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“This precious Book of Love”: Shakespeare, Women, and Narrative in the 19th Century

by

Catherine Bachochin Moore

A Dissertation

Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Lehigh University

May 2011

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Catherine Bachochin Moore

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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"This precious Book of Love": Shakespeare, Women, and Narrative in the 19th Century

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the nineteenth-century character criticism written by women addressing Shakespeare's female characters. The character criticism of actresses Helen Faucit, Fanny Kemble, Ellen Terry and authors Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott, Anna Jameson, and Mary Cowden Clarke reveals an emotional and textual engagement with Shakespeare's characters that differs from the Romantic and Scientific criticism of their male counterparts such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Matthew Arnold, Edward Dowden, and Algernon Swinburne. Within the pages of their narratives, the female character critics record their personal, emotional, textual engagement with characters such as Rosalind, Lady Macbeth, and Imogen, and establish a communal and dialogic relationship of loving friendship with them. A narratological analysis illuminates this communion in the narrative by examining each critic's reconstruction and re-imagination of Shakespeare's play, mimetic staging of scenes, and representation of the consciousness of the character. The textual communion is enacted in the critic's narrative in the same way that the actor, such as Terry or Kemble, psychologically unites with her character on stage. In their written works, both nineteenth-century character critics and actresses share this female communion with Shakespeare's characters with other female readers. Rather than viewing such extra-textual accounts of Shakespeare's play as the stuff of fantasy or dreams, this dissertation argues that the moments of communion between critic and character provide the female reader the 'extra-textual' space to envision Shakespeare's character and herself differently from the 'ideal' woman of the Victorian age.

Introduction

"This precious Book of Love": Shakespeare, Women, and Narrative

In these remaining days of May, 1884, you have braved the miserable weather and those "blighting East winds" to gain entry to the Royal Albert Hall at two o'clock in the afternoon, and you cannot wait to see The Shaksperean Show, "the most attractive and picturesque exhibitions of recent times," as promised in the *Daily News*.[1] Earlier in the month, the advertisement in *The Graphic* promised this event to be all about Shakespeare and all about charity for the women at the Chelsea Women's Hospital: "The name of the Bard of Avon has been adopted as the text-word of the whole event, and an endeavour will be made to give the Show a value beyond its own object, by affording an instructive insight into the artistic beauties of Shakespeare." The advertisement was right.[2]

You open your newly bought, "luxuriously printed," and handsomely bound Show Book[3] and read the note of Mr. J. S. Wood, the official "Showman" of The Shaksperean Show. He writes in the Show Book:

> 'A book, oh rare one!' I borrow from the Bard the words of Posthumous, not 'in self-glorious pride,' but 'to do ample grace and honor' to those

[1] "The Shaksperean Show Book." *Daily News*. Issue 11895. May 28, 1884. My opening second person narrative/account of The Shaksperean Show is constructed from this *Daily News* article, as well as two other articles: "The Shaksperean Show." *Daily News*. Issue 11897. May 30, 1884. "The Shaksperean Show." *Daily News*. Issue 11898. May 31, 1884.

[2] "Shaksperean Show Advertisement." *The Graphic*. Issue 754. May 10, 1884.

[3] *The Shaksperean Show Book* was the official programme of The Shaksperean Show. Edited by J. S. Wood, the Secretary of the Chelsea Women's Hospital, the Book was in album format and, according to the *Daily News* article, was printed on "rough tinted paper" and contained written "contributions by prominent workers in the fields of art and letters." Though the May 31, 1884 *Daily News* article claims that the 7,000 copies of the Book were "rapidly approaching exhaustion," only two copies, one at The British Library and another at The Folger Shakespeare Library, were consulted for this study.

> 'who hath writ' 'for Charity,' 'this precious Book of Love,'—for charity is love.
>
> Tis merely 'a Beggar's Book'—a professional beggar indeed, a Hospital Secretary—but the rarity of it is that writers and artists 'of good name and fame' have 'joined, with me, their servant,' in the production of such a Book without fee or reward.
>
> The patients in this Hospital bear those sufferings which are the heritage of womankind, be they rich or poor, lowly or exalted. (Show Book 1)

You close your Show Book, or "Book of Love," and survey the sumptuous surroundings. Royal Albert Hall is transformed before your eyes: right in front of the magnificent pipe organ a reproduction of Stratford Church looms sedately over the arrangement of stalls with their Lady Stallkeepers. The Show begins with a "flourish of trumpets and the formal marshalling of the halberdiers ... in their beef-eater costumes." You see Lord Cadogan "standing in front of the platform under the great organ," and he announces the "great regret of the Prince and Princess of Wales at their unavoidable absence." With tremendous feeling does Lord Cadogan speak of the Princess's sorrowful circumstance thirteen years ago[4] and remind us that she "laid the foundation stone of the new hospital."

In the Show, eleven of your favorite plays are presented in *tableaux vivants* with "brief arguments" and "morals" in stalls arranged north to south on the circular floor. The "comely band of young ladies" who are selling the Show Book are clothed in

[4] In 1871 Princess Alexandra gave birth to her son, Prince Alexander John of Wales on April 6. He died one day later. The Chelsea Hospital for Women was founded in 1871. On July 16, 1880, the foundation stone was laid and the Princess of Wales was present at the ceremony (Daily News). Her remarks were: "We cannot conceive any object more worthy to be taken up or one more likely to be of benefit to a large suffering class in this country. Again, assuring you of the pleasure it gives us to be here, we willingly give our consent to your naming two wards in the New Hospital, the 'Alexandra' and the 'Albert Edward'" (Shaksperean Show Book).

Elizabethan dress and are beautifully attired in "quaint Puritanical muslin caps, laced stomachers, and stone-coloured dresses, with 'rolls' upon the shoulders." Regarding the opulent stalls and glancing at the "tinted paper" pages of your programme, you are reminded by the "Plan of the Show" that you should not "go to the Jews" for money at the *Merchant of Venice* stall, you are instructed not to "marry your deceased husband's brother or murder will out" at Hamlet's space, and you are advised to "let no family feud thwart pure young love" at Romeo and Juliet's area. Among the eleven stalls themselves, there are one hundred costumed men and women in different *tableaux* who present a distinct scenic moment from each play. You cannot believe that you can walk to "Capulet's Garden," saunter to a "Street in London" from *Richard III* and then process to "Leonato's Garden" from *Much Ado About Nothing*. You then turn an about face to see "The Garter Inn" from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* sandwiched between "The Forest of Arden" from *As You Like It* and "The Cave and Cauldron" of *Macbeth*. Continuing around the other bank of stalls, you stroll before *Hamlet*'s "Battlements" and "The Grand Square of St. Mark" from *The Merchant of Venice*, and then, visit the "Atrium in Paulina's House" from *The Winter's Tale*, *Measure for Measure*'s "The City Gate," and finally find yourself "Before the Walls of Angiers" from *The Life and Death of King John*. You admire the Lady Stallkeepers, who take time to "promenade and chat" with the other spectators in the crowd, and yes, although there are "visitors of both sexes" here filling the amphitheatre, the "ladies hav[e], as usual, decidedly the preponderance."

Look! There are Portia and Nerissa in their "grave forensic robes"! Juliet from *Measure for Measure* is radiant in her "white robes trimmed with gold" and her "crimson-lined hat with ostrich feathers." Handsome costumes aside, what attention has

been given to the decorations in oil colour for the scenes! There so many beauties for your eye to behold, and the Stallkeepers with their "syren enticements" mingle among the throng with "multifarious objects on sale" for you to take home. You will most certainly buy a reproduction of Shakespeare's brooch and wear it proudly as a badge of association with the Bard and with this worthy charitable event. After taking some refreshments and purchasing some raffle tickets, you will wade through the three thousand people in attendance and muster up the courage to ride the mechanical lift to see the exhibition in the Queen's Room of "relics and articles of Shaksperean Interest" by Mr. Frederick J. Furnivall.[5] To round out your afternoon, you will hear some Shakespearean concert music in the Western Theatre, as well as attend the lovely Miss Cowen's Shakespearean *tableaux* at 5:30 pm. Most likely, you will return the next day, as you have heard that the admission fee will be reduced to "half-a-crown."[6]

On May 29-31, 1884, the Shaksperean Show exhibition took place at the Royal Albert Hall. In his note, J.S. Wood's words of love and dedication for the Chelsea Hospital for Women and his Shaksperean Show are not only liberally peppered with Shakespearean quotations in order to celebrate the Bard, but they also remind us of his larger project at hand--to raise money for the Women's Hospital. Wood's Show Book

[5] Furnivall founded the New Shakspere Society in 1873. At the Shaksperean Show, there were folios, quartos, signatures, portraiture, and other papers encased in glass for Shakespeare fans to gaze at. The spelling of Shakspere is purposeful here. Furnivall was insistent on the restoration of "our great Poet's name" (5). In his prospectus to his Society he appends this information about the Society's spelling in a footnote: the "spelling ... is taken from the only unquestionably genuine signatures of his that we possess, the three on his will, and the two on his Stratford conveyance and mortgage. Though it has hitherto been too much to ask people to suppose that SHAKSPERE knew how to spell his own name, I hope the demand may not prove too great for the imagination of the Members of the New Society" (5). The insistence of the spelling of Shakspere and The Shaksperean Show further emphasizes The Society's authenticity with their "text-word," the Bard of Avon.

[6] There seems to have been a sliding scale for admission price. Five shillings for day admission, then half a crown the next. The evening prices, starting at 7:00 pm, were 2 shillings one day and 1 shilling the next.

includes information, schedules, and listings concerning the Shaksperean Show as well as poetry (including offerings from Browning, Tennyson, and Wilde), names of supporters, advertisements, and testimonials concerning the charitable work that is necessary for the women of the Hospital: “the object of which is to pay off a mortgage behalf to the women of England of £5000 which burdens the Chelsea Hospital for women” (i). Throughout the Book are appeals for monetary and emotional support for the women patients. Mr. George Augustus Sala writes, “The Chelsea Hospital for Women is one of those charities which should come home to all our hearts and it is the bounden duty of every man to do his very best to support it--ay, even if in loving memory only of the mother that bore him” (Show Book). In her poem, “The Chelsea Hospital for Women: An Appeal on its Behalf to the Women of England,” Mary Grace Walker urges the “daughters,” “maidens,” and “matrons” of England to hear their “sisters' cry comes up in you,/ A wail of pain through all the land,/ Let each hold out a helping hand,/ Each to her own true heart be true” (Show Book). The heart as a locus of home, truth, and of course charity and love was not only found in the Book but also was physically represented in the popular emblem of the Show: the relic of the Shakespeare Brooch,[7] displayed in one of Furnivall's glass cases and reproduced as merchandise for the general public. Wearing the Heart Brooch at the Show and on the streets of London, a lady proclaimed how trendy she was due to the popularity of Shakespeare, and she was marked equally as a charitable

[7] In John Rabone's 1883 lecture, a description of the brooch reads as follows: “a narrow band of silver bent into the shape of a heart, about one inch in length and a little less in width. The heart is not of the conventional shape, but is un-equal sided--one side being full and the other indented, after the manner of the human heart. Above the top of the heart is a coronet attached to it only at the ends, consisting of five larger stones of graduated sizes, the first, third, and fifth stone being red, and the second and fourth blue. On the reverse, near the bottom on the one side, is the letter W, and reading onwards up the other side, the word SHAKESPEARE” (14). It is still available as a piece of jewelry one can purchase; for example, the Folger Shakespeare Library's shop offers the reproduction of the brooch in silver and glass for $58.00.

soul. The Shakespeare Heart Brooch itself was a symbol of solidarity with the women of the Hospital, much like the awareness and support ribbons one finds of today for various causes and charities--AIDS, breast cancer, soldiers.

Thumbing through the pages of the Shaksperean Show Book reveals an overriding narrative of the need for love and charity for a community of women. This "Book of Love" uses the cultural valence of Shakespeare to authorize its charitable message to the public. The Shaksperean Show is the apotheosis of late nineteenth-century bardolatry: spectators could visit the most popular stage characters of the day, collected and brought to life all in one arena, and engage with any of them as freely as any fan convention of today. The Book of Love even assures the spectator that Shakespeare himself will be present at least in spirit. "W.S." tells us in "A Voice from the Tomb" that "My heroes and heroines will be with ye in the flesh, and in their divers habits as they lived" (84).

The spectacle of the Show itself, its narrative, and its appropriation of Shakespeare and his characters all serve as the perfect scenic backdrop for the exhibition and celebration[8] of nineteenth-century women's character criticism. Like the Shaksperean Show, women's character criticism exhibited a mixture of sympathetic understanding, love, and outright veneration of Shakespeare, brought to life favorite characters (in

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[8] Danny Karlin, in his article about Browning's poetic contribution in the Show Book, recognizes the "economic basis" of the Show—that of the "selling of Shakespeare" and "Shakespeare's selling power" (154). Karlin can only guess what Browning's thoughts were on this charity event, how he felt about his poem's inclusion in the programme, and if Browning even attended the Show. Karlin writes, "Yet it is as though [Browning] had anticipated the noisy surroundings of Shakespeare's name, the impudently witty travesties of his words, the multiple appropriations of him for charity, for vanity, for piety and for money. 'What succeeds/ Fitly as silence?' What succeeds Browning's poem is the Shakespearean babble of the Victorian age, to which Browning was adding his voice even as he declared he would rather withhold it" (155). Karlin's description of the Victorian pop-culture interest in all things Shakespeare as mere "Shakespearean babble" is reminiscent of the kind of terms used to describe the puffiness and superfluity of language, thought, and fancy of the women who write character criticism. In this study, I examine women's responses to Shakespeare's heroines and focus on that which mainly has been criticized as fluff, superfluity, or the 'babble' of women.

textual spaces created in their own works where the reader may pick and choose where he or she would visit), and abridged, condensed, and highlighted Shakespeare's text at will. Women such as Anna Jameson (1794-1860), Mary Cowden Clarke (1809-1898), Fanny Kemble (1809-1893), Helena Faucit Martin (1817-1898), Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott (fl. 1884-85), and Ellen Terry (1847-1928) were not only the fans of Shakespeare's female characters who revered them as living, breathing women, but they also had a burning desire and a charitable sentiment to share Shakespeare and his characters with others, especially with their sisters. Texts like Faucit's *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* and Elliott's *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls* were true 'Books of Love,' combining their adulation of Shakespeare, their near obsessive sympathy and interest with his female characters, and their ardent desire to share the feelings and experiences they have had with those characters with other women.

Character criticism, although written by both men and women throughout the nineteenth century, became a "phenomenon" that combined the Victorian cult of womanhood with the cult of Shakespeare (Ziegler "Virago" 120-121). Two definitions of character criticism help to define its function and its purpose; one, by Richard Green Moulton, focuses on character criticism's helpful, but secondary, function, and the other, by Miss Grace Latham, seeks to describe the value and necessity of character study:

> One of the most popular sides of dramatic study is Character Interpretation: the process by which all the sayings and doings of a personage in the play, his relations with others, and the general bundle of impressions of which he is the centre, are all collected by the mind, as rays by a lens, and formed into the abstract idea—a *Character*. When this

> process of interpretation is further accompanied by a sense of progress and advance as we follow the character through the movement of the drama, we get *Character-Development*. (Moulton 563)

> To form at all a fair conception of a Shaksperian character, we must first study it in connection with its fellow dramatis personae, and, making due allowance for the circumstances, prejudices, and temperaments of each of these, note the influence they have, and the impression they make on each other. Then, turning to the character itself, we must sink as far as possible our own individuality in it, make its joys and sorrows our own, see with its eyes, and (to use a French theatrical expression) so get into its skin, that we can see from within all the various impulses which govern it; and then, by comparing our two studies, we shall have some idea of the creature with whom we have to deal. (Latham 402)

What is lovely about the juxtaposition of these two definitions is that it highlights the personal and intimate nature of character criticism written by women. Moulton's method of character interpretation, which is but a "side" of dramatic study, positions the critic outside of the text, looking in on the character, analyzing him, and finally, collecting and focusing the impressions into an abstract idea. This abstract idea, combined with analysis of the "movement of the drama" will develop into a total understanding idea of the character in relation to the play. Latham, on the other hand, positions her critic within the text so that she may "sink as far as possible" into the character's thoughts and impulses, share that character's sight, and viscerally experience

what that character feels.[9] Only with this intimate female relationship established can we have "some idea of the creature" Shakespeare has created, according to Latham. The character criticism of women records a dynamic textual interaction between author and character, and this relationship is significant because it elucidates the psychic interaction and play we have when reading and writing about, or even when performing characters.[10] Character criticism not only points to how these women connect to and commune with these characters but also suggests that this very female communion forms the basis of how any reader understands his or her connection and identification with characters altogether. The character criticism of Helena Faucit and Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott thus showcases this communion between reader and character in their texts and offers a new way we may understand the presence of character in a text. The communion of author and character, which will be made tangible here in this study by the critical apparatus of narratological analysis, is identical to the ethereal communion of actor and character on stage, where, in the words of actress Fanny Kemble, a "double process" (103) occurs—an actor becomes the character, communes with it, yet is still the actor. Far from being simple re-tellings of Shakespeare's plays and fan-fiction devoted to their favorite heroines, the textual engagement of Elliott and Faucit gives substance to the

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[9] Writing about Helen Faucit's character essays, Carol J. Carlisle notes a certain visceral quality of Faucit's "portrayals": "Faucit reconciled the Shakespearean heroines with the womanly ideal of the romantic and Victorian periods, giving both soul and body to those insubstantial wraiths that had drifted through the visions of Coleridge and Hazlitt ("Critics" 73).

[10] Nina Auerbach, in her work, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*, describes the Victorian exaltation of character and the "myth of the literary character" as having reached its most significant expression with the assumption of a character on the stage (203). She writes, "If literary character is magical in its blend of human with supernatural vitality, there is a necromantic intensity in the representation of the character" (203). While I will grant that a certain amount of 'necromancy' is required to represent the spiritual, other-worldly, and ghostly connection between woman character critic and Shakespeare female character, I characterize this 'intensity' of connection to be a communion.

insubstantial—their writings lay bare the complicated, intangible psychic interaction between reader and character.

Faucit's Gallery and Elliott's Garden: "Old, old stories"?

Writing character criticism—the "dominant model" of women's Shakespearean criticism in the nineteenth century—Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott (fl. 1884-1885) culled some of her lectures and cultivated her thoughts in her own *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls* in 1885, and Helena Faucit Martin (1817-1898) penned letters to friends and published them in 1885 in a sleek volume, entitled, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* (Thompson and Roberts 4). Elliott and Faucit are brought together here by virtue of their reading and textual engagement with Shakespeare's female characters, and not by any association of birth, profession, or class. Faucit, a famous stage actress from 1836 to 1879, performed alongside such famous Victorian actors as William Macready and Henry Irving. She married Theodore Martin in 1851, became Lady Martin in 1880, and kept a circle of acquaintances of eminent Victorians including Robert Browning, John Ruskin, and Queen Victoria. Her "gallery of 'fair warriors'" of Shakespeare's heroines was dedicated to the Queen with her permission, went though several editions between 1885 and 1891, and was very popular, with this popularity mostly due to her revered status as an ideal actress on the Victorian stage[11] (Faucit viii) (Thompson and Roberts 4). In 1845, *The Manchester Times* wrote in praise of Faucit, her prowess as a Shakespearean actress, and her superior ability to embody a true, ideal woman on stage:

[11] Carol J. Carlisle, in "Helen Faucit's Acting Style," remarks that Faucit was "described sometimes as an illuminating commentator on the poetic plays that she helped to animate (especially Shakespeare's), or as a collaborator with the poet—sometimes as a poet herself. Most of all, however, she was praised as an ideal embodiment of womanhood" (50).

> Miss Faucit's nature is not so much that of a woman, as that of WOMAN. She infuses, so to speak, the personality of the feminine character into every delineation. In every embodiment she seems to raise the veil from a shrined feeling in her individual heart. The range is certainly wide, which includes equally the Antigone of two thousand years ago, and the heart-breaking pangs of contemporary suffering, and makes both equally ideal--which places the hand of a Rosalind in that of an Imogen--which shows the sweet sisterhood in contrast of a Beatrice and a Juliet--which artlessly pleads in Desdemona, pierces in the accusing agony of Constance, or freezes in the ominous terseness of Lady Macbeth. (qtd. in Theodore Martin 160)

The praise of the veracity of Faucit's acting is echoed in the writer's adulation for her gallery of Shakespearean heroines, her written record of her interaction with them. Margaret Stokes, in a lengthy article in *Blackwood's Magazine*, yoked together *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* with the experience of seeing Faucit onstage. To read the characters in Faucit's work, avers Stokes, reminds one of her stage impersonations: Faucit's "beautiful volume will waken a host of stirring memories in those who had the good fortune to see the heroines of which it treats clothed with life by its gifted authoress" (741). Further, Stokes describes Faucit's "little autobiographical sketches" and character "portraits" as replete with the "earnest, dreamy, imaginative girl expanding into the woman, into whose face has passed the expression of a life devoted to meditation on the problems, not of art only, but of human life" (746). Finally, Stokes

comes to the conclusion that in *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* one finds a "contribution of the highest value to the best criticism of [Shakespeare's] work" (746).

As much as Faucit and her life were in the limelight, both onstage and off, Elliott's life was not. There is scant information about the woman who penned two books on Shakespeare's female characters at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1884, writing as Madeleine Leigh-Noel, she published an inexpensive, parchment-covered, small octavo volume, *Lady Macbeth: A Study*, and it was well-received.[12] In the April 1st, 1884 edition of *The Theatre*, *Lady Macbeth* is described as an "admirable critical study" to which "students of Shakespeare may well turn with profit and encouragement" for it is a "neat little volume, analyzing, describing, and elaborating the character of 'Lady Macbeth'"(222). A copy of *Lady Macbeth* was presented to Algernon Swinburne with Leigh Noel's compliments in her own hand and even made its way into his library.[13] As Miss Leigh-Noel, she delivered two lectures at the New Shakspere Society concerning "Shakspeare's Garden of Girls," in October 1884, with her first installment of "Hot-House Flowers: Juliet, Imogen, and Ophelia" and in November 1884, with her second installment, "Hardy Blossoms" (Transactions 107, 109). Due to unknown circumstances, in December 1884, her "third and last division," "Wild Flowers: Miranda, Perdita, etc." was read not by Leigh-Noel, but by Mr. Sidney L. Lee, who would later become an author, Shakespearean scholar, and editor of and contributor to the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Transactions 110-112). Leigh-Noel's flower-lectures on the women of

[12] *The Theatre*'s notice of April 1, 1884 praises the little volume's ability to illustrate a 'real' Lady Macbeth: "For once we see Lady Macbeth described as a living, breathing woman, burdened with the sorrow of an awful secret, and not as a tenth-rate tragedy queen, artificial and pompous" (222). The price of *Lady Macbeth* was just 1 shilling. The price of Leigh-Noel/Elliott's second work, a quarto volume, cloth bound, was 3s. 6d. By contrast, Helena Faucit's book cost 21s.
[13] The presentation copy with Leigh-Noel's autograph (Madeleine Leigh Noel, no hyphen) and Swinburne's bookplate is now located in Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Shakespeare were to grow and eventually bloom into a second book, *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls*.[14] It is unclear how Madeleine Leigh-Noel, or Madeleine Leigh Noel (with *no* hyphen as her autograph suggests), becomes known in library catalogues as Mrs. Madeleine Elliott, or Mrs. M. L. Elliott; exhaustive biographical searches on both family names have yielded no connection between the two. Tantalizingly, however, an actress, Miss Leigh Noel, treads the boards in the provincial theatre scene at just the same time Madeleine Leigh Noel writes in England. Miss Leigh Noel's acting career spans from September 1882 to October 1883, with a notice that in May of 1883, due to illness, Miss Leigh Noel could not appear as Juliet at the Theatre Royal in Bath. Miss Leigh Noel, "always the eminent tragedienne," (*The Era*, "Provincial Theatricals" and "The Guards") utterly vanishes from the theatrical notices at the same time that Madeleine Leigh Noel convalesces at Bexhill-on-Sea, in Sussex, where she will write *Lady Macbeth: A Study*.[15] Miss Leigh Noel's theatrical career ceases at the same time Madeleine Leigh Noel's career as a writer begins. Madeleine Leigh Noel, in the fall of 1884, delivers all of her lectures at the New Shakspere Society, save her last one in December, and coincidentally, Miss Leigh Noel, actress, who "has not been acting for the last 12 months" appears for one performance only in a "spirited rendering of the part" of Marie de Fontanges, in *Plot*

[14] *The Theatre*'s notice of February 2, 1885 suggests that Leigh-Noel's "success deservedly attained by her clever and interesting study of Lady Macbeth" and the "great interest and discussion" generated by her series of papers on Shakespeare's "girl heroines" have both led her to be "induced" to publish her book, *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls* (104). The New Shakspeare Society's director, Furnivall stated, "in a vote of thanks accorded to Miss Leigh-Noel," that "'many side-lights on Shakspeare's Women' had been shown by the papers" (104).

[15] In her preface to the work, dated March 1884, Leigh Noel writes that her impressions of Lady Macbeth were created during a time of "solitude," when "I was denied everything but the heritage of suffering and in my sick-room the image of this wonderful woman grew before my mental vision, as the statue grows under the sculptor's tool, until, at last, I saw her--as I wish to present to my readers" (iv). Madeleine Leigh Noel is still in Bexhill as of April of 1884, according her given address in the Swinburne presentation copy.

and Passion (*The Era*, “Theatrical Gossip”). Sadly, the link between the author Madeleine Leigh Noel/Elliott and actress Miss Leigh Noel is only speculative. Biographical information about Elliott may be lacking, yet, what does remain of Elliott are her texts. Those texts are remarkably similar to Faucit's. Both women share an ardent and dynamic textual engagement with Shakespeare's women, and their texts are in scope and sentiment true ‘Books of Love’ about women and Shakespeare.

Twentieth-century Shakespearean criticism has questioned the academic value of these ‘Books of Love.’ The dismissal of character criticism is most famously expressed in L. C. Knights' 1946 work, *Explorations: Essays in Criticism Mainly on the Literature of the Seventeenth Century*. Knights, in his first chapter entitled “How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?” dismisses the interest in character criticism “from Hazlitt to Dowden” and of Victorian women, such as Anna Jameson and Mary Cowden Clarke, because of its irrelevance to the true work of the Shakespearean critic which is to “master the words of the play” (15). He compares a “good” and a “bad” critic: “The main difference between good and bad critics is that the good critic points to something that is actually contained in the work of art, whereas the bad critic points away from the work in question; he introduces extraneous elements into his appreciation—smudges the canvas with his own paint” (17-18). Knights' words of derision for character criticism, and by extension, the “bad critics” who would write it, is nothing new. Criticism of this nature was levied against character essays more and more by the end of the nineteenth century, as there was a proliferation of all sorts of “Shakespearean criticism” being published.[16] A

[16] In the 1889 volume of *Shakesperiana*, a writer from *The Church Review* complains of the criticism which abounds and the critics’ qualifications to write it: “Shakesperiana is a free field into which anybody, who can write grammatically, and who has access to a library, can write to his heart’s content. Or, if he do not

June 1885 review of Elliott's Garden in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, under the “New Books” section, is worth quoting in its entirety because the reviewer's sentiments not only echo the general feeling that women's character criticism is sentimental and unintelligent but also anticipate Knights’ distaste for character criticism’s and bad critics’ “extraneous smudges.” The review points out two major prevailing attitudes about Shakespeare and “real” scholarship, or, in the words of the critic, true “fruitful criticism”: the pairing of Shakespeare and “sentimentalization” is not academically rigorous, and character studies are not only out of fashion, but are without invention or value. The critic writes:

> One would have thought that the sentimentalizing school of Shakespearean criticism had had its day, and that after Mrs. Jameson and Mrs. Cowden Clarke no one would feel called upon to draw full-length word portraits in the “Book of Beauty” style of young ladies whom most educated people know sufficiently well without a recapitulation of their charms. The author of this very solid volume thinks otherwise, and fills over 300 pages with alternate paraphrase and padding, after the accepted style of fifty years ago. It is all very orthodox and very pretty, but it is an old, old story, and we can with difficulty imagine any purpose to be served by its repetition. Such work adds wantonly to the pyramid of printed matter under which the poet is buried. It does not enlarge our knowledge,

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happen to have access to a library, he has simply to take the last thing written on the subject and contradict it … Shakespeare himself has said something about everything (barring perhaps tobacco), so the range of subjects is infinite, and except the law, no topic of human interest has so religiously preserved its literature as has the exhaustive topic of Shakespeare. In other words, just as anybody can be a poet, so anybody can be a Shakespearian commentator. The recipe for either appears to be a quire of paper, a pen, and a bottle of ink” (93). The volume continues to record that in 1886, 5,212 new books on and editions of Shakespeare were published in England; in 1887, there were 5,688; and in 1888, there were 6,598 (93-94).

> unless our Shakspearean reading has been very limited or very unintelligent, and in either case we should put our time to much better use in studying the original pictures in their entirety than in examining these conventional oleographic enlargements of individual figures. The mental attitude in which the author of this book approaches her subject may be judged from the motto on her title-page… The mind which can not only pass without challenge, but positively repeat and enforce in italics, such an assertion as this, is clearly not one from which we can expect any fruitful criticism.

The writer quite accurately points out that Shakespeare character criticism by the likes of Faucit and Elliott is at times over-zealous in its celebration, adoration, and veneration of Shakespeare's female characters and their "charms" and beauty. This "old, old story" is an oft repeated one, but very female; the writer references the character criticism of Anna Jameson and Mary Cowden Clarke and even mistakenly ascribes the "motto" on Elliott's title page to "Mrs. Cowden Clarke" when those words were actually her husband's, Charles Cowden Clarke. The critic claims that there is no point to studying Elliott's colorful imitations (an oleograph is a chromolithograph print made with oil paint, transferred on canvas to simulate an oil painting) or facsimiles of Shakespeare's characters—time would be better spent studying the "original pictures" in the context of the whole play and as Shakespeare drew them himself on the page or on the stage. For this critic, the combination of Elliott's "very pretty" celebration and love of Shakespeare's female characters and her insistence upon those characters' importance to women's lives is utterly valueless in the world of serious "criticism" because it does not "enlarge our

knowledge" about Shakespeare. The superfluous and seemingly tedious "paraphrase and padding" in Elliott's character criticism does not produce, according to the critic, a very expansive or intelligent Shakespearean reading. Yet, the "paraphrase and padding" are precisely what is crucial to the women who write character criticism because, in those textual flights of emotional re-telling, commentary, and editorial we see author, narrator and character together in a narrative bond of unity. Elliott's and Faucit's narrative work did not "wantonly" or gratuitously contribute to the "pyramid of printed matter under which the poet is buried"; it was a necessary addition to the tradition of women writing about Shakespeare's female characters and to the cultural moment in which Shakespeare and his female characters had a great deal of popularity and significance.[17] That the *Pall Mall* critic did not understand the value of Elliott's textual bloating, or her "paraphrase and padding," is understandable; however, those moments of paraphrase or moments of narrative mediation between Elliott's and Faucit's "old stories" and Shakespeare's story and the moments of narrative interaction between character and narrator are exactly what we might use to elucidate, recuperate, and enlarge our knowledge of the connection between women and the characters they love.

Character/Text/Woman

> Q: Does Juliet ever demonstrate any unique personality? Does she need to and would she today?

[17] In "Intercepting the Dew-Drop: Female Readers and Readings in Anna Jameson's Shakespearean Criticism," Christy Desmet writes about Anna Jameson's "re-visions" of Shakespeare (54). She states, "Jameson's work is less important for *what* she says than *how* she says it…She not only recreates Shakespeare's characters in her own image, she invites female readers to recreate themselves" (54). Desmet's assessment of Jameson's work is applicable to Faucit's and Elliott's writing as well. The structure of their narratives, the *how*, is more important than the *what* because the structure illustrates the 'recreation' of Shakespeare's characters. And, Faucit and Elliott beckon and 'invite' female readers to enter both Gallery and the Garden in order to view the characters coming to life.

Nicholas Walker, Santiago, Chile

A: Every living individual has a unique personality, but Juliet is not a person. She is a text. If she ever acquires "unique personality" it is because an actress supplies her with it.

Germaine Greer, "Talking Point e-Lecture: *Romeo and Juliet*

Greer's assertion that Juliet is a text—that Juliet herself as a character is not a person—would certainly be disputed by the women character critics I examine in this thesis. These women have no doubt in their minds that Juliet and Shakespeare's other female characters are fictional characters but are also real people. For instance, Mary Cowden Clarke insists that Shakespeare's characters are "human beings … mortal women … dear friends" ("Ladies" 25). Anna Jameson describes them as "individuals … breathing realities, clothed in flesh and blood" (69). Clarke, Jameson, and others believe that Shakespeare's female characters exist in the temporal world and, moreover, that the characters' essential natures and personalities can be plainly discerned and described. Elliott, in her *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls* echoes all of her sister writers' feelings when she writes: "Juliet, Imogen, Desdemona, Ophelia, Rosalind, and the rest are women we know. They have their counterparts all around us" (iii).

Greer's statement also raises a larger issue that I will investigate: the conflation and communion of author and character, text, and meaning. Her simple sentence, "Juliet is text" can mean several things: Juliet is a literary figure, who exists only lexically in the pages of a text (or the "work" to Barthes) and has no corporeal existence. Or, Juliet is as inscribable and as culturally determined as a text is (Barthes' "multi-dimensional

space"[18])—that is, one may assign Juliet's thoughts and feelings as determined by his or her culture, society, and moment in time. Some of the nineteenth-century women character critics do articulate a certain flexibility in allowing for the multitude of interpretations that one may derive from Shakespeare's characters. Jameson[19] notes in the dialogue in her introduction of *Characteristics of Women: Moral, Poetical, and Historical* that men and women and their interpretations of Shakespeare are "influenced by our own characters, habits of thought, prejudices, feelings, impulses, just as [men and women] are influenced with regard to our acquaintances and associates" (22). Some favor acknowledging the breadth of interpretation of the characters, particularly in the medium of performance. Fanny Kemble, for example, writes that each actor has his or her own level of "accuracy and power" of "perception" which represents the author's "original creation" ("Notes" 14). Faucit marvels at the malleability of Shakespeare's characters each time an actor gives his or her "living commentary" upon the stage: "How much has [the actor] left to be filled up by accent, by play of feature, by bearing, by action, by subtle shades of expression, … by all these movements and inflections … which play so large a part in producing the impression left upon us a living interpretation of the master-poet!" (160). It is actress Ellen Terry who comes the closest to identifying the cultural valence of the interpretation of Shakespeare's characters. As Terry writes in

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[18] Roland Barthes, in *Image-Music-Text*, writes that the text is a "multi-dimensional space" and a "tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (146).

[19] Georgianna Ziegler, in her article, "The Actress as Shakesperian Critic: Three Nineteenth Century Portias," mentions that Anna Jameson was a critic who was "attuned to the actor's approach" (103). Jameson's "consideration of a character's background and motives, her evocation of settings and comparison with the works of famous painters, and her close attention to the subtlety of feelings expressed by a character in a certain scene…all point to a way of thinking about character that is similar to what we have seen with the actresses" (103). The writers I will be discussing, some actors and some not, all commune with their character as the actor does.

her memoirs about having represented her conception of Portia "five or six different ways," she wonders:

> Has there ever been a dramatist …whose parts admit of so many different interpretations as do Shakespeare's? There lies his immortality as an acting force. For times change, and parts have to be acted differently for different generations. Some parts are not sufficiently universal for this to be possible, but every ten years an actor can reconsider a Shakespeare part and find new life in it for his new purpose and new audience." (87)

In Terry's mind, then, Juliet, can be a text which can be re-written and re-evaluated by actor and audience alike. In the sense of its Latin derivation, text, or *texere*, "to weave"—Juliet exists in a particular "woven state," and has a "web or texture of ... materials" (McKenzie 5). The text of Shakespeare itself assumes multiple states, not only in an actual physical manifestation of the words (as on the printed page in an edition or script), but also in less tangible forms such as critical interpretations made by its readers or spectators and theatrical representation on stage.[20] The nineteenth-century women writers considered in this study effortlessly weave themselves in and out of Shakespeare's text, their own narratives, and the lives of the characters they create.

The women writers and actresses all evaluate, interact with, and describe Shakespeare's female characters in much the same way, whether their relationships with those characters has been on the page or on the stage. It is reasonable to assume that actresses, like Faucit, Kemble, and Terry, have created more psychologically intense

[20] For Barbara Hodgdon, the Shakespearean play exists in the "multiple states" of the "words constituting the play texts," the "readings based on those texts," and in "concrete, historically particular theatrical representations," or, "performance texts" (3).

character portraits because they have "become" those characters on the stage.[21] I find, however, that even women who are not actresses, like Jameson, Clarke, and Elliott, create extra-textual lives in their characters and breathe life into them on the page as if they were enacting them on the stage. Because there is similarity between the women writers, actress and non-actress alike, in how they construct their narratives and approach the characters, interact with them, and present them on the page, a performance paradigm will serve to give shape to their textual encounter with characters. As an actor psychologically connects with a character, embodies and assumes the character's disposition and nature, and then presents that character to an audience, so too does an author have her narrator connect with a character, make narrative choices of how to "embody" that character in the story, and present that character and its consciousness to her readers. In *Narrative as Performance*, Marie Maclean, in her discussion of the poetry of Baudelaire, writes of the shared characteristics between the structure of narrative and performance:

> The printed text is a representation of the act of telling itself, and so the actual narration becomes a part of the fictional world. The teller is embodied in the narrator, whether implicit or explicit, and the original live audience is embodied in the narratees present in the text and the narrative audience, a fictional construct. The narrator may relate his or her own fictional world or may produce yet another possible world in the course of

[21] Georgianna Ziegler notices a similarity between nineteenth-century Shakespearean critics, such as Coleridge, and the actress's character criticism. Yet, what makes the actresses distinct from other scholars and critics is their "ability to *assume* the characters they would create. Their goal is to embody the play, to give a form and 'local habitation' to the characters sketched in the lines on the page" ("Actress" 106). I find that all the women writers embody the play and their characters on the page-stage of their character criticism.

> the narration. The printed text is a fabrication which only becomes an act when read, that is when interacting with an actual audience. (10)

Women character critics construct their narratives with narrators who tell the story of a character to an audience, or narratees, located both within and without the text. Faucit's and Elliott's stories are representations of Juliet's and Imogen's lives, not on the stage, but on the page. We can consider the narratives constructed by the women character critics, then, in the light of this dialogic process of performance.

In evaluating the narratives about the female characters, it is challenging to see the women character critics' creations, their essays about Juliet and a host of others, as they would desire—as real women. In *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Mieke Bal reminds us about the troubling human aspect of a character: "The character is not a human being, but it resembles one. It has no real psyche, personality, ideology, or competence to act, but it does possess characteristics which make psychological and ideological descriptions possible. Character is intuitively the most crucial category of narrative, and also most subject to projection and fallacies" (115). The women character critics anthropomorphize the characters to such a degree that it is difficult for their readers to view Rosalind, Imogen, or Lady Macbeth as constructions, not people. A secondary issue, both problematic and fascinating, concerns nineteenth-century women writers' intimate emotional interactions and textual engagement with the characters themselves. Certainly, it is because they believe that these characters are so familiar and life-like that they need to put themselves into their own narratives and construct narrators/narrating agents who also interact with the characters.

Ultimately, for each of the women character critics there is an essential personality of Shakespeare's female characters that she defines and describes with great authority because the great Bard has bestowed to all women living, breathing characters. The critic's analyses and opinions in her text often are not attributed entirely (or at least overtly) to her unique perceptions or insight of the characters. In most cases, the critic stresses that Shakespeare's genius of creation allows her to see Shakespeare's women in different ways. In *The Ladies Companion*, Mary Cowden Clarke can only "aspire" to be a humble "ministering attendant" who illuminates the "crystal of Shakespeare's volume" by merely "draw[ing] forward the branch sconces" so that "fair ladies" may "inspect their own semblance in Shakespeare's mirror page" (25). Anna Jameson writes of the Bard: "Shakespeare, who has looked upon women with the spirit of humanity, wisdom, and deep love, has done justice to their natural good tendencies and kindly sympathies. [In female friendships] he has represented truth and generous affection … with such force and simplicity, and obvious self-conviction, that he absolutely forces the same conviction on us" (56). In *Record of a Girlhood*, Fanny Kemble imagines being before a great temple erected in praise of the master-poet's "genius" and "undying glory," in which one finds Shakespeare, enshrined; the temple houses a "shrine filled with light and life and warmth and melody; with knowledge and love of man, and worship of God and nature. There is our benefactor and friend" (297). Elliott, in her full-length study of Shakespeare's "hardy blossoms," claims only to have "endevoured to display [the beauties of Shakespeare's characters] as they have manifested themselves [to Shakespeare]" (i). And, further, "We [women] can take [his characters'] hands in honest faith and learn from them to appreciate more than ever, nobility of character, singleness

of purpose, and purity of ideal" (ii). Similarily, Faucit writes, "There is an "infinite debt [women] owe to the poet who could portray, as no other poet has so fully done, under the most varied forms, all that gives to woman her brightest charm, her most beneficent influence" (ix). Each of these women consistently reverts to praising Shakespeare's talents and multi-faceted women, instead of taking the credit for her own unique vision and interpretation of the plays. Each author is reticent at times about her writing and interpretations; however, at other times, she willingly and emotionally supplies shade, color, and depth to Shakespeare's women in her written analysis and/or her performance by the dynamic construction of her own narrative and text.

In general, the women who write character criticism share many ideas about Shakespeare, his female characters, and their implicit membership in the community of women who write about Shakespeare. First, all agree that Shakespeare is the Master-Poet. He is variously described as a great teacher, kind father, benevolent friend, and omnipotent seer of humankind. Second, the women stress that all of Shakespeare's female characters are real women. Whether the actress-author has impersonated them or "clothe[d them] with life" (Faucit 230), and/or engaged with them by reading Shakespeare's plays, there is no doubt that Shakespeare's "offspring," as Elliott exclaims, "are real flesh and blood, creatures we can believe in, whom we can take to our hearts, whose influence ministers us in a thousand ways, and for whom we feel a genuine friendship" (ii). Third, women character writers view Shakespeare's women as ideal models of womanhood. Despite some disagreement as to particular attributes of character and of personality, all authors I have studied agree that by studying, reading, meeting, and engaging with the "sister-hood of Shakspeare's heroines" (Elliott ii),

women's lives will be enhanced, enriched, and edified. Fourth, all women writers in this study argue for an essential nature of any character. Each author is certain that characters have certain inherent qualities, as bestowed to each character by Shakespeare himself. Each feels that she is not only able to plumb the depths of each character with great perception and skill but that she is privy to Shakespeare's intention and creative impulse in the genesis of that character. In her discussion of the character of Lady Macbeth, for instance, Kemble describes the art of representation as a sort of test of the actor's skill in perceiving the author's fixed and knowable "original creation": "thus the character of 'Lady Macbeth' is as majestic, awful, and poetical, whether it be worthily filled by its pre-eminent representative, Mrs. Siddons, or unworthily by the most incompetent of ignorant provincial tragedy queens" ("Notes" 14-15). In Jameson's chapter on Miranda, she not only credits Shakespeare as the man who "alone" could have created such a beautiful woman, unsurpassed in "tender delicacy … ideal grace … and simplicity," but also states resolutely that the "character of Miranda resolves itself into the very elements of womanhood. She is beautiful, modest, and tender, and she is these only; they comprise her whole being, external and internal" (283). Fifth, the women critics' absolute conviction in their knowledge and interpretation of Shakespeare's characters is curiously mixed with abject reticence. Owing somewhat to the perceived need to maintain modesty of nineteenth-century women who write,[22] these authors' sentiments range from confessions that their interpretations may be from the heart (Clarke: "[My]

[22] Mary Jean Corbett, in *Representing Femininity: Middle-Class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women's Autobiographies*, investigates the ways women represented themselves in writing, publically and privately. Corbett maintains that the "ideology of domestic femininity persistently shaped the written lives of Victorian and Edwardian women" and that this "discourse of femininity was something many public women consciously appropriated as a means of legitimating their public identities, of achieving professional success, of making political change" (15).

tire-woman's task [the presentation of the characters to female readers] shall be performed with zeal and assiduity, whatever lack of skill may exist" (25)) to affirmations that they alone can know Shakespeare's women (in one of Terry's lectures she says, "I am able to speak to you about Shakespeare's women with the knowledge that can be gained only from union with them" (80)). Faucit's introduction to her letters of character sketches encapsulates both feelings in a single paragraph:

> What I have written has been written in a loving and reverent spirit, with the wish to express in simplest language what I feel deeply about these exquisite creations of Shakespeare's genius. That fuller justice might well be done to them I do not doubt … I have, as it were, thought their thoughts and spoken their words straight from my living heart and mind. I know this has been an exceptional privilege; and to those not so fortunate I have striven to communicate something of what I have learned in the exercise of my 'so potent art' (viii).

Lastly, each author writes about and/or performs with the community of female readers/listeners/spectators in mind.[23] Jameson, Elliott, Faucit and Clarke openly and warmly acknowledge their female readers; some of Faucit's character sketch letters are dedicated to her female friends; Kemble and Jameson discuss and correspond about the subject matter and consequent reception of Jameson's *Characteristics of Women*; Terry often makes asides in her writings to the young actress and her Shakespearean roles;

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[23] And in this way, the authors are feminist critics, according to the definition given by Lenz, Greene, and Neely in the Introduction to *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*: "Feminist critics are profoundly concerned with understanding the parts women have played, do play, and might play in literature as well as in culture. Feminist criticism of Shakespeare begins with an individual reader, usually, although not necessarily, a female reader—a student, teacher, actor—who brings to the plays her own experience, concerns, questions" (3).

Jameson dedicates her book to Kemble; Faucit dedicates her book to the Queen; Elliott dedicates her *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls* to the American actress, Mary Anderson. Through the lens of Shakespeare's female characters, the women critics choose to see themselves and each other and value this female friendship and camaraderie. Janice Raymond, in *A Passion For Friends: Toward a Philosophy of Female Affection*, writes that in the "hetero-reality" of this world, where women exist perpetually in relation to men, women can actively choose female friendship which presents another view of women: "the vision of women who have seen their Selves [and who have] helped to create other women in their own self-directed image" (239). When each character critic chooses to write her "Book of Love," she participates in a female network of love, respect, and admiration not only for Shakespeare's heroines, but also for her community of writing women.

"The Book of Love": In the Gallery and the Garden

Faucit's and Elliott's textual spaces of the Gallery and the Garden, respectively, serve to give their characters the environment they need to come to life, in lovingly detailed, living, breathing portraits or in luscious, carefully tended blooms. The narratives that Faucit and Elliott create not only allow the reader to meander through their texts and explore any character but also invite the reader to vicariously experience the author's own union with those characters about which she writes. All in all, both strongly acknowledge the female connection with their examination of Shakespeare's female

characters. Following the tradition of Jameson, Cowden Clarke, and Kemble,[24] Faucit's and Elliott's character criticism participates in the discussion of the ideal woman and communicates to women readers that Shakespeare's characters are real friends that may serve to reflect their thoughts and feelings. Faucit and Elliott both dedicate their works to the women of England, invite them into their texts, and provide an alternative space for them to envision themselves as women.

Faucit's and Elliott's narratives are as cavernous as The Shaksperean Show exhibit at Royal Albert Hall. Readers can traipse through their representations of Shakespeare's plays as easily as moving around the Hall at the different stalls. There is no doubt that Elliott and Faucit reconstruct, reframe, and refocus Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, and *Cymbeline*. But, just as in the *tableaux* created for The Shaksperean Show, the characters' placement and framing will bring us to a different reading and understanding of them; each stall is not an official presentation of the play, but a conglomeration, pastiche, abridgement of the play into a performance space. So too, are Faucit's Gallery and Elliott's Garden narrative "performance" spaces in which the female characters come to life.

The structure of the Gallery and the Garden as narrative "performance spaces" can be analyzed with the help of narratology, which is concerned with the study and analysis of texts as narratives. Narratology asks the questions of how a text is made into a

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[24] Tricia Lootens, in *Lost Saints: Silence, Gender, and Victorian Literary Canonization*, equates the representation of Shakespeare's heroines with the representation of femininity. She observes: "By the middle of the nineteenth century, to interpret Shakespeare's heroines meant nothing less than to read the essential, sacred female character itself; to teach them meant nothing less than to teach divine femininity. As critics, scholars, biographers, portraitists, and theatre troupes analyzed, reinterpreted, appropriated, and revised the Bard's female fictional characters, readings of Shakespeare's heroines emerged as key sites of conflict and discussion concerning both the construction of femininity and the faith in such femininity as a cornerstone of English or Anglo-Saxon cultural supremacy" (79).

narrative and what are its structural elements and its narrativity, or narrative-ness. A narratological analysis of the composition, characterization, and perspective of the Gallery and the Garden illuminates how the authors structure their own narratives of Shakespeare's plays and how they interact with the characters about which they write. It would be easy to say that Faucit's and Elliott's narratives are simple rearrangements of the plays with the female parts highlighted and discussed. This is not so. The authors have their own stories to tell in addition to Shakespeare's. An epistle to a friend, a woman writing in a sick room, the friendly advice columnist to other women, and so on, each frame discussions of the characters. A narratological analysis on the Gallery and the Garden will consider how the narrators are constructed and how the narration is focalized (the perspective from which events are narrated), specifically how the authors choose to represent the consciousness of Shakespeare's female characters (whether in direct, indirect, or free indirect speech) and how they choose to display those characters' inner lives. I am interested in the authors' use of indirect and free indirect speech and the boundary between narrator and represented character. Thus, this representation of consciousness of the female character is the critical point for these narratives, and the central problem of this representation is found in the "relationship between the representing agent and the one who is being represented" (Herman 23). In Faucit's and Elliott's texts, there is ambiguity in the answer to the question "Who is speaking?"—the narrators in Faucit's and Elliott's texts or the characters? In such cases where there is such ambiguity in the representation of consciousness, Herman and Vervaeck suggest that, "Narratologist and reader will have to decide for themselves where to draw the boundaries between implied author, narrator, and character. A traditional reader will

want to draw them as clearly as possible even if the text rules out an unequivocal choice" (Herman 27). Instead of drawing those boundaries out to define them, I am defining those moments of boundary-ambiguity as moments of communion, where the boundaries have dissolved and where the implied author, narrator, and character are one.

Additionally, I will look beyond the text as an "independently functioning system of signs" and acknowledge that, in Bakhtinian tradition, there is a polyphonous dialogue between text and reader, and that, in the view of feminist narratology, the social reality and the subjective experience of the author come into play (Herman and Vervaeck 126, 135). The challenge of feminist narratology, writes Susan Lanser, is to be able to see the "dual nature of narrative, to find categories and terms that are abstract and semiotic enough to be useful, but concrete and mimetic enough to seem relevant for critics whose theories root literature in 'the real condition of our lives' "(200). This "dual nature of narrative"—much like Kemble's "double process" of acting—informs the authors' narrative structure and their personal interaction with the characters about which they write.

This study will focus on the unique and personal way in which women character critics interact with and represent the consciousnesses of Shakespeare's female characters. Women character critics' interaction with Shakespeare's characters is significant because it lays bare the critics' psychological connection to those characters within the pages of their narratives. Admittedly, women's character criticism participates in nineteenth-century discourse about the definition of ideal womanhood; their texts do celebrate the ideal woman in every female character in Shakespeare's plays. Previous academic studies of women's character criticism have focused solely on the women

critics' observations about the female characters and have investigated to what extent the women critics have recuperated the agency of these characters. In those studies, if scholars have addressed the emotional interaction between critic and character, they regard those moments as curiosities, quaint relics of style and convention, and fantasies. This present study will continue to investigate how the critics regard and respond to Shakespeare's female characters within the context of the nineteenth century. However, what is unique about this study is that it will focus on the structure of the critics' criticism as *narrative* and will fully embrace those emotion-filled moments of communion and interaction between author and character. I contend that how a woman character critic constructs her narrative indicates much more about the critic, her character, and the character's agency, than an analysis of her observations alone can ever relate. The narrative structure of women's character criticism, then, communicates more than what the critic may observe about the character herself and, in fact, frees the character from the constrictions of Shakespeare's plays. Women character critics create new narratives for Shakespeare's characters and give them 'extra-textual' lives by supplying their backstories, thoughts and ideas, and even afterlives. In their new narratives, women character critics dynamically enact Shakespeare's plays, re-script the plays to coincide with their own expressions and desires, and represent the consciousness of the female characters. The women character critics make deliberate narrative choices of how to represent the consciousness of the characters, and, as the characters are enacted for their readers, their activity and life gives those characters the textual space to be free.

This dissertation begins with surveys of both male and female responses to Shakespeare and his characters, continues with an in-depth investigation of two women

critics and their narratives, and concludes with a study of the actor and the critic and the similarities with their representation of a character's consciousness. To begin, Chapter One investigates the responses and textual engagement of male critics *vis-à-vis* Shakespeare's characters. Male critics throughout the nineteenth century indulge in either a Romantic, effusive exclamatory criticism that praises Shakespeare's genius and his characters or an analytic and scientific criticism that tries to quantify Shakespeare's genius and his characters. Male critics such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and William Hazlitt praise Shakespeare and may even appreciate with zeal his creations, but there are no emotional interactions with the characters they discuss. Later nineteenth century critics, such as Matthew Arnold, Edward Dowden, and Frederick Furnivall, attempt to methodically quantify and harness "Shakespeare," but still do not emotionally interact with his characters. It is Algernon Swinburne, in *A Study of Shakespeare,* who composes brief miniscule moments of lyrical scenic description and two representations of a character's consciousness. Swinburne's treatment of Othello approaches the work of women character critics, but his criticism as a whole does not emotionally participate fully in creating 'extra-textual' lives for his characters. Whatever critical apparatus they may use to write about Shakespeare and his plays, male critics do not engage emotionally with Shakespeare's characters in the dialogic and dynamic manner in which women character critics do in their written narratives. Male critics are concerned with finding the man, Shakespeare, himself, in order to understand and know his plays.

Concluding the survey chapters, Chapter Two discusses the emotional and dialogic textual engagement of nineteenth-century women as they commune with their textual others, Shakespeare's heroines. As the woman character critics re-tell and reshape

Shakespeare’s plays, they connect to Shakespeare’s female characters and represent their consciousnesses for women readers. The narratives of Fanny Kemble, Anna Jameson, Mary Cowden Clarke, Helena Faucit and Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott provide for their readers not only dynamic spaces for Shakespeare’s female characters to act beyond the confines of Shakespeare’s play, but also provide tangible evidence of an emotional and dialogic relationship—a friendship—between the character critic and Shakespeare’s characters. Specifically considering Faucit’s and Elliott’s criticism of ‘Lady’ Rosalind and Lady Macbeth, I show that the emotional way in which they interact with both Ladies is just as significant as what they are saying about the Ladies themselves and their essential womanhood. Both critics give Lady Rosalind and Lady Macbeth the narrative space and freedom to behave, speak, and feel as the critics desire them to, and not necessarily to act in the manner Shakespeare prescribes in his plays.

In Chapter Three, a narratological analysis of the work of Faucit and Elliott and their narratives on Imogen demonstrates that the critics weave themselves in and out of Shakespeare's narrative and of Imogen herself and form a textual communion between narrator and character. As Faucit and Elliott make deliberate choices on the mimetic or diegetic staging of *Cymbeline*, they represent Imogen’s consciousness in direct, indirect, or free indirect thought and speech from carefully selected emotional moments of the play. By representing Imogen’s consciousness in ambiguous moments of narration (Is it Imogen who speaks? Is it Faucit or Elliott? Is it Faucit-Imogen and Elliott-Imogen?), Faucit and Elliott make plain within their narratives textual moments of communion with Imogen. These moments of communion in Faucit’s and Elliott’s narratives liberate Imogen from Shakespeare’s play and allow other women readers to share in her freedom.

Lastly, Chapter Four focuses on the writing of actresses Fanny Kemble and Ellen Terry and on the paradoxical 'double process'—the relationship of the actor to her character as she represents the consciousness of that character. Kemble's and Terry's writing and thoughts on the acting process elucidate the similarities among acting, bringing a character to life, and constructing a narrative. Kemble and Terry conceive moments of communion in their representation of a character on stage and see this psychological relationship as a welcoming one for a merged being to exist, Kemble-Juliet and Terry-Juliet. Because character critics have been representing the consciousness of Shakespeare's female characters all throughout the nineteenth century, their narratives tangibly record their psychological connection to character and anticipate the theories of acting and characterization of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century theater practitioners. As the character critics merge with Shakespeare's characters within their own narratives, a 'third being' is created—it is Faucit-Imogen who speaks and not just Faucit or Imogen. This third being is similar to what is theorized as being created in the mind of the actor as he or she enacts the character on stage. So too, do the character critics create this 'third being,' or a fused entity of narrator and character, within the pages of their own narratives. Thus, the similarity of the acting process and the narrative process helps our understanding of how the character is created when the author/actor represents a character. While the actor on stage is literally the fused being of actor and character, the narrator in the text has those same moments of communion with the character as she deliberately chooses how to represent the consciousness of that character.

Women character critics do not simply re-tell Shakespeare's plays, nor just record effusive comments, nor naively celebrate their own responses of his female characters. Women's character criticism shows us the critic's intimate interaction with Shakespeare's characters and makes tangible and concrete the complex psychological process of characterization in her own narrative. Character critics such as Faucit, Elliott, Jameson, Clarke, Kemble, and Terry quite easily and naturally "insert" themselves into Shakespeare's play as they describe it and create dramatic 'extra-textual' interactions with Shakespeare's characters within the pages of their narratives. Above all in their narratives there is a communion—a "mutual participation, possession of common qualities, association, union" (*OED*)—and a loving friendship established between character and author: authors and characters are vivified, not on stage, but in the pages of their narratives.

Chapter One

“The man behind the text”: Male Victorians and Shakespeare

O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art; but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers; like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little, nothing useless or inert—but that, the farther we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident!
Thomas De Quincey, “On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth” (1823)

To do honour to Shakspere, to make out the succession of his plays, and thereby the growth of his mind and art; to promote the intelligent study of him, and to print Texts illustrating his works and his times, this New Shakspere Society is founded.
Frederick J. Furnivall, “The Founder’s Prospectus Revised,” The New Shakspere Society (1874)

The Victorians loved and honored Shakespeare, were in no doubt of his genius, and knew in their hearts that, in the words of Thomas Carlyle, noble and gentle “King Shakspeare” shone in “crowned sovereignty” [1] over all of his subjects.[2] Both De Quincey

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[1] Thomas Carlyle, in his 1840 essay, “The Hero as Poet,” puts forth his idea of the greatness England could achieve under the rule of “King Shakespeare.” Carlyle writes that though England’s imperial hold on countries may come and go, Shakespeare remains for England a powerful force: “Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it: Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or a combination of Parliaments, can dethrone! This King Shakespeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, strongest of rallying-signs; indestructible; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of parish constable soever, Englishmen and women are, they will say to one another: ‘Yes, this Shakespeare is ours; we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him’” (86).

[2] In *Shakespeare and the Victorians*, Adrian Poole remarks that Carlyle’s “triumphant rhetoric is not entirely convincing”: “It is one thing to dream up a king of infinite space and time before whom to prostrate yourself; he might as well be called a god. But supposing the king were still human, what would it mean to *be* that man? Carlyle cannot imagine a real living Shakespeare” (194).

and Furnivall address Shakespeare's genius. De Quincey rhapsodizes on Shakespeare's omnipotent works, which are practically forces of Nature in of themselves, and Furnivall declares his and the New Shakspere Society's allegiance to 'Shakspere' in the Society's mission statement. What can also be gleaned from the two statements is not only the conviction that one will discover knowledge of Shakespeare by studying him, but also the two critical stances of male critics writing about Shakespeare—De Quincey's aesthetic, 'exclamatory' criticism[3] and Furnivall's scientific criticism. Throughout the Victorian era there were tensions between a Romantic description of Shakespeare's art and spirit and the scientific calculation of his language or versification; between proving his essential creativity and debating the authorship of his plays; and between the celebration of his power to fill a reader's mind with wonder and the inadequacy of the stage representation to ignite the same kind of imaginative effect in the spectator. Though bardolatry, aesthetic criticism, and scientific criticism remain throughout the nineteenth century, the nature of Shakespearean character criticism changes for male critics from the Romantic era to the late Victorian era. Romantic critics such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and William Hazlitt praise Shakespeare, his characters and his plays, but never emotionally interact with his characters to the degree of representing the characters' consciousnesses in narrative form. Later nineteenth-century critics such as Matthew Arnold, Frederick Furnivall, Edward Dowden incorporate a scientific and logical component to their criticism, but do not represent any character consciousness, for their mission is to understand Shakespeare's plays and thereby know Shakespeare, the

[3] In Aron Stavisky's *Shakespeare and the Victorians: Roots of Modern Criticism*, he explains "exclamatory criticism" as criticism which "instead of understanding a poet in his particularity, his finite infinity, drowns him beneath a flood of superlatives" (19).

man. Algernon Swinburne, in his *A Study of Shakespeare*, is the sole male critic of the nineteenth century whose criticism departs from his male contemporaries in his presentation of his favorite scenes from Shakespeare. While Swinburne's criticism contains only the briefest moments of representations of the consciousness of Shakespeare's characters, his objective remains to know and understand Shakespeare. A survey of male critics throughout the nineteenth century reveals this desire and overriding concern to know Shakespeare, 'the man behind the text.'

While women critics continue to write character criticism all throughout the nineteenth century, most male Shakespearean scholars, in the latter half of the century, shift their emphasis to the 'serious' study of Shakespeare, the man, and his works. Male critic are concerned with this 'serious' Shakespearean study and the desire to know the 'man behind the text,' Shakespeare himself. Women character critics register no anxiety about uncovering the 'man behind the text,' because they are confident that Shakespeare, as their friend, has bestowed to them wonderful, real, and living examples of women. As women character critics celebrate Shakespeare and venerate his female characters within the pages of their narratives, they emotionally and dialogically interact with those characters as they mimetically or diegetically (show or tell) stage moments of those characters' lives from Shakespeare's plays. Nineteenth-century male critics, though they may have sensitivity to the inner emotional lives of characters and to the overall dramatic effect of Shakespeare's plays, do not at all engage textually with Shakespeare's characters in a dialogic and emotive relationship within the pages of their criticism, and their lack of this kind of engagement with the characters fundamentally separates and distinguishes them from women character critics.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and William Hazlitt make up the trinity of the Romantic criticism of Shakespeare. Later nineteenth-century works consistently refer to these three, especially Coleridge. What can be said generally about the three, besides the fact that they each maintain that Shakespeare was the apotheosis of dramatists, is that they believe that they can study him and thereby know his genius, they make observations of the living nature of Shakespeare's characters, and they comment upon the difference between reading (with their imaginations and minds' eyes) Shakespeare's plays and seeing his plays represented on the stage.[4]

Shakespeare is, according to Coleridge in his *Essays and Lectures on Shakspeare* (1818), Nature's "chosen poet," who has been bestowed with a "genial understanding directing self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper than consciousness" (qtd. in Raysor 224). So, too, for Hazlitt, Shakespeare's text is the text of Nature. In his discussion of Hamlet in *Characters of Shakspeare's Plays* (1817), he writes of the "exact transcript" quality of the events that took place at the court of Denmark and its total effect on Shakespeare's audience:

> But [in Elsinore] we are more than spectators… We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatick writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature: but Shakspeare, together with his own comments, gives us the original text, that we may judge for ourselves. (117)

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[4] Janet Ruth Heller, in *Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, and the Reader of Drama*, observes the critics' trend to privilege Shakespeare's page over the stage. Heller explains their view: "Performances of good dramas, especially tragedies, demean the text because the words and ideas are lost in a profusion of spectacle that assaults the senses and deadens the mind. However, the act of reading plays allows the 'abstracting' the distance from sense perception, needed for the unhampered activity of the imagination. The Romantics view themselves as teachers and friends of the reading public who can help their contemporaries overcome their addiction to the five senses and teach them to think dynamically" (3-4).

These words also reveal with what close proximity Hazlitt views and describes Shakespeare's characters. In his *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818), Hazlitt regards Shakespeare's characters as "real beings of flesh and blood," who offer such verisimilitude of thought, action, and dialogue that "one might suppose that he [Shakespeare] had stood by at the time, and overheard what passed" (312).[5] Hazlitt knows that Shakespeare's skill is great. His power of characterization is so effortless; Shakespeare "at once becomes them, and speaks and acts for them" (*Characters* 108). Lamb, in his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* (1808), observes the same natural, 'flesh and blood' quality of Shakespeare's characters, but hints at their essential ideal quality, which may be ultimately unrealizable in our reality: "Shakespeare makes us believe, while we are among his lovely creations, that they are nothing but what we are familiar with, as in dreams new things seem old: we but awake, and sigh for the difference" (112). The natural and familiar quality of Shakespeare's characters, then, for Lamb may not necessarily be something for all to know or understand—and least of all—to represent on stage.

In his essay, "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare" (1812), Lamb argues that the characters of Shakespeare are "*so natural*" that they are "grounded deep in nature—so deep that the depth of them lies out of the reach of most of us" (26). Lamb discusses the

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[5] John Kinnaird, in his article, "Hazlitt and the 'Design' of Shakespearean Tragedy: A 'Character' Critic Revisited," tries to recuperate Hazlitt and his unfortunate 'Character' critic ways: "'Character' critics are not supposed to be interested in the 'design' of a play, and Hazlitt has been accused of indulging such fond habits of the breed as ignoring 'action' and 'context,' 'abstracting' characters from the play and fraternizing familiarly (making 'friends for life') with the dramatis personae" (22). Kinnaird argues that Hazlitt's psychological interest in Shakespeare's characters is part of his larger study of dramatic imagination: "The 'character' critic, at least as defined by current legend, is interested in emotion as inward state of mind, as the motivation of unique and separate individuals, but Hazlitt's interest is in 'passion' as the energy of human *conflict*—as the dynamism of 'circumstance,' a force generated by sympathies and antagonisms, by the motives of individuals as they exist *only* in combination with each other and in response to some extraordinary challenge to the generic resources of 'the human soul' (26).

differences between reading Shakespearean tragedy and viewing it upon the stage: in reading Shakespeare's tragedies, "the sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds" (30). When Lamb reads, his imagination and mind's eye can view the ideal world of Shakespeare and his characters aright;[6] however, in the theater, confronted with the temporal world and physical reality of the scenery and players, Lamb must account for the glaring differences between the two worlds.[7] The "reading of a tragedy," he writes,

> is a fine abstraction. It presents to the fancy just so much of external appearances as to make us feel that we are among flesh and blood, while by far the greater and better part of our imagination is employed upon the thoughts and internal machinery of the character. But in acting, scenery, dress, the most contemptible things, call upon us to judge of their naturalness. (33)

Lamb's statement provides a way in to the reader's mind as one mingles "among flesh and blood," Shakespeare's characters. Abstraction, fancy, and imagination are needed to plumb the depths of the "internal machinery" of the character (33). Lamb cannot interact with Shakespeare's great tragic characters[8] and gain access to their 'internal machinery'

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[6] Joan Coldwell, in "The Playgoer as Critic: Charles Lamb on Shakespeare's Characters," writes of Lamb's ideal way of interacting with Shakespeare's characters: "Shakespeare's characters, in the Romantic view, are products of the poet's imagination, not imitations of 'those cheap and everyday characters which surrounded him, as they surround us,' and therefore they are to be most nearly approached through the imagination of a reader. They are abstract, and to attempt to give them visible form is to bring down 'a fine vision to the standard of flesh and blood' (193).

[7] John I. Ades, in "Charles Lamb, Shakespeare, and Early Nineteenth-Century Theatre," points out that Lamb's sentiments about the difference between reading Shakespeare and seeing plays performed indicate not that he did not understand the primacy of Shakespeare's plays in performance: "Far from being remote from an awareness of the theater, Lamb's whole point of view is intimately connected with what Shakespeare turned out to be in Covent Garden and Drury Lane in early nineteenth-century London" (520).

[8] Roy Park, in "Lamb, Shakespeare, and the Stage," writes that Lamb's views of acting tragedies in the theater does not indicate Lamb's bias against the theater: "…[His] case against the art of act is aesthetic and

when watching a theatrical performance because the character no longer becomes *his* reading. Lamb is sensitive to and aware of the inward experience of reading, which may or may not correspond to a satisfying aesthetic theatrical experience.[9] Women character critics also understood the importance of the inward experience of reading; however, instead of pointing out the limitations of the stage, women character critics enacted their own reading experiences and presented female characters' 'internal machinery' in their narratives. This point of contact between the reader's thoughts and the 'internal machinery' of the character is one that the women character critics such as Anna Jameson, Mary Cowden Clarke, Fanny Kemble, Helen Faucit, Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott, and Ellen Terry embrace and celebrate in their works. In *Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, and the Reader of Drama*, Janet Ruth Heller observes the critical echoes of Lamb's "exploration of the unwritten contract between authors and readers" in twentieth-century reader-response critics and film critics: "[Lamb] contrasts the reader's imaginative freedom when reading drama to the more superficial and limited response of the spectator" (5). Lamb understands the connection between author and reader when using one's imagination to 'mingle' with characters and their 'internal machinery' in the reading experience. Similarly, the female character critics understood this intimate connection and chose to document their textual interaction with Shakespeare's female characters within their own writing. Yet while male critics, like Lamb, may find disruption between reading Shakespeare and seeing his plays, where he 'but awake[s],

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normative, dependent on his view of the nature of imagination and its relation to the senses, the relationship between poetry and painting, his view of the moral nature of man and the function of art. His argument does not hinge in any vital respect on his lack of relish for contemporary performances… A better theatrical tradition might have altered the tone of his essay on Shakespeare, but not its overall direction" (176-177).

[9] Robert Sawyer, in *Victorian Appropriations of Shakespeare*, admits that Lamb accurately points out this aesthetic difference between reading and viewing Shakespeare's plays as the conflict between a "private Shakespeare and public Shakespeare" (15).

and sigh[s] for the difference,' female critics instead staged their own versions of Shakespeare's characters in the pages of their own narratives. Though he has an awareness of a reader's psychological connection to a character's 'internal machinery,' Lamb does not enact any scene or character consciousness in his criticism.

Hazlitt, too, echoes Lamb's sentiments about the ideal poetry of Shakespeare transgressing into the realm of stark, inadequate scenic stage representation. In his discussion of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hazlitt laments over the conversion of this "delightful fiction" to a "dull pantomime":

> The *ideal* can have no place upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective: every thing there is in the foreground. That which was merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality. Where all is left to the imagination (as is the case with reading) every circumstance, near or remote, has an equal chance of being kept in mind, and tells according to the mixed impression of all that has been suggested. But the imagination cannot sufficiently qualify the actual impressions of the senses. (140)

The reader's imagination or "regions of fancy," in Hazlitt's words, then cannot occupy the same place as, be transferred, nor act as a something equivalent to the "boards of the theatre," or performance (140). Hazlitt's and Lamb's complaints about the conditions of performance not meeting the expectations or the standards of their imaginations are familiar.

Critics of Shakespeare in the early nineteenth century often discussed the discrepancy between the Shakespeare one encounters when in an armchair as one reads, a

“closet Shakespeare,”[10] and the Shakespeare one encounters in the theatre. The women character critics do indeed discuss the difference of interacting with Shakespeare by reading and by viewing his characters on the stage. Yet, as the texts of male critics point out the impossibility of their ideal characters being realized anywhere but their fertile and pliable imaginations, the female character critics let their imaginations stage Shakespeare’s plays and realize their ideal characters in their own texts.

That is not to say that the trinity of Romantic male critics is not engaged with Shakespeare’s text or his characters. Each does write about the reader’s personal identification with and investment in Shakespeare’s characters and their thoughts and feelings. Hazlitt admits in his discussion of Hamlet, “It is we who are Hamlet” (115), and Lamb insists, that when individuals read King Lear, that “we see not Lear, but we are Lear—we are his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms” (30). Yet, when male critics discuss female characters, they laud women as perfect examples of womanhood and divine creatures, or as Hazlitt writes, “pure abstractions of the affections” (26), and credit them with a somewhat negligible significance and individuality as characters with agency throughout the action of the play. In *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays*, Hazlitt’s brief discussion of Imogen prompts him to reflect upon that “peculiar characteristic” of all of Shakespeare’s heroines: they “seem to exist only in their attachment to others” (26). Hazlitt continues his adulation of “the prettiest little set of martyrs and confessors” by praising the genius of Shakespeare: “No one ever hit the true perfection of the female character, the sense of weakness leaning on the strength of its affections for support, so well as Shakespeare” (27). Shakespeare’s

[10] Joan Coldwell, “The Playgoer as Critic: Charles Lamb on Shakespeare’s Characters,” writes that a “common theme of Romantic criticism became the plea for a closet Shakespeare” (184).

female characters exemplified the ideal, and even the saintly and mythic, "womanly woman." Coleridge, in his lecture on *The Tempest*, explains that:

> in Shakespeare all the elements of womanhood are holy, and there is the sweet, yet dignified feeling of all that *continuates* society, as sense of ancestry and of sex, with a purity unassailable by sophistry, because it rests not in the analytic processes, but in that sane equipoise of the faculties, during which the feelings are representative of all past experience... Shakespeare saw that the want of prominence... was the blessed beauty of the woman's character, and knew that it arose not from any deficiency, but from the more exquisite harmony of all of the parts of the moral being... he has drawn it, indeed, in all its distinctive energies of faith, patience, constancy, fortitude—shown in all of them as following the heart, which gives its results by a nice tact and happy intuition. (133-134)

Shakespeare, then, draws both men and women with accuracy and ease, but creates blessed, harmonious, and beautiful sketches of women. Hazlitt writes, in his discussion on *Hamlet*, a stock phrase that is not only used frequently in Shakespearean character criticism, but also generally found in all Shakespearean criticism of the nineteenth century: "nobody but Shakspeare could have drawn [fill in the name of any character] in the way that he has done" (121). Virtually every nineteenth century Shakespearean critic discusses this idealization of poet, character, and play; Shakespeare's genius in his representation of real men and ideal women is never questioned. Romantic

Shakespearean critics embrace Shakespeare's genius and celebrate his characters, but ultimately represent and describe them differently than female character critics.

Romantic "empathetic" and "appropriative" criticism (Bate 8), especially the kind which illustrates the critics' personal investment in Shakespeare and his genius and their identification with his characters, led to a proliferation of character study. Certainly, the tradition of character study could be said to have started earlier than Hazlitt's own work in 1817. Shakespearean criticism of the late eighteenth century focusing on discussion of character included such authors as William Richardson's *A Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of some of Shakespeare's Remarkable Characters* (1774), Maurice Morgann's *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Falstaff* (1777), and even in, August Wilhelm von Schlegel's *A Course of Lectures of Dramatic Art and Literature* (1812). The focused character criticism of Hazlitt, though, began a certain critical tradition in England, marked by the adoration of Shakespeare, as the master English poet, and of his characters as intriguing examples of men and women, became popular. By 1886, Richard Green Moulton[11] acknowledges in his paper, "On Character Development in Shakspere as Illustrated by Macbeth and Henry V," that one of the "most popular sides of dramatic study is Character Interpretation: the process by which all the sayings and doings of a personage in the play, his relations with others, and the general bundle of impressions of which he is the centre, are all collected by the mind, as rays by a lens, and formed into the abstract idea—a Character" (563). Moulton's method of character interpretation is a "side" of dramatic study which positions the critic outside of the text in order to analyze

[11] British-American critic Richard Green Moulton (1849-1924) authored several works of literary criticism, including *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* (1885). Moulton advocated an inductive and "systematic approach" to criticism in the hopes of making literary study disciplined and "scientific" (Williamson 632).

the character and focus the critic's impressions into the abstract idea of "Character." Analysis and abstraction, instead of emotional appreciation and personal investment, will help a critic understand Shakespeare's characters, and this method of study is prevalent among the work of Victorian male character critics.

In their study of Shakespeare's female characters, male authors such as John Ruskin, and Stephen J. Meany focused on their "beauty and sweetness" and their "innate dignity of womanhood" (Meany 37). According to Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865) not only were female characters self-less and emotionally tender women, but also they were, "infallibly faithful and wise counselors—incorruptibly just and pure examples—strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save" (121). The pure and saintly nature of women and the "reality and the apotheosis of womanhood" were celebrated and discussed in works such as Meany's *The Women of Shakespeare* (1859) (5). In his introduction, Meany writes:

> In nothing, perhaps, does Shakespeare so deeply and divinely touch the heart of humanity as in the representation of woman. Next to the Bible, he is the best friend and benefactor of womankind that has yet appeared on our earth; for, next to the Bible, he has done most towards appreciating what woman is, and towards instructing her what she should be. The incomparable depth and delicacy and truthfulness with which he has exhibited the female character are worth more than all the lectures and essays on social morality the world has ever seen. (5)

Admittedly, the themes of Meany's statement (Shakespeare as friend and benefactor, moral guide and teacher) can certainly be found in all of the female character critics'

works. Grace Latham, in her 1885 paper delivered to The New Shakspere Society entitled, "The Dramatic Meaning of the Construction of Shakspere's Verse," describes a type of student who studies the works of Shakespeare, an ideal student who exemplifies practically all of the New Shakspere Society's tenets and practices: "one which honours him as our greatest literary light, and by patient research gathers together all kinds of archaeological details to explain obscure passages, counts each irregular line to decide on the wonderful characterization, the deep philosophy, and the exquisite poetry contained in them" (127). Yet most of the authors who center their criticism on Shakespeare's characters and who deal with his plays in a more exclamatory and effusive fashion, would hardly fit into Latham's Shakespearean student profile. For such exclamatory and sentimental criticism mused over such subjects as the personality or recreational interests of Shakespeare (as in the Union Club's 1887 "Shakespeare on Horseback") and, in L. C. Knights' words, dwelled on only Shakespeare's "characters, his heroines, his love of Nature or his 'philosophy'" (6). In his essay, "How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?", Knights bemoans the damage done to Shakespearean criticism by the critical interest and analysis of the characters as real people and the reader's friends: "It is responsible for all the irrelevant moral and realistic canons that have been applied to Shakespeare's plays, for the sentimentalizing of his heroes … and heroines" (16). Knights claims that the sentimental criticism ignored the dramatic structure of the play, its pattern of development, and Shakespeare's craft of poetry and his "words on the page" (6). Those critics who are not aware of these over-riding principles of drama and Shakespeare's poetry are inhibited from engendering, he adds, the "development of that full complex response that makes [one's] experience of a Shakespeare play so very much

more than an appreciation of ‘character’—that is, usually of somebody else’s ‘character’ (16).

Knights’ anxieties of appropriation and doubts about the relevance of the sentimental character criticism were in part prefigured in the Victorian critical tendency to clarify, understand, analyze, distill, and purify Shakespeare and his texts *scientifically* from the 1860’s and onward.[12] Scholarly editions of Shakespeare’s plays such as the *Cambridge Shakespeare* (1863) and the *Clarendon Shakespeare* (1868) were published, Shakespeare Societies such as J.P. Collier’s The Shakespeare Society (1840-53) and Frederick J Furnivall’s The New Shakspere Society (1873-94) were formed, and concordances, ‘Lives of Shakespeare’ books, and, of course, volumes of criticism appeared. Shakespeare was both a scholarly and a popular commodity in the literary marketplace and on stage—although the kind of criticism that ‘mattered’ or that was considered significant or important was beginning to be defined and the critical approaches of that criticism became codified and were questioned and contested.

How can we best know Shakespeare? Through scientific examination or aesthetic engagement with his plays? How can we know the true nature of his genius and his plays? By methodically mining his verse for linguistic clues, obsessively searching for an essential Shakespearean artistic genetic fingerprint or by charting the artistic life and growth of the artist according to his plays and their own dramatic quality?

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[12] Robert Sawyer, in *Victorian Appropriations of Shakespeare*, contends that the middle Victorian period (1850-1880) saw changes in English culture in the realm of politics, education, women’s rights, and society: “…society, individually and collectively, was redefining itself, and these three decades then prove to be pivotal ones, particularly in terms of gender, culture, subjectivity, and the family” (14). “Shakespeare” and “the multiple interpretations and uses” of Shakespeare also mirrors the changes in society at this time (14).

At the epicenter of these tumultuous questions was Furnivall's New Shakspere Society, which, "through Meetings, Papers, and Discussions" explored theme, characters, and nature of Shakespeare; tabulated and dissected the verse and language of Shakespeare; issued quarto and folio versions of his plays and of other Renaissance dramatists; and above all, debated the authorship and the exact chronology of 'Shakspere's' plays (Furnivall 7). The spelling of 'Shakspere' is significant for the Society; it is a deliberate attempt to distance its members from those who were still working with the 'old Shakespeare', and, the spelling encapsulates the Society's agenda to uncover the true, authentic Shakespeare, one unsullied by the sentimental vagaries of any other Shakespearean criticism which claims to be erudite and authoritative. In the Society's prospectus, Furnivall tells his fellow members that the unusual spelling of Shakespeare's name is really the most legitimate one:

> This spelling of our great Poet's name is taken from the only unquestionably genuine signatures of his that we possess, the three on his will, and the two on his Stratford conveyance and mortgage …. Though it has hitherto been too much to ask people to suppose that SHAKSPERE knew how to spell his own name, I hope the demand may not prove too great for the imagination of the Members of the New Society. (5)

Furnivall's prospectus also describes the Society's mission and wishes that all of its members proselytize the 'good news' of Shakspere and disseminate his works to others. He concludes the prospectus with these thoughts:

> I hope our *New Shakspere Society* will last as long as SHAKSPERE is studied. I hope also that every member of the society will do his best to

> form Shakspere Reading-parties, to read the Plays chronologically, and discuss each after its reading, in every set of people, Club or Institute, that he belongs to: there are few better ways of spending three hours of a winter evening indoors, or a summer afternoon on the grass. (8)

Although Algernon Swinburne would have probably agreed with Furnivall's opinion of what to do with three odd hours of one's free-time, he took issue with just about every thing else to do with Furnivall and the Society's methodology of its Shakespearean criticism. In *A Study of Shakespeare* (1880), he not only discusses the plays by their "spiritual" order, and not by chronology, but also tries to define Shakespeare's genius and art through a feeling of and sense of his poetry and language. The beauty of the poetry can only be "traced by ear and not by finger," which is to understand the sense and sound of verse by ear, instead of counting out beats of the verse with thumb and finger (16). It is interesting that, even though Swinburne rails against the Society, he is caught within the critical apparatus of the day: if Swinburne doesn't argue the chronology of the plays, he does group them in three artistic eras, which agree with, respond to, and challenge the existing dating methods; if he doesn't advocate the mathematical austerity of 'plucking out the heart of every play and Shakespeare's mystery,' he does use verse to illuminate the particular melodic or lyrical style of Shakespeare (6). Swinburne confidently writes of the venerable and great 'old Shakespeare,' not of the 'New Shakspere,' "a *novus homo* with whom I have no acquaintance, and with whom I can most sincerely assert that I desire to have none" (256). The New Shakspere, Swinburne also notices, is appropriated by all sorts of critics with various agendas, or, "those who select him as a social sponsor for themselves and

their literary catechumens" (256). In his own work of Shakespearean criticism, Swinburne himself appropriates "Shakespeare" for his own purposes as he records his own preferences of characters and plays.

Swinburne's *A Study of Shakespeare* discusses his favorite plays and characters; however, at isolated moments, Swinburne's emotive style approximates the character criticism of women critics as he imagines the emotion and feeling of a character in a scene from a play. Out of all the male critics' of the nineteenth century, Swinburne's Shakespearean criticism displays very brief attempts at bringing to life certain scenes of the play by narration and representation of a character's consciousness. Critics of Swinburne have noticed his penchant for effusive language as he describes Shakespeare's plays and characters, yet have not fully addressed Swinburne's emotional moments of identification with Shakespeare's characters. One critic, Robert Sawyer, in *Victorian Appropriations of Shakespeare,* does notice that Swinburne is communicating so much more in *A Study of Shakespeare* than just simple commentary on the plays. Sawyer argues that Swinburne's criticism expresses Swinburne's "private complexity … in a public forum," and that Swinburne "appropriates Shakespeare … to further his own radical agenda, which promoted liberal politics, agnostic religion, and Hellenistic aestheticism" (33). Further, Sawyer intriguingly suggests that Swinburne writes in an "alternative-voiced discourse," where readers may choose from among two voices in his works: "a traditional voice and a subversive one" (34-35). Using Swinburne's "personal and powerful" Shakespearean criticism and his thoughts and words concerning the characters of Hamlet, Falstaff, and Lear, Sawyer shows that Swinburne not only aligned himself with those characters, but also promoted and "re-imagined" politics, religion, and

masculinity (63). According to Sawyer, Swinburne "maps his radical agenda onto a traditional subject, that of Shakespearean studies. In this manner, Swinburne's alternative-voiced discourse works as a subversive agent in overthrowing elitist ideas about Shakespeare and politics, Shakespeare and religion, and, perhaps most notably, Shakespeare and sexuality" (64). Sawyer's argument of the existence of Swinburne's "alternative-voiced discourse" I accept and, in fact, I observe as I read Swinburne's exaggerated style and displays of emotion. However, I do not see any instances of narrative moments of connection and identification with the four characters Sawyer claims that Swinburne aligns himself with. While Sawyer is correct in noticing that Swinburne's comments on those four characters reveal as much about the critic as they do about the characters, I have found only minute moments of Swinburne's textual identification with two characters: Cleopatra and Othello.

Swinburne's emotive language is similar to the sentimental and effusive language of the female character critics of the day. Also similar to the female character critics, Swinburne uses the cultural authority of "Shakespeare" to give a space to his own message about himself, where, as one reviewer noted about *A Study of Shakespeare*, "we learn as much about Swinburne as we do about Shakespeare" (qtd. in Sawyer 59). Although similarities exist between the female character critics and Swinburne, in terms of expressing emotion and using "Shakespeare" as the vehicle of one's own message, there is a fundamental difference in how Swinburne and the female character critics choose to represent the characters.

Like the Romantic critics (such as Coleridge and Lamb, whose "everlasting praise, honour and glory" he commemorates in his final pages), Swinburne is prone to

effusive language and description (225). Swinburne writes of how he admires certain plays and characters over others, but his descriptions of them never move beyond the level of re-telling the basic elements of the plot of the play or the fundamental personality traits of the characters. He can describe how much he loves or favors a character, but will never enact that character and stage that character's life within the pages of his criticism. The closest Swinburne approaches to a dramatic representation of a character's consciousness is in his discussion of the great tragic figure Othello. Immediately preceding this momentary flash of insight into Othello's mind, Swinburne discusses stage representations that have "mutilated" Shakespeare's play by re-arranging speeches in a manner that was "out of keeping with character and tune and time" (184). Swinburne admits that if such a mutilation were to happen to a great speech of Othello's (III.iii.453-462), there might be an entirely different reading of the character as a result:

> In other lips indeed than Othello's, at the crowning minute of culminant agony, the rush of imaginative reminiscence which brings back upon his eyes and ears the lightening foam and tideless thunder of the Pontic sea might seem a thing less natural than sublime. But Othello has the passion of a poet closed in as it were and shut up behind the passion of a hero. (184).

In the briefest of moments, in one literal "minute" in his text, Swinburne describes the emotional "agony" of Othello as his memory of Desdemona "brings back upon his eyes and ears" the bombast of the "Pontic sea" (184). At this emotional moment in the play, Othello desires to follow a course of "black vengeance" (for the 'adultery' his wife has committed with Cassio) and tells Iago, "Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,/

Shall nev'r look back, nev'r ebb to humble love,/ Till that a capable and wide revenge/ Swallow them up" (III.iii.446, III.iii.457-460). Swinburne writes fleetingly of this emotional "rush" that happens to Othello, but Othello remains silent under Swinburne's narrative control.

Swinburne's tiny burst of description of Othello's emotion comes the closest out of any male character critic to approximating the way the female character critics describe Shakespeare's characters. The female character critics, however, do not just present one emotional descriptive sentence, but they completely re-stage and re-create Shakespeare's play and represent fully the consciousness of their chosen character. To Swinburne's credit, he does select an emotional moment of his beloved character and for a brief "crowning minute," see Othello's 'internal machinery,' in Lamb's phrase, of his mind. After this miniscule effusive moment, Swinburne writes of 'seeing' characters as they exist in one's own mind:

> When once we likewise have seen Othello's visage in his mind, we see too how much more of greatness is in this mind than in another hero's. For such an one, even a boy may well think how thankfully and joyfully he would lay down his life. Other friends we have of Shakespeare's giving whom we love deeply and well, if hardly with such love as could weep for him all the tears of the body and all the blood of the heart: but there is none we love like Othello. (184-185)

Swinburne, like Desdemona (in her lines where she sees Othello's visage, I.iii.252), can see Othello for who he truly is, a heroic man, and can express his greatness. The sympathetic connection to Othello is such that Swinburne believes that "even a boy"

would "lay down his life" for this hero (184). Swinburne's emotions for Othello are of the "body" and the "heart," as evidenced in his "tears" and "blood" (185). Immediately following his sentimental outburst, Swinburne shifts his focus to a discussion of *Macbeth*: "I must part from [Othello's] presence again for a season, and return to my topic in the text of *Macbeth*" (185). Swinburne acknowledges his connection to Shakespeare's characters, and we observe the "presence" of them throughout his writing. Often in Swinburne's prose, we see how *he sees* characters (how he sees their visages in their minds) when he expresses admiration, love or disapprobation, but we never truly see those characters speaking for themselves nor those characters infused with action and words and dramatized in the pages of his writing.

Swinburne rhapsodizes most, however, about Shakespeare's women, including Cordelia and Imogen. The truly special and holy nature of one of his favorite characters, Cordelia, prompts Swinburne to whisper with reverence,

> The place [she and sacred characters like her] have in our lives and thoughts is not one for talk; the niche set apart for them to inhabit in our secret hearts is not penetrable by the lights and noises of common day. There are chapels in the cathedral of man's highest art as in that of his inmost life, not made to be set open to the eyes and feet of the world. Love and death and memory keep charge for us in silence of some beloved names. It is the crowning glory of genius, the final miracle and transcendent gift of poetry, that it can add to the number of these, and engrave on the very heart of our remembrance fresh names and memories of its own creations. (75)

The reality of the character, the genius of the crowned Poet, and the emotional, sacred reverence of the critic's imagination are never questioned here. Even though Cordelia 'inhabits' Swinburne's 'secret heart,' however, she is so protected, 'beloved' and sacred, she is kept still, cloistered away, and silent. Swinburne may adore the beauty and transcendence of Shakespeare's female characters, but he views them from the outside of Shakespeare's text and keeps them cloistered inside. He may venerate the female characters for their beauty, virtue, and spirit, but he does not interact with them to let the characters speak for themselves.

Swinburne concludes his study with what he claims could not have brought his little book to a "happier end"—a discussion of "divine" Imogen, the "very crown and flower of all her father's [Shakespeare's] daughters" (226-227). In a scant two pages, Swinburne mentions the names Posthumus, Iachimo, Cymbeline, and his 'discussion' amounts to a few 'honeyed' words about Imogen, "the immortal godhead of womanhood" (227). Swinburne closes his book, "upon the name of the woman best beloved in all the world of song and all the tide of time; upon the name of Shakespeare's Imogen." (227). Imogen literally is the last word of his work. One wonders how to interpret his final thought on his page. Is it an everlasting memorial to the aesthetic perfection of Shakespeare's genius and creation? Is Swinburne winking at those critics who expect a mighty summation of This Is What It All Means at the conclusion of his book on Shakespeare? Can Imogen or what she stands for artistically in Shakespeare's growth and maturity then really be the answer to This Is What It All Means? If this is true, it would most likely infuriate and frustrate the chronological logicians, authorship conspiracy theorists, and finger mathematicians of the New Shakspere Society, a result

that would have pleased Swinburne immensely and would have fueled his on-going literary feud with Furnivall.

Even though Victorian male critics like Swinburne may use effusive language to celebrate Shakespeare's characters, male critics are still concerned with understanding and knowing 'the man behind the text,' the genius poet, Shakespeare. Shakespeare's Olympian power is enshrined and described in Matthew Arnold's 1844 sonnet, "Shakespeare," from his poetry collection, *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* (1849):

> Others abide our question. Thou art free.
> We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still,
> Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
> That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
> Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
> Making the Heaven of Heavens his dwelling-place,
> Spares but the cloudy border of his base
> To the foil'd searching of mortality:
> And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
> Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
> Didst walk on earth unguess'd at. Better so!
> All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
> All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,
> Find their sole voice in that victorious brow. (50)

Shakespeare, god-like, sits in lofty majesty in his high, grand, and ethereal 'dwelling-places,' but is not so out of our reach that He cannot imbue mortal men's "pains," "weakness," and "griefs" in His "victorious brow." If Shakespeare provides his readers with a display of lofty genius, how is the critic to approach him? In his "Preface to Poems" (1853), Arnold suggest that Shakespeare is one of those "excellent models" for an English writer to "reproduce… something of [his] excellence, by penetrating himself with [his] works and by catching [his] spirit" (1403). Yet, because Arnold's conception of great artistic achievement is the work of the ancients, Shakespeare has their "elementary soundness," but falls below them in "their purity of method" and is a "less safe model" for the writer (1406). Because the modern time is full of "bewildering confusion," "a multitude of voices," and "caprice," the ancients are the only ones to adequately provide Arnold with "sure guidance" and the "solid footing" in art (1403, 1407). In their tragedies, the Greek poets considered the "grandiose effect of the whole," where action, character, and situation can be united for the spectator in a total dramatic experience:

> The terrible old mythic story on which the drama was founded stood, before he entered the theater, traced in its bare outlines upon the spectator's mind; it stood in his memory, as a group of statuary, faintly seen, at the end of a long and dark vista: then came the poet, embodying outlines, developing situations, not a word wasted, not a sentiment capriciously thrown in: stroke upon stroke, the drama proceeded: the light deepened upon the group; more and more it revealed itself to the riveted

> gaze of the spectator: until at last, when the final words were spoken, it stood before him in broad sunlight, a model of immortal beauty. (1401)

The Greek poets were able to unite the whole dramatic experience—subject, story, action, and language—by filling up the outlines of "terrible old mythic" stories (1401). Shakespeare, whose name should never be "mentioned without reverence," has all the "general characteristics of great poets," but what "leads him astray" is his "gift of expression" (1403-1405):

> For we must never forget that Shakespeare is the great poet he is from his skill in discerning and firmly conceiving an excellent action, from his power of intensely feeling a situation, of intimately associating himself with a character; not from his gift of expression, which rather even leads him astray, degenerating sometimes into a fondness for curiosity of expression, into an irritability of fancy, which seems to make it impossible for him to say a thing plainly, even when the press of the action demands the very direct language, or its level character the very simplest. (1405)

Shakespeare's "overcuriousness of expression" does not conform to the restraint and simplicity of the ancients, and therefore "falls below them" in that aspect of his dramatic works (1405). Even though Shakespeare's genius as a poet is never questioned, Arnold dislikes Shakespeare's capricious language,[13] and it is that which ultimately makes him a less suitable model for a young writer to emulate.

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[13] Adrian Poole, in *Shakespeare and the Victorians*, writes that "the mature Arnold judged [Shakespeare] as a dangerous" model for writers because of Shakespeare's curious, capricious way of seeing life "erratically and in fragments (210-211). Poole identifies other words that are "dangerous" for Arnold: caprice, curious, curiosity, and multitudinous (211). Poole paraphrases what Arnold would say about Shakespeare: "If only the world would stop for us to grasp it; if only poets would stop colluding with its confusion. Shakespeare

Reminiscent of Arnold's paradoxical admiration and criticism of Shakespeare, Edward Dowden, in *Shakspere: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (1874), integrates scientific criticism with the aesthetic appreciation of Shakespeare: he approaches the plays with respect to their 'established' chronological order, his purpose is to quantify Shakespeare's creative genius, and he describes character and situation with feeling and emotion. We find the Arnoldian admiration for the great poet and man in Dowden's description of Shakespeare's ability to know and understand the universe. Because it is "highly important to fix our attention on what is positive, practice and finite in Shakespeare's art, as well as in Shakespeare's life," Dowden must try to describe the great poet's finite infiniteness (33-34):

> He does not merely endeavour to compass and comprehend the knowable; he broods with a passionate intensity over that which cannot be known. And again, he not only studies self-control; he could depict, and we cannot doubt that he knew by personal experience absolute abandonment and self-surrender. The infinite of meditation, the infinite of passion, both these lay within the range of Shakspere's experience and Shakspere's art. (34)

Dowden yokes Shakespeare's experience (his mind) and his art often; he views Shakespeare as having "lived and moved in two worlds—one limited, practical, and positive; the other a world opening into two infinites, an infinites of thought, and an infinite of passion" (35). A reader will have to muster strength and fortitude to understand this great poet as he enters Shakespeare's "universe" (41):

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sets such a bad example. Look how difficult his language can be, 'so artificial, so curiously tortured,' such 'over-curiousness of expression.' Sophocles is not like that" (211).

> In the meantime to enter with strong and undisturbed comprehension into Shakspere, let us endeavour to hold ourselves strenuously at the Shaksperian standpoint, and view the universe from thence. We shall afterwards go our way, as seems best; bearing with us Shakspere's gift. And Shakspere has no better gift to bestow than the strength and courage to pursue our own path, through pain or through joy, with vigour and resolution. (40-41)

Dowden views our entry into the Shakespearean universe as one that we must be strong enough to "hold ourselves strenuously at the Shaksperian standpoint, and view the universe from thence" (40-41). Strength, courage, and clear and focused "undisturbed comprehension" will reward the reader with a view from Shakespeare's "universe" (30). Like many male critics, Dowden characterizes Shakespeare's genius as so lofty that even the thought of truly knowing and apprehending him is filled with great difficulty, toil, and exertion. In contrast female character critics, most notably Mary Cowden Clarke did not at all strain to connect with or to approach Shakespeare and his characters in the face of his genius; he was an almighty poet, but he was also their friend.[14] Even though Dowden admits that we can study and approach Shakespeare by understanding the growth of his work, environment, and artistic self, ultimately, Shakespeare's readers are closed to his world. Even though Dowden hopes that some answers to the questions of the true nature of Shakespeare's power may be "gathered out of [his] forgoing chapters," he believes that

[14] See especially Mary Cowden Clarke's article "Shakespeare as The Girl's Friend" (1887): "To the young girl, emerging from childhood and taking her first step into the more active and self-dependent career of woman-life, Shakespeare's vital precepts and models render him essentially a helping friend" (562). To the female character critic, Shakespeare was the poet of womankind who gave her female characters who were real women and real friends.

"the answers remain insufficient" (429). Thus Dowden quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson to help characterize the level of knowledge readers may attain when reading Shakespeare:

> 'A good reader can in a sort nestle into Plato's brain, and think from thence; but not into Shakespeare's. We are still out of doors.'[15] *We are still out of doors*; and for the present let us cheerfully remain in the large, good space. Let us not attenuate Shakespeare to a theory. He is careful that we shall not thus lose our true reward…. true revelation. (429-30)

For Dowden, there is a part of us that never gets into the 'brain' of Shakespeare—he will be revealed to us if we bring to him our "courage, energy and strength" in our work—but not his true genius bestowed to him by "Nature" (430).

"The man behind the text"

The title of my chapter is taken from Theodore W. Hunt's[16] 1883 *Shakespeariana* article, "The Method of Shakespearian Study," in which he advocates a "second order of study" of the plays for "ambitious young men": "The study of the spirit as well as the letter of the writing; the study of Shakespeare himself, the man behind the text; the interpretation of the inner form as well as the outer; so that from this subjective view the textual itself becomes more instinct with meaning, and we see the purity of thought and language, of poet and poem" (50). Hunt echoes Dowden's remarks about how difficult it is to get to the poet through his poem, to know Shakespeare's 'mind and art,' and he acknowledges how "we still have to wait for a thoroughly satisfactory discussion of his

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[15] This quotation is from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, "Shakespeare; or the Poet," which was one of seven essays in his 1850 work entitled, *Representative Men*.

[16] Theodore Whitefield Hunt (1844-1930) was an author and professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at Princeton University ("University").

plays" using his own proposed method of combining critical study with poetical inspiration (51). According to Hunt, nothing less than a messianic Bard will assuage our pain in not knowing what Shakespeare's plays really mean: "perchance it is appointed to us to wait for the 'fullness of time,' till a second Shakespeare arise whose mission shall be to interpret to us the first" (51). The 'man behind the text' is important to the male critics of the nineteenth century. Male critics either know him, want to know him, or are waiting to know him.

The female character critics, as typified by Anna Jameson, Mary Cowden Clarke, Fanny Kemble, Helen Faucit, Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott, and Ellen Terry, did not have this desire to penetrate the identity of the 'man behind the text.' Instead, the female critics celebrated Shakespeare's ability to portray women faithfully and sought the 'woman' in Shakespeare. For example, in Jameson's chapter "On The Love of Shakespeare," in *The Romance of Biography* (1837), she wonders about the *woman* behind the 'man behind the text.' Even though Jameson laments that we will never know the identity of the woman who had Shakespeare in thrall and under such "full and irresistible influence of female fascination," Jameson imagines that shadowy woman: "She stands beside him a veiled and nameless phantom. Neither dare we call in Fancy to penetrate that veil; for who would presume to trace even the faintest outline of such a being as Shakespeare could have loved?" ("Romance" 244). Further, Jameson exults that there is "no one woman," because Shakespeare, who has given women such female characters, belongs to all women: "I rejoice that the name of no one woman is popularly identified with that of Shakespeare. He belongs to us all!—the creator of Desdemona, and Juliet, and Ophelia, and Imogen, and Viola, and Constance, and Cordelia, and

Rosalind, and Portia, was not the poet of one woman, but the POET OF WOMANKIND" (248). Women critics regarded Shakespeare as a great poet, teacher, and benevolent friend who has given them wonderful role models and true-to-life portraits of women. Women critics did not search for the 'man behind the text' because they knew that Shakespeare was their poet, the 'poet of womankind.'

Victorian women found a space of negotiation in the seemingly all-male Shakespearean scholarly critical tradition. Mary Cowden Clarke and Helen Furness each complied Shakespearean concordances and assisted their husbands in editions of plays.[17] Women had membership in the New Shakspere Society (in 1875, out of four hundred and fifty members, sixty were women, and five were among the 'Vice Presidents') where they contributed and delivered papers. Jane Lee, E. H. Hickey, Teena Rochfort-Smith, Lady Charlemont, Grace Latham, Isabel Marshall, J. H. Tucker, Miss Phipson, Lucy Toumlin Smith, and even Madeleine Elliott are just some of the women who are scattered throughout the Society's *Transactions*. Women contributed to the profusion of writings about Shakespeare, yet, their scholastic value remained a matter of debate. A *New York Tribune* article in 1883 unabashedly stated, "Briefly, very few women, even among the most intelligent, like and understand Shakespeare" (qtd. in Thom 98). This statement propelled Wm. Taylor Thom to retort:

> The brilliant and solid work of women in recent years on Shakespeare—both as writers and as interpreters of his gracious heroines—gives a

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[17] In fact, Mary Cowden Clarke penned a few lines for Helen Furness in memoriam, 1883, in the poem, "Helen Kate Furness": "My sister in concordant deed! Although/ I never saw thee, grasped thy hand, or knew/ Thee in the flesh, methinks I knew thee well/ In spirit, knew thy worth and excellence!" (71). Through their shared labors for their husbands and for Shakespeare, Cowden Clarke insists upon an intimacy with her 'sister' that is beyond the 'flesh'.

> curious inappropriateness to the *Tribune*'s censure, and constitutes of itself a very patent answer thereto. Mrs. Cowden Clarke, Mrs. Furness, Lady Helena Faucit Martin, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jameson, and many others, can be most worthily cited and compared with the best workers among the men. (99)

Were women critics, then neophyte Shakespearean scholars or simple, industrious workers? While the academic significance of the women critics' texts can be debated, it is the manner in which they engaged with Shakespeare and his female characters that is singular: their interaction with the characters can neither be classified as strictly scientific, aesthetic, nor exclamatory because they connected to the characters in an emotional, sympathetic, and understanding way. Mary Cowden Clarke, in her article "Shakespeare as The Girl's Friend" (1887) contends that Shakespeare's characters are true women who teach their sisters and who provide them with "warning, guidance, kindliest monition, and wisest counsel" (562). According to Clarke, Shakespeare, as "great Poet-teacher," has done so much for women and continues to do so much for them because he is their friend:

> Our great Poet-teacher, who has given us 126 clearly drawn and thoroughly individual characters, who has depicted women with full appreciation of their highest qualities, yet of their defects and foibles, who has championed them with potential might by his chivalrous maintenance of their innate purity and devotion, while showing the points wherein their natural moral strength may be warped and weakened by circumstance, who has vindicated their truest rights and celebrated their best virtues—

> himself possessing keener insight than any other man-writer into womanly nature—Shakespeare may well be esteemed a valuable friend to womankind. (562)

Because Shakespeare provides a woman with such faithful portraits of herself, with all of her strengths and weaknesses and her beauty and ugliness, Cowden Clarke insists, a woman should interact with his characters on a personal and intimate level and "endeavour to mould and form [her own disposition] into the best perfection of which it is capable" (562). This personal and intimate way of interacting with Shakespeare's characters— which combines an examination of the character alongside a personal and emotional encounter with that character—distinguishes the women character critics of the nineteenth century. Male critics may celebrate and venerate Shakespeare and his plays, rhapsodize about and idealize his characters, and even try to quantify and qualify 'Shakespeare.' The women critics write with the mutual understanding that Cowden Clarke describes, and this fundamental premise infuses all their works: that Shakespeare's female characters are true women with whom we may find ourselves and see ourselves in community with one another. This sympathetic, emotional, and communal desire to see Shakespeare's characters as other women and as friends and then to share that vision with their readers irrevocably separates the female character critics from their male counterparts in the nineteenth century.

The 'Out of doors' of Male Critics

Shakspeare is as much out of the category of eminent authors, as he is out of the crowd. He is inconceivably wise; the others, conceivably. A good reader can, in a sort, nestle into Plato's brain, and think from thence; but not into Shakspeare's. We are still out of doors.
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Shakespeare; or the Poet," (1850)

We may behold all this [all aspects of the female heart] so clearly reflected in [Shakespeare's] page, we there see ourselves so faithfully imaged, that few more fitly than women can study his writing. We have been told that 'the properest study of mankind is Man.'[18] So the properest study of woman may be herself, if she will note her capabilities, to improve them; her powers, to enlarge them; her faculties, to cultivate them; her sentiments, to refine them; her passions, to regulate them; her ideas, to elevate them; her sense and judgment, to strengthen them; her virtues, to cherish them; her defects, to amend them; her errors, to avoid them; her vices, to check, eradicate, and destroy them.
Mary Cowden Clarke, "Shakespeare-Studies of Woman," (1850)

Ralph Waldo Emerson's remark about being distanced or "out of doors" and Mary Cowden Clarke's assertion that Shakespeare reflects all aspects of the female heart in his "page" both acknowledge Shakespeare's genius and uncanny ability to create characters who are truly and fully human. The difference between Emerson and Cowden Clarke is essentially the difference between the approaches and methodologies of the male and female character critics. Emerson cannot fathom a way into Shakespeare's mind; he cannot 'nestle into his brain' and "think from thence" (24). Nineteenth-century male critics of Shakespeare want to find 'the man behind the text,' and use aesthetic and scientific criticism to know Shakespeare and his characters. No matter what critical stance the male critic uses, he is 'out of doors' in his approach to the play and interaction with the characters. A male critic may celebrate and venerate Shakespeare and his characters, but as a rule he does not emotionally merge and identify with characters as he writes about them. Only Swinburne aligns himself with characters and represents two notable characters' consciousness in brief, fleeting moments in his criticism. Whether in

[18] These words rephrase Alexander Pope's second line of "Epistle II," in his "Essay on Man" (1732). The couplet from which Cowden Clarke derives her quotation is, "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,/ The proper study of mankind is Man."

emotive bursts of description or in detailed examinations of language or plot, the male critic of the nineteenth century desires to know Shakespeare and struggles to truly grasp him and his genius. In contrast, Cowden Clarke and other women character critics, not only find a way into Shakespeare's brain, but also they 'think from thence.' Cowden Clarke finds herself immersed in Shakespeare's 'brain' when she studies his characters so fully and when she sees those real women and all their strengths and faults alongside her *own*. Further, Cowden Clarke affirms that women are best suited to the work of investigating and knowing Shakespeare's female characters: "we there see ourselves so faithfully imaged, that few more fitly than women can study his writing" (25). The personal connection that women make with their 'faithful' images in Shakespeare's characters is the subject of my next chapter. The women character critics' personal connection and attachment to Shakespeare's characters is so ardent that a reader is struck with and convinced of the intimacy, immediacy, and reality of their convictions. A reader never feels 'out of doors' when reading a woman's character criticism because she invites the reader in to experience her interaction with Lady Macbeth, Rosalind, or Imogen.

Being 'out of doors,' or not being able to 'nestle in the brain' of Coleridge, Hazlitt or Swinburne as they write of Shakespeare's characters, describes my own interaction with nineteenth-century male critics. I am permitted to understand their opinions concerning Shakespeare, his mind, and his characters and plays, but I find myself 'out of doors' with the male critics' own personal and individual interactions with Shakespeare. The female Victorian critics and their writings about their dear friends, Shakespeare's characters, make me, one reader, feel welcome in their texts. Ultimately, when I read

male Victorian critics, I am soberly and resolutely shut out of the male reader's interaction with the characters, and I can only "awake and sigh, for the difference"—along with Charles Lamb.

Chapter Two

"You are now out of your text": Textual Engagement of Women Character Critics

To the young girl, emerging from childhood and taking her first step into the more active and self-dependent career of woman-life, Shakespeare's vital precepts and models render him essentially a helping friend. Through his feminine portraits she may see, as in a faithful glass, vivid pictures of what she has to evitate, or what she has to imitate, in order to become a worthy and admirable woman. Her sex is set before her, limned with utmost fidelity, painted in genuinest colours, for her to study and copy from or vary from. She can take her own disposition in hand, as it were, and endeavour to mould and form it into the best perfection of which it is capable, by carefully observing the women drawn by Shakespeare.
Mary Cowden Clarke, "Shakespeare as the Girl's Friend," (1887)

In the nineteenth century, women character critics interacted with the texts of Shakespeare by reading, writing, and performing. They also celebrated Shakespeare as their "great Poet-teacher" by identifying and communing with his female characters, and by sharing that communion with their audiences (Clarke "Girl's" 562). Character critics such as Anna Brownell Jameson, Mary Cowden Clarke, Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott, Fanny Kemble, and Helena Faucit Martin, pioneered and developed the genre of character criticism; they wrote detailed character analyses and created an appreciation for and an awareness of Shakespeare's female characters (Thompson 2). These women's readings of the characters and their own responses to them point to their experience of interacting with the text of Shakespeare: Do they resist or participate in the construction of ideal womanhood as they praise and critique the characters? Or, do they find other ways of emotionally engaging with Shakespeare's text and his characters? For the nineteenth-century actress, such as Faucit and Kemble, whose visceral experience with

Shakespeare's text differs from that of her sister-writers, her writings produce a dynamic interpretation of the characters of Shakespeare. The actress's position of having physically embodied the characters on stage affords her some personal insight to the playing of them and provides her with the character's 'actual' on-stage experiences. So too in their readings and written narratives of Shakespeare's female characters, the nineteenth-century female character critics often approximate the intimacy of the actresses' visceral textual experience.[1] For the actresses and for the non-actresses alike, their writings produce characters who freely move about in and even leap outside of the Shakespearean text (Auerbach "Woman" 211). Through the retelling or, in some cases, re-scripting, of Shakespeare's plays, the critics give the female characters 'extra-textual'[2] lives: emotional and historical pasts, altered presents, and invented futures.

Where then, indeed, are nineteenth-century women located in and about the texts of Shakespeare? Are they as Olivia, in I.v of *Twelfth Night*, pronounces a cheeky Viola, "out" of their texts from which they read? To answer these questions I explore the texts of women readers, writers, and performers and their negotiation of the texts of Shakespeare; and, to what degree, these authors "carry on an extended mediation between assertive female characters and the patriarchal oppressions in the plays, between the male author and his female readers, between male critics and themselves, between

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[1] A visceral textual experience would be that of the actor/narrator embodying the character on the page and bringing it to life. Actors in the Victorian age were mostly concerned about the analysis of the passions and the emotions and the subordination of these passions to a "general whole" (Lewes 95). In George Lewes' *On Actors and the Art of Acting*, he writes that the actor must be "trembling with emotion, yet with a mind in vigilant supremacy controlling expression, directing every intonation, look, and gesture" (95). And, when an actor "feels a vivid sympathy with the passion... he is representing, he personates, i.e. speaks through the persona or character; and for the moment is what he represents" (168). For an overview of how acting styles developed in the nineteenth century, see Taylor, George. *Players and Performances in the Victorian Theatre*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989.

[2] Carol Carlisle, in her biography of Helen Faucit, *Fire and Ice on the Victorian Stage*, utilizes the term "extra-dramatic" to describe these kinds of imagined scenes which the critic bestows to her character (247).

Shakespeare's texts and their own desires, and between Shakespeare's culture and their own" (Neely 249). This "extended mediation" of the character critics reveals their own personal attachment to the characters and moments of textual communion with them. The first half of the chapter explores key aspects of the character criticism that Clarke, Kemble, Jameson, Faucit, and Elliott pioneered, including their emotional connection to and sympathy with characters, their recuperation and celebration of the womanhood of the characters, and above all, their representation of the consciousnesses of the characters. The second half of the chapter begins with a discussion on how women critics such as Jameson and Kemble viewed characters such as "Lady" Rosalind and Lady Macbeth, and then focuses in on Elliott and her works, *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls* (1885) and *Lady Macbeth: A Study* (1884), and on Helena Faucit Martin and her Shakespearean character study, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* (1885). Faucit's and Elliott's readings of and engagement with 'Lady' Rosalind from *As You Like It* and Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth* are displayed directly in their textual accounts as they bring those characters to life. In Faucit's and Elliott's constructed narratives of the lives of 'Lady' Rosalind and Lady Macbeth illustrate their textual moments of connection with these two seemingly dissimilar characters. 'Lady' Rosalind, so dubbed by Helena Faucit herself,[3] and Lady Macbeth are two of Shakespeare's women who might not, at first, appear to affect perfect womanly behavior or manner in terms of the Victorian

[3] At the end of her letter on Rosalind as she discusses the Epilogue in *As You Like It*, Faucit writes that the lines were "fit enough for the mouth of a boy-actor of women's parts in Shakespeare's time, but it is altogether out of tone with the Lady Rosalind" (288). In a later edition (1904), 'Lady Rosalind' was changed to "Princess Rosalind" (285).

ideal.[4] Rosalind, cross-dressed as the youth Ganymede, pursues the object of her affection, Orlando in the forest of Arden; and Lady Macbeth, complicit in a brutal regicide, asserts her strong will and influence over her husband. The ways in which Faucit and Elliott find the 'woman' inside each character, demonstrate their motives and justify their actions, retell Shakespeare's own stories and vivify their characters all help to locate the authors' position within the text of Shakespeare. Within their own narratives, Faucit and Elliott find themselves in an intimate textual relationship with the characters whose consciousness they represent, record these moments of communion with Shakespeare's characters, present an alternative narrative space in which to view the characters, and above all, share these moments of intimate connection with other women readers.

The 'Woman' in Shakespeare

Women readers and spectators of Shakespeare in the nineteenth century wrote criticism of the plays and characters, compiled editions and adaptations, published theatre reviews, and contributed to journals devoted to the study and appreciation of Shakespeare (Thompson 2, 4). While women critics nestled within the study and admiration of female characters, male critics were preoccupied with scientifically establishing the chronology of the plays and writing the "exclamatory criticism" that glorifies Shakespeare and exults

[4] The virtuous and saintly Victorian ideal woman could be imaged as a domestic angel (as in Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House"), an idolized Queen (as in John Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens"), or the Virgin Mary. As Nina Auerbach writes, "a normal, and thus good woman, was an angel, submerging herself in family, existing only as daughter, wife, and mother" ("Woman" 4). That the authors under examination here include 'non-ideal' women and yet defend their essential womanly character, makes the monolithic 'ideal woman' problematic. The authors' insistence of the womanliness of characters of strength, will, action, ambition, manipulation, and trickery (to mention a few) may expand and rewrite this category, as well as perhaps reflect changing attitudes toward women and their roles in society throughout the nineteenth century.

his poetic omnipotence (Stavisky 19).[5] In contrast, women readers could identify, or aspire to identify, with the demure, perfect, and transcendent "womanliness" of Shakespeare's female characters, who serve as culturally and socially appropriate models of self-sacrifice, fortitude and instinctive knowledge, sympathy and patience, devotion, and effervescent beauty (Carlisle "Critics" 69).

Words of veneration and idolization for, and even, identification with Shakespeare punctuate the writings of the women character critics, too.[6] In 1887, Mary Cowden Clarke wrote that even though Shakespeare was "the most manly thinker and most virile writer that ever put pen to paper," he had "likewise something essentially feminine in his nature, which enabled him to discern and sympathize with the innermost core of woman's heart" ("Girl's" 562). Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott, in *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls*, echoes Clarke's sentiments about the innate femininity of Shakespeare: "How he attained to such familiarity with the feminine nature it is impossible to say. It was not an acquirement, it was an instinct" (ii). Further, because Shakespeare presents such paragons of virtue and womanliness to his women readers, it is only meet that his readers bear tribute to him. In her introduction to *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, Helena Faucit hopes that her writings may not only help her readers cherish

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[5] For instance, Thomas Carlyle, from his *Lectures on Heroes*, writes of the sovereignty of an English Shakespeare, "Here ...is an English king, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combinations of Parliaments, can dethrone! This king, Shakespeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty over us all, as the noblest, more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever?" This extract from Carlyle's third lecture, was presented as an essay entitled, "Worth of Shakespeare to the English Nation," in Edward Dowden's *Shakespeare Scenes and Characters* (1876).

[6] Female character critics' affinity for identification with and study of the nature of Shakespeare's heroines and of Shakespeare himself has been associated with, according to Marianne Novy, three conceptualizations of the poet himself: one of the outsider, the protean artist of characterization, and the actor (3). Women could relate to the marginal social position and the 'feminine' sensitivity of this male poet who was relatively uneducated, was active in a somewhat morally questionable profession, and was the creator of such beautiful, feminine characters.

the true beauty of Shakespeare's characters, but also assist them in realizing what privileged readers they actually are. The "best reward" that Faucit could wish for herself as an author would be that:

> my sister-women should give me, in return, the happiness of thinking that I have helped them ... to appreciate more deeply, and to love with a love akin to my own, these sweet and noble representatives of our sex, and have led them to acknowledge with myself the infinite debt we owe the poet who could portray ... under most varied forms, all that gives a woman her brightest charm, her most beneficent influence. (viii, ix)

To nineteenth-century women character critics, Shakespeare, who, in Elliott's words, "fathers" women of such "nobility of character, singleness of purpose, and purity of ideal," is a paternal authority, divine creator, and moral teacher (ii). In Shakespeare, then, women readers may place their trust and find virtuous models of femininity. To these models they also may ascribe their own thoughts of all that is "womanly." In the preface to their jointly edited *The Works of William Shakespeare*, Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke stress not only the moral and intellectual benefit for children to read Shakespeare, but also that the result of the reading is different for boys and girls: "A poor lad, possessing no other book, might, on this single one make himself a gentleman and a scholar. A poor girl, studying no other volume, might become a lady in heart and soul" (i). A boy may improve his mind by actively using his Shakespearean knowledge and wisdom in a future profession, while a girl may find in Shakespeare 'how-to-be-a-lady' lessons on moral refinement and feminine conduct. For the young woman reader then, moral instruction and proper behavior are to be found in the pages of Shakespeare;

similar to a book of moral conduct and proper behavior, Shakespeare's text assumes the authority of a biblical tome, and his female characters become a "walking compendia of transcendent feminine capacities" (Lootens 79). Lastly, the appreciation for Shakespeare and his teachings are not merely apprehended at childhood—it is a life long endeavor and pleasure, especially for women. Mary Cowden Clarke, in her article, "Shakespeare as the Girl's Friend" (1887), writes enthusiastically to her young female readers on the beatitudes of reading Shakespeare:

> Happy she who at eight or nine years old has a copy of 'Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare' given to her, opening a vista of even then understandable interest and enjoyment! Happy she who at twelve or thirteen has Shakespeare's works themselves read to her by her mother, with loving selection of fittest plays and passages! Happy they who in maturer years have the good taste and good sense to read aright the pages of Shakespeare, and gather thence wholesomest lessons and choicest delights! (564)

When reading Shakespeare, women may not only find moral guidance and delight, but also companionship with other women readers, and comfort in the immortal presence of the Bard himself.[7]

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[7] Kate Flint, in *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914*, explores the types of books women were instructed to read and the ways in which nineteenth-century women were prescribed to read those books, and Shakespeare is certainly among the authors. In her discussion of Sarah Stickney Ellis' opinion about women reading passages from Shakespeare aloud to their families versus women reading Shakespeare alone, Flint observes that Ellis dislikes women reading alone because private reading is a "self-centered activity" (102). Private reading, then, can be seen as a "means of claiming personal space for oneself" (102). Women's character criticism throughout the nineteenth century certainly provided women with this kind of personal space to experience the lives of Shakespeare's female characters.

While for nineteenth-century women readers' construction of a Shakespeare as a benevolent, paternal authorial presence may have been comforting, appropriate, and even culturally sanctioned, for feminist critics today this Shakespeare is problematic. The way we read and interpret texts is not only influenced by gender, but is also shaped by other social and cultural influences.[8] When we read, suggests Annette Kolodny, "we are calling attention to interpretive strategies that are learned, historically determined, and thereby necessarily gender-inflected" (452). Acknowledging that reading texts inevitably involves a subject and object and that the literary canon is androcentric, 20th-century feminist critics propose that the reading experience for women and men is different: men are encouraged to equate their maleness with the universal, and women misidentify themselves with that which is universal (male) (Schweickcart 616-618). Women read the androcentric text, identify with that which is male, and verify their position as 'other.' Judith Fetterley, for example, argues that a woman reader is "immasculated" by the androcentric text: "As readers and teachers and scholars, women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one of whose central principles is misogyny" (qtd. in Schweickart 618). Women's participation, then, with the androcentric text is not only marked by an identification with the structures and ideologies of her oppression, but also restricted by a false image of self-identity. Patrocinio Schweickart further explains that androcentric literature "does not allow the woman to seek refuge in her difference. Instead, it draws

[8] Textual critics contend that readers make their own meanings from texts, which are produced in a particular place and time and are under the influence of current cultural and ideological practices, the "consciousness industries of the moment" (McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections*) or under the influence of other readers, the "interpretive community" (Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*).

her into a process that uses her against herself. It solicits her complicity in the elevation of male difference into universality and, accordingly, the denigration of female difference into otherness without reciprocity" (618). Ultimately, women must become what Fetterley calls "resisting readers" who assume control of the reading experience, read against the androcentric text, and expose what the text includes and excludes in an attempt to understand the structure of the text (Schweickart 618, 624, 625). What makes nineteenth-century women character critics' writing so compelling is that they became so much more than just 'resisting' readers. Their textual interaction with Shakespeare's text was not one replete with struggle and resistance, but with control and creation. Women character critics may have read Shakespeare's androcentric text, but sought only the 'woman' in it as they interacted with his characters. Women character critics created their own texts, configured their own narratives of Shakespeare's plays, and represented the consciousness of the characters in an intimate and emotional way for the express purpose of providing a 'new script' for women to read about themselves.

A Script of Their Own

If the literary canon is replete with androcentric texts, what signs are there of resistance in the writings of nineteenth-century female character critics? Because of female character critics' insistence on their self-identification with Shakespeare's female characters and with Shakespeare himself as they re-create the lives of his characters in their own narratives, the female character critics bypass immasculation and misidentification of their selves. Marianne Novy suggests that female writers have constructed three images of Shakespeare who all provide a different kind of way of identifying with him—as the outsider, the artist of "protean flexibility," and the actor (5).

Novy contends that it was a "survival strategy" for the women who constructed these different identifications of Shakespeare whose "metaphorical gender, at least, was somehow not only masculine" (5). Instead of focusing on how women misidentify themselves in their negotiation of Shakespeare's text, Carol Thomas Neely sees his text as "one in which the woman reader can find, or out of which she can construct, the most varied and shifting and unexpectedly new selves" (247). Neely articulates three critical stances which women critics have adopted in working within his text and in finding spaces of self-hood and authorial agency: the compensatory, the justificatory, and the transformational (242). The critic who subscribes to the compensatory approach expresses appreciation for the beauty of Shakespeare's language, identifies with his strong, assertive female characters (and their friendships), and "works with him" in order to appropriate his characters so that the essential nature of "womanly virtues" can be interrogated (243). The justificatory approach, characterized by a "balance of sympathy and judgement," advocates viewing Shakespeare as a "vehicle whereby the oppressiveness of patriarchal structures and the constrictions suffered by women are exposed and, sometimes, corrected through revision" (244). The final approach women critics apply to Shakespeare, the transformational, entails confrontation, the analysis and critique of patriarchy, and the revision and transformation of Shakespeare's scripts into 'scripts of their own' (244). Neely's three critical positions are all somewhat recuperative in nature; they offer constructive ways in which to view women responding to and navigating the sea of patriarchal and androcentric male texts.

These critical positions can be useful to categorize, explain, or even justify the female character critics' analyses of Shakespeare's female characters; however, Neely's

critical stances do not entirely explain the emotional or personal way in which the female character critics engage with the characters themselves. It is true that most of the critics' writings would seem to fit neatly under the description of Neely's compensatory approach: they never deny that Shakespeare is the immortal Poet-Master, who has created truly ideal female characters. According to all of the female critics in this study, they acknowledge that there is something essentially womanly about each of his characters; Mary Cowden Clarke informs her readers, "From the lady of the highest rank, to the humblest among women ... we all may read in his respective delineations our feminine resemblance … all [female characters] have one feature in common—they are preeminently womanly in all they do and say" ("Studies" 25). Even if a character should behave in an unwomanly way, it is not Shakespeare who has failed in his portrayal of womanhood. It is his female readers who must acknowledge the faults of their own sex and learn to better themselves through the example of Shakespeare's female characters. Again, Mary Cowden Clarke writes:

> Shakespeare shows women—as Nature creates them—compounded of force and feebleness, of excellence and blemish, of virtue and frailty, of "good and ill together." His heroines are the perfect types of womanhood—but they are far from perfect themselves. They are human beings, consequently imperfect; they are fallible, and not perfection; they are mortal women, not faultless angels. But we love them all the more; we rather regard them as dear friends, by whose help and example we may hope to model ourselves. ("Studies" 25)

Clarke's words elucidate four important motifs that are iterated throughout most of the character critics' writing: the authority of Shakespeare and his poetic prowess; his conception of the true character of women (in all her good and bad qualities); women's desire to identify and to sympathize with the emotions and the situations of Shakespeare's female characters; and the belief in the reality of the characters as 'real' women, or, 'friends,' with whom all women readers of Shakespeare may reach some level of intimacy.[9] In their writings and character portraits, the character critics interact with and maintain a dialogue with the female characters, their own readers, and, even if tacitly, with Shakespeare himself.

The emotional investment in the lives of Shakespeare's female characters which permeates their writing informs the character critics' own textual engagement with Shakespeare. The critics unabashedly participate in the construction of the apotheoses of Shakespeare's female characters and record interpretations of them that are congruent with the construct of ideal womanhood. However, the way in which the critics' narratives are constructed and the way they choose to represent the consciousness of the characters are what allow Shakespeare's female characters agency and space to be configured differently in their own texts. These different configurations of characters are not necessarily found in the character critics' hermeneutic, written analyses and conclusions, but rather, it is explored on the emotional and personal level of engagement

[9] Jill Ehnenn, in "'An attractive dramatic exhibition'?: Female friendship, Shakespeare's women, and female performativity in nineteenth Century Britain," writes that "although the Shakespearean heroine is legitimized by the rhetoric used to define a nineteenth-century woman as angelic and passionless, the actress-critics' insistence on her complexity simultaneously problematizes the category. Discursive efforts to justify the heroine's performance within gender norms ironically call attention to the very illusions they attempt to conceal; essential femininity appears stable and normative only through performances of critical writing and conventional social action" (Ehnenn).

with the characters themselves within their own texts.[10] Thus, new lines of inquiry are drawn: how have the character critics read the text of Shakespeare, how have they interacted with Shakespeare's characters, and how have they communicated their sentiments to their own readers? In *Feminism and the Politics of Reading*, Lynne Pearce suggests a model of reading not based on hermeneutic interpretation, but proposes one which accounts for the affective and emotional valence in the reading process and which has the reader "implicated" in the text itself (15).[11] By viewing the reading process as a discourse of romance (as configured by Barthes) between the reader/lover and a 'textual other,' Pearce maintains that a dialogic relationship forms and that textual other (or the text itself) becomes "if only temporarily and as a matter of illusion—the reader's primary interlocutor" (248). The 'textual other,' one with whom the reader identifies and acknowledges an affective relationship, may assume the form of a character, an interpretive community, an author-function, or even the "act of interpretation" itself (17). Since the critics intimate a sympathetic knowledge of and kinship with the characters about which they write, it is very plausible that they could view Shakespeare's women as their 'textual others'—others, 'friends,' who are brought to life, made to reflect images of some part of themselves[12], and shared with other women readers.[13]

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[10] In "Victorian Portias: Shakespeare's Borderline Heroine," Julie Hankey, in her discussion of Anna Jameson's character criticism, sees her "passionate engagement" as one that "constituted a challenge to the social world in which Jameson herself lived" (430).

[11] Pearce explains that an 'implicated reading' of a text is "predicated not on the assumption that the reader is 'involved' in the text in terms of a simple reflex of 'recognition,' but rather that s/he (inter)actively engages with it in a fully dialogic exchange" (248). The authors do engage and identify with the characters in Shakespeare's text as their textual 'others,' and, as they connect to and commune with those characters, they approach this full dialogic exchange with the same intensity and abandonment of self that Pearce describes.

[12] In "Victorian Portias: Shakespeare's Borderline Heroine," with her discussion of Anna Jameson's criticism, Julie Hankey names the female character critic's "private sense of identification with the character" as a "feeling almost of consanguinity" (434). Consanguinity is an apt term to describe this

Shakespeare's Mirror: The Real and The Ideal

Mary Cowden Clarke, in her first article in a series for *The Ladies' Companion* entitled, "Shakspeare-Studies of Woman" (1850), describes the text of Shakespeare as a "mental looking-glass" in which "we women may contemplate ourselves" and "we... see ourselves so faithfully imaged" (25). Clarke's Shakespearean looking-glass quickly mutates into a full-length "Psyche," or cheval-glass, into which a woman may gaze and perform a meticulous inspection of herself:

> ... in the tall glass ... a lady gains a full-length view of herself, so that no point of person or dress may be disregarded, so, in Shakespeare's mirror, a woman may obtain a psychological reflex of her nature that may aid her to its spotless array, and to the utmost perfection in adornment of which it is susceptible. (25)

According to Clarke, as women begin to visualize themselves in Shakespeare's mirror, women will not only "take delight in seeing their own beauties and virtues therein reflected," but also will "lead them to imitation, emulation," and "compet[ition]" with "his most charming specimens of... kindred womanhood" (25). The ideal woman reflected in Shakespeare's mirror, at once perfect and fallible, though lovable in spite of her imperfection, might force a woman reader to identify with an unrealistic and false depiction of womanhood; the reader would be forever doomed to an "agonized cosmic primping" in the emulation of an impossible ideal (Lootens 92). The woman in

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emotional relationship. I see this intimate kinship as more intense: one of a communion between critic and character.

[13] In "Victorian Portias: Shakespeare's Borderline Heroine," Julie Hankey sees the female character critics "operating on two levels: on the surface they reproduced the dominant ideology, while at the same time couching their challenge to is as a further celebration of that ideology" (447).

Shakespeare's mirror is an unattainable ideal, but that ideal, imaged by the poet-master Shakespeare, is never questioned explicitly; however, it can be argued that the woman in Shakespeare's mirror represents more than an abstract ideal. The woman in the mirror which Clarke and other female character critics desire to present to their readers is one who is 'real' and intimately connected to them. The authors "resurrect" and "free" Shakespeare's characters from his text as "the animating spirits of their own works" (Auerbach "Woman" 209). In their works, the character critics provide the characters with a "contingency and individuality," and an extra-textual space in which the female characters may move freely about in an invented past, a modified or a conditional present, or an undetermined future (Auerbach "Woman" 212). These different configurations of the lives of the female characters reflect an alternative image to view in Shakespeare's mirror as the character critics' own readers engage with their texts. The images of the female characters as presented by the character critics may encourage a female gaze, then, not directed at culturally constructed Shakespearean ideal woman, but at themselves.[14] This introspection begins as the critics re-script and retell Shakespeare's

[14] Whereas the male gaze has traditionally objectified the woman, as Janice Raymond points out, the female gaze has been "historically trained on men," "shaping" the male ego (239). If, as Virginia Woolf writes, "Women have served... as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of a man at twice its natural size," what happens when the female gaze is directed at herself or at 'other' women (qtd. in Raymond 240)? Laura Mulvey, in her writing of the male gaze and the scopophilic world of the cinema, uses the looking at and identification of the on-screen object in terms of Lacan's mirror; in which we, first, construct our ego and then, identify that image as the 'other,' which is "the birth of the long love affair/despair between image and self image" (18). Mulvey continues that the "woman stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker of meaning" (15). The relationship of the 'textual other' of the women authors is still a self-other configuration. However, I am in favor of using Pearce's model of a dialogic relationship, which has its origins in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin: "no utterance (written/spoken) is made in isolation, but is always dependent upon the anticipated response of another (actual or implicit) addressee" (29). It is not so much how the female character critics compare themselves with the images reflected in Shakespeare's mirror (analyzing their characters), but how the critics engage with them

stories, as they position themselves and their readers about the pages of Shakespeare's text, and as they interact and commune with their mirror image, their Shakespearean 'textual other.'

'Lady' Rosalind and Lady Macbeth

The character critics' level of engagement with textual others and with Shakespeare takes shape as they ask their readers to relate to characters, or to understand, sympathize, and empathize with them. Jameson and Kemble make emotional points of contact with their characters, but always remain mindful of their dual purpose in their study: to understand and to explicate. In her introduction to *Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, and Historical* (1832), Jameson has a woman named Alda, and a man, Medon, participate in a dialogue; Alma articulates the value of studying Shakespeare's characters, "real human beings," in the perfect setting—in a volume such as Jameson's:

> But we can do with them what we cannot do with real people: we can unfold the whole character before us, stripped of all pretensions of self-love, all disguises of manner. We can take leisure to examine, to analyse, to correct our own impressions, to watch the rise and progress of various passions—we can hate, love, approve, condemn, without offense to others, without pain to ourselves. (I: 22-23)

The characters in Jameson's text are at once specimens of humanity to be analyzed and real people who may ignite the reader's passions in an imagined and vicarious textual

(inscribing themselves into the text and communing with those characters) and share them with their readers.

relationship.[15] Jameson's character sketches themselves reflect this tension between the level of personal attachment to the characters and the study of the play, including its exposition and explication of character as evidenced by the character's speeches. For Jameson, Rosalind is a "compound of essences," which may be impossible to analyze, except, perhaps, in an effusively lyrical prose comparison to all things natural: "to the silvery summer clouds ...? ... to the May-morning, flush with opening blossoms and roseate dews ...? ... to some wild and beautiful melody ...? … to a mountain streamlet, now smooth as a mirror in which the skies may glass themselves ...? ... or rather to the very sunshine itself?" (I:146).[16] And, although Lady Macbeth, according to Jameson, is a "terrible impersonation of evil passions and mighty powers," she is also an admirable woman of strong will and intellect: she is "never so far removed from our own nature as to be cast beyond the pale of our sympathies; for the woman herself remains a woman to the last—still linked with her sex and with her humanity" (II: 313). In her analysis of Lady Macbeth, Jameson offers her readers only fleeting personal contributions to the character. One such emotional narrative encounter is an imagined vision of Lady Macbeth crowning herself, in which she "luxuriates in her dream of power":

> She reaches at the golden diadem, which is to sear her brain; she perils life and soul for its attainment, with an enthusiasm as perfect, a faith as settled, as that of the martyr, who sees the stake, heaven and its crowns of glory

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[15] For an investigation of how Jameson invites her readers to engage with and "re-create" themselves through her presentation of Shakespeare's female characters, see Christy Desmet's article, "'Intercepting the Dew-Drop': Female Readers and Readings in Anna Jameson's Shakespearean Criticism," *Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare: On the Responses of Dickinson, Woolf, Rich, H. D. and Others*. Ed. Marianne Novy. Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

[16] In "Victorian Portias: Shakespeare's Borderline Heroine," with her discussion of Jameson's Portia, Julie Hankey describes Jameson's kind of effusive language as the "language of beauty" which 'softens' and 'disguises' the "subterfuge" at work in her writing (440, 434).

> opening upon him. ‘Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!’ This is surely the very rapture of ambition! (II: 323)

Kemble shares with her readers the true ambitious nature of Lady Macbeth by narrating this moment of rapture. For Kemble, Macbeth is the “grandest of all poetical lessons, the most powerful of all purely fictitious moralities, the most solemn of all lay sermons,” and the characters she describes within the play are little more than subjects for serious reflection, careful study, and moral reproach (“Notes” 22). Kemble maintains that Lady Macbeth is a ‘masculine’ woman (“she possessed the qualities which generally characterise men, and not women—energy, decision, daring, unscrupulousness”), who, in her “godless” state, pursues the “objects of ambition” with the help of her evil wickedness (“Notes” 57, 56). The only instance in which Kemble interacts with her Lady Macbeth is one that illustrates Lady Macbeth’s supreme ambition and wickedness. Kemble, oddly enough, imagines the same emotional crowning scene, which Jameson also brings to life for her readers:

> Lady Macbeth was of far too powerful an organisation to be liable to the frenzy of mingled emotions by which her wretched husband is assailed; and when, in the very first hour of her miserable exaltation... when the crown is placed upon her brow, and she feels that the ‘golden round’ is lined with red-hot iron, she accepts the truth with one glance of steady recognition: ‘Like some bold seer in a trance/ Beholding all her own mischance,/ Mute—with a glassy countenance.’ (“Notes” 59-60)

At the end of her description of the imagined crowning scene, Kemble evokes another Lady in a state of emotional turbulence, Tennyson’s “The Lady of Shalott.” Kemble

curiously yokes the image of the Lady of Shalott at a morbidly contemplative moment with that of Lady Macbeth in her actively ambitious, "miserable exaltation." Although Kemble may create this scene for her readers with a personal and intimate knowledge of Lady Macbeth, her analysis remains an explication of "Shakespeare's delineation of the evil nature of [Lady Macbeth's and Macbeth's] souls—the evil strength of the one, and the evil weakness of the other" ("Notes" 70). Jameson's and Kemble's analyses of Shakespeare's female characters are effusive in their praise of Shakespeare, believe that the characters are exemplars of 'womanly women,' and claim to have intimate knowledge of these wonderful 'friends,' as they 'fill in the gaps' of the emotional lives of the characters they represent.

Character critics such as Clarke, Elliott and Faucit not only create imagined scenes for their characters, but also dramatically re-script Shakespeare's play and give their textual others extra-textual lives in their own narratives. In *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* (1851), Clarke devises personal histories[17] for each of the female characters, where her readers may delight in seeing young Rosalind and Celia[18] gadding

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[17] Julie Hankey, in "Victorian Portias: Shakespeare's Borderline Heroine," comments on Cowden Clarke's work: "Although constructed biography of fictional characters can often be dismissed as laughable today—especially Mary Cowden Clarke's extraordinarily fanciful and inventive realizations of it—her tales were very popular in their day" (441). I find Cowden Clarke's 'constructed biographies' of Shakespeare's characters very similar to the female character critic's extra-textual construction of Shakespeare's characters within her narrative. Akin to today's fan fiction, Cowden Clarke's constructed biographies serve to 'fill in the gaps' in Shakespeare's fictional world and explain the situation, motivation, and history behind the psychologically complex heroine of Shakespeare's play. Cowden Clarke's 'back-stories' of the characters function in much the same way as the character critics' extra-textual lives of female characters. Character critics insert themselves into their own narratives about Shakespeare's plays, connect emotionally with the character, and 'fill in the gaps' of the character's life.

[18] Jill Ehnenn, in "'An attractive dramatic exhibition'?: Female friendship, Shakespeare's women, and female performativity in nineteenth Century Britain," writes of how the female character critics represent the friendship between Celia and Rosalind and how these representations reflect the tensions in the nineteenth century discourse on femininity. Their writings, Ehnenn maintains, "refer not only to problems with the idea of womanhood, or in reconciling ideals with literary characters, but to the problem of the

about the forests of France and devising clever schemes to help their female friends who find themselves in peril. Further, her readers may witness also, in just one powerfully compact scene, a microcosm of the life of Lady Macbeth: her mother's first signs of interest in her infant (her "non-boy"), her first murder committed as a newborn, and the death of her mother (103). Each of the narratives are constructed as "tales," in which Clarke may present Shakespeare's women in their "'sallet days,' when they are 'green in judgement,'—immature,—but the opening buds of the future 'bright consummate flowers' which [Shakespeare] has given to us in immortal bloom" (iv). With her imaginative extra-textual lives of Shakespeare's female characters, Clarke encourages her readers to reposition themselves when reading Shakespeare's text: her reader's consideration of the character's pasts (one of either identification or connection with the characters in some way), will inform her experience with Shakespeare's own text. So too Elliott and Faucit in their writings challenge their readers to interact with Shakespeare's characters on a personal level and even to view them in two distinct narrative frameworks: that of a Garden and a Gallery.

"Lady" Rosalind in the Garden and the Gallery

Elliott's Garden in *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls* and Faucit's Gallery in *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* serve as performance 'spaces' for the presentation and enactment of Shakespeare's female characters. Elliott locates Shakespeare's female characters in Shakespeare's very own garden; the "girls" are his "flowers" that she has "loved to cull" for her readers (ii). Not only are these girls pretty flowers, but also the

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rupture between ideology and the flesh-and-blood women whose close relationships with one another were insistently obvious" (Ehnenn).

progeny of the Bard himself: "His offspring are real flesh and blood, creatures we can believe in, whom we can take to our hearts, whose influence ministers to us in a thousand ways, and for whom we feel a genuine friendship" (ii). Elliott assures us, then, that the daughters of Shakespeare are real women we might identify with, learn from, and consider our personal friends. Faucit places Shakespeare's female characters, her "fair warriors," in a "gallery" (viii). Her analyses are exhibited in a series of character portraits, framed in an epistolary style, and written upon the earnest request and "instigation" of a dying friend (vii).[19] Similar to Elliott's insistence of the reality of the characters, Faucit assures us that in reading about Shakespeare's "exquisite creations" we will encounter 'real' women, because she writes, "I have had the great advantage of throwing my own nature into theirs, of becoming moved by their emotions: I have, as it were, thought their thoughts and spoken their words straight from my own living heart and mind" (viii).[20] Thus, through the living 'presence' of the author and the visceral and corporeal experience of the actress, Faucit brings to life the characterizations of Shakespeare's female characters for her "sister-women" (viii).[21]

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[19] The first two letters were written in the summer of 1880 at the request of Faucit's friend, author Geraldine Jewsbury (1812-1880), who died of cancer on September 23, 1880 (Wilkes). Faucit finished the Ophelia and Portia letters two weeks before her dear friend died (Carlisle "Fire" 245).
[20] Julie Hankey, in "Helen Faucit and Shakespeare: Womanly Theater," believes that this statement of Faucit's ownership of the characters' words and thoughts "comes close to claiming creative kinship with Shakespeare" and that Faucit "offers herself as an alternative origin, the source of a second birth for Shakespeare's heroines" (56).
[21] Faucit writes her character criticism with female readers in mind, and one cannot help to think that she affected her female readers in the same way as her female spectators. In her biography of Faucit, Carol Carlisle characterizes the female spectators' admiration of her performances as essentially different than that of the male spectators' responses: Faucit's "acting made women feel *themselves* to be more attractive, more worthwhile, more exalted in nature" (79). An interesting morsel of the power of Faucit's character criticism is that many young women consulted her work in preparing their own essays for *The Girl's Own Paper*'s "Prize Competition" in 1888. Mary Cowden Clarke officiated the essay contest, entitled, "My Favourite Heroine from Shakespeare," and reports in the March 10th issue: "Lady Martin's book has been laid heavily under contribution, and on this subject we must take some of the girls to task for plagiarism. Two or three essays on Portia were far too much like Lady Martin's charming sketch of this character; her

Both Faucit and Elliott take pains to guarantee the life and vitality of the characters for their readers in their narrative spaces of the Gallery and Garden. Faucit's character narratives are living portraits, composed and painted by Faucit as she has reconstructed them in her mind, from her memories, and with her own past stage experience of creating her "living picture[s] of womanhood as divined by Shakespeare" (xi). Elliott's Garden is a space for Shakespeare's female characters, or girl-flowers, to grow and bloom. Elliott begins her introduction to her "garden of delights" by "beckoning" us into "the garden whose blossoms I have tried to arrange, and whose beauties I have endeavoured to display as they have manifested themselves to the writer" (i). Elliott and Faucit further celebrate the scenic, visual nature of the Garden and Gallery by insisting upon the actual existence of the characters, not only in their introductions, but also throughout their discussions on the female characters. Elliott often reminds us that Rosalind is "natural," has "girlish vivacity," and is capable of assuming "all of the prerogatives of her sex ... She is fretful, impatient, unreasonable, illogical, and contradictious" (79, 92, 84). As Faucit writes of Rosalind, she attempts to "clothe her with life" much as she did for her stage representation of Rosalind; in this way, Faucit "gives her heart" to Rosalind, the "high-hearted woman" who possesses "strong, tender, delicate" charms (286, 239). This narrative of a real and vital woman existing within a

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quotations, too, have been used in an exactly similar setting" (381). Cowden Clarke not only took some girls to task about plagiarism, but also pointed out how some girls "made their essays [especially on Portia] a vehicle for expressing their ideas on a social problem… the vexed question of 'women's rights'" (380). Cowden Clarke did not approve of the young women's appropriation of the character of Portia and their use of her as proof that Shakespeare's "pet creation" was a champion of women's rights (381). Cowden Clarke regarded the current 'social problem' as having "nothing to do with the subject they [were] writing about" (381). Despite Cowden Clarke's dismay at their incongruous use of Portia as a feminist, the young women were using Faucit's and other female character criticism to jumpstart their own feelings and words about women and her place in society; the most popular characters written about were those "heroines who successfully overc[a]me their troubles" (381).

living textual framework surfaces in both Elliott's and Faucit's characterizations of Rosalind. By theatrically presenting Rosalind romping about their pages, Elliott and Faucit permit movement and spaces of agency to Rosalind, both as a "womanly" woman and as boy-youth, and encourage their readers to identify with her.

Elliott's narrative of *As You Like It*, *vis-à-vis* the adventures of Rosalind, begins as simple exposition, but quickly bifurcates into a recitation and ebullient litany of Rosalind's private thoughts and motivation. Elliott assumes she is privy to the innermost thoughts of all characters; in her description of Rosalind giving Orlando her chain in I.ii, she writes, "Her nature has in a few moments been stirred by the awakenings of a new life, and she gives him her chain, all that in a material way she can give him. 'Her hand lacks means' to bestow more, but already she has given herself, and the two part with the same thought upon their lips" (76). Since Elliott's "key-note" of the play is "love, love in its life-giving, grief-destroying power," she concentrates her descriptive powers on the love-scenes between Rosalind and Orlando (74). Elliott explains her reasons and reveals her ulterior motives for her singular attention to these scenes:

> I have dwelt ... fully on the love scenes between Orlando and Rosalind, because in no other play does Shakespeare give such an insight into a pure maidenly heart. Rosalind's romance is as healthy as her own sweet person, and no girl need lose a particle of modesty or a vestige of self-respect by conning the phrases of love ... here depicted. No girl need receive harm by emulating the heaven-born sympathies, the unselfish cheeriness, the warm gladness of Rosalind. (95)

Significantly, Elliott advocates that her readers should not fear to act upon their innermost desires as Rosalind has. For Elliott, there is no doubt of Rosalind's utter longing and ardent emotion for Orlando; the impassioned description of Rosalind learning of Orlando's love (in III.ii) is typical of all of Elliott's accounts of the intensity and pitch of Rosalind's fervor:

> She is intoxicated with delight, and she can either laugh or cry with pleasure. To be in his company, to taste the bliss of his presence, with the knowledge that this young god is hers absolutely, might have made any other woman throw off her disguise and appear in veritable form, the Rosalind, 'just as high as his heart.' (80, 81)

Rosalind does not "throw off her disguise and appear in veritable form," but instead enters into the "strife of tongues" with Orlando (82). Though she allows Rosalind the "girlish ecstasy" of a young woman in love, Elliott cannot reconcile the fact that Rosalind experiences these emotions under the guise of a "sun-bronzed boyish forester" (83, 81).

The cross-dressed disguise is "positively painful" for Rosalind, a "pretty fiction" she has created, and a capricious masquerade that fools no one in Arden, perhaps not even Orlando (96, 94). Elliott maps out the subtext of Orlando in the same scene: "That Orlando dimly recalls some resemblance in his beardless youth to his heavenly Rosalind is quite apparent-- he laughingly enters into the lad's humour. The voice, the eyes, the smile, vaguely excite his wonder" (82). Elliott has Orlando compartmentalize his "heavenly" Rosalind; and later, in IV.i, Elliot completes the picture of Rosalind's objectification, this time, by the permission of Rosalind herself: "Dearer to her are the occasional glimpses she gains of Orlando's worship of herself" (87). This scene reaches

a climax in Elliott's description of the two lovers in close physical proximity. Elliott's 'stage directions' after Rosalind's line, "By this hand, it would not kill a fly," read:

> ... and still craving for more of the blissful intoxication, [Rosalind] comes nearer to him, and secure in her disguise of forester, lays ... her head upon his shoulder, with what to him is a semblance, but to her a reality of the devoted affection that is welling up within her bosom. Why should [Orlando] not humour the naïveté of the bewitching boy, whose curly head is resting on his shoulder? (88)

Elliott's spirited narration of Rosalind's and Orlando's physical proximity captures them at the height of Rosalind's rapture. In this instance, Rosalind's disguise aids her in acting upon her desires; however, Elliott never articulates this fact. Elliott is unwilling to assign the wit and saucy impertinence of Ganymede's (whose name Elliott never mentions) "swashing and a martial outside" to the inner "crystalline" heart of Rosalind (I.iii.118) (96).

It is incompatible for Elliott, then, to concede that the aggressive and swaggering behavioral traits that accompany the mannish apparel can belong to such a flower of perfection as Rosalind; for Elliott, in Rosalind's disposition there is no "doublet and hose" (III.ii.194-95). In the end, the "story of her assumed sex" becomes a "myth," affecting little, if any, change to the essential womanly personality of Rosalind:

> ... she surrenders herself to the mastery of love with a self-abandonment that never oversteps the modesty of maidenhood. She may assume manly attire and 'a swashing and a martial outside' but she cannot divest herself of her woman's heart or virgin delicacy. Rosalind is a poem in herself,

> and all her surroundings are poetic—the scene, the personages, the story. (98)

Rosalind's final transformation into a poem is reminiscent of the image of the delicate girl-flower planted in Shakespeare's garden; Elliott tends to and culls a lyrical, expressive, beauteous work of art. Even though Elliott does much to emphasize the modest and refined spirit of Rosalind, to illustrate the "power of observation" and "capacity of expression" of her nature, and to divulge the innermost desires of her heart, Elliott does not allow Rosalind any of the masculine qualities of Ganymede nor does she acknowledge that it is only when dressed as Ganymede that Rosalind is empowered to action.

If Elliott does not permit Rosalind/Ganymede to usurp her womanly nature and act upon her innermost passions during the wooing scene, however, it is precisely at that point that Elliott's narrative becomes its most active. Because Elliott identifies with Rosalind as her textual other, Elliott takes Rosalind's place in the wooing scene by bringing it to life with passion, verve, and intensity. Elliott presents to her readers, her 'audience,' the wooing scene in the present tense ("she comes nearer to him …"), explains the inward thought and outward action of Rosalind ("We can imagine, far better than we can describe, the delicious tumult of her feelings as she exclaims, 'Am I not your Rosalind?'"), and invites the participation of her audience ("Note the sweet eagerness of the shy enquiry, 'What would you say to me now an I were your very, very Rosalind'") (87-88). Elliott not only transports her audience to witness the scene 'live,' by mimetically staging that moment, but also positions her readers to feel and understand Rosalind's motives, thoughts, and 'subtext' throughout.

Faucit's perspective on and approach to the character of Rosalind elaborates and intensifies the theatrical immediacy that Elliott's narrative suggests. As an actress, Faucit has intimate knowledge of Rosalind because she has impersonated her on the stage. As an author, however, Faucit promises her readers, to "endeavour to put before you what was in my heart and my imagination when I essayed to clothe her with life" (230). Throughout her character portrait, Faucit gives her readers not only a running commentary on and description of Rosalind's emotional subtext, but also includes Rosalind's vocal inflections, stage blocking, and other helpful advice for the actress or reader. Faucit, like Elliott, devotes a considerable portion of her analysis to the wooing scenes between Rosalind and Orlando, but Faucit's treatment of Rosalind/Ganymede's personality and behavior diverges slightly from Elliott's.

Faucit, for whom *As You Like It* is a "love-poem" of "rich harmonious music," realizes that the wooing scenes in the forest are not simple, trivial scenes of mere "fooling" (239, 238). With the disguise of Ganymede, Rosalind is able to act upon her desires and make discoveries on her own about whom she loves. Faucit describes Rosalind's cross-dressed performance, her "daring design," as:

> the finest and boldest of all devices, one on which only a Shakespeare could have ventured, to put his heroine into such a position that she could, without revealing her own secret, probe the heart of her lover to the very bottom, and thus assure herself that the love which possessed her being was as completely the master of his. (238)

The cross-dressed performance allows the heroine certain prerogatives normally associated with men: she is in a position to disclose what information she chooses about

her "secret," she can uncover the reciprocity of her love, and may act upon her own desires. Further, Faucit acknowledges that the way Rosalind achieves this last initiative, "never losing one grain of our respect," is indeed exceptional, for the woman "is rarely placed for gratifying the impulses of her own heart" (239). Significantly, Faucit views the behavior and manner which comprises the cross-dressed Ganymede as part of Rosalind, too: "through the guise of the brilliant-witted boy, Shakespeare *meant* the charm of the high-hearted woman, strong, tender, delicate" (239) [my emphasis]. Because she believes that the character traits of Ganymede essentially reside within and stem from the character of Rosalind herself, Faucit stresses that the actress must demonstrate to her audience Rosalind's strength and "charm" from the very start of the play, or else Rosalind will be misrepresented:

> The actress will ... fail ... in her task, who shall not suggest all this, who shall not leave upon her audience the impression that, when Rosalind resumes her state at her father's court, she will bring into it as much grace and dignity, as by her bright spirits she had brought of sunshine and cheerfulness into the shades of the forest of Arden. (239)

Rosalind's "bright spirits," or her 'Ganymede-ness' exists already in her, and the actress must communicate hints of 'Ganymede' at court as much as she showed her audiences the 'Ganymede' in Arden.

Despite her insistence, though, upon the 'Ganymede-ness' already in Rosalind, Faucit remains at times equivocal about the true composite nature of Rosalind's "unmaidenly" disguise (260). During the wooing scenes, Rosalind, or the actress who plays Rosalind, must constantly temper her 'martial outside' with her inner maidenly

reserve and dignity. Faucit writes, "I need scarcely say how necessary it is for the actress in this scene [III.ii], while carrying it through with a vivacity and dash that shall avert from Orlando's mind every suspicion of her sex, to preserve a refinement of tone and manner suitable to a woman of Rosalind's high station and cultured intellect" (264). This tightrope act of gender display, which would be effected by the actress's "suitable changes of intonation and expression," is quite a precarious task for the actress (264). Declaring that III.ii is the most difficult scene for the actress to play, Faucit confesses that she "never approached this scene without a sort of pleasing dread, so strongly did I feel the difficulty and the importance of *striking the true note in it*" (265) [my emphasis]. What, for Faucit, is this "true note"? Displaying the "right" combination of 'Ganymede-ness' and of 'Rosalind-ness'? And, how does the actress display to her audience the "archness, the wit, the quick ready intellect, the ebullient fancy, with ... tenderness underlying all" (265)? To whom do these characteristics belong? Faucit never answers these questions. Her solution to a successful interpretation of the scene is equally unknown, even to herself: "... once engaged in the scene, I was borne along I knew not how ... I seemed to lose myself in a sense of exquisite enjoyment" (265).

In her description of the wooing scene, Faucit interpolates sections of dialogue with her own stage directions of how the scene should be realized. Faucit brings to life Rosalind/Ganymede and the wooing before our very eyes: "And now we are to see how Rosalind carries out in practice her own suddenly devised fiction" (272). Faucit's Rosalind/Ganymede is a bit more forward and impertinent than Elliott's modest, reticent Rosalind as she resolves to make the wooing of Orlando a reality:

> Her own heart is brimful of happy love, and only by variety of mood and volubility of utterance can she keep down its emotion. 'Come, woo me!' she exclaims. Seeing Orlando taken aback by the suddenness of this invitation, she repeats it ... Still he hangs back; but she is not to be foiled in her determination to make him play the lover, so she adds—'What would you say to me now, an I were your very very Rosalind?' … After some more badinage ... Rosalind turns suddenly upon Orlando with the question—'Am I not your Rosalind?' and she does so, her voice, I fancy, vibrates with feeling she finds it hard to conceal ... Who does not feel through all this exuberance of sportive raillery the strong emotion which is palpitating at the speaker's heart? (272-273)

With this plaintive question, Faucit asks her readers to feel and experience the emotional strain experienced by Rosalind/Ganymede throughout the scene. Faucit makes certain her readers know how immediate and present Rosalind's emotional turmoil is, when, at the climax of the scene, the mock-marriage, this time, it is Faucit-Rosalind who continues the struggle of representing the two characters:

> Rosalind has been made by Shakespeare to put these words [of troth] into Orlando's mouth. This is for her a marriage, though no priestly formality goes with it; and it seems to me that the actress must show this by a certain tender earnestness of look and voice, as she replies, 'I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband.' I could never speak these words without a trembling of the voice, and the involuntary rushing of happy tears to the eyes, which made it necessary for me to turn my head away from Orlando.

> But for fear of discovery, this momentary emotion had to be overcome, and turned off by carrying his thoughts into a different channel. Still Rosalind's gravity of look and intonation with not have quite passed away—for has she not taken the most solemn step a woman can take? (274)

In this final paragraph devoted to the mock-marriage, as the emotion of the scene progresses, Faucit directly inserts herself into Shakespeare's and Rosalind's narrative. First, Shakespeare has given "Rosalind" the authority to carry on in earnest in the marriage scene. Then, in order that the correct emotional pitch and tone be represented, "Rosalind" gives way to the "actress," who must affect "tender" expressions and deliver her lines in much the same way. Next, Faucit herself steps into her narrative to assure her readers of the intensity and the immediacy of the emotions of the scene: she must bring to life her "involuntary" emotional and physical reactions. Quite abruptly, the narrative continues as if "Rosalind" had indeed followed Faucit's stage directions, as "Rosalind's" "momentary emotion had to be overcome" (274). And finally, with the exhortation to her audience concerning the solemnity of the event that just passed, Faucit looks to her readers for justification of and agreement on the true inward feelings of Rosalind. In this one 'extra-textual' moment, Faucit vivifies Rosalind in her narrative, emotionally connects with her character and shares that connection with her readers.

The cross-dressed disguise of Rosalind, Ganymede the "strangely imperious youth," is convincing to the other characters in the forest of Arden, it would seem, largely because of Rosalind's manner and behavior—not necessarily because of the fashion of her 'doublet and hose' (264). Faucit feels that it is more the "characteristic of princely

blood and training" which is "frequently exemplified in the progress of the play," that gives proof to the authenticity of the appearance of the "seeming boy" (268). The combination of Rosalind's mannish behavior and comportment and her "princely blood," for instance, fuels Phoebe's infatuation with Rosalind/Ganymede: "It is not merely the beauty of his person that strikes her, she feels the distinction of his bearing-- the unconscious imperiousness of Rosalind, the princess" (270). Rosalind's noble and authoritative manner, which allows her to gain "ascendancy over all she cares for," may also be thrown on and off, especially when, as Faucit claims, Rosalind needs to make her audience "feel the woman just for [a] moment" (273). Yet paradoxically, according to Faucit, the characters of Rosalind and Ganymede must also remain distinct enough from one another for a discerning audience: "The audience, who are in her secret, must be made to feel the tender loving nature of the woman through the simulated gaiety by which it is veiled; and yet the character of the boy Ganymede must be sustained" (280).

To whatever degree Rosalind is Ganymede or to whatever extent she shares certain character traits with him, Rosalind is left with, affirms Faucit, her own noble, royal, and independent self. Some part of 'Ganymede' will live on, in a way, in Rosalind: "In the days that are before her, all largeness of heart, the rich imagination, the bright commanding intellect, which made her the presiding genius of the forest of Arden, will work with no less beneficent sway in the wider sphere of princely duty" (285). Most importantly, Faucit's ending in her 'textual production' of *As You Like It* does not have Rosalind 'submitting' or 'abandoning herself' unto her husband's will. Instead, Rosalind

is given an extra-textual script to follow, courtesy of her new author, Helena Faucit.[22] Rosalind is to enter into what appears to be a fair and just relationship, one equally amenable to both partners: "Orlando will not only possess in her an honoured, beloved, and admired companion, but will also find wise guidance and support in her clear intelligence and courageous will!" (285). Finally, Faucit ends her character study on Rosalind with a discussion of the Epilogue, for which she has had, in its execution, a "shrinking distaste" (288). Faucit maintains that the Epilogue is "altogether out of tone with the Lady Rosalind," and that she has often struggled to make sense of it, particularly, of Rosalind's incongruous statements about her gender (288). Interestingly enough, Faucit is convinced of delivering the Epilogue as "one's very own self," thereby fusing the "high-toned winning woman" of the character of Rosalind with her own identity (288).[23]

Both Faucit and Elliott construct their own narrative spaces for Rosalind to exist, dynamically configure and fill in the gaps of her emotional life within Shakespeare's play, and offer their extra-textual scenes to readers so that they may have another way to

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[22] Faucit relates to her readers in her other character portraits the extreme difficulty in leaving her characters once their story had been completed by Shakespeare. Faucit writes, "But I could never leave my characters when the curtain fell and the audience departed. As I lived with them through their early lives, so I also lived into their future" (39). Thus, Faucit describes the 'after-lives' of the characters. For instance, Portia visits Shylock ("bringing wine and oil and nourishment for the sick body, and sacred ointment for the bruised mind") with the hope of not only "converting" him, but also convincing him to accept his daughter's marriage (40). It is not long before the "inexorable Jew" yearns for her company: "until gradually she had drawn from him from time to time the story of his life, of his woes, of his own wrongs, of the wrongs of his race, of his sweet lost wife, of his ungrateful daughter" (41).

[23] In her biography of Faucit, Carol Carlisle discusses the special connection between Faucit and Rosalind in the Epilogue in terms of Faucit's stage performance: "Since tradition obliged her to include the speech (with 'If I were a woman' changed to 'If I were among you'), she used it to illustrate the reassertion of the 'high-toned winning woman' after doublet and hose had been laid aside. Reluctant or not, she made the most of her opportunities. She appeared onstage with her veil 'down,' perhaps to symbolize a hidden identity, but she could not have kept her expressive face covered long. Critics were captivated by her 'witching grace,' 'winning archness,' and 'quiet eloquence.' The epilogue confirmed what many had sensed throughout the play, a special affinity between herself and Rosalind" (291).

envision Shakespeare's heroine. Faucit's and Elliott's dialogic and emotional moments of communion with their textual other in their narratives show this intimate knowledge of and connection to the character and provide an alternative liminal space for the representation of Rosalind's consciousness.

While neither Elliott nor Faucit denies the true, virtuous, loving, delicate, and 'womanly' nature of Rosalind, nor the strong desires or intense emotions she has for Orlando, nor the essential 'feminine character' of Ganymede, both are unwilling to wholeheartedly condone Rosalind's cross-dressing. Similarly, Elliott and Faucit view Rosalind/Ganymede as compromising her maidenly virtue with such unseemly apparel. Only Faucit, however, credits Rosalind with the same character traits as the plucky boy-youth. Even though Faucit acknowledges that the disguise works against Rosalind's modesty, she points to a confluence of identity, behavior, and gender in Rosalind. In Elliott's reading of *As You Like It* and of Rosalind, it is difficult for her to reconcile a mental image of her "heavenly" Rosalind with a swaggering, "martial" outside. For Faucit, who has not only wrestled with this dilemma of representation but has embodied it, the boundary which lies between the masculinity of Ganymede and the femininity of Rosalind may be slightly more ambiguous.[24] In both Gallery and Garden, however, even

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[24] Faucit's relation to Rosalind as her textual other in her reading may provide her the flexible space in which her feminine interior and masculine exterior may not be so incongruent with one another. On the Victorian stage, it has been argued by Tracy Davis, in *Actresses as Working Women*, that, the actress in a breeches role was "never sexless," and that "neither convincing impersonation nor sexual ambiguity was possible" (113, 114). However, throughout the stage history of the representation of the cross-dressed heroine it has been argued that either she has muddled, clarified and amplified, or erased gender difference. Because this disparity between feminine interior and masculine page/youth exterior exists, the ways in which we respond to and interpret the female characters of Julia, Portia, Rosalind, Viola, and Imogen, suggest not only how we perceive their own place in society, but also indicates the cultural construction of their notions of femininity and the category of "woman" itself. For an overview of the history of cross-dressing as a "symbolic incursion into [the] territory that crosses gender boundaries," (viii), see Bullough, Vern L. and Bonnie Bullough, *Cross-Dressing, Sex, and Gender*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

if Rosalind/Ganymede is not permitted any assertive, active masculinity, the narratives in which Rosalind finds herself during the wooing scene compensate for her immodest appearance. By having demure Lady Rosalind spring to life before their readers' eyes, Elliott and Faucit give her the narrative space in which she may act upon and gratify her innermost desires. As Elliott and Faucit intimately represent the consciousness of Rosalind, the communion of critic and textual other is made tangible within the pages of their narratives so that women readers may envision this alternative way of viewing Shakespeare's heroine.

The "Great Bad Woman": Lady Macbeth

Elliott and Faucit somewhat extricate Lady Macbeth, a "great bad woman" in the words of William Hazlitt, from the Garden and Gallery: Elliott (writing as M. Leigh-Noel) devotes a separate volume entirely to her, while Faucit declines to 'epistolize' her in a character study. Where both choose to relocate Lady Macbeth in their texts signals the admiration, fear, and fascination they have for this "true woman" (Elliott 1). Elliott, who desires to "champion the cause" of Lady Macbeth, informs her readers that "it requires only a little care and patience to discover in Lady Macbeth many true womanly traits and even endearing qualities" (1, 2). Having been importuned by "Shakesperian scholars of eminence" to render a written character portrait of Lady Macbeth, Faucit writes that she has consistently refused to do so, for it would be a "task of great labour" (344, 345). Instead, Faucit is content to "be judged by the recorded impression produced by Lady Macbeth, as I acted her, upon the minds of men of high authority" (345).

Although she characterizes her discussion on Lady Macbeth as an extended aside, coincidentally enough in her letter devoted to Rosalind, Faucit does write about Lady Macbeth and exposes and shares her own "antipathy" and admiration for the character (233).

As previously mentioned, other women authors have also found the admirable 'woman' in Lady Macbeth;[25] however, other critics, especially male writers, have not. Coleridge, in his concise one-paragraph description of Lady Macbeth, illustrates a prevailing attitude toward the character:

> Lady Macbeth, like all in Shakspeare, is a class individualized:—of high rank, left much alone, and feeding herself with day-dreams of ambition, she mistakes the courage of fantasy for the power of bearing the consequences of the realities of guilt. Hers is the mock fortitude of a mind deluded by ambition; she shames her husband with a superhuman audacity of fancy which she cannot support, but sinks in the season of remorse, and dies in suicidal agony. (244)

Coleridge's encapsulation of Lady Macbeth's character, along with Mrs. Sarah Siddons' 'fiendish' conception of Lady Macbeth on the early nineteenth-century stage, provides the 'unwomanly' stereotype that informs Faucit's and Elliott's presentation of the character.[26] Nevertheless, both character critics, in their personal interaction with Lady

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[25] Anna Jameson (in *Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, and Historical*, Volume II) and Fanny Kemble (in *Notes Upon Some of Shakespeare's Plays*).

[26] Mrs. Siddons writes of Lady Macbeth: "In this astonishing creature one sees a woman in whose bosom the passion of ambition has almost obliterated all the characteristics of human nature; in whose conception are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect and all the charms and graces of personal beauty" (qtd. in Dowden "Scenes" 219). For more on Mrs. Siddons' conception of Lady Macbeth and the 'traditional' stage representation of the character, see Kliman, Bernice W. *Macbeth: Shakespeare in Performance*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992.

Macbeth in their own texts, concede some womanly, sympathetic qualities to her and investigate, extra-textually, the motives and feelings behind this 'great bad woman.'[27]

In her preface to *Lady Macbeth: A Study*, Elliott begins by describing for her readers an encounter with Lady Macbeth. In the isolation and "solitude" of Elliott's sick-room, "the image of this wonderful woman grew and grew before my mental vision, as the statue grows under the sculptor's tool, until at last, I saw her—as I wish to present to my readers" (iv). Significantly, Elliott's own vision of Lady Macbeth is the product of her own physical ordeal and the hardships and deprivations of the sick-room. Elliott admits that at this time, she was "denied everything but the 'heritage of suffering' in her sick-room (iv). Whatever ailment Elliott was suffering from while composing her *Study*, Elliott uses her personal experience to empathize with another Lady who has suffered greatly.[28] Elliott's initial experience with Lady Macbeth has forged a relationship between Elliott and the "living, loving woman;" so much so, that Elliott decides to retell Lady Macbeth's story as a personal crusade not to exculpate her for her misdeeds, but to defend her and present her anew for her readers. According to Elliott, Lady Macbeth, a strong, beautiful, intelligent, and graceful lady, is "blind in her wifely devotion" to her husband: if she is to be blamed for any crime, it is only "owning no law but the

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[27] Georgianna Ziegler, in her article, "Accommodating the Virago: nineteenth-century representations of Lady Macbeth," surveys the expanse of interpretations of the 'great bad woman.' Referencing Ellen Terry's and Sarah Siddons' thoughts, Ziegler writes: "The idea of a feminine, 'even fragile,' Lady Macbeth evokes the alternate method by which the nineteenth century sought to appropriate her character. Siddons' notion that only a woman who was intelligent and beautiful, 'respectful in energy and strength of mind, and captivating in feminine loveliness,' could influence a man of Macbeth's stature, heralded the nineteenth-century attempt to fit Lady Macbeth's character into the model of acceptable womanhood" ("Virago" 129).
[28] In Swinburne's presentation copy of *Lady Macbeth: A Study*, Elliott, in April 1884, records her address in Bexhill, Sussex—a place for rest, holiday or convalescence in the nineteenth century and onward. Because much is not known about Elliott, nor her stay at St. Heliers in Bexhill-on-Sea, it is tantalizing to find any morsel of information about her, her possible convalescence in Bexhill, her own illness and kind of suffering she refers to.

advancement of her husband, and acknowledging no ties but those which bound her to him" (5, 6). Not only her indefatigable "wifely devotion" contributes to Lady Macbeth's troubled mind; at the epicenter of her emotional distress is her unfulfilled maternal yearning for a child. Elliott contends that a child in Lady Macbeth's life would have alleviated her solitude, suffering, and her need to keep a tenacious emotional grasp on her husband. In one of five litanies on the subject of Lady Macbeth's unfortunate lack of a child, Elliott writes,

> Oh, for a child to have nestled to her iron heart-- to have unbound the frozen milk of her congealed breasts! She could have sobbed out the bitter disappointment, remorse, and horror, had she been touched with the talisman of infant fingers. I can imagine her keeping in some locked cabinet the sole mementos of her maternal joys,—some faded, tiny garment, a little toy, with locks of fluffy, golden hair. How it would contrast the stainless past with the blood-bedewed present! and one pities her as she hurriedly locks up her treasures, unable to bear the agony of the retrospection! Her throat would contract as the tears, scalding and resistless, would spring to her eyes, though she dashes them away lest they should leave their tokens on her face. (66-68)

In this extra-textual account[29] of Lady Macbeth, Elliott bemoans Lady Macbeth's plight as she first positions her in the conditional tense and realm of possibility ("She could

[29] Georgianna Ziegler denotes this extra-textual account as mere fantasy ("Virago" 135), whereas I feel that the account is much more than evidence of an over-active imagination. Rather, the passage indicates another narrative being constructed for Lady Macbeth, one that both Elliott and her readers may experience.

have sobbed"). Elliott then transports Lady Macbeth to an atemporal hypothetical state, asking her readers to follow along with her ("I can imagine"). Finally, as she makes her imagined condition actual, Elliott enacts Lady Macbeth's physical reactions in the present ("she hurriedly locks up," "she dashes them away"), which mask, as her readers now understand, her painful memories. Because Lady Macbeth has been given an extra-textual dimension to her emotional life (her personal history of thwarted motherhood), now all of her typically 'masculine' and assertive actions take on quite a different character to Elliott's readers.

Lady Macbeth's womanly qualities surface at her most assertive and powerful moments; instead of abandoning her feminine delicacy, she uses it to strengthen her own will. For instance, as Lady Macbeth tries to urge Macbeth to follow through with the murder of Duncan (I.vii), she demonstrates the level of her commitment to the act—by using her most devastating loss to convince her husband:

> Stay, there is one more arrow in her quiver which she can use to strengthen her resolution ... She has loved deeply, terribly, and hopelessly the babe of her womb, and he knows how she has mourned that babe's untimely decease. His heart has been wrung of old to see her dry-eyed, pitiful sorrow for 'the babe that milked' her … She chokes down the involuntary lump in her throat, and regardless of the film in her eyes occasioned by the remembrance of happier days, she says icily, but with iron distinctness, 'I have given suck ...' ... Even as her whole being vibrates and quivers under these memories, she watches his face until she reaches the terrible end. The effect is what she wished. (27, 28)

In this dialogic and emotional extra-textual scene, Lady Macbeth is at her most 'wifely' and womanly, as she steels her own resolve while controlling her husband's. Elliott traces this combination of feminine delicacy and manipulative strength from the first moment Lady Macbeth appears with her husband. Vehemently disagreeing with Coleridge's assertion that there is "no womanly, no wifely joy at the return of her husband," Elliott chides him and envisions quite a different scene:

> But in writing this, [Coleridge] makes no allowance for the expression of her face, or the tones of her voice, that might convey a hundred-fold more womanly tenderness and wifely joy than could be put into words. ...Nor do we imagine this high salutation was directed to him from some distant part of the chamber. Rather, we seem to see her as she cries, 'Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor!,' run to his arms to receive his glad embrace, and then, gently disengaging herself, as she looks with warm welcome into his eye, continue: 'Thy letters, &c.' It is with heaving bosom and genuine wifely interest and delight at her husband's return that she hints at the high hopes and designs she cherishes for him. But first he must be led to disclose something of his own cogitations, to elicit which she significantly asks. (10-11)

Unlike Coleridge who thought that in this scene Lady Macbeth had "no womanly, no wifely joy at the return of her husband," Elliott does not evaluate Lady Macbeth's greeting to her husband solely based upon her words of salutation. Instead, Elliott constructs within her own narrative evidence of Lady Macbeth's womanly nature. Elliott mimetically stages and brings to life Lady Macbeth's behavior, uses Lady Macbeth's

inner dialogue of her own thoughts, and establishes a dialogic relationship with her as she represents Lady Macbeth's consciousness in order to show that there is much more to the character than her given dialogue in Shakespeare's play.

According to Elliott, Lady Macbeth, neglected by her husband and unneeded by a child, dies of a broken heart. In the end, Lady Macbeth becomes an "example of the torture of unconfessed sin and the bitterness of unlawful ambition" (75). Because Elliott's readers know the 'real' woman behind Lady Macbeth, however, Elliott may with confidence ask her readers, "Does not one feel intense commiseration for the criminal? Who amongst us can cast the first stone?" (75). So as to prevent anyone from being offended with the life, liberty, and womanly attributes given to Lady Macbeth in her own narrative, Elliott ends her study by properly praising the "great master," Shakespeare. Interestingly enough, she voices the tribute not by herself, but quotes a long passage by Coleridge; "we," she writes (herself or her readers?), "are now ready to echo the words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge" (86).

Elliott begins her study with a dialogic interaction with Lady Macbeth as an individualized, personal encounter, which metamorphosizes and grows into an alternate reality of Shakespeare's text. Within the pages of her own narrative, Elliott stages Lady Macbeth's life and presents moments of emotional connection as she represents her consciousness. The dynamic presentation of Lady Macbeth's consciousness in Elliott's narrative allows her readers to envision another way of seeing this stereotypical 'great bad woman.' To vindicate the existence of her own narrative, Elliott ends her study by referencing Shakespeare, whose text and characters she has appropriated. Yet, rather disappointingly, though possibly out of necessity to somehow 'authorize' her own

narrative (perhaps in much the same way as Kemble references "The Lady of Shalott" and Tennyson), Elliott ends her study of Lady Macbeth by paying polite respect to a distinguished male critic and to the great author himself.

Although Faucit has not written as much as Elliott about the character of Lady Macbeth, her brevity is not necessarily an indication of her unfamiliarity with the part. Faucit performed the role of Lady Macbeth to much critical acclaim throughout her stage career (1836-1870) and even 'brought her to life' off-stage in her private readings for her friends (Theodore Martin 344). When called upon by William Macready to act the part of Lady Macbeth for the first time in 1842, Faucit writes of her apprehension and reservations in her private journal, "I always look upon that part as hallowed ground, upon which I dare not tread. I must have a great deal more confidence than I now have, if I ever attempt it" (qtd. in Theodore Martin 36). Although Lady Macbeth was not her favorite character to play—in her engagements, she always performed her first "as to not have it hanging over" her head—Faucit admits, "I could not but admire the stern grandeur and indomitable will which could unite itself with 'fate and metaphysical aid' to place the crown on her husband's brow" (234). Faucit may understand the reasons why Lady Macbeth "falls into [Macbeth's] design," however, eventually, "we may not sympathize with her" (234).

Faucit must have reached some point of contact or identification in order to have represented Lady Macbeth as effectively as she did; she writes that in her acting she had her "reward in the bond of sympathy, often boarding on affection, which grew up between myself and the unknown world of whom I spoke" (qtd. in Theodore Martin 405). However distanced Faucit may appear to the character of Lady Macbeth, she does, in her

description of II.iii, interact with her as she recounts her churning emotional state which precipitates her fainting:

> But she did not know what it was to be personally implicated in murder, nor foresee the Nemesis that would pursue her waking, and fill her dreams with visions of the old man's blood slowly trickling down before her eyes. Think, too, of her agony of anxiety, on the early morning just after the murder ... and the torture she endured while, no less to her amazement than her horror, he recites to Malcolm and Donalbain ... how he found Duncan ... She had faced that sight without blenching, ... but to have the whole scene thus vividly brought again before her was too great a strain upon her nerves. No wonder she faints. (234)

Ultimately, Faucit grants Lady Macbeth considerable strength of mind, faith and patience, and the hope for redemption. In an 1838 *Macbeth* promptbook, Faucit writes to herself some thoughts on Lady Macbeth—a kind of a miniature character portrait—to aid her representation:

> Through every strife she looks forward to the reconciliation—beyond every storm to the repose. There is no depth of the heart, according to her, which faith & knowledge cannot illumine; no agony of the affections which may not be overcome by the bravery of patience.

While this sentiment may not have informed all or any of her actual performances, it does give some insight into the way Faucit thought about herself and her representation of the character of Lady Macbeth. Even though she does not devote a whole epistolary essay to Lady Macbeth, Faucit establishes an emotional and dialogic relationship with Lady

Macbeth, dramatically stages the inner life of Lady Macbeth in an extra-textual encounter, and represents Lady Macbeth's consciousness within her own pages.

Beyond Shakespeare's Text

Nineteenth-century women who wrote character criticism believed that Shakespeare was indeed the apotheosis of dramatic poetry, defended the ideal woman in his characters, and proselytized their readers to the worship of his plays. The character critics' active participation and identification with the characters within their *own texts*, however, not only allow them to bestow upon the characters a freedom and a life beyond that of Shakespeare's text, but also give them the authority to usurp the author position of the immortal poet-master himself. As the character critics alter or 'fix' what Shakespeare does not account for, they retell his stories to make them fit their own narrative design and their own conception of the character. Faucit and Elliott augment or complete the characters' lives with as much emotional detail and psychological motive as they can—much like the way in which the actor must relate to his character in order to represent the character truthfully. David Cole, in his investigation of the correlation between the processes of acting and reading, writes, "Readers are like actors because what an actor does to a script is what any reader must do to a text—'realize' it, 'actualize' it, make it happen as an event" (27). Women character critics not only actualize Shakespeare's text, but also their own, by interacting, with an other, a textual other, who becomes 'real' to the reader. A reader witnesses this personal connection and communion between the author and character/textual other in the character critic's dramatic reconstructions of Shakespeare's plays. The character critic's intimate connection between herself and her

character provides a reader with tangible evidence of her intimate 'ghostly' wanderings in Shakespeare's text.[30] In the critic's narrative, this emotional, intimate, and dialogic author-character relationship exists, but it only really exists when readers actualize it by reading.

Far from being simple re-tellings of Shakespeare's plays with the woman's part highlighted, women character criticism establishes emotional connections with female characters and dramatically re-scripts his plays to represent the consciousnesses of those characters. Character critics such as Clarke, Jameson, Kemble, Faucit and Elliott celebrate and venerate Shakespeare's female characters as shining examples of womanhood; however, through their dynamic presentation of those characters thoughts and actions, they give them more power and agency within their own scripts than the characters ever had encased in Shakespeare's text. Women character critics' narratives create and demonstrate moments of communion between author and character. Moments of communion appear tangibly within the pages of their narratives as Faucit and Elliott make deliberate narrative choices as they describe and represent the consciousness of their textual other. Faucit's and Elliott's emotional moments of connection with the characters become so much more than just the stuff of fantasies, dreams, inventive realizations of pasts or futures, purely fanciful writings, or products of over-active imaginations. Faucit and Elliott create with ease dynamic narratives for Shakespeare's characters to inhabit not only so that they may illustrate their own connection to those

[30] Lynne Pearce describes the reader's articulation within the text she reads as a "ghostly insubstantiality" (24). Pearce writes, "for whereas the text's characters are fixed in the historical moment of their first inscription—performing the same roles, living the same lives, over and over again—the reader is free (if not actually compelled) to wander" (25). While we are not privy to the authors' exact wanderings and emotions which underpin their experience of reading Shakespeare, we do see the result of both in their writings—an intimate connection with and understanding of the female characters and the desire to communicate that relationship to their female readers.

characters, but also so that they make plain their desire to share those moments of communion with other women. Faucit and Elliott, as well as all of the female character critics such as Mary Cowden Clarke, Anna Jameson, and Fanny Kemble, invite their 'sister-women' readers to look at a different image of themselves and of Shakespeare's characters and to follow them as they move in, about, and beyond the text of Shakespeare.

Chapter Three

Storying Imogen in the Gallery and Garden

Here comes the Britain. Let him be so entertain'd amongst you as suits with gentlemen of your knowing to a stranger of his quality. I beseech you all, be better known to this gentleman; whom I commend to you as a noble friend of mine: how worthy he is I will leave to appear hereafter, *rather than story him* in his own hearing. [my italics]
Philario, *Cymbeline*, (I.iv.28-34)

In Act I of *Cymbeline*, Philario introduces Posthumus to Iachimo and other gentlemen. Instead of 'storying' him—making him into a story—while Posthumus stands there, he allows Posthumus to speak for himself. Helena Faucit's chapter on Imogen in *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* and Madeleine Elliott's Imogen chapter in *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls*, both 'story' or narrativize Imogen for their audiences. In both narratives of Imogen in Faucit's Gallery and Elliott's Garden, Philario's introduction of Posthumus could be re-written as, "Here comes the Princess of Britain. Let her be so entertain'd amongst you as suits with ladies of your knowing to a stranger of her quality. I beseech you all, be better known to this lady; whom I commend to you as a noble friend of mine: how worthy she is I will leave to appear hereafter." Each author presents Imogen, invites us to welcome Imogen in our ken of other worthy ladies, and beseeches us to know better her friend Imogen.

Both narratives of Imogen are complex; the Gallery and the Garden do not simply re-tell Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and focus on Imogen and what happens to her. Faucit and Elliott not only tell the story of Imogen in Shakespeare's play and relay Imogen's backstory, inhabit her innermost feelings, and imagine her future life, but also tell us their

own stories of communing with Imogen, of writing and sharing Imogen with others, and of their present states of mind. Faucit and Elliott both represent Imogen's consciousness by making choices in how they describe scenes, either mimetically ('showing') or diegetically ('telling'), how they manipulate the time of their narratives by summarizing (acceleration) or stretching out (deceleration) the temporal events of Shakespeare's story, and how they use direct speech (quoted dialogue), indirect speech (reported speech and thought) or even free indirect speech (a combination of the reporting narrator's speech and represented character's speech). In their use of indirect speech, especially, the boundary between narrator and character is blurred and difficult to distinguish—is it the narrator or the character who is speaking? Those moments of blurred boundaries are moments of communion which Faucit and Elliott experience with Imogen. Both authors create heightened emotional scenes of *Cymbeline* and use the thoughts and words of Imogen not only to represent the consciousness of their beloved character, but also to appropriate Imogen's story for their own purposes. In her Gallery, Faucit tells her story of her desire to paint and vividly illustrate the picture of beauty, Imogen, and share that beauty with her sisters. In her Garden, Elliott tells her story of planting her Imogen flower in a social reality so that her sisters may gain sustenance from her virtue, despite her trials, and refreshment in her beauty. In both narrative spaces of the Gallery and Garden, Imogen's thoughts and feelings are made tangible as Faucit and Elliott represent Imogen's consciousness in the pages of their works.

Daughter of King Cymbeline, Imogen, well-loved and revered by Victorian ladies, is the epitome of womanhood—a resourceful, loving, and above all, faithful wife. Imogen must endure much throughout the play, but she is eventually rewarded with the

one thing she lost so early in the play—her husband. Some of her tribulations include: a forced separation from her husband because he is banished by Cymbeline; the lascivious advances of an unsavory man and the amorous designs of a stupid one; a false accusation of infidelity; a journey to a foreign land while in male disguise; the company of strange cave-dwelling men (two of them, unbeknownst to her, are her brothers) in the forest; the imbibing of a poisonous elixir, which temporarily simulates her own death; the horrifying sight of a headless corpse, mistakenly thought to be her husband's; an adoption of a position as page to a Roman soldier; and, finally, an emotional reunion with her husband.

The highlights of Imogen's trials in the play and Imogen's essential womanly beauty are nicely condensed for us in Evangeline M. O'Connor's *An Index to the Works of Shakspere*: "Imogen, daughter of Cymbeline, introduced in the first scene of the play. The wager concerning her, i.4; her interview with Iachimo, i.6; his stratagem, ii.2; the command for her death, iii.3; her journey, iii.4; her beauty, iii.6; her apparent death, iv.2 (168). Imogen's 'beauty' in Act III, scene vi is demonstrated as she is just before the cave of Belarius and is tired and worn out from travel: "I see a man's life is a tedious one,/ I have tired myself; and for two nights together/ Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick,/ But that my resolution helps me" (III.vi.1-4). In this scene, Imogen perseveres despite being thrown into a treacherous situation, is resourceful and quick to act as the boy 'Fidele' when confronted by Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus, and is truthful about her conflicting feelings about her husband: "My dear lord,/ Thou art one o'th'false ones. Now I think on thee,/ My hunger's gone; but even before, I was/ At point to sink for food" (III.vi.14-17). Agreeing with O'Connor's assessment of Act III, scene

vi and its "artistic beauties," Jennie de la Montagnie Lozier[1] describes Imogen's character as more like that "of a saint than mortal" and elaborates further:

> I find in her not only sweetness but a good deal of mental vigor and wit. Although in the main gentle, she can be keen, reflective, witty and severe upon occasion. She loves a beautiful, good and worthy man whom she has known and trusted from childhood. Only once she seems to doubt him, and then she blames some painted jay of Italy for his shortcomings. She is through all her terrible afflictions exceedingly dignified and noble. Although the victim of cruelty and treachery, she preserves meekness and patience through it all, and is rewarded by reconciliation with her aged father, the restoration of her brothers and the blissful reunion with her repentant and forgiven husband. (213)

In "Shakespeare as the Girl's Friend," Mary Cowden Clarke describes, too, Imogen's 'beauty' and her resolve to never allow her "allegiance to waver": "Imogen is a perfect exemplar of a devotedly loving wife and a high-minded, large-souled woman" (562). This kind of inward beauty—of strength and devotion, of courage and fortitude, of meekness and patience, of mental vigor and wit, and of virtue and grace—may help explain why Imogen is so loved by women, especially Faucit and Elliott, of the nineteenth century.

Faucit begins her piece on "Imogen, Princess of Britain" with two quotations, which will guide her epistolary essay[2] on this character; she includes the Second Lord's

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[1] President of The Avon Club, a Shakespearean club in New York City, Lozier was also a physician who wrote, in 1892, "Educational Influences of Women's Clubs," which professed the educational value of clubs for women (Logan 739-40).

exclamation in II.i.56-57, "Alas, poor princess,/Thou divine Imogen!" and excerpts a stanza from Edmund Spenser's "An Hymn in Honour of Beauty," lines 127-30 and lines 132-33: "So every spirit, as it is most pure,/ And hath in it the more of heavenly light,/ So it the fairer body doth procure/ To habit in:/ For of the soul the body form doth take:/ For soul is form, and doth the body make"[3] (159). Imogen is a beautiful creature, both inside and out, and deserves our admiration and veneration; audience members naturally "admire her by her mere presence," and Imogen "at the same time inspires them with a reverent devotion" (178). The introductory quotations help the reader understand how Faucit will shape her approach to her "woman of women": Faucit will visually present the internal and external beauty of Imogen as she represents Imogen's consciousness alongside her own thoughts and feelings (160).

Immediately after the introductory quotations, Faucit reminds her readers that her portrait of Imogen is presented as a letter to her friend, Miss Anna Swanwick,[4] dated

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[2] In her biography of Faucit, Carol Carlisle devotes a chapter to Faucit's work as a critic and suspects that in today's age, Faucit's essays "are often considered as curiosities rather than as critical writings to be taken seriously: sentimental descriptions of Victorian gentlewomen masquerading as Shakespearean heroines" (248). Carlisle is sure of the value of Faucit's essays, and their "greatest importance" is "helping us to understand Helen Faucit's methods as an actress and to envision her stage interpretations" (249). I think it remarkable that for the actress, like Faucit, and non-actress alike, like Elliott, their narratives are constructed similarly, and their ways of representing the consciousness of the character are similar.

[3] Edmund Spenser's "An Hymne in Honour of Beautie" (1596), the second hymn of his published *Foure Hymnes*, is addressed to Venus and further mentions the connection between the beauty and goodness of the body and soul in the preceding stanza:
Therefore wherever that thou dost behold
A comely corpse, with beauty fair endued,
Know this for certain, that the same doth hold
A beauteous soul, with fair conditions thewed,
Fit to receive the seed of virtue strewed.
For all that fair is, is by nature good;
That is a sign to know the gentle blood.

[4] Miss Anna Swanwick (1813-1899) was a writer, social reformer, and scholar, who had a "high ideal of the function of the stage as a popular educator, having seen in her youth the wonderful acting of Mrs. Siddons, Macready, the Kembles, Rachel, Helen Faucit, and others" (Bruce 181). In Swanwick's memoirs, Mr. Justin McCarthy gives? a remembrance of her and her circle of friends, "I am glad, however, to be able to say that she made friendships, too, with some who had no claim to any such distinction, and, indeed,

October 1882. Faucit frames her narrative of Imogen within the construct of an epistle, but that fact can be easily forgotten as one begins to read the essay and learn about the wonders of Faucit's and Swanwick's "chief favorite" character (159). Yet the epistolary framework of her narrative is crucial to keep in mind not only because it allows us to voyeuristically read another person's personal correspondence, but also it casts us in the recipient's role as Faucit intimately addresses "you," as the narratee, directly throughout the letter. Faucit composed "Imogen, Princess of Britain" at the "urgent request" of Swanwick, and throughout the letter she reminds her reader of their friendship (159). Faucit emphasizes the need for mutual participation and collaboration in making Imogen appear before our eyes in her narrative; indeed, Faucit calls upon the assistance of Swanwick herself in "filling in the gaps" of her memory (161). She references a letter that Swanwick wrote to her sixteen years ago which will come to her "aid" in vivifying the divine Imogen (161). Shared memories and letters between these two friends will accomplish the seemingly impossible: to bring Imogen to life. Faucit herself acknowledges the daunting task before her, as she has usually had the "helps" of the actor's ability to become the "living commentary" of a character (160).[5] On stage, an actor can fill up the character by "accent, by play of feature, by bearing, by action, by

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took a pleasure in bringing any friend into acquaintanceship with the leaders of intellectual movement. At her dinner table I have thus been privileged to meet Gladstone, Dean Stanley, James Russell Lowell, Lord Acton, Sir Theodore Martin and his wife, who won fame on the stage as Helen Faucit, and many others whom indeed it was a privilege to meet under such conditions of friendly and informal intercourse" (Bruce 249-250).

[5] Carol J. Carlisle, in "Helen Faucit's Acting Style," comments that Faucit's a "constant" in her on-stage acting was her identification with the character she was portraying (42). Carlisle writes that Faucit "relied heavily on imaginative identification with her character--more heavily, perhaps, than the average critic of that time would have considered desirable. (The effect of being 'the very person herself' was often praised, but the ideal was, I think, superficial.) In identifying herself with her role she was undoubtedly influenced by Macready, who was credited with originating the 'psychological' style of acting, but she was already inclined in that direction" (41-42).

subtle shades of expression, inspired by the heart and striking home to the heart" (160). Faucit even admits, "To one accustomed like myself to such helps [of the actor's craft] for bringing out the results of my studies of Shakespeare's women, it seems hopeless to endeavour to convey the same impressions by mere words. The more a character has wound itself round the heart, the more is this felt" (160). Faucit's 'mere words' in "Imogen, Princess of Britain" in fact do exactly the work of actor as Faucit chooses how she represents the consciousness of Imogen in her narrative. Faucit chooses either mimesis or diegesis in her presentation of scenes from *Cymbeline*, uses either direct and indirect speech to enact Imogen's thoughts and words, and manipulates the time in her narrative from the time of the story of Shakespeare's play.

Faucit's trepidation and "fear and trembling" of Imogen are so great that Faucit finds it "next to impossible to put her so far away from me that I can look at her as a being to be scanned, and measured, and written about" (159-160). Faucit admits that Imogen was the character who "wound itself round the heart" and who "seemed to become 'my very life of life'" because Faucit was "living through all her emotions and trials on the stage" in impersonating her night after night (159-60). Faucit speaks of Imogen, especially when she recalls her own stage history with the character, as a person with whom she has an intimate relationship:

> But Imogen has always occupied the largest place in my heart; and while she taxed largely my powers of impersonation, she has always repaid me for the effort tenfold by the delight I felt at being the means of placing a being in every way so noble before the eyes and hearts of my audiences, and of making them feel, perhaps, and think of her, and of him

> [Shakespeare] to whose genius we owe her, with something of my own reverence and love. (160)

Faucit's reticence to approach "the Imogen" because of her personal connection with her is strikingly evident as she delays speaking of her and the play for seven pages (161). A long preamble to her reflection upon Imogen begins with narrated past events from Faucit's theatrical life. She tells us of her first performance of Imogen at school, of a performance of Imogen with Macready,[6] and of the "best Pisanio" she worked with, Mr. Elton[7] (162). Faucit cheerfully, but desultorily, writes of Mr. Elton, about her role of Pauline in *The Lady of Lyons*, and her recollection of others watching her in that play. She further fluidly relays her memories of *The Lady of Lyons* and details a specific moment of kindness and consideration done by Lord Lytton[8] in his sending to her dressing room some lozenges for her "constant cough" she had during the play's opening (168). Yet, after this engaging little story, Faucit abruptly arrests her narrative with the realization that she is prolonging the appearance of Imogen. She exclaims, "But oh how I have wandered from Imogen! It is, I suppose, like Portia,--'To peize the time,/To eke it and to draw it out in length,'-- to stay myself from grappling with a task which I yearn yet dread to approach" (168). Faucit is painfully aware that her own 'narrative time' is prolonging the 'story time' of the play. Faucit takes liberties with the time of her own narrative (a letter to Swanwick about Imogen) and the time of the events of *Cymbeline*,

[6] William Macready (1793-1873) actor and theatre manager whose famous Shakespearean tragic stage impersonations include Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, and King Lear. He first performed *Cymbeline* in 1837 with Helen Faucit, at which time she became a member of his company and was his leading lady for several years. Richard Foulkes describes the greatest quality of Macready's acting as "his intellectual ability to penetrate and to express the psychological nature of his characters."

[7] Edward William Elton (1794-1843) acted alongside Faucit in Macready's company at Drury Lane (Knight).

[8] Playwright, novelist, politician, and poet, Edward Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873), later Lord Lytton, wrote *The Lady of Lyons or Love and Pride*, and the play was first produced at Covent Garden Theatre in 1838.

which she relays, but narratorially mediates and restructures them, so that she can stage Imogen's thoughts and feelings in the way she desires.

Faucit begins the story of Shakespeare's Imogen and *Cymbeline* generally—the play's setting, its source, and the principal characters. In her re-telling of Shakespeare's play, she narrates events, delivers the backstory on several characters, and ventriloquizes the thoughts and feelings of the Imogen, as she represents her consciousness. For Faucit, *Cymbeline* "might indeed be fitly called *Imogen, Princess of Britain*, for it is upon her, her trials and her triumph, that it chiefly turns" (169). After her discussion of the opening scenes of the play, Faucit again reminds us that she has quite a task in bringing Imogen to life within the pages of her narrative. After all, the actor embodies the character and creates an entity for an audience member's eyes to behold and for her sense to understand. How may Faucit infuse her narrative with the visual, aural, and temporal qualities of the actor? Faucit writes in tender exasperation at those people who do not appreciate the art of acting: "Ah! how little can those who, in mere ignorance, speak slightingly of the actor's art, know of the mental and moral training which is needed to take home into the being, and then to express in action, however faintly, what must have been in the poet's mind, as his [Shakespeare's] vision of Imogen found expression in the language he has put into her mouth!" (178). This statement reveals much about the relationship between creator/her creation and the actor/her character which can both be applied to Faucit's current role as narrator and to her relationship with her character, Imogen. Vision (seeing), language (words and expression), and embodiment of that language (mouth and the body of the actor) all combine to produce a successful Imogen. Also what is needed for a successful impersonation of Imogen is to have the actor take

her ‘home into the being’—to bring Imogen ‘home’, so to speak, to the actor herself, as if that is where she naturally belongs and as if that is where the union of the two is safe. Faucit succeeds in bringing Imogen home to us in her narrative by creating a space where both she and Imogen can roam freely on the page and by manipulating vision, language, and temporality in her discussion of *Cymbeline*.

Throughout her narrative, Faucit not only refers to Imogen and the events of the play with vivid descriptive language, but also likens these animated descriptions to ‘drawings’ (three instances), ‘visions’ (three instances), and ‘pictures’ (four instances). So visual is Faucit’s narrative that there are twenty-two instances of phrases using the verb “see”: for example, “When we see Imogen first” (174), “we see the indignant princess” (183), and “the scene ... in which we next see Imogen” (189). Faucit acknowledges the visual creation of the “divine Imogen” in both her acting life and her present writing life; she closes her letter with the simple statement: “This was my vision of Imogen when I acted her; this is my vision of her still” (226). In addition to creating lively visions of Imogen on the page for her readers, Faucit uses Shakespeare’s language liberally to support her own descriptions and statements, to complete her own sentences, and to augment the dialogue of the characters she presents. For instance, Faucit gives evidence for her own statement, “The whole tragedy of [Imogen’s] position is summed up by Imogen herself early in the play, in the words (Act i.sc.6)-- ‘A father cruel, and a step-dame false:/ A foolish suitor to a wedded lady,/ That hath her husband banish’d: --oh that husband!/ My supreme crown of grief! and those repeated/ Vexations of it!” (173-74). Faucit’s use of Shakespeare’s words to complete her own would include, for example, her rendering of Iachimo’s description and thoughts of Imogen sleeping in her

bed in Act II, scene ii. First Faucit quotes Iachimo's lines (II.ii.14-23), and then continues on with her thoughts:

> What a picture is here! Drawn by a master-hand; for Iachimo has all the subtle perception of the refined sensualist. 'That I might touch!' But even he, struck into reverence, dare not. 'A thousand liveried angels wait on her,' so that his approach is barred. With all dispatch he notes the features and furniture of the room. 'Sleep the ape of death, lies dull upon her,' and this emboldens him to steal the bracelet from her arm. (185)

Faucit thus employs Shakespeare's words to augment her own often—both in description and dialogue. Again, in Act III, scene ii, as Imogen receives a letter from Posthumus, Faucit declares "that [Imogen's] natural temperament is cheerful, we see by the readiness with she seizes this first opportunity to rejoice--a letter from her lord" (189). And further:

> How pretty is the way in which, she, as it were, talks to the letter before she opens it:--
>
> > "Oh learn'd indeed were that astronomer
> > That knew the stars as I his characters;
> > He'd lay the future open."
>
> Then the little prayer, like some devout Greek, to the "good gods" to
>
> > "Let what is here contain'd relish of love,
> > Of my lord's health, of his content--yet not,
> > That we two are asunder,--let that grieve him."
>
> In her overflowing happiness, as she breaks the wax of the seals, she blesses the very bees "that make these locks of counsel." (189)

In this passage, Faucit begins to use Imogen’s words to continue her own description of ‘pretty talking,’ and then moves to quoting Imogen’s words to augment her sentence about the ‘little prayer,’ and finally finishes with integrating Imogen’s words with her narration of the event of Imogen’s blessing of the bees who made the wax for the letter’s seal. If Faucit were simply re-telling this scene in her narrative, it may have been written: ‘Imogen’s words are very pretty as she talks to the letter before she opens it. She then makes a little prayer, like a devout Greek, to the gods. In her overflowing happiness, as she breaks the wax of the seals, she blesses the bees who made the wax.’ Faucit’s ease of using Shakespeare’s language is evident as she weaves Imogen’s words with her own. At times of heightened emotion, Faucit’s words flow effortlessly into Imogen’s. The result is a confident, lively interplay of words, full of active moments of Imogen’s appearance in Faucit’s own narrative.

So too does Faucit take temporal liberties with Shakespeare’s play and plot events therein—she anticipates plot events (prolepsis), backtracks from the narrated event in flashbacks (analepsis), inserts signpost language to direct us to her own arrangement of events, and even suspends (narrative pause) and extends (deceleration) moments in the play as she ruminates or imagines what happens. Although Faucit knows that Miss Anna Swanwick is familiar with Imogen and the play of *Cymbeline*, that knowledge does not stop her from allowing her own thoughts to preview and anticipate the events in Shakespeare’s play. The malleable nature of Faucit’s rendering of Shakespeare’s plot events reveals itself many times throughout her narrative. At the end of her opening remarks of the play and of her description of the central plight of Imogen, she anticipates the emotional turmoil the heroine will experience—without even having formally

'introduced' Imogen to us in her narrative. As Faucit writes of Imogen's particular plight in *Cymbeline*, she initially quotes Imogen and then she uses the words of the Second Lord in attendance to Cloten to help her describe the "poor princess":

> "Thou divine Imogen, what thou endur'st!
> Betwixt a father by thy step-dame govern'd;
> A mother hourly coining plots, a wooer
> More hateful than the foul expulsion is
> Of thy dear husband, than that horrid act
> Of the divorce he'd make! The heavens hold firm
> The walls of thy dear honour, keep unshaked
> That temple, thy fair mind!"
>
> And all this, while she was still "comforted to live," because in her husband she had the one priceless "jewel in the world that she might see again." Rudely stripped of that comfort, as she soon is, what state so desolate, what trial more cruel than hers! But I must not anticipate. When we see Imogen first, it is at the moment of her parting with Posthumus. (174)

Faucit uses prolepsis as she anticipates Imogen's words of I.i.90-92, her desolate state (III), and her cruel trial (IV and V) before even narrating Imogen's first appearance in the play. Faucit also interrupts and backtracks from Shakespeare's story. For instance, as Faucit is concluding her discussion of I.iii, she gives the backstory of Pisanio in part to illustrate his allegiance to Imogen and in part to justify why Imogen can, "pour out her heart to him in these exquisite bursts of tenderness" (177):

> I have always thought that Pisanio had formerly been a follower of Posthumus's father, Sicilius Leonatus, and had been assigned, therefore, by Cymbeline to his son as a special servant when he first took the

> orphaned boy under his care, and made him the playfellow of Imogen. He had seen Posthumus grow up with all the winning graces of a fine person, and a simple truthful, manly nature, so void of guile himself as to be unsuspicious of it in others; while Imogen had developed into the beautiful, accomplished, high-souled woman, for whom mere "princely suitors"-- and we are told, she had many-- had no attraction, companioned as she had been from childhood to womanhood by one whose high and winning qualities she knew so well. Pisanio had seen them grow dearer and dearer to each other, and never doubted that Cymbeline looked with favour on their growing affection until the evil hour when he re-married, and was persuaded by his queen to favour Cloten's suit. The character of that coarse, arrogant, cowardly braggadocio must have made his pretensions to the hand of Imogen odious to the whole court that loved and honoured her, but especially to Pisanio; and we may be sure he was taken into counsel, when a marriage was resolved upon, as the only way to make the union with Cloten possible. Thus he has drawn upon himself the suspicion and hatred to the queen and her handsome, well-proportioned, brainless son. I say well-proportioned; for how otherwise could Imogen have afterwards mistaken his headless body, as she does (Act iv. sc. 2), for that of Posthumus? (178)

These words do not only offer information about Pisanio (and the personages of Cymbeline's court), but also develop into a summation of the events that lead to the

opening of the play. Further, at the end of this summary comes yet another proleptic preview of events to come.

Because Faucit moves so fluidly back and forth through Shakespeare's story, she uses signpost language to direct the reader to the next scene in her narrative. There are such phrases as "Observe how carefully Shakespeare fixes our attention upon her at the very outset of the play," "And now we must leave Imogen, and follow Posthumus to Rome," "We now go back to Imogen," "We can imagine the scene in the cave that evening," and "We must leave Imogen for a while, for the events are now hurrying on which are to bring her sorrows to a close" (170, 178, 179, 202, 216). Faucit does not simply re-tell the events in Shakespeare's play; she creates her own story. This signpost language is an aid in understanding how Faucit constructs her narrative and how she focuses on the representation of the consciousness of Imogen.

Faucit frequently suspends time in her narrative, and, as she decelerates the scene moment by moment, her narrative is less concerned about the faithful re-telling of Shakespeare's story than with a mimetic representation of Imogen's consciousness. Faucit, for example, decelerates the scene between Imogen, Cloten, and Pisanio in Act II.iii.124-148, when Imogen is in the process of spurning Cloten and discovering that she lost Posthumus's bracelet:

> Imogen's patience leaves her, and she turns upon [Cloten] with the same eloquence of scorn with which we have before seen her silence Iachimo, but with even greater contempt:--
>
> > "Profane fellow!
> > Wert thou the son of Jupiter, and no more
> > But what thou art besides, thou wert too base

> To be his groom ...
> *Clo.* The south-fog rot him!
> *Imo.* He never can meet more mischance, than come
> To be but named of thee! His meanest garment,
> That ever hath but clipp'd his body, is dearer
> In my respect than all the hairs above thee,
> Were they all made such men."

> Even as she speaks, she misses from her arm the bracelet which had never quitted it since Posthumus place it there, and summons Pisanio, whom she bids tell her women to search for it. Vexation upon vexation:--
>
> > "I am sprited with a fool,
> > Frighted, and anger'd worse."
>
> As is so common when we first miss anything, she thinks she saw it lately:--
>
> > "I do think
> > I saw't this morning: confident I am
> > Last night 'twas on mine arm; I kissed it,"—
>
> adding with a sweet womanish touch--
>
> > "I hope it be not gone to tell my lord
> > That I kiss aught but he."
>
> "*Aught*," you see, not "*any one*." Alas! it has gone to him, and on a deadlier errand. (187-88)

In this scene Imogen rebuffs Cloten and realizes the absence of the bracelet which Iachimo stealthily stole from her arm the previous evening. The missing bracelet causes Imogen and Faucit great consternation, and Faucit decelerates the scene to give weight to Imogen's emotional discovery. Faucit elongates her narrative time of this scene from the actual story time of the play. Faucit's description flows into Imogen's words and thoughts behind those words as she uses a combination of indirect and direct speech:

"Vexation [the lost bracelet] upon vexation [Cloten] ... 'I am sprited with a fool,/ Frighted, and anger'd worse.'" Faucit-Imogen in communion utter this double vexation of the missing bracelet and the unwanted advances of Cloten. Both women's words combine with a synergy that enacts the character of Imogen and vividly presents her consciousness in the narrative.

As Faucit is creating her own narrative of Imogen, she and the character share moments of communion in the narrative. The confluence of Faucit's narration of an event with Imogen, indirect and direct speech of Imogen's words and thoughts, and Faucit's self-insertion in her narrative makes up an instance of communion with Imogen. In her narrative, Faucit marks a moment of communion between narrator and character by mimetically presenting events, inserting a continuous, seamless flow of dialogue, and providing added action and augmented description or intense exclamation. Such narrative moments interrupt the story time of the play, but they do much to expose Faucit's process of inhabiting and communing with Imogen in her narrative. The moments of communion between Faucit and Imogen are scenes of heightened emotion for the character: Imogen's perusal of the letter which Iachimo delivers and Iachimo's insinuations of Posthumus's behavior abroad (I.vi), Imogen's reading of Posthumus's letter of condemnation (III.iv), Imogen's cave dwelling (III.vi) followed by the consequent discovery of Cloten/'Posthumus' (IV.ii), and Imogen's reunion with her husband (V.v). All of these emotional scenes revolve around Imogen's feelings about Posthumus.

Faucit must highlight the first moment of Imogen's doubt and unhappiness about her husband, and these feelings begin in I.vi, the meeting with Iachimo. Faucit begins

her narration of I.vi with the announcement, "We now go back to Imogen" (179). Within the span of two sentences, she accelerates the "weeks" that "have obviously gone by" (179). The two most emotional parts of this scene occur as Imogen first receives the letter and when she hears Iachimo's description of Posthumus's alleged disloyalty to her. Faucit quotes Imogen (I.vi.3-7) to describe her current "mood," vexation, grief, and unhappiness:

> She is in this mood when Pisanio introduces "a noble gentleman of Rome," who brings letters from her lord. The mere mention of them sends all the colour from her face. Iachimo, noticing this, reassures her:--
>
> > "Change you madam?
> > The worthy Leonatus is in safety,
> > And greets your highness dearly."
>
> Now returns the delicate colour to her cheek, the warmth to her heart, and she can say with all her accustomed grace, "Thanks, good sir. You are kindly welcome." This is her first letter from her wedded lord; and while she is drinking in its words of love, Iachimo is watching her with all his eyes. The happiness in hers, lately so full of tears, adds to her fascination, and her whole demeanour expresses, silently, but eloquently, the purity and beauty of her soul. (180)

Faucit decelerates the moment just before Imogen receives the letter (I.vi.10) and the one while she is reading it (IV.vi.14-25), during Iachimo's aside. Faucit gives Imogen the actions of grieving, blanching, blushing, regaining composure, and "drinking" in words of love, all within just four lines of dialogue; she hears the information of the letter's arrival in I.vi.11, and begins reading it as Iachimo begins his aside in I.vi.15. Faucit even

gives Imogen the "silent" expression of the "purity and beauty of her soul" whilst Imogen reads the letter, which no doubt has to be quite an involved perusal of it (180). Later in the scene, in I.vi.63-155, Imogen erupts into emotion as Iachimo insinuates that her husband has not been loyal to her. Faucit's storytelling becomes equally as animated and agitated as Imogen's emotional state, with shorter bursts of quoted dialogue mostly from Imogen, both in and out of her own paragraphs, and with her own thoughts inserted alongside of Imogen's:

> Upon this [Imogen's request for Iachimo to be plain, I.vi.93-99], he speaks so plainly, and with such indignation, of her lord's disloyalty, that for a moment a cloud rests upon her mind. With a sad dignity she says--
>
> > "*Imo.* My lord, I fear,
> > Has forgot Britain.
> > *Iach.* And himself. Not I,
> > Inclined to this intelligence, pronounce
> > The beggary of his change; but 'tis your graces
> > That from my mutest conscience to my tongue
> > Charms this report out."
>
> He is now striking into a vein which reveals a something in the speaker from which, as a pure woman, she instinctively recoils, and she exclaims, "Let me hear no more!" Iachimo, mistaking for wounded pride the shock to her love, and to all the cherished convictions of the worth of Posthumus on which it rests, urges her to be revenged upon him. How beautiful is her reply! *For a wrong like this there is no remedy, no revenge. It is too monstrous even for belief*:--
>
> > "Revenged!
> > How should I be revenged? If this be true--
> > As I have such a heart, that both mine ears

Must not in haste abuse--if it be true,
How shall I be revenged?"

Imogen, who has throughout felt an instinctive dislike to the free-spoken Roman,-- this bringer of ill tidings,-- when he now dares to tender love and devotion to herself, on the instant reads him through and through. She calls at once for Pisanio to eject him from her presence, but the wily Italian has taken care not to have her loyal retainer within hearing. Quite earlier in the scene she has sent him out of the way by the words--

"Beseech you, sir, desire
My man's abode where I did leave him: he
Is strange and peevish."

Pisanio does not, therefore, answer to his mistress's call, and Iachimo continues his advances. Her instinct, then, was right. The cloud vanishes that for a moment has rested upon her mind; and instead of the doubting, perplexed woman, wounded in her most sacred belief, we see the indignant princess sweeping from her presence in measureless scorn the man whose every word she feels to be an insult:--

"Away! I do condemn mine ears that have
So long attended thee. If thou wert honorable,
Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not
For such an end thou seek'st; as base as strange.
Thou wrong'st a gentleman, who is as far
From thy report as thou from honour; and
Solicit'st here a lady, that disdains
Thee and the devil alike.--What ho! Pisanio!" [my italics]
(182-183)

In this section of commentary, Faucit energizes and augments Imogen's speech and severely edits the "wily Italian" Iachimo and his speeches in her recounting of this scene

(182). Faucit deliberately excises Iachimo's lines of I.vi.99-112, I.vi.118-28, and I.vi.132-39 so that she may focus instead on the inner thoughts of Imogen. Iachimo's speech of 99-112 becomes an Imogen-focused sentence, which silences him: "He is now striking into a vein which reveals a something in the speaker from which, as a pure woman, she instinctively recoils, and she exclaims, "Let me hear no more!" (182). Faucit condenses Iachimo's lines of 118-28 into a diegetic, or 'telling,' sentence: "Iachimo, mistaking for wounded pride the shock to her love, and to all the cherished convictions of the worth of Posthumus on which it rests, urges her to be revenged upon him" (182). In this sentence, still, Iachimo's suggested idea of revenge is used to further Faucit's description of Imogen's "shock to her love" and "cherished convictions" of her marriage. And due to her narratorial mediation, Faucit renders moot Iachimo's lines of 132-39, as his own lascivious intentions made clear to Imogen. Instead of allowing Iachimo to speak the lines, "I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure,/ More noble than that runagate to your bed,/ And will continue fast to your affection,/ Still close as sure" (I.vi.136-139), Faucit turns the spotlight on Imogen once again: "Imogen, who has throughout felt an instinctive dislike to the free-spoken Roman,-- this bringer of ill tidings,-- when he now dares to tender love and devotion to herself, on the instant reads him through and through" (182).

Faucit's narration of Iachimo's advances is consonant with what Imogen thinks and feels about her husband (she cannot bear any mention of Posthumus being a "runagate" to her bed) and what she feels about Iachimo's advances: she will not entertain anyone other than Posthumus dedicating himself to her "sweet pleasure" (I.iv.136). Imogen rejects Iachimo with her words of "measureless scorn" in I.vi.141-48,

and Faucit dismisses Iachimo with the expulsion of his salacious words in her narrative (183).

This scene's narrative moments of union between Faucit and Imogen reveal the great duress and emotion the narrator shares with this character. Imogen is presented with the two most abhorrent thoughts in her mind in this scene: first, that her husband has been unfaithful and that she should hurt her husband in kind, and second, that she should entertain Iachimo as that tool of revenge for her husband's indiscretions. In these instances of Imogen's heightened emotion, Faucit allows Imogen's dialogue to flow freely from her descriptive sentences ("With a sad dignity she says, 'My lord, I fear, Has forgot Britain') and flow freely from her own thoughts of Imogen's situation in indirect speech to Imogen's direct speech ("It is too monstrous even for belief ... 'Revenged!'). In this last instance especially, Faucit is clearly implicated in Imogen's story. Before Imogen can utter her lines of 128-32, Faucit admiringly approves of her response ("How beautiful is her reply!") and continues to further describe Imogen's thought process about Iachimo's suggestion of having her revenge on Posthumus and his alleged disloyalty: "For a wrong like this there is no remedy, no revenge. It is too monstrous even for belief:--'Revenged!'" In these specific utterances, the narrator who speaks is the same as the character who sees the monstrosity of the idea of revenge. Faucit's two declarations of the wrong (Posthumus's infidelity) and its monstrosity (the idea of Imogen resorting to infidelity out of revenge) are focalized together with Imogen's own thoughts and end with Faucit/Imogen's utterance of her incredulity of Iachimo's lewd suggestion.

In Faucit's discussion of the scenes leading up to III.iv, she is ebullient in her description of Imogen and what will lie ahead of her as Imogen commits herself to

journey to Milford-Haven. Faucit admits that she has derived great pleasure from acting in III.ii:

> All [Imogen's life at court] had been so sad before. What a burst of happiness, what play of loving fancy, had scope here! It was like a bit of Rosalind in the forest. The sense of liberty, of breathing in the free air, and for a while escaping from the trammels of the Court and her persecutors here, gave light to the eyes and buoyancy to the step. Imogen is already in imagination at that height of happiness at that 'beyond beyond,' which brings her into the presence of her banished lord." (191)

Faucit's detailed description of her stage experience with her heroines' freedom in their respective 'green worlds' melds with Imogen's own situation and feelings. One such elision between Faucit and Imogen can be seen in the sentence, "The sense of liberty, of breathing in the free air, and for a while escaping from the trammels of the Court and her persecutors here, gave light to the eyes and buoyancy to the step" (191). The "liberty" and "free air" felt by Rosalind and Faucit is felt, too, by Imogen; even though the "trammels of the Court" are Imogen's, the sentence ends with a non-specified set of eyes and buoyant step and with a feeling that is shared by all—Rosalind, Faucit, and Imogen.[9]

In III.iv., at Milford-Haven, Faucit decelerates each emotional moment of Imogen—the anticipation of seeing Posthumus, of telling him all her sweet thoughts of him, and of finding him in "blessed Milford" (192):

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[9] Julie Hankey, in "Helen Faucit and Shakespeare: Womanly Theater," writes of Faucit's Imogen/Rosalind comparison that the feeling described here "almost transcends the banished lord. Of course he is there in her imagination, but her buoyancy seems somehow autonomous too… like Rosalind, she is roofless, neither fathered nor husbanded" (66).

> And now we have to think of Imogen as having escaped from her courtly prison-house. By her side rides "the true Pisanio," her one friend, and he is conveying her to her husband. What happy anticipations fill her heart! Now she will be able to tell him all the "most pretty things" she had to say at their sad parting, when they were cut short by the entrance of her father, who,
>
> > "Like the tyrannous breathing of the north,
> > Shook all their buds from blowing."
>
> Absorbed in her own sweet dreams, she does not notice the continued silence of her companion, until, having reached some deep mountain solitude, he tells her the place of meeting is near at had, and they dismount. It is at this moment that they come before us. Imogen, very weary with the unusual fatigue, looks anxiously round for the approach of Posthumus. (192)

Faucit narrates Imogen's 'off-stage' moments leading up to her entrance with Pisanio in III.iv; Faucit imagines Imogen's 'escape' from Court, narrates her ride though the countryside, previews her thoughts of Posthumus, and announces her arrival at Milford-Haven. It is interesting that Faucit includes two analepses of Act I—Cymbeline's cruel parting of Posthumus and Imogen (I.i) and Imogen's regret at being unable to take leave of her husband (I.iii). Faucit takes both of these flashbacks from Imogen's speech to Pisanio in I.iii.25-37, "I did not take my leave of him, but had/ Most pretty things to say. Ere I could tell him/ How I would think of him at certain hours/ Such thoughts and such," and manipulates them slightly to serve the purpose of instilling her Imogen with the

emotional memory of the event which set the play in motion—the banishment of Posthumus. Faucit places Imogen's "most pretty things" she had to say at the "sad parting" of Imogen and Posthumus at I.i.129, not at the actual departure of Posthumus, for which Imogen wishes she had be present and which occurs sometime before I.iii. Posthumus's departure is an off-stage event that Pisanio actually witnesses and reports to Imogen in I.iii. Faucit also places Imogen's I.iii. description of her father's "tyrannous breathing" which "shook all their buds from blowing" at that moment when Cymbeline enters and banishes Posthumus in I.i.129—a moment which Imogen painfully recalls as she was unable to "Give him that parting kiss which I had set/ Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father,/ And like the tyrannous breathing of the north/ Shakes all our buds from growing" (I.iii.34-37). Faucit thus includes the two snippets of Imogen's dialogue to give emotional color to her Imogen and to her "sweet dreams" and to illustrate the importance of this meeting between wife and husband (192).

In both lines and action, Faucit immensely decelerates and elongates Shakespeare's rendering of Imogen's actual reading of the letter and her reaction to it. It is an emotional event for Faucit to narrate and for Imogen to be saddled with. Much later in her narrative, in fact, Faucit recalls this scene again to remind us how earth-shattering this letter is: "the blow which was inflicted by the first sentence in that cruel letter went to the heart with a too fatal force" (225). That first sentence of the letter is so 'fatal' that Faucit must arrest her narrative abruptly. She is mirroring Imogen in the moment of receiving that fatal blow—Faucit cannot speak of the charge of infidelity, and Imogen can't either:

My pen stops here. I know not how to write. Such a charge as that letter contains, to meet the eyes of such a creature! She has begun to read, full of apprehension for her husband's safety, and from his hand she now receives her deathblow. As the last word drops from her lips, her head bows in silence over the writing, and her body sinks as if some mighty rock had crushed her with its weight. These few words have sufficed to blight, to blacken, and to wither her whole life. The wonder is, that she ever rises. I used to feel tied to the earth. "What need," says Pisanio, "to draw my sword? The paper hath cut her throat already. ...What cheer madam?" What indeed! In a dull kind of way, she, after a while, repeats the words in the letter: "False to his bed! What is it to be false?" Then, remembering how so many weary nights have been passed by her, she asks--

> "To lie in watch there, and to think on him?
> To weep 'twixt clock and clock? If sleep charge nature,
> To break it with a fearful dream of him,
> And cry myself awake? That's false to his bed,
> Is it?"

Her honour wedded to his honour, both must be wrecked together! That he should entertain one instant's suspicion of her takes the life out of her heart. No sin could be more utterly abhorrent to her nature than that of which she is accused; and this no one should know so well as her accuser, the companion of her life, the husband from whom no secret, not one of her most sacred feelings, has been withheld. It is because she feels this, that she can find no other solution to the mystery than that the "shes of

> *Italy" have "betrayed mine interest and his honour." Then flashes upon her like a flood of light Iachimo's account of how the "jolly Briton" passed his time, --of his opinion of woman, of "what she cannot choose but must be," and of his contempt for any man who will his "free hours languish for assured bondage,"-- and worse still, how he could "slaver with lips as common as the stairs that mount the Capitol; join gripes with hands made hard with hourly falsehood;" be "partnered with tomboys," &c. All this comes back sharply on the memory of this poor bewildered creature, who holds no other clue to the motive, can imagine no other reason why the hand she loved should desire to murder her.* In her agony she remembers that Iachimo, when accusing Posthumus of inconstancy, "looked like a villain"; but, now that his words have seemingly come true, she exclaims, "Now, methinks thy favour's good enough." No suspicion crosses her mind that this same villain is in any way connected with her present suffering. The sleep which "seized her wholly," and made her the victim of his treachery, was too deep for that; neither could the loss of the bracelet be at all connected in her mind with him. Oh the exquisite cruelty of it all!--under false pretenses to get her from the Court, plant her in a lonely desert, and there take her life! [my italics] (193-94)

This letter reading in the play transpires as follows: Imogen reads the letter aloud in lines 21-31, she reacts to it while Pisanio's speaks his lines 32-39, and finally Imogen questions Posthumus's accusation in lines 40-44. Faucit's narrative excises Imogen's ten lines of reading the letter in the play in favor of narrating what is happening in Imogen's

mind. Because the letter's words are potent enough "to blight, to blacken, and to wither her whole life," Imogen does not utter them in Faucit's narrative (193). Faucit tells us that Imogen begins reading, but then allows only one "last word" to 'drop from her lips'; that last word, in fact, is "disloyal," which Faucit cannot allow her Imogen to physically utter here. In the play, Imogen reads the last few lines of the letter, addressed to Pisanio about what to do with Imogen: "Let thine own hands take away her life. I shall give thee opportunity at Milford-Haven. She hath my letter to the purpose; where if thou fear to strike and to make me certain it is done, thou art the pander to her dishonour and equally to me disloyal" (III.iv.27-31). It is significant that Faucit singles out Imogen's unspoken last word—"disloyal". Specifically, in the word's context in the letter, Posthumus is characterizing Pisanio as disloyal if he will not carry out the command to kill Imogen; however, the whole letter's subject is Imogen's disloyalty to Posthumus and how she "hath play'd the strumpet" in Posthumus's bed (III.iv.21-22). Disloyalty is what Imogen has been charged with and disloyalty is what Posthumus now displays as he incriminates his innocent wife; and therefore, when "the last word drops from her lips," Faucit does not specify the last word of the letter and does not have Imogen speak it. The letter truly does deliver to Imogen a "deathblow": Imogen is completely silenced as she reads the letter 'aloud,' "her head bows in silence over the writing, and her body sinks as if some mighty rock had crushed her with its weight" (193). Faucit then gives Pisanio a chance to say lines 32-33 and then line 39, only to make way again for Imogen's volatile reaction to the charge of being false to her husband in lines 40-44. What follows is the italicized passage above—Faucit's micromanagement of each agonizing thought, moment to moment, in tormented Imogen, creating another scene entirely, frozen in time in a

narrative pause between lines 44 and 46. By choosing very carefully how she represents Imogen's consciousness, Faucit manipulates her reader to sympathize with and truly see Imogen and her torment.

The false accusation of disloyalty levied against Imogen marks a powerful shift in Faucit's narrative as she begins to describe the complete breakdown and dissolution of Imogen's thoughts of her marriage. Because of this untrue accusation, both their 'honours' must be "wrecked"—Imogen's honour wrecked falsely and Posthumus's honour wrecked by his belief of his wife's infidelity and by his desire to have her killed (193). Faucit interpolates between indirect and direct speech as she describes Imogen's thought process in understanding "the mystery" of why Posthumus, "from whom no secret, not one of her most sacred feelings, has been withheld," has accused her (193). First, Faucit has Imogen's words of I.iii.29-30 come back to her—it is possible that Posthumus has been seduced by Italian women—the "shes of Italy" (29). Then, Iachimo's words of Act I, scene vi, lines 67, 70-73, 105-107, 121-22 come upon Imogen "like a flood of light" (194). Faucit records and gives voice to the dialogue that is "sharply" in the memory of Imogen and makes her thought process evident to us (194). In the play, the next lines of Imogen are: "I false? Thy conscience witness! Iachimo,/ Thou dids't accuse him of incontinency;/ Thou then lookd'st like a villain; now methinks/ Thy favor's good enough" (III.iv.46-49). Faucit continues, however, to present these lines indirectly as memories, too—"In her agony she remembers that Iachimo ..." (194). This mimetic return to the actual dialogue of the present scene (III.iv) flows seamlessly from Faucit's own construction of Imogen's thought process. After Faucit has made Imogen's thoughts visceral to us, she is ready to have Imogen rejoin the action of III.iv

with Imogen's realization of Iachimo's words: "but, now that his words have seemingly come true, she exclaims, "Now, methinks thy favour's good enough" (194). Even though Faucit's narrative pause gives her Imogen reason and cause to implicate Iachimo in this current treachery, Faucit insists that "no suspicion crosses her mind that this same villain is in any way connected with her present suffering" (194). Faucit points out that Imogen cannot know that it was Iachimo who stole the bracelet while she was sleeping and who had a larger role in this series of events. Just as in the play, the audience knows this information, and Imogen does not. Yet with the inclusion of her narrative pause between lines 44-46 of Imogen's thought process, Faucit makes clear that her Imogen knows Iachimo and his words have something to do with her present "exquisite cruelty" (194).

On the way to Milford-Haven, Imogen's augmented cave dweller life (III.vi) with her hosts and her consequent discovery of Cloten/'Posthumus' (IV.ii) make up the next two highly-charged moments from the play for Faucit. Faucit admits that this scene, "and those at the cave immediately following, which as I have said, laid the strongest hold on my young imagination" (198). In the beginning of her discussion of III.vi, Faucit creates much more of an extra-textual life for her Imogen than just narrating Imogen's given speech of lines 1-27. Faucit breaks up that speech with description of Imogen's actions, thoughts, and feelings, she interjects her own thoughts on Imogen's plight, and then she returns to the speech by way of discussing her own "instinctive" and "unusual" way of entering the cave (199). Imogen's speech beginning scene vi becomes an opportunity for Faucit to not only decelerate the moment before the speech, but the speech itself. In the play, Imogen, disguised in boy's clothes, enters the scene alone and says, "I see a man's

life is a tedious one,/ I have tir'd myself" (1-2). Faucit begins this scene with a mimetic shift:

> What a picture Imogen presents as we see her next (Act iii. sc. 6)--alone, among the wild hills, in a strange dress, in a strange world--wandering along unknown paths, still far away from Milford-Haven! *Oh, that name, Milford-Haven! I never hear it spoken, see it written, without thinking of Imogen.* Weary and footsore, she wanders on, with the dull ache at her heart-- far worse to bear than hunger,-- yearning, yet dreading, to get to Milford, that "blessed Milford," as once she thought it. *When I read of great harbour and docks which are now there, I cannot help wishing that one little sheltering corner could be found to christen as "Imogen's Haven." Never did heroine or woman better deserve to have her name thus consecrated and remembered.* For two nights she has made the ground her bed. What food she had with her has long been exhausted; and there is, oh, so little spur of hope or promise in her heart to urge her onwards! She complains but little. The tender nursling of the Court learns, by the roughest lessons, what goes on in that outer world of which she has seen nothing. "I see," she says, "a man's life is a tedious one." [my italics] (198)

To begin the speech, Imogen, says Faucit, presents us with the picture of her solitude in this very foreign place. In fact, when Faucit interjects her remembrances and personal thoughts of Milford-Haven, she is wandering as much as Imogen is. More importantly, Faucit's personal interjections serve to help decelerate Imogen's speech. Faucit not only

augments and micromanages this speech, moment by moment, but also mirrors Imogen's thought process during 1-27. In all, elaborating on this speech of only twenty-seven lines in Shakespeare's play, Faucit devotes three pages of her text to it and inserts five personal interjections about Milford-Haven, Milford-Haven and Imogen, her past emotional history with the scene, and her past theatrical history with the scene. In the beginning of Imogen's speech, after speaking of her weariness, she, too, thinks of Milford-Haven, "Milford,/ When from the mountain top Pisanio showed thee,/ Thou wast within a ken" (III.iv.4-6). Imogen realizes that assistance is not forthcoming ("foundations fly the wretched"), nor terribly helpful when it does arrive ("Two beggars told me/ I could not miss my way") (7-9). She then thinks of the fidelity of people and, eventually, of her husband, "My dear lord,/ Thou art one o'th'false ones" (14-15). Recalling her hunger and need for shelter, Imogen providentially happens upon an entrance to a cave and finally enters: "Ho! who's here?/ If any thing that's civil, speak; if savage,/ Take or lend. Ho! No answer? Then I'll enter./ Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy/ But fear the sword like me, he'll scarcely look on't./ Such a foe, good heavens!" (22-27). In the passage above, Faucit becomes a dramatized narrator as her first two italicized interjections mirror Imogen's Milford statement ("Oh, that name, Milford-Haven! I never hear it spoken, see it written, without thinking of Imogen") and her desire for shelter ("I cannot help wishing that one little sheltering corner could be found to christen as "Imogen's Haven"[10]) (198). Faucit's next statement, "Never did heroine or woman better deserve to have her name thus consecrated and remembered," reflects Imogen's current situation—she has been lied to and most falsely accused of infidelity by her

[10] At present, there is a residential street in Milford Haven called "Imogen Place," Milford Haven, Dyfed SA73 2JG, UK. It is a connecting road from Shakespeare Avenue to Stratford Road.

husband. Faucit's next interruption of the scene describes the "hold" that this scene had on her "young imagination," because she was struck with the providential guidance given to Imogen at her most desolate: "It seems so strange, and yet so fitting, that, in her greatest grief and loneliness, Imogen should be led by an unseen hand to her natural protectors, and that they, by an irrepressible instinct, should, at the first sight, be moved to love, admire, and cherish her" (198). Imogen, too, is led to the cave just as she was "at point to sink for food": "But what is this?/ Here is a path to't; 'tis some savage hold" (III.vi.15-16). And, finally, at the end of the speech, Imogen's and Faucit's experiences and stories are fully intertwined. As Imogen enters the cave, Faucit recalls her "unusual" way, of entering the cave--full of trepidation and "natural terror" (199):

> The "Ho! who's here?" was given, as you may remember, with a voice as faint and full of terror as could be,-- followed by an instant shrinking behind the nearest bush, tree, or rock. Then another and a little bolder venture: "If anything that's civil, speak!" Another recoil. Another pause: "If savage, take or lend! Ho!" Gaining a little courage, because of the entire silence: "No answer? then I'll enter!"-- peering right and left, still expecting something to pounce out upon her, and keeping ready, in the last resort, to fly. Then the sword, which had been an encumbrance before, and something to be afraid of, comes into her mind. If the dreaded enemy be as cowardly as herself, it will keep him at bay:--
>
> > "Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy
> > But fear the sword like me, he'll scarcely look on'it."

> And so, with great dread, but still greater hunger, and holding the sword straight before her, she creeps slowly into the cave. (200)

Faucit begins this discussion of Imogen's cave entrance by referencing Anna Swanwick and her memory of Faucit's stage performance of Imogen. Just before this passage, Faucit admits to Swanwick that "you have seen, and therefore I need not dwell on it more than to remind you" of her Imogen during this scene. Yet, Faucit does dwell on it, begins to speak of her Imogen, and, by the end of the paragraph, Faucit's Imogen and the Imogen of her narrative are one. The initial utterance of "'Ho! who's here?' was given" is passively constructed—the "Ho!" was given by Faucit. But, the actions (recoil, pause, gaining courage, peering right and left, keeping ready) that animate the end of Imogen's speech move the narrative to Imogen herself and bring us into a present moment, where Faucit and Imogen are unified as they creep "slowly into the cave" (200).

Faucit establishes and embellishes Imogen's cave dwelling before she narrates Imogen's discovery of what she thinks is her husband's decapitated body. Faucit envisions Imogen's, or Fidele's, idyllic cave life with her new hosts, Arviragus, Guiderius, and Belarius, and devotes one of the longest quoted passages in the letter to them—the dialogue which immediately follows their discovery of 'dead' Imogen. Faucit imagines the evening scene in the cave, off-stage after III.vi, because she needs to establish Imogen's emotional state: her domestic comfort in the cave needs to come before her 'heart-sickness' of IV.ii.37 and shock of IV.ii.295-332. Faucit begins her evening scene by offering that Imogen and company "supped" and then her new hosts implored her to tell her story, which was told in a "very guarded way" (202). Continuing the events of the evening and previewing future evenings like it, Faucit explains:

By this time they [Arviragus, Guiderius, Belarius] would have found their softest skins to make a couch for one so delicate, which she, with all a woman's instinct, would wrap well around her limbs. Then, forgetting fatigue, she would sing or recite to them some tale, of which we know she had many well stored in her memory. How the charm her presence had wrought would deepen upon them as the night wore away, and how the dreams that filled their sleep would carry on the sweet dream of the waking hours which they had passed by her side!

How long Imogen remains their guest we are not told--some days it must have been, else all the things they speak of could not have happened. For the first time, their cave is felt to be a home. On their return from a day's sport, a fresh smell of newly strewn rushes, we may think, pervades it. Where the light best finds its way into the cavern are seen such dainty wild-flowers as she has found in her solitary rambles. Fresh water from the brook is there. The vegetables are washed, and cut into quaint "characters" to garnish the dishes; a savoury odour of herbs comes from the "sauced" broth, and a smile, sweet in their eyes beyond all other sweetness, salutes them as they hurry in, each vying with the other who first shall catch it. When the meal is ready, they wait upon Fidele, trying with the daintiest morsels to tempt her small appetite; and, when it is over, and she is couched upon their warmest skins, they lay themselves at her feet, while she sings, "angel-like," to them or tells them tales of "high emprise and chivalry," as becomes a king's daughter. (203)

Faucit's imagining of Imogen's cave-home life is certainly evidence that these cave scenes "laid the strongest hold" on her mind (198). In this added scene to the play, it is important for Faucit to establish Imogen's "subtle charm" (203) with the three men. In these two passages, there is warmth, protection, good story and song, felicity, and domesticity. Imogen decorates her newly found nest with flowers, she cleans the cave and lays out "newly strewn rushes," and she even prepares meals (203). In part, Faucit's source for this extended narration comes from Guiderius's lines about her "neat cookery" (IV.ii.49) and Arviragus's lines, "How angel-like he sings!" (IV.ii.48). Yet Faucit amplifies Imogen's domestic prowess by having her please her hosts by dutifully 'saluting' them with smiles and beautifying every aspect of their cave. Later in the letter, Faucit refers to these lines (IV.ii.46-58 in a truncated fashion) again, writing, "What a picture do these sentences bring before us of a true lady and princess—not sitting apart, brooding over her own great grief, that her dear lord should be 'one o' the false ones,' but bestirring herself to make their cavern-home as attractive and pleasant to them as only the touch and feeling of a refined woman could!" (207-208).

In anticipation of the emotion Faucit will stir with Imogen's horrific shock of seeing the headless body of what she thinks is Posthumus in IV.ii.295-332, she creates an expanse of thirty-three lines of IV.ii.197-234 to appear in her narrative to give full weight to Imogen's appearance of death. Faucit transcribes so much of Shakespeare's dialogue, unadulterated and unmediated by any added description or narration. She takes herself out her narration of this scene just as Imogen herself is 'out' of this scene because the drug she took has given her the semblance of death. Faucit knows that as Arviragus bears in his arms the seemingly dead Imogen, great pathos would have to be felt in the

audience; however, as she has been ‘dead’ at that moment onstage when she has played Imogen, she can only imagine it: “I know not with what emotions this passage is received in the theatre, for I have never seen the play acted; but, often as I have read it, I can never read it afresh without a rush of tears into my eyes ...” (210). The whole quoted passage, then, speaks for itself, as Imogen and Faucit cannot.

The pathos of Imogen’s perceived death continues as Faucit treats Imogen’s discovery of her ‘husband’ and his headless body with animation and embellishment. As is *de rigueur* for her treatment of Imogen monologues, Faucit breaks up, extends, and energizes the speech with Imogen’s thought process and emotional reactions. Faucit first describes Imogen as she wakes and how her “dream is still with her” (212). Faucit continues:

> Then, becoming conscious of something by her side:--
>
> > “But soft! no bedfellow!-- O gods and goddesses!”
>
> She is now fully awake, feels the flowers about her, and sees the blood-stained body by her side:--
>
> > “These flowers are like the pleasures of the world;
> > This bloody man, the care on’t. I hope I dream;
> > For so I thought I was a cave-keeper,
> > And cook to honest creatures; but ‘tis not so.”
>
> Surprise combines with fear to overwhelm her:--
>
> > “Good faith
> > I tremble still with fear. But if here be
> > Yet left in Heaven as small a drop of pity
> > As a wren’s eye, fear’d gods, a part of it!”
>
> She looks about her; the cave, the rocks, the woodland that she knew, are there:--

> “The dream’s here still: even when I wake, it is
> Without me, as within me; not imagined, felt.”

And yet how comes it that she should be lying beside a headless man? On looking closer she recognizes the garments of Posthumus--the figure too--*’tis very Posthumus!*

> “I know the shape of his leg; this is his hand;
> His foot Mercurial; his Martial thigh;
> The brawn of Hercules: but his Jovial face—
> Murder in heaven!--How!-- ‘Tis gone.”

At once her thoughts fix on Pisanio as having betrayed them both with his forged letters. It is he, “conspired with that irregulous devil Cloten,” that has cut off her lord. All former distrust of that “dear lord” vanishes on the instant, and he is resorted to the place in her heart and imagination which he had held before. They have both been the victims of the blackest treachery, and Pisanio, “damned Pisanio,” hath--

> “From this most bravest vessel of the world
> Struck the main-top!”

Think of the anguish of her cry:--

> “O Posthumus! Alas,
> Where is thy head? where’s that? Ay me! where’s that?
> Pisanio might have kill’d thee at the heart,
> And left this head on. How should this be? Pisanio--
> ‘Tis he, and Cloten. Malice and lucre in them
> Have laid this woe here. Oh, ‘tis pregnant, pregnant!
> The drug he gave me, which he said was precious
> And cordial to me, have I not found it
> Murderous to the senses? That confirms it home!
> All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks,
> And mine to boot, be darted on thee!

> And with one long agonised wail, "Oh, my lord, my lord!" she falls senseless on the body. [my italics] (212-213)

Faucit keeps Imogen's speech (IV.ii.291-332) mostly in tact; the slight revisions excise lines 300-302 and 329-332, replace line 308 with her own words, narrate 314-317, and place 313-314 at the end of the speech. Of this discovery, Faucit writes that now Imogen's "interest in life is over" (214), and therefore, Faucit must convey Imogen's fear and anguish by amplifying her exclamations and underlining her emotions. Most strikingly, in a moment of communion, Faucit places Imogen's actual realization that the body is that of Posthumus within her own narration of the event, not within Imogen's dialogue. Instead of having Imogen react to the body with line 308, "A headless man? The garments of Posthumus?", wherein the realization lies, Faucit represents her thoughts in indirect speech with, "And yet how comes it that she should be lying beside a headless man? On looking closer she recognizes the garments of Posthumus--the figure too--'tis very Posthumus!" (213). As a result, the boundary between Faucit's narration and the representation of Imogen's thoughts is hard to distinguish as both narrator and character react to the body simultaneously. Faucit excises 300-302, where Imogen takes the time to reflect further on how illusory her "cave-keeper" existence was, perhaps because those lines do not maintain the level of anxiety and emotion her Imogen requires. Similarly, Faucit's extirpation of 329-332, Imogen's cry to "give color to my pale cheek" with the body's blood, does not focus on Imogen's mental anguish in the way she requires. Faucit needs Imogen to awaken, to experience surprise, fear, and shock, and to recuperate Posthumus in her estimation, to unravel the plot against her, and finally, to agonize the loss of her lord. A gruesome and pathetic desire to slather Posthumus's blood on

Imogen's cheek is incongruous with Faucit's conception of Lady Imogen. Faucit and her penchant for combining a mimetic representation of the scene with indirect speech flowing into direct speech of the thoughts and words of Imogen, manipulate her readers to see Imogen vividly in her narrative.

In her own descriptive paragraphs of the events prior to Imogen's reunion with her husband (V.v), Faucit narrates them diegetically. Not until after Cymbeline and Fidele/Imogen have finished speaking in private does Faucit begin to mimetically present Imogen: "And now Imogen comes forward with Cymbeline who bids the seeming page stand by his side and make his demand aloud, commanding Iachimo at the same time to answer him frankly on pain of torture. My boon says Imogen, is, "that this gentleman may render of whom he has this ring?" (219). Imogen's pertinent question of 135-36 flows effortlessly from Faucit's sentence and catapults the unraveling of all of Iachimo's treachery and villainy. In lines 153-68 and in 169-209, Iachimo speaks of Posthumus, the ring, the wager, and the bracelet. Faucit focuses solely on Imogen during all of Iachimo's lines, and allows her the narrative space to react, understand, and express all that she is thinking, despite the lack of speech. Iachimo's lines of 141-6 become Imogen-voiced reactions of "By villainy? Yet how? As yet, Imogen is without a clue" (220). Iachimo's next lines of 147-149, send "all the blood back to [Imogen's] heart" (220). And, during Iachimo's recital of his wrongdoings (153-68 and 169-209), Faucit does not represent anything in her narrative except Imogen's expression of thoughts and feelings:

> Imagine Imogen's state of mind during the recital! Oh the shame, the agony with which she hears that her "dear lord" has indeed had cause to think her false! *All is now clear as day. The mystery is solved; but too*

late, too late! She remembers the supposed treasure in the chest, although Iachimo does not speak of it. *Then the lost bracelet! How dull she has been not to think before of how it might have been stolen from her!* Worst misery of all, Posthumus has died in the belief of her guilt. *No wonder he wished for her death!* What bitter hopeless shame possesses her, even as though all were true that he had been told! Only in the great revealing of all mysteries hereafter will Posthumus learn the truth. But till then she has to bear the burden of knowing with what bitter thoughts of her he passed out of life.

Ah, dear friend, as I write, the agony of all these thoughts seems again to fill my mind, as it ever used to do when acting this scene upon the stage. I wonder if I ever looked what I felt! It is in such passages as these that Shakespeare surpasses all dramatic writers. He has faith in his interpreters, and does not encumber them with words. No words could express what then was passing in Imogen's soul. At such moments Emerson has truly said, we only "live from a great depth of being."[11]

I cannot conceive what Imogen would have done eventually had Posthumus been indeed dead. But I can conceive the strange bewildered rapture with which she sees him spring forward to interrupt Iachimo's

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[11] This phrase is from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, "History," published in 1841. The context of that phrase is as follows: "It has been said that 'common souls pay with what they do; nobler souls with that which they are.' And why? Because a soul, living from a great depth of being, awakens in us by its actions and words, by its very looks and manners, the same power and beauty that a gallery of sculpture, or of pictures, are wont to animate" (45). It is interesting that Emerson mentions the "power and beauty of a gallery or sculpture," as this power and beauty of Imogen is something which Faucit wants to share with us in her own representation of Imogen in her Gallery.

> further speech. *He is not dead. He has heard her vindication;* and she, too, lives to hear his remorse, his self-reproaches, his bitter taunts upon his own credulity! [my italics] (220-21)

Here Faucit's narration of Imogen's "state of mind" gives Imogen the opportunity to voice her shame, enlightenment, understanding, memories, self-reproach, and misery.

Through using indirect and free indirect speech, Faucit interrupts Imogen's own thought process to mirror her own feelings as Imogen is expressing a litany of emotions. The italicized sentences above have a certain ambiguity about who speaks—Faucit or Imogen. For example, Faucit uses indirect speech to describe Imogen's self-reprimanding thoughts about the loss of the bracelet: "How dull she has been not to think before of how it might have been stolen from her! (220). And then, Faucit follows that sentence with free indirect speech, "No wonder he wished for her death!" (220). In this moment of communion, Faucit-Imogen both understand what exactly she has been accused of: infidelity. Faucit acknowledges Anna Swanwick at this moment of "agony" for her and for Imogen—in her act of writing her narrative and in her memory of acting this scene. Significantly, even though Faucit has succeeded in recording Imogen's inner life in her own narrative, she herself has fears that she may not have conveyed all of Imogen's inner life on the stage. At this moment, Faucit suggests that no amount of dialogue would have helped communicate Imogen's "soul"—a spiritual entity which is truly intangible. What we do see in this moment, however, is that Faucit and Imogen feel, express, and act as one in indirect and free indirect speech. Faucit has no difficulty in oscillating between her expression (which is Imogen's) and her description of Imogen's expression.

After Faucit describes the “last sweet moment[s]” of Imogen (her reunions with her husband and with her brothers), she gives Imogen the narrative space to speak her last lines and presents Cymbeline’s “picture” of Imogen in lines 392-396 (222, 223). Faucit describes lines 401 and onward with:

> Nor is Lucius forgotten; for when Cymbeline, in his exuberant happiness, bids his prisoners be joyful too, “for they shall taste our comfort,” Imogen, as she hangs upon the breast of Posthumus, turns smilingly to the noble Roman with the words, “My good master, I will yet do you service,” and helps to relieve him of his chains. They are the last she speaks; and here I might well leave her, with the picture of her in our minds which Shakespeare has drawn for us in the words of her delighted father:--
>
> > “See
> > Posthumus anchors upon Imogen;
> > And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eye
> > On him, her brothers, me, her master, hitting
> > Each object with a joy.” (223)

Faucit doubly inscribes this last image of Imogen and her connubial felicity. She mimetically presents Imogen at Posthumus’s neck and gives in direct speech Cymbeline’s words, or Shakespeare’s “picture,” of the same image. She enshrines her Imogen in this picture and in her gallery to close her official commentary on the play and her heroine. Indeed, Faucit believes that the image of Posthumus anchored upon Imogen is the final image from the play where “most people will prefer to leave [Imogen], as Shakespeare leaves her and all around her, both good and bad, happy” (223).

Yet, because Faucit could never leave her Imogen at the play’s end, she cannot now leave Imogen in her written narrative. At the end of this letter an epilogue is devised

for Imogen because Faucit admits that she could "never could leave my characters when the scene closed in upon them, but always dreamed them over in my mind until the end" (223). Faucit narrates a plentiful afterlife[12] for Imogen and her retinue: now that Imogen's sufferings are over, she forgives Posthumus ("She has forgotten as well as forgiven"); Posthumus cannot forgive himself ("No! I believe never"); Guiderius and Arviragus will have a "sweet sister-tie" with Imogen; Belarius and Pisanio will be a part of a "group of loving hearts about the happy princess"; and Iachimo's "even bitterer pangs of remorse than he then felt will assail [him] and never leave him" (224-225). Sadly, Imogen's trial will eventually overwhelm and overtake her: "Happiness hides for a time injuries which are past healing" (225). To end her narrative, Faucit must envision Imogen's death:

> Trembling, gradually, and oh, how reluctantly! the hearts to whom that life [Imogen] is so precious will see the sweet smile which greets them grow fainter, will hear the loved voice grow feebler! The wise physician Cornelius will tax his utmost skill, but he will find the hurt is too deep for mortal leech-craft. The "piece of tender air" very gently, but very surely, will fade out like an exhalation of the dawn. Her loved ones will watch it with straining eyes, until it
>
> > "Melts from
> > The smallness of a gnat to air; and then

[12] Georgianna Ziegler describes Faucit's creations of her character's backstories as fantasies ("Actress" 96). The fantasy is important; in writing about Faucit's conception of Portia, Ziegler contends that Faucit's "fantasizing has the distinct purpose of helping her to understand Portia's lines and interpret her behavior on the stage. Where it goes beyond such necessity however and enters that merely curious realm of [Mary Cowden] Clarke's stories is when she projects a future life for the characters" (96). The 'curious realm' Faucit enters by constructing her character's afterlife is necessary to understand the psychic connection to her character and the unique narrative Faucit creates. A character's afterlife as presented here does not need to serve a practical purpose on the stage. Faucit's realization of that non-existent part of the character's given onstage life is necessary to see the union of narrator and character.

> Will turn their eyes and weep."
>
> And when, as the years go by, their grief grows calm, that lovely soul will be to them
>
> > "Like a star
> > Beaconing from the abodes where the Immortals are;"
>
> inspiring to worthy lives, and sustaining them with the hope that where she is, they may, in God's good time, become fit to be. Something of this the "divine Imogen" is to us also. Is it not so? (225-26)

Faucit beautifully and peacefully describes Imogen's death: Imogen is the "piece of tender air" who will fade and melt from this mortal coil and eventually will transmute to an astral soul. The "piece of tender air" appellation comes, in fact, from Jupiter himself--the phrase was written on a "tablet" given to Posthumus so that he would know his "full fortune": "When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of tender air" (V.iv.110, 138-40). In V.v.435-445, the Soothsayer decodes the tablet's meaning and deciphers the "piece of tender air" as "virtuous" Imogen herself. Imogen, the "tender air," will evanesce like an "exhalation of the dawn"—this phrase recalls an image from Shelley in his poem, "Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude": "But thou art fled/ Like some frail exhalation; which the dawn/ Robes in its golden beams,--ah! thou hast fled!/ The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,/ The child of grace and genius" (686-690). The fading of Imogen's life is cleverly paired with her own lines of I.iii, as she is fantasizing about how she might have taken her leave of Posthumus when he was sailing away: "Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from/ The smallness of a gnat to air, and then/ Have turn'd mine eye and wept" (20-22). Faucit envisions this

parting of a loved one by recalling Imogen's imagined scene if she had taken her leave of her husband. Imogen has taken her leave of us, but she is not gone. Again, Faucit elicits the poetic prowess of Shelley, by using two of his lines of "Adonais": "The soul of Adonais, like a star,/Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are" (494-5). Faucit ends her narrative with Imogen's death, but leaves us with her transcendent, divine soul to live on in us.[13]

As Faucit includes Anna Swanwick in "Something of this the 'divine Imogen' is to us also. Is it not so?," she is also inviting her readers to consider her Imogen and Imogen's divinity. Imogen's lovely soul will also be to us 'something' that will inspire us and give us hope that we will be as ethereal and eternal like a star. With the closing of the letter, Faucit reminds us that Imogen's life, death, and divinity is ultimately shared between two friends, who have loved her most. Faucit's narrative ultimately allows us to understand how she shares one of Imogen's trenchant qualities—that of having a "natural disposition to lose herself in others" (206). Luckily, for us, Faucit records for us her narrative interaction with Imogen so that her readers can see those moments of union.

'Adorning the chamber of our inner life': Imogen in Shakespeare's Garden

Just as Faucit exhibits her characters in her Gallery and shares their lives with her friends in an epistolary framework, Elliott devises a beautiful narrative space in which to display the characters that she has cultivated, tended, and nurtured. In *Shakspeare's*

[13] Carol Carlisle, in her biography of Faucit, reads this 'extra-dramatic' passage as Faucit's inability "to empathize with a woman who could live happily with a man who had injured her" and her inability "to accept the quick shift from shock and suffering to 'happy ever after'" (251). Carlisle's reading of this passage differs from mine; I view Imogen's death to be inextricably linked to the divine friendship existing between Faucit, Imogen, and Swanwick.

Garden of Girls, Elliott envisions Shakespeare's female characters in her own garden where she showcases them for our mental and sensual pleasure. In her threshold to her textual Garden, the introduction "At the Wicket," Elliott welcomes us through that little garden gate and invites us to behold these "blossoms nurtured under English skies and instinct with the virtues of the soil that gave them birth" (i). Elliott's own garden of Shakespeare girl-flowers is inspired by Tennyson's verses from "Maud," which she uses as the epigraph to her chapter on Juliet: "Queen Rose of the rosebud garden of girls,/ Come hither, the dances are done;/ In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,/ Queen lily and rose in one;/ Shine out, little head, swimming over with curls,/ To the flowers and be their sun" (3). It is not just the physical beauty of Shakespeare's girl-flowers that we should admire, however. Elliott reminds us at both the opening and close to her work that the admiration and contemplation of Shakespeare's girl-flowers are helpful stays against the vagaries of the workaday world and are a means to refresh our minds and spirits. At the end of her text, Elliott writes:

> The more we contemplate these flowers of humanity, the more we learn to love them and to feel that there is no recreation more thoroughly refreshing to the weary brain and tired worker than to wander at will amongst the woods and meadows where they bloom, and gather their bright blossoms to adorn the chamber of our inner life, and deck with beauty the shelves and recesses of our mental workroom. (351)

Elliott hopes that not only recreation and refreshment will come of examination of Shakespeare's flowers, but also that our inner life may be satisfied by an emotional and intellectual "never failing spring of pleasure" (iii). Just as Faucit intimately knows her

characters which she has viscerally embodied on stage and in her narrative, Elliott also knows these characters because she can “take their hands in honest faith and learn from them to appreciate more than ever, nobility of character, singleness of purpose, and purity of ideal” (ii).

Elliott’s narrative frame of the Garden positions Shakespeare’s characters in a pragmatic and realistic world. In addition to representing the lives of the characters and events of Shakespeare’s plays, Elliott inserts her own personal ‘story’ in her narrative. Elliott’s ‘story’ is that of a working woman who seeks “pure refreshment and education” and “genuine friendship” in the “sisterhood” of these female characters (ii, iii) in her Garden. Elliott’s wish to share this friendship with other women and to raise up her sisters is further underscored in her introduction by her inclusion of Charles Cowden Clarke’s statement about Shakespeare and the women of England from his 1863 text, *Shakespeare-Characters: Chiefly Those Subordinate*:

> Shakespeare is the writer of all others whom the women of England should most take to their hearts; for I believe it to be mainly through his intellectual influence that their claims in the scale of society were acknowledged in England, when, throughout what is denominated the civilised world, their position was not greatly elevated above that of the drudges in modern low life. And have not both parties been gainers by the reformation? not but that much yet remains to be modified; nevertheless the moral philosophy of Shakespeare, anticipated by another code, which I am perfectly sure he would have been the first to recognise and avow, has exalted our social system above that of the rest of the world. (iii)

So impressed is Elliott with Charles Cowden Clarke's sentiment about women's elevation in society that she uses a truncated version of it on her title page.[14] Elliott's purpose of culling these girl-flowers in her Garden then is actually two-fold: to proclaim the beauty of and love she has for these 'flowers of humanity,' and to plant these flowers firmly in the soil of social reality for her "fellow wayfarers on life's pilgrimage" (iv).

In *Shakspeare's Garden of Girls*, Elliott places Imogen in her Garden as one of the 'Hot-House' flowers, between Juliet and Ophelia, and begins her chapter with an epigraph of a few lines from Tennyson's "Merlin and Vivien" from *Idylls of the King*: "In love, if love be love, if love be ours,/ Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers;/ Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all" (25). In these lines, the seductive temptress Vivien sings to Merlin the song she once heard Lancelot sing, and she is endeavoring to manipulate Merlin into revealing the secret to one of his spells. Elliott surely knows Imogen is certainly no Vivien; yet, the choice of epigraph hints at what her narrative focuses on—the issue of trust between men and women and the struggle for equilibrium in those relationships. For Elliott, the heart of Imogen's story rests in issues of trust in marriage and the behavior of men and women in the state of marriage.

At the start of her narrative, Elliott quotes Swinburne and his words of adoration of Imogen, or, "the immortal god-head of womanhood" (25). Elliott's opening defers to

[14] Cowden Clarke's statement comes from his essay concerning *Much Ado About Nothing*. Earlier in the essay, he states how Shakespeare has been "the man to lift them [women] from a state of vassalage and degradation, wherein they were the mere toys, when not the she-serfs, of a sensual tyranny; and he has asserted their prerogative, as intellectual creatures, to be the companions, (in the best sense), the advisers, the friends, the equals of men" (306). Both Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke did much work to make Shakespeare accessible to men and women. Cowden Clarke, in his preface acknowledges his wife Mary in her aid in producing his "affectionate study of Shakespeare"--she is "one whom it were scant praise to pronounce the "better part" of me, and that to her feminine discrimination are owing many of the subtlenesses in character development which we traced together" (vi).

"one of the most foremost poets of the present day," but Elliott follows this with one separated line, "Nor can we allow language like this to be exaggerated" (25). Imogen is just the "perfection of women"; Elliott confirms that she is "a being of flesh and blood, one of ourselves, but yet so high about us that we have to reach upwards hands of longing ere we can touch her, to raise our eyes from low objects and our hearts from low desires in our admiration of and devotion to this noblest woman, 'best beloved in all the world of song, and all the tide of time'" (26). At the end of this sentence, Elliott quotes Swinburne once more; however, throughout most of this testimony to Imogen's essential characteristics, Elliott affirms to herself and other female readers that, yes, Imogen is 'one of us' but she is such a paragon of 'woman' that we will long to "touch" her, be like her (26). Elliott's narrative of Imogen continually negotiates and endeavors to reconcile this tension between the just out of reach 'immortal god-head of womanhood' and the longing of the everyday woman who is situated in reality. In "Imogen," Elliott not only gives us her thoughts and feelings about her beloved character, but also relates to her audience a parallel 'story' of her own—one of the plight of the 'perfect' woman who must cope with the decrepit state of marriage and who must confront the vagaries of men in the world. Using the bare bones of Shakespeare's play of *Cymbeline* and a deliberate abridgement of Imogen's scenes, Elliott thus presents an overall blended 'third' narrative of Imogen when she presents her own story of the conflict between men and women. Elliott's audience sees her in communion with her heroine as the both women's stories are given equal weight and combined in one essay called "Imogen."

Elliott's narrative compresses Shakespeare's play considerably. She sweepingly accelerates large portions of the play, highlights certain emotional moments for Imogen,

underscores her important scenes, and excises enormous amounts of dialogue and events of the play. Elliott moves through *Cymbeline* with an urgent, driving force; in several places in "Imogen," she reminds us that "we need not stop and discuss" a certain issue and that the backstory of a character need not be mentioned (27). Elliott also alters the temporal structure of *Cymbeline* and carefully selects scenes from the play to describe mimetically (the parting of Imogen and Posthumus, Imogen and Iachimo, Imogen and Milford Haven, Imogen and headless Cloten, and the end of Act V). Elliott strings together these scenes with her own 'story'—interjections about not only Imogen's perfection as a woman, but also about men and women and the state of marriage. Because her controlling idea throughout her essay is that, in Imogen, "the whole [female] sex is raised and vindicated," Elliott appropriates Imogen's scenes and represents Imogen's consciousness to coincide with her own concerning how women are viewed by men (42). For Elliott, the central fault of men is that there will always be "careless and lewd fellows of the baser sort" who will attempt to "vilify women" (42). Elliott molds and sculpts her narrative of Imogen to include her own thoughts of what constitutes a 'perfect woman' and highlights the threats and challenges to that woman who tries to achieve that perfection.

Elliott commences her discussion of *Cymbeline* by establishing the perfection of Imogen and the calamity which has befallen her so that she may use the play's opening events to support her own claims about women and marriage. The narrative begins with a discussion of Imogen as Shakespeare's "rich jewel" and "precious gem" in a "humble setting"—the non-heroic atmosphere of the court and the "inauspicious companionship" of those around her (26-27). Elliott spends four pages setting up the "corruption and

commonplace" surrounding Imogen because she needs to establish how Imogen's "moral beauty" needs "congenial soil from which to draw its daily food and support," and how Imogen may swelter under the deleterious "hothouse atmosphere" of the court (27). Elliott presumes that Imogen is able to survive in that 'hothouse atmosphere' because she is nourished by the memory of her dead mother; Imogen's "fostering influences" must have come from "contemplation of that mother's character, hallowed and intensified by death, that preserved her from the commonplace taint of things and people around her" (27). As for how Imogen grew up and "fixed" her affections on Posthumus, Elliott simply states, "When the story opens the mischief was done" (27, 28). That 'mischief,' of course, is the "inevitable result" of Imogen's "early associations" with Posthumus (28). Because Imogen and Posthumus are husband and wife at the beginning of the play, Elliott must interject her feelings about what makes a good marriage, like the one Imogen would have provided for Posthumus had not the "terrible storm" of "misfortune and trouble" come upon the two (29). Before actually presenting Imogen in the play's events of I.i, Elliott first dispels some commonly held views on marriage:

> It is the stupid idea of some very good humdrum people that marriage means the extinction of romance, that all those fond ideals that are nourished in the inflamed fancy of the lover must vanish at the cold touch of the wedding ring. If soft words, tender caresses, and pretty endearments are ever to be permitted to married couples, they must be indulged in with some practical end in view—to soothe the worker's weary brain, to sustain the woman's fainting heart—but in no case must they be allowed for their own sakes. The sweetness and light of life are

> extinguished at the hymeneal altar, and henceforward everything is to be prosy and practical.
>
> Thus is the marriage made dull and unendurable; but this is not the light in which Shakespeare presents it. With such a wife as Imogen the romance of life would be ever fresh, although in her nature it would be allied to qualities of the 'good useful' order. (28-29)

Elliott focuses a great deal on the marriage Imogen does not have, instead of celebrating and describing the one she does. Elliott highlights the "dull and unendurable" marriage because it is likely the one in which men and women find themselves most often—one where the "sweetness and light of life are extinguished" (28). Imogen, as perfect wife, of course, could never let this happen. Elliott must establish this 'fact' about Imogen and her marriage with Posthumus so she can show what felicity and 'sweetness' will be destroyed when husband and wife must part, and this scene, I.i, is where Elliott officially commences Imogen's story in *Cymbeline*.

Elliott decelerates the parting of husband and wife over two pages, but does not mimetically present I.i, except for one single sentence about Imogen's inner emotional state. Elliott describes the parting of Imogen and Posthumus as the "terrible storm" which afflicts both, but mostly affects Imogen, for she already knows well "the hypocrisy and cunning of the queen and what she would be called on to suffer and endure amidst the loneliness and isolation of the court" (29). In her passage concerning the parting, Elliott recursively mentions this separation five times: "No sooner were they one in name than the loving husband and devoted wife had to part;" "The parting with her husband was grief enough, but it was aggravated by the sudden intrusion of her father;" "such

parting were bitter enough;" Posthumus was "driven out like an offending dog;" and Imogen suffered the "heaviness of a greater blow [the parting]" (29). In *Cymbeline*, the parting occurs once, however, Elliott increases the frequency of Posthumus's banishment in order to emphasize the turbulence of the "terrible storm" which affected their marriage (29). The effect of the Posthumus's banishment on Imogen is what Elliott wants to focus on. In that moment of separation of husband and wife, Elliott assumes intimate knowledge of Imogen's paralysis and of Imogen's estimation of Posthumus and of her own self-worth:

> Had Posthumus left the court with every outward mark of honour, had he gone as a soldier goes, protesting his love for his mistress by a still greater love of honour; or as an envoy, the trusted messenger of a powerful state, such parting were bitter enough; but for him to be driven out like an offending dog, and scurried away with the basest epithets, was an insult added to injury that might have crushed the spirit in her who had to bear it most heavily.
>
> For the moment indeed it paralysed her.
>
> Her father's wrath fell unheeded upon a nature that had been benumbed by the heaviness of a greater blow. But whilst she felt not her father's fury, she was not so utterly beaten down but she could vindicate her choice of and admiration for Posthumus. With the self-negation so characteristic of woman's love, she over-valued the man to whom she had given herself away:
>
> He is

> A man worth any woman; overbuys me
> Almost the sum he pays.

> We should think differently. Imogen was worth two of three of Posthumus, but she is true to her nature in imagining his value to be far more than others do.
>
> Is it not always so with women, or at anyrate with the better sort? Unconscious of her own worth or unable to estimate it at its just value, she exaggerates the worth of the object on which she has set her heart, and it often costs much bitter experience to convince her of her error. (29-30)

In this scene, Elliott focuses on one instance of Imogen's "crushed spirit," as we see her paralysed, and on one moment of Imogen's articulation of Posthumus's value. Elliot does not allow her reader access to Cymbeline's anger, because Imogen does not heed it—Elliott makes sure in her narrative that her Imogen is indeed "senseless of [Cymbeline's] wrath" (I.i.135). The only words Elliott will permit Imogen to utter are those of Imogen's estimation of Posthumus's value, which is really an underestimation of her own. In a strong moment of dissonance with her Imogen, Elliott 'thinks differently' about Imogen's value when she 'negates her self' to her husband's value. The authorial "We" is Elliott's narrative pronoun of choice, but, with that "We" Elliott enforces a collective agreement between her and her readers/audience when she implicates plurality in her choice of pronoun. Elliott confirms that Imogen is worth "two or three" of Posthumus and that Imogen's love for her husband is at the root of her "imagining" that he is worth more than she (30). Elliott gives Imogen these brief utterances to show that the "better sort" of women self-negate all the time, and that, through Imogen's example

of her own mistake in estimating her worth, it is often “bitter experience” which convinces *us* of *our* “error”: she asks us, “Is it not always so with women …?” (30).

Elliott’s comments on a woman’s value and worth, as perceived by herself and by the world of men, take her to the next scene she wants to discuss: Imogen with Iachimo. Elliott prefaces Imogen’s interaction with Iachimo with a long discussion which condemns “men of Iachimo’s stamp,” defines what “pure women” can do, and censures Posthumus’s “share in [Iachimo’s] wretched imposture” (31). Before Elliott allows her audience to see “dastardly” Iachimo and beleaguered Imogen, she needs to compare Iachimoan men with Imogenian women (32). Iachimoan men believe that they are God’s gift to women: “Partly from the company they keep, and partly for their most insufferable conceit they believe no one can resist their seductive advances. It is just as difficult to convince a negro under the equator that there is such a thing as solid water which he has never seen, as to make men of this sort realize the existence of virtue and chastity” (31). The idea that a woman can be virtuous and chaste is beyond an Iachimoan man’s ken and is completely foreign to him. “Men of this sort” will always prey upon women—an Iachimo will always prey upon an Imogen. Yet, what is a woman to do and how is a woman to behave? Elliott answers these questions with a short statement about how pure women and ‘impure’ women behave and how they are perceived:

> But a pure woman has no need to blazon abroad her chastity by ostentatious acts of prudery. She may, and often does, do that which, to those who live upon the very borderland of virtue and vice, seems risky and equivocal. Where moral health is very delicate and precarious, great

> care is needed to preserve it from utter ruin; but a woman with a robustly, healthy, moral constitution may venture where her frailer sisters may not. All the same, however, 'Be she chaste as ice, pure as snow, she shall not escape calumny.' (31)

A pure woman, who is in fine "moral health," best showcases her purity when she "venture[s] where her frailer sisters" cannot go (31). A pure woman, because she is confident of her "robustly, healthy, moral constitution," may even do things which may seem "risky" to others whose moral health is "delicate" and who "live upon the very borderland of virtue and vice" (31).

Imogen, of course, is a pure woman who must confront Iachimo, eschew his lascivious nature, and endure what his trickery and lies produce. Elliott establishes the 'fact' that a pure woman, like Imogen, is still pure if she finds herself in 'risky' situations with men—it is only because of a pure woman's confidence in her own virtue which makes her able to 'venture' to 'risky' places and perhaps even to the 'borderland of virtue and vice.' Yet Elliott ends this section with Hamlet's words to Ophelia (*Hamlet*, III.i.135-136) which state the reality that pure women must suffer: even though a pure woman has confidence in her virtue, the world around her will not view her as she sees herself. Elliott prefaces the Iachimo/Imogen scenes (his initial meeting with her, I.vi, and his nighttime escapade of stealing her bracelet, II.ii) with this discussion of the truth of a virtuous woman and the truth about the world of men who seek to destroy and defame her.

In her description of the events of I.vi, Elliott zeroes in on and decelerates the pace of Imogen's thoughts and feelings about Iachimo's suggestion of revenge. Elliott

accelerates Iachimo's 'dastardly' plot so that she may fully concentrate on Imogen's discovery of her missing bracelet as she rebuffs Cloten in II.iii. Elliott's swift movement of her narrative through II.ii and II.iii helps her to maintain a focus on Imogen's reactions to and Imogen's ability to recover from the "temptation and insult" of men (31). As she introduces Iachimo and Imogen's meeting, Elliott condenses the 210 lines of I.vi into a few paragraphs and only allows Imogen to utter her words of 128-132:

> Beginning with a muttered growl, that from indefiniteness disturbs and perplexes his hearer, [Iachimo] plays with the wife's anxiety to hear good news of her absent lord, and beats about the bush till at last he breaks out into the blackest lies, and gives out that Posthumus professes the lightest opinion of women and the sacred bonds of marriage.
>
> Imogen listens to this in wonder and disbelief. *Should it all be true what Iachimo has hinted at, and that Posthumus has disgraced and dishonoured her—how could she retaliate?* As to the base ideas of revenge that her vile tempter harbours, she is unable to see them until he translates them into plain unvarnished terms.
>
> Revenged!
>
> she cries, echoing Iachimo's suggestion,
>
> Revenged!
> How should I be revenged? If this be true,
> (As I have such a heart that both mine ears
> Must not in haste abuse) if it be true,
> How should I be revenged?

> The only way patent to the filthy mind of this yellow-faced Italian is for her to wallow in the same mire that he avers her husband is taking pleasure in. *He has no measure, no conception of a true woman's nature.* Imogen sees at last how dangerous is the character of the man to whom she has accorded so free and audience. It is time he were dismissed, and she calls aloud for her faithful servant, Pisanio, to show this fellow the door. 'What ho! Pisanio!' [my italics] (32-33)

In this scene, Iachimo is only a "muttered growl," because he is not permitted to speak of those truly 'black lies' he tells Imogen. The focus is on Imogen in this scene. Elliott channels Imogen's own incredulity of Posthumus's 'disgrace' and 'dishonour' with the question, "Should it all be true what Iachimo has hinted at, and that Posthumus has disgraced and dishonoured her—how could she retaliate?" (32). The question is phrased in free indirect discourse—and it is difficult to draw the boundary here between Elliott and Imogen because in that question both express shock at the suggestion of revenge. Perhaps because the idea of revenge is thoroughly morally reprehensible to Elliott-Imogen, Elliott must double Imogen's exclamation in direct speech, "Revenged!" (32). Elliott does not spare any disgust for the "yellow-faced" Italian in her depreciatory description, nor does she entertain any great detail of what his suggestion of revenge actually would signify for Imogen—"a besmirched reputation" (32). Elliott-Imogen achieves a moment of communion with Imogen with their reaction to his suggestion to "wallow in the same mire" of adultery: "He has no measure, no conception of a true woman's nature" (32). Because Elliott-Imogen now understands the kind of man Iachimo is, Imogen "sees at last how dangerous is the character of the man to whom she

has accorded so free and audience" (32). Once Imogen understands Iachimo's nature, Elliott must terminate this scene and Iachimo; Elliott includes one of Imogen's three entreaties of "What, ho! Pisanio!"—which, effectively communicates to Iachimo that his "attack is foiled" (33).

In her depiction of the other event of Iachimo's and Imogen's interaction, the stealing of her bracelet in II.ii, Elliott extremely accelerates the scene because she would rather highlight Imogen's reaction to the loss of such a precious item. Before Elliott describes his "plan of attack" in fact, she pronounces in an analepsis that Iachimo's "plot succeeds exactly to his liking," and so it is unnecessary to dwell on that "crafty creature" who would "ruin a character and murder a reputation" (33). Instead, Elliott takes her audience to II.iii, where Imogen realizes the loss of her bracelet and where she must endure yet another attack on her sensibility and purity, this time by Cloten. In the following passage, Elliott mimetically presents the scene as Imogen's emotion becomes tense when she not only comprehends the missing bracelet as an unfortunate situation, but also sees it as a portent of misfortune:

> In the meanwhile Imogen sleeps in peace, unconscious of the villainous outrage that has been wrought upon her happiness, but awakes in the morning to be pestered with the odious attentions of Cloten. With him she is perfectly plain and outspoken. He cannot understand a hint gently given. He has no feelings that need be spared:
>
> > I am much sorry, sir,
> > You put me to forget a lady's manners
> > By being so verbal; and learn for all…
> > I hate you, which I had rather
> > You felt, than make't my boast.

> Imogen can speak out in good round terms when it is necessary to pierce the dense stupidity of an obtuse fool like Cloten, who shows his want of wit as well as of breeding in the vulgar abuses he pours upon Posthumus. But whilst irritated with the tedious importunity of this 'profane fellow,' Imogen becomes suddenly conscious of the loss of her bracelet, and, as is often the case when we lose familiar objects, she thinks she saw it that very morning. A doubt flashes across her mind, a presentiment of evil coming, and a suspicion of foul play somewhere.
>
> > I hope it be not gone to tell my lord
> > That I kiss aught but he.
>
> But this does not prevent her making it plain to Cloten that if he persists in annoying her she is ready for the struggle. (34)

In this passage, Elliott yokes together two moments that signify Imogen's qualities of womanly perfection. Throughout her essay, Elliott has been trying to highlight these two major qualities of Imogen: her aptitude for and confidence in rebuking the unwanted advances of a man (in this case, Cloten) and her awareness of how she is viewed to others (in this case, when she realizes what the missing bracelet will suggest). Elliott's indirect speech flows into Imogen's direct speech so well that it is clear that Elliott feels as Imogen does about Cloten ("He cannot understand a hint gently given. He has no feelings that need be spared: I am much sorry, sir") and about the missing bracelet ("A doubt flashes across her mind, a presentiment of evil coming, and a suspicion of foul play somewhere. I hope it be not gone to tell my lord/ That I kiss aught but he"). Both instances of Elliott's commentary flowing into Imogen's dialogue demonstrate Imogen's

ability to confront men and her sensibility to understand the implications of the perilous situation in which she finds herself. Through highlighting Imogen's encounter with Cloten, Elliott wishes to communicate that, even though women may find themselves attacked and beleaguered by the unwanted advances or opinions of men, there is yet their inward conviction of purity and confidence in themselves that make them "ready for the struggle" (34).

In Elliott's next presentation of scenes, she describes Imogen and Milford Haven—one snippet of a scene when she hears of her husband's presence there (III.ii) and then another scene when she reads his letter to Pisanio (III.iv). Elliott's concentration, once again, is on Imogen's reaction to the situation that is thrust upon her—a husband banished, a journey to another land to see him, a false accusation, an order for her execution, and her own struggle with her feelings. Elliott's 'Milford Haven' scenes bifurcate into Imogen's desire to undertake the journey to Milford Haven (III.ii) and then Imogen's shock in reading Posthumus's letter (III.iv):

> But Imogen, as guileless in soul as she is ardent in devotion, cannot be restrained a moment from setting out upon a journey, the length and hardships of which are nothing to her. She is breathless with excitement.
>
> > If one of mean affairs
> > May plod it in a week, why may not I
> > Glide thither in a day? –Then, true Pisanio,
> > (Who long'st, like me, to see thy lord; who long'st—
> > Oh, let me 'bate, --but not like me—yet long'st,
> > But in a fainter kind. –Oh, not like me;
> > For mine's beyond beyond,) say and speak thick,
> > (Love's counselor should fill the bores of hearing,
> > To the smothering of the sense,) how far is it
> > To this same blessed Milford.

Difficulties melt away in the heat of her fervour. She will listen to no more discussion, she sees no more obstacles. In her eyes there gathers a mist that hides every hindrance to her purpose, a mist of tears, but tears of gladness that well up from a heart too disturbed by emotion to find vent in the surface ripples of smiles.

When we next meet her, anxiety of a darker nature is troubling her spirit:

> Pisanio! Man!
> Where is Posthumus? What is in thy mind,
> That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh
> From the inward of thee? One but painted thus
> Would be interpreted a thing perplexed,
> Beyond self-explication. Put thyself
> Into a haviour of less fear, ere wildness
> Vanquish my staider senses. What's the matter?

As she recognizes her husband's hand-writing, a fear that all is not well overcomes her. In this letter the wretched Posthumus unfolds to Pisanio the slander he has heard about his wife, and seeks to make him her murderer. Under this fearful suspicion of being false to the man to whom she has given up her whole soul, for a moment her faith in him is shaken,

> Some joy [sic] jay of Italy,
> Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him!
> Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion.

What can she do but be loyal even to his command for her death? (36-37)

The words Elliott chooses to give Imogen mark the progression from "breathless excitement" ("If one of mean affairs/ May plod it in a week, why may not I/ Glide thither in a day?") and dark, "troubling" anxiety ("What is in thy mind,/ That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh/ From the inward of thee?") to dejection and "drooping

spirits" ("Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion") (36, 37, 38). Elliott is compelled to showcase the wide discrepancy in Imogen's emotional state between Imogen's hope and longing for her husband (the idea of 'Milford Haven') and Imogen's despondency when she understands what 'Milford Haven' actually means. Elliott carefully selects Imogen's stage directions so that she can mark Imogen's progression of elation to depression: Imogen's "difficulties melt away," she "will listen to no dissuasion," she "sees no obstacles, a "mist of tears" gather in her eyes, an "anxiety of a darker nature" troubles her spirit, and her "faith in him is shaken" (36). Elliott spends so much time plotting the arc of Imogen's inner life in these 'Milford Haven' scenes because she needs to demonstrate to her audience that, despite Imogen's dejection and gloom, Imogen is indeed a "true woman" who can rebound from misfortune and who can overcome the obstacles in her way (39). After Pisanio's idea of donning the 'doublet and hose' as the boy Fidele is mentioned, Elliott writes that Imogen's

> drooping spirits revive. But a minute ago she was ready to die because Posthumus wished it; but as soon as there is a prospect of being near him, watching his daily life, and hearing of him constantly, life has still some charms for her.
>
> He is to suppose her dead. *Will he mourn for her? What will his style of living be when he hears of her decease? Will no pangs of remorse seize him as he eyes the 'bloody sign' of her destruction and his vengeance? And will he then give himself up to the wiles of the easy-mannered Roman ladies?* All these questionings would no doubt be present to her distempered mind as she donned the doublet and hose, and tried to assume

> the 'waggish courage' of a boy. And all this proves her the true woman, with a heart quick to feel and a mind eager to inquire. [my italics] (38-39)

Elliott continues to build her argument about Imogen, her state of being a true woman, and ultimately her assertion that Imogen as a pure and true woman 'raises' and 'vindicates' women. A "true woman" will have a "heart quick to feel"—even if the feeling is 'breathless excitement,' or 'dark' anxiety, or even "drooping spirits" (39). A "true woman" will also have a "mind eager to inquire," a state of mind which will allow her to undertake a perilous journey and to surmount the tremendous difficulties of a husband who accuses her of being disloyal and who wants her to die. Elliott gives voice to Imogen's inward distress and doubts about Posthumus (her "questionings") in free indirect speech because Elliott and Imogen both question his motives. Elliott-Imogen's questionings ground Imogen in reality and serve as proof of her status as a 'true woman.'

Continuing her argument about Imogen as 'true woman,' Elliott uses Act IV scene ii, Imogen's discovery of the headless Cloten, to tackle another aspect of women—this time not their penchant for emotion, but their propensity to lie. This section of narrative contains Elliott's most fully realized dramatic scene, yet she examines an unexpected moment of it. Instead of intensifying the horrific moment of the discovery of Cloten's headless body, which Imogen mistakes as her husband's, Elliott scrutinizes a woman's propensity to lie as Imogen tells and acknowledges her own lie in IV.ii.377-379. Elliott describes Imogen after Arviragus and Guiderius sing to her in her grave:

> Left alone by the side of the headless Cloten, disguised in the clothes of Posthumus, Imogen awakes, refreshed by the action of the drug she had taken; but when she recognizes the garments of her husband and some

resemblance to him in the physical form of the corpse beside her, all reproach and anger dies.

At once she fastens the guilt of the murder upon Pisano again, with all a woman's precipitancy, jumping to premature conclusions. Overcome with this new horror, she falls senseless on the body, only to be aroused by the arrival of the Roman soldiery.

Again her womanhood appears in the ready fabrication of a story and a name to explain her condition. Her wit is ever ready to prompt her tongue. It would be imagined that the weight of her trouble would have driven from her mind all thoughts of maintaining her disguise, and that she would have poured forth her grief as soon as she found a sympathizing ear, or, at anyrate, have told her story in a hesitating and disjointed fashion; but no! she at once avers that this was her master, slain by mountaineers, by name, Richard du Champ, whilst she whispers to herself,

> If I do lie, and do
> No harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope
> They'll pardon it.

A cardinal article of a woman's code of morality. Women, in all essentials, are as true as men; but in matters of indifference, it must be allowed they are readier with falsehoods than men. Men lie often enough, but the lies stick in their throat, and do not run easily off their tongues; but in act, they are as skilled in untruth as their erring sisters. (40-41)

Elliott does not funnel the emotion of this scene of Imogen's discovery of Cloten's headless body into the moment of the discovery, but rather into the moments afterwards.

Elliott decelerates Imogen's discovery of the body before she has Imogen 'fall senseless': Imogen forgives her husband, censures Pisano, jumps to conclusions about Pisano, and is "overcome with this new horror" (40). Elliott does not choose this scene, however, to bombard us with Imogen's internal anguish. After all, Elliott's readers might think that Imogen's emotions would be pouring out of her—"but no!" we would be wrong (41) . Instead, Elliott uses this scene to show how easily and tactfully Imogen can lie about this dead man whom she thinks is her husband. Elliott wishes to defend Imogen's choice of telling this little lie. A moment of communion rests in this white lie; Imogen tells it to survive and to preserve her guise as Fidele and this is for Elliott-Imogen, a "cardinal article of a woman's code of morality" (41). Elliott admits that both men and women lie; but women, "in matters of indifference"—or in telling white lies that are unimportant—have the clear advantage over men. Elliott focuses on this part of the emotional scene because Imogen's recovery from the shock, her ability to regroup, and her stratagem of concealment of her inward emotion all combine to make Imogen able to withstand the calumny of others. Again and again, Elliott selects scenes that demonstrate Imogen's ability to work through slander and defamation, grief and pain, and hardships and challenges—because this is exactly what 'true women' do when they contend with husbands, lovers, and the world of men.

In Act V, throughout which Shakespeare breathes "penitence and pardon," Elliott selects only three items from V.v to describe. Elliott magnifies the moment of Posthumus's cry (V.v.225-227) and his striking of Imogen (229), and then fixates on the embrace of husband and wife, concentrating on how "both the credulous husband and the vile slanderer are brought face to face with Imogen" (41). Since virtuous Imogen has

been battling those advances and false accusations of 'vile slanderers' for quite a while in her narrative, Elliott will excise everything from this scene except three moments that prove Imogen's magnanimity. These three moments will also serve, then, to close the play of *Cymbeline* for Elliott and conclude her argument about the nature of women. Elliott enacts V.v initially with a description of Imogen's two sole thoughts she has during V.v.129-224:

> She harbours no idea of vengeance; she has no desire to make the lesson sharper than events have ordered it; but when Posthumus utters the agonised cry,
>
> > O Imogen!
> > My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
> > Imogen, Imogen!
>
> Her heart can be restrained no longer. Hitherto she has schooled her emotions and kept down the rising tide of passionate longing in her breast, but his heart-broken cry bursts the bonds that hold it back, and she rushes forward to tell all,
>
> > Peace, my lord; hear, hear—
>
> With a rude and frenzied hand he strikes her down, or, rather, not her, for he sees only an interfering boy, who would deny him his only solace, the expression of a bootless grief. Then Pisano speaks out. Cymbeline recognizes his daughter's voice, and the revived Imogen falls into her husband's arms, with words so full of tender feeling, saying so little to senseless ears, but meaning so much to those who have the grace of hearing,

> Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?
> Think that you are upon a rock; and now
> Throw me again.
>
> Thus, in Imogen, the whole sex is raised and vindicated. (41-42)

In these deliberately chosen moments of Shakespeare's V.v, Elliott is able to summarize the initial 'storm' and eventual 'calm' of the marriage of Imogen and Posthumus. The initial phase of the 'storm' in *Cymbeline* is Posthumus's banishment and separation from Imogen, and what follows next is the turbulence of Imogen's reaction, Posthumus's wager/Iachimo's deceit/Posthumus's rejection of his wife, Imogen's misfortune and reaction, Imogen's recovery and survival, and finally, the 'calm' of the reunion of husband and wife. In her narration of V.v, Elliott dramatizes the 'storm' and the progression to the 'calm' of their marriage in just a few mimetic moments: Posthumus's agony with the loss of his wife, Imogen's reaction, Posthumus's strike at and wounding of Imogen, Imogen's recovery from the persecution, and Imogen's reunion with her husband with her "words of tender feeling … saying so little … but meaning so much" (42). Imogen's words of V.v.261-263 mean so much because they encapsulate all the understanding, acceptance, forgiveness, love, and virtue of Imogen. These words embody all that Imogen is and all that she was—despite what other men have said or alleged—a loving wife. These words of Imogen are also *equivalent* to Elliott's conclusion that Imogen 'raises and vindicates the whole sex.' In that one action, the embrace of husband and wife, and through the direct speech of Imogen's three lines, Imogen vindicates and raises women. Elliott ends the action of the play of *Cymbeline* right at the moment of the embrace. There is nothing further to relate about the play, for in that embrace, Imogen accepts Posthumus in spite of how awfully she was treated and

what she had to endure during the course of the play.   Posthumus is given no more lines to speak; Elliott even denies him Shakespeare's words for him, which would confirm to us and to Imogen that he desires her, too: "Hang there like fruit, my soul, till the tree die!" (V.v.263-264). For Elliott, this scene concerns only Imogen and her actions—how Imogen is dignified, has a "strength of affection" to endure the travails of separation from her husband, overcomes the vilifications of the "baser sort," and, through all that, survives as a "complete woman" (42-43):

> Careless and lewd fellows of the baser sort there will always be to vilify women. Fools and blind, who will swagger about their conquests, and make vile boasts of their own evil deeds; but there are more women of Imogen's class in the world than these gallants of limited acquaintance wot of, though they are not to be found in the haunts and associations that Iachimo frequents. In woman there is a moral dignity, and a holy strength of affection that neither suffering nor death can avert, that raises them only 'a little lower than the angels.' (42)

Elliott champions the moral and holy "women of Imogen's class," and not those women of "mere animalism" who are motivated by their carnal appetites and are found in those places of ill-repute that Iachimo visits. The words of Psalm 8:5[15] also aids Elliott in

[15] Psalm 8 from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1868) is as follows: 1 O Lord our Governour, how excellent is thy Name in all the world: thou hast set thy glory above the heavens! 2 Out of the mouths very babes and sucklings has thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies: that thou mightest still the enemy, and the avenger. 3 For I will consider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers: the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained. 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him: and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 Thou madest him lower than the angels: to crown him with glory and worship. 6 Thou makest him to have dominion of the works of thy hands: and thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; 7 All sheep and oxen: yea, and the beasts of the field; 8 The fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea: and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas. 9 O Lord our Governour: how excellent is thy Name in all the world! (12-13).

describing 'woman,' and specifically the woman who has maintained her "moral dignity" and "holy strength of affection" in the face of "vile boasts" and "evil deeds" (42). In her narrative of Imogen, it is Elliott who makes women 'a little lower than the angels' and who 'crowns them with glory and honor' through her rearrangement and re-telling of Imogen's story and her representation of Imogen's consciousness.

At the end of V.v, Imogen is a "complete woman" who assumes many roles: she has the "maiden's modesty, the lover's romance, the mistress' influence, the wife's devotion" and is "one whom all men may proudly call sister" (43). Despite all the holy and moral accolades heaped upon this blessed and virtuous character, Imogen, Elliott insists, is a "reality" to us (42). Even though she is a "creature of romance," her major success is having "wifely love and chastity" and "pure and strong" affections for her husband, despite being so maligned by the "concoction of the blackest falsehood" of men (42-43). Imogen's example can apply to any woman who has been falsely accused, or whose reputation has been defamed, or whose actions may be seen as morally questionable. As a result of Elliott's severe truncation of V.v and her fixation on Imogen's embrace and words, her narrative provides a space for women to enact their desires to be seen as faithful and loving, and not as unfaithful and promiscuous.

Elliott's final words on Imogen, "the complete woman," are sealed by the authority of none other than Shakespeare himself (43). Elliott concludes her essay on Imogen by imagining Shakespeare affirming all that she has claimed about Imogen's perfection in her narrative. Elliott concludes her essay with: "In … [*Cymbeline*], Shakspeare seems to have gathered together all that is beautiful, and noble, and lovely, and of good report, and blending them in one, has said, 'This is the perfect woman and

she is Imogen'" (43). Elliott includes these final words in her essay and attributes them to 'Shakespeare,' giving an authority to her own work as well as equating 'woman' with 'Imogen.' Elliott's thesis is to not only celebrate and illustrate the virtuous soul of Imogen, but also to demonstrate the existence of 'real-life' Imogens with 'real-life' Imogen problems—that of women's conflict with their private virtue and emotion versus their outward and public appearance.

Moments of communion in Faucit's and Elliott's narrative exist with a shift to a mimetic presentation of scenes and a continuous, seamless flow of indirect and direct speech. In both Faucit's and Elliott's narratives, they add action, augment descriptions, intensify emotional reactions, and accelerate and decelerate the story of the play. Elliott's method, however, is a constant barrage of commentaries which are interpolated with Imogen's action, scene after scene. Elliott's litanies about marriage, differences between women and men, and the challenges to and achievement of Imogenly perfection for women follow each Imogen scene, and thus Elliott equates her own words and story with Imogen's. Whereas Faucit positioned herself often from within Imogen's own mind, where we could share and participate every emotional moment from inside Imogen herself, Elliott places her own 'story' squarely alongside Imogen's, because Imogen's central conflict is one which Elliott sees as universal to the condition of being a woman.

In both Faucit's and Elliott's narratives, then, are moments of union with Imogen—shared moments of thoughts, feelings, and words—as the authors place their own personal stories amidst, on top of, and alongside the representation of Imogen's thoughts, feelings and words. In both narratives, strict boundaries between narrator and character are blurred: Faucit speaks as herself, as Imogen, and, in indirect speech as

Faucit-Imogen, for example. In the border between Faucit and Imogen and Elliott and Imogen exists a hyphen, in a graphic sense, but within that hyphen exists a communion where one persona exists as easily as another. Faucit and Elliott thus create within that border, or that hyphen, a third consciousness: Faucit-Imogen and Elliott-Imogen. Within their written narratives, Faucit's and Elliott's communion with Imogen produce a fusion of personas in their representation of Imogen's consciousness.

Chapter Four

The "double process" of Acting: Fanny Kemble, Ellen Terry, and Paradox

It appears to me that the two indispensable elements of fine acting are a certain amount of poetical imagination and a power of assumption, which is a good deal rarer gift of the two; in addition to these, a sort of vigilant presence of mind is necessary, which constantly looks after and avoids or removes the petty obstacles that are perpetually destroying the imaginary illusion [that one is 'Juliet' or 'Belvidera']. The curious part of acting to me, is the sort of double process which the mind carries on at once, the combined operation of one's faculties, so to speak, in diametrically opposite directions.
Fanny Kemble, *Record of a Girlhood*, Vol. II, 1878

The likeness of passion on the stage is not then its true likeness; it is but extravagant portraiture, caricature on a grand scale, subject to conventional rules. One is one's self by nature; one becomes some one else by imitation; the heart one is supposed to have is not the heart one has. What, then, is the true talent? That of knowing well the outward symptoms of the soul we borrow, of addressing ourselves to the sensations of those who hear and see us, of deceiving them by the imitation of these symptoms, by an imitation which aggrandizes everything in their imagination, and which becomes the measure of their judgment; for it is impossible otherwise to appreciated that which passes inside us. And after all, what does it matter to us whether they feel or do not feel, so long as we know nothing about it?
He, then, who best knows and best renders, after the best conceived ideal type, these outward signs, is the greatest actor.
Denis Diderot, *The Paradox of Acting*, trans. 1883

Fanny Kemble's "double process" and Denis Diderot's "paradox" both address the "old and continuing controversy" of acting: does an actor really feel and experience the emotions[1] of the character he or she represents or does an actor consciously imitate those feelings and emotions of the character in order to best represent the character

[1] Joseph R. Roach, in *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting*, writes that not only is there "speculation and debate" about the actor's body and its psychophysiological relationship to the "larger world," but also about the "question of [the actor's] emotion" (11). He states, "even when the special complications raised by theatrical representation are set aside, the question of emotion tends to defy settled conclusions. Emotions are common to everyone's experience, yet they are notoriously difficult to define" (11).

(Booth 133)? The nature of Kemble's "double process," though, includes another element as the actor is working out whether she should feel or think, become, or imitate: the "poetical imagination" of the actor, which buoys the "imaginary illusion" that one is the character she presents. This insistence on a fervent connection and communion with one's character is integral to the thinking of the women character critics, and the actresses among them, notably Fanny Kemble and Ellen Terry, describe their acting process in "becoming" their characters in much the same way. Character critics' narratives enact an emotional and psychological connection with Shakespeare's characters, as the critic makes choices about how to represent the consciousness of the character. The central question, then, is how do Kemble and Terry configure and describe this actor-character connection and relationship, as each re-creates and vivifies Shakespeare's characters on stage? In the actor's imagination, are the actor and character unified and indistinguishable: Does Kemble/Juliet become "Juliet"? Are the actor and character unified and distinguishable: Do Kemble and Juliet become "Juliet"? Are the actor and character unified, distinguishable, and create another mind: Do Kemble and Juliet create "Juliet" and does Kemble-"Juliet" exist on stage? Are the actor and the character separate and indistinguishable: Does Kemble perform as Juliet and experience "Juliet" moments on stage as Kemble-"Juliet"? Or, are actor and character separate and distinguishable: Does Kemble perform as Juliet, aware that she is representing "Juliet" on stage, and does she remain Kemble and "Juliet"? The question of how we best explain the actor-character relationship is answered in Kemble's mind when she states, "Juliet was a reality to me, a living individual woman, whose nature I could receive as it were, into mine at once, without effort, comprehending and expressing it" ("Record" II 85).

Kemble's statement reveals the communion between actor and character as both natures are effortlessly brought together and integrated for her audiences.

Just as Faucit and Elliott created narrative spaces to connect with characters, and alternatively showed and told, experienced and represented, narrated and enacted them on their pages, so too do the actresses describe a process of "self-assertion and self-surrender" as they connect with their characters (Cole 14).[2] Kemble, in *Notes Upon Some of Shakespeare's Plays* and Terry, in *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, describe this same psychological communion with their characters; their thoughts on the representation of the character are similar to the kind of narrative choices Faucit and Elliott made in constructing, diegetically or mimetically presenting (telling/summary or showing/scene), and uniting with Shakespeare's female characters in their narratives. The actor's creation of the character and his or her relationship to that character in the actor's imagination is one of communion: where the actor's mind meets and merges with the character to create another being,[3] the actor-character,[4] which infuses the performance on stage.[5] Kemble's

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[2] David Cole, in his book, *Acting as Reading*, contends that the acting is a "physicalization of the act of reading...[which] had its origins in a bodily process...Acting is the recovery of a 'lost' physical of reading" (1). Acting and reading share a mix of active and passive processes: "Acting is not all active: It is also surrender (to the role, to directorial intent, to one's own impulses). And reading is not all intake: It is also structuring, comparing, decoding... in short, activity... Indeed, even considered as taking in, reading is not wholly passive: To take in is to receive, but it is also to consume, to incorporate, to take in. In fact acting and reading are most alike on the score of this supposed "contrast." Each is a problematic mix of active and passive" (14). Cole connects acting and reading; I build on that concept and describe the construction of written narratives to be similar to acting as well.

[3] Georgianna Zeigler, in "The Actress as Shakespearian Critic: Three Nineteenth Century Portias," writes of the actresses being "engaged in creating a role, in developing that third dimension of Shakespeare's lines which makes the words into living beings on stage" (94).

[4] Kemble's and Terry's actor-character is much like Constantin Stanislavski's conception of the 'third being.' In Jean Benedetti's *Stanislavski: An Introduction*, the "process of character-creation is not one of self-effacement but of self-transformation whereby one's own life experiences become the experience of the character. A third being is created, a fusion of the character the author wrote and the actor's own personality, the actor/role. It was, as he put it, a new child, with the author as father, the actor as mother, and the director as midwife" (95).

and Terry's psychological creation of the actor-character, is not only consonant with the textual unions present in the written narratives of female character critics, but also prefigures much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century acting theories which try to explain the actor's psychological connection with a character. The frustration of the paradox of Kemble's "double process" is assuaged in the female character critics' union of actor-character and critic-character. The actor-character is a merged communion of both beings (the actor-character is *both* the actor *and* the character when they are together), and the boundary that exists between the two beings is fluid. Female character critics, actresses and non-actresses alike, actively enact and connect to Shakespeare's characters by representing their consciousnesses and share this connection as a communion between critic and character for their audiences.

Actor and Character: "A monstrous anomaly"

Fanny Kemble's words to describe acting, "a monstrous anomaly," begin the discussion on the nineteenth-century debate about how the actor should best represent the character and its consciousness. How much feeling should enter into the "scenic performance" (Journal 242)? Kemble admits that this question would be "impossible to answer, for acting is altogether a monstrous anomaly. In my own individual instance, I know that sometimes I could turn every word I am saying into burlesque (*never* Shakspeare, by the by), and at others my heart aches, and I cry real, bitter, warm tears, as earnestly as if I were in earnest" ("Journal" 242). The debate about the actor's earnest vs.

[5] Nina Auerbach, in *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*, writes, "the assumption of character upon the stage was as close to the mystery of incarnation as most unbelieving Victorians would penetrate" (203).

feigned feeling and her real vs. simulated emotion comes to the fore in England in the 1880's, with the translation of Denis Diderot's 1830 published essay, "Le Paradoxe sur le comedién" (Taylor 145). Diderot dislikes the actor's reliance on sensibility[6]—that "soul, passion"—which supersedes his or her conscious, intelligent presentation—or, the actor's "cool head … profound judgment, and exquisite taste"—of "a great part" (95). When sensibility overrules the judgment and 'cool-headedness' of the actor, the effect is undesirable on the stage. He asks,

> If [the actor] is endowed with extreme sensibility what will come of it?—What will come of it? That he will either play no more, or play ludicrously ill; yes, ludicrously; and to prove it you can see the same thing in me when you like. If I have a recital of some pathos to give, a strange trouble arises in my heart and head; my speech hangs fire. I babble; I perceive it; tears course down my cheeks; I am silent. But with this I make an effect—in private life; on the stage I should be hooted.
>
> Why?
>
> Because people come not to see tears, but to hear speeches that draw tears; because this truth of nature is out of tune with the truth of convention. Let me explain myself: I mean that neither the dramatic system, nor the action, nor the poet's speeches, would fit themselves to my stifled, broken, sobbing declamation. You see that it is not allowable to imitate Nature,

[6] Henry Irving, in his "Preface" to Diderot's *Paradox*, in Walter Herries Pollock's 1883 translation, quotes the tragedian Talma and his definition of 'sensibility': "That faculty of exaltation which agitates an actor, takes possession of his senses, shakes even his very soul, and enables him to enter into the most tragic situations, and the most terrible of the passions, as if they were his own" (xvi).

> even at her best, or Truth too closely; there are limits within which we must restrict ourselves. (102)

Diderot insists upon the actor using restraint and control with his sensibility in portraying a character. Real tears in a "stifled, broken, sobbing declamation" would not serve the actor well in his performance nor would those tears serve to help the actor give a 'truthful' portrayal of a character (102).

Stage actor Henry Irving, who wrote the preface in an 1883 translation of Diderot's essay, took issue with an actor's denial of this sensibility and maintained that an actor, through a "double consciousness" of mind, may "feel all of the excitement of a situation and yet be perfectly self-possessed" (xv). Although Irving is convinced that the best actor is one who "combines the electric force of a strong personality with a mastery of the resources of his art," he also acknowledges the difficulty in qualifying exactly the ratio of "sensibility and art," or 'feeling' and 'method/technique' in an actor and the difficulty in defining this ratio (xx):

> Perhaps it will always be an open question how far sensibility and art can be fused in the same mind. Every actor has his secret. He might write volumes of explanation, and the matter would still remain a paradox to many. It is often said that actors should not shed tears, that real tears are bad art. This is not so. If tears be produced at the actor's will and under his control, they are true art; and happy is the actor who numbers them amongst his gifts. The exaltation of sensibility in art may be difficult to define, but it is none the less real to all who have felt its power. (xx-xix)

Irving admits that the actor can use feeling in his portrayal of a character, yet the extent to which an actor is infused or 'exalted' with the "power" of emotion is still very difficult to define.

George Henry Lewes in his work, *On Actors and The Art of Acting,* addresses the paradoxical debate of how feeling and art can be psychologically 'fused in the same mind.' Agreeing with Diderot's subjugation of sensibility to the higher powers of intellect, Lewes takes a different tack on the need for sensibility itself when he acknowledges the inherent contradiction of how it figures in work of the actor: "If [the actor] really feel[s], he cannot act; but he cannot act unless he feel" (100). Since an actor needs real feelings, expressions, passions, and emotions in order to act, the problem now becomes how to translate, temper, and "harmoniously subordinate" them to an aesthetic whole (95). In Lewes' view, then, how far does the actor feel? The actor "is in a state of emotional excitement sufficiently strong to furnish him with the elements of expression, but not strong enough to disturb his consciousness of the fact that he is only imagining—sufficiently strong to give the requisite tone to his voice and aspect to his features, but not strong enough to prevent his modulating the one and arranging the other according to a pre-conceived standard. His passion must be ideal—sympathetic, not personal" (105). The actor's job, then, is to harness this ideal passion in his representation of the "ideal character"; and Lewes recognizes that the "supreme difficulty of an actor" is to represent that "ideal character with such truthfulness that it shall affect us as real" (112). Achieving 'truthfulness' in the performance of a character on stage that in turn seems 'real' to an audience is not only the "supreme difficulty of an actor"—it is the essence of his or her work.

Lewes does shed some light, however, on the "supreme difficulty" of the actor's truthful connection with his or her character as he discusses the difference between an actor who is a "creative" artist and an actor who is a "conventional" artist:

> When an actor feels a vivid sympathy with the passion, or humour, he is representing, he personates, i.e., speaks through the persona or character; and for the moment is what he represents. He can do this only in proportion to the vividness of his sympathy, and the plasticity of his organisation, which enables him to give expression to what he feels. The success of the personation will depend upon the vividness of the actor's sympathy, and his honest reliance on the truth of his own individual expression, in preference to the conventional expressions which may be accepted on the stage. This is the great actor, the creative artist. The conventional artist ... cannot be the part, but tries to act it, and is thus necessarily driven to adopt those conventional means of expression with which the traditions of the stage[7] abound. (168)

The actor needs vivid sympathy and truth in order so that, "for the moment," he or she becomes what he or she represents. Lewes concedes that an actor's momentary connection with the character exists when the actor is speaking through the persona he creates. The connection between character and actor, however, is still configured in such a way that actor and persona are distinct—one speaks through the other.

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[7] Lewes describes further these nineteenth-century stage "conventional expressions": the actor's "lips will curl, his brow wrinkle, his eyes be thrown up, his forehead be slapped, or he will grimace, rant, and 'take the stage,' in the style which has become traditional, but which was perhaps never seen off the stage; and thus he runs through the gamut of sounds and signs which bear as remote an affinity to any real experiences, as the pantomimic conventions of ballet-dancers" (169).

Discussing the acting of William Macready, Lewes comments on how Macready "sympathetically" depicted emotion, "he felt himself to be the person, and having identified himself with the character, sought by means of the symbols of his art to express what the character felt, he did not stand outside the character and try to express its emotions by the symbols which had been employed for other characters by other actors" (38). Though Lewes describes a momentary connection between actor and character, as the actor 'stands inside' the character and where vivid sympathies allow an actor to speak through his or her persona, the whole of the aesthetic experience of acting requires that the actor must couch this connection in "well-known symbols" of "our common nature" so that the character may be interpreted with sympathy by an audience (124). Lewes' theory of acting acknowledges Diderot's paradox and posits a psychological connection between actor and character. Lewes knows there is an intimate relationship between actor and character, yet he configures the two 'beings' as distinct from one another.

Though Lewes' thoughts on acting move us closer to an understanding of the process by which the actor represents the consciousness of the character, Russian actor and theater director Constantin Stanislavski codifies and articulates the psychological underpinnings of the characterization process. Stanislavski's process of characterization, in his systematic approach to acting developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, brings us closer to a description of the relationship between actor and character which has already been discussed and displayed by the nineteenth-century female character critics as they write about Shakespeare's characters.

The paradox of Diderot and the actor's psychological connection to character are further articulated in Stanislavski's precepts concerning the actor, his inward feelings,

and the outward portrayal of a character. In *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski writes that an actor must actually feel and use emotion to connect to a character in an "inner process of living the part" (14). The actor still utilizes his conscious creative mind, but he or she uses that to "best prepare the way for the blossoming of the subconscious, which is inspiration" (14). The "fundamental aim" of acting, then, is "the creation of this inner life of a human spirit, and its expression in an artistic form" (14). The actor must work inwardly on himself and the part and then work outwardly to show this inner experience an "external embodiment" (15). A concise definition of the work of actors is rich in implication about the internal/external processes which acting necessitates:

> [Actors] bring to life what is hidden under the words [of the dramatist]; we bring to life what is hidden under the words; we put our own thoughts into the author's lines, and we establish our own relationships to other characters in the play, and the conditions of their lives; we filter through ourselves all the materials that we receive from the author and the director; we work over them, supplementing them out of our own imagination. That material becomes part of us, spiritually, and even physically; our emotions are sincere, and as a final result we have truly productive activity—all of which is closely interwoven with the implications of the play. (52)

The process described here is one of animation, analysis, and communion. The actor 'brings to life' the words of the play and brings himself to the role itself. Through the actor's use of his imagination, feeling, and memory, and through the study of the role and

sympathy with the character, the actor will experience a spontaneous "transformation" of his "*human sympathy into the real feelings of the person in the part*" (189).

The image of the actor as filter is also apt in the description of how much 'material' has to pass through the actor as he is preparing and performing his part. The actor filters experiences, ideas, influences about the part—or "combinations of objectives, and given circumstances which you have prepared for your part, and which have been smelted in the furnace of your emotion memory" (177). Just as the actor/filter image is fitting for all that is coming through the actor's mind and body on stage, the actor's mind/furnace is appropriate to describe the psychological process underpinning the "creation of the human soul in the part" (144). A smelting process indicates the fusing and melting of materials in order to make the component parts distinguishable. An actor melds and melts, then, his experience, emotion, and imagination, or, "living elements of his own being," into the "soul of the person he portrays" (178). The materials which have been smelted in actors are distinct, yet "part of us, spiritually, and even physically," and so an intimate relationship has been forged between the character and the actor. Of this forged relationship, Stanislavski comments further:

> so much of your role has already been mixed into your own self that you cannot possibly tell where to draw the line between you and your part. Because of that state you will feel yourself closer than ever to your part. Moreover, you can speak for your character in your own person. This is of utmost importance as you develop your work systematically and in detail. Everything that you add from an inner source will find its rightful place. Therefore, you should bring yourself to the point of taking hold of

> a new role concretely, as if it were your own life. When you sense that kinship to your part, you will be able to pour feelings into your inner creative state, which borders on the subconscious, and boldly begin the study of the play and its main theme. (306)

What ultimately results from the actor's kinship with his or her part, is the "birth of a new being—the person in the part," for in the "creative process there is the father, the author of the play; the mother, the actor pregnant with the part; and the child, the role to be born" (312). This new being, the actor in the part, has been fused, smelted, forged together in communion with the character, yet is distinctly aware of itself as actor and as part.

Stanislavski warns of the actor's total self-negation to the part:

> You can understand a part, sympathize with the person portrayed, and put yourself in his place, so that you will act as he would. That will arouse feelings in the actor that are analogous to those required for the part. But those feelings will belong, not to the person created by the author of the play, but to the actor himself.
>
> *Never lose yourself on the stage. Always act in your own person, as an artist. You can never get away from yourself. The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks the departure from truly living your part and the beginning of exaggerated false acting*. Therefore, no matter how much you act, how many parts you take, you should never allow yourself any exception to the rule of using your own feelings. To break that rule is the equivalent of killing the person you are portraying, because you deprive

> him of a palpitating, living, human soul, which is the real source of life for a part. (177)

The actor must be in communion with his or her "inner life of a human spirit" but must not get 'lost' in that spirit by using his or her own feelings—he/she must emote feelings that are analogous to the part. It is not the actor and his feelings displayed on stage, it is the actor-role, the 'new being,' and his or her feelings displayed on stage. The connection of the actor-role should be quite strong and be practically inviolable, for, they rely on each other for their existence. If the actor should 'lose' himself or herself in his/her own feelings on stage, the actor destroys the 'person' that is being created. The actor-role, then, is a fusion of character and actor, and the bond between them is a conduit for sympathy and connection.

Stanislavski's configuration of this 'new being' is precisely the communion of actor-character that actresses like Kemble and Terry have written about in their character criticism and have created as they have enacted Shakespeare's characters on stage. All throughout the nineteenth century, female character critics, actresses and non-actresses alike, have shared their 'new beings,' their intimate relationships and communions with Shakespeare's female characters with their readers, have anticipated the theories of character creation by theatre practitioners, and have displayed and recorded their own psychological connections to characters in their written texts.

The "reception of the creation of another mind": The Acting of Kemble and Terry

Actresses Fanny Kemble and Ellen Terry have much in common: a birth into a theatrical family; a notable and successful public life on the stage; a private life filled

with marriages, divorces, and children; professional involvement with influential nineteenth-century actor-managers (Kemble's with William Macready and Terry's with Henry Irving); autobiographical writing of their lives[8]; utter adoration of Shakespeare; famous stage portrayals of Shakespearean heroines; later-life private performance-readings or lectures[9] about those characters, and, above all, intimate connections to Shakespeare's characters, as evidenced in their writings—Kemble's *Notes Upon Some of Shakespeare's Plays* and Terry's *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*[10]—about the female characters and about the craft of acting itself.[11]

The kind of life Kemble and Terry lived on the stage is summarized by Mrs. C. Baron Wilson, in *Our Actresses; or, Glances at Stage Favourites, Past and Present*, as she describes stage actresses and their typical stage lives, which are punctuated by undertaking various stage roles of the day, including Shakespeare's female roles:

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[8] Mary Corbett, in *Representing Femininity: Middle Class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women's Autobiographies*, addresses both Kemble's and Terry's self-representation in writing and their public and private identities. Corbett sees Kemble as having to "internalize and disseminate the standards of middle-class femininity" in her autobiographical writings (13). For Terry, because her "public identity depends upon her being delivered to her audience as a commodity," her writings publicize "an intersubjective realm of the private" where "representations of the 'true self' are "highly constructed, in part by identifiably theatrical conventions" (14).

[9] I am treating Terry's lectures as a text of character analysis and as a performance text. Kevin Jackson, in *Invisible Forms: A Guide to Literary Curiosities*, writes about the lecture as a popular nineteenth-century form, which is related to the dramatic monologue (200). Focusing specifically on Sigmund Freud's lectures, he notices that "the personality of the speaker (more exactly, the speaker's persona) may do more than any rigorous display of logic or erudition alone to persuade or educate an audience (208).

[10] The four lectures are: "Children in Shakespeare's Plays," "The Triumphant Women" (Portia, Rosalind, Volumnia, Virgilia, Merry Wives, Beatrice), "The Pathetic Women" (Viola, Juliet, Desdemona and Emilia, Cordelia, Imogen, Ophelia, Lady Macbeth), and "The Letters in Shakespeare's Plays." Over a period of ten years, 1911-21, Terry 'performed' these lectures, and they were revised by her and then culled and edited in the publication, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, in 1932 by Christopher Marie St. John (a.k.a. Christabel Marshall).

[11] Even though as Martin Meisel, in "Perspectives on Victorian and Other Acting," admits that "recovering the acting of the past is a notoriously desperate enterprise," I will illustrate Kemble's and Terry's acting 'theories' which are dispersed throughout their writings about Shakespeare's characters and their interactions with them (356).

> they were mostly inducted [into their profession] in their infancy—rising gradually with their years, from cupid, or the babe in the wood, through Juliet and Ophelia, up to Lady Macbeth and the majesty of Denmark; or (if their peculiar talent induced them to become votaries of Thalia) though Beatrice and Rosalind, onwards to Oakley's jealous wife, or Ford's merry one!—then, as years rolled on, and the dimple was ("Out, alas! thou tell-tale time!") superseded by the wrinkle, sinking gradually into Dame Quickly, or Juliet's garrulous old Nurse. (12-13)

With some tweaking here and there to the list of characters—adding 'Portia' to both and subtracting 'Rosalind' from Terry,[12] for example—Wilson's remark about growing up on stage with Shakespeare's roles applies to both Kemble and Terry and to their affinity for portraying Shakespeare's characters throughout their stage careers.[13] Kemble and Terry enshrine Shakespeare and his characters in an inviolable sanctuary of their hearts and minds in their process of character creation, and their thoughts and comments about them and their art in writing is remarkable. It is because the two women had such a strong connection to Shakespeare's characters, that Kemble can proclaim that the actor-character relationship is "the reception of the creation of another mind" ("Notes" 14-15),

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[12] In *Ellen Terry: Player in her Time*, Nina Auerbach comments on Terry's "many parts" throughout her life: [they] tell a richer story than did any one of the them; from childhood to old age, she mirrored the passing needs of successive phases of culture. Taking the conflicting pressures of her times, she tried to become what others imagined. The infinite willingness of her expansive adaptability made the roles that were her life more broadly revealing than the mere creations of Victorian stage conventions... Ellen Terry's metamorphoses reflected collective dreams. The vocation of the real woman was to become that corporate creation, a work of fiction" (17).

[13] In *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*, Nina Auerbach writes of Terry's peculiar power as she donned Shakespearean roles: "Ellen Terry remains our most vivid exemplar of the mythic luminosity of the Victorian stage, in part because she made her reputation performing Shakespeare's heroines. For Victorian audiences, Shakespearean characters represented the apotheosis of selfhood and a glorification of womanhood in particular" (206).

and that Terry can boast that she is able to speak about Shakespeare's "women with the knowledge that can be gained only from union with them" ("Lectures" 80).

Kemble's definition of the dramatic art's "most original process," that is the process of character creation, will serve to illustrate both actresses' approaches to Shakespeare's female characters. Kemble writes in *Notes Upon Some of Shakespeare's Plays* that the "conception of the character to be represented is a

> mere reception of the creation of another mind; and its mechanical part, that is the representation of the character thus apprehended, has no reference to the intrinsic, poetical, or dramatic merit of the original creation, but merely to the accuracy and power of the actor's perception of it; thus the character of "Lady Macbeth" is as majestic, awful, and poetical, whether it be worthily filled by its pre-eminent representative, Mrs. Siddons, or unworthily by the most incompetent of ignorant provincial tragedy queens. (14-15)

Three major thoughts may be teased out of this definition: first, the actor's conception of the character, which is the creation of another mind formed by actor's communion with the character; second, the 'double process' of the actor's creation of the character and the actual physical embodiment of that character, its 'mechanical part'; and third, the original, essential, ideal Character of the playwright which will always hover over that actor/performance.

The creation of another mind requires an actor to have "poetical imagination," in the words of Kemble ("Record" II 103). For Terry, an actor needs "Imagination, industry, and intelligence—the three I's—all indispensable to the actress, but of these

three the greatest is, without a doubt, imagination" ("Memoirs" 34). Further, for Terry, imagination is the predominant force behind the creation of a character in an actor's mind; the imagination should be unsullied by theory or other stage representations of a character before the actor has a chance to decide for herself. For example, Terry feels that she should have not read "everything that had ever been written" about Juliet as she prepared for the role:

> It was a dreadful mistake. That was the first thing wrong with my Juliet—lack of original impulse. Everything that one does or thinks or sees will have an effect upon the part, precisely as on an unborn child. I wish now that instead of reading how this and that actress had played Juliet, and cracking my brain over the different readings of her lines and making myself familiar with the different opinions of philosophers and critics, I had just gone to Verona, and just *imagined*. ("Memoirs" 163)

Certainly, there are echoes of Stanislavski here in the creation of a child—the role—to be born from the actor's imagination. The power of imagination to stimulate the process of acting is great—though Kemble complains about the limitations of the actor's own physical ability and the intrusion of the environment of the stage itself:

> Were it possible to act with one's mind alone, the case might be different; but the body is so indispensable, unluckily, to the execution of one's most poetical conceptions on the stage, that the imaginative powers are under very severe though imperceptible restraint. Acting seems to me rather like dancing hornpipes in fetters. And by no means the least difficult part of the business is to preserve one's own feelings warm, and one's

imagination excited, whilst one is aiming entirely at producing effects upon others; surrounded, moreover, as one is, by objects which, while they heighten the illusion to the distant spectator, all but destroy it to us of the *dramatis personae*. ("Record" II 171).

The phrase "dancing hornpipes in fetters" perfectly encapsulates the difficulty in reconciling the actor's mind, "excited" imagination, "warm" feelings, and "poetical conception" of the character with the actual physical embodiment of that character on stage. It is interesting that Kemble expresses some frustration with the physical body and its temporal surroundings as it enchains her inner poetry of expression.[14] Kemble knows full well the role the actor's physical body plays in the portrayal of a character; the actor "personally embodies his conception; his voice is his cunningly modulated instrument; his own face the canvas whereon he portrays the various expressions of his passion; his own frame the mould in which he casts the images of beauty and majesty that fill his brain" ("Notes" 15-16). Yet, there is difficulty in 'preserving' the imaginative workings, or the "images of beauty and majesty," of the mind when physically present on stage.[15]

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[14] Perhaps this frustration has to do with Kemble's dislike of the nuts and bolts of the business end of theatre and of the scenic limitations of the nineteenth-century stage. Kemble writes, "The theatrical profession was, however, utterly distasteful to me, though acting itself, that is to say dramatic personation, was not; and every detail of my future vocation, from the preparations behind the scenes to the representations before the curtain, was more or less repugnant to me" ("Records" II 13). Deirdre David, in *Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life*, sees Kemble constructing a "narrative of reluctant fame," in which Kemble has a "reluctant transformation from accomplished and bookish girl to glamorous star, of moral disdain for the theater and preference for intellectual work" (xiii). Certainly Kemble, who constructs a personal narrative like the one David describes, would not celebrate the publically-displayed physical body as the means to help express the privately-conceived inner life of the character.

[15] Kemble admits that the "happiness of reading Shakespeare's heavenly imaginations is so far beyond all the excitement of acting them (white satin, gas lights, applause, and all), that I cannot conceive of a time when having him in my hand will not compensate for the absence of any amount of public popularity. While I can sit obliviously curled up in an armchair, and read what he says till my eyes are full of delicious, quiet tears, and my heart of blessed, good, quiet thoughts and feelings, I shall not crave that which falls so far short of any real enjoyment, and hitherto certainly seems to me as remote as possible from any real happiness" ("Record" 105).

Terry, too, comments in her lectures that her conception of Shakespeare's characters in her mind may vary from her actual impersonation of them: "I know that I have expressed opinions in these lectures about some of Shakespeare's women which do not coincide with those I have expressed in my acting. It is not always possible for players to portray characters onstage exactly as we have seen them in imagination" ("Lectures" 162-163). Ultimately, as Kemble remarks, the actor must "live and move through a temporary existence of poetry and passion, and preserve throughout its duration that ideal grace and dignity" (Notes 16). Even though the actor's "existence of poetry and passion" may or may not be ever realized satisfactorily for the actor in the physical realm, he or she must embody a character and grapple with the inherent duality of actor and character, or the actor's 'double process,' on the physical stage.

Kemble's defines the 'double process'[16] itself as the "most singular part of the [acting] process, which is altogether a very curious and complicated one," and this process describes the actor's duality of being character and actor at once ("Record" 104). In this 'double process' the physical actor embodies the character on stage through the "power of assumption,"[17] but, there is always the actor's "watchful faculty" and "vigilant

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[16] In *Representing Femininity: Middle Class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women's Autobiographies*, Mary Corbett reads Kemble's 'double process' as the difference between "enacting an illusion for public consumption and the private consciousness of how that presentation is being produced" (114). This duality then makes Kemble "unreal to herself: she operates on two levels that she finds wholly incompatible" (114). In addition, Deirdre David, in *Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life*, contends that Kemble related the 'double process' to the "performance of comedy and tragedy" (55). Further, David believes that Kemble associated tragedy with her 'dramatic' faculty of acting and her mother and comedy with the 'theatrical' faculty and her father: "consciously or not, and consistent with the model of profound difference between her parents that was always in her mind, she aligned the emotional abandon of tragic acting, as she understood it, with her mother and the mature, trained approach needed for comedy with her father" (55).

[17] Georgianna Zeigler, in "The Actress as Shakespearian Critic: Three Nineteenth-Century Portias," relates Kemble's "power of assumption" to "the quality which Coleridge and Keats—following Schlegel—give to Shakespeare: 'the capability of transporting himself so completely into every situation...that he is enabled... to act and speak in the name of every individual'" (102).

presence of mind" which "looks after and avoids or removes the petty obstacles" of the performance itself ("Record" 103-104). The paradoxical connection between actor and character onstage also corresponds to the actor's awareness of that paradox.[18] Kemble's "watchful faculty" is present even though she is completely "Juliet" on stage; her "vigilant presence of mind … never deserts me while I am uttering all that exquisite passionate poetry in Juliet's balcony scene, while I feel as if my own soul was on my lips, and my colour comes and goes with the intensity of the sentiment I am expressing; which prevents me from falling over my train, from setting fire to myself with the lamps placed close to me ("Record" 104).

The double awareness of the actor's moments of communion with his or her character and of the actor's reality is also confirmed by Terry as she relays a memory of playing Portia in the casket scene of Act III, scene ii. Terry remembers an "awe-struck feeling" and the "feeling of the conqueror" when as Portia she speaks her lines of 149-74:

> I knew that I had 'got them' at the moment when I spoke the speech beginning, 'You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand.' "What can this be?" I thought. "*Quite* this thing has never come to me before! *This is different*! It has never been quite the same before." It was never to be quite the same again. Elation, triumph, being lifted on high by a single stroke of the mighty wing of glory—call it by any name, think of it as you like—it was Portia that I had my first and last sense of it. And, while it

[18] Kemble observed the duality of her craft in two essential impulses in human nature: the dramatic ("the passionate, emotional, humorous element") and the theatrical ("the reproduction" of the dramatic) ("Notes" 3). Because actors "have consciousness which is never absent from the theatrical element," the "combination" of both the "dramatic temperament" and the "theatrical talent" "is essential to make a good actor; their combination in the highest possible degree alone makes a great one" ("Notes" 4-5).

> made me happy, it made me miserable because I foresaw, as plainly as my own success, another's failure.[19] (86)

As Terry connects to Portia, she feels the "elation, triumph" of becoming the character herself, and even is borne along in the character of Portia in a spiritual way: she was "lifted on high by a single stroke of the mighty wing of glory" (86). Terry actually has an awareness that something transcendent is occurring as she remembers that moment of communion with Portia: "*Quite* this thing has never come to me before! *This is different*!" (86). Language fails Terry as she tries to describe "this thing," yet she does acknowledge that she experiences a 'double process' which ultimately allows her the awareness of her connection to the character.

In her Introduction to Terry's *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, Christopher St. John (a.k.a. Christabel Marshall) writes of this connection between actor and character: "It has often been remarked that Ellen Terry spoke the language of Shakespeare as if it were her native tongue, and in these communings with herself there is revealed something of the process by which she arrived at that state of grace in which his words became her words" (15). A telling example of how Terry communed with herself and how she achieved the "state of grace" is hinted at in her own stage directions to herself for the readings in the lecture series. Notice how Terry is doubly aware, too, of outwardly satisfying her audience and inwardly satisfying her own self in the performance:

[19] That failure would belong to Charles Coghlan and his dismal portrayal of Shylock. In *Shylock: A Legend and its Legacy*, John Gross nominates the poor performance of Coghlan as the reason why the production failed: "with a hole like this at its center, the production was beyond repair, and it closed after only three weeks" (152).

> Get the words into your remembrance first of all. Then, (as you have to convey the meaning of the words to *some* who have ears, but don't hear, and eyes, but don't see) put the words into the simplest vernacular. Then exercise your judgment about their sound.
>
> So many different ways of speaking words! Beware of sound and fury signifying nothing. Voice, unaccompanied by imagination, dreadful. Pomposity, rotundity.
>
> Imagination and intelligence absolutely necessary to realize and portray high and low imaginings. Voice, yes, but not mere voice production. You must have a sensitive ear, and a sensitive judgment of the effect on your audience. But all the time you must be trying to please *yourself*.
>
> Get yourself into tune. Then you can let fly your imagination, and the words will seem to be supplied by yourself. Shakespeare supplied by oneself! Oh!
>
> Realism? Yes, if we mean by that real feeling, real sympathy. But people seem to mean by it only the realism of low-down things.
>
> To act, you must make the thing written your own. You must steal the words, steal the thought, and convey the stolen treasure to others with great art. ("Lectures" 14-15)

This is the 'double process' of acting for Terry in microcosm. An actor must be technically aware of herself (the words, the sound, the meaning) and of the effect of that technique on an audience. An actor, however, must also use her imagination, commune with the character, and show "real feeling, real sympathy," all the while pleasing herself.

An actor must be infused with imagination and be in ‘tune;’ she allows the words of Shakespeare to flow through her. This idea of having his words flow through her, in communion with her character, appears to be too much for Terry—“Shakespeare supplied by oneself! Oh!” There is as much Terry in her stage conception of a character as there is of that character; the onstage presence of Terry and character is “stolen treasure” which is given to the audience. Ultimately, Kemble and Terry both experience, in their minds and on stage, moments of union with Shakespeare’s characters, but paradoxically, there will always be a frustration, disappointment, or challenge for them in the realization and embodiment of those characters on stage.

The remaining element of Kemble’s definition of the process of character creation is the playwright’s original, essential Character, the outlines of which the actor must ‘fill up’ with her self. In Kemble’s view, there is an essential ‘Lady Macbeth’ who will be ‘majestic, awful, and poetical’—no matter what kind of actor, talented or not, performs the role. Kemble believes that the actor is

> at best but the filler-up of the outline designed by another,—the expounder—; and a fine piece of acting is at best, in my opinion, a fine translation. Moreover, it is not alone to charm the senses that the nobler powers of mind were given to man ... But ‘tis that, through them, all that is most refined, most excellent and noble, in our mental and moral nature, may be led through their loveliness, as through a glorious archway, to the source of all beauty and all goodness. (“Journal” 217)

The actor pours herself into the character using the outlines provided by the playwright and ‘translates’ the character as Kemble-Juliet on stage, for example. What this process

can lead the audience to, besides the collective experience of the audience's senses being 'charmed' by the stage representation of the character, is the "glorious archway" of beauty and truth of that character.

Kemble's "glorious archway" is akin to Terry's "state of grace" that the actor achieves, channeling the poetry, emotion, and passion of a scene ("Lectures" 151). For example, during "The Pathetic Women" lecture, Terry describes and brings to life Juliet's 'potion speech':

> Juliet is alone now, alone with her purpose, alone with her terror. Yes! For one brief moment she is terrified! The old familiar faces are still dear to her in spite of everything ... Perhaps she will never look on them again. She is used to having her nurse within call at night. Many a time that dear nannie has soothed her when she had been restless, and comforted her when she woke shuddering from some bad dream. She is shuddering now, and the impulse to cry out for help is so overpowering that she can't resist it. But hardly has she yielded and called, 'Nurse!' than she remembers that she could do nothing for her. She must face this terror alone:
> [recites (IV.iii.14-58) with some truncation].
> Ah, if that could be done, as it should be done! An actress must be in a state of grace to make that speech of hers! She must be on the summit of her art where alone complete abandonment to passion is possible! (148-151)

The actor submits herself to the passion of Juliet in a 'state of grace,' and to achieve that quasi-religious connection[20] between Terry and Juliet is the true 'summit' of the actor's art. Terry also would agree with Kemble's assessment of the actor-as-translator and the actor-as-filler of outlines; however, Terry recognizes that there are many other influences acting upon the performer as she portrays a character: "An actress does not study a character with a view to proving something about the dramatist who created it. Her task is to learn how to translate this character into herself, how to make its thoughts her thoughts, its words her words. I am able to speak to you about Shakespeare's women with the knowledge that can be gained only from union with them" ("Lectures" 80). Terry also understands that actors cannot "avoid bringing what is part and parcel of ourselves, temperament and culture, for instance, but we can, if we will, leave behind such things as theories, preconceived notions, prejudices, and predilections" ("Lectures 79).

Yet Terry departs from Kemble's notion of an essential Character when she acknowledges the "danger" of "trying to shrink or stretch everything, scenes, characters and lines, to fit" an existing conception or theory of a character. Terry sees Shakespeare's genius[21] in his ability to make characters that allow actors latitude in reproducing many translations of them. Thus, Terry in her memoir reflects on Frederick Furnivall's remarks to her about her conception of Portia (a "lady gracious and graceful, handsome, witty, loving and wise, you are his Portia to the life"): "That is the best of

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[20] Nina Auerbach, in *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*, comments on Terry's "religious language," and that with this language, "character and womanhood break free of bardolatry to inaugurate their own faith" (213).

[21] Terry has situated herself inside Shakespeare's text as much as she believes Shakespeare has lived in her. Terry has "lived with [Shakespeare] in his plays," ("Lectures" 16) and regards him as "my friend, my sorrow's cure, my teacher, my companion, the very eyes of me" ("Memoirs" 295).

Shakespeare, I say. His characters can be interpreted in at least eight different ways, and of each way some will say: 'That is Shakespeare!'" (145-46).

For both women, whether Shakespeare's character of Juliet remains an ideal one throughout time or a shifting one according to the cultural moment, the character-actor connection *is* one of paradox, but there is no difficulty in the actresses' minds about that connection because a state of grace or communion with the character exists alongside the boundary of reality of the physical actor and the stage performance. Kemble and Terry, like the nineteenth-century female character critics, reframe the paradox of the 'double process' by offering the actor-character (or author-character), the fused entities in communion, as a way of representing the consciousness of Shakespeare's characters. The paradox of actor and character existing and feeling at once is resolved somewhat by the creation of the merged actor-character and by the ease with which the boundaries between actor and character are blurred.

The 'fairer shape': Boundaries, Character and Audience

To vivify and bring into prominence a poor and dull 'creation' is the work of a skillful actor; and in this he merits praise, where the author, who really created the part, or stole and spoilt it, but at least supplied its outline for the actor to fill in, merely deserves contempt.
Godfrey Turner, "Calls," *The Stage*, 1884

Charming as the lady [Mary Anderson as Pauline in *The Lady of Lyons*] may be, both in look and gesture, she is certainly wanting in that unexplicable impulsiveness, that absolute abandonment of consciousness and self-possession, without which all acting must appear false and untrue.
The Theatre, "Our Omnibus Box," 1883

Ah! how little can those who, in mere ignorance, speak slightingly of the actor's art, know of the mental and moral training which is needed to take home into the being, and then to express in action, however faintly, what must have been in the poet's mind, as his vision of Imogen found expression in the language he has put into her mouth!

Helena Faucit, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, 1885

These statements illustrate the gradations of the actor-character connection and how, in the words of Charlotte Porter, acting itself shadows forth "our secret emotions, our undefined impressions" which "take fairer shape before us" (57). Turner claims that the characters are merely outlines or sketches for the actor to 'fill up' and flesh out to make it 'real' for audiences. The Anderson performance reviewer wishes that the actress had the "abandonment of consciousness and self-possession" that is necessary for truth in the character's portrayal on stage. In this case, the actor must give herself over, impulsively negate and abandon herself to the character in order to communicate 'truth' on stage. In contrast, Faucit situates the actor in an intimate nexus with the poet's character, for the actor must bring the character "home into the being," where character and actor are in communion. No matter where the description of this relationship between actor-character falls on the spectrum of connectivity between the two, language seems to fail us as we attempt to accurately describe the spiritual, ethereal, and mercurial nature of the boundary itself.

The blurry boundary between reader and text and actor and text and character is configured and given shape by David Cole in *Acting as Reading*. Cole contends that acting is the recovery of a "lost" physical of reading," in which readers are like actors because their interaction with the text is similar: both "'realize' it, 'actualize' it, make it happen as an event" (1, 27). Both acting and reading contain a "problematic mix of active and passive, of self-assertion and self-surrender" and that the sympathies of both the reader and actor can be "distributed over a spectrum of characters" (14). As the actor

undertakes the process of characterization, or reading "from within role," he does not "sever [his] tie with general reading" (15). Cole characterizes the 'boundary' that exists between the actor-reader as a 'boundariless' state between actor and character (59). Cole's conception of the acting process as similar to the reading process and his idea of 'boundarilessness' are both helpful to give context to the similarities I have found between female character critics' representations of consciousness of Shakespeare's characters in both their narrative and performance processes. Yet, while Cole's argument of acting and reading as complimentary processes and his idea of 'boundarilessness' in the relationship between actor and character are provocative, the female character critics configure their communion, their 'boundarilessness,' between themselves and Shakespeare's characters in a open, mutually beneficial, and loving way.

Cole, using Norman Holland's psychoanalytic approach to reading theory, accepts that "mental processes" are the "survival, the "displacement upward," of what were once bodily processes"[22] (39). Reading is like eating; and, if one goes back to the time when eating displayed the "character of boundless receptivity," one would arrive at the infant's early oral phase at his mother's breast, when the infant does not distinguish his ego from the sensations flowing in him in this "paradisiacal state" (58). Cole maintains that it is at "this boundariless state—[where we are] unable to distinguish 'in here' from 'out there,' knowing nothing of any 'you' or 'me' or 'it'—which, as the original physical form of eating, lies at the origins of reading...[and] which acting, therefore, seeks to recover (58-

[22] Cole explains that Holland "assumes that an author's repressed fantasy material finds expression in the texts he produces but that there must first occur 'a transformation of the fantasy at the core of [the] literary work into terms satisfactory to an adult ego'" (Cole 39). Further, Cole writes that our "encounter with a text consists in 'regression to our earliest oral experience...in which we are merged with the source of our gratification'" (Cole 41).

59). Acting can recover this boundariless state because in acting, the division of self, with its orally active and orally passive impulses, is at its "sharpest" (60). The two opposed impulses do not "sit side by side" but "reach toward each other in a paradoxical effort to make of this boundless opposition a boundarilessness" (64).

To map out the different levels of processes from eating, introjection,[23] reading, to acting, Cole sets up a chart which defines the active and passive impulses. His breakdown of what is happening during the general acting process and the process of characterization is as follows:

> **Acting**
>
> **Orally active impulse:** I make the body the source of the text.
>
> **Orally passive impulse:** I open myself to the text as source of my every word and move.
>
> **Active and passive are set equal to produce boundarilessness:** I make the body the source of the text by opening myself to the text as source of my every word and move. (61)
>
> **Acting (as a transaction with character)**
>
> **Orally active impulse:** I impose upon my character the identity of the reader I am.
>
> **Orally passive impulse:** I accept as my identity that of the reader my character is.

[23] Introjection is the "unconscious fantasy of union with another by ingestion," and it "spans the gap between physical and textual intake" (Cole 62-3).

> **Active and passive are set equal to produce boundarilessness:** I impose my identity as a reader upon the character from whom I accept my identity as a reader. (62)

In this breakdown of characterization, the actor and the character are both readers and the active and passive impulses clash with one reading identity (actor) and another reading identity (character) (113). The character is a "single-solution" reader: each character occupies a 'single' way of reading the text and has a "particular solution to the drive/defense dilemma which he alone offers" (112). The actor, like any reader, desires to "appropriate a text's balance of drives and defenses for himself," and he must focus on the reader that the character is in order to represent him (115-116). The actor must be a "general reader," because that kind of reader can "lurch" empathically "over a spectrum of drive/defense solutions (i.e. characters)" (116). The actor, by filling up the outlines of the character and giving it an inner life, makes both the actor and the character as general readers, where a boundariless relation can occur (123). The boundary between the character-reader (single-solution) and the actor-reader (general, full-spectrum reader) is set into a boundariless relation when the actor has to reconcile and incorporate both reading identities into himself:

> How does such a "setting equal" of their reading-identities bring actor and character into a boundariless relation? But the boundary to be removed is precisely one between two different kinds of readers: the (single-solution) *reader he is* and the (full-spectrum) *reader I am*. And in the course of the actor's transaction with character the distinction between these two types of readers cannot help but disappear, since the actor's portrayal cannot but

> be a portrayal of both. For one thing, since he has but a single presence to stand for the presence of either reader, the actor necessarily represents the presence of both. But more basically, since the actor has but a single reading process with which to read either *as* the character or *for* him, that reading process is undecidably the reading process of both. *My defensiveness, Mercutio as defensive, Mercutio as enacting my defensiveness, my finding Mercutio defensive*... How then is it possible to say whether reading is going on "in here" (in my reading activity, which I impute to the character) or "out there" (in the character's reading activity, which I experience as my own)? With the appearance of such inner/outer confusions we recognize the familiar signs of the boundariless state. It is in the loss of all distinction between his own and the character's reading processes, between himself and the character *as readers*, that the actor's boundariless relation with his character consists. (125-126)

In the actor's portrayal of a character, he incorporates both his way of reading the text and his character's way of reading the text. Boundarilessness occurs between the two when the two processes are integrated in a performance—the actor reads as Mercutio and for Mercutio—because both processes need to be in one actor to represent "Mercutio" on stage.

Cole's idea of the boundarilessness between actors and characters as readers is helpful when trying to understand Kemble's and Terry's desire to articulate their connection with Shakespeare's female characters. Even Kemble and Terry identify a certain active and passive impulse as one submits to "Juliet," and yet asserts oneself as

the actor herself. In the communion of actor and character, then, there is a 'boundariless' union, yet separation, and thus a continuing paradox. The primary nature of the union Cole configures for the reader-actor and the communion I conceive for Kemble and Terry and "Juliet" are different, however. Cole states that "reading is, thus, not an openness (on the part of the reader) meeting an openness (on the part of the text); it is more like one set of barriers going up against another" (56). I believe instead that the text for the character critics/actors must remain open for their communion with themselves and their textual others, their characters.

Further, Cole describes the reader as a "balance of fantasizing and defensive impulses and comes to a text largely in the hope of 'recreating …[his] own defenses from [its] materials" (56). In Cole's configuration of acting and reading, and the original 'boundariless' state of receptivity of the infant, the self's "desire for such a "total commingling with another is necessarily an ambivalent one, for such a union, if realized, might mean the end of the self" (59). Acting, in Cole's view, does its best to recover this boundariless state because it acknowledges and tries to fuse the "deepening division" between the active and passive impulses of one's self. But, what if that "total commingling with another" is realized in a mutual communion with the other, instead of through a fear of "being engulfed by the other" (59)? Indeed, Cole asks, "Who can say, under such circumstances, that to merge or fuse with the other might not take the form of being engulfed—of being devoured? From now on the wish to eat must always be accompanied by a fear of being eaten in one's turn" (59). This primal scene of once "unbounded receptivity" has now become both desire and fear of fusion with the mother. Since this scene of tension in eating "'passes on' to each of the 'higher' activities that

derive from it: introjection, reading, and ultimately acting, "on each [succeeding] level, the conflict grows more acute" (59). Why would that desire to merge or fuse with the other be one of conflict and fear of integration of the self? Why can't the communion of self and other be one based on mutual benefit, love, and sharing of each other's selves? As Kemble and Terry interact with Shakespeare's characters, they seek companionship, find validity, and see themselves as women: Kemble exclaims, "I feel as if I were Portia-- and how I wish I were!" ("Records" II 108). Terry exclaims, "I have been Beatrice!" ("Lectures" 97). In this type of relationship—female friendship—there is no call to consume, dominate, or engulf the other. Because Shakespeare's female characters are friends and real women to Kemble and Terry, they may say that they have 'been' that character, or represented that character's consciousness even while asserting and maintaining her own self.

This relationship of communion, as one being meets another in a union of shared thoughts, feelings, and emotion, is one of love and mutuality—actress and character *both* come together as one *and* remain themselves. Janice Raymond, in *A Passion for Friends: Toward a Philosophy of Female Affection*, writes that female friendship, or "gyn/affection," is based on affection which is "a feeling, emotion, fondness, attachment, and love for one another" (7). Further, Raymond suggests that gyn/affection "has the power to help the women's lives together, to make connections that have not been made, and to provide a unifying and directing influence in a network of meaning that transcends women's past, our ordinary lives, and our present" (213). A communion based on mutuality instead of domination, of desire for connection instead of fear of fusion, of love instead of separation of one's self is the nature of the intimate relationship that Kemble,

Terry, and all of the female character critics describe with Shakespeare's characters. While Cole's "boundarilessness" is absolutely fitting and applicable to the character critics' connection to Shakespeare's female characters, the nature of the union between them is not fraught with conflict and battle, but replete with connection and fusion in the creation of a new space and consciousness—the character (Kemble-Juliet, for example) and the new narrative of that fusion.

The "fairer shape" and beyond

For actors and character critics alike, their constructions (characters and narratives) need audiences (spectators and readers) in order to come to life, to be enacted fully: characters need to be seen on stage and narratives need to be read. Where are we, finally, as audience members in the narratives of the character critics? Charlotte Porter, in "Ay, Every Inch a King," reviews a production of *King Lear*, and notes the discrepancy of seeing adequate and inadequate stage representations of characters, specifically referencing the poor performance of Mr. William E. Sheridan[24] in the title role. Porter describes the effect of seeing a play wherein a kind of 'double process' of spectator, too, occurs:

> The play is worked within us and our own moved mind must be more the actor than the audience; but in the acting, our secret emotions, our undefined impressions, take fairer shape before us, and while the stage

[24] The Lear of William E. Sheridan (1839-87), for Porter was "too 'fond and foolish,'" and did not display the full majesty of the character; for example, his prayer for nature's curses upon Goneril was "carefully studied and well done, but the accompanying contortions of face and waving of the body were too monotonously continued, and the whole business seemed rather a trick to effect admiration than a means to compel emotion" (58).

> play outside proceeds, we can look on this picture and on that, trace connections, contrast effects and, judging how far the representation falls below or how far it rises above our instinctive ideal, get a riper notion of Shakespeare's mind and art. (57)

The characters and the narratives of the critics do indeed take 'fairer shape' before us as they are essentially different and changed from Shakespeare's Juliet, to Kemble-Juliet, Faucit-Juliet, and Elliott-Juliet. Kemble, too, comments on the powers and responses of an audience, "I think that acting the best which skillfully husbands the actor's and spectators powers, and puts forth the whole of the one, to call forth the whole of the other, occasionally only; leaving the intermediate parts sufficiently level, to allow him and them to recover the capability of again producing, and again receiving, such impressions ("Journal" 90). For Kemble, the audience has power which is cultivated together with the actor's power, and in turn, both are 'called forth' to participate in the mutual exchange of the theatrical experience.

As we read and view texts being enacted, whether on the page by Elliott-Juliet or on the stage by Kemble-Juliet, we are 'called forth' to witness the transaction, union, and communion between author and character and actress and character. Readers, like spectators, witness the 'textual performance' of narrative and make sense of the representation. Marie Maclean, in *Narrative as Performance*, reminds us of the similarities between performance and narrative and the audience's role in each:

> Just as an actor participates in the making of the text by his performance, so we can participate in the making of that metatext which is critical theory by performing it. Each enactment, like each reading, is itself an

> interpretation of that theory. Our reader response, our enactment, our interpretation will modify the text and produce a new response among its readers in return. Performance, like revolution, is an act which must always be renewed. (42)

The actor-character critic responds to, enacts, and creates a union with Shakespeare's characters; the audience responds to this connection and enacts that connection again and again through reading and interpreting. Our responses in enacting other's responses to Shakespeare's female characters have the quality no less than of revolution. What the character critics so dearly wanted to share was the moment of reaching a connection with other women, whether they were characters inscribed and vivified in new narratives on the page or enacted on the stage. That moment of true connection, communion, is then transmitted to the audience, and is much like the description Anna Jameson gives of how Kemble touched her audience with her power: Kemble's genius in her acting would seem "to send forth, in a word—a glance,—the electric flash which is felt through a thousand bosoms at once, till every heart beats the same measure with her own!" ("Visits" 276). Actor and character critic alike 'send forth' the 'electric flashes' of communion so that our hearts beat 'the same measure' as their own.

Whether on the page or on the stage, the collective 'electric flash' moment is transmitted to an audience in a powerful and necessary way. Susan Griffin, in *The Eros of Everyday Life* comments on our need for communal experiences:

> The wish for communication exists in the body. It is not for strategic reasons alone that gathering together has been at the heart of every movement for social change ... These meetings were in themselves the

> realizations of a desire that is at the core of human imaginings, the desire to locate ourselves in community, to make our survival a shared effort, to experience a palpable reverence in our connections with each other and the earth that sustains us. (qtd. in hooks xviii)

For the nineteenth-century women character critics, it was necessary to locate themselves in the 'shared effort' of connection with Shakespeare's female characters and then share that connection of love and 'reverence' with other women. bell hooks takes Griffin's desire for communion to extend to the concept of love: "the communion in love our souls seek is the most heroic and divine quest any human can take" (xviii).[25]

The women character critics of the nineteenth century were untroubled by the boundaries between themselves and Shakespeare's text and his female characters and were unperturbed by the paradox contained in that relationship. The women metamorphosed his text into new narratives and championed his characters, or as Elliott maintains, "companions and warm-blooded friends" (314), gave them moments of 'life,' and, above all, desired to share with other women these moments of communion in their own 'books of love.'

[25] In *Communion: The Female Search For Love*, bell hooks discusses love as a "gendered narrative," where love is women's "founding narrative," which was "not only handed to us by men but shaped to reinforce and sustain male domination" (35). hooks advocates women seeing past the patriarchal narrative of romantic love, but to instead "create loving bonds, circles of love that nurture and sustain collective female well-being" (xix).

Epilogue: "Books of Love"

Thousands and thousands of books have been written about Shakespeare, and most of them mad. These books are all very much alike in form and method. Their introductions and first chapters are often good. Each author begins by a sane and sensible exposure of some folly of a predecessor; and then, little by little, in hints and intimations, he begins to develop a delusion of his own. Strange interpretations, sometimes cryptograms, appear at first in furtive footnotes, and then flourish in the text; until at last the writer proclaims to the world his great discovery with shouts of maniacal exultation.
Logan Pearsall Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare* (1934)

Logan Pearsall Smith's words fitly describe some critical attempts at scholarly writing in the world of Shakespeare studies. Although Smith's configuration of Shakespearean criticism may even in some way characterize my own work, his definition does not account for the nineteenth-century women character critics' essays, articles, and books devoted to Shakespeare's female characters. Tellingly, Smith's favorite guide books in his "expedition" and "great adventure" into "Shakespeare" include: A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, Algernon Swinburne's *A Study of Shakespeare*, Coleridge's writing, Edmund Chamber's *Shakespeare: A Story*, Harley Granville-Barker's *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, Barrett Wendell's *William Shakespeare*, John Bailey's *Shakespeare*, and John William Mackail's *Approach to Shakespeare* (40-41). These works, for Smith, are exceptional in their ability to be "the record first of all of an aesthetic experience, vividly felt, though not comprehended, perhaps by the reason, and then, with that reliance on his own feeling, even in opposition to his reason, which is the first duty of the true critic, the patient search for the explanation of the experience, and then its translation into terms of thought" (56).

Smith's definition of Shakespearean criticism, or scholarly bombast, and even his own personal collection of the best Shakespearean criticism excludes the emotional and dialogic character criticism of Anna Jameson, Mary Cowden Clarke, Fanny Kemble, Helen Faucit, Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott, and Ellen Terry. Indeed, women's writing on Shakespeare's female characters does not follow Smith's "mad" formula of books written about Shakespeare, nor does it conform to his definition of the 'best sort' of Shakespearean criticism. Women character critics lovingly record their textual interactions with Shakespeare's characters in an emotional and dialogic relationship in their narratives. There is no "patient search for the explanation of the experience" for the women character critics: instead, they share with us the experience itself (Smith 56). There is no "translation into terms of thought" of that experience for the character critics: instead, they present their emotional textual engagement with Shakespeare's characters to their readers and allow them not only to witness this relationship and union, but also to share in the enactment of the lives of those characters (Smith 56). Like J. S. Wood's "precious Book of Love" Show Book for the 1884 Shaksperean Show, women's character criticism contains within its pages love and care for other women and records the celebration of Shakespeare's plays and portrayal of his characters. Women character critics created "Books of Love," devoted to the celebration of Shakespeare's characters and dedicated to the sisterhood and community of women readers.

In women character critics' narratives, there is emotional textual engagement with Shakespeare's characters, and this engagement is not just a simple re-telling of the play with the woman's part highlighted. In the critics' construction of new narratives, the characters are given a freedom beyond Shakespeare's play. Character critics carefully

select how to represent the consciousness of the character through their choices of mimetic or diegetic staging, temporal accelerations, decelerations, and pauses, and most importantly, through their use of free indirect speech, which indicates moments of union between narrators and characters. The moments of communion recorded on the page of the character critics are moments which demonstrate how they read and interacted with Shakespeare's plays and show how they understood the function of 'character' itself. A fused and merged being of Faucit-Imogen or Elliott-Imogen indicates the psychological interaction of self and character during the narrative process. This communion of character and author is consonant with how actors relate to and 'become' their characters on stage. Because they have recorded this textual fusion of beings in their character criticism all throughout the nineteenth century, the women character critics anticipate and confirm the theories of the psychological processes occurring as an actor 'becomes' a character. For both actor and critic, the connection and intimate relationship with the character are real and tangible, whether enacted and embodied on stage or enacted and constructed within the pages of a narrative.

Scholars like Logan Pearsall Smith disregard the character criticism of Anna Jameson, Mary Cowden Clarke, Fanny Kemble, Helen Faucit, Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott, and Ellen Terry because their works do not synthesize feeling and reason in a "patient search for the explanation" of the works of Shakespeare. However, what the women character critics accomplish in their narratives is truly exceptional and historically significant. Working with the ideal and accepted model of womanhood, the critics appropriate Shakespeare's cultural authority and Shakespeare's characters and subversively reconstruct his plays and his characters in the way *they desire* to envision

them. They give 'great bad' characters warmth and feeling, explain the motives and desires of tragic and comic women, increase the agency and freedom of subjugated or oppressed women, and vindicate characters' lives from not only the confines of Shakespeare's play but also the confines of Victorian society. Their insistence upon the importance of sharing feelings of love, respect, and friendship in communities of women—women character critics, Shakespeare's sisterhood of characters, and women readers—is strategic. By sharing intimate relationships between Shakespeare's characters and real women, the character critics insist that there is movement and agency for women in their versions of Shakespeare's play and in their own narratives.

Madeleine Leigh-Noel Elliott's words will serve to conclude this study and to reveal the remarkable accomplishment of the "Books of Love" of character critics of the nineteenth century. Their creation of dynamic narratives is no less of a feat than that of Shakespeare's own creation of his characters. Elliott writes in her chapter, "Hermia and Helena," of the excellence in Shakespeare's delineations of his characters:

> [Not in any of his] characters do we find the slightest inaccuracy or defect. Each one is so true to nature that we are sure the poet knew such characters as he describes, or rather as he produces; for they are creations, not descriptions, they are the offspring of his brain, not the product of his pen. Out of his soul they sprung, fully statured at the moment of their birth, and they remain for ever, real personages, compared with whom, Helen of Troy, Joan of Arc, Elizabeth of Hungary, Isabella of Spain and Catherine of Russia are vague and shadowy beings, ghosts whose outlines

> loom dimly through the mist of years, not the companions and warm-blooded friends that we recognise in the children of Shakespeare. (314)

nineteenth-century women character critics created and produced their characters, too, and those characters seem to have sprung 'out of their souls' as well. The characters represented in their narratives were other beings into which the critics poured their own thoughts, feelings, and desires. This fusion of critic and character in moments of textual communion is made tangible through the representation of the character's consciousness. This union is then shared with other women readers. As Shakespeare has created his "children," so too do women character critics create and share with us true "companions and warm-blooded friends" in the dynamic and living spaces of their narratives, their "Books of Love."

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