenraad Claes (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 64–106 <<https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474426213.003.0004>> (p. 92).

⁴⁰⁵ Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 63.

As Claes notes, 'When we take the modest design of the *Pagan Review* into account, the similarity to French Symbolist journals becomes more conspicuous [...] The *Pagan Review*, issued in what its own front matter refers to as a 'pamphlet form', complete lack of illustration, unornamented paper covers, and standard typeface for its equally unremarkable typesetting, looks somewhat like the typically restrained French literary journals of the time'.⁴⁰⁶ An image of the front cover of *The Pagan Review*, illustrating its cover design and the Symbolist influences on it, appears on page 164. For contrast, images of the front covers of *The Evergreen* and *The Yellow Book* follow on pages 165 and 166; an image of the front cover of *Cosmopolis*, another Symbolist production, follows on page 167.

A pan-European aesthetic network is written on the text as well as written into it. There is the suggestion of a distribution network, relying on Léon Vanier; the suggestion of an artistic relationship between English, Scottish, French, and Belgian writers in the combination of contributors and design. In *The Pagan Review*, his connectivity is primarily suggested, rather than outright stated – Sharp allows the reader to do the work of understanding the connections he draws and their value, rather than stating those connections and their value clearly and frankly as he did in *A Record and A Study* – and aesthetic, subtly proclaiming a place on the artistic cutting edge. Sharp lets the *Pagan Review* do the work of demonstrating artistic networks and the processes of networking, and invites the reader to become part of this process by encouraging them to work to understand the artistic links he has made visible in his magazine.

However, Sharp was not only relying on Symbolism to frame the aesthetic credentials of his magazine. His foreword, with its focus on sexual liberty, echoes issues at play within Aestheticism – it echoes William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, for instance – as well as concerns surrounding the 'New Woman' present in his friend Mona Caird's writing.⁴⁰⁷ There is an undercurrent of queerness, too, in his concentration on Paganism (especially sexual, especially Dionysian), and his fond parodying of several contemporary queer writers such as Paul Verlaine and Swinburne. Claes notes:

Taking into consideration both the assumed names and the different styles associated with each persona, Swinburne, Lionel Johnson, Le Gallienne, and the

⁴⁰⁶ Claes, p. 92

⁴⁰⁷ Claes, p. 91.

eccentric poet and composer Theo Marzials are just some of the possibly referenced real authors in this at least partly satirical scheme.⁴⁰⁸

Scottish writing also gets its due: one of the advertisements included as part of *The Pagan Review*'s concluding paratexts is for an anthology of contemporary Scottish poetry, and one of the pseudonyms is written in Middle Scots, 'Willand Dreeme'.⁴⁰⁹

The subscription information, immediately preceding the adverts, suggests that 'foreign orders may be despatched, if more convenient', through Leon Vanier, and American orders through Charles Webster and Company.⁴¹⁰ While Sharp published *Flower o' the Vine* with Charles Webster and Co., there is no direct evidence that either Leon Vanier or Charles Webster and Company had ever heard of *The Pagan Review*. I argue that these names were mere theatrical signifiers of internationalism; they seem to serve no purpose but to legitimise the magazine. Advertisements in *The Pagan Review* serve a similar purpose, playfully supporting the supposed writers, making *The Pagan Review* look more serious than it was, and making *The Pagan Review* look legitimate as a 'little magazine'. While it is unknown how common it was for editors to see advertisements as a legitimising practice, *The Pagan Review* stands out for the fact that its advertisements were largely false, and therefore served primarily and perhaps exclusively to legitimise the magazine and emphasise its cosmopolitanism.

The adverts consist of seven books in preparation. The largest portion is given to W.S. Fanshawe's *Vistas*. Fanshawe had published one of these *Vistas* in *The Pagan Review*, 'The Black Madonna'. The copy of the advert lists each of the 'dramatic interludes' to be included in the volume, discusses their form, and then gives publication information, noting that two hundred copies will be published privately and available directly from the author. This gives a feeling of exclusivity to the work: there is a limited opportunity to possess *Vistas* and those lucky enough to have purchased *The Pagan Review* have an advantage. It also marks an attempt to legitimise *The Pagan Review* by linking it to small presses and artisan production. *Vistas* was eventually published by Frank Murray under Sharp's name. The four other texts announced by contributors to *The Pagan Review* were not published in any

⁴⁰⁸ Claes, p. 92.

⁴⁰⁹ Paratext in *The Pagan Review* is difficult to define. However, I shall engage with the magazine's self-fashioning and make a distinction between the text – the contents of the magazine as the magazine gives them – and the paratext, including advertisements, cover, subscription information, etc.

⁴¹⁰ Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 65.

form. They may have been fake, in the sense that Sharp had never intended to release them; they may have simply fallen through before publication. This happened to a novel of Macleod's, *The Lily Leven: in Green Fire* (1896), which was marked as 'by the same author' alongside 1894's already-published *Pharais, The Mountain Lovers, The Sin-Eater and Other Tales*, and *The Washer of the Ford*. However, it never materialised, and it was 'giv[en] up [...] indefinitely'.⁴¹¹ It is perhaps too strong to call these never-materialising texts fake, as Sharp's intention for them is unclear. However, they were certainly not as close to completion as the advertisements suggest. The remaining two texts were real: *English Poems* by Sharp's friend Richard Le Galliene, and an anthology of Scottish poetry in which Sharp himself was featured.

The real people we see in these paratexts are easy to read as set-dressing to legitimise and centre the magazine within a dually Aesthetic and Symbolist moment. However, even the texts that never materialised and may never have been meant to indicate a network. Almost all of the texts have some form of international flavour, whether they be evoking Scottish, French, or Belgian literatures, or leaning on Greek, Italian, and Scottish cultural traditions.⁴¹² The *Pagan Review* is an attempt at mixing different cultural strains into one product, creating a virtual pan-European coterie. If we could visualise the 'world' of *The Pagan Review* as a salon, we find a mix of voices, accents, cultures. While not especially ambitious in content – for example, the only art we find in *The Pagan Review* is a little typography on the front cover – by virtue of its one producer, the 'salon' it creates is still wide-ranging.

⁴¹¹ Halloran, V2, p. 331.

⁴¹² 'The Black Madonna' was reprinted in Sharp's *Vistas*, and was inspired by Maeterlinck. Contributor Charles Verlayne is clearly intended as a reference to French poet Paul Verlaine, and 'The Oread' blends Greek and Scottish mythic imagery.

Nº 1,
August 15, 1893.

THE PAGAN REVIEW

..... Foreword.
W. S. Fanshawe: *The Black Madonna.*
Geo. Gascoigne: *The Coming of Love.*
Willand Dreams: *The Pagan: a Romance.*
Lionel Wingrave: *An Unlaid Story.*
James Marazion: *The Hope of the Sahiwal.*
Charles Verlayne: *The Oread.*
Wm. Windover: *Dionysos in India.*

Contemporary Record.
Editorial.

NIC TRANIT Gloria (Gloria)
(one Shilling.)

Figure 19: The front cover of The Pagan Review, showing in the bottom left corner the motto and price of the magazine, and its typography.



Figure 20: The front cover of *The Evergreen* (Spring 1895) showing the focus on the decorative arts common to British 'little magazines' of the time.

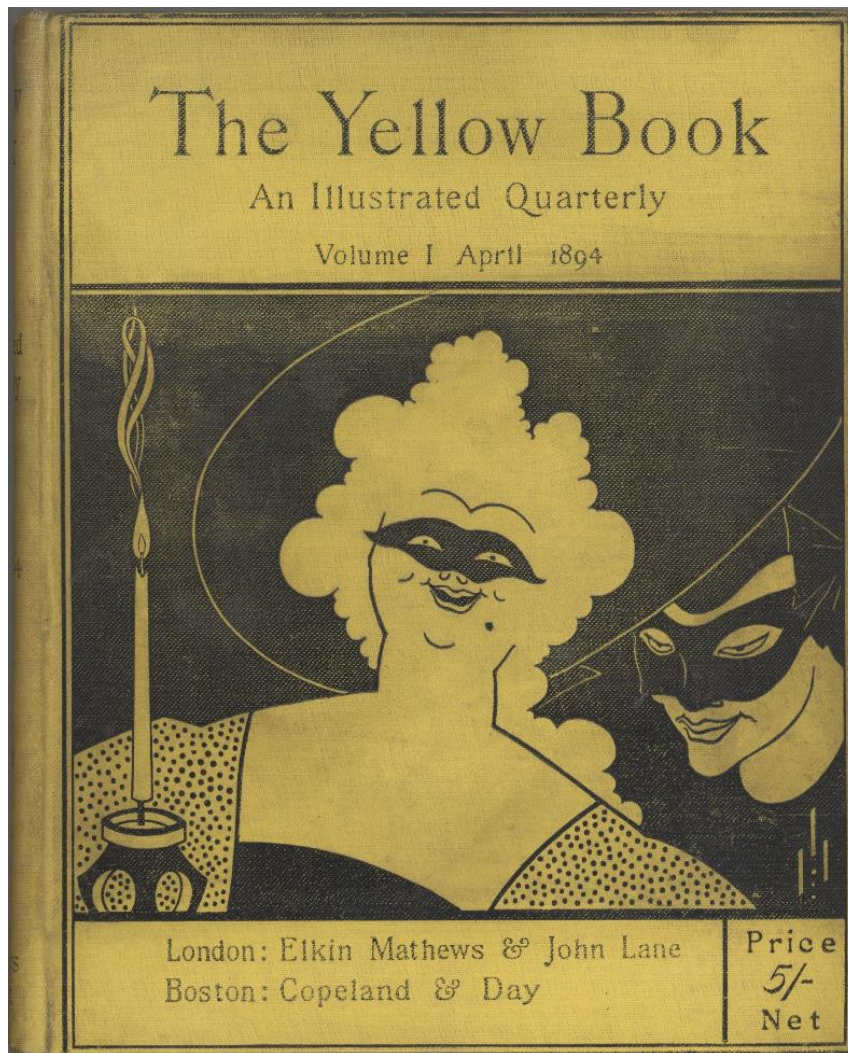


Figure 21: The front cover of April 1894's *The Yellow Book*, again emphasising decoration and 'little magazines' as art objects.



Figure 22: The February 1896 issue of *Cosmopolis*, showing the comparative simplicity of Symbolist design.

We find in its pages primarily the characters Sharp invents, with names suggestive of Symbolism and the Celtic Revival, like 'James Marazion', 'Willand Dreeme', and 'Charles Verlayne'. We also find characters waiting to be invented in the advertisements, like 'John Lafarge' and 'Rose Desiree Myrthil'; their names carry vague suggestions of the kinds of authors they might be (writers of dramatic, politicised romances, pagan feminist memoirists, writers of French or Belgian sensibility and/or extraction), but they are only names – there is no material associated with them to make good on the suggestion of their names. These characters appear alongside real people, like George Meredith, Emile Zola,

and Stuart Merrill. Later magazines replicated this virtual salon in reality – even leaving aside the obvious *Yellow Book*, Sharp/Macleod was published in *The Dome*, *Cosmopolis*, and others. *The Dome* featured international literatures, not all in English, international art, international architecture. *Cosmopolis* had simultaneous interconnected British, French and Russian editions. These other productions were more economically viable than *The Pagan Review*, though neither was particularly long lived.

The connectivity at play in *The Pagan Review* is a two-dimensional portrait of a network, indicating its potential in a staged, static way. The painted network is itself an advertisement, not only for *The Pagan Review* but for the real-world artists and movements with which it associates itself. It leans on those initial networks – from Symbolism through to Decadence, from George Meredith and Thomas Hardy through to Emile Zola – in order to represent that network, to show awareness of the way international literatures can support and impact one another, and, equally, to even joke about that network. In creating a believable but nevertheless largely fictional portrait of interconnectivity, Sharp shows an awareness of the network and his place within it. *The Pagan Review* is a portrait, faithfully told, of the way in which a lesser-known figure – here, ‘W.H. Brooks’, the supposed editor of *The Pagan Review*, who was in fact Sharp operating under a pseudonym – can bring together different figures, some known and some not, into one mutually orbiting network-system.

This self-aware portrait of network, connectivity, and cosmopolitanism is bracketed by an essential theatricality. Sharp shows an essential playfulness, and a turn towards self-parody. His “Charles Verlayne” is an all-too-obvious reference to Paul Verlaine, and Sharp resurrects H. P. Siwaarmill (first seen in Sharp’s *The Children of Tomorrow*, and whose name is an obvious anagram of “William Sharp”) for the second edition. W. H. Brooks’ dismissive comments towards Maeterlinck take on a parodic air, given Sharp’s appreciation for Maeterlinck, and the general tone of “Contemporary Record” is playful:

Lord Lytton, who lisped in his father’s fiction, died a writer of verse [...] As a poet he was a worthy son of his father [...] Meanwhile all Whitmaniacs (the courteous appellation is not ours) [...] Mr. Hall Caine has written *The Scapegoat*. He has also rewritten it. The experiment reflects credit on him as a conscientious workman, but is in other respects an awful example to set to the young. Horrible possibilities are suggested. Burke and Hare will be outdone in the resurrecting business. [...] Maurice

Maeterlinck – who stabbed himself with a bodkin in *Les Sept Princesses* – has, in *Pelléas et Melisande*, opened a vein. There is just a chance it is not an artery.⁴¹³

This theatricality we also see in the fact that Sharp wrote to friends under the name of Brooks, in one particular case cheekily noting ‘what an admirable fellow’ his and his correspondent’s mutual friend William Sharp was.⁴¹⁴

Yet Sharp does, nevertheless, take this camping of connectivity and of the ‘little magazine’ wholly seriously. As will be explored later, the ideas and ideals expressed in *The Pagan Review* are in keeping with the ideas and ideals expressed in *The Savoy*. While Sharp expressed these ideas in grandiose language, he was not so much satirising them as poking fun at himself: these ideas were central to Sharp and Macleod’s artistic output. Further, the parodying of connectivity was backed by the self-awareness shown in Sharp’s anthologies and biographies. To refer once more to Mark Booth, camp ‘is defined as a matter of “expressing what’s basically serious to you in terms of fun and artifice and elegance”, of “making fun out of” what you take seriously as opposed to making fun of it.’⁴¹⁵ *The Pagan Review* is not a satire of the ‘little magazine’, or a parody *per se*: it is, instead, a camping of the literary salon, the textually expressed network, and the ‘little magazine’. Sharp took the ideas he expressed, as well as the medium in which he expressed them, wholly seriously, whilst making fun out of them and delighting in the experiment.

This camping is visible from the very opening of the magazine. Its tagline, *Sic Transit Gloria Grundi*, is a tongue-in-cheek play with the character Mrs Grundy and the subsequent naming of conservative traditionalism as *Grundyism*.⁴¹⁶ Further, Sharp’s foreword notes that the magazine is aimed at ‘thorough-going unpopularity’.⁴¹⁷ The phrase calls to mind Sharp’s lukewarm reception in the press, as well as the usual fate – that is, a small number of publications followed by collapse – of ‘little magazines’ of the type. We may think here of the lukewarm reception of *The Evergreen* and *The Yellow Book*, as well as the fact that many other ‘little magazines’ had extremely short runs, indicating their lack of commercial viability

⁴¹³ Sharp, as W. H. Brooks, *Pagan Review*, p. 61-62. The ellipsis not in brackets is Sharp’s own.

⁴¹⁴ Halloran, V1, p. 434-5. Sharp’s correspondent in this case was Thomas Janvier, who, if he were not already aware of the joke, would almost certainly have become so through reading the letter – Sharp’s theatrics were not subtle.

⁴¹⁵ Booth, p. 66.

⁴¹⁶ ‘Grundy, n.3.’ *OED Online*. Oxford University Press <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/82029> [accessed 04/07/2022].

⁴¹⁷ Sharp, *The Pagan Review*, p. 1.

and their limited popularity. ‘Thorough-going unpopularity’ also toys, though perhaps cross-temporally, with the concept of camp as intentional bad taste. The link between camp and queerness was not fully codified in this period (though it is now ‘perceived as a gay male political strategy’)⁴¹⁸ but it is interesting within a Sharp context to see an early use of the word in its more-or-less modern definition in Fanny Park’s self-description, published in *The Observer* in 1870; she describes her ‘campish undertakings’, a phrase which can be taken to mean her social transition.⁴¹⁹ Sharp’s work too is a campish undertaking, and while William Halloran calls Sharp’s paganism ‘heterosexual’, the queer elements in *The Pagan Review*, and the queer undertones in Victorian paganism generally, suggest that Halloran’s choice of adjective is too strong.⁴²⁰ We cannot overlook a queer political presence in Sharp’s campish undertaking, since it evokes Bredbeck’s assertion that camp is a ‘political strategy’.⁴²¹

Though these queer undertones do not necessarily require Sharp himself to be queer, we cannot suppose that Sharp was ignorant of, or rejected, these queer undertones, either in paganism, in *The Pagan Review* specifically, or in his social circle. Sharp’s close friend John Addington Symonds had released *A Problem in Greek Ethics* in 1883, *A Problem in Modern Ethics* in 1891, and *In The Key of Blue* in the year of his death, 1893. While the first two were of limited run, Symonds also commented on Sharp’s introduction to *Shakespeare’s Songs*: he referred to the introduction as ‘more humanly and humanely true about Shakespeare’s attitude in the Sonnets than anything which has yet been written about them’, and said that ‘you are one of those who live [...] in “the whole”’, a statement which Terry L. Meyers reads as suggestive of Sharp’s own sexuality.⁴²² While the exact meaning of Symonds’ words is unclear, it is suggestive that Sharp openly addresses with sympathy the queer potentiality that other critics had read and seen as incongruous with the Shakespeare they knew from *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. As Sharp writes:

⁴¹⁸ Gregory W. Bredbeck, ‘Narcissus in the Wilde: Textual cathexis and the historical origins of queer Camp’, in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, ed. by Moe Meyer (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 44-64 (p. 45).

⁴¹⁹ [Anon.], ‘The Men In Women’s Clothes’, *The Observer*, 29 May 1870, p. 3 <http://ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/men-womens-clothes/docview/475172843/se-2?accountid=14874> [accessed 05/05/2022]. In this context, perhaps we ought begin to consider camp as a transgender female political strategy.

⁴²⁰ Halloran, V1, p. 418. See Dennis Denisoff, ‘Walter Pater and the Queer Sympathies of Today’s Paganism’, *Pater Newsletter*, 2007, pp. 31-36, and ‘The Dissipating Nature of Decadent Paganism from Pater to Yeats’, *Modernism/modernity*, 15.3, 2008, pp. 431-446. See also Jennifer Hallett and G. J. Wheeler.

⁴²¹ Bredbeck, p. 45.

⁴²² Meyers, p. 7.

Yet another reason for the strange obtuseness of some would-be interpreters is an apparent forgetfulness of the most obvious facts of chronology. Would the man who was capable of writing such immortal works as 'The Tempest', 'King Lear', 'Macbeth', 'Hamlet', 'Othello':---so urge they, in effect – be likely to condescend to such almost unreasoning devotion to a boyish friend, still less would he be likely to forget the unspoken commands of duty, and yield to a temptation which was doubly evil in that the sinner transgressed against both moral and civil law? But it was not the Shakespeare of Hamlet, of Lear, of Macbeth, of Othello, who addressed the brilliant young Herbert of Pembroke in terms which now seem to us extravagant in their ardour ; it was not this Shakespeare who for a time forgot lealty to wife and child for an enthralling passion that disturbed his spiritual nature to its deepest depths, though it left them clearer than they had yet been, serene for evermore. But it was that younger Shakespeare, still in his years of youth, adventuresome, full of life, inspired with the fire of genius, elate with already won success, susceptible to every charm pertinent to the joyous pageant of life around him, – that Shakespeare, who as a young man, married untimely and early thrown upon the world to carve out his own destiny, so far as in him lay, loved with true affection, and with all the Euphuistic emphasis in expression characteristic of the generation his brilliant young friend, William Herbert.⁴²³

It seems that what John Addington Symonds saw in Sharp's writing was a deeper sympathy and understanding than Sharp was able to fully express here. Some of Sharp's more critical prevarications in this extract I read as him ventriloquising the 'would-be interpreters', though I also read his words as those of a young and little-proven critic confined by popular opinion and perspective. The 'attitude' Symonds suggests may be a queer attitude, generically speaking; a bisexual attitude specifically; or merely an awareness of queer perspective, developed through Sharp's close friendships with queer men and women. It is perhaps the urgency of Sharp's response that Addington Symonds found most telling. While bracketed by a certain level of decorous prevarication, Sharp's lack of ultimate condemnation and the forcefulness of his defence linger, and show him sympathetic and open to a queer perspective; interestingly, it also shows him open to queer perspective early in his career, when, as shown in Chapter 2, that career was still easy to scupper. Sharp's urgency perhaps takes on more weight when we consider it in light of the 1881 censure of his poem 'Motherhood': a poem that Vernon Lee read as overtly sexual, and criticised Sharp for writing.⁴²⁴ This censure led to the shattering of the burgeoning friendship between Sharp and Lee, and the experience may have led Sharp to take more care with

⁴²³ Sharp, *The Songs, Poems and Sonnets of William Shakespeare*, p. 15-16.

⁴²⁴ See Appendix 3.

work that may be seen as politically and sexually radical. This poem will be discussed in more detail on pages 218-19.

Aware of the possible repercussions generally and aware of the possible consequences for his own career, Sharp still takes a risk in presenting this defence of Shakespeare. While this defence was never again accomplished in such forceful language, it lingers in Sharp's and Macleod's works – in the introduction to *The Pagan Review*, in 'Morag of the Glen', in 'The Hotel of the Beautiful Star' – and in the way they, especially Sharp, worked, operated, and socialised. The following chapter engages with these ideas in greater detail.

Given this context, Sharp was almost certainly aware of the Ganymedeian implications when he writes that *The Pagan Review* was aimed at 'the younger men'.⁴²⁵ Sharp's own tendency to form emotionally intense relationships with older men – including Addington Symonds himself – looms large here. The only known writer to submit for *The Pagan Review*'s doomed second issue was the queer writer Robert Murray Gilchrist, with whom Sharp remained great friends, and whose sexuality Sharp seemed well aware of.⁴²⁶ Interestingly, Murray Gilchrist's *Frangipanni* was published uniform with *Vistas* in the Regent Library: *Frangipanni* in 1893 and *Vistas* in 1894. Murray Gilchrist may have suggested the Regent Library as a home for *Vistas*.

The Foreword of *The Pagan Review* does not foreground queer relationships: 'The supreme interest of Man is – Woman: and the most profound and fascinating problem to Woman is Man'.⁴²⁷ Nevertheless, Sharp filled his magazine with enough suggestiveness that it seems, like Addington Symonds' reading Sharp's *Shakespeare*, Gilchrist saw something in *The Pagan Review* that resonated.

The death of the magazine, too, retained its theatricality. Tongue in cheek, like the issue's foreword, Sharp's notice of the *Review*'s death indicates that at least on one level, the entire production of *The Pagan Review* was a self-conscious performance:

Regretted by none, save the affectionate parents and a few forlorn friends, The Pagan Review has returned to the void whence it came. The progenitors, more

⁴²⁵ Sharp, *The Pagan Review*, p. 1 (inside front cover).

⁴²⁶ See Halloran, V1, p. 507, p. 512 (in which Sharp writes 'I am glad we have become friends. Something drew me to you from the first', emphasis Sharp's own), p. 540, p. 559, p. 563, for Sharp's references to Gilchrist's partner, George Alfred Garfitt.

⁴²⁷ Sharp, *The Pagan Review*, p. 3.

hopeful than reasonable, look for an unglorious but robust resurrection at some more fortunate date. "For of such is the Kingdom of Paganism."⁴²⁸

It is unclear whether it was an intentional performance from its conception, a parodic exploration of 'little magazines', where each contributor's too-obvious pseudonym played a part in the parody and the foreword toyed lightly with the values of Aestheticism and its movement into Decadence; whether it began with serious intentions and slowly became a parody; or whether the elements of parody only came in at the point Sharp knew it would be unsustainable. It is important to note at this point that as parodic and tongue-in-cheek as *The Pagan Review* is, many ideas Sharp referred to in it were ideas that he took seriously and used in his own work.

As Booth remarks, to be camp is to be committed to the marginal with a commitment greater than the marginal merits.⁴²⁹ Sharp's focus on his own works, at least in *The Pagan Review*, is camp because of this very definition. He presents himself as committed to his work – marginal and poor as it had been received – with a commitment so great that he dances a fine line between gauche self-promotion and intentional camp. The magazine opens with the statement '[w]e aim at thoroughgoing unpopularity: and there is every reason to believe that, with the blessed who expect little, we shall not be disappointed', and the Foreword continues, proclaiming with great commitment that '[i]t is Life that we preach, if perforce we must be taken preachers at all'.⁴³⁰ These words are both lighthearted and gauche; shoving themselves out into the world in much the same manner that Sharp shoved his way into Rossetti's house, or into the publishing market. Sharp here plays with the very kind of aggressive self-confidence that was poorly received earlier in his career. The very fact of the gauche quality to *The Pagan Review* is indicative of its campness. Sharp's usual taste was towards the Aesthetic, which Booth, in campish tones, distinguishes from Camp: 'Serious aesthetes tend to be priggish, whilst camp people gaily publicise themselves as immoral.'⁴³¹ *The Pagan Review* gaily publicised itself, rejecting priggishness in favour of accepting the ways in which it may be seen as immoral and embracing being seen as such, and in favour of emphasising its own theatricality.

⁴²⁸ Halloran, p. 417.

⁴²⁹ Booth, p. 69.

⁴³⁰ Sharp, *The Pagan Review*, p. 4.

⁴³¹ Booth, p. 72.

4.2: *The Evergreen* as Portfolio

In 1894, William and Elizabeth Sharp met Patrick and Anna Geddes. Friendship between Patrick Geddes and William Sharp was immediate and strong. Elizabeth Sharp writes that:

To hold to the essential beauty and thought of the past, while going forward eagerly to meet the new and ever increasing knowledge, was the desire of both men. In their aims they were in sympathy with one another [...] they were eager to find some way of collaboration.⁴³²

Patrick Geddes' and J. Arthur Thompson's *Evolution of Sex* was published by Walter Scott as part of the Contemporary Science series, edited by Havelock Ellis, in 1889, and so it is possible that Sharp and Geddes were aware of each other before their meeting. While it is unknown how they came to meet, that fact of a common publisher, and Sharp being an editor with that publisher, suggests a possible path to friendship. Their relationship deepened quickly and the Sharps became involved with Geddes' educational and publishing efforts. The Sharps moved temporarily, in 1895, to Edinburgh, taking a flat so that they could be more closely involved with Geddes' new firm than they could from London or from Sussex.⁴³³ William Sharp was to lecture as part of Edinburgh University's Summer School, and he was looking forward to it, having written, as Elizabeth rather fondly notes, far too much material for the ten lectures he was supposed to be delivering.⁴³⁴

Sharp's doctor's warnings about the potential American lecture tour, and the potential professorship, come to fruition in Edinburgh. Then forty and having been sickly much of his life, 'he was seized with a severe heart attack and all his notes fell to the ground. It was with the greatest effort that he was able to bring the lecture to a close.'⁴³⁵ In the aftermath he temporarily retired to the Firth of Forth, while Elizabeth continued on in Edinburgh so that they were still able to fulfil their commitments with Geddes and the University. Luckily, these events did not stop Sharp's close involvement in either Geddes' publishing firm or the *Evergreen* itself. Geddes encouraged Sharp to move permanently to Edinburgh but after some deliberation, Sharp refused. Edinburgh, despite Sharp's love of

⁴³² E. A. S., V2, pp. 48-49

⁴³³ The Sharps moved to Sussex in 1892, a decision which did not particularly agree with either of them.

⁴³⁴ It was not his first lecture, nor his first engagement with the academic world, having put himself forward for the post of Professor of English Literature at University College London. E. A. S., V2, p. 51.

⁴³⁵ E. A. S., V2, p. 52.

and desire to return to Scotland, was too far out of the London network-system on which he relied. London was a 'bazaar of fortunate & smiling chances,' and being too far outside London would deny him of the important physical proximity to magazines and publishers that underpinned his successful literary operation.⁴³⁶ Moving to Edinburgh, Sharp suggests, would deny him his much fought for financial stability: he doubted that he could find enough work to earn him '£300 & leave [him] time for [his] own particular work'.⁴³⁷

Despite his economic inability to move, he still had an important role in the development of Patrick Geddes and Colleagues. As Halloran notes:

To help the firm get a good start, he suggested 'a little Fortnightly,' like The Chap-Book Stone and Kimball was publishing in Chicago. [...] The fortnightly would require careful editing and handling, and Sharp would be glad to undertake it [...] Sharp's suggestion was the genesis of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, a more elaborate publication, the first issue of which appeared in the spring of 1895.⁴³⁸

As Halloran suggests here, the 'little Fortnightly' never materialised. Instead, what appeared was four issues of a magazine inspired by a 'Christmas Book' from December of 1894, which had been produced mostly by students of Edinburgh's University Hall, with which Geddes was deeply connected.⁴³⁹ Several of the writers featured in *The New Evergreen: A Christmas Book from University Hall* went on to have a place in *The Evergreen* proper.⁴⁴⁰ Koenraad Claes, in *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine*, discusses the goals of the *Evergreen*:

The Evergreen, by contrast, was to prove the relevance of science, art and folklore to a comprehensive appreciation of life in all its aspects. For its integration of social politics, science and art into one overarching project, represented conceptually in the integrated ordering of its contents and the cohesion of its design aesthetic, the *Evergreen* may of all little magazines of the 1890s be the most invested in the Total Work of Art ideal.⁴⁴¹

An advert for Geddes and Colleagues, yes; but not only. *The Evergreen* was a manifesto for a new Edinburgh and a new Scotland with its own cultural identity viewed in the context of a world stage. The echoes with modern devolved Scotland are obvious, and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, in the introduction to *The Evergreen* on *Yellow Nineties Online*, writes:

⁴³⁶ Halloran, V2, p. 16.

⁴³⁷ Halloran, V2, p. 16.

⁴³⁸ Ibid, p. 16.

⁴³⁹ See Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Kooistra, 'General Introduction to The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal', *Evergreen Digital Edition, Yellow Nineties 2.0* (2019) https://1890s.ca/the_evergreen_general_introduction/ [accessed 04/07/2022] See also Claes, p. 166.

⁴⁴⁰ Claes, p. 166.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, p. 164.

Indeed, the [the 1895-96 *Evergreen*]'s ongoing cultural importance is evident in a new *Evergreen*, 'harking back to the *Evergreens* published by Allan Ramsay and Patrick Geddes,' launched by the Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust in September 2014 on the occasion of the Scottish referendum on national independence.⁴⁴²

Israel Zangwill noted this same cultural importance at the time of the Geddes' *Evergreen*'s production:

"Till I went to Edinburgh,' he wrote, 'I did not know what the "Evergreen" was. Newspaper criticisms had given me vague misrepresentations of a Scottish "Yellow Book" calling itself a "Northern Seasonal"."

Kooistra adds:

It was only by walking through the slums of Old Edinburgh's Lawnmarket – then considered to be among Europe's worst – and seeing the urban renewal and revitalization that Geddes's projects were engendering, that Zangwill began to understand *The Evergreen* as the portable aesthetic expression of a larger socio-political vision.⁴⁴³

The Evergreen was the most visionary artistic project that Sharp had ever worked on. While it was not precisely as he had originally proposed it, he sat on its editorial board and contributed to most of its issues. Fiona Macleod contributed to all of them. Sharp had never been able to fully realise his Scottish identity in London, and his early career was marked by a constant struggle between his Scottish and London selves.⁴⁴⁴ *The Evergreen* was an important synthesis of the modern literary world with the traditions of Scottish art and culture, and forged a path for the development of Scottish literature. Sharp, still heavily influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites but growing more and more interested in avant-garde European literatures, was able to finally possess his Scottish identity, and do so while taking part in a fresh and exciting literary movement. *The Evergreen* allowed Sharp to take part both in the artistic avant-garde and in the rejuvenation of Scottish identity and urban renewal in Scotland.⁴⁴⁵ For the first time under his own name, Sharp was able to put his Scottish identity first.

⁴⁴² Kooistra, <https://beta.1890s.ca/the-evergreen-general-introduction/>.

⁴⁴³ Kooistra, <https://beta.1890s.ca/the-evergreen-general-introduction/>.

⁴⁴⁴ E. A. S., V1, p. 81-2.

⁴⁴⁵ Michael Shaw fruitfully navigates Sharp and Macleod's writings as obscure and conflicting on the matter of the colonialist project throughout 'William Sharp's Neo-Paganism'; also see Elizabeth Sharp, V1, 81-2, on the difference between Sharp's internal Teuton and internal Celt.

The Evergreen also allowed Sharp a space in which to explore how he wanted to express and fashion himself. Halloran writes that:

[1896], Sharp asked Anna Geddes if she was surprised when her husband told her “W. S. and Fiona Macleod are one in the same person.” Since the Fiona writings were his “Celtic” credentials for taking part in the publishing firm Geddes was organizing, he had confided in Geddes and given him permission to share the secret with his wife. Sharp’s purpose in writing to Anna was to emphasize the need for “absolute preservation of the secret.” He had sent her a letter from Fiona, written in Fiona’s handwriting, before she was apprised of Fiona’s true identity. Now he wrote in his own handwriting and signed the letter, curiously, “Fiona Macleod and William Sharp.” This is a unique instance of the double signature in a letter and of the Fiona Macleod signature in a letter written in Sharp’s hand.⁴⁴⁶

Fiona Macleod may have in part operated as a way for Sharp to express the Scottishness that felt inexpressible otherwise. It also seems that while Sharp had been expressing an internal femininity since at least his early twenties, this had similarly proven impossible to express externally; for Sharp, it seemed that being true to his Scottishness meant being true to his femininity. It is plausible that this connection, between femininity and Scottishness, was one that was more external expectation than internal pressure, given the cultural association between Celticism in all its forms and womanhood.⁴⁴⁷ Silke Stroh analyses Macleod’s *Green Fire* in light of this cultural association.⁴⁴⁸ Nevertheless, we cannot assume that Fiona Macleod was a woman because she was a Celt, or that she was a Celt because she was a woman – or further, that if she were a woman because she was a Celt or vice versa, that this was a marketing ploy by Sharp.⁴⁴⁹ Moreover, Fiona Macleod’s “‘Celtic’ credentials’ may have acted both as a way of distancing her from Sharp’s public persona, and a way of giving Sharp access to femininity without cutting too close to the bone.⁴⁵⁰ Macleod’s artificial aspects and distance from Sharp (that is, that she was presented as a Highland Catholic rather than a Lowland Protestant) may have been as much a personal coping mechanism as much as a disguising tactic. It may have been difficult for Sharp to

⁴⁴⁶ Halloran, V2, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁴⁷ See Joseph Valente, *Dracula’s Crypt* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2002), p.26; Murray G. H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 61.

⁴⁴⁸ Silke Stroh, “Racist Reversals: Appropriating Racial Typology in Late Nineteenth-Century Pro-Gaelic Discourse” in Stroh, *Gaelic Scotland in the Colonial Imagination: Anglophone Writing 1600-1900* (Evanston, Illinois: 2017) pp. 213-246 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt22727mv> [accessed 14/04/2021]

⁴⁴⁹ See Shaw, *The Fin-de-Siecle Scottish Revival*, p. 159. Further, we cannot forget that while womanhood and Celticism were deeply interlinked within nineteenth-century discourse, the majority of the loudest voices in the Celtic Revival were men.

⁴⁵⁰ Halloran, V2, p. 14.

contemplate creating a female persona whose upbringing and lifestyle was similar to his family's. Macleod's distinct differences from Sharp may have allowed Sharp to retain emotional control of that distance.

The first *Evergreen* was released in spring of 1895 and contained three pieces by Macleod and one by Sharp. Macleod continued as the primary contributor out of the two, placing three works in issues one, three, and four, and one in issue two, where Sharp placed one work each in the first three issues. Most other contributors contributed one per issue to at most three issues of the four-issue run. Eighteen contributors contributed two or more per issue. The only contributors to contribute more than three pieces of work to any number of issues were those who created art for the magazine. Several writers contributed to every issue of the magazine, and they are outlined in the following table:

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>No. of Contributions Overall</i>
<i>Fiona Macleod</i>	10
<i>J. Arthur Thompson</i>	6
<i>Patrick Geddes</i>	8
<i>W. Macdonald</i>	8

As we can see from the table, Fiona Macleod was the most prolific contributor of writing to the magazine. *The Evergreen* may not have been her production in the way that *The Pagan Review* was Sharp's, but it was very much a vehicle for her writing. Sharp fell away, buried among the many other contributors who only wrote one piece per issue for the magazine. By contrast, Macleod was one of the most commonly occurring names in the magazine, only surpassed by some of the art contributors. *The Evergreen*, functionally, is an informal portfolio of Macleod's early writing. Sharp had never appeared in a production with such high artistic values, and when he finally did, trailing behind him was over a decade of unsatisfactory and poorly received material. Macleod, however, acquired critical acclaim and popularity more quickly, as will be seen in the later discussion about reception of her work. The artistic culture surrounding *The Evergreen* legitimised Macleod; with ten contributions over four issues, her style and subjects were an inescapable part of the magazine's tone and aesthetic. For Sharp/Macleod, *The Evergreen* was something like *The Germ*, in that it was an aesthetic manifesto that worked as portfolio and springboard for its

contributors.⁴⁵¹ *The Pagan Review* played with and camped this aesthetic manifesto/portfolio, but in *The Evergreen*, the concept of the aesthetic manifesto was played straight, with a bigger budget and greater artistic presence, and pushed Sharp/Macleod's career into its next phase in a way *The Pagan Review* never managed.

Macleod was fundamental to *The Evergreen*, not only in terms of having contributed so many works but also in terms of the magazine's reception. The magazine as a whole was not particularly well-received, but Macleod's contributions were often praised. An anonymous reviewer for *The Literary World* wrote:

The Seasonal would be unique and valuable even, without the work of Fiona Macleod. But with her verses and a story from her pen the strength and charm are much increased, and also, we should say, the saleability, for she is a remarkable writer, destined, alas! for popularity.⁴⁵²

In *The Bookman*, fellow *Evergreen* contributor Victor Branford wrote: 'but the writings of Fiona Macleod are gradually disclosing to the British public quite another Scotland than that with which lowland writers have familiarized them.'⁴⁵³ An anonymous writer for *The Saturday Review* singled out one of Sharp's works, a translation of a poem by Belgian writer Charles Van Lerberghe, and one of Macleod's. It is unclear whether the reviewer was one of those few who knew, or suspected, Macleod's identity:

There are two pieces of writing which are worth reading. One a translation of the "Flaieurs" of Charles Van Lerberghe, "this new and strange, this apparently crude but artistically wrought presentment of the brutality of the commonplace death" (the words are Maeterlinck's, quoted by Mr. William Sharp in his note); the other is Fiona Macleod's, telling of the marvellous legend which makes a Gaelic girl the foster-mother of Christ for one night.⁴⁵⁴

An anonymous writer for *The Scottish Review* also noted both Sharp and Macleod's works, interestingly also mentioning Sharp's friends Sir Noel Paton and Edith Wingate Rinder:

The strongest paper in the number is from the hand of Mr. Geddes. Sir Noel Paton contributes a number of graceful verses, and Mr. W. Sharp, besides a poem or two, a

⁴⁵¹ Koenraad Claes, 'The Germ of a Genre', in *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctv7n0bhhk> [accessed 05/05/2022] pp. 16-35 (pp. 22-4).

⁴⁵² [Anon.], "'The Evergreen'" *The Literary World: A Monthly Review of Current Literature*, 28.10, 15 May 1897, p. 157 https://1890s.ca/EG1-4_Review_LiteraryWorld_1897/ [accessed 04/07/2022].

⁴⁵³ Victor V. Branford, 'Old Edinburgh and *The Evergreen*', *The Bookman* 9.51, (1895) 88-90 https://1890s.ca/EG2_Review_Bookman_1895/ [accessed 04/07/2022].

⁴⁵⁴ [Anon.], 'Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol.2, Autumn 1895', *The Saturday Review*, November 1895, p. 736. https://1890s.ca/EG2_Review_The_Saturday_Review_Nov_1895/ [accessed 04/07/2022].

translation of van Lerberghe's *Les Fleurs*, a play which though suggestive is not in any way a subject for enthusiasm. Among other notable pieces are Miss Rinder's Breton legend entitled "Amel and Penhor," and Miss Macleod's "Mary of the Gael."⁴⁵⁵

Finally, an anonymous reviewer for *The Spectator* writes:

These two numbers of the "Seasonal" are marked by an anxious self-consciousness, an effort to have style that defeats itself. The type has so much of this style that it is ugly and unreadable. Style stands like a grille before the articles, and hits one in the eye from the drawings. We find, however, some feeling and talent in the writing of Miss Fiona MacLeod, and in Mr. Charles Mackie's *Hide and Seek*.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵ [Anon.], "'The Evergreen'", *The Scottish Review*, Jan 1896, p. 178
https://1890s.ca/eg2_review_the_scottish_review_jan_1896/ [accessed 04/07/2022].

⁴⁵⁶ [Anon.], "'The Evergreen'", *The Spectator*, Feb 1896, p. 274
https://1890s.ca/eg2_review_the_spectator_feb_1896/ [accessed 04/07/2022].

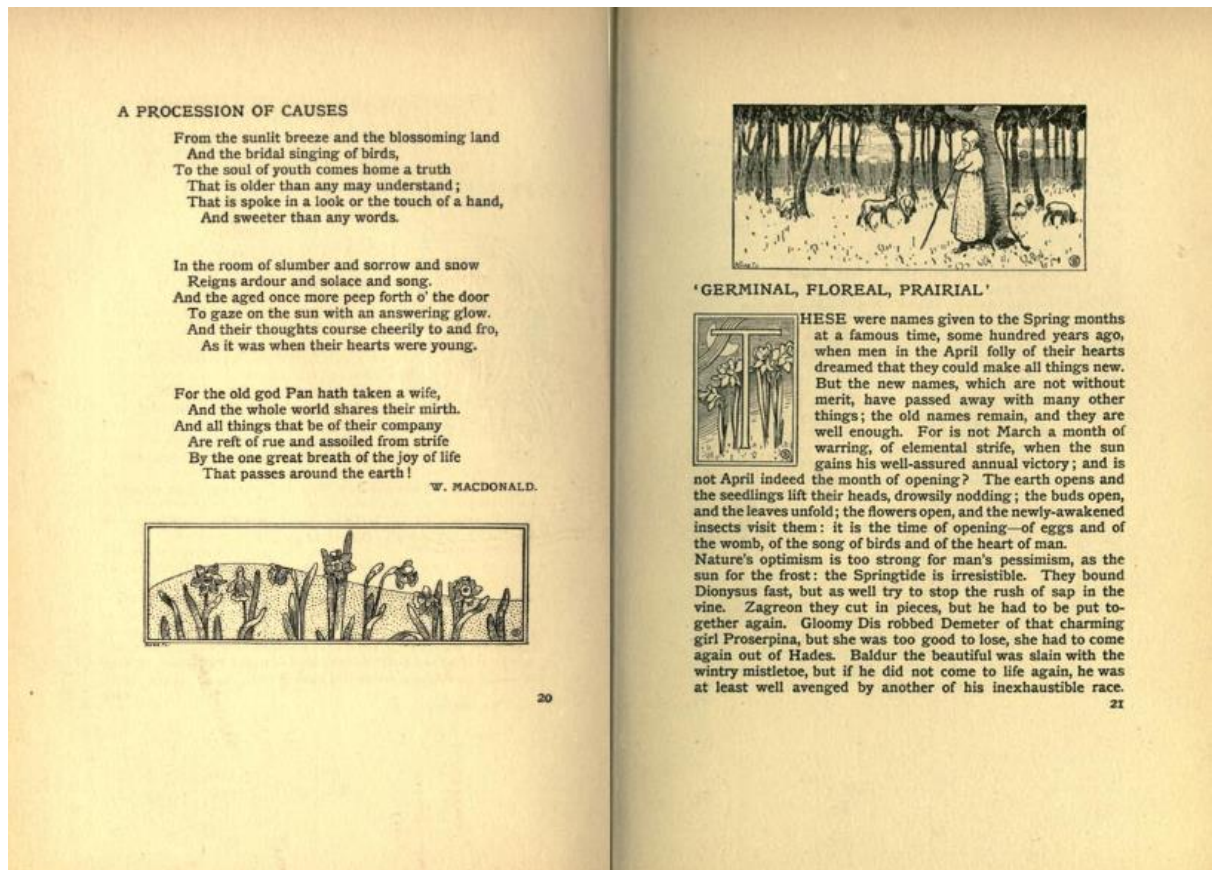


Figure 23: This shows two pages from *The Evergreen, Spring 1895* (the first volume), demonstrating the ‘ugly and unreadable’ typeface.

The following table demonstrates which contributors were singled out for mention across the eighteen reviews collected by Kooistra *et al* on the Yellow Nineties Database.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁷ [Anon.], “Our Library Table.” Rev. of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol 1. *The Athenæum*, 22 June 1895, p. 801. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2020. <https://www.1890s.ca/EG1-review-the-athenaeum-1895/>; [Anon.], “The Evergreen.” Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 1., Spring 1895, *Magazine Of Art*, Jan 1895, p. 439. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/eg1_review_magazine_of_art_sept_1895/; H.G. Wells, “Bio-optimism.” Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 1, Spring 1895, *Nature*, 29 Aug 1895, pp. 410-411. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/eg1_review_nature_1895/; [Anon.], “The Evergreen.” Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 1, Spring 1895, *The Review of Reviews*, June 1895, p. 546. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG1_Review_ReviewofReviews_1895/; [Anon.], “The Yellow Book & The Evergreen.” Review of *The Yellow Book*, vol. 5, April 1895, and *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 1, Spring 1895, *The Bookman*, June 1895, p. 91. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Center for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://beta.1890s.ca/eg1_yb5_review_bookman_1895/; [Anon.] “The Evergreen.” Rev. of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 1, Spring 1895, and vol. 2, Autumn 1895, *Cosmopolis Literary Advertiser*, March 1896, p. 2. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG1-2_Review_Cosmopolis_Literary_Advertiser_March_1896/; Israel Zangwill, “The Evergreen.” Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 1-2, *The Pall Mall Magazine*, Feb 1896, pp. 327-329. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*,

Three of the eighteen do not single out any particular writer or artist, and thus effectively this table accounts for fifteen reviews.

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>Positive Reviews</i>	<i>Negative Reviews</i>	<i>Mixed Reviews</i>
William Sharp	1		
Robert Burns	1		1
J. Arthur Thomson	2	1	
Fiona Macleod	5		
Edith Wingate Rinder	1		
Charles Van Lerberche	2		

(trans. by William Sharp)

edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG2_Review_The_Pall_Mall_Magazine_Feb_1896/; [Anon.], "The Evergreen." Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 1-4, 1895-1896/7, *The Literary World; A Monthly Review of Current Literature*, 15 May 1897, p. 157. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG1-4_Review_LiteraryWorld_1897/; Margaret Armour "Mural Decoration in Scotland. Part I." Rev. of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*. *The International Studio*, 1897, pp. 100-106. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2020. <https://www.1890s.ca/EG-Review-The-International-Studio-1897/>; Victor Branford, "Old Edinburgh and the Evergreen." Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 2, Autumn 1895, *The Bookman*, Dec. 1895, pp. 88-90. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG2_Review_Bookman_1895/; [Anon.], "The Evergreen." Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 2, Autumn 1895, *Bow Bells*, Nov 1895, p. 491. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG2_Review_Bow_Bells_Nov_1895/; [Anon.], "The Evergreen." Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 2, Autumn 1895, *Magazine Of Art*, Feb 1896, p. 159. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG2_Review_Magazine_of_Art_Feb_1896/; [Anon.], Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 2, Autumn 1895, *The Saturday Review*, November 1895, p. 736. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG2_Review_The_Saturday_Review_Nov_1895/; [Anon.], "The Evergreen." Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 2, Autumn 1895, *The Scottish Review*, Jan 1896, p. 178. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/eg2_review_the_scottish_review_jan_1896/; [Anon.], "The Evergreen." Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 2, Autumn 1895, *The Spectator*, Feb 1896, p. 274. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/eg2_review_the_spectator_feb_1896/; [Anon.], "'The Pageant,' and Two Other Miscellanies." Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 2, Autumn 1895, and *The Pageant*, 1896, *The Spectator*, 29 Aug 1895, p. 274. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/eg2_pageant1_review_thespectator_feb1896/; [Anon.], Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 3, Summer 1896, *The Saturday Review*, July 1896, p. 48. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/eg3_review_the_saturday_review_july_1896/; [Anon.], "The Evergreen." Review of *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, vol. 2, Autumn 1895, *International Studio*, 1896, p. 66. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/EG2_Review_International_Studio_March_To_June_1897/.

Charles Sarolea	1	
C.H Mackie	3	2
W. G. Burn-Murdoch		1
Riccardo Stephens		1
Hugo Laubach		1
Robert Brough		1
Pittendrigh	1	
MacGillivray		
Patrick Geddes	3	1
Noel Paton	1	
J. Cadenhead	2	
John Duncan	1	1

There are seventeen contributors here of 65 total across all four issues of the magazine. There are ten mixed or negative mentions, and twenty-four positive. The positive mentions are shared by thirteen contributors. Of those thirteen, six are mentioned positively more than once, but only Fiona Macleod is mentioned more than three times. Interestingly, three of the six most positively received also appear in the preceding table of those who contribute the most, though there is no correlation between the positive reception and number of contributions to the reviewed issue.⁴⁵⁸ Macleod, who had the highest number of written contributions overall, also has the highest number of positive reviews, although all but one of those positive reviews hung on one contribution, her story 'Mary of the Gael'. This supports Robert Farquharson Sharp's assertion that Sharp took on the Macleod pseudonym to get a 'fair show' from critics.⁴⁵⁹

The Evergreen was not Fiona Macleod's first publication. In 1894, Frank Murray published Sharp's *Vistas* and Macleod's *Pharais*. In 1895, Macleod began publishing in *The Evergreen*, and in the same year her second novel, *The Mountain Lovers*, was published by John Lane, and her short story collection, *The Sin-Eater and Other Tales*, was published by

⁴⁵⁸ One of those six is J. Cadenhead, one of the artists who contributed more work to the magazine than Macleod.

⁴⁵⁹ See Meyers, p. 57. This Sharp was William Sharp's cousin, and Elizabeth Sharp's brother. He was a writer and translator in his own right.

Patrick Geddes. There is no muddling through the whims of the publishing industry for Macleod, since the stage has been already set by Sharp. Macleod can step out – through Sharp’s connection with Frank Murray, through Sharp’s connection to Geddes – onto the kind of stage that had eluded Sharp in his early career despite the connections he made. It was, in a very real sense, Sharp whose social connections opened the door into *The Evergreen*, and Macleod who walked through it. The decade that Sharp spent slowly and painstakingly setting up his social network and using it to gain financial stability bears fruit suddenly in the work of Fiona Macleod. However, it should not be ignored that, as Halloran passingly notes, Macleod was Sharp’s “‘Celtic’ credentials’ in contributing to *The Evergreen*.⁴⁶⁰ While Sharp connected to Geddes, it was Macleod who consolidated that connection. In a small way, *The Evergreen* is representative of Macleod’s networking as well as Sharp’s. Together Sharp and Macleod made opportunity out of *The Evergreen*.

Nevertheless, the presence of Sharp on *The Evergreen*’s editorial committee and the fact that he used Macleod as his ‘credentials’ – a process of legitimisation that doubtless went both ways – and Geddes’ knowledge of Macleod’s identity makes *The Evergreen* a protected space in which Macleod is guarded and supported.⁴⁶¹ The same is true of the fact that Macleod’s first novel, *Pharais*, was published with Frank Murray after Sharp’s *Vistas*. Sharp is scoping out Macleod’s first opportunities, making sure that they are safe for her works and personhood. In this period, Macleod is supported by Sharp and Geddes. However, in *The Savoy*, Macleod is standing by herself.

4.3: The Savoy

The relationship between Macleod and *The Savoy* was triggered by W.B Yeats, a frequent contributor to the magazine. Yeats had, according to William Halloran, encouraged the editor of *The Savoy*, Arthur Symons, to ask Macleod to submit a story for publication.⁴⁶² Macleod, or Sharp, wrote ‘The Archer’ for submission, though that story was passed over in favour of a second, ‘Morag of the Glen’. However, though the Yeats connection was clearly

⁴⁶⁰ Halloran, p. 16.

⁴⁶¹ Halloran, V2, p. 15.

⁴⁶² Halloran, V2, p. 220.

influential in getting Macleod published, it is worth mentioning that a fair number of Sharp's friends appeared throughout *The Savoy's* run, including Bliss Carman, Ernest Rhys, and Mathilde Blind. Sharp was therefore closely associated with *The Savoy* socially speaking, and Macleod had several routes into its pages she could have taken advantage of. Nevertheless, Symons' request that she submit is emblematic of Macleod's new place in the literary world. Where Sharp seems at points to have been 'filler' for a magazine or collection, and seems to have been published because he wrote cheap, easily marketed work at speed, Macleod is being invited to appear in curated, cutting-edge artistic works like *The Savoy*, *The Dome*, and *Cosmopolis*.

Symons appears to have asked for contributions regularly, including from Joseph Conrad. Conrad accepted the commission with some unwillingness, and this unwillingness may shed some light on Macleod's own relationship with *The Savoy*.⁴⁶³ William Atkinson writes that 'Conrad was not entirely pleased to be in such a magazine [as the Savoy], one now best known as the epitome of nineties decadence'.⁴⁶⁴ Atkinson elaborates: '[I]n the spring of 1896, Conrad wrote to T. Fisher Unwin, his publisher and agent: "I am very glad you do not think much of the 'Savoy.' The personality (as disclosed in some verses) of A.[rthur] S.[ymons] is not sympathetic to me"'.⁴⁶⁵ Whilst Macleod's (and indeed Sharp's) fiction and poetry lacked the archetypal decadent ennui, Sharp's love of the Symbolists and the undercurrents of sexual freedom, including more subtly queer sexual freedoms, in various Sharp and Macleod works, suggest that *The Savoy* and Symons' editorship found a more sympathetic eye and ear in Sharp/Macleod than in Conrad. To demonstrate this sympathy most clearly, we can look to *The Pagan Review*. I draw out here two excerpts from the first two editorial notes to *The Savoy*, to compare with Sharp's editorial note to *The Pagan Review*.

All we ask from our contributors is good work, and good work is all we offer our readers. This we offer with some confidence. We have no formulas, and we desire no false unity of form or matter. We have not invented a new point of view. We are not Realists, or Romanticists, or Decadents. For us, all art is good which is good art. We hope to appeal to the tastes of the intelligent by not being original for

⁴⁶³ William Atkinson, "'The Idiots' in 'The Savoy': Decadence and the Celtic Fringe", *Conradia*, 47.2 (2015), 113-132, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44683734> [accessed 04/07/2022] (p. 115).

⁴⁶⁴ Atkinson, p.113.

⁴⁶⁵ Atkinson, p. 115.

originality's sake, or audacious for the sake of advertisement, or timid for the convenience of the elderly-minded.⁴⁶⁶

That reception has been none the less flattering because it has been for the most part unfavourable. Any new endeavour lends itself, alike by its merits and by its defects, to the disapproval of the larger number of people. And it is always possible to learn from any vigorously expressed denunciation, not, perhaps, what the utterer of that denunciation intended should be learnt.⁴⁶⁷

The Pagan Review 'aims at thorough-going unpopularity,' and 'in a word, is to be a mouthpiece – we are genuinely modest enough to disavow the definite article – of the younger generation.'⁴⁶⁸ Sharp was, perhaps, creating what Symons calls unfavourably a 'false unity of form or matter', with the creation of this 'mouthpiece'; and Sharp wrote:

it is natural that literature dominated by the various forces of the sexual emotion should prevail. Yet, though paramount in attraction, it is, after all, but one among the many motive forces of life; so we will hope not to fall into the error of some of our French confreres and be persistently and even supernaturally awake to the functional activity and blind to the general life and interest of the commonwealth of soul and body.⁴⁶⁹

In this quotation, Sharp does indicate a theme for *The Pagan Review*, where Symons disavows a theme for *The Savoy*. However, for all that Symons refused the concept of false unity, a false unity was applied to *The Savoy* from outside. The reputation of Symons' poetry and Beardsley's art as possessing an intense 'dirty-minded' sexuality – that very thing which made Conrad baulk – suggests that the reality of *The Savoy*, no matter the editorial intentions, echoed the intentions of *The Pagan Review* in that it was, in Sharp's words, 'dominated by the various forces of the sexual emotion'.⁴⁷⁰ While Symons may not have wished to declare that the magazine was so dominated in his editorial note, or even curate such an image within his volumes, *The Savoy* of the popular imagination, and *The Savoy's* place within the literary environment, was dependent on the sense that it was, if not 'dirty-minded', dominated by 'sexual emotion'.⁴⁷¹ Later in this chapter it will be shown that this

⁴⁶⁶ Arthur Symons and Aubrey Beardsley, 'Editorial Note', *The Savoy*, 1 (January 1896), <https://1890s.ca/savoy-volumes/> [accessed 04/07/2022] p. 5.

⁴⁶⁷ Arthur Symons and Aubrey Beardsley, 'Editorial Note', *The Savoy*, 2 (April 1896), <https://1890s.ca/savoy-volumes/> [accessed 04/07/2022] p. 5.

⁴⁶⁸ William Sharp, 'Foreword', *Pagan Review* (p. 1, p. 3).

⁴⁶⁹ Sharp, *Pagan Review*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁷⁰ Atkinson, p. 115; Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 3.

⁴⁷¹ Atkinson, p. 115; Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 3.

domination is indeed a 'false unity'; however, that does not take away from the public image of *The Savoy*, nor from the sympathy suggested between *The Pagan Review* and *The Savoy*.⁴⁷²

Sharp's tagline for *The Pagan Review*, 'Sic Transit Gloria Grundi', echoes Symons' assertion that *The Savoy* refuses to be 'timid'; while Sharp's tone in the editorial note suggests an intentional courting of controversy, his assertion that 'It is Life that we preach, if perforce we should be taken as preachers at all', suggests that 'originality for originality's sake' was not a concern, just as it was not a concern for Symons, even if 'art for art's sake' was.⁴⁷³ Sharp's assertion that life was what he preached suggested an intent to curate the magazine without thought to what was original for its own sake, and instead to curate in line with that sense of 'Life', whether the works were especially, consciously, original or not.⁴⁷⁴ Sharp's apparent focus for *The Pagan Review* was to include literature which expressed 'life to the full, in all its manifestations, in its heights and depths'.⁴⁷⁵ This is a more fanciful way of putting Symons' rejection of theme. As much as Sharp focused his energies on 'sexual emotion', and thus did put a theme on the first issue of *The Pagan Review*, the magazine's projected future suggested Symons' themeless, formless, good art for the sake of good art.⁴⁷⁶ We can position *The Savoy* as others have done, and as it did itself, as a successor to *The Yellow Book*. However, in several ways, it was also an unknowing successor to *The Pagan Review*. *The Savoy*, between Symons and Beardsley's reputations and the fact that Leonard Smithers, its publisher, was a well-known pornographer, cannot escape its focus on the 'sexual emotion' previously proclaimed by Sharp in *The Pagan Review*.⁴⁷⁷ In this light we can look at *The Savoy* as a successful remarketing of the ideas in *The Pagan Review*, and thus, a suggestion, if unremarked, of the ultimate viability of Sharp/Macleod's artistic efforts.

Elizabeth Sharp wrote in her biography that there had been whispers of Macleod's presence before *The Pagan Review*, and thus we can read echoes of Macleod within that

⁴⁷² Symons and Beardsley, *The Savoy*, 1, p. 5.

⁴⁷³ Sharp, *Pagan Review*, front cover; Symons and Beardsley, *The Savoy*, 1, p. 5; Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 4; Symons and Beardsley, *The Savoy*, 1, p. 5; Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁴ Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 4.

⁴⁷⁵ Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 4. While I focus here on the similarities between Sharp and Symons' and Beardsley's work, all were responding to a contemporary debate which included works such as Thomas Hardy's *Candour in English Fiction* and George Moore's *Literature at Nurse*.

⁴⁷⁶ Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁷ Sharp, *Pagan Review*, p. 3.

text, especially given the freedom of *The Pagan Review*'s pseudonymous construction.⁴⁷⁸ While that should not be taken to mean that the sympathy indicated by *The Pagan Review* with *The Savoy*'s aims and curation of content is exclusively Macleod's, it is nevertheless interesting given the fellow feeling between *The Savoy* as a whole and Macleod's story published in its pages, 'Morag of the Glen'.⁴⁷⁹ Taken on its own, 'Morag of the Glen' is not the kind of text one might classically associate with *The Savoy*. However, Wendell Harris notes that *The Savoy* rarely lived up in the whole to its own reputation.⁴⁸⁰ Harris largely focuses on Yeats' contributions, of which there were nine across seven issues.⁴⁸¹ He describes the English Decadent stereotype as follows:

Their psychology is usually appraised by a slightly different pattern [from French Decadence]: first a soul-corroding ennui, then the desire for new, sharper, and usually iniquitous experiences with which to banish this tedium, and finally despair at the banality of the malaise and the ineffectuality of the cure.⁴⁸²

Harris also notes that whilst Symons and frequent contributor Ernest Dowson did defend and write works which fit the definition of Decadence, the poetry of *The Savoy* has a more complex position:

[...] a careful reading of the poetry of the *Savoy* clearly demonstrates the inapplicability of these descriptions of decadence to most of its poetry. Any reference to the 'decadence' of that poetry requires the recognition of a three-fold qualification: 1) that many of these poems contain no hint of decadent tendencies; 2) that although the coterie of poets which clustered around the *Yellow Book* and the *Savoy* was intensely interested in Verlaine, Mallarme, and Rimbaud, few of the *Savoy* poems conform to the complex of psychological attitudes attributed to the French decadence; 3) that the greater portion of those poems which seem to reveal a decadent impulse invite a different interpretation of the meaning of that term than is outlined in either of the above patterns.⁴⁸³

Harris then makes his point by turning to Yeats. Yeats, Harris argues, saw in Symbolism and French Decadence a way to combine Celtic esoteric elements with a 'brief and pregnant' style.⁴⁸⁴ To Harris, Yeats' poetry does not show 'in any form the exquisite weariness of soul

⁴⁷⁸ E. A. S., V1, p. 215.

⁴⁷⁹ Fiona Macleod, 'Morag of the Glen', *The Savoy*, 7 (October 1896), 13-34

https://archive.org/details/savoy_1896_07/mode/2up?view=theater [accessed 08/07/2022].

⁴⁸⁰ Wendell Harris, 'Innocent Decadence: The Poetry of the Savoy', *PMLA*, 77.5 (1962) 629-636

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/460411> [accessed 04/07/2022].

⁴⁸¹ These numbers do not include his essays on William Blake.

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, p. 629.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 630.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 630.

associated with decadence'.⁴⁸⁵ Further, Yeats' use of symbolism differed from that of Symons and Dowson, as rather than focusing on the body and mind, Yeats' symbolism was used 'to summon forces occult, mysterious, and ancient into the present upon which his lyrics bear'.⁴⁸⁶ These qualities, which Harris identifies in Yeats' work, are also present in Macleod's work to varying degrees. The use of Symbolism to evoke esoteric Celticism and mysterious forces, the implied parallels between the French and Celtic literary cultures, and the lack of an exquisite weariness of soul can all be applied to Macleod's work to varying degrees; weariness is a common theme, though Macleod does not seem to express this theme in a typically Decadent style.⁴⁸⁷ This similar approach is perhaps not surprising given the deep friendship between Yeats and Macleod, and the fact that at one point a rumour was floated that Macleod was Yeats.⁴⁸⁸ The two had a tangled reputation, and were seen in the press and possibly between themselves as two sides of the same coin. Similarities between the way both handle the connections of Celticism with Decadence and Celtic literatures with European literatures are to be expected.

That is not to say that 'Morag of the Glen' works within Decadence exactly as Yeats' poetry does. Macleod's single *Savoy* text, which begins its penultimate issue, fits slightly differently in Harris's suggestions of non-decadent Decadence. While not approached from a direction of ennui, dissatisfaction or artificiality, there are elements of classically decadent themes; themes that, according to Harris, are not present in Yeats' *Savoy* poetry. 'Morag of the Glen' contains suggestions of moral erosion in the theme of masculine, especially patriarchal and especially colonial, violence. The women of the piece are sexually and emotionally broken down by the men to whom they are attached: the first a Protestant Scottish farmer who disregards the 'old faith' so beloved by his wife and daughters, and the second an English lord's son. The violence enacted by both these men forces the women of the piece to press against, and go beyond, their moral bounds. One of the daughters' committing suicide and the other causing, in some indirect and supernatural way, the death of the lord's son are direct results of past and present patriarchal-colonial violence. 'Morag of the Glen' is also open to a queer reading, given the ways in which the female narrative

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 630.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 631.

⁴⁸⁷ However, Macleod's work does often involve a sense of Celtic exhaustion.

⁴⁸⁸ Alaya, p. 16.

voice discusses the titular Morag. The narrator states that 'her soft, white, delicate, wild-rose face was like none other that I have ever seen', and goes on to say 'Ah, she was a fawn, Morag! . . . soft and sweet, swift and dainty and exquisite as a fawn in the green fern'.⁴⁸⁹ The narrator refers to Morag as 'Morag-my-heart' and takes care of her when she comes in from the storm after causing the death of her sister's English lover: 'She did not speak as I led her in, and made her stand before the fire, while I took off her soaked dress and shoes. In silence she made all the necessary changes, and in silence drank the tea I brewed for her'.⁴⁹⁰ After this tender moment, the two go to bed:

"Come to my room with me," she whispered, as with quiet feet we crossed the stone flags and went up the wooden stair that led to her room.

When she was in bed she bade me put out the light and lie down beside her. Still silent, we lay there in the darkness, for at that side of the house the hill-gloom prevailed, and moreover the blind was down-drawn. I thought the weary moaning of the wind would make my very heart sob.

Then, suddenly, Morag put her arms about me, and the tears streamed warm about my neck.⁴⁹¹

While the story lacks a typical decadent luridness, in the themes of illicit pregnancy, death, and murder there is an intense sexual focus. The story questions traditional gender bounds, sexual mores, and the potentially tragic impact of those sexual mores on individual lives. Further, it suggests that Protestantism, when it lacks reference to the 'old faith', cannot solve and in fact worsens the dilemmas of the text.⁴⁹² 'Old faith', here, is simultaneously and ambiguously resonant of both Paganism and Catholicism, united with a positive, rather than negative, inflection. That is not to say that 'Morag of the Glen' is wholly anti-Protestant; it is not, *per se*, Protestant faith itself that is the issue but the colonialism and modernity that Protestantism represents. For Macleod, Protestantism can and should coexist with Pagan Catholicism; when the two can be syncretised, a greater truth is reached that allows the dilemmas to be solved. Nevertheless, Macleod is doubtful of this cure. The colonial threat to Highland Scotland is not erased by the death of one English lord's son, and nor does the 'old faith' gain its old ground. Instead, the reader is left with the sense that Scottish culture is

⁴⁸⁹ Macleod, *Morag of the Glen*, p. 15.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22, p. 31.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

falling prey to the disconnected artificiality of religious and social colonialism: a predator which leaves the Celt vulnerable to exhaustion and decline.

According to William Atkinson, 'this theme of Celtic decline threads its way through the entire run of *The Savoy*'.⁴⁹³ Speaking of Joseph Conrad and Arthur Symons, but with relevance to the themes of 'Morag of the Glen', Atkinson notes:

[Symond's] poem ['In Saint Jacques'] expresses nostalgia for a practice and faith that is already of another time and place. Although there is no nostalgia in Conrad's tale ['The Idiots'] there is the same awareness of a world that is passing away, that we are reading the kind of story that a modern person cannot participate in but may only observe as an outsider.⁴⁹⁴

Atkinson goes on to make connections between Symbolism and the Celt of the late-nineties imagination:

For [Yeats], everyday reality is unreal. His Celts have become a race of symbolists, devoted to 'the truth of spiritual things to the spiritual vision' ('Decadent Movement' 859), as Symons put it. But in *The Savoy*, they are represented as in decline.⁴⁹⁵

The Savoy's consistent thread of Celtic decay, and the close tie between the Celtic and the Symbolist which only deepens *The Savoy's* Celticism, indicates *The Savoy* as a magazine in which there is, however subtly, a thread of colonial self-consciousness if not outright criticism. The 'truth of things' is disappearing, declining; access to truth, and true spirituality, is becoming harder and harder to find. In 'Morag of the Glen', the colonial thread is made clear and distinct through the presence of an English aristocratic family, but the ending of the English family line through the murder of the heir does not undo the damage caused by the colonial presence.

The fusion of Celticism and Decadence as suggested by Wendell Harris and the criticism of colonialism as suggested by William Atkinson are not the only features that make Macleod and *The Savoy* a fitting combination. The work of Aubrey Beardsley, most especially his unfinished novel *Under The Hill*, which appeared in volumes one and two of *The Savoy*, but also the art he produced for the magazine, shows an interesting commonality between Macleod's work and more traditionally Decadent output. *Under The Hill's* four scanty chapters contain several instances of gender-slip. The Abbé de Fanfreluche's gender-signals lack coherence, from 'his hand, slim and gracious as La

⁴⁹³ Atkinson, p. 121.

⁴⁹⁴ Atkinson, p. 120.

⁴⁹⁵ Atkinson, p. 123.

Marquise du Deffand's in the drawing by Carmontelle, [which] played nervously about the gold hair that fell upon his shoulders like a finely-curled peruke' to the 'dainty night dress' out of which he slips.⁴⁹⁶ There is an 'antique old thing', for whom Beardsley uses the pronoun *he*, yet who has a 'girlish giggle'.⁴⁹⁷ Further, 'some of the women had put on delightful little moustaches dyed in purples and bright greens, twisted and waxed with absolute skill; and some wore great white beards, after the manner of Saint Wilgeforte'.⁴⁹⁸ Gender-signals are mixed and malleable in his art, too, when it is taken alone. This is especially true in 'Tristan Und Isolde', where it is somewhat ambiguous who is who;⁴⁹⁹ 'The Three Musicians', in which there is apparently a heterosexual couple yet the gentleman of the pair is short, has an ambiguously curved figure and wears slippers almost identical to the lady of the pair;⁵⁰⁰ and 'The Bathers', where the gender signals can only be interpreted with reference to the surrounding text.⁵⁰¹ Macleod's own gender-slip, the physical and psychological slip between Sharp and Macleod, finds sympathy here. While Macleod's 'Morag of the Glen' features very little gender-slip except insofar as hints of same-sex desire can be classed as such, *The Savoy* was a gender-queered production. Macleod, also in various ways a gender-queered production, fits easily within its pages. Macleod's gender-signals also cannot be interpreted without reference to the surrounding text: she exists, as will be explored in the following chapter, in and around text. Her gender signals, like Beardsley's, are difficult to approach and explain by virtue of their intense textuality.

Mid-1890s London was largely split between *The Savoy* on the one hand and *The Yellow Book* on the other. Sharp, in his early days in London, may have been tempted to fall in line with this schism, but the sympathy between Sharp/Macleod and *The Savoy* should not be taken as evidence that they did in fact fall in line. By the lights of *The Pagan Review*, and the later contributions to *Cosmopolis* as well as one or two French magazines, Macleod's favour could be said – if we had to divide the literary scene between John Lane and Leonard Smithers – to fall with *The Savoy*. However, Macleod cannot actually be said to

⁴⁹⁶ Aubrey Beardsley, 'Under The Hill', *The Savoy*, 1 (January 1896), pp 156-170, 2 (April 1896), pp. 187-196 (p.156, p. 195) <https://1890s.ca/savoy-volumes/> [accessed 08/07/2022].

⁴⁹⁷ Beardsley, p. 163.

⁴⁹⁸ Beardsley, pp. 166-9.

⁴⁹⁹ Aubrey Beardsley, "Tristan Und Isolde" *The Savoy*, 7 (November 1896), p. 91 https://archive.org/details/savoy_1896_07/mode/2up?view=theater [accessed 08/07/2022].

⁵⁰⁰ Aubrey Beardsley, 'The Three Musicians', *The Savoy*, 1 (January 1896), p. 67 https://archive.org/details/savoy_1896_07/mode/2up?view=theater [accessed 08/07/2022].

⁵⁰¹ Aubrey Beardsley, 'The Bathers', *The Savoy*, 1 (January 1896), p. 87.

be standing with or against either branch of English Decadence, and when we look again to *The Evergreen*, to the anti-colonial strand in 'Morag of the Glen', to *The Pagan Review's* European influences, we find a greater synthesis of aims and perspectives in Macleod's work than is suggested by aligning her with one camp or another. That is not to suggest that in Macleod's work, as in Sharp's, there is an element of all things to all people. Macleod's work is more firmly aesthetically coherent than Sharp's had been; something which, amusingly, she chastised Sharp over. Sharp's letter to Macleod, written on their birthday, in 1905, reads: '[...] And inwardly dwell with me, so that less and less I may fall short of your need as well as your ideal'.⁵⁰² Macleod's letter in return is sharper in tone, and suggestive of Sharp's general habits:

You have much to do, or that you ought to do, yourself: and as for *our* collaboration I see no way for its continuance unless you will abrogate much of what is superfluous, curtail much that can quite well be curtailed, and generally serve me loyally as I in my turn allow for and serve *you*. Let our New Year be a very different one from the last, dear friend: and let us not only beautifully dream but *achieve* in beauty. Let the ignoble pass, and the noble remain.⁵⁰³

The emphasis of Macleod's literary output was on aesthetic coherence. While one of the attractions of Sharp's oeuvre is its heterogeneity, it lacks a strong authorial identity. It is possible to trace Sharp's themes and ideas through his work, but those themes are not always handled confidently or presented as central to the work. Macleod has that confidence and centrality of idea and theme which Sharp lacks. We can see this confidence grow throughout the three periodicals discussed in this chapter. In *The Pagan Review*, Macleod was barely present, though Sharp's artistic experimentation and confident Foreword echo the later themes in Macleod's work. In *The Evergreen*, Macleod had become Sharp's artistic credentials, the evidence of his (or 'his') abilities. In *The Pagan Review*, Sharp created and leant on a network that simultaneously parodied the networks of other magazines and leant credibility. In *The Evergreen*, Sharp used his connections to get himself and Macleod into an artistically credible production. In *The Savoy*, Sharp's *Pagan Review* has come to pass; neither Sharp nor Macleod are especially important in the life-cycle of *The Savoy* as they were in *The Pagan Review* and *The Evergreen*, but *The Savoy* demonstrates

⁵⁰² E. A. S., V2, p. 312.

⁵⁰³ E. A. S., V2, p. 313. Emphasis Macleod's.

that Macleod can now be positioned within the sphere of literature as art rather than the sphere of literature as product where Sharp lingered through most, if not all, of his career.

Each periodical considered in this chapter allows an interrogation of what it was to be a Victorian, especially a marginal one. Through their form, each allows a dialogue between differing interrogations to exist and form, through implicit dialogue, a wider narrative of Victorian marginality. Yet we must remember that having a voice within this dialogue is deeply reliant on networking and interpersonal connection. The social relationships that forged and maintained literary opportunity also shaped the kinds of discussions of marginality that could occur within these political and politicised texts. It is hardly surprising that Sharp/Macleod occupied this discursive space under a pseudonym. While Sharp's previous works – such as *Sonnets of This Century* and his biographies – had been in some ways disruptive with regards to marginality and the centrality of certain figures, the questions of marginality he raises had only been linked to literary survival: that is, Sharp's implicit exploration of marginality had been limited to figures who, while not marginal in themselves, occupied literary margins, such as Edward Cracroft Lefroy. Pseudonymous space allowed freer exploration of political and social margins: with the guard of a pseudonym, Sharp's own career was not at risk.

In the periodicals, Sharp and Macleod – especially Macleod – turned to other margins. Macleod seemingly was driven to explore cultural, social, and gender marginality. Just as Macleod could no longer be held at bay, nor could her politics. Her pseudonym offered both her and Sharp security and safety from direct censure, allowing them to more freely explore what it was to be a Victorian in the social margins. The next chapter will explore the meaning and function of the Macleod pseudonym in more detail.

Chapter 5: The Woman I Try To Imagine: Fiona Macleod

The previous chapter explored the questions of identity that Sharp navigated prior to Macleod's appearance, and the subsequent answer Macleod gave. This chapter will continue the focus on identity navigation, though it takes a retrospective view: tracing Macleod through Sharp's life and exploring her relationship with Sharp. The first section sets up my approach to Macleod, establishing the ways she has been interpreted both contemporaneously and retrospectively. In exploring the ways in which she has been interpreted, I navigate the transphobic stereotypes that have been applied to Macleod. The second section looks back at Sharp's life, exploring the history of Macleod, and it argues that Macleod did not appear, fully formed, in 1894, but instead was growing and developing throughout Sharp's life.

This second section echoes the previous chapter's navigation of Macleod as an *answer*: by placing emphasis on the ways, in Elizabeth Sharp's words, that Macleod was foreshadowed, I show that one of Sharp's recurrent driving forces was a feminine interiority. By interiority I mean not only a hidden female self, but also a self-reflective and deeply internalised feminine spiritual and somatic experience. Sharp, consistently in the areas covered by the earlier chapters, had an outward-facing focus, be that in terms of continuously expanding his social sphere, or in terms of disseminating the cultural capital that he, prior to his coming to London, largely lacked. By outward-facing I mean Sharp had a mode of literary work that focused on social acts, community-building work, and work especially geared toward public expectation and the literary market; I mean Sharp as a consumable social and literary product, where being consumable was a key facet of his career. Sharp was frequently outward-facing and consumable, and the self he most often presented in his letters and in his work was also outward-facing – focused on his career, on advancement, on advantageous connection. Yet we can see in tension with this outwardness a continual inward-facing quality. By inward-facing I mean Sharp's inner, internal self as separate from his outward, social self; I mean his sense of himself, his own emotions, and his desire for his inward self to be reflected better by his outward self. Sharp's letters spill over with vulnerability, and Sharp's desperation to be liked shows that the habitual outward focus was under pressure. To Herbert Stone, for example, he signs off his letter of July 9th, 1895, with a closing that shows a pressured sense of care for Stone's

wellbeing: ‘I do hope you are having a good time, but not overtiring yourself. When do you leave Paris — & when are you to be here again?’⁵⁰⁴ To Robert Murray Gilchrist, he is less effusive, but his comments seem reflective of a deeper emotion, and his final sentence carries a sense of desperation: ‘Did I tell you of the letter of splendid praise & recognition which George Meredith wrote to Miss Macleod. It is one of several, some wholly unexpected: but a letter like that of GM’s remains a kind of beacon in one’s life. “Be assured,” he adds, “that I am among those whom you kindle.” Yes: to kindle: that is what one wants to do. Elsewhere, alluding to a certain quality in the book, he says: “How rare is this! I do not know it elsewhere.” I know you will be glad.’⁵⁰⁵ He separated, with enormous difficulty, his outward self – jovial, workaday – from his internal self – insecure, spiritual – and the letters function as sites in which we can see the internal, inward self escaping and flowing over.

In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss the intensity of Sharp’s internal experiences, and the way that his internal, inward-facing, sense of himself was put under pressure by the economic need to face outward. In using these terms I collapse several meanings together, across a variety of critical works. James Reveley uses these terms most closely to the way I do, differentiating between ‘inward’ as in internal identity work within the self, and ‘outward’ as identity work for the consumption of the reading public.⁵⁰⁶ I use ‘outward facing’ to stand for public facing, for social, interactive, and interpersonal work, and ‘inward facing’ to stand for not only identity work internal to the self but also expressive and emotional work, emotional vulnerability, and the exposing of the internal self. I self-consciously use inwardness in its emotionally intimate and frequently queer-inflected sense. The tension I identify is between the obligations Sharp felt towards the society in which he existed, and the obligation he felt towards his internal self. I will show that once Macleod appears, this tension relaxes. Sharp – as distinct from Macleod – is no longer under an intense pressure to be consumable to publishers and editors. As I explore in the third section on the paratextualisation of physical embodiment, he retreats instead into a quiet, restricted sphere of queer masculinity, relaxing into a space of restricted intimate

⁵⁰⁴ Halloran, V2, p. 92.

⁵⁰⁵ Halloran, V2, p. 102.

⁵⁰⁶ James Reveley, ‘Using Autobiographies In Business History: A Narratological Analysis Of Jules Joubert’s *Shavings And Scrapes*’ *Australian Economic History Review*, 50 (2010), 284-305 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8446.2010.00306.x>.

relationships. The association of queer masculinity with *inwardness* takes on a different sense here: a sense of closed intimacy, where internal experiences are, as I will show, expressed in in-group language and with a united sensibility. In short, as Macleod begins to take on a more public-facing role, Sharp's relationships with male friends became more intimate, and more fixed on a smaller circle of likeminded people. I suggest that finally possessing their own identity – expressed as Macleod – as well as greater financial security, allowed Sharp to shift focus from an intensely external, constantly seeking, constantly networking social life to a relaxed, intimate, and essentially closed social circle. Macleod takes over much, though not all, of the public-facing work, allowing Sharp to retreat into the safety of queer society. Macleod's public-facing work, as well as the female social sphere she creates and curates for herself, is explored in this chapter's final section, where I explore in detail the ways that Macleod presented herself and the ways that she used her networking ability.

In this chapter I flex and extend the meaning of paratext, by expanding it to encompass the pseudonym, the physical body of the author and the response to that body from others. We see the potential for this expansion in Genette's work, as well as in the work of Marie Maclean. Maclean writes that:

Another question raised by the paratext is that it represents a means of lending the text authority, originally the very attribute of the author. Here the main factors are those of the author's name and of the preface and dedication, although the latter's work in lending authority is increasingly assumed in our days by the blurb or back cover notice. The history of authorial nomenclature reflects the growth of literature as an object of consumption as well as the relatively modern phenomenon of the text as individual possession, either of the author who copyrights it or the house which publishes it. Both editors and public have come more and more to demand the "brand name" which lends authority to the product. The use of pseudonyms is also endlessly instructive, whether they represent an attempt to acquire *auctoritas* and *gravitas*, or an attempt to shed them, as when eminent scholars write detective stories, or when a Mikhail Bakhtin must publish under the names of his students to avoid censorship.

One area of great social interest, in that it so clearly relates the circumstances of production to the editor, to the family, and to society, with its fashions and ideologies, is that of the choice of gender in the pseudonym. This is a field only briefly touched on by Genette, but one where some outstanding work has been done already by feminist critics. A particularly penetrating analysis of the assumption or rejection of the name, the pseudonym, and the patronym is Anne Freadman's "Of Cats, Companions and the Name of George Sand." The importance of the *auctoritas*, *gravitas*, and indeed *pietas* attached to the author's name was well underlined, and delightfully sent up, by the choice of pseudonym of the brilliant science fiction writer

James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice B. Sheldon) who successfully hoaxed his/her large readership for a number of years.⁵⁰⁷

Here, we see Maclean noting gender and pseudonymity as having an important role to play regarding the way that a text is read, understood, and injected with authority. The presumed physical embodiment (that is to say, the assumption that he was a cisgender man) of James Tiptree Jr. is a key part of the way his texts were read; this presumed embodiment offers his texts a different kind of *auctoritas* and *gravitas* than the presumed physical embodiment offered by the name Alice B. Sheldon.⁵⁰⁸ An author's physical embodiment, their body and gender as encoded within it, as read by their audience, is a key part of the periphery that supports and justifies their text.

Genette, too, though more briefly, acknowledges the importance of the author's name, and as we saw in the quote from Maclean, a name is not only a name – it is a suggestion of gender and of embodiment:

But this text rarely appears in its naked state, without the reinforcement and accompaniment of a certain number of productions, themselves verbal or not, like an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations. One does not always know if one should consider that they belong to the text or not, but in any case they surround it and prolong it, precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb, but also in its strongest meaning: to make it present, to assure its presence in the world, its "reception" and its consumption.⁵⁰⁹

The name *Fiona Macleod* is a way into the texts she writes, a threshold that contextualises and defines her texts. As demonstrated in the American *Volta*, there was a disconnect for Sharp between the way his texts were read and the way he himself was read, a disconnect which impacted his social relationships and the social connections he could make. This tension brings the signature as textual threshold into disrepute, at least for Sharp.

Somewhere there is a failure of representation: Sharp cannot 'write out of his heart' under

⁵⁰⁷ Marie Maclean, 'Pretexts and Paratexts: The Art of the Peripheral', *New Literary History*, 22.2 (1991), 273-279 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/469038> [accessed 04/07/2022] (p. 276).

⁵⁰⁸ I use presumed here to draw attention to the fact that socially we assume certain body types and shapes of men and women – we may presume that the body of a person with a male name matches that which we generally associate with men and masculinity, and vice versa. In doing so we may assume certain things about their texts or understand their themes and ideas in a different way than we might have done had we presumed a different body and a different gender. However, it is important to remember that this is only presumption, including when regarding a writer whose gender has never been under question. See these assumptions at play in the above quotation, see footnote 508.

⁵⁰⁹ Gérard Genette and Marie Maclean, 'Introduction to the Paratext', *New Literary History*, 22.2 (1991), 261–72 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/469037>> (p. 261).

his own name, and, it seems, cannot be accurately represented or accurately read.⁵¹⁰ At some point in the process, in the movement from physical individual to authorial signature, and from authorial signature to signature as frame device that supports, contextualises and delimits the text, representation breaks down: Sharp and his texts become disconnected, and Sharp becomes a poor threshold for his own texts. This, for Sharp, seems to have been incredibly important. He, as a journalist, would have been aware of the ways in which the paratext of the critical response – informed, as in the case of *The Critic*, by personal knowledge and acquaintance with the author as an individual – could frame and shape the text being responded to.⁵¹¹ We see the pressure of this failure of representation when Macleod spoke to Katherine Tynan: ‘I am not an unmarried girl [...] my heart still lies where the cradle rocked’.⁵¹² Macleod here is presenting herself in line with the self she wishes to be represented in critical response (and the self that she wishes to present in social relationships, the self she wishes to network with). Macleod is forging and creating her own epitexts, showing a degree of control that was not available to Sharp in that Sharp’s epitexts were ready-formed. Sharp looked and sounded a certain way, had a certain manner, was from a certain place; he had no control of the “meaning” these elements had for critics, or for those individuals with whom he connected and networked on the basis of his writing. Macleod, however, could control these epitexts because she could be from wherever best reflected her writing, have whatever manner best served her purposes, and look like someone who would prefer to push a paper-cutter than an oar.⁵¹³ In this chapter, then, I treat the authorial signature as a paratext, but also treat the letters Macleod wrote and the persona she presented internally in her texts and externally in her letters as such. I do not treat the paratext wholly literally; instead, I argue for metaphorical expansions of the concept, taking already elastic terminology and pushing it to encompass the relationship texts have with the bodies of their authors and the relationship authors have with their own bodies. I offer the paratext, and more broadly the material text itself, as a site in which Macleod could seek a form of gender-affirming care. Here, the paratext as a site of

⁵¹⁰ E. A. S., V2, p. 14.

⁵¹¹ [Anon.], ‘The Lounger’, *The Critic*, 12.301 (1889), 64-5 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000057828> [accessed 01/07/2022] (p. 164).

⁵¹² Halloran, V2, p. 323-4. Macleod asserts she was born in the Southern Hebrides.

⁵¹³ My apologies to the anonymous writer for *The Critic*, whose words I have corrupted.

production, transformation and transaction allows Macleod to engage fluidly, playfully, and creatively with gender – itself productive, transformational, and transactional.

In this chapter, I briefly depart from direct discussion of networking to discuss the details of Sharp's life and Macleod appearance. It is not entirely unrelated to networking: it will delve into the networks that Sharp built to discuss Macleod, Macleod's textual networking and geographical remoteness, Sharp's interiority and how his approach to networking changed, and how their texts interacted with their readers via paratexts. In order to fully discuss these aspects of networking, some detailed biographical context is necessary.

Thus, this chapter forms a new way of looking at Macleod: it is, to an extent, a biography, aimed at creating a picture of how she came to exist, what she was like, and what she did. However, I also look at the purposes she served and what she signified. I do not wholly treat Macleod as an autonomous person separate from Sharp; however, nor do I wholly treat her as an episode in Sharp's life. The fact that, in a very textual way, I have bracketed Macleod into a single chapter in Sharp's life, is a conscious act of design. Macleod, I will here show, has been seeping through the cracks of the other chapters in this thesis, just as she seeps through the cracks of Flavia Alaya's work. In Alaya's work, Macleod is confined, though her confinement is imperfect. Here, her confinement has been intentionally imperfect. This chapter is an attempt to reapproach Macleod as neither autonomous person nor scandalous prank but as an internal pressure, and as an answer to Sharp's internal conflicts. This chapter will echo others, as I show that Macleod is Sharp redux; I will show how she too used connectivity to support her career and networked with central individuals to access opportunities that were otherwise closed. Further, I expose the points of pressure and slip where Macleod escapes in earlier chapters, covering previously explored ground with an eye to expressing the points and places in which she is retrospectively visible.

5.1: Critical Perspectives

There are many theories surrounding the relationship between William Sharp and Fiona Macleod. Some, like William Halloran, believe that Macleod was a self-conscious creation

and symbolised and sometimes even blurred with Sharp's friend and presumed lover Edith Rinder. In recent work, this has also involved gender slippage, as Halloran notes that 'the norms of [Sharp's] society dictated that he be [man or woman], not both'.⁵¹⁴ Some see a psychological element to the relationship, though as we will see below that element has been variously defined. After the publication of Elizabeth Sharp's biography, it was suggested that Macleod was what we might now call an *alter*, and that Sharp showed evidence of what is now Dissociative Identity Disorder.⁵¹⁵ The field of psychology, especially that focusing on issues of multiple identity, was very much in its infancy at the time of Sharp's life and death, and thus we cannot put too much weight on the posthumous diagnosis – still, it cannot be dismissed.⁵¹⁶ Flavia Alaya also presents a psychological element to Macleod, but suggests that Sharp's femininity was due to a victimhood complex, leading Sharp to make the misguided and misogynistic decision to present himself as a woman, primarily as a means by which he could possess a form of victimhood to which he had not previously had access:

What he needed more than others do, perhaps, was to impose upon that inner life a secrecy that could give him both the joy of possessing a personal, inviolable domain and the terror of its being under constant threat of exposure. It was more important to the quality of his inner life, however, that in childhood it had been victimized – perhaps even terrorized – and in manhood it had accreted to itself all forms of victimization.⁵¹⁷

Terry L. Meyers approaches the relationship between William Sharp and Fiona Macleod as the use of a female persona to ventriloquise homosexual desire.⁵¹⁸ Virginia Blain, in 2004, is the first scholar to link Sharp's relationship to Macleod through genderqueer concepts.⁵¹⁹ Michael Shaw also links to transgender concepts in passing, recalling W. P. Kerr's assertion

⁵¹⁴ Halloran, V2, p. 88.

⁵¹⁵ [Anon.], 'Dual Personality in the case of William Sharp', *Journal for Psychical Research*, 15 (April 1911) 57-63 <http://www.lexscien.org/lexscien/lbmainframe.jsp?r=r8w> [accessed 04/07/2022].

⁵¹⁶ The archive for the Society of Psychical Research suggests that William Sharp's case was discussed as an example of dual personality in Frederick Myers' book *Human Personality*, but I have been unable to find it in that text.

⁵¹⁷ Alaya, p. 136. For Alaya's background analysis that leads to this conclusion, see especially pp. 26-7, p. 116, and p. 123. I note once more, as I did earlier, that there is extremely little evidence, all of it circumstantial, to believe that Sharp was victimised or terrorised as a child at all.

⁵¹⁸ Meyers, p. 4.

⁵¹⁹ Blain's article is not sympathetic; her phrasing and positioning links her perspective to Alaya's, wherein it uses trans- phrasings as an echo of Alaya's victimhood complex.

that Sharp ‘dressed in women’s clothes’ to write the Macleod texts.⁵²⁰ These explanations are important to bear in mind; however, almost all of them in one way or another move away from the ways William and Elizabeth Sharp talked about Fiona Macleod, and from the contemporary response to Macleod. The first part of this chapter, therefore, will recuperate the way that both Sharps talked about her.

In this chapter, Macleod will usually be referred to as her own individual person separate from Sharp, though at points this will be impossible as there is not always a clear dividing line between Sharp and Macleod. I have chosen to approach Sharp and Macleod in this way as it more accurately reflects the way in which Sharp and Macleod behaved towards each other, and the way in which both Sharps approach and discuss her. While the question of pronoun is a difficult one, as is usual in this thesis Macleod will be referred to as *she*. However, at points this may slip, and indeed this chapter will engage in intentional pronoun slip where it seems appropriate to the material under consideration. Treating Macleod in this way should not be taken to suggest anything about her actual personhood, but instead about the ways she was received and discussed in her own moment. It is not the intention of this chapter to lead to one conclusion or another on the *nature* of Macleod, though it will present the option, dismissively suggested in Blain, of a genderqueer element, alongside the other options from other critics.⁵²¹

⁵²⁰ Shaw, *Queer Victorian Families*, p. 86. Shaw links to Ian Fletcher’s *W.B Yeats and his Contemporaries* Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987 <https://archive.org/details/wbyeatshiscontem0000flet> [accessed 02/05/2022] Fletcher writes as if the idea that Sharp dressed in women’s clothes was contemporary [p. 163; a misprint, where Fletcher writes ‘does he’ instead of Lucas’ ‘did he’, adds to this impression]. What he cites in evidence of this is words from W.P. Ker to E.V. Lucas, but these words were only published in the 1930s. [E. V. Lucas, *Reading, Writing and Remembering* (London: Methuen and Co., 1932) p. 82 <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.80786> [accessed 02/05/2022]] E. V. Lucas says that Sharp confided in a friend of his that he, Sharp, wrote the Macleod texts in women’s clothes. I cannot corroborate what friend this may be, and given how little Sharp shared of the relationship between Macleod and himself, I cannot help but be doubtful of the veracity of these claims. It may be true; but without corroborating evidence, given the posthumous publication of Lucas’s words, it lacks credence.

⁵²¹ I self-consciously use *genderqueer* in place of *transgender* in some places, such as here. *Genderqueer* was coined by Riki Anne Wilchins in 1995, in the newsletter *In Your Face*, to refer to a wider spectrum of queer gender experiences than *transgender*, *transsexual*, *transvestite*, *gender-nonconforming*, etc, each individually suggested. While *transgender* is often used as an umbrella term regardless of transition intention or transition status, I choose *genderqueer* because of the spectrum of possibilities it covers. All the usage of the term *genderqueer* asks of Sharp and Macleod is that they have a gender experience not considered the norm in their contemporary moment. It is less definite and defined than *transgender*, but in terms of historical gender experiences I find the lack of definition to be the most inclusive and respectful approach. It should not be taken as implying that further definition is necessarily required.

5.2: Names and Spaces

Sonja Nikkila writes that ‘a name [...] both allows and requires interpretation.’⁵²² Nikkila is speaking theoretically here, about the mediation of a name through text and intertext, through appearances on book covers and in indexes as well as in journalistic and academic works. The 2020 #ReclaimHerName promotional slogan and republication of pseudonymous texts under the authors’ birth names is an example of the kinds of interpretation to which Nikkila refers. What Nikkila suggests with this one sentence, more than her particular point about intertext, is the concept of the name as symbol, as signifier. Names as symbols and signifiers have great importance for the study of Macleod. I note here that the author’s name can be, as Foucault describes it, ‘the equivalent of a description’; in what follows I shall explore the ways in which ‘Fiona Macleod’ fittingly describes the works written under that name.⁵²³ We can see, above and in the previous chapter, that ‘William Sharp’, as generic and common a name as it is, somehow failed as a description. These concepts, while borrowing from Barthes and Foucault’s mediations on authorship, will nevertheless be approached as personal, rather than philosophical, ideas, with immediate emotional and social consequences for Sharp and indeed Macleod.

The development of the name ‘Fiona Macleod’ is unclear, though Elizabeth writes that the name “‘flashed ready made” into his mind’.⁵²⁴ Sharp himself writes that ‘of course I had associations with the name Macleod’.⁵²⁵ These associations are unclear, though Elizabeth mentions a friendship, when Sharp was sixteen, with a Gaelic-speaking fisherman called Seumas Macleod.⁵²⁶ Sharp, in contrast, writes to Frank Rinder:

I would like you very much to read some of this new Fiona work, especially the opening pages of ‘Iona,’ for they contain a very deep and potent spiritual faith and hope, that has been with me ever since, as there told, as a child of seven, old

⁵²² Sonja Nikkila, ‘Pseudonymity, authorship, selfhood: the names and lives of Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2006) <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/17556?show=full> [accessed 07/07/2022] p. 4.

⁵²³ Michel Foucault, ‘What is an Author’ in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, trans. by Robert Hurley et al (New York: The New Press, 1998), p. 209.

⁵²⁴ E. A. S., V2, p. 13.

⁵²⁵ E. A. S., V2, p. 12.

⁵²⁶ E. A. S., V1, p. 18.

Seumus Macleod (who taught me so much – was indeed the *father* of Fiona) – took me on his knees one sundown on the island of Eigg, and made me pray to ‘Her’.⁵²⁷

The name *Fiona* was, by Sharp’s contemporaries, seemingly unreadable. Lacking a context for the name, some assumed that it was invented.⁵²⁸ Further, it appeared unpronounceable: Grant Allen questioned Macleod, asking ‘How in English letters would you write *Pharais* phonetically, or as near it as our clumsy southern lips can compass? (I have not “the Gaelic” [...].) And how “Fiona?” Is it something like Feena?’.⁵²⁹ The name *Fiona* acted as a block to interpretation and signification. Sharp and Macleod offered an interpretation, noting that *Fiona* is rare but that it is the short version of the name Fionoghall, what in English could be rendered *Flora*:

It may interest you to know that the name which seems to puzzle so many people is (though it does exist as the name “Fiona,” not only in Ossian but at the present day, though rarely) the Gaelic diminutive of “Fionaghal” (i.e. Flora). “Fiona,” however, and not “Fionaghal,” is my name.⁵³⁰

Yet the inability of the name Fiona Macleod to be interpreted, its lack of signification, also signifies. The name, unreadable and unpronounceable by an 1890s London audience, fits with the style of her work, and fits with the image of the woman given through the texts themselves: a lady of the Highlands who sees almost no-one, Gaelic-speaking, un-English, unreachable. The mythic, unreal quality in her name is reflected in her work. In her first name’s inability to be read we find a reflection of the qualities of foreignness in her work. Here we find Macleod’s name acting as description, as reflecting the discourses with which her work engaged. So ultimately symbolic of late Victorian Celticism was Macleod’s work that she was, at points, identified with W.B. Yeats.⁵³¹

⁵²⁷ E. A. S., V2, p. 157.

⁵²⁸ Letters to Grant Allen (E. A. S., V2, pp. 18-19), Catherine Janvier, and Ernest Rhys (Halloran, V2, p. 233, p. 267) show Macleod and Sharp explaining the origin of the name and asserting it as a ‘real’ Scottish name.

⁵²⁹ E. A. S., V2, p. 18 (Letter from Grant Allen). Notably, Macleod’s reply to Grant Allen does not include a pronunciation of either *Pharais* or Fiona.

⁵³⁰ Halloran, V2, p. 233, p. 267. The quotation comes from Macleod’s letter (p. 267), but Sharp covers the same ground in a letter to Catherine Janvier (p. 233). A Google Ngrams search, while simplistic, validates some of the confusion over the name. In a British English corpus from 1800-2000, the name Fiona does not get above 0.000009% of words until 1894 (the date is suggestive) when it hits 0.000012%, and slowly climbs from there. Macleod, by contrast, has its lowest point in 1810 at 0.000057% of words, and in 1894 hit 0.000219%. Furthermore, a search of Scottish birth records showed that the first Fiona to be recorded there was born two years after Macleod began publishing. There are no records, however, of any Fionaghals, or of similarly spelled names.

⁵³¹ Alaya, p. 16; Macleod laughingly references those she has been confused with: ‘Heaven knows who and what I am according to some wiseacres! A recent cutting said I was Irish, a Mr. Chas. O’Conor, whom I know

We can read into Sharp's reaction that this foreignness was unintentional. Certainly to a modern eye *Fiona* is easily readable, and extremely familiar. It seems counterintuitive to suggest that an 1890s audience had no context for the name, and it seems like that was also perhaps counterintuitive to Sharp, who had grown up in Scotland and spent much of his time there. The tone of Sharp and Macleod's letters suggests that the foreignness of *Fiona* is specifically something brought to it by its readers, not a self-conscious conceit from Sharp. Were it a self-conscious conceit, we might expect to see a name more like *Willand Dreame*, one of the pseudonyms from *The Pagan Review*, which was Middle Scots.

A further aspect of Nikkila's work with relevance to Macleod is what Nikkila terms
[The] paradoxical, unstable condition of authorship itself, during the author's life – when the personal self is unavoidably inflected by the published persona – and during her afterlife, when identity is at the mercy of memory, and memorialization.⁵³²

These processes happened for Sharp: Sharp's personal self was continually inflected by and with Macleod, both privately and consensually and publicly and non-consensually, and the Macleod identity and the Sharp identity have been recognised unevenly. Texts written by Macleod have been remembered under the Sharp name; texts written by Sharp have been remembered under the Macleod name. At best the names may be rendered *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)* or *Fiona Macleod (William Sharp)*. These navigations carry a consistent tension, showing a discomfort with writers who were assigned male at birth taking on female names, where culturally we have largely found a comfort with navigating the reverse, such as Nikkila's reference points of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, and George Eliot.⁵³³ While transgender readings of Eliot and their assigned-female genderqueering compatriots exist, there is no culturally lingering image the transgressor as there is with Sharp; by transgressor I mean someone who actively played with, rejected, or moved beyond the

not. A friend of a friend told that friend that I was Miss Nora Hopper and Mr. Yeats in union – at which I felt flattered but amused. For some time, a year or so ago, there was a rumour that "Fiona Macleod" was my good friend and relative, William Sharp. Then, when this was disproved, I was said to be Mrs. Sharp. Latterly I became the daughter of the late Dr. Norman Macleod. The latest is that I am Miss Maud Gonne – which the paragraphist "knows as a fact". Do you know her? She is Irish, and lives in Paris, and is, I hear, very beautiful – so I prefer to be Miss Gonne rather than the Fleet Street journalist!' (Halloran, V2, p. 323).

⁵³² Nikkila, p. 4-5.

⁵³³ Nikkila, p. 5-6.

accepted gender categories of their period in a way that was – or could have been – seen as politically subversive or socially unacceptable.⁵³⁴

I will refer to cross-gender pseudonyms with the language of transition, though I leave *trans*- phrasings alone. For writers such as the Brontës, Eliot, and Vernon Lee, I will use the phrase *FTM* (that is, female to male) pseudonyms. For writers like Sharp, I will use *MTF* (male to female) pseudonyms. *FTM* and *MTF* are an often-used shorthand for gender transition, though now considered dated. I use them with their transgender connotations intact, but without meaning to imply that those who use such pseudonyms are transgender. Nevertheless, the social act of taking on a cross-gender pseudonym is a process of movement, and one thus better defined by phrasings that explicitly suggest movement, like *FTM*, rather than the more modern *transmasculine*.⁵³⁵ Using *transmasculine* may imply a more direct connection between cross-gender pseudonyms and cross-gender embodied experiences than I mean to suggest.

With regard to *FTM* pseudonyms, we are provided, culturally speaking, with a method of contextualising and explaining their usage. Nikkila refers to it as the ‘disreputable femininity myth’:⁵³⁶ it is, directly speaking, the idea that women used cross-gender pseudonyms to escape the restrictions of the patriarchy and be given a ‘fair show’ from critics, publishers, and the public alike.⁵³⁷ The myth provides an easy and non-disruptive answer to the question of pseudonym use, and because of this ease, there is generally no lasting image of the predator, the charlatan, the transvestite, attached to figures such as Currer Bell and George Eliot as there is with Sharp/Macleod.⁵³⁸ The very fact of the existence of the disreputable femininity myth means that critics and the public do not have any context for handling the Sharp/Macleod pseudonym – as, given the premise of the myth, there is no reason for men to take female pseudonyms – and so we must begin to enter into genderqueer critical spaces. Sharp expressed similar ideas to those enshrined in

⁵³⁴ See for example Grace Lavery on George Eliot, Ardel Haefele-Thomas’s ‘Trans Victorians’ issue of *Victorian Review* (44.1), and Eva Spišiaková on Radclyffe Hall.

⁵³⁵ Transmasculine refers to those who are assigned female at birth and who wish to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone, masculinising transition. It includes not only transgender men but also nonbinary and genderqueer individuals. Transfeminine is its equal for those who are assigned male at birth.

⁵³⁶ Nikkila, p. 7.

⁵³⁷ See Meyers, p. 57. I use Robert Farquharson Sharp’s words about his cousin self consciously here.

⁵³⁸ Word choice ‘transvestite’ here is intentional, not just for rough period accuracy but for the associations with the word of perversion and pathetic misogyny. The word is often used in distinctly transphobic ways, and the perception of Sharp falls along similar lines.

the disreputable femininity myth – for example, that the pseudonym allowed him access to different forms of self-expression, or, in his own words, ‘I can write out of my own heart in a way I could not do as William Sharp’ – yet Sharp’s motivations are taken to be different than those of his company among the assigned-female contingent.⁵³⁹ As such, the ‘reasons’ for Sharp’s choice of pseudonym remain within transphobic theoretical spaces. What follows is a list of concepts that have been applied to Sharp and which demonstrate the concept of transphobic theoretical-critical space:

- The invader, the man who cannot accept that there is a space he is not allowed to access;⁵⁴⁰
- The charlatan, the liar, the wolf in sheep’s clothing;⁵⁴¹
- The transvestite, who is both invader and liar, who is perverted and damaged, who is pathetic, who perpetuates misogyny by making womanhood an act, who is pathetic due to his lack of manliness and equally due to his proclamation of a womanhood which he says is accurate and yet, according to the theoretical space, is wholly dependent on gender role and assumption.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ E. A. S., V2, p. 14.

⁵⁴⁰ For this, we may think back to Alaya’s assertion that Sharp had a ‘tender and vulnerable inner life which had [...] become associated with womanhood [...] It was more important to the quality of his inner life, however, that in childhood it has been victimized – perhaps even terrorized – and in manhood it had accreted to itself all forms of victimization.’ (p. 136). She also writes that ‘it was very fashionable to be female’, among those who supported women’s civil rights. (p. 138). This is echoed in recent opinion pieces on how ‘fashionable’ it is to be transgender or nonbinary, and in disgusted reactions to gender non-conforming men. For the latter, see EJ Dickson, ‘Why Conservatives Are So Threatened By Harry Styles In A Dress’, *Rolling Stone*, 2 December 2020 <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/harry-styles-dress-conservatives-threatened-1097874/> [accessed 31/05/2022] and for the former see Lou Ferriera, ‘Are trans and gender nonconforming identities new “trends”?’ , *Open Democracy*, 14 July 2021, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/are-trans-and-gender-nonconforming-identities-new-trends/> [accessed 31/05/2022] and Debra Soh, ‘The problem with the “nonbinary” trend’ , *Washington Examiner*, 24 May 2021, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/the-problem-with-the-nonbinary-trend> [accessed 31/05/2022].

⁵⁴¹ We see this in Virginia Blain (2004), and in such reactionary concepts as the idea that cisgender men will masquerade as transgender women in order to prey on cisgender women. For a scholarly approach to this topic, which also in passing notes the idea, suggested in Blain and Alaya, that transgender rights and, in fact, transgender existence, threatens cisgender women’s rights and existence, see Beatriz Pagliarini Bagagli, Tyara Veriato Chaves, and Mónica G. Zoppi Fontana, ‘Trans Women and Public Restrooms: The Legal Discourse and Its Violence’, *Frontiers in Sociology*, 6 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.652777>.

⁵⁴² For a recent article focusing especially on the concepts of lying and acting with regards to transgender, especially transfeminine, people, see David Randall, ‘Oklahoma Universities Are Teaching Students to Lie’ *OCPA*, 20 May 2021, <https://www.ocpathink.org/post/oklahoma-universities-are-teaching-students-to-lie> [accessed 31/05/2022]. For a powerful transfeminine perspective on some of these cultural ideas, see Jennifer Coates, ‘I Am A Transwoman. I Am In The Closet. I Am Not Coming Out’ , *Medium*, 11 March 2016, <https://medium.com/@jencoates/i-am-a-transwoman-i-am-in-the-closet-i-am-not-coming-out-4c2dd1907e42> [accessed 31/05/2022]. For further approaches, see Torkild Thanem and Louise Wallenberg, ‘Just Doing

These three concepts are important for previous critical constructions of Sharp/Macleod, but the ultimate signal that, critically speaking, analysis of Sharp largely resides within the transphobic theoretical space is the fact that no critic, at the time of writing, has acknowledged the genderqueer possibilities suggested by their very use of transphobic critical/theoretical space. Macleod/Sharp is considered within transphobic paradigms, but she is denied access to genderqueer space. She is constructed as a predator, a fraud, even as a transvestite, yet denied articulation because she is consigned to being considered within transphobic space without access to any genderqueer space. Critics have named Sharp as a liar, charlatan, a threat to womanhood, a 'travesty' to women's writing,⁵⁴³ a perpetuator of gender roles, but never fairly considered her transgender or genderqueer potential in and of itself: her 'transvestitism [is] not of the flesh but of the imagination'.⁵⁴⁴ Sharp is posthumously subjected to the consequences of existing as a transgender woman, whilst never being visibly interpreted *as* a transgender woman.

I will note here that it hardly matters if Sharp was, or was not, a transgender woman, and my argument should not be taken as resting on the assumption that she was. The rhetorics used to discuss Sharp are transphobic – specifically, transmisogynistic – whether or not Sharp was transgender or genderqueer. There has been little to no active deconstruction of the transphobic rhetoric nor acknowledgement that the rhetoric itself is transphobic. This must not be taken to suggest that critics who approach Sharp are transphobic or are intentionally echoing transphobic rhetoric. Transphobic rhetoric often emerges subtly, generally in pieces of previous work that have gone unquestioned. Often it is a question of critical delicacy and the climate of critical writing. Critical work on Sharp that discusses the pseudonym need not therefore be taken in bad faith – in fact, far from it. This is not an accusation of outright transphobia, but a questioning of systemic transphobia within critical space.

Gender? Transvestism and the power of underdoing gender in everyday life and work', *Organization*, 23.2 (2016) 250-271, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508414547559> [accessed 31/05/2022]. For a quick overview of the stereotypes associated with trans women, see Rachel McKinnon, 'Stereotype Threat and Attributional Ambiguity' *Hypatia*, 29.4 (2014) 857-872 (p. 858) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24542107> [accessed 31/05/2022]. See also Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2007).

⁵⁴³ Blain, p. 77. See also Franklin E. Court, '[Untitled]', *Victorian Studies*, 40.4 (1997) 742-44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3828788>. [Accessed 10/05/2022] (p. 744).

⁵⁴⁴ Alaya, p. 11. Note: Halloran has made mention of a genderqueer possibility in passing, and Meyers, as previously explored, mentions genderqueer potential but only as a route to homosexual identification.

Gaye Tuchman points out that many men, in the history of the novel, have taken female pseudonyms and so that Sharp/Macleod's case is not wholly isolated; these men, however largely remain unnamed and unknown, writing as 'A Lady' rather than under specific names:

The authors and publishers of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century seem to have assumed that novelists were supposed to be women, as revealed by the simple and common pseudonym "By a Lady." If it had been assumed that novelists were supposed to be men, the phrase "By a Gentleman" might have graced title pages more frequently. The use of female pseudonyms may have been intended to attract female readers by suggesting that these pseudonymous authors saw the world as women did.⁵⁴⁵

Several words, noteworthy for the way they fit within transphobic approaches to MTF pseudonyms, appear in Tuchman's writing, including *paraded* and *masqueraded*: 'Solid data seem to support the assumption that many male writers masqueraded as women in the novel's heyday'.⁵⁴⁶ These words suggest a lack of legitimacy that words surrounding FTM pseudonym use do not.⁵⁴⁷ That is not to say that Tuchman is wrong to imply the dynamic of pseudonymity that she does (that is, that the men she discusses were writing as women for commercial gain, and considered themselves taking on a kind of commercial disguise); rather, I indicate the history of the reception of MTF pseudonyms as distinct from the reception of FTM pseudonyms. This difference in reception of pseudonymity shapes the reception of Macleod.

Macleod's difference from figures who wrote as 'A Lady' lies in the constantly escaping, yet tightly kept, secret of her identity, the lack of simple motive, and her fame. These differences make her pseudonym hypervisible, and her hypervisibility enters her into transphobic theoretical space. The men who wrote as *A Lady* were not entered into the same theoretical space as completely – they may have *paraded*, *masqueraded*, been liars or charlatans, but they have a motive that absolves them of gender disruption: they were, we are led to believe, in it for the money. While Nikkila suggests that the pseudonym often

⁵⁴⁵ Gaye Tuchman, *Edging Women Out* (London: Routledge, 2014) p. 45, p. 53.

⁵⁴⁶ Tuchman, p. 48, p. 53.

⁵⁴⁷ Nikkila points to words such as 'mask' (p. 6), interesting for its parallel to *masquerade*, though 'mask' carries more sympathetic connotations. 'Women' writers use a male pseudonym to 'circumvent' 'prejudice', and for 'convenience' and 'psychic escape' (p. 6-8). For 'women' writers, the male pseudonym is expressed as a valuable mechanism through which to access the literary world. Nikkila notes that pseudonymous pressures of this type did not only act on 'women' writers but could act on all writers (p. 8), and we may recall Sharp's own words as evidence that Sharp was subject to these pressures of prejudice and psychic escape.

becomes invisible, the pseudonym for Sharp/Macleod is hypervisible – it is so visible that it is often the only thing seen or critically considered.⁵⁴⁸ Where, for example, *Currer Bell* disappears and Charlotte Brontë takes the fore, or where George Eliot's pseudonymous choices in no way spawn the main body of criticism on her work, for Fiona Macleod, the pseudonym and its consequences are the major questions of her afterlife. Fiona Macleod's pseudonymous identity has become the lynchpin of critical response.

5.3: Fiona Macleod (Foreshadowings of)

Despite the general, though largely implicit, critical consensus that Sharp's femininity only truly appeared in 1894 with the appearance of Fiona Macleod, the *Memoir* shows that the presence of a feminine side, self, or perspective characterises almost the entirety of Sharp's recorded life. There was no sudden explosive femininity; instead, there was a recurrently present feminine force in Sharp. This section takes a broad view of Sharp's femininity, exploring the ways that it was discussed and expressed before Fiona Macleod provided a focal point. I then move into discussing the relationship between Sharp and Macleod, and the ways that we can mark a difference between the two.

In the index to her biography, Elizabeth Sharp includes an entry for '*Fiona Macleod, Foreshadowings of*'.⁵⁴⁹ One of the most telling pieces of foreshadowing is from William Sharp's early career, during the 'severe grind for the necessities of life'.⁵⁵⁰ Here, Elizabeth Sharp suggests that 'his "other self", the dreaming psychic self, slept for a time', and writes that 'so complete [...] was this divorce between the two radical strains in him that only a few of his intimates suspected the existence of the [...] feminine side of him'.⁵⁵¹ Her summation is that 'at no time did the "Fiona Macleod" side of his nature gain help or inspiration'.⁵⁵² Yet her argument is contradicted barely nine lines later when she continues:

I remember he told me that rarely a day passed in which he did not try to imagine himself living the life of a woman, to see through her eyes, and feel and view life

⁵⁴⁸ Nikkila, p. 5.

⁵⁴⁹ E. A. S., V2, p. 353.

⁵⁵⁰ E. A. S., V1, p. 81.

⁵⁵¹ E. A. S., V1, p. 81-2.

⁵⁵² E. A. S., V1, p. 82.

from her standpoint, and so vividly that “sometimes I forget I am not the woman I am trying to imagine.”⁵⁵³

That Sharp was prone to intense, overwhelming visions may be suggested by an earlier passage, written by Sharp discussing the moments immediately following his first meeting with Dante Gabriel Rossetti:

But, though conscious of external circumstances, I was not in London. The blood of the South burned through my veins, the sky was a semi-tropical one: the river rushing past was not the Thames, but the Tiber; the granite embankment was a marble aqueduct, with vines laden with ripe fruit covering it with a fragrant veil: citrons and pomegranates were all around. Dark passionate eyes of the South met mine; the dreamy sweetness of a strange tongue sang an ineffably delicious song through and through my soul.⁵⁵⁴

Sharp partially forgot his presence in London; his reality, his real experience, however internal and spiritual, was that he was in an impossible Italy. While the reader never gets a glimpse in such terms of Sharp’s relationship with ‘the woman [he is] trying to imagine’, the intensity of Elizabeth Sharp’s description mirrors Sharp’s self-transposition from London to Rome, and so we can read his ‘forgetting’ in the same context as this transposition. Sharp’s internal femininity became so intense that, at times, he was transposed from one bodily experience to another. Even within a context where his ‘feminine side’ was buried and divorced from him, that femininity was inescapably present. In this context, his earlier line to John Elder – telling Elder not to hate him if sometimes he is more a woman than a man – takes on a pointed suggestiveness: from almost Sharp’s earliest adulthood, there was or was developing a part of himself that was at least feminine, if not always a woman.⁵⁵⁵ Further, due to Sharp’s previously explored silence on the matter of his childhood, this feminine part characterises almost the entirety of Sharp’s recorded life. Elizabeth Sharp’s biography starts in earnest when Sharp was, at the youngest, seventeen or eighteen; Sharp was twenty-four when he expressed femininity to John Elder. From then, for the following twenty-six years, Sharp’s femininity came up consistently and, it is suggested, was a constant part of his internal sense of self.

This feminine aspect predated Sharp’s career and predated his understanding of himself as a Celtic writer; however, the words used to describe this feminine presence

⁵⁵³ E. A. S., V1, p. 82.

⁵⁵⁴ E. A. S., V1, p. 57.

⁵⁵⁵ Halloran, V1, p. 26.

always had a (stereotypically) Celtic twinge: dreamy, psychic, more deeply-feeling, more vividly emotional.⁵⁵⁶ Tellingly, in Elizabeth's rendering, Macleod, or the feminine presence that predated her, was more deeply connected to Sharp's emotions than Sharp was himself. We can imagine, perhaps, the dividing line between the two as a closet door, or as the 'vestibule' Genette calls on in conceptualising the paratext.⁵⁵⁷ Nevertheless, to divide this feminine presence off as the emotional, vivid part of him and the 'William Sharp' side of him as an economically minded but rather dull creature offers a simplicity not represented in E. A. Sharp's biography nor W. Sharp's letters. It is true that the 'William Sharp' side was often presented as the worker, and 'Fiona Macleod' the dreamer.⁵⁵⁸ The part of Sharp that eventually developed into Macleod Elizabeth specifically calls 'the dreaming, psychic self'.⁵⁵⁹ Later, she writes:

His literary efforts were directed toward the shaping of his prose critical writings, toward the controlled exercise of the mental faculties which belonged to the William Sharp's [sic] side of himself. From time to time the emotional, more intimate self would sweep aside all conscious control; a dream, a sudden inner vision, an idea that had lain dormant in what he called 'the mind behind the mind' would suddenly visualise itself and under such impulse he would write at great speed, hardly aware of what or how he wrote, so absorbed was he in the vision with which for the moment he was identified. In those days he was unwilling to retouch such writing; for he thought that revision should be made only under a similar phase of emotion [...] Later, when that side of his nature found expression in the Fiona Macleod writings – when those impulses became more frequent, more reliable, more coherent – he changed his attitude toward the question of revision and desired above all things to give as beautiful an expression as lay in his power to what to him were dreams of beauty.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁶ This of course leans on the nineteenth century, often but not always non-Celtic, perception of Celtic personality. For an example of such a contemporary approach to Celtic identity, see Matthew Arnold's *Celtic Literature* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1891). Arnold blurs distinctions between different Celtic populations. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5159/5159-h/5159-h.htm> [accessed 07/08/2023]. Please note that this link lacks page numbers to direct the reader, but that Arnold's conceptions of Celtic identity are present throughout the text, as is his blurring of Celtic populations.

⁵⁵⁷ Gérard Genette and Marie Maclean, 'Introduction to the Paratext', *New Literary History*, 22.2 (1991), 261–72 <https://doi.org/10.2307/469037> (p. 261).

⁵⁵⁸ E. A. S., V1, pp. 171-2.

⁵⁵⁹ E. A. S., V1, p. 82.

⁵⁶⁰ E. A. S., V1, pp. 171-2

This passage is indicative of Elizabeth Sharp's desire to separate Sharp and Macleod along worker/dreamer lines, but is also indicative of the ways in which Sharp and Macleod resisted such separation. Elizabeth Sharp is responding particularly here to the idea that Sharp was, in Ernest Rhys's words, 'a poet who was rather disinclined by temperament for the 'poetic pains'', who was 'not always anxious to correct a leisure' that which 'he wrote in haste'.⁵⁶¹ She explains this tendency of Sharp's, which Rhys sees as a problem or issue in Sharp's character, as an earnest desire to stay true to the spirit of the vision that inspired his poetry. The agency behind these poems does not seem to be entirely Sharp's. Instead, it belongs to 'the mind behind the mind', which, as a seemingly internal process, both is and is not Sharp, and Elizabeth identifies this agent with Fiona Macleod, whilst to an extent denying that Fiona Macleod was, in any sense, a self-contained existence.⁵⁶² She refers to 'that side of his nature', whilst also implicitly suggesting a separate presence that would and could take control of Sharp.⁵⁶³ A later passage, during their residence in London, is suggestive of the degree to which Sharp would be subsumed, or perhaps more pertinently, drowned in these visions. Elizabeth Sharp writes:

A telegram had come for him that morning, and I took it to his study. I could get no answer. I knocked, louder, then louder, – at last he opened the door with a curiously dazed look in his face. I explained. He answered "Ah, I could not hear you for the sound of the waves!"⁵⁶⁴

Sharp and Macleod – or at least the energy that found expression in the writings under her name – are both the same and separate, conflicting but interdependent. Visions are Sharp's, but do not seem to come from him. Sharp is a worker – he was extremely prolific – but also a dreamer, prone to extreme psychic identification. Ernest Rhys writes:

He did not see places or men or women as they were! He did not care to see them so: but he had quite peculiar powers of assimilating to himself foreign associations – the ideas, the colours, the current allusions, of foreign worlds. In Italy he became an Italian in spirit; in Algiers, an Arab. On his first visit to Sicily he could not be happy because of the sense of bloodshed and warfare associated with the scenes amid which he was staying; he saw bloodstains on the earth, on every leaf and flower.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶¹ E. A. S., V1, p. 169.

⁵⁶² E. A. S., V1, p. 171.

⁵⁶³ E. A. S., V1, p. 172.

⁵⁶⁴ E. A. S., V2, p. 38.

⁵⁶⁵ E. A. S., V1, p. 170.

While Elizabeth Sharp tries to make Fiona Macleod explicable to the audience, in her text we instead see a consistent process of separation and blur. Sharp and Macleod are by turns separated and brought together within Sharp's visions and psychic impulses which come from him and yet come from elsewhere. In these 'foreshadowings' of Fiona Macleod, these sections which purport to make Macleod explicable, we see instead Elizabeth's own inner workings as she struggles to contextualise and explain Sharp/Macleod in language that did not encourage scandal.

An idea of the relationship between Sharp and Macleod, with all its unusual qualities, can be gathered from the following extracts from Elizabeth Sharp's biography. Copied here, in full, are two letters from a late stage of Sharp and Macleod's relationship and career. One from Sharp to Macleod, and the other from Macleod to Sharp. They were written to arrive on their shared birthday, the 12th of September. This was a habit, according to Elizabeth Sharp, and the way the two talk and relate to one another is suggestive of their relationship and the way in which they understood each other.

On the 12th of September, 1905, he brought me the two birthday letters when they reached him, and gave them to me to read, saying, with a smile, "Fiona is rather hard on me, but she is quite right."

Dearest Fiona,

A word of loving greeting to you on the morrow of our new year. All that is best in this past year is due to you, *mo caraid dileas*:⁵⁶⁶ and I hope and believe that seeds have been sown which will be reborn in flower and fruit and may be green grass in waste places and may even grow to forests. I have not always your serene faith and austere eyes, dear, but I come to much in and thro' my weakness as you through your strength. But in this past year I realise I have not helped you nearly as much as I could: in this coming year I pray, and hope, it may be otherwise. And this none the less tho' I have much else I want to do apart from *our* work. But we'll be one and the same *au fond* even then, shall we not, Fiona dear?

I am intensely interested in the fuller development of the Celtic Trilogy – and shall help in all ways. You say I can give you what you have not: well, I am glad indeed. Together we shall be good *Sowers*, *Fionoghal mo rùn*:⁵⁶⁷ and let us work contentedly at *that*. I wish you Joy and Sorrow, Peace, and Unrest, and Leisure, Sun, and Wind, and Rain, all of Earth and Sea and Sky, in this coming year. And inwardly dwell with

⁵⁶⁶ My faithful (or true) friend.

⁵⁶⁷ Fiona, my love (or, tellingly, secret). Translations are approximations based on Robert Archibald Armstrong, *A Gaelic Dictionary in Two Parts* (London: James Duncan, 1825) https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/A_Gaelic_Dictionary_in_two_parts_I_Gaeli/FZ1WAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0 [accessed 05/07/2022]. These were further checked with Malcolm MacFarlane, *The School Gaelic Dictionary* (Stirling: Eneas MacKay, 1912) <http://www.ceantar.org/Dicts/MF2/index.html> [accessed 04/07/2022], and further checked with the LearnGaelic online dictionary <https://learngaelic.scot/index.jsp> [accessed 05/07/2022]. The 1825 and 1912 dictionaries were referenced as examples of the kinds of work Sharp may have had at his disposal, should he not have been fluent in Scottish Gaelic.

me, so that less and less I may fall short of your need as well as your ideal. And may our “Mystic’s Prayer” be true for us both, who are one.

Ever yours, dear, Will.

My dear Will,

Another birthday has come, and I must frankly say that apart from the loss of another year, and from what the year has brought you in love and friendship and all that makes up life, it has not been to your credit. True, you have been in America and Italy and France and Scotland and England and Germany – and so have not been long settled anywhere – and true also that for a month or two you were seriously and for a few months partially ill or “down” – but still, after all allowances, I note not only extraordinary indolence in effort as well as unmistakeable laziness in achievement. Now, either you are growing old (in which case admit dotage, and be done with it) or else you are permitting yourself to remain weakly in futile havens of ignoble repose or fretful pseudo rest. You have much to do, or that which you ought to do, yourself: and as to *our* collaboration I see no way for its continuance unless you will abrogate much of what is superfluous, curtail much that can quite well be curtailed, and generally serve me loyally as I in my turn allow for and serve *you*. Let our New Year be a very different one from the last, dear friend: and let us not only beautifully dream but *achieve* in beauty. Let the ignoble pass, and the noble remain.

Lovingly yours, dear Will,

Fiona.⁵⁶⁸

What these letters reveal for the character of Fiona Macleod and her literary intentions will be discussed below.⁵⁶⁹ For the moment, however, I linger on these letters as artefacts of a relationship. There is no suggestion from Elizabeth Sharp that anything was ever done with these letters beyond being written and received; there was no apparent intention to publish them and thus use them to preserve the social divide between William Sharp and Fiona Macleod, for example. Neither does Elizabeth Sharp suggest that the letters were ever known to exist during Sharp and Macleod’s lifetime by anyone besides themselves and their wife. Elizabeth Sharp’s tone is cagey with regards to how to approach these letters, and none of the critical perspectives on Sharp/Macleod are especially helpful. Within Halloran’s context for Macleod, Sharp sending Macleod a letter to his own address hardly makes sense, since there is no hint of Edith Rinder’s presence or involvement. Should Macleod have been a simple tool, whether one to access feminised victimhood or one to ventriloquise homosexual desire, sending birthday letters would not make sense, either. That is not to say that these letters must be taken as evidence that Macleod and Sharp were

⁵⁶⁸ E. A. S., V2, pp. 310-313. Emphasis and special characters as given in the text.

⁵⁶⁹ This section will be in the network-focused section of the chapter.

separate people. There is an element of fancifulness to Sharp's engagement with the world, with or without the presence of Macleod. The concept of sending birthday letters to and from a persona, and even saying '[she] is rather hard on me', is in line with Sharp's more fanciful mode.⁵⁷⁰ This fanciful mode cannot be fully explained within the context of Macleod as symbolising, covering for and acting as spiritual connection with Edith Rinder, nor within the context of her being a self-conscious, deliberate tool. The birthday letters complicate Sharp's presumed relationship with Macleod, giving it an element of playfulness that is absent in most explanations of the Sharp/Macleod relationship.

One of the most interesting aspects of the two letters are the differences in tone. 'A word of loving greeting', begins Sharp, where Macleod cuts bluntly to the chase: 'Another birthday has come, and I must frankly say that [...] it has not been to your credit'. Both of them discuss the same topic: their work and Sharp's failure to keep up with his other half. Sharp's tone is apologetic, scattering praise of Macleod among admissions that he '[has] not helped [her] nearly as much as [he] could.' He seems almost frightened of rejection: 'inwardly dwell with me,' he begs, 'so that less and less I may fall short of your need as well as your ideal'. He refers to Macleod with pet names four times in the body of the letter, in both English and Gaelic, and his language is effusive and rather purple at points. He tends to capitalise important words and use metaphors. Sharp's letter contains more adjectives, (nineteen total, minus repeats), seven of which lean positive, one of which leans negative.

Macleod's letter contains six negative or negatively inflected adjectives, of a total fourteen without repeats.⁵⁷¹ She writes of Sharp's 'indolence' and 'laziness', but expresses some kindness, backhandedly, when she suggests that he has spent time in 'fretful pseudo rest'. She jokes with him, saying that his laziness is due to growing 'old', but the joke is bracketed by negativity and harshness, including saying that their partnership cannot go on if he continues to, in his words, 'fall short.' Macleod writes 232 words over six sentences, making an average sentence length of 38.6 words. Sharp writes 262 words over eleven sentences, making an average sentence length of 23.8 words. Sharp's sentences are distinctly shorter than Macleod's, adding to the slightly manic, restless energy of his writing.

⁵⁷⁰ E. A. S., V2, p. 310.

⁵⁷¹ When run through a sentiment analyser which gives a score from -100 (negative) to +100 (positive), Sharp's letter scores +94.1, and Macleod's scores +43.8. The sentiment analyser I used can be found here: <https://www.danielsoper.com/sentimentanalysis/default.aspx#>.

Macleod shortens her sentences in the last part of her letter, and her tone softens – her words become more positively inflected (‘beautifully’, ‘noble’) and she refers to Sharp as ‘dear friend’, the only pet name in the body of her letter. Overall, Sharp’s letter is more affectionate, and, while disappointed in the past year, hopeful and optimistic for the future. His writing is breathless, staccato and crowded with adjectives and nouns. Macleod’s letter, by contrast, is graver, showing far less optimism. Her writing is slower, her words weighted down by their darker mood. The contrasts are distinct, and the character shown in each letter is very different. Sharp’s letter has the sun-god, hyperactive, smiling qualities his friends attach to him, but Macleod’s letter shows a darker, slower, far more cautious mood. Macleod’s sombre caution is borne out: these letters come approximately three months before their death.

5.4: Paratextual Bodies

In this section, after exploring and analysing the critical perspectives on Macleod and her history and personality, I return to the ways in which we can see the author’s body as, functionally, a paratext to their work. In this I refer back to Genette, who considers the paratext to include ‘all the messages which are situated, at least originally, outside the book: generally with the backing of the media (interviews, conversations), or under the cover of private communication (correspondences, private journals, and the like)’.⁵⁷² Maclean writes that:

both editors and public have come more and more to demand the "brand name" which lends authority to the product. The use of pseudonyms is also endlessly instructive, whether they represent an attempt to acquire *auctoritas* and *gravitas*, or an attempt to shed them.⁵⁷³

I suggest, in this section, that the author’s body is a message situated outside the book which carries an authority and perhaps even a *gravitas* that can shape responses to the author’s work. In this I extend past the pseudonym into the real or supposed physical embodiment represented by the name. Here, we can look back to the quotation from *The*

⁵⁷² Genette and Maclean, p. 264.

⁵⁷³ Maclean, p. 276.

Critic, where we note the writer's impression of Sharp as an embodied individual apparently changes the writer's way of relating to Sharp's texts:

[H]e by no means realizes the conventional ideal of the poet or literary worker, his mould and manner being those rather of a man whose life has been lived in the open air, to whom the cricket bat "comes handier" than the pen, and who would rather pull an oar than push a paper-cutter any day of the week.⁵⁷⁴

This quote shows that Sharp's physical appearance, including his build and manner, was incongruous and inconsistent with his texts, and in fact that his build and manner were inconsistent with the idea of him being a writer at all. Sharp may have been aware of this gap himself, and may have considered a critic's knowledge of his physical embodiment a block to true understanding of the work he was trying to produce. Sharp's pseudonymous ventures and his 'shabby' hesitancy in publishing show his attempts to create a false body to stand in for his own, that will create a more fitting threshold into his work.⁵⁷⁵ Most of Sharp's literary career was, as mentioned, particularly outward facing. His body represented his work; it was Sharp, the embodied individual, whose in-person social work shaped his career. For those who knew Sharp, then, his body did act as a threshold into his work and writing, as the social act of networking acted as a threshold for Sharp into the publishing world.

In order to explore these concepts, I begin from a place of queer identity slip, where characters blend with their authors and more deeply represent the author in doing so. However, I then show that Macleod took over the outward facing social role from Sharp, crossing the established boundaries of queer identity slip. I explore the ways that two members of Sharp's social circle used fictional characters as stand-ins for themselves outside of fictional writing, and the way in which these figures are operating within a form of identity creation where the fictional, written text is a 'truer' representation of the embodied person than the social face of that person. They are using text – their own text – to override the 'paratext' of their social face in their intimate social relationships. Sharp, however, uses a 'creation' to override the 'paratext' of his social face in his *outward-facing relationships*. This marks a distinct shift. Where people such as Alexander Nelson Hood held onto their social faces in their less intimate social lives and used a character as a stand-in

⁵⁷⁴ [Anon.], 'The Lounger', *The Critic*, 12.301 (1889), 64-5 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000057828> [accessed 01/07/2022] (p. 164).

⁵⁷⁵ Halloran, V1, p. 383.

within their intimate and closed social spheres, Sharp used a stand-in during his less intimate social life and held onto his social face in his more intimate relationships. This is suggestive, given Sharp's consistent above-mentioned vulnerability and desire to be liked; Sharp's public and private faces already differed. His private face already carried a femininity that he was sometimes comfortable expressing; this expression was more difficult in public space.

From there, I discuss the way in which Sharp created an impression of Macleod's physical embodiment. This includes Sharp's words and Macleod's. However, in discussing this, I emphasise the ways in which Macleod only existed in text: in her own work as author, in her letters, and in Sharp's. Her presence is entirely textual. I link the ways in which the Macleod identity was held within a queer, intimate social space to the homosocial knowledge space discussed in Chapter Two. Some of the textual discussion of Macleod may have been more purposeful; Macleod's mediations on her own identity to Katherine Tynan likely were an attempt to give details that would inform a critic's response to her work.

Two of Sharp's queer friends engage in similar identity slippage to Sharp and Macleod. Theodore Watts-Dunton signs one of his letters 'Your affectionate Aylwin', after the protagonist of the novel which Watts-Dunton discussed writing in the letter.⁵⁷⁶ To Alexander Nelson Hood, Sharp addressed the letter 'Dear Julian', after the protagonist of a novel Hood was writing. At one point Sharp writes:

"Julian" ought to have a great lift, and not the least pleasure in looking forward to seeing you again early in October is that of hearing some more of your book of Venice and of the other Julian.⁵⁷⁷

The blurring of writer and character in various directions is telling for Fiona Macleod. The identification of Macleod with Sharp's truest self is shown in Sharp's own words to Catherine Janvier: 'I can write out of my own heart in a way I could not do as William Sharp'.⁵⁷⁸ This parallel suggests that those who knew about Fiona Macleod may have understood her as part of the same identity-character slippage that named Alexander Nelson Hood 'Julian' and Theodore Watts-Dunton 'Aylwin'. However, Sharp's identity play cannot be simplified to a writer carrying the name of a character that reflected him at the

⁵⁷⁶ E. A. S., V2, p. 137. See Halloran, V3, p. 60, p. 87, p. 96.

⁵⁷⁷ E. A. S., V2, p. 210. See Halloran, V3, p. 191 and p. 363 for more identity slippage surrounding Alexander Nelson Hood.

⁵⁷⁸ E. A. S., V2, p. 14.

level of the soul. Indeed, as much as she sometimes appeared in her own texts, Macleod is not indisputably a *character*. Her reality is slippery and difficult to define, but nothing, in either of the Sharps' works, suggest that Macleod was a character or a specifically created entity, even if some of the facts about her were purposefully developed and are unambiguous fictions.⁵⁷⁹

To a degree, the Macleod identity fits with the pattern of identity-slip suggested among Sharp's friends. However, the Macleod name lacks the secrecy and intimacy surrounding the other identity-slippages, as her works and name were public and the others only existed in letters between friends. While only a few of Sharp's friends knew of the true nature of the relationship between him and Macleod, and while Sharp safeguarded the identity as well as he could, the Macleod identity was one that was put forward into the world, not one that remained in the intimate written world that existed between lovers and friends.⁵⁸⁰

Sharp did have a rich, intimate world of correspondence, but this rich world is largely not replicated in the surviving Macleod correspondence. In some of these intimate correspondences, Sharp discusses his woman's soul, and the closeness of Fiona Macleod to himself.⁵⁸¹ In the surviving Macleod letters there are far fewer intimacies, perhaps speaking as much to the stumbling block of the secret of her identity as to gendered rules for intimacy and emotion. Sharp cannot keep Macleod from his most intimate friends, but rarely does Macleod herself write to these friends. Macleod's sphere of written intimacy as we know it is exclusive to her own productions: her novels, stories, and poems express the same themes and the same kinds of selfhood that we see in Sharp's intimate universe of letter writing. The network, in this period, once Sharp has established himself as a writer and can relax into his relationships, becomes one largely of intimacy, self-expression, and emotion. Sharp's written world has moved from being largely professional, or outward-facing (writing to companies, to magazines, to editors) to being private, or inward-facing: much of his correspondence was with personal friends rather than with strangers or business associates. There is a distinct shift in his letters from those that are in some way public, or presenting a public persona, to those which express intimacy and a private inner

⁵⁷⁹ One of these unambiguous fictions will be demonstrated below in an extract from *Le Galliene*.

⁵⁸⁰ Macleod was usually referred to as Sharp's cousin.

⁵⁸¹ See Halloran, V3, p. 173.

self. Macleod, however, primarily left us with professional, outward-facing letters. While Sharp used his private, intimate correspondence to reveal himself and his true character, Macleod used her public correspondence for the same purpose. What Macleod reveals and expresses of herself in her professional letters will be discussed in section V.

Macleod exists exclusively in text. Sharp occasionally attempts to enforce the concept of her physical reality:

He and only he had written the “Fiona Macleod” fantasies and poems, but – yes! There was a real Fiona Macleod as well. She was a beautiful cousin of his, living much in solitude and dreams, and seldom visiting cities. Between her and him there was a singular spiritual kinship, which by some inexplicable process, so to say, of psychic collaboration, had resulted in the writings to which he had given her name. They were hers as well as his, his as well as hers. [...] On one occasion, when I was sitting with him in his study, he pointed to the framed portrait of a beautiful woman which stood on top of a revolving bookcase, and said “That is Fiona!”. I affected belief, but, rightly or wrongly, it was my strong impression that the portrait thus labelled was that of a well-known Irish lady prominently identified with Home Rule politics, and I smiled to myself at the audacious white lie.⁵⁸²

The ‘physical’ reality that Sharp gave Macleod was never part of Macleod’s publicly accessible identity, but instead was only given to friends, in person or in text. These fragmented details Sharp gave in order to increase the sense of her physical reality existed only in the semi-public, semi-private world between Sharp and his friends, as did his occasional, hushed confessions about her connection to him. To Robert Murray Gilchrist, Sharp writes:

I am glad you like “The Mountain Lovers.” But do write to me about how you feel it, & what you think of it. You, & a few like you, constitute the sole public for whose opinion I really care. [...] Did I tell you of the letter of splendid praise & recognition which George Meredith wrote to Miss Macleod. It is one of several, some wholly unexpected: but a letter like that of GM’s remains a kind of beacon in one’s life.⁵⁸³

To Richard Le Gallienne:

Yes, my boy, be just to Miss Macleod. Anything you can say for her will be gratefully appreciated, but she as well as her unworthy cousin earnestly hope for no more confusion respecting her actual authorship of “The Mountain Lovers” etc., publicly or privately.

⁵⁸² Richard Le Gallienne, “The Mystery of “Fiona Macleod””, *The Forum*, 45 (Jan-June 1911) 170-179 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000552622> [accessed 04/07/2022] (p. 172). While RLG was not included in the secret, he did reveal it to the public and had to rescind it very quickly after a hasty telegram from Sharp. Thus I suggest that different friends were entrusted with different pieces or given different ideas of Macleod.

⁵⁸³ Halloran, V2., p. 102.

More about her when we meet. (George Meredith has just sent to her present Argyllshire address a letter of splendid praise & encouragement. He knows that she is my cousin: but, I hope, will never be “put about” by hearing any other rumour).⁵⁸⁴

In this letter, again to Gilchrist, Sharp’s identity play is evident even letters in to friends who knew the secret of Macleod and were trusted:

Fortunately, our friend Miss F. M. practically finished her book just before *she* got ill too – and there is a likelihood that *There is But One Love* will come out this Spring. A few days will decide...⁵⁸⁵

To Catherine Janvier, Sharp writes:

I hope to send you a letter from the beautiful place by the sea where we are going to. It will be a letter from Fiona Macleod. Yes, *Pharais* is mine. It is a book out of my heart, out of the core of my heart. I wrote it with the pen dipped in the ichor of my life.⁵⁸⁶

While any one of these friends could have used the material they learned about Macleod in their careers as writers and editors, none of them did. Sharp’s words on Macleod’s physical reality never entered that public sphere in their lifetime though those words lingered on its threshold. Sharp’s confessions and assertions were not taken as gossip to be disseminated. The secret was thus held within a private emotional space between friends, any of whom could betray it but who did not, apparently held by the ‘rules’ of private, intimate space. Here, the private, intimate, emotional space links to the earlier work in the chapter on biographies, where all the parties in question held onto each other’s secrets for fear of what might be revealed if they broke the unofficial rules of the community. Sharp has gone from being an interloper in the private emotional space to being protected by it. Identity-construction, through the keeping of secrets, has become a communal act. This ‘reciprocal knowledge’ connects and acts to solidify social bonds.⁵⁸⁷

The texts that generate Macleod are letters from Sharp about her, her own written work in its various forms, and letters to and from Macleod. Something or someone like Macleod existed before these texts, as we see from the consistent pre-Macleod discussion of a feminine part to Sharp, a feminine side, perspective, or inner life. When this feminine aspect grew, it – Macleod’s very existence – had to be solidified through text. However, this

⁵⁸⁴ Halloran, V2, p. 101.

⁵⁸⁵ Halloran, V2, p. 381.

⁵⁸⁶ Halloran, V2, p. 33.

⁵⁸⁷ Georg Simmel, ‘The Sociology Of Secrecy And Of Secret Societies’, *American Journal Of Sociology*, 11.4 (1906), 441–98 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2762562> [accessed 12/05/2022] (p. 449).

is not exclusive to Macleod: we saw previously in the American Volta that Sharp himself was created and constricted by text. When Sharp writes to Catherine Janvier that he can show his heart as Macleod in a way he could not as Sharp, the dynamics of textual creation and constriction are part of what he means.⁵⁸⁸ Macleod, created by text, is not constricted by text. She is instead freed by it. Macleod is revealed through text, where Sharp was trapped by it.

The textual reveal of the self is there in Theodore Watts-Dunton as Aylwin, and in Alexander Nelson Hood as Julian, but Macleod takes a step further; she is a paratextual reveal of the self, alongside a textual one. Textual in the sense that she is created by text; paratextual in the sense that as author, she is outside the very texts in which and by which she is created. She is a paratext to Sharp, forming the clearest avenue through which to explore and understand him; Sharp is a paratext to Macleod, an adjacent 'text' that allows Macleod to be seen, heard, and published. Sharp's letters in which he mentions or introduces Macleod act as a threshold, a way into Macleod and a way in *for* Macleod. To stretch Maclean and Genette's work further, Pauline Nestor's work on letters facilitates a navigation of the ways in which a physical embodiment (or an implied one) can act as thresholds to understanding, rendering bodies as paratexts:

The letter form is by nature suited to self-revelation and self-construction, for it enables a monologue while simultaneously hypothesising a dialogue. Hence the ghostly interlocutor prompts or stimulates the performance of a self at the same time as his or her absence is liberating for that performance or disclosure. Disapproval or dissent exist only in so far as the letterwriter chooses to bring them into play imaginatively, and similarly the necessarily deferred nature of the response guarantees that the kinds of misconstruction to which the immediacy of conversation is susceptible are absent for the letter writer, at least at the crucial moment of self-construction. Thus, for example, when Charlotte Brontë writes passionately to her friend Ellen Nussey of her 'rebellious and absurd emotions', of 'vehement impatience of restraint and steady work' and an 'urgent thirst to see – to know – to learn', she concludes that she could hardly make such a confession to anyone but Ellen, 'and to you rather in a letter than "viva voce"'.⁵⁸⁹

Brontë's revelation to Nussey prefigures Sharp's later words to Catherine Janvier, that Sharp could 'write out of [his] heart in a way [he] could not do as William Sharp, and indeed [he]

⁵⁸⁸ E. A. S., V2, p. 14.

⁵⁸⁹ Pauline Nestor, 'New Opportunities for Self-Reflection and Self-Fashioning: Women, Letters and the Novel in Mid-Victorian England', *Literature & History*, 19.2 (2010), 18-35 <https://doi.org/10.7227/LH.19.2.2> (p. 23).

could not do if [he] were the woman Fiona Macleod is supposed to be'.⁵⁹⁰ The Fiona Macleod texts act in a way similar to the epistolary space: as a site of self-construction, performing and liberating the self while saved from disapproval or dissent by the guard of pseudonym. This disapproval and dissent were a pressure Sharp had experienced early in his career, when his poem 'Motherhood' resulted in censure from Vernon Lee. While Sharp was friends with Lee's half-brother Eugene Lee Hamilton, and hoped to become friends with Lee, these hopes were shattered with Lee's reaction to Sharp's 'Motherhood'. The poem, which considers childbirth and motherhood from three perspectives (that of a tiger, an Australian Aboriginal woman, and a western middle-class woman), was read by Lee as overtly sexual and perhaps demeaning; the topic in general, as well as Sharp's approach to it, seems to have struck Lee as 'fleshly', and inappropriate, leading to a misconstruction of Sharp's poetic intention:

As to the alleged impropriety of the subject of Motherhood I am at a loss to conceive upon what ground such a statement is put forward. I hope your brother does not still misunderstand me after my recent letter, but previously I know he had completely done so from one short sentence in his letter to me on this subject, where he says – "Besides, is not your type of civilized woman degraded by being associated with the savage and the wild beast?" This showed me that he, as I now see you have done also, looked at the poem and not at what made the poem: he looked at the external description, not at the soul-like animating idea.⁵⁹¹

Sharp attempted to use the letter form to correct Lee's misconstruction of him. Sharp's hypothesised dialogue in reply shows him desperately attempting to correct the misconstruction and salvage unsuccessfully what was left of their friendship.⁵⁹² We may argue that this censure and Sharp's reply took place in a space wherein Sharp's physical body – his presumed cisgender maleness – acted as a threshold to Lee's understanding, and that Lee's understanding was, in Sharp's mind, misshapen by virtue of a misleading threshold, a faulty paratext. Yet, as himself and by his own name, Sharp could not escape his misleading embodiment that served as a block to understanding. Inescapably 'viva voce', never absented, Sharp's texts were guaranteed to be misunderstood.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹⁰ E. A. S., V2, p. 14.

⁵⁹¹ See Appendix C; also Halloran, V1, p. 43.

⁵⁹² See Appendix C.

⁵⁹³ We may read Lee's reaction in light of Virginia Blain's own reaction to the poem in 'Queer Empathy': 'Two women writing as Michael Field and projecting themselves empathetically into what they perceived as the masculine erotic desire for a woman is not as troubling because it does not perpetuate unequal power

In the use of the Fiona Macleod pseudonym, Sharp and Macleod were mutually guarded from potential censure and misunderstanding. Lacking a 'real', present, attached embodiment, the Macleod texts themselves were deferred and displaced, as a letter is in Nestor's figuring, operating *sotto voce*. They lacked the immediacy of conversation, not only because of the fact of their form but also because, by virtue of her lack of physical embodiment, Fiona Macleod could not be pinned down or placed. The author was a deferred presence, guaranteeing the absence of misconstruction. Fiona Macleod was a more daring (self-)construction than the voice of the poet in 'Motherhood' and had greater control over her self-construction as she existed only in text and in the spaces between text. Sharp, forever beholden to the 'text' of his physical body and bodily construction, could only self-figure within certain bounds. The Macleod texts would always be read – were they under the Sharp name – within those constructions of his body, at least within the critical, social-networked sphere that knew him. Sharp's body and presence acted as a paratext to the works themselves, as did his publication history. His body-as-paratext limited the reading of his texts. The paratextual body is fashioned by others, is publicly read and consumed. Sharp, as explored in the previous chapter, could not control this consumption, this paratextualisation of his body. The physicality of the network, and the fundamental role of the physical network in the selling, buying, reading, and reviewing of texts, means that he could not escape his body being read.

However, in Macleod, the reading of the body is deferred. Macleod's body is fictional, created in her texts and the mind of the reader only, and thus is able to reflect with complete precision the *kind* of body that would be an advantageous paratext. Here we can think of her pseudonym, earlier explored as signifier. *Fiona Macleod*, the words on the cover of the book, reflect an acceptable self, the perfect paratext to her words, the ultimate signifier. There is utter harmony between Macleod's body and text. She presents herself as the ultimate Celt, and thus there is no conflict for the critical contemporary reader to resolve between the author's paratextual body and the text itself. Sharp has solved the conundrum of the disconnect between his body and his text, and solved his resistance to

relations; the idea of women 'colonising' masculine eroticism carries nothing of the political resonance of the idea of a man writing a woman's experience of childbirth, for example.' (see Blain, 'Queer Empathy', p. 11.) Sharp's 'faulty paratext' leads to this political reading, and his discomfort with the paratext of his body seems to stem from this politicisation.

being consumed, by creating a fitting signifier. She becomes fitting because so much of her is reliant on the reader's own construction.

Key to the reader's constructive work is the fact that Macleod always operated, by virtue of her solely textual presence, within intimate dialogic spaces. Nestor discusses reading the novel in the nineteenth century as a privatised, intimate endeavour, no longer social and public – as intimate, private dialogue between reader and author. Macleod's voice was only heard within these intimate dialogues between reader and author, or within the intimate social space of letters. With the lack of a body to attach to the work her words had a dialogic intimacy even while that dialogue disseminated widely: she had no physical presence or physicalised fame to distract from that dialogic intimacy. She expressed her intimacies through text and dialogue, and through the lack of a physical body that the reader could know, Macleod was and is always constructed *by* the reader. Sharp's words were attached to a publicly accessible body. You could read his works and then meet him, physically. Macleod's body is continually deferred. Her texts were her only avenue of construction, and, as texts, were and are always speaking directly to the reader. Her works may have spread widely, but her self always existed, as it still exists, in the intimate constructive space between text and reader.

This site, however, is endlessly constructive. Textual space is the safest space in which Macleod could exist, not only by virtue of her lack of a physical body of her own, but also by virtue of the fact that it was the safest space in which identity creation could happen for Sharp. While Fanny Park and Stella Boulton's social transitions pre-dated Sharp's arrival in London, Sharp was too well-known for such a pursuit to be possible.⁵⁹⁴ Sharp built, used, and relied on his social world too much, and gained too much fame, for him to be able to safely access a social transition. By the time that it became imperative for Sharp to express femininity – when Macleod appeared – Sharp's opportunity for social transition and identity exploration – if he ever had one – had disappeared. The only space in which identity exploration could still happen was the textual space. It is textual space in which Macleod appeared, in which Sharp, arguably, transitioned. It was the safest, most secure option – but it also allowed Sharp complete access to the kind of woman she might wish to be. Paratextual transition lacks the limits that physical, medical, and social transition had in

⁵⁹⁴ See Simon Joyce, 'Two Women Walk into a Theatre Bathroom: The Fanny and Stella Trials as Trans Narrative', *Victorian Review*, 44.1 (2018), 83-98 <https://doi.org/10.1353/vcr.2018.0011>.

1894 and continue to have in 2022. In the following section, we will see some of the ways in which Macleod constructed herself, as well as the social consequences of Macleod's textual transition. The balance between the two begins to shift. Macleod begins to take over Sharp's social face, doing most of the interpersonal work of publishing. Sharp falls back, retreating into an intensely queer intimate and closed space, where conscious identity construction is acceptable and expected.

5.5: Macleod as Networker

There are many letters from Macleod in Halloran's collection, but for the purposes of this chapter I have curated a snapshot, taking representative letters from 1895 and 1896 because they show Macleod's early process as a networker and how she worked to establish herself. However, before going into the letters in more depth, the trends of the 1895-99 collection should be indicated. During this time, Macleod corresponded with thirty people. One is unnamed. The vast majority are men, but the few women with whom she corresponds are worth exploring. These are Mrs James Ashcroft Noble, Katharine Tynan, Dora Sigerson Shorter, and Edith Lyttelton. The letter to Mrs James Ashcroft Noble is an intimate expression of sympathy on the death of her husband. James Ashcroft Noble and Sharp were great friends; there is no surviving sympathy letter from Sharp to Mrs Ashcroft Noble, and Macleod and Ashcroft Noble do not appear to have corresponded – and so Macleod's letter is a little curious.⁵⁹⁵ It has two crossings out, which Halloran has rendered readable in his collection. They are the only crossings-out seen in the Fiona Macleod letters of this period, and it is possible that Macleod felt they revealed too much knowledge of and intimacy with the family. Macleod's first letter to Katharine Tynan expresses thanks for a good review, flattery of Tynan's own work, and finally a promotion of Edith Wingate Rinder's work, and hope that Tynan and Wingate Rinder may meet in future. The structure and form of this letter is similar to that of letters written by Sharp to reviewers, and, like Sharp's letters, leads to a correspondence with Tynan. The next letter to Tynan contains

⁵⁹⁵ Kedrun Laurie, 'James Ashcroft Noble 1844-1896' *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2010, https://beta.1890s.ca/wp-content/uploads/noble_bio.pdf [accessed 07/07/2022] (p. 3).

similar flatteries and discussion of Macleod's work, but is largely taken up with discussion of Macleod's own history and her frustrations about the person she is always assumed to be.

This marks a curated intimacy with Tynan, designed to present herself as a certain person and in a certain light. Here we see curation of her image and her public persona, as well as creation of her self. These details that Macleod shares might work their way into any of Tynan's future work on Macleod, and impact Tynan's portrayal of her and readings of her texts. These 'facts' presented by Macleod separate her from Sharp, give her access to her self, and give her a greater reality:

I am not an unmarried girl, as commonly supposed, but am married. The name I write under is my maiden name. Perhaps I have suffered, as well as known much joy, in my brief mature life [...] Of course I don't object to its being known that I come of an old Catholic family, that I am a Macleod, that I was born in the Southern Hebrides, and that my heart still lies where the cradle rocked.⁵⁹⁶

The one letter to Dora Sigerson Shorter has only one line in the main body of the text, which appears to be a reply to a letter. It is a new year's greeting, hoping for good things to come for Sigerson Shorter. In the postscript, Macleod mentions writing an article on Celtic writers for *The Fortnightly*, of which Sigerson Shorter is one. This letter marks two instances – out of four so far – of Macleod using letters to women to either promote other women or to indicate that she is promoting her correspondents themselves. This is a similar dynamic to that in Sharp's own letters, but is less common in Macleod's letters to men. It seems that Macleod did not feel it necessary to promote men, or promote *to* men. Instead, her efforts are spent creating communal links within the social sphere of women writers, as Sharp's efforts were spent creating communal links within the social sphere of lesser-known and middle-brow male writers. This suggests that Sharp and Macleod were both invested in literary community, and saw the promotion of other members of their community as an important aspect of belonging to that community. This is certainly not to say that Sharp talked to men and Macleod talked to women; Sharp had many female close friends, and Macleod had important connections with men. However, both focused their promotional efforts intra-communally, rather than inter-communally. There is no surviving evidence of Macleod promoting such people as Sigerson Shorter to male publishers, agents, or authors of her acquaintance, nor is there surviving evidence of Sharp doing the same. This perhaps

⁵⁹⁶ Halloran, V3, p. 323-4.

indicates that these promotional efforts were driven by the desire to create or solidify social bonds. However, it is worth noting that Sharp did act as an agent, at times, for those he promoted. As we saw from John Nichol, this was not always well received. That Macleod did not seem to 'place' her friends as Sharp 'placed' his may indicate that Macleod learned from Sharp's *faux pas*, that Macleod did not have the physical or social freedom to act as an agent, or that Macleod did not feel a need to engage in the same quid-pro-quo exchange of favours that had been necessary for Sharp.

Macleod's letters to Edith Lyttelton are a marked departure from her other letters to women. Macleod and Lyttelton came into contact because Lyttelton had 'come under the spell' of Macleod's work.⁵⁹⁷ There are four letters to Lyttelton in the Halloran collection, often long and intimate explorations of their sympathy with one another. However, Macleod's letters also act to introduce Sharp to Lyttelton, which was a potentially advantageous connection, since Lyttelton's husband was an MP. While we often see Macleod using Sharp's connections, introducing herself through her 'friend and relative', this is the first of the relationships in which the exchange goes in the opposite direction. We can prove that this method worked, as Sharp himself entered into correspondence with Lyttelton in 1900.⁵⁹⁸

Macleod's correspondence is narrow in scope, yet, within that limited scope, she still succeeded in taking over Sharp's public space. She corresponded largely with publishers and editors, and with some mutual friends of hers and Sharp's - who seemed to have more sympathy with Macleod than Sharp - fans, and playwrights who were adapting her work for the stage.⁵⁹⁹ She encouraged writing among her fans and may also have been contacted by people who wanted her to review their manuscripts; she did so in the case of a Mr Black, but it is difficult to know if Macleod's letter to him was her only letter, or if the manuscript review was the culmination of a series of letters. Largely, however, Macleod's fan-letters that survive are from women. There are notable examples from men – one, asking for Macleod's hand in marriage, and another, from Japanese writer Yone Noguchi – but primarily it appears Macleod was written to by women, and encouraged writing in those women, as well as promoting the writing of women she already knew. Macleod's letter-

⁵⁹⁷ Halloran, V3, p. 11.

⁵⁹⁸ Halloran, V3, pp. 31-2.

⁵⁹⁹ Such friends include Yeats and George Russell.

writing universe, with the exception of the publishers she wrote to, was deeply female: in the act of textual transition, she could more comfortably access a feminine social sphere. While William Sharp did have a circle of close female friends, including Mona Caird, Adelaide Elder, Edith Wingate Rinder, and Catherine Janvier, this circle was limited and did not easily expand. It is important to note that Caird and Elder were from Sharp's earliest days in London, and that Rinder and Janvier were women who had some knowledge or sympathy with Sharp's femininity or womanhood. This circle may have stayed limited because of the difficulty of achieving the sympathy and intimacy required in the relationship: to put it very roughly, Sharp may have needed to be seen as 'one of the girls' by his female friends. This pressure does not act on Macleod, which may explain how much more intensely female than Sharp's her social circle is.

This feminine universe was, however, not limited to the solely textual, as the circle of those involved with the Macleod letters were also all women. Mary Sharp, William's younger sister, wrote the majority of the Macleod letters from Sharp's drafts.⁶⁰⁰ Lillian Rea was at times Sharp's secretary and Macleod's London agent, and her agency acted as Macleod's return address.⁶⁰¹ Edith Wingate Rinder, the frequently-suggested genesis of Macleod, had the same role as Lillian Rea at times, and she also played Macleod in front of George Meredith.⁶⁰² Elizabeth Sharp, too, offered an important role in supporting Macleod's work and supporting her development. As Sharp wrote to Elizabeth: 'She's our daughter, isn't she?'.⁶⁰³ While not a part of the team that allowed Macleod to safely exist, Catherine Janvier was a close friend of Sharp's, and she too was aware of Macleod and privy to her importance to Sharp. There were five women, including Elizabeth Sharp, who were deeply involved with the creative effort necessary for Macleod to live. Macleod existed with the support and protection of other women.

Several men also knew Sharp's secret. Those closest to it, like Alexander Nelson Hood and Robert Murray Gilchrist, were queer. Other men who knew, whose sexuality is unknown, may have been told the secret for pragmatic reasons. One such friend was Patrick Geddes, as discussed in the previous chapter.⁶⁰⁴ Further strategic reveals can be seen

⁶⁰⁰ Halloran, V1, p. 640.

⁶⁰¹ Halloran, V3, p. 16, p. 418.

⁶⁰² Halloran, V3, p. 16, p. 75, p. 199.

⁶⁰³ E. A. S., V2, p. 291.

⁶⁰⁴ Halloran, V2, p. 15.

elsewhere, as when Sharp allowed Alexander Nelson Hood to tell the Prime Minister that the Macleod texts were written by Sharp in an attempt to get Sharp a civil pension.⁶⁰⁵ The suggestion was that the Macleod texts were more culturally valuable than Sharp's under his own name, and thus that revealing their 'true' authorship was an economic decision, though not one Sharp made lightly.⁶⁰⁶ Otherwise, however, it is suggestive that those who were closest to the secret were people with some element of gender marginalisation, and this perhaps indicates how Sharp thought of Macleod or how Macleod thought of herself – not as a grand prank or other scheme, but as a vulnerable act of self-unveiling. Macleod can be said to be seeking refuge amongst those who had the greatest chance of understanding.

One important factor in the creation of Macleod is her *character*. Character has an important role to play in these textual letter-networks. Sharp characterised himself in certain ways depending on his correspondent. However, for Macleod, these shifts were not merely shifts of register, topic, or tone. Sharp's boisterous, boyish tone may have calmed down as his career progressed, and the balance of his assertiveness against his eagerness to please may have shifted from correspondent to correspondent, but for Sharp writing as himself there is less of an intense drive to create a character behind the pen. By turns he may have characterised himself as amusingly lazy, beset by illnesses and distractions, or a hard worker whose attempts were frustrated, but there was, by the mere fact that he could be known in person and not only in text, less self-consciousness and less necessity for him to create himself as a character or persona. There was a fluidity in his construction of himself, a variability. He had a certain amount of freedom, given both his extratextual existence and his closeted femininity.⁶⁰⁷

Earlier in this chapter, I examined the constraints and freedoms operative on Macleod by virtue of her solely textual presence. However, Macleod is not saved completely from the social world by lack of presence. We can read her bluntness, directness, and assertiveness as showing an understanding of the different social expectations of women and of men. This is best seen against Sharp's own correspondence. Especially evident early

⁶⁰⁵ Halloran, V3, pp. 140-141.

⁶⁰⁶ Halloran, V3, pp. 173-5.

⁶⁰⁷ While several people did know that Sharp and Macleod were, at least in some ways, one person, this by no means suggests that Sharp was 'out' regarding his femininity. In fact, the fact that he was largely cautious about who he came out to and the fact that those people were largely women or queer men, suggests that he was aware of the potential consequences of being 'out' completely and thus was, on some level, aware of his own closetedness.

in his career, but still present later, is a desire for approval. Macleod's letters rarely betray this same desire, though it occasionally appears in letters to Yeats and George Meredith.⁶⁰⁸ However, in the majority of instances, Macleod shows a confidence in her work and ability that frequently faltered for Sharp. Macleod shows little need to apologise for her delays and illnesses beyond an obligatory passing mention, where Sharp's apologies add a sense of insecurity to his letters:

As I think Mr. Sharp explained to you, I have been unwell [...] and so there has been delay in finishing "The Washer of the Ford," or rather, in rewriting and partially recasting it. I am now under a promise to deliver the book, if possible, by the middle of March, but this means that you cannot have it till about the end of March.⁶⁰⁹

Her tone is most blunt when speaking with publishers and editors, and softest when speaking to friends like Yeats and George Russell. However, she appears careful to always place herself on equal footing with them, lacking Sharp's occasional fawning quality.

For example, when the publishers Stone and Kimball were going bankrupt and not making good on their contracted arrangements, Macleod was blunt and firm-handed, in contrast to Sharp's more friendly – though gradually firmer – letters to the same firm. To Hannibal Ingalls Kimball, Macleod writes: "Thanks for your letter. But please send me a specific answer to my proposal [...]."⁶¹⁰ To Herbert Stone she writes:

Dear Sir, I cannot understand your silence. [...] I am strongly disinclined to publish further with your firm, unless I meet with more prompt courtesy and more satisfactory business relations.⁶¹¹

However, in one of Sharp's own rather indignant letters to Stone, complaining of the fact that the proofs for *The Gipsy Christ* have been delayed, Sharp's general style shows through. His broad strokes are the same as Macleod's: irritated by the long silence and worried for the cost to his schedule, and inclined to cease business with Stone if the matter went unresolved. However, he prevaricates frequently, softening his ire with constant potential excuses for Stone, like illness. Sharp also closes with friendly matters, like asking when Stone will be next in London, hoping that he has not been ill, and giving John Lane an introduction to Stone. Sharp's letter to Stone lacks Macleod's ability to get to the point and stay there; instead he spends paragraph after paragraph in plaintive discussion of his thwarted plans.

⁶⁰⁸ See E. A. S., V2, pp. 83-87, and p. 41-2.

⁶⁰⁹ Halloran, V2, p. 179.

⁶¹⁰ Halloran, V2, p. 310.

⁶¹¹ Halloran, V2, p. 204.

Another letter begins *My dear Herbert*, signs off *Yours ever, Will*, and only in the postscript are any issues indicated:

I am more chagrined than I can say about the extraordinary delay with *The Gypsy Christ*. Not a sign yet of a proof. I do trust for every reason financially & otherwise, I am not to lose my Autumn pubn. as I have already lost the late Spring.

Macleod's greater assertiveness may indicate an understanding that, as a woman, she would be read in a different way than a man, and thus may have to compensate in her style for this difference.⁶¹² Characterising herself with Sharp's enthused, apologetic, fawning prevarication may have limited how seriously she was taken by her male correspondents. However, it is also possible that after her textual transition, Sharp could access a self-confidence she could not access when presumed a man. Macleod's intimacies that she shows to her closest correspondents are always very specific; they operate as extensions of her texts, betraying similar ideas and ideals about Scotland, mysticism, and the Celtic renaissance. Her intimacy is rarely personal in nature, instead always linked to the sympathies she was trying to build with writers such as Yeats and George Russell. Where Sharp betrays personal intimacies and details as an act of friendship, Macleod's personal intimacies only ever work in three distinct ways. First, to aid in the impression that she is a person and not a persona by discussing her travels and her habits, though in such a way as to still make herself physically unreachable to her correspondents; second, to excuse her absences and delays through illness; and third, to increase her standing as a 'true Celt'.⁶¹³ Her letters, in consequence, have a more crafted, more deliberate quality than Sharp's. However, this deliberateness may in itself be a response to gender norms, marking differences in the emotional freedom that she and Sharp had based on their perceived genders.

It is significant also that Macleod betrayed to Katharine Tynan her age and marital status. Perhaps uncomfortable with the way notions of her youth might impact the perception of her writings, Macleod wrote that she was married, and suggested – though

⁶¹² That she wrote in a different way to a man is also noted by Katherine Tynan and Ethel Rolt-Wheeler. Both writers note that the Fiona Macleod texts are so clearly written by a woman that they, with varying levels of conviction, resort to the idea that some supernatural force was at play. Rolt-Wheeler's words are especially interesting as she claims that Fiona Macleod was, in fact, the voice of St Brigid.

⁶¹³ She writes to Katherine Tynan that 'I am, in summer and autumn, so much of a wanderer through the Isles and Western Highlands that letters sometimes are long in reaching me.' (E. A. S., V2, p. 30-31). To W.B Yeats she writes 'I am at present like one of those equinoctial leaves which are whirling before me as I write, now this way and now that: for I am, just now, addressless, and drift between East and West.' (E. A. S., V2, p. 146).

did not outright state – that she was in early middle-age. It is unclear whether her age and marital status entered the general impression of her as a writer or whether they remained an expression of intimacy she gave in letters in order to establish herself as a person. However, it is tempting to connect Macleod's statement that she is married to the fact that she received a marriage proposal in response to her work.⁶¹⁴ The former may have been intended to prevent more of the latter. Nevertheless, a married, middle-aged woman may command a little more authority than a young unmarried girl, and, given the intensity with which Macleod projected her own authority in other contexts, it seems likely that these questions of authority, power, and how to be taken seriously as a woman, were questions which dogged Macleod's self-construction. These pressures can be seen as constricting Macleod's freedom or liberation, yet it seems that these were pressures that Macleod could navigate more easily than Sharp could navigate similar constrictions. Questions of power and authority do not seem to have obsessed Macleod as intensely as questions of identity and being taken seriously obsessed Sharp; Macleod may have seen them as part of existing socially as a woman, an uncomfortable but necessary consequence.

Macleod's network was largely a curated version of Sharp's own, with some small additions. Their spheres were not wholly separate, though they operated within the network as separate people. The secret was perhaps too delicate for them to risk going far beyond the safety of people whom Sharp himself knew. Macleod's letters show an awareness of networking, but equally an awareness of the difference of how men and women could network – Macleod's changes in tone and topic from the Sharp letters indicates a sense of gendered networks wherein a woman had less emotional flexibility. Sharp's intimacy in his network rarely pays attention to *who* he is being intimate with; he could develop intimacy with anyone. However, Macleod's intimacies can be seen in two telling places – in letters to men with whom she had a political, authorial, and emotional sympathy, and letters to women who had shown sympathy for Macleod's work and aims. Her intimacy is given in places where she can be certain it will be correctly read. There is no such carefulness in Sharp's intimacies, either indicating a difference in character, a difference in gendered rules of intimacy, or both.

⁶¹⁴ E. A. S., V2, p. 58.

Conclusion: Edited, with Introduction, by Mrs. William Sharp

This thesis began by asking what the role of social work was in the growth of careers like Sharp's, writers whose careers were, on one level or another, inexplicable. I asked: how might the 'hack' writer, unable to rely on family money, talent, or upper-class social privilege, use connectivity to grow their careers and make good on 'fortunate & smiling chances'?⁶¹⁵ Further, what might this do to our understanding of literary talent and fame: how might the social circles of the hack writer destabilise traditional ideas of what causes literary success? With recourse to social network analysis, I demonstrated the way that with luck, work, and judicious use of what class privilege he had, Sharp could exponentially expand his social circle.

That this expanded social circle led to literary opportunity was largely a matter of luck. Sharp struggled, surviving on little work and the generosity of his new friends. But Sharp's heartbreak – the loss of his friend and mentor, Dante Gabriel Rossetti – was also his first major opportunity. With this biography, we see the opportunities contained in his social circle come home to him. Yet we see him struggle with these opportunities; and we first see the pressure of a desire to tell vying against a desire to stay quiet. Sharp struggled in the role he had to take for economic reasons; he was not the only one struggling, of course, but the struggle stands out against the overriding impression from critics like Alaya and Blain, and the contemporary impression similarly, that Sharp only saw opportunity in that role as Rossetti's biographer. Sharp seemed to feel a pressure to expose the network-paths inherent in literary success; in his biographies, at least at first, he showed an inability to disguise the network-paths taken by or available to his subjects. Sharp revealed the role of networking in the careers of his subjects, exposing and complicating the sense of inevitability that surrounded the careers of successful writers.

Sharp's next effort was recuperative. Newly stabilised, Sharp focused his curatorial efforts on supportive recuperation. Here, he showed again an awareness of networking; but, rather than exposing the network-paths a person could take in the pursuit of success, he instead became part of that path. We can read Sharp's anthologies as an attempt to share the luck of his position to those around him, who, like him, may have vanished into

⁶¹⁵ Halloran, V2, p. 39.

obscurity were it not for those ‘smiling chances’.⁶¹⁶ This effort was itself disruptive. Sharp broke the rules of anthologising in much the same way as he had broken the rules of biography; perhaps not overtly, and perhaps not lastingly, but enough to raise questions of, as Amigoni would have it, who narrates given moments and histories,⁶¹⁷ and, as Robert Lecker would have it, who defines and delimits what it means to be.⁶¹⁸ Sharp’s contemporaries, we can see, were aware that Sharp was – perhaps accidentally, and certainly not alone – raising and troubling these questions.

As Sharp was raising these questions in anthologising, he was growing aware of their relevance to his own life and existence: asking who narrated him, and what it might mean to be. Sharp’s efforts to extend his networking and increase his chances of publication in America led, albeit indirectly, to a distinct and sudden turn in his career. The tensions that had chased Sharp throughout his career finally caught up with him, and, with the extra support of a more stable career and a slightly stronger reputation, Sharp turned mostly away from the commercial and in some ways self-betraying work on which he had built himself and towards more artistic, self-reflecting work. No longer directly reliant on an ever-expanding network, Sharp’s social efforts turned, too. Thus begins the telling of Fiona Macleod, and the social efforts that supported and scaffolded her existence.

Like Sharp, Macleod began in magazines. Yet Macleod had consistent social support and opportunities, bolstered by Sharp’s stage-setting, that allowed her to begin her career with the confidence that Sharp had, despite his general manner, lacked. Macleod’s career left behind the trajectory of the hack writer, beginning boldly and to good reviews. The social connections that Sharp had already made allowed Macleod’s talent to be fully seen and explored. The social work that Sharp exposed as lying behind the success of Rossetti, Shelley, and Browning was done, in the life of Macleod, by Sharp himself.

The final chapter of this study explored Macleod in more detail and with an eye to seeing, and recuperating, the whole of her existence. I note in this chapter the ways in which gender-diverse embodiment is subject to a sequence of pressured readings and misreadings, and the ways in which it was possible to correct and counter these social misreadings – the ways in which the network ‘failed’ to support even those which had

⁶¹⁶ Halloran, V2, p. 39.

⁶¹⁷ David Amigoni, *Victorian Biography* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1993) p. 2.

⁶¹⁸ Robert Lecker, *Keepers of The Code* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013) p. 8.

previously relied upon it – within texts themselves. I argue that Sharp partook in a method of approaching text and reading that emphasised its transitional and transactional space: a space, specifically, of gender slip and gender affirmation; I argue that this was a way of getting around the fact that the supportive space of the network became constrictive, constraining, and stifling of personal growth and development. This final chapter aimed to discover the ways in which Sharp, or Macleod, born between two calf covers, found themselves readable and misread, textual and paratextual: I explore the ways in which a physical body could operate as a paratext and the ways in which a reading of that ‘text’ could then result in misreadings of more literal texts. Further I explore the ways in which text itself allowed the creation of a more suitable body, one less susceptible to misreading. On a more concrete level, Macleod corrected readings of herself through text and through paratext, taking on the outward networking role in order to have greater control over her epitexts, while Sharp retreated to a knowledge-space in which communication – epitext – was less risky.

In 1906, barely two months after Sharp’s death, Georg Simmel published ‘The Sociology of Secrecy and Secret Societies’ in the *American Journal of Sociology*. It is difficult to read Simmel’s work and not think of the then extremely recent revelation of Macleod and Sharp’s identities. Simmel writes:

If A has a different conception of M from that of B, this does not necessarily mean incompleteness or deception. On the contrary, the personality of A and the total circumstances of his relation to M being what they are, his picture of M is for him true, while for B a picture differing somewhat in its content may likewise be true. It is by no means correct to say that, over and above these two pictures, there is the objectively correct apprehension of M, by which the two are to be corrected according to the measure of their agreement with it.⁶¹⁹

For Sharp, who built a variety of relationships with a variety of people, these different pictures – these different versions of himself that he revealed to, and concealed from, others – were purposeful and yet often fluid and shifting. We may read these different pictures as socially functional, allowing Sharp to build and develop the connectivity with which this thesis is concerned. So too, Sharp’s inner world – often temporally shifting and fluid, sometimes almost hallucinatory – was ‘chaotic’; as Michael Durrant and Andrew

⁶¹⁹ Georg Simmel, ‘The Sociology Of Secrecy And Of Secret Societies’, *American Journal Of Sociology*, 11.4 (1906), 441–98 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2762562> [accessed 12/05/2022] (p. 443).

Balmer note in ‘Simmel and Shakespeare on Lying and Love’, ‘we are not all perfect witnesses to, nor commentators on, our own inner world’.⁶²⁰ Simmel’s formulations suggest that we are never totally known, even by ourselves. Sharp’s internal chaos and external fluidity of ‘content’ is of course not unique; but this fluidity, so strongly expressed by both William and Elizabeth Sharp, has been taken to reveal Sharp as a liar and charlatan. This conclusion instead considers these moments of chaos and consistent threads of fluidity (as oxymoronic as that may be) as ways to reflect on William and Elizabeth’s modes of telling and secret-keeping, and the ways in which material text holds space for both telling and non-telling.

The dominant mode of Sharp criticism has been framed by ideas of incompleteness and deception. Further, critics have tended to search for the ‘objectively correct apprehension’ of Sharp, a William-Fiona figure who exists over and above William Sharp and Fiona Macleod.⁶²¹ This figure, despite fifty years of searching, has remained silent and impossible to find. As Hugh Stevens writes in the *Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, ‘the prevalent mode of anonymous first-person life narration in the late nineteenth century is, of course, the sexological case study, a mode of narration that might be seen to tell in literal, vulgar ways.’⁶²² Stevens continues, discussing Freudian processes of discovery in biographies of James; uncoverings, exposings, slips and confessions: ‘this discursive procedure contains its subject and turns its subject into an exhibition piece, with peculiarities safely understood and labelled.’⁶²³ Safely understanding and labelling Sharp – a process deemed necessary by virtue of Sharp’s own non-normativity, where Sharp’s gender variance and queer sexuality must be controlled and secured – has been part of the process

⁶²⁰ Andrew Balmer and Michael Durrant, ‘Simmel and Shakespeare on Lying and Love’, *Cultural Sociology*, 15(3) (2021), 346–363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975520987064> (p. 351). For Sharp’s moments of hallucination, I quote here from E. A. S., V2, pp. 37-8. She quotes W. Sharp as writing “[...] But one night I awoke hearing a rushing sound in the street, the sound of water. I would have thought no more of it had I not recognised the troubled sound of the tide, and the sucking and lapsing of the flow in muddy hollows. I rose and looked out. It was moonlight, and there was no water. When after sleepless hours I rose in the grey morning I heard the splash of waves, I could not write or read and at last I could not rest. On the afternoon of that day the waves dashed up against the house.” [Elizabeth herself then continues the narrative] An incident showed me that his malaise was curable by one method only. A telegram had come for him that morning, and I took it to his study. I could get no answer. I knocked, louder, then louder, – at last he opened the door with a curiously dazed look in his face. I explained. He answered “Ah, I could not hear you for the sound of the waves!” It was the first indication to me, in words, of what troubled him.’

⁶²¹ Simmel, p. 443.

⁶²² Hugh Stevens, ‘Queer Henry In The Cage’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, ed. by Jonathan Freedman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 120-138 (p. 120).

⁶²³ Ibid, p. 121.

of re-integrating that which, in Simmel's framework, cannot truly ever be, and indeed *need* never be, integrated.

In 1912, Elizabeth Sharp's biography of her partner was co-opted as a psycho-sexological case study by proxy: a site of discovery of multiple identity. While there were only disjointed fragments of a first-person confession, an anonymous writer for the *Journal of Psychical Research* nevertheless used Elizabeth's work to diagnose William with what we would now call Dissociative Identity Disorder.⁶²⁴ Other accounts of multiple identity current at the time add some authority to this way of approaching Sharp, yet this approach fell out of vogue with critics eventually – if it had ever been in vogue to start with.⁶²⁵ Flavia Alaya notes that the theory that Sharp and Macleod were totally separate personalities is usually given without any understanding of what such an experience looks like and means.⁶²⁶ Certainly after Alaya's work it seems that the theory of multiple identity was widely rejected, and subsequently, critics have struggled with Sharp in other ways: many of them coming down on the side of Sharp being a liar or manipulator. Yet this rejection of multiple identity perhaps came too soon: while Alaya may have been correct at her moment of writing, the theory could stand to be revisited in light of the greater understanding of multiplicity, and the fact that own-voices accounts of multiplicity are now much more readily available, including on highly accessible social media accounts⁶²⁷.

However, the question of Sharp's identity is still largely unanswerable, though critics like Terry L. Meyers, Virginia Blain, and Michael Shaw have tried. Each attempt at integration is halted by the fact that William-Fiona cannot speak in his own words, and perhaps will not speak in his own words. Elizabeth and William Sharp's works are engaged in exploring what Hugh Stephens describes as 'the secret that will not reveal itself', though, Stephens notes regarding the work of Henry James, exploring that secret does not mean the secret becomes any clearer.⁶²⁸ In fact, between the three of them – Elizabeth Sharp, William Sharp, and Fiona Macleod – the secret becomes less and less clear even as it seems that we ought to be getting closer and closer to the truth. There is no knowing which of Sharp's or

⁶²⁴ [Anon.], 'Dual Personality in the case of William Sharp', *Journal for Psychical Research*, 15 (April 1911) 57-63 <http://www.lexscien.org/lexscien/lbmainframe.jsp?r=r8w> [accessed 04/07/2022].

⁶²⁵ For a contemporary example, see B. C. A., *My Life as a Dissociated Personality*, ed. by Morton Prince (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1909).

⁶²⁶ Alaya, p. 137.

⁶²⁷ For an example, see the Instagram account @gianusystem.

⁶²⁸ Stevens, p. 122.

Macleod's words reveal, and which of their words obscure. As a result, there is no telling sexological case study that can, in fact, *tell*; there is no psychological case study that can *explain*. This, I argue, is at least partly by design.

I explore Elizabeth's work here for a few key reasons. Firstly, she is an understudied figure within study of Sharp, and this is problematic due to the fact that study of Sharp is, or has been, extremely reliant on Elizabeth's work and writings. We assume her reliability, even when we have no particular grounds on which to do so, and in assuming such, our study of Sharp is based on a foundation which may not be as stable and secure as we might have hoped. I raise these questions about Elizabeth's work because her work has not yet been questioned, and instead has been entirely accepted. Her biography has not been treated as a literary work, even as many other biographies are treated as such - including within this thesis itself. I explore her work here, in this conclusion, because the questions raised by her work cause me to reflect on my own work and the ways in which I, too, have accepted Elizabeth's work as accurate and wholly reliable. When considering my own work in order to write this conclusion, it became clear the degree to which I was relying on and accepting Elizabeth's work while in some ways invisibilising her presence. While I always corroborated Sharp's networks across multiple sources, and did not solely rely on the biography, it is nevertheless Elizabeth's work that makes Sharp's networks and networking processes visible, much as Sharp did in his biographies of Rossetti, Shelley, and Browning. Thus, Elizabeth is key to this thesis, its direction, and its construction, and she may even be key to the direction of Sharp studies as a whole.

We can see in the reaction to Sharp's outing that there was an intense pressure on Elizabeth regarding what she did and did not say. Therefore, what Elizabeth says and what she obscures was of enormous importance to her audience and to her spouse's legacy. Someone would tell, if Elizabeth didn't. They had already come close – Ernest Rhys and Catherine Janvier had already spoken on the matter, in a limited way. Later, Richard Le Gallienne and Belford Bax would talk as well. Elizabeth's silence would have been read, too, just as much as her written words. Macleod had been a question for decades by the time of the biography's publication. What Elizabeth did, and did not, do, would carry extraordinary weight.

Elizabeth manages this pressure by being consistently vague about a variety of details that, if given, would have in some way *told*. What Elizabeth reveals is not the life

story of her spouse, but the personal connections that Sharp and Macleod made. Most chapters of her work are filled with letters to and from Sharp and Macleod. Sharp's biography becomes a list of passings and of meetings, of journeys, of transitions, of movements. It is interesting, in this light, that Elizabeth burned most of Sharp's papers before her own death.⁶²⁹ What understanding we can have of Sharp is largely rendered through interpersonal connections, through these networking processes, but we can access only a limited number of these connections. Our main way of approaching Sharp is through the group of people who surrounded him, and the groups of people he passed through. Elizabeth's narrative of Sharp's life is itself a narrative built on networks, a narrative shaped by personal connections, though curated. Elizabeth renders visible a network, like Sharp in his own biographies, and renders Sharp visible through the mechanism of this network. What we see, then, are all the different versions of Sharp that were shown to the different people who knew him, and we must build our own complete picture, if such a complete picture could ever be achieved.

There are, embedded in my work and that of the Sharps', constant recursive loops. I, Elizabeth, and William all participate in this method of lifewriting that centres not the man but, in William's words, the constellation.⁶³⁰ We rescue and recuperate. Elizabeth's bibliography, too, served as rescue, as did her uniform editions of the texts William wanted to be preserved. In the silences where the novels and poems William wanted to be forgotten would have occupied shelf-space, Elizabeth's bibliography quietly speaks.

Who is this ghostly figure that hovers between us and Sharp? Elizabeth Sharp was a journalist in her own right. She worked as Art Critic for *The Glasgow Herald*, a post that was originally William's but gradually became her own.⁶³¹ She does not list *The Glasgow Herald* pieces in the bibliography of Sharp's works, a choice which becomes loaded when we remember the fluidity of the Sharps' involvement in this role. This is true, incidentally, of all William's anonymous writing; while Elizabeth's involvement is only certain in the case of *The Glasgow Herald*, it could also be true of others. Elizabeth edited, translated, and collected various volumes for the Walter Scott publishing company, as well as for Patrick Geddes and

⁶²⁹ Halloran, V3, p. 401.

⁶³⁰ Sharp, *Papers Critical*, p. 18.

⁶³¹ Michael Shaw, 'Contested Cosmopolitanism: William and Elizabeth A. Sharp's *Glasgow Herald* Reviews of the Paris Salons 1884-1900', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 48.1 (2022) 37-47
<https://doi.org/10.51221/sc.ssl.2022.48.1.5>.

Colleagues. William was deeply involved with both, writing the introduction to Elizabeth's *Lyra Celtica*. Between the lines, then, we can see a writing partnership between the Sharps, where in an indirect sense Elizabeth and William shared one body of work.

Elizabeth Sharp's literary labour was as important to the Sharp's life as William's and Macleod's; her work seems to have been a key part of their income in the early years of their marriage, though she produced less as time went on. As well as working as the art critic for *The Glasgow Herald*, she edited *Lyra Celtica* for Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, in 1896; for Walter Scott, she produced among others *Sea Music*, *Women's Voices*, and *Great Musical Composers* (1887), *Women Poets* (1890), *Heine's Italian Travel Sketches* (1892), and *Heine in Art and Letters* (1895).⁶³² For the *Evergreen*, she wrote the short story 'Frost'.⁶³³ She and William collaborated on *Progress of Art in the Century* (1906; W & R Chambers). Further, in William's own words: 'Elizabeth has now the artwork to do for a London paper as well as *The Glasgow Herald*'.⁶³⁴ Yet, in the works where her editorial and authorial voice is loudest and clearest – the biography and collected works of her spouse – her other experience is almost entirely silent. Elizabeth elides her own journalistic skills and her decades of literary work.

In order to look more deeply at Elizabeth's work, we may think back to Trev Lynn Broughton's work on biography. Biography, at least for a while, had been an intimate labour, a protective and hagiographic labour with an expectation of kind honesty. Elizabeth Sharp casts herself in this mould. She asserts her honesty, her integrity, her love of her husband. We are to read her as a Victorian Biographer in the traditional style. Yet by 1910 biography was changing again. Edmund Gosse's 1907 *Father and Son*, for example, played with the late-Victorian ideal of 'truth': and indeed played with the meaning of 'truth' itself: 'truth' became more openly flexible and narrativized.⁶³⁵ Ideas, feelings, and emotions were

⁶³² In the case of *Sea Music* and *Women Poets* the books are advertised as part of the Canterbury Poets series, but no names are given in the advertisement. In *Women Poets*, *Women's Voices*, and *Sea-Music* her name is given as Mrs. William Sharp; in *Sea-Music* she is listed as the editor of *Women's Voices* and *Great Musical Composers*. In *Heine in Art and Letters* and *Great Musical Composers*, the first a translation and the second an edition of the work by G.F. Ferris, her name is given as Elizabeth A. Sharp. This is true of *Heine's Italian Travel Sketches* also.

⁶³³ E. A. S, 'Frost', *The Evergreen*, Vol. 4 (1896-7), pp. 53-60. *Evergreen Digital Edition*, edited by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, 2016-2018. *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, Ryerson University Centre for Digital Humanities, 2019. https://1890s.ca/egv4_sharp_frost/

⁶³⁴ Halloran, V2, p. 521.

⁶³⁵ See Ruth Hoberman, 'Narrative Duplicity and Women in Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*' *Biography*, 11.4 (1988) 303-315 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23539400> [accessed 04/07/2022].

inflecting biography in a new way. Elizabeth Sharp's elision of her own literary credentials disguises the narrative potentialities of her own work. The publication of the biography allowed Elizabeth to seize control of the narrative. Her citation of William's letters and diaries gives her work academic inflection, and echoes the 'lives and letters' genre of biographical writing. Yet she, as his wife, had control over these sources – and for many of the letters printed in the memoir, the memoir is the only record. This is also true of the diaries, as far as I have been able to discover. In this way, she cemented her position as the primary narrator of Sharp's life.⁶³⁶

Elizabeth has created for us a Sharp to study, and we have no real way of discovering how far the William she creates for us corresponds to the 'real' William. We may think back to Simmel's work, and the way in which one portrait of the self is no less real than the other – the way that Sharp sketched and re-sketched himself for each new purpose – and consider the way in which Elizabeth's biography may be one final functional, socially connective sketch. We, the readers after Sharp's death, are that final category of network nodes Sharp writes into his biography: the lurking pressure of the judgemental future, reading what was left behind, and integrating it, or not, into our literary constellations.⁶³⁷

Sharp has always been difficult to find, for Elizabeth as well as in his own writings. This is true from his earliest writing efforts, where the influence of other poets was so strong that Sharp's own poetic voice disappeared.⁶³⁸ Critics noted Sharp's nods to Rossetti or Swinburne, and in Sharp's own writing he so frequently referred to other people, and echoed other voices, that his own voice – while consistently, editorially present – was deemphasised, and frequently disappeared beneath the depth of reiteration and echo through which Sharp spoke.⁶³⁹

Sharp began to find his own voice through the mechanism of social connectivity – through opportunities that arrived through his connections. He used his voice to encourage

⁶³⁶ We may think here of John Addington Symonds' *Memoir*, Horatio F. Brown's expurgations, and Edmund Gosse's burnings; see Sarah J. Heidt, "'Let JAS Words Stand': Publishing John Addington Symonds's Desires", *Victorian Studies*, 46.1 (2003), 7-31, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3830106> [accessed 04/07/2022] and Rictor Norton, 'Symonds, John Addington', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/26888>.

⁶³⁷ For these categories, see pp. 111-112.

⁶³⁸ See following reference, and Meyers, p. 26, where Percy Bysshe Shelley subsumed Sharp, p. 37, p. 40, and p. 43.

⁶³⁹ [Anon.], "'The Human Inheritance and Other Poems'" *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 31 May 1882, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000686/18820531/078/0003> [accessed 01/07/2022] (ll. 84-86).

and reframe social connections, to make connections and create community. Where Sharp used his writing to present the social community in which he lived and worked, Elizabeth, too, enacted social strategies to bolster Sharp, constantly framing him – as he did Rossetti, in his turn – within the context of social groups and movements.

This thesis is only a limited examination of the social groups and movements that Sharp used, was used by, and was framed with. I have focused very particularly on those groups, movements, and networks that are immediately reflected in Sharp's texts and which seem to have had the most visible impacts on his career. Yet of course Sharp was part of many other networks which I could not discuss here, and which further research could shed more light upon. Similarly, the processes I have outlined could be discussed in more detail, and the connective processes of literary production could be more minutely described.

This study of Sharp, I hope, opens doors to the study of other genderqueer – in its most general sense – figures, especially those who used the medium of text to access gender affirmation and community. My work showed the ways in which Sharp took advantage of social structures to forge a career, and the ways in which these social structures were important to the building and management of literary careers in general; yet my exploration of these factors was in no way exhaustive, and there are many more social structures and career-forming processes that could be examined. I also explored the constricting and limiting pressures of the network within the specific areas of movement between literary styles and gender expression; there are many more areas, perhaps unlimited areas, where the network was more constrictive than creative.

This closing note is written with the view to, in some ways, also exposing Elizabeth Sharp as her own literary presence, and the memoir as an object of study in itself rather than as a biographical key to the secret of Sharp. Similarly, this thesis discusses Sharp's American career in more detail than has previously been discussed, and further work is necessary to truly understand the resonances that Sharp's work had with American audiences, and why Sharp left a more lasting impression in the American market than in the British or Scottish markets.

Most key to this thesis, however, and thus most key to its contribution, is the primary focus on Sharp's editorial and marginal presence. This conclusion seeks to open avenues into further study of presence in the margins, and the ways in which these marginal, paratextual presences shape and form the literary works which follow. Sharp is

not alone in having such a marginal presence, and he is surely not the most influential of all these marginal presences, these voices from the paratext. He is surely not the only figure whose social relationships were formed within, and by, paratext. Further work will show the ways in which late Victorian paratextual space was personally and socially constructive, and perhaps even cast light on the paratext as a space in which people could be invented, and could invent themselves.

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Images

Figure 1: Public domain image; 'Mr William Sharp, from a photograph by Frederick Hollyer' *The Chapbook*, 15 September 1894. Image here: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:William_Sharp_1894.jpg [accessed 05/07/2022].

Figure 6: *Song-Tide: Poems and Lyrics of Love's Joy and Sorrow*, by Philip Bourke Marston, ed. by William Sharp (London: Walter Scott, 1888). Author's copy.

Figure 13: [note: while the image given is copyrighted, I have purchased the book in question and will replace the images with my own once that has processed].

Figure 20: Image from <https://archive.org/details/ThePaganReview/mode/2up> [accessed 05/07/2022].

Figure 21: Image from <https://1890s.ca/evergreen-volumes/> [accessed 05/07/2022].

Figure 22: *The Yellow Book*, ed. by Henry Harland (London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1894-1897). Image shows Vol 1, April 1894. <https://1890s.ca/yellow-book-volumes/> [accessed 05/07/2022].

Figure 23: *Cosmopolis*, ed. by Fernand Ortmans (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896-1898). Image shows issue 2, February 1896. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k309769?rk=64378;0> [accessed 05/07/2022]

Figure 24: Image from <https://archive.org/details/evergreennorther01gedduoft/page/20/mode/2up> [accessed 05/07/2022]

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Gwynn, S., & Nilanjana Banerji, 'Dobson, (Henry) Austin (1840–1921), poet and author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32845> [accessed 08/05/23]

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<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-27748> [accessed 08/05/23]

Hamer, D., 'Morley, John, Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1838–1923), politician and writer' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35110> [accessed 08/05/23]

Hinings, J., 'Noel, Roden Berkeley Wriothsesley (1834–1894), poet and essayist' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20235> [accessed 10/05/23]

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<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34150> [accessed 08/05/23]

Jay, E., 'Oliphant, Margaret Oliphant Wilson (1828–1897), novelist and biographer,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
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<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-21585> [accessed 08/05/23]

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Lee, S., & Nilanjana Banerji, 'Knight, Joseph (1829–1907), drama critic', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
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[accessed 21/05/2023]
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<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-16745> [accessed 10/05/23]

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<https://www.dib.ie/biography/birrell-augustine-a0679> [accessed 21/05/2023]
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<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-14312> [accessed 08/05/23]
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Sichel, E., & Nilanjana Banerji, 'Ainger, Alfred [pseud. Doubleday] (1837–1904), writer and Church of England clergyman', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30352> [accessed 08/05/23]

Smith, G., & Sondra Miley Cooney, 'Masson, David Mather (1822–1907), biographer, literary scholar, and editor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34924> [accessed 08/05/23]

Stephen, L., & Nilanjana Banerji, 'Morison, James Augustus Cotter (1832–1888), author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19271> [accessed 08/05/23]

Stewart, J., & C. A. Creffield, 'Fowler, Thomas (1832–1904), philosopher and college head', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33228> [accessed 08/05/23]

Thirlwell, A., 'Rossetti, William Michael (1829–1919), art critic and literary editor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35841> [accessed 08/05/23]

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<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33481> [accessed 08/05/23]

Appendix A: Works By William Sharp and Fiona Macleod

This list is taken from Elizabeth Sharp's *Memoir*. She organises this bibliography into multiple sections, dividing by author (Sharp or Macleod) as well as by type of work, and then chronology. Here, I have reorganised this list by chronology first, and then author and type of work. In this way, I seek to show more clearly the intensity of Sharp and Macleod's work and make it easier to see shifts and changes in the work. I have chosen to stop at 1905, the year of Sharp/Macleod's death, to reflect their publishing output while alive, and the response to them likewise. The only 1905 texts not included in this listing are two German translations, by Winnibald Mey, of *Wind and Wave* and *The Dominion of Dreams*. Later, in 1910 and 1915 respectively, are two Swedish translations, by Karin Hirn, of *Wind and Wave* and *The Sin-Eater*. Works are largely presented according to E. A. S's presentation in the *Memoir*, though in many cases the information given has been trimmed. Each text is only listed once, with other editions (such as American editions, or reprints) given in notes at the end of each listing.

1879

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

The Secular Review. *May 17*. – On Reverence.

Good Words. *Feb*. – "Night" (Poem).

The Examiner. *July*. – "Because Life Is Filled With Sorrow And Tears" (Sonnet).

The Examiner. *July*. – "Lo, In That Shadowy Place" (Poem).

The Examiner. *Sept*. – "Religion" (Sonnet).

Chambers' Journal. *Dec*. – "Through The Fern."

1880

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Modern Thought. *Jan*. – "Retrospect" (Sonnet).

Modern Thought. *Feb*. – On A Passage In The Koran.

Good Words. *May*. – "Am Meer" (Two Sonnets).

1881

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Modern Thought. *Nov.* – On “Victor Hugo.”

Modern Thought. *June.* – A Note On Climate And Art.

1882

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Athenaeum. *Feb.* – “Spring Wind” (Sonnet).

Athenaeum *Feb.* – Four “Transcripts From Nature”.

Academy. *Sept.* – “Sleepy Hollow” (Poem).

Academy. *Sept.* – “Mnemosyne” (Sonnet).

Academy. *Sept.* – “La Pia” (Sonnet).

Harper. *Oct.* – “Birchington Revisited” (Poem).

Portfolio. *Nov.* – On D. G. Rossetti And Pictorialism In Verse.

Art Journal. *Dec.* – On Paolo Toschi And Corregio

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Pictorialism In Verse, issued in the Portfolio Of Artistic Monographs (November, 1882). London. Seeley And Co.

To Sonnets Of Three Centuries, Edited By T. Hall Caine. London. Elliot Stock. The Sonnet “Spring Wind.”

Contributions To Anthologies And Reprints, Published By Walter Scott, Ltd. London.

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

The Human Inheritance; The New Hope; Motherhood. London. Elliott Stock.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record And A Study. London. Macmillan & Co.

1883

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Fortnightly. *Feb.* – On The Rossettis

Cassell’s Mag. *March.* – “The Last Aboriginal” (Poem).

Literary World. *May 18.* – On Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

1884

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Art Journal. pp. 101 and 133. – On Monte Oliveto And The Frescoes Of Sodona.

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

Earth's Voices: Transcripts From Nature: Sospitra And Other Poems. London. Elliot Stock.

1885

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Athenaeum. Feb. – On "Marius The Epicurean."

Good Words. May. – The City Of Beautiful Towers.

Good Words. Nov. – On Chelsea Hospital And Its Inhabitants.

Good Words. Dec. – "A Ballad Of Tennis" (Poem).

Art Journal. p. 205. – "The Isle Of Arran."

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Introduction to *The Poems Of Sir Walter Scott*. II Vols. (*Canterbury Series*.)

Introductory Study to *The Songs And Sonnets Of Shakespeare*. (*Canterbury Series*.)

Introduction to *De Quincy's Confession Of An Opium Eater*. (*Camelot Classics*.)

Introduction to Allan Cunningham's *Great English Painters*. (*Camelot Classics*.)

1886

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Jack Noel's Legacy. A Story For Boys: Printed Serially in *Young Folks' Paper*, Vol. 8.

London. James Henderson & Sons, Ltd. [a/n: This refers perhaps to a collected edition of the serial print run; the serial and the James Henderson print were both 1886.]

Under The Banner of St James. A Story For Boys: Printed Serially in *Young Folks' Paper*, Vol. 8. London. James Henderson & Sons, Ltd. [a/n: This refers perhaps to a collected edition of the serial print run; the serial was 1886 and this James Henderson print was 1887.]

Good Words. May. – "May In Surrey" (Poem).

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

The *Sonnets Of This Century*. (*Canterbury Series*.) The second edition contained two sonnets by him: "Spring-Wind" and "A Midsummer Hour", which were withdrawn from later editions. In 1900 the title was altered to "Sonnets Of The Nineteenth Century."

1887

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

National Review. *March*. – On "Rossetti In Prose And Verse."

National Review. *June*. – On The Royal Academy And The Salons.

Eclectic Mag. *May*. – On The Art Of Rossetti.

Good Words. – "The Yellow Hammer's Song" (Poem).

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Life Of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Issued in *Great Writers*, Edited By Professor Eric S.

Robertson, M.A. London. Walter Scott & Co.

Introduction To Alfred Austin's *Days Of The Year*.

Memorial Introduction to *For A Song's Sake* by Philip B. Marston. (*Canterbury Series*).

To Ballads And Rondeaux, Etc. (*Canterbury Series*) re-edited by Gleeson White, William Sharp contributed three poems, "The Ballad Of Vain Hopes", "The Ballad Of The Sea-Wind", "The Ballad Of The Sea-Folk".

1888

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

The Secret Of The Seven Fountains: A Story For Boys, printed serially in *Young Folks' Paper*. Vol. XXIII, Nos. 943-959. London. James Henderson & Sons, Ltd. [a/n: This refers perhaps to a collected edition of the serial print run; the serial and the James Henderson print were both 1888.]

Good Words. *June*. – A Venetian Idyll.

Scottish Art Review. – Vol. I. Criticism On George Meredith's "Reading Of Earth."

Scottish Art Review. – Vol. I. Random Impressions From An Author's Notebook.

Scottish Art Review. – Vol. I. "Love In My Heart" (Poem).

Scottish Art Review. – Vol. II. A Note On The Aesthetic Development Of America.

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Life Of Heinrich Heine. Issued in *Great Writers*. Edited By Professor Eric S. Robertson, M.A. London. Walter Scott.

Introduction to *Song-Tide* by Philip B. Marston. (*Canterbury Series*.)

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

The Sport Of Chance. A Novel in three volumes. London. Hurst And Blackett, Ltd. This novel was originally written and printed serially in *The People's Friend* (Dundee) in 1887 under the title "A Deathless Hate."

Romantic Ballads And Poems Of Phantasy, printed for the author by Walter Scott.

1889

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Life Of Robert Browning. Issued in *Great Writers*. Edited By Professor Eric S. Robertson, M.A. London. Walter Scott.

American Sonnets selected by William Sharp. (*Canterbury Series*.)

To Sea-Music Anthology arranged by Mrs. William Sharp (*Canterbury Series*) W. S. contributed four poems: "The Sea-Spell.", "Atlantic Combers.", "The Sea In Bondage.", "The Swimmer At Sunrise."

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

Children Of Tomorrow: A Romance. London. Chatto And Windus.

1890

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Harper's. *June*. – "Sycamores In Bloom" (Poem).

Art Review. *June*. – Fragments From The Lost Journal Of Fiero Di Cosimo.

Art Review. *June*. – "On Robert Browning" (Poem).

New York Independent. *March*. – "Goldenhead" (Poem).

Belford's Magazine. – "In Memoriam: Robert Browning" (Poem).

Good Words, *P. 617*. – Reminiscences Of The Marble Quarries Of Carrara.

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Critical Introduction to *Great Odes* selected By William Sharp. (*Canterbury Series*.)

Critical Memoir to an English translation of *Essays On Men And Women* by C. A.

Sainte-Beuve. (*Masterpieces Of Foreign Authors*.) London. David Scott.

1891

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Century. *Dec.* – “Remembrance” (Poem).

National Review. *Mar.* – On American Literature.

Atlantic Monthly. *Dec.* – On Joseph Severn And His Correspondents.

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

Sospiri Di Roma (in irregular, unrhymed metre), printed for the author by La Societa Laziale, Roma.

1892

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

The Red Rider: A Romance of the Garibaldian Campaign in the two Sicilies. Issued serially in *The Weekly Budget*. James Henderson And Sons, Ltd. [a/n: This refers perhaps to a collected edition of the serial print run; the serial and the James Henderson print were both 1892.]

New York Independent. *Aug. 25.* – “The Second Shadow: Being the Narrative of Jose Maria Santos y Bazan, Spanish Physician in Rome.”

Atlantic Monthly. *May.* – On Severn's Roman Journals.

Good Words. *June.* – “Primavera Di Capri” (Poem).

Forum. *July.* – On Thomas Hardy.

Academy. *March.* – On Maeterlinck.

Harper. *May.* – “The Three Infinities” (Poem).

The Pagan Review: No. I. August, 1892. Edited By W. H. Brooks. Buck's Green Rudgwick,

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

The Life And Letters Of Joseph Severn. London. Sampson Lowe, Marston & Co.

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

A Fellowe And His Wife. By Blanche Willis Howard and William Sharp. London. James R. Osgood, Mac Ilvain & Co. It was issued also in 1892 in the Tauchnitz Collection of British Authors. as Vol. 2813. (Simultaneous with Harper's in New York)

Flower O' The Vine: Romantic Ballads and Sospiri Di Roma. With an Introduction by Thomas A. Janvier. New York. Charles Webster & Co.

1893

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

The Last Of The Vikings: Being the Adventures in the East and the West of Sigurd, the Boy King Of Norway. Issued serially in *The Old And Young*. Nos. 1659- 1674. James Henderson And Sons, Ltd. London. [a/n: This refers perhaps to a collected edition of the serial print run; the serial and the James Henderson print were both 1893.]

Nineteenth Century. *June*. – "La Jeune Belgique."

Nineteenth Century. *Dec*. – French-African Health Resorts.

National Review. *June*. – On The Art Of The Year.

Good Words, *p. 196*. – "Into The Silence" (Poem).

Good Words, *p. 709*. – "Fröcken Bergliöt" (Story).

Good Words, *p. 845*. – "Love In A Mist" (Story).

New York Independent. *Jan*. – "The White Flowers Of January" (Poem).

New York Independent. *May*. – "The Return To Nature."

New York Independent. *July*. – "Innismore And London" (Poem).

1894

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Nineteenth Century. *Jan*. – On The New Winter-Land Of French Africa.

Atlantic Monthly. *Aug*. – On Cardinal Lavigerie's Work In North Africa.

Atlantic Monthly. *Dec*. – Some Personal Reminiscences Of Walter Pater.

Portfolio. *July*. – On Fair Women In Painting And Poetry.

Harper. *March*. – "The Weaver Of Snow" (Poem).

Realm. *Dec*. – On The Child In Art.

Art Journal. *Jan.* – “Flora In January” (Sonnet).
 Art Journal. *Feb.* – On Tclemçen And Its Vicinage.
 Art Journal. *April.* – “Vesper” (Sonnet).
 Art Journal. *July.* – “The Peace Of Summer” (Sonnet).
 Art Journal. *Oct.* – “Aftermath” (Sonnet).
 Literature. *May 24.* – On The Return To Nature.
 Chapbook (Chicago). *Sept. 15.* – “To Edmund Clarence Stedman” (Poem).
 Chapbook (Chicago). *Sept. 15.* – “The Birth Of A Soul” (Dramatic Poem).

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Fair Women In Painting And Poetry. Issued in *The Portfolio Artistic Monographs*.
 Edited By P. G. Hamerton. London. Seeley And Co. Another edition of this work was published in the *Miniature Portfolio Monographs* in 1907.

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

Vistas. Issued In *The Regent Library*, printed by Frank Murray at the Moray Press, Derbyshire. (Simultaneously with Stone And Kimball in Chicago [*Green Tree Series*]). Same as English edition with addition of "The Whisperer" and a foreword. A second edition was printed in 1894; and a new edition issued in 1906 by Duffield & Co. New York).

Novels and books of poetry by Fiona Macleod

Pharais: A Romance Of The Isles. Issued In the *Regent Library*. Published by Frank Murray at the Moray Press, Derbyshire. Re-Issued in 1907 by T. N. Foulis. Edinburgh.

1895

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Evergreen I. *Spring* – “The Norland Wind” (Poem).
 Evergreen II. *Autumn* – “The Hill-Water” (Poem).
 Good Words. *Jan.* – Through Northern Tunesia.
 Harper. *June.* – Rome In Africa.
 Harper. *Dec.* – The Hebrid Isles.

Atlantic Monthly. *June*. – Some Reminiscences Of Christina Rossetti.

Chapbook (Chicago). *Dec. 15*. – Note On Belgian Renaissance.

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Evergreen I. *Spring*. – The Bandruidh (Poem).

Evergreen I. *Spring*. – Day And Night (Poem).

Evergreen I. *Spring*. – The Anointed Fan.

Evergreen II. *Autumn*. – Mary of the Gael.

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

Wives In Exile (A Novel). Boston, Mass. Lamson And Wolffe. [a/n: Published later (1898) in the UK, by Grant Richards of London].

The Gipsy Christ And Other Tales. Chicago. Stone And Kimball (*Carnation Series*).

[a/n: This was released in 1896 in the UK as *Madge o' the Pool: The Gipsy Christ and Other Tales*, by Archibald, Constable and Co.]

Novels and books of poetry by Fiona Macleod

The Mountain Lovers. London. John Lane. Issued in the *Keynote Series*, No. XVII. A second edition was printed in 1906. [a/n: Simultaneously by Roberts Bros. of Boston, Mass., in America. An American second edition was also released in 1906, perhaps by or in partnership with John Lane as E. A. S lists the publisher of this 1906 edition as John Lane, London and New York].

The Sin-Eater And Other Tales. Edinburgh. P. Geddes & Coll. Re-Issued in 1899 by David Nutt, London. [a/n: This was released in 1895 in America by Stone and Kimball of Chicago, and a second American edition released in 1907 by Duffield and Co.]

The Washer Of The Ford And Other Legendary Moralities. Edinburgh. P. Geddes & Coll. Re-Issued in 1899 by David Nutt, London. [a/n: In America, this was released in 1896 by Stone and Kimball of Chicago, and then by Duffield and Co. in 1907]

Reissue of *The Shorter Stories Of Fiona Macleod: re-arranged, with additional tales*.

P. Geddes & Coll. Edinburgh. Re-Issued In 1899 By David Nutt. London.

Green Fire: A Romance. Westminster. Archibald, Constable & Co. [a/n: Released in America in 1896; E. A. S. does not give a publisher]

From The Hills Of Dream. Mountain Songs And Island Runes. P. Geddes & Coll. Edinburgh. Prefaced with a dedication to Arthur Allhallow [Geddes]. [a/n: This was published in America as *From The Hills Of Dream: Threnodies, Songs, And Other Poems*, in the *Old World Series* by Thomas Mosher of Maine. A second American edition was published in 1904]

The Laughter Of Peterkin: A Retelling of Old Tales of the Celtic Wonderland. Drawings By Sunderland Rollinsons. London. Archibald, Constable & Co. 1897.

1896

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Evergreen III. *Summer*. – “Oceanus” (Two Poems).

Atlantic Monthly. Dec. – On William Morris: The Man And His Work.

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Evergreen III. *Summer*. – A Summer Air (Poem).

Evergreen III. *Summer*. – Under The Rowans (Poem).

Evergreen IV. *Winter*. – The Love-Kiss Of Dermid And Graime.

Evergreen IV. *Winter*. – The Awakening Of Augus Ogue (Poem).

Evergreen IV. *Winter*. – When The Dew Is Falling (Poem).

Savoy. Nov. – Morag Of The Glen.

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Introduction to *Selection of Poems by Matthew Arnold*. (*Canterbury Series*.)

Introduction And Notes To *Lyra Cetica: An Anthology Of Representative Celtic Poetry*.

Edited By Elizabeth A. Sharp. Edinburgh. P. Geddes & Coll.

Introduction and Notes to the *Poems of Ossian* translated by James Macpherson.

Edinburgh. P. Geddes & Coll.

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

Ecce Puella: And Other Prose Imaginings. London. Elkin Mathews.

1897

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

To *Songs And Tales Of St. Columbia And His Age*. Edinburgh. P. Geddes & Coll., "13th Century Iona"; "The Festival of the Birds"; "The Sabbath of the Fishes and Flies"; "The Moon-Child"; "The Flight of the Culdees".
Harper's. *April*. – Beneath The Rainbow (Poem).

1898

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Atlantic Monthly. *Sept.* – On Sir Edward Burne Jones.
Fortnightly LXIV. *Aug.* – On Sir Edward Burne Jones.
Nineteenth Century. *Sept. And Oct.* – On The Art Treasures Of America (*In Two Parts*).
Century. *Nov.* – "A Hazard Of Love" (Poem).
Cosmopolitan. *Nov.* – On Rembrandt.
Good Words. *Dec.* – The Eternal City.
Art Journal, *p.* 377. – Puvis De Chavannes: An Appreciation.
Literature. *July 2.* – Among My Books (No. 39).

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Dome. *May.* – Children Of The Dark Star.
Dome. *Oct.* – Monody Of Isla The Singer (Poem).
Dome. *Dec.* – The Last Night Of Artan The Culdee.
English Ill. Mag. *Dec.* – The Lords Of Shadow (Poem).
Good Words, *p.* 245. – The Four Winds Of Desire.
Good Words, *p.* 595. – The Wells Of Peace.
Harper. *Dec.* – The White Heron.
Literature *Sept. No. 47.* Enya Of The Dark Eyes.
Cosmopolis. *June.* – The Wayfarer.
L'Humamte Nouvelle. *Nov.* – La Tristesse d'Ulad (Translation).
L'Ermitage. – Cravetheen The Harper. (Translated Into French By Henri Davrai.)

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Critical Studies contributed to Charles Dudley Warner's Library of Best Literature: Ancient and Modern. New York. The Studies marked with * were written in collaboration with Ernest Rhys, and are signed by both authors:

- To Vol. V.- * On Celtic Literature.
- To Vol. VII.- On Henri Conscience.
- To Vol. XIV.- On Icelandic Literature.
- To Vol. XVI.- On Maarten Maartens.
- To Vol. XVI.- On Maurice Maeterlinck.
- To Vol. XVIII.-* On Myths And Folklore Of Aryan People.
- To Vol. XIX.-* On Ossian.
- To Vol. XXVI.- On Hersart De La Villemarque.

1899

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Harper's. *Dec.* – Through Bush And Fern.

New York Independent. *Dec. 12.* – “To Gladstone” (Sonnet).

National Review. *April.* – On The Sonnet In America.

Good Words, *p. 382.* – A Memory Of Verona.

Good Words. *June.* – On Alfred Austin.

Good Words. *July.* – On George Meredith.

New York Independent. *July.* – On George Meredith.

Literature. *July.* – “The Ballad Of The Ram” (Poem).

Literature. *July.* – The Cafe Of The Blind.

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Dome. *Jan.* – The Secrets Of The Night (Poem).

Dome. *Mar.* – A Field For Modern Verse.

Dome. *Dec.* – Balva The Monk (Poem).

Dome. *Dec.* – The Lament Of Ian The Proud (Poem).

Fortnightly. *June.* – A Group Of Celtic Writers.

Fortnightly. *Nov. I, Dec. II.* – The Divine Adventure.

Novels and books of poetry by William Sharp

Silence Farm. (A Novel.) London. Grant Richards.

Novels and books of poetry by Fiona Macleod

The Dominion Of Dreams. Westminster. Archibald, Constable & Co. A re-issue was published in 1909 by Constable & Co. [a/n: Published in America in the same year by Frederick Stokes & Co. of New York].

The Divine Adventure: Iona: By Sundown Shores: Studies In Spiritual History. London. Chapman And Hall, Ltd. [a/n: The first section, *The Divine Adventure*, was released in America in 1903, in the *Old World Series*, by Thomas Mosher of Maine. It contained an added Foreword and Notes].

1900

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Fortnightly, CXV. *Sept.* – On Some Dramas Of Gabriele d'Annunzio.

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Nineteenth Century. *Nov.* – On Carmina Godelica.

Nineteenth Century, *P.* 825. – On The Gael And His Heritage.

Fortnightly. *March I, April II.* – Iona.

Fortnightly. *Nov.* – The Immortal Hour (Drama).

National Review. *July.* – The House Of Usna (Drama).

Contemporary Review. *May, P.* 669. Celtic: An Essay.

1901

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Quarterly Review No. 387. *Oct.* – Modern Troubadours.

New Library Rev. I. *April.* – The Impressionist In Art.

Harper. *Oct.* – The Houseless: The Hotel Of The Beautiful Star.

Art Journal XVII. *Aug.* – Taormina Sicily: A Suburb Of The Sun.

Pall Mall Mag. XXV. *Dec.* – A Literary Friendship: Mr. Swinburne And Mr. Watts – Dunton At The Pines.

M. A. P. CXVII (Chapters Of Autobiography). – "In The Days Of My Youth".

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Fortnightly. Oct. – Through The Ivory Gate (10 Poems).

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Introduction to *Selection Of Poems by C. A. Swinburne*, Arranged By William Sharp
For The Tauchnitz Collection Of British Authors. Leipzig. [a/n: Given as E. A. S gave it;
seemingly a misprint for A. C. Swinburne.]

Novels and books of poetry by Fiona Macleod

Celtic: A Study In Spiritual History; afterwards incorporated in *The Winged Destiny*,
1904. [a/n: This was an American publication, released by Thomas Mosher of
Maine].

1902

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Harper's. *June*, Vol. XLIV. – Sir Walter Scott's Land.
Harper's. *July*, Vol. XLIV. – Capt'n Goldsack (Poem).
Harper's. *Sept.* – Vol. XLIV. – R. L. Stevenson's Country.
Quarterly Review No. 389. *July*. – On Italian Poets Of Today.

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Contemporary. Oct. – Sea Magic And Running Water.
Contemporary. Oct. – Culidh Mhoire.
Contemporary. Dec. – The Lynn Of Dreams.
Living Age. Jan. 11. – Singer In The Woods (Poem)

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

*Progress of Art in the XIX Century: To Which is Added a History of Music in the XIV
Century*, by Elizabeth A. Sharp. London And Edinburgh. W. & R. Chambers, Ltd. 8vo.
This volume was written for, and forms Vol. XXII Of the *Nineteenth Century Series*,
Edited By Justin Mccarthy And Others. The Linscott Publishing Co.: Toronto And
Philadelphia.

Novels and books of poetry by Fiona Macleod

Wind And Wave: Selected Tales. Leipzig. Bernhard Tauchnitz. Issued In The "Collection Of British Authors." Vol. 3009.

The Silence Of Amor [a/n: An American edition, by Thomas Mosher of Maine. It is based on *From The Hills of Dream*, with a foreword, "When Dalua Was Prince of This World", "Of Blossom and Wind", and "The Enchanted Book" added].

By Sundown Shores [a/n: An American edition, by Thomas Mosher of Maine. It was released in the *Brocade Series* and was based on *The Divine Adventure*, with "The Lynn of Dreams", "Sheumas: a Memory", and a prologue added].

1903

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Harper. *April*, Vol. XIV. Sicily: Land Of Theocritus.

Pall Mall Mag. Vol. XXIX. – The Country Of Charles Dickens.

Pall Mall Mag. Vol. XXIX. – The Country Of George Eliot.

Pall Mall Mag. Vol. XXIX. – The Country Of Sir Walter Scott, I.

Pall Mall Mag. Vol. XXX. – The Country Of Sir Walter Scott, II.

Pall Mall Mag. Vol. XXX. – Through Nelson's Duchy.

Pall Mall Mag. Vol. XXX. – The Lake of Geneva.

Pall Mall Mag. Vol. XXX. – The English Lakes.

Pall Mall Mag. Vol. XXX. – The Carlyle Country.

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Fortnightly. *Feb.* – The Four Winds Of Eirinn.

Fortnightly. *June.* – The Sunset Of Old Tales.

Fortnightly. *Nov.* – The Woman At The Crossways.

Monthly Rev. *Jan.* – The Magic Kingdoms.

Country Life. *July 4.* – Deidre Is Dead (Poem).

Country Life. *July 15.* – Song In My Heart (Poem).

Country Life. *July 25.* – Aileen The Happy.

Country Life. *Aug. 29.* – Leaves, Shadow And Dreams (Poem).
Country Life. *Oct. 10.* – At The Coming Of The White Swans (Poem).
Country Life. *Oct. 24.* – Sorrow (Poem).
Country Life. *Dec. 5.* – The Weaver Of Snow (Poem).
Country Life. *Dec. 5.* – The Cross Of The Dumb (Poem).
Country Life. *Dec. 26.* – A Cry On The Wind (Poem).

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Introduction to *Poems by Eugene Lee-Hamilton*. (*Canterbury Series*.)

Novels and books of poetry by Fiona Macleod

Deirdre And The Sons Of Usna. (*The Old World Series*. Reprinted from *The Laughter Of Peterkin* (London), with added Notes and Dedicatory Preface). [a/n: Released by Thomas Mosher of Maine].

The House Of Usna: A Drama. Reprinted From *The Fortnightly Review*, 1900, with Foreword added. [a/n: Released by Thomas Mosher of Maine].

1904

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Atlantic Monthly. *April.* – The Sicilian Highlands.

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Country Life. *Jan. 23.* – Invocation To Sleep (Poem).
Country Life. *Feb. 13.* – I-Brazil (Poem).
Country Life. *Feb. 20.* – Sorrow On The Wind (Poem).
Country Life. *March 12.* – Song Of The Apple Trees (Poem).
Country Life. *April 2.* – Flame On The Wine! (Poem).
Country Life. *April 9.* – Fatality In The Magic Drama, [afterwards incorporated into the Foreword to the Dramas in Vol. VII of The Collected Edition (1911)].
Country Life. *May 28.* – Dreams Within Dreams (Poem).
Country Life. *June 11.* – The Mountain Charm.
Country Life. *July 4.* – Summer Clouds.
Country Life. *Sept. 10.* – The Sea-Spell.

Country Life. *Sept. 17.* – September.

Country Life. *Oct. 1.* – The Tides.

Country Life. *Oct. 15.* – Still Waters.

Country Life. *Nov. 5.* – The Mountain Charm.

Country Life. *Nov. 19.* – The Pleiad Month.

Country Life. *Nov. 26.* – Running Waters.

Country Life. *Dec. 17.* – The Milky Way

Country Life. *Dec. 24.* – St. Christopher Of The Gael (Poem).

Harper. *April.* – The Cup (Poem).

Academy. *March 11.* – On A Redbreast Singing At The Grave Of Plato (Poem).

North American Rev. – *I, P. 685; II, P. 900.* – The Irish Muse.

Pall Mall Mag. *Jan.* – The Dirge Of The Four Cities (Poem).

Pall Mall Mag. *May-June.* – The King's Ring (Tale).

Theosophical Rev. *XXXV Sept.* – A Dream.

Fortnightly. *Dec.* – The Winged Destiny.

Anthologies, Introductions and similar by William Sharp

Literary Geography. London. "Pall Mall Publications."

Novels and books of poetry by Fiona Macleod

The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History Of The Gael. London. Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

Ulad Of The Dreams. (The Brocade Series.) Reprinted From *The Dominion Of Dreams.*

[a/n: Released by Thomas Mosher of Maine]

The Tale Of The Four White Swans. (*The Brocade Series.*) Reprinted from *The Laughter Of Peterkin*, with added Dedication. [a/n: Released by Thomas Mosher of Maine]

1905

Periodical Contributions by William Sharp

Pall Mall Mag. *New Series No. I.* – Modern Athens.

Pall Mall Mag. *New Series No. I.* – Dream Wind.

Pall Mall Mag. *New Series No. I.* – Honeymoon Rose.

Pall Mall Mag. *New Series No. I.* – Echoes Of Joy.

Pall Mall Mag. *New Series No. II.* – Blossoms Of Snow.

Periodical Contributions by Fiona Macleod

Theosophical Rev. XXXVI. – The Secret Gate (Poem).

Academy. – Two Old Songs Of May.

Pall Mall Mag. *Vol. II.* – Children Of Wind And Clan Of Peace.

Country Life. *Jan. 2.* – Where The Forest Murmurs.

Country Life. *Feb. 4.* – The Sons Of The North Wind.

Country Life. *Feb. 11-18.* – Winter Stars I And II

Country Life. *Feb. 25.* St. Bridget Of The Shores.

Country Life. *March 18.* – The Shadow (Poem).

Country Life. *March 28.* – The Heralds Of March.

Country Life. *April 15.* The Dells Of Youth (Poem).

Country Life. *April 15.* The Tribe Of The Plover.

Country Life. *April 29.* – The Wild Apple.

Country Life. *May 20.* – Mo Brōn (Poem).

Country Life. *June 10.* – Roseen Dhu. (Poem).

Country Life. *June 17.* – The Clans Of The Grass.

Country Life. *July 8.* – The Rearguard Of Spring.

Country Life. *Aug. 5.* The Coming Of Dusk.

Country Life. *Aug. 19.* – The Dirge Of The Clan Subhail (Poem).

Country Life. *Aug. 25.* – At The Rising Of Moon.

Country Life. *Oct. 21.* – Peace (Poem).

Country Life. *Nov. 4.* – The Gardens Of The Sea.

Country Life. *Nov. 11.* – The Shrew Mouse (Poem).

Country Life. *Nov. 18.* – The Rose Of Night (Poem)

Country Life. *Dec. 23.* – Beyond The Blue Septentrion.

Novels and books of poetry by Fiona Macleod

The Sunset Of Old Tales. Leipzig. Bernhard Tauchnitz. Issued In The "*Collection Of*

British Authors," Vol. 3835.

The Isle Of Dreams. (Old World Series.) A reprint of the section "Iona" in *The Divine Adventure: Iona, Etc.* London, 1900, with contents rearranged and augmented. [a/n: Released by Thomas Mosher of Maine].

Signed Articles And Reviews Of William Sharp And "Fiona Macleod."

1887

Victorian Poets. 13th Edition. By Edmund Clarence Stedman. On W.S. In Supplementary Chapter. Boston And New York. Houghton Mifflin & Co.

1892

The Poets And Poetry Of The XIX Century. Edited By Alfred H. Miles. Vol. Viii. On William Sharp, By James Ashcroft Noble. London. Hutchinson & Co.

1894

The Chapbook. *Sept. 15.* – On William Sharp's Poem, By Bliss Carmen. Chicago. Stone & Kimball.

1895

The Bookman. *Aug.* – Fiona Macleod, A New Writer.

1897

Academy. *April.* – Fiona Macleod And The Celtic Movement.

Yale Mag. *March.* – Tha Mi Dubhachas; A Celtic Appreciation. By Benj. B. Moore. U.S.A.

1900

Fortnightly. *June.* – The New Mysticism. By Ernest Rhys. Afterwards Printed In The Bibelot, Vol. Viii, No. 11 (1902), Published By T. B. Mosher. Portland, Maine, U.S.A.

1902

Harvard Monthly. *Xmas No.* – Miss Fiona Macleod And The Celtic Movement.

1903

The Young Man. *April.* – A Literary Wanderer: The Career Of Mr. William Sharp.

1904

Fortnightly. *Dec.* – The Winged Destiny and Fiona Macleod. By Ethel Goddard.

1905

Nord Und Sud. *Sept.* – Alt Islands Sagenliterature, von Beda Prilipp.

Country Life. *Dec. 22.* – "Fiona Macleod," A Poem, By R. G. T. C.

Le Temps. *Dec. 20.* – Unc Enigme Litteraire – Rene Proux.

Le Mercure De France. *Jan.* – " L'Idée Celtique dans l'œuvre de Fiona Macleod." By Thos. B. Rudmose-Brown.

L'Européen . – "William Sharp And Fiona Macleod." By Thos. B. Rudmose-Brown.

Appendix B: Works on William Sharp and Fiona Macleod

This section serves as a collation of all the critical work on William Sharp and Fiona Macleod that I have been able to find. It serves as reference material, as many of these works are difficult to find. Some references to Sharp will be passing, though, where passing, nevertheless valuable.

Alaya, Flavia, *William Sharp--"Fiona Macleod," 1855-1905* (Harvard University Press, 1970)

Blain, Virginia, 'Period Pains: The Changing Body Of Victorian Poetry', *Victorian Poetry*, 42.1 (2004), 71–80, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40002729> [accessed 07/07/2022]

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Bullough, Vern L., 'Transsexualism in History', *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 4.5 (1975), 561–71 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01542134>>

Coste, Bénédicte, 'Late-Victorian Paganism: The Case of the Pagan Review', *Cahiers Victoriens et Édouardiens*, 80 Automne, (2014) <<https://doi.org/10.4000/cve.1533>>

Crichton-Miller, H., 'William Sharp and the "Immortal Hour"', *The British Journal of Medical Psychology* 5.1 (1925) 35-44 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000523493> [accessed 11/07/2022]

Dusdieker, Carol, 'Fiona Macleod: Poetic Genesis and the Song Settings of Arnold Bax and Charles Griffes' (unpublished PhD thesis, Indiana University, 2012) <<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Fiona-Macleod%3A-Poetic-Genesis-and-the-Song-Settings-Dusdieker/939a91b972383bc7123e5c003b2ff1a61083f0d5>> [accessed 25 February 2022]

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- , 'W. B. Yeats, William Sharp and Fiona Macleod: A Celtic Drama, 1897',
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Appendix C: Letter to Vernon Lee on Sharp's poem 'Motherhood', March 1881

Dear Miss Paget⁶⁴⁰

I have already heard so much of you both from my cousin [i.e, Elizabeth Sharp] and Mary Robinson that I feel I need to make no apology for forestalling our coming acquaintanceship by now writing – especially as I have just received a long letter from you to Elizabeth with reference to some work of mine which you have seen. Before endeavouring to reply to this letter, let me thank you most sincerely for all the trouble you had about the *Figura Mystica* (decidedly *mystica*) of “Chiario dell Erma”. Rossetti had taken for granted when he gave me his pamphlet *Hand and Soul* that I wd. understand the opening was as artistically incorrect as the main portion was allegorically true: but unfortunately I did not find this out until after my cousin had written to you on the matter. I see your letter to her is dated 14th February – I wish she had forwarded it to me sooner that I might have been able to thank you before this.

And now as to your letter. I wrote a week or so ago to your brother [Eugene Lee Hamilton] as to his criticism on “Motherhood” and also with reference to his own poems – and in that letter I broadly stated, if I remember right, my views on the question.

But in case you have not seen it I will go for you over the same ground again, taking your letter in detail. You begin by saying “I have been thinking a good deal of late of the School to which that poem *Motherhood* belongs, and of the desirability of a young poet like Mr. Sharp joining it”.

In the first place, your thoughts have found an anchoring place where neither myself nor my poetical and critical friends have yet done: in other words, “Motherhood” never seemed to me or them to belong to any school at all. It certainly could not be spoken of as belonging to the *Fleshly School* nor could it as to the *Transcendental*, or the *Philosophic* pure and simple, or the *Didactic*, or the *Narrative*, or the *Lyric*, or the *Dramatic*, or the *Psychologic*, or any other “ic” that men may have fashioned unto themselves. It is nearer the *Philosophic*, or the *Natural*, than any other – because what really is the poem is the beautiful idea: – the poetic garniture shrouding it is only a necessary incidental, worthy or

⁶⁴⁰ Halloran, *The Life and Letters of William Sharp “Fiona Macleod”* Vol 1, pp. 40-46

unworthy as the case may be: for of course artistic expression is what constitutes the difference between the man who sees and writes, and the man who only receptively sees, and therefore does not write. I was spending the evening lately with [Robert] Francillon, the author of "Olympia" and other fine works, and, as a critic, a strong opponent of the Fleshly School of verse – and in talking of some of my writing he said "There is one great charm to me in Motherhood, and that is that it is so strongly original – there is no trace of its belonging to the so-called Fleshly School which is so prevalent now – nor indeed of its belonging to any school, or showing any trace of indebtedness to any particular master".

By the subsequent remarks in your letter, however, and by what I have heard, I infer that by the "School to which Motherhood belongs" you mean the Fleshly School. As you will see by the above, I consider your adjudication mistaken.

As to the latter part of the sentence – "the desirability of Mr. Sharp's joining it" (the Fleshly School) I can honestly assure you that it is the last school of Art to which I shall render my efforts, that I have little sympathy with its present phase, and that I believe both it and mock-Aestheticism will, sooner or later, die a twin and heaven-to-be praised death. But where we differ, I expect, is in what poets and in which doctrines we consider the Fleshly School to embrace. To me, a fleshly (what a hideous word this is by the by – why not some such word as natural, or physical) poet is by no means necessarily a disciple of the Fleshly School. With all his faults – poetic and artistic – Walt Whitman is a noble and truly great fleshly or natural poet – but I can imagine no great contemporary writer having a greater contempt for what is called the Fleshly School, or more utter repudiation of its habits of expression. Again, Gabriel Rossetti is frequently spoken of as if at the head of this school: no greater mistake could get abroad. He is intensely spiritual and refined, and as far removed both in spirit and work from the crass materialism of such poets as form this School as Milton or Dante. It is materialism that is weighing down an already weary and overburdened nation – materialism everywhere, and most of all alas! in the hearts of the rising generation of young men and woman – not so much materialism that overlooks the soul, as materialism that has practically no soul, that scorned appendage nowadays being so carefully hidden away and shrouded up. And this materialism is often thought of and spoken of as intimately associated with advancing intellect and culture! Good God, as if intellect were comparable to character, and as if a thoroughly true and whole character could be evolved without the spiritual element: – and is culture to unfold her white wings and

unstained hands and walk serenely forward, while the ground underneath is mire and mud and the air overhead is fog and darkening mist? And it is to this materialism – above all this intellectual materialism – that the Fleshly School owes its rise. The tree is known by its fruits.

After this sentence I have quoted from your letter comes a series of remarks following on the statement – “I am persuaded that Mr. Sharp, in choosing the subject he did, was labouring under a confusion of ideas on the subject of what I may call ‘The Ethics of Impropriety’ which is extremely common” etc.

Permit me in turn to point out what seems to me an equally common confusion of ideas on the subject of how true poets write. A poet who is really a poet does not as a rule choose his subject at all – his subject chooses him. As Buxton Forman says in his critical work on Contemporary English Poetry – “an artist whose ideas are cut as it were with a red hot blade on his very heart cannot always pick and choose his subject; he must often be chosen by his subject”: and again, speaking of a well-known poem, – “it is easy to see that neither the incidents nor the thread were arrived at by painful reasoning, or by any other process than by that real poetic intention concerning the nature of which critics must be content to remain profoundly nescient”. I am very glad to see such a well-known critic confessing this inability of non-poets to realise the part-intellectual, part-spiritual, part-emotional quality which is called poetic intuition.

In like manner, Motherhood chose me, not I it as a subject. The idea took hold of me, enthralled me with its beauty and significance, possessed me till I gave it forth again in artistic expression. It was not till after the idea had seized my mind and imagination that I began to think of writing such a poem – and even then the whole details of it came in one intuitive flash, and I saw the poem from first to last as it now stands – I had no careful reasoning to go through, no judging of fittableness; no fears as to propriety or impropriety; – I simply had something in me – a pure beautiful idea – and to this I had to give expression. I had nothing to think of afterwards except the mere technical details and artistic presentment – such as glow and colour to the first part, weirdness to the second, dignity and moral beauty to the third.

As to the alleged impropriety of the subject of Motherhood I am at a loss to conceive upon what ground such a statement is put forward. I hope your brother does not still misunderstand me after my recent letter, but previously I know he had completely done so

from one short sentence in his letter to me on this subject, where he says – “Besides, is not your type of civilized woman degraded by being associated with the savage and the wild beast?” This showed me that he, as I now see you have done also, looked at the poem and not at what made the poem: he looked at the external description, not at the soul-like animating idea. As Emerson says – it is not metres, but a metre-making argument that makes a poem; – a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing. Your objection would have been perfectly valid if, say, the 1st part had been put forward by itself as a complete poem – nay more, it wd. be deserving of both artistic and moral censure as a pure Fleshly School production, without any *raison d’être* apparently than pride in technical workmanship, and recklessness as to revelling in details of things much better left undescribed. But in *Motherhood* this first part is only one of the necessary three sides of the triangle of the central idea, and is never meant for a moment to be read by itself. *Motherhood* is not a theme given in three expository poems: it is one poem.

I see that both you and your brother have fallen into the mistake of thinking that *Motherhood* was a delineation of Passion, and written to sanctify such. Where the sexual feelings are referred to they are introduced as linked to and giving point to the idea, and never for a moment formed original motifs. Animal desire in the first, savage longing in the second, and reminiscence of pure passion in the third parts are each introduced incidentally to the inner motif. It might just as well be said that the object of the poem was to give a poetical description of travail: and I for one would never so far degrade the art I follow as to write such a poem with such an object.

I entirely agree with what you say as to the difference between the innocent and the holy and between that which may be done and that which may be described: and also, that merely because such and such a phenomenon exists or has existed it is not therefore desirable or defensible for reproduction in verse. I believe the essence of true poetry to be purity: not the hideous and unnatural malformation, Prudery – but Purity. Purity in intellectual, moral, and physical erudition and thought.

For myself, I cannot conceive any man or woman being the worse of [sic] reading *Motherhood*: it seems almost a degradation to myself to stoop to imagine such a thing. If any man could comprehend the spirit, the idea, the teaching of the poem and not be the

better of it, he wd. hardly be one we could call high-minded or of refined nature: and if any being (I cannot say man) should find in it nothing but sensual pleasure that gratified and fed his lowest appetites, then I say such a man makes it a mirror wherein his own foulnesses are focussed, and would of necessity be such an one as would sneer at the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus Christ, or such an one as to whom the very name of "woman" carries no faintest breath of purification but only an odour, to a pure man as a death-vapour of unutterable vileness. What Motherhood makes clear is not innocence, but what is altogether holy and sacred. It is above all a poem for men. Pure, intellectual, and refined women like yourself, Miss Paget, do not understand the necessity of theoretical as well as practical purity to men: how men have naturally not only more animalism but also how their outer circumstances tend far more to subdue or destroy their sense of spiritual significance, than in the case of women. I know, as you cannot know, how so many men look on passion, marriage, and motherhood; and not all the poets, critics, and philosophers in Christendom could prevent me thinking that it is a noble aim and worthy of any poet – to help men (blinded by upbringing, or other circumstances) to perceive and realise that passion is not lust, is not alone physical desire, but is a blended yearning of body and spirit: – that marriage is not sexual union for the propagation of the race alone, but a true complementary union between two natures akin to each other for the purposes of growth in spiritual beauty and nobility: – and that motherhood is not an outcome alone of the two foregoing, not a painful and unpleasant natural act, but a fact full of the most spiritual significance – a link of unguessed and immeasurable value to the man, a sacrifice of divine import to the woman. This, if I fail not, is and will be one of my main aims in life.

It seems to me that Motherhood is an effort in furtherance of this: and I have not yet seen the shadow of reason that can make me alter my belief in the rectitude and fittingness of what I have done. As far as personal affirmation goes, I emphatically deny that, to use your own words, I have made "a very dreadful prostitution of my powers". Insight is everything; and to those who can honestly see no spiritual affinities in Motherhood, I am afraid it must just forever remain "the hocos-pocus in words" which you describe it. It is thus with half-amusement and half-comprehension of your meaning that I read your statements to my cousin as to "the sophistication of ideas under which I am labouring". There is sophistication and sophistication. It is from no petty pride or self-opinionativeness (for I am ever open to argument and opposite views) that I say we are not likely ever to

agree upon this matter, as far as my accepting the view you uphold is concerned: – nor is it likely, I think, that my cousin ever will either. I hope not. And now enough as to Motherhood and its allied questions – and only one word more as to one other of my poems. Mary Robinson tells me you have read “The Satyr”: – unfortunately you have not done so, but only a copy of the original draft which my cousin had in her little book, and which she had not my authority for showing you. “The Satyr” as Miss Robinson has seen it is a very different poem from the one you have seen – being clarified by a truer classicalism and materially modified as to expression and detail. A clay model often looks suggestive of something less than purity and modesty, while the finished marble statue is white in import as the parian itself.

And now, dear Miss Paget (for I seem to have got to know you better since my letter, and “dear” is the first step from conscious aloofness) believe me when I say I thank you most sincerely for the kind interestedness that prompted your writing the critique you did, and the generous terms in which apart from my subjects, you praise my ‘abilities’. It is doubly flattering when from the author of the “Studies”.

Pray remember me most cordially to your brother, whose acquaintance I feel it a personal loss I cannot make in the flesh. I earnestly hope he is comparatively well, and that the Poetry which is so much to him is proving an openhanded goodness.

I am looking forward to seeing you in June, and tho’ I am afraid you will not find a convert, I hope at least you may find a friend in

Yours very sincerely | William Sharp

Appendix D: English Men of Letters and Great Writers

The following sections list the works in the *English Men of Letters* and *Great Writers* book series. They follow the format Author, *text*, year of publication; university attended by the author. Where an author has been repeated, I have not stated the university. The titles of each text are given in short form taken from the source (listed at the bottom of each section). At the bottom of each section are the numbers of authors who attended Oxford, Cambridge, another university, or who had no university education. Each reference has been cited, and these citations have been collected in a specific section of the bibliography.

English Men of Letters

Leslie Stephen, *Samuel Johnson*, 1878; Cambridge.⁶⁴¹

James Cotter Morison, *Gibbon*, 1878; Oxford.⁶⁴²

Richard H. Hutton, *Sir Walter Scott*, 1878; University College, London; Universities of Bonn and Heidelberg.⁶⁴³

John Addington Symonds, *Shelley*, 1878; Oxford.⁶⁴⁴

Thomas Henry Huxley, *Hume*, 1879; No university education.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴¹ Alan Bell, 'Stephen, Sir Leslie (1832–1904), author, literary critic, and first editor of the Dictionary of National Biography', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36271> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁴² Leslie Stephen & Nilanjana Banerji, 'Morison, James Augustus Cotter (1832–1888), author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19271> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁴³ Harold Orel, 'Hutton, Richard Holt (1826–1897), journalist and theologian', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-14312> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁴⁴ Rictor Norton, 'Symonds, John Addington (1840–1893), writer and advocate of sexual reform', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26888> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁴⁵ Adrian Desmond, 'Huxley, Thomas Henry (1825–1895), biologist and science educationist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

William Black, *Goldsmith*, 1878; No university education.⁶⁴⁶

William Minto, *Daniel Defoe*, 1879; Aberdeen University, Divinity Hall, and Merton College, Oxford, though he took no degree at Oxford.⁶⁴⁷

John Campbell Shairp, *Robert Burns*, 1879; Glasgow University and Oxford.⁶⁴⁸

R. W. Church, *Spenser*, 1879; Oxford.⁶⁴⁹

Anthony Trollope, *Thackeray*, 1879; No university.⁶⁵⁰

John Morley, *Burke*, 1879; Oxford.⁶⁵¹

Mark Pattison, *Milton*, 1879; Oxford.⁶⁵²

Henry James, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 1879; Harvard Law – did not complete.⁶⁵³

Edward Dowden, *Southey*, 1879; Trinity College, Dublin.⁶⁵⁴

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-14320> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁴⁶ Richard Garnett & S. R. J. Baudry, 'Black, William (1841–1898), journalist and novelist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2499> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁴⁷ Alexander Mackie & Sayoni Basu, 'Minto, William (1845–1893), literary scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18815> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁴⁸ Richard Ovenden, 'Shairp, John Campbell (1819–1885), literary scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-25196> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁴⁹ G. Martin Murphy, 'Church, Richard William (1815–1890), dean of St Paul's', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5389> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵⁰ N. John Hall, 'Trollope, Anthony (1815–1882), novelist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-27748> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵¹ David Hamer, 'Morley, John, Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1838–1923), politician and writer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35110> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵² H. S. Jones, 'Pattison, Mark (1813–1884), college head and scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-21585> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵³ Philip Horne, 'James, Henry (1843–1916), writer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34150> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵⁴ E. J. Gwynn & Arthur Sherbo, 'Dowden, Edward (1843–1913), literary scholar and poet', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32882> [accessed 08/05/2023].

Adolphus William Ward, *Chaucer*, 1879; Cambridge.⁶⁵⁵

Goldwin Smith, *Cowper*, 1880; Christ Church and Magdalen Colleges, Oxford.⁶⁵⁶

James Anthony Froude, *Bunyan*, 1879; Oxford.⁶⁵⁷

John Nichol, *Byron*, 1880; Glasgow University and Oxford.⁶⁵⁸

Thomas Fowler, *Locke*, 1880; Oxford.⁶⁵⁹

Leslie Stephen, *Alexander Pope*, 1880.

Alfred Ainger, *Charles Lamb*, 1882; Cambridge.⁶⁶⁰

David Masson, *Quincey*, 1881; Marischal College, Aberdeen, and Divinity Hall, Edinburgh.⁶⁶¹

Sidney Colvin, *Landor*, 1881; Cambridge.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁵ G. P. Gooch & R. J. W. Evans, 'Ward, Sir Adolphus William (1837–1924), historian', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36726> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵⁶ Christopher A. Kent, 'Smith, Goldwin (1823–1910), journalist and historian' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36142> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵⁷ A. F. Pollard & William Thomas, 'Froude, James Anthony (1818–1894), historian and man of letters' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10202> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵⁸ Murray G. H. Pittock, 'Nichol, John (1833–1894), literary scholar and writer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20083> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁵⁹ J. A. Stewart & C. A. Creffield, 'Fowler, Thomas (1832–1904), philosopher and college head', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33228> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶⁰ Edith Sichel & Nilanjana Banerji, 'Ainger, Alfred [pseud. Doubleday] (1837–1904), writer and Church of England clergyman', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30352> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶¹ G. G. Smith & Sondra Miley Cooney, 'Masson, David Mather (1822–1907), biographer, literary scholar, and editor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34924> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶² Ernest Mehew, 'Colvin, Sir Sidney (1845–1927), art and literary scholar and museum administrator', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32518> [accessed 08/05/2023].

George Saintsbury, *Dryden*, 1881; Oxford.⁶⁶³

F. W. H. Myers, *Wordsworth*, 1881; Cambridge.⁶⁶⁴

Richard Claverhouse Jebb, *Bentley*, 1882; Cambridge.⁶⁶⁵

Leslie Stephen, *Swift*, 1882.

Adolphus William Ward, *Dickens*, 1882.

Edmund Gosse, *Gray*, 1882; No university.⁶⁶⁶

H. D. Traill, *Sterne*, 1882; Oxford.⁶⁶⁷

James Cotter Morison, *Macaulay*, 1882.

Austin Dobson, *Fielding*, 1883; No university.⁶⁶⁸

Mrs. Oliphant, *Sheridan*, 1883; No university.⁶⁶⁹

W. J. Courthope, *Addison*, 1884; Corpus Christi and New Colleges, Oxford.

R. W. Church, *Bacon*, 1884.

H. D. Traill, *Coleridge*, 1884.

⁶⁶³ Alan Bell, 'Saintsbury, George Edward Bateman (1845–1933), literary scholar and historian', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35908> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶⁴ Alan Gauld, 'Myers, Frederic William Henry (1843–1901), psychical researcher and essayist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35177> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶⁵ Hugh Lloyd-Jones, 'Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse (1841–1905), Greek scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34166> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶⁶ Ann Thwaite, 'Gosse, Sir Edmund William (1849–1928), writer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33481> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶⁷ S. J. Low, & Chandrika Kaul, 'Traill, Henry Duff (1842–1900), satirist and journalist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-27661> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶⁸ S. L. Gwynn & Nilanjana Banerji, 'Dobson, (Henry) Austin (1840–1921), poet and author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32845> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁶⁹ Elisabeth Jay, 'Oliphant, Margaret Oliphant Wilson (1828–1897), novelist and biographer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20712> [accessed 08/05/2023].

John Addington Symonds, *Sir Philip Sidney*, 1886.

Sidney Colvin, *Keats*, 1887.

John Nichol, *Thomas Carlyle*, 1892.

This list taken from David Paul Wagner, <https://www.publishinghistory.com/english-men-of-letters-macmillan.html> [accessed 27/04/2023].

Six Cambridge; thirteen Oxford; five other universities or began and did not finish; six no university education.

Great Writers

Eric Sutherland Robertson, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, 1887; Edinburgh University.⁶⁷⁰

Hall Caine, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1887; No university.⁶⁷¹

Frank T. Marzials, *Charles Dickens*, 1887; Unknown.

Joseph Knight, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 1887; No university.⁶⁷²

Francis Richard Charles Grant, *Samuel Johnson*, 1887; Cambridge.⁶⁷³

George Thomas Bettany, *Charles Darwin*, 1887; Caius College, Cambridge.⁶⁷⁴

Augustine Birrell, *Charlotte Brontë*, 1887; Trinity Hall, Cambridge.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷⁰ [Anon.], 'Distinguished St. Andrews Resident Dead', *Dundee Courier*, 25th May 1926, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000567/19260525/063/0005?browse=true> [accessed 21/05/2023].

⁶⁷¹ Vivien Allen, 'Caine, Sir (Thomas Henry) Hall (1853–1931), novelist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32237> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁷² Sidney Lee & Nilanjana Banerji 'Knight, Joseph (1829–1907), drama critic', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34347> [accessed 08/05/2023].

⁶⁷³ John Morris and Philip Oldfield, 'Grant, Francis Richard Charles (1834–1899)', *British Armorial Bindings*, <https://armorial.library.utoronto.ca/stamp-owners/GRA004> [accessed 21/05/2023].

⁶⁷⁴ [Anon.], 'Obituary: Mr George T. Bettany', *The Times*, 4th December 1891, pg. 9 https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Times/1891/Obituary/George_Thomas_Bettany [accessed 21/05/2023].

⁶⁷⁵ Eunan O' Halpin, 'Birrell, Augustine', *Dictionary of Irish Biography* <https://www.dib.ie/biography/birrell-augustine-a0679> [accessed 21/05/2023].

Richard Garnett, *Thomas Carlyle*, 1887; No university.⁶⁷⁶

Richard Haldane, *Adam Smith*, 1887; Edinburgh University and Gottingen.⁶⁷⁷

William Michael Rossetti, *John Keats*, 1887; No university.⁶⁷⁸

William Sharp, *Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 1887; University of Glasgow, did not finish.

David Hannay, *Tobias George Smollett*, 1887; No university.⁶⁷⁹

Austin Dobson, *Oliver Goldsmith*, 1888; No university.

Charles Duke Yonge, *Walter Scott*, 1888; Cambridge and Oxford.⁶⁸⁰

John Stuart Blackie, *Robert Burns*, 1888; Marischal College, then Göttingen.⁶⁸¹

Frank T. Marzials, *Victor Hugo*, 1888.

Richard Garnett, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 1888.

James Sime, *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, 1888; Edinburgh University, then Heidelberg.

Edmund Gosse, *William Congreve*, 1888; No university.

Edmund Venables, *John Bunyan*, 1888; Cambridge.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁶ Alan Bell, 'Garnett, Richard (1835–1906), librarian and author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33334> [accessed 08/05/2023].

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William Sharp, *Heinrich Heine*, 1888.

W. L. Courtney, *John Stuart Mill*, 1889; Oxford.⁶⁸⁴

Henry Woodd Nevinson, *Friedrich Schiller*, 1889; Oxford.⁶⁸⁵

David Hannay, *Frederick Marryat*, 1889.

T. W. Rolleston, *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing*, 1889; Trinity College, Dublin.⁶⁸⁶

Richard Garnett, *John Milton*, 1890.

Frederick Wedmore, *Honoré de Balzac*, 1889; No university.⁶⁸⁷

Oscar Browning, *George Eliot*, 1890; Cambridge.⁶⁸⁸

Goldwin Smith, *Jane Austen*, 1890; Oxford.

William Sharp, *Robert Browning*, 1890.

Roden Noel, *Lord Byron*, 1890; Cambridge.⁶⁸⁹

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Moncure Conway, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 1890; Dickinson College, Pennsylvania.⁶⁹⁰

William Wallace, *Arthur Schopenhauer*, 1890; University of St Andrews, also
Oxford.⁶⁹¹

Lloyd C. Sanders, *Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, 1890; Oxford.⁶⁹²

Herman Charles Merivale and Frank Marzials, *William Makepeace Thackeray*, 1891;
Merivale Oxford, Marzials unknown.⁶⁹³

Henry Edward Watts, *Miguel de Cervantes*, 1891; No university.⁶⁹⁴

Francis Espinasse, *Voltaire*, 1892; Edinburgh University.⁶⁹⁵

Cosmo Monkhouse, *James Leigh Hunt*, 1893; No university.⁶⁹⁶

William James Linton, *John Greenleaf Whittier*, 1893; No university.⁶⁹⁷

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Six Cambridge; Seven Oxford; One both; Seven other university or did not finish;
Eleven no university/unknown.