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William Sharp and the Victorian Pressures on Sexuality

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Introduction

Printed here for the first time are two lost works by the nineteenth-century Scottish writer William Sharp (1855–1905), works that manifest the poetic and cultural impress of the Victorian age (especially its constrictions on gender and sexuality) and that illuminate Sharp's complex personality. The first work is "Ariadne in Naxos," a moving and dark play of love and abandonment stimulated by Algernon Charles Swinburne's Greek tragedy *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865); the second is "Beatrice," a poem in the idyllic mode popularized by Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

William Sharp and the Victorian Pressures on Sexuality

When he died, William Sharp was respected as journalist, writer, and poet. In his fifty years he had known famous men and women; written biographies of D. G. Rossetti (in whose circle he moved), Heine, Browning, Joseph Severn (the friend of Keats), and Shelley; been an art and literary critic for several leading newspapers and periodicals; and published four volumes of poetry, four novels, two books of essays, several anthologies, and a number of books of other sorts. His renown was modest, seemingly unlikely ever to rise above that of many writers successful in their age but of limited interest to succeeding generations.

Except for one curious circumstance.

From 1894, Sharp sustained two writing careers, one continuing under his own name as a man, the other under a pseudonym as a woman, Fiona Macleod, whose true identity Sharp strained (successfully) to keep secret from all except a few close friends. Fiona Macleod, a visionary Gaelic poet, was as accomplished as Sharp (some critics thought she was more accomplished), turning out mystic and deeply felt poetry, fiction, and drama. George Meredith thought Macleod's works had all the

"imagination" and "simple fluency"¹ that Sharp's lacked, while Thomas Jay Garbaty suggests that "the books he [Sharp] wrote under her name constituted his best work, for in these was felt the magic of the Scottish countryside, the warmth and curiosity of the old Gaelic rites."² The relative standing of the two may be inferred from volume 3 of *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, where Fiona Macleod has an index entry and William Sharp does not, and where her name heads the bibliographic list.

From her first appearance in print, Macleod attracted admiration from leading writers and critics of the day, and was instrumental in advancing the rebirth of interest in Gaelic myth and folklore associated with the Celtic Renaissance. Although he had a number of reservations about Macleod's work, William Butler Yeats nevertheless thought she had "in her hands the keys of those gates of the primeval world, which shut behind more successful races, when they plunged into material progress."³

In *William Sharp-Fiona Macleod: 1855-1905*, Flavia Alaya has aptly described Sharp's furtive division of both personality and writing as

a novelist's fantasy realized. He has readily lent himself to interpretation as a self-romanticizing madman, frenzied wanderer, religious cultist, and literary opportunist, half-missionary, half-charlatan; he has been obviously suspect as a transvestite, using his unusual sympathy with women as grounds for one of the most curious literary hoaxes of the nineteenth century.⁴

Alaya's biographical and critical study of Sharp is thorough, astute, and sympathetic, exploring the internal and external pressures on Sharp. Alaya carefully examines the way Sharp was "responsive ... to so many different streams of literary and philosophic thought and makes a compound of so many movements of mind, English and foreign" (p. 8):

Sharp's union of cosmopolitanism with his problem of personal identity was no private eccentricity. Both were there, all around him—the cosmopolitanism a persistent

and growing bias away from high-Victorian nationalism; the problem of identity, even sexual identity, a growing malaise in the artistic mind. The connection between them is evident in the mask consciousness and symbolic nationalism of Yeats, in Stevenson's Jekyll-Hyde doppelgänger, in the taut strain between the poles of the civilized and the primitive in the work of Conrad, and in the American-European dialectic of Henry James. Like Sharp, they were 'foreigners' all.

(Alaya, p. 15)

But Alaya also admits that

although time has thrown the experiences of social change in Sharp's lifetime into jarring new perspectives, revealing much that was not known before, it has left the mysteries of Sharp's internal life practically untouched, and thus, if anything, more mysterious than ever. There is nothing in the stuff of Sharp's history alone guaranteed to make hard, realistic sense out of his illusion of a unique literary mission, nothing concrete to explain completely his eccentricity in choosing to write under the name of a woman, nothing positive with which to penetrate the mystery of his cryptic utterances about himself and everything he produced as Fiona Macleod. By now it may have become impossible to know with certainty what were the deeper experiences that formed him and led to the feminine bias of his major work, experiences that every literary biographer, in this day of psychoanalytic judgments, is under sentence to investigate—his relations with his family, with his wife, and with the woman who was the effective cause of his taking the name and literary personality of Fiona Macleod.

(Alaya, p. 3)

Of all the themes and influences Alaya traces so skillfully, she explores the question of sexual identity less than she does the others, although she does speculate about the effect on Sharp of a "father [who] encouraged him in every manly physical exercise and no doubt looked upon a literary career as smacking of the effete" and does quote from a letter Sharp wrote (November 20, 1880) affirming

the depth of his affection to a friend, John Elder: "Don't despise me when I say that in some things I am more a woman than a man" (Alaya, p. 27; quoted from *Memoir*, I, 51⁵). Alaya also suggests in passing that "cultural inhibition" led Sharp to suppress any dramatization in his work of the "sexual tensions within himself" (p. 112).

Now, more than two decades after Alaya wrote, and benefiting from the development of gay theory, gay studies, and gay history as well as from the discovery of the works this edition presents, we must find it virtually impossible not to see Sharp's sexual identity as the key to the "mystery of his cryptic utterances about himself." From his youngest years, Sharp appears to have struggled with Victorian constructs of gender and sexuality, chafing under their constraints, and undergoing in the 1890's a particularly acute crisis of sexual identity and duality, a crisis eventuating in the creation of Fiona Macleod. To see Sharp in the light of Richard Dellamora's observation that "in the terms of Edward Carpenter or Havelock Ellis, the 'fusion of the two sexes' in a male body defines the novel category of male homosexuality"⁶ is to see clearly for the first time the source of Sharp's tensions. According to Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, Sharp's is "one of the more interesting cases of cross-gender behavior" in the nineteenth century.⁷

Sharp's trans-gendering represents the playing out of psychological strains that are clear in his biography, but its timing was forced by the rapidly intensifying pressures on gender and sexual identity in the 1880's and 1890's. Jeffrey Weeks declares, in a statement that constitutes a consensus among scholars, that "the 1890s represent a decisive punctuation point in the shaping of modern sexuality a period not delineated by the artificial constraints of a decade, but dramatically symbolized, nevertheless, by ... [its] events, scandals, and publications."⁸ The period was acutely characterized by a Henry James narrator (in an 1894 story dealing with a lost manuscript) who comments on a woman who writes under a man's name and a man who writes under a woman's: "in the age we live in one gets lost among the genders and the pronouns."⁹

In *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*, Elaine Showalter illuminates this "golden age of lit-

erary and sexual doubles"¹⁰ and explores many of the Victorians' constructions of gender and the new pressures challenging men's understanding of themselves and their roles:

- the existence of male bonding institutions (public schools, the universities, clubs);
- the rise of feminism and the New Woman;
- an increasing consciousness of homoerotic feelings and the exploration of them by Walt Whitman, Walter Pater, John Addington Symonds, Edward Carpenter, and Havelock Ellis;
- W. T. Stead's dramatic newspaper investigations in 1885 ("The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon") of brothels specializing in child prostitution, sadism, and flagellation, as part of his campaign to raise the age of consent for women from 13 to 16;
- the 1885 Labouchère Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act making criminal all acts (private as well as public) of "gross indecency" between men;
- partially disguised literary depictions of homosexual panic or crises in masculinity (*The Strange Story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* [1886], *She* [1887], *The Picture of Dorian Gray* [1891], *Dracula* [1897], *Heart of Darkness* [1902]);
- the peculiarly obscene murders by Jack the Ripper of East End prostitutes in 1888;
- the public exposure of a male brothel in 1889 (the Cleveland Street Scandal);
- the trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895.

In *Sexual Anarchy*, Showalter quotes Regenia Gagnier's *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public*: "there was 'a crisis in the 1890s of the male on all levels—economic, political, social, psychological, as producer, as power, as role, as lover.'"¹¹

Perhaps the central element of this crisis in masculinity is one Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick examines—the "sudden, radical condensation of sexual categories" and the culture's "urgent homophobic pressure to devalue one of the two nominally symmetrical forms of choice."¹² Her suggestions that suddenly there was "no space in the culture

exempt from the potent incoherences of homo/heterosexual definition" (p. 2) and that "a modern problematic of sexual orientation could be said to date" from 1891 (p. 91) provide a compelling gauge of the tensions Sharp must have felt. Indeed, his self-division, the creation of Fiona Macleod, seems virtually described by Sedgwick when she traces the effects of "the discourse related to male homosexuality itself ... [become] for the first time extremely public and highly ramified through medical, psychiatric, penal, literary and social institutions":

With a new public discourse concerning male homosexuality that was at the same time increasingly discriminant, increasingly punitive, and increasingly trivializing or marginalizing, the recuperative rhetoric that emerged had an oddly oblique shape.

(p. 164)

The description of Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* as an example of what Sedgwick calls "a minority rhetoric of the 'open secret' or glass closet" (p. 164) is applicable to Sharp/Macleod as well, a creation "shaped by the conjunction of an extravagance of deniability and an extravagance of flamboyant display" (p. 165).¹³ The creation is also a fascinating example of how some male writers from the 1880's imagined what Showalter characterizes as "fantastic plots involving alternative forms of male reproduction or self-replication: splitting or cloning ... ; reincarnation ... ; transfusion ... ; aesthetic duplication ... ; or vivisection [all] celibate, yet procreative metaphors for male self-begetting ... [that] reject natural paternity for fantastic versions of fatherhood" (p. 78).

Sharp's known associations with John Addington Symonds, Walter Pater, Walt Whitman, and Oscar Wilde are only dimly documented, but one may suspect that they reflected his sexual dilemma and what Sharp called "the strain of life—the strain of double life."¹⁴ In May 1883, Sharp paid a rapturous visit to Venice where, Elizabeth Sharp notes in her memoir of her husband, "the frequent companionship of John Addington Symonds ... [was] a perpetual joy to him" (*Memoir*, I, 148). In *The Letters of John Addington Symonds* the correspondence between Symonds

and Sharp is described as "not now available,"¹⁵ which seems to suggest some reserved trove. However, Robert Peters has written me that the intention was to indicate a lack of surviving letters. Whether the relationship between Sharp and Symonds was anything other than a shared antipathy to the whole range of Victorian Grundyisms is difficult to determine. Sharp's having told Symonds of his engagement in Venice (see Symonds' congratulatory letter of December 22, 1884 [*Memoir*, I, 160]) may have been an affirmation of heterosexuality. Yet Symonds' praise of Sharp's introduction to *The Songs, Poems, and Sonnets of William Shakespeare* ([1885]) seems to suggest a shared understanding:

... the Preface (to my mind at least) is more humanly and humanely true about Shakespeare's attitude in the Sonnets than anything which has yet been written about them.... you are one of those who live (as Goethe has for ever put it) in 'the whole.' It is the great thing for modern criticism to get itself up out of holes and corners, mere personal proclivities and scholarly niceties, into the large air of nature and of man.

(*Memoir*, I, 175-176)

Indeed, Sharp's introduction confronts the sonnets' homoeroticism directly, arguing that it is foolish to conceive of Shakespeare as "in all things ... perfect, a flawless man" (p. 13). Sharp evokes Shakespeare's life in terms that seem frequently personal:

... we may rest assured that he was pre-eminently manly, and therefore that he experienced all those emotions to which men are ordinarily liable; that he wrestled with temptations even as we ourselves do; that not infrequently, especially in the impulsive ardours of youth, indiscretion overcame precept and prudence; that occasionally he spoke and acted as he would fain not have done; that once or twice, at least, in his life he had bitter cause to bewail the domination of the body, the surrender of the better part of him.

Yet another reason for the strange obtuseness of some would-be interpreters is an apparent forgetfulness of the most obvious facts of chronology. Would the man who was capable of writing such immortal works as 'The Tempest,' 'King Lear,' 'Macbeth,' 'Hamlet,' 'Othello'—so urge they, in effect—be likely to condescend to such almost unreasoning devotion to a boyish friend, still less would he be likely to forget the unspoken commands of duty, and yield to a temptation which was doubly evil in that the sinner transgressed against both moral and civil law? But it was not the Shakespeare of Hamlet, of Lear, of Macbeth, of Othello, who addressed the brilliant young Herbert of Pembroke in terms which now seem to us extravagant in their ardour; it was not this Shakespeare who for a time forgot lealty to wife and child for an enthralling passion that disturbed his spiritual nature to its deepest depths, though it left them clearer than they had yet been, serene for evermore. But it was that younger Shakespeare, still in his years of youth, adventuresome, full of life, inspired with the fire of genius, elate with already won success, susceptible to every charm pertinent to the joyous pageant of life around him,—that Shakespeare, who as a young man, married untimely and early thrown upon the world to carve out his own destiny, so far as in him lay, loved with true affection, and with all the Euphuistic emphasis in expression characteristic of the generation, his brilliant young friend, William Herbert; rejoiced in the company of accomplished men of divers talents; was half surprised into and doubtless fought against a *liaison* with one whom he afterwards found to be unworthy even as a paramour. Shakespeare, like many another man, had to pass through the dark valley of humiliation and weariness and sorrow, and they are but bat-sighted apologists who would have us believe that instead of going through these experiences which taught him such infinite store of wisdom he spent his youthful years in thinking out indifferent allegories, and in tricking them forth in still more intricate and (from this point of view) dissatisfying verbal disguise.

(pp. 14, 15-16)

Sharp was, of course, not the first to see such elements in the sonnets, but his view does set him apart from the pre-

dominant view of the Victorians, mostly anxious, as Samuel Schoenbaum says, "to redeem the god of their idolatry from self-confessed impurities of the flesh," from being "worse yet ... (most horrible of imaginings!) the practitioner of unnatural vice: Shakespeare the Invert."¹⁶

Walter Pater was an "intimate and valued friend" (*Memoir*, II, 35) of both William and Elizabeth Sharp and visits back and forth were frequent. After Pater died, William Sharp remembered him warmly, recalling their first meeting, arranged by Philip Bourke Marston, in 1880: Pater was to Sharp "the author of the book that was a kind of gospel of joy to me,"¹⁷ *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), which Sharp elsewhere praised for its "new 'Cyrenaicism.'"¹⁸ Pater, Sharp thought, was drawn to him because Sharp was a friend of Rossetti, and because Sharp "was young and full of hope and eager energy, and had traveled much and far, and experienced not a few strange vicissitudes" ("Some Personal Reminiscences," p. 804). Sharp recalled his first visit, three or four days, to Pater in Oxford with special fondness, describing Pater's home and College rooms (where Sharp later stayed), the austerity of his life, and his autograph collection, which included a page of *Atalanta in Calydon*. By 1882, Sharp had collected and had specially bound all the essays by Pater he could track down. He recalled a visit in 1884 for the "many long talks about Marius and the new Cyrenaicism, and on all implied in what it has become the vogue to call the new Hedonism"¹⁹ ("Some Personal Reminiscences," p. 809). He was especially appreciative of Pater's sensitivity to what lies behind the surface:

It is his apprehension of, his insight into, this subtle, profoundly intimate second-life in every manifestation of human life and nature, of the warm shadow as well as of the sunlit flower, of the wandering voice as well as of the spring harbinger, that is one secret of the immediate appeal of Walter Pater's work to all who not only love what is beautiful, wheresoever and howsoever embodied, but also, as a Celtic saying has it, 'look at the thing that is behind the thing.'

("Some Personal Reminiscences," p. 811)

In 1889, Pater wrote to support Sharp's candidacy (later withdrawn, for reasons of health) for the Chair of English Literature at University College, London: "With a large knowledge of books and of fine arts, he is also intimately in touch with men and things, and would, I think, give taking lectures and stimulate the interest of young students."²⁰

Elizabeth Sharp affirms that Sharp's visit to Whitman, on January 23, 1892 (not long before Whitman died), was the "chief interest" of his stay in New York; virtually a pilgrimage, it was "a memorable visit to Walt Whitman, in whose fearless independent, mental outlook, and joy in life, in whose vigorous individual verse, he [Sharp] had found incentive and refreshment" (*Memoir*, I, 310). The two talked of "the literature of the two countries past and to come" and Whitman asked Sharp to convey a message to his English admirers:

"William Sharp, when you go back to England, tell those friends of whom you have been speaking, and all others whom you may know and I do not that words fail me to express my deep gratitude to them for sympathy and aid truly enough beyond acknowledgement. Good-bye to you and to them—the last greetings of a tired old poet."

(*Memoir*, I, 311–312).

Sharp's relationship with Oscar Wilde appears to have been a competitive one. In an essay that plausibly posits Sharp's *Children of To-morrow* (1889) as a source of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Isobel Murray documents the tense relations between the two: "Wilde's comments on Sharp's work and ideas are uncharacteristically negative, indicating some distinct difference or dislike." She suggests that "the antagonism of the two men may have stemmed from a sense of rivalry, and the very similarities of their ideas"; both took "very similar and unsurprising attitudes to Victorian sexual morality."²¹

In the years just around the time of Fiona Macleod's creation, Sharp manifested various signs of discontent and instability. In 1890, he abruptly abandoned London, feeling that his life's very "satisfactoriness was a chain that

was winding round him and fettering him to a form of life that was becoming rigid and monotonous":

Curious about life, he cared incessantly to experiment; restless and never satisfied (I do not mean dissatisfied) he constantly desired new fields for this experimentation.... he longed for different circumstances, different environment[s], new possibilities in which to attempt to give fuller expression of himself.

(*Memoir*, I, 265)

Perhaps some element in this restless agitation that was to last throughout the decade shows in his 1888 volume *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*, where he explored in several poems "the Doppelgänger legend [which] affects us more subtly than the most eerie tale of haunted rooms."²² As William F. Halloran has noted, "The Twin-Soul" contains "a veiled hint of psychosexual disorder"²³ with the speaker's cry to a "Spirit-Enchantress, O Demon-Will" who "witched my soul" and "filled me with trouble and awe, / With pain that still at my heart doth gnaw":

In the dead of the night a spirit came:
Her moonwhite face and her eyes of flame
Were known to me:—I called her name—
The name that shall not be spoken at all
Till Death hath this body of mine in thrall!
(pp. 83, 82)

Could Alfred Douglas have written his celebrated line in "Two Loves" (1894), "I am the Love that dare not speak its name," without having read Sharp's penultimate line?

Sharp's longstanding concern for the injustices inflicted on women by law and society was on his mind in December 1890 (*Memoir*, I, 273, 275). A diary entry for January 22, 1891 (an entry to be examined more fully below) records Sharp's querying whether there might not be "a definite law in the evolution of sexual morale" (*Memoir*, I, 284). In a letter of May 1, 1891, he derided the Scottish reviewer who had objected to the "nude sensuousness" of several of his poems in *Sospiri di Roma* (*Memoir*, I, 298) and later that year began to collaborate with the American

writer Blanche Willis Howard on an epistolary novel, *A Fellowe and His Wife* (1892): she wrote the husband's letters and he the wife's.

In adopting the persona of Countess Ilse von Jaromar in *A Fellowe and His Wife*,²⁴ Sharp had the opportunity through her artistic and personal expansion and growing independence to reprise his own experience of Rome (a trip explored below). In words that can be read to apply to Sharp himself, Ilse warns her fiancé the day before the wedding that "I do not know myself after all. I thought I did. I *must* go to this far-off Rome. But what if I "*find myself*" there, what if I know that Jaromar can never, never be to me'—" (p. 87); her finding herself, as she does, somewhat alienates her husband, as modern, enlightened, and supportive as he is.

Writing as a woman leads Sharp to several curiously nuanced episodes. Not only does Ilse find herself enchanted by Shelley's "Eipsychidion" ("Shelley must have been half a woman," she comments [p. 31]), but under its influence she finds herself dreaming of Emilia Viviani, becoming Emilia Viviani, and finally sculpting a bust of her, a bust whose features resemble those of a troubling acquaintance, Lucrezia Mallerini. She also finds herself taken with a boy she meets in the country. The scene evokes an era before the Christian age:

He was a young shepherd, and was clad in goatskin; but his legs were bare, and his brown throat. His large black eyes were ever so much lovelier than those of Lucrezia Mallerini, and he had that thickly-clustered black hair which is so like the heavy masses of the fruit of the hedge-ivy. He rose slowly, stretchèd himself, gave a long, shrill cry to his scraggy sheep, and then moved out of sight behind one of the aqueduct's ruined arches.

(pp. 124-125)

After Herwegh, her art instructor (and would-be seducer), arranges for the boy, Vanni, to model for two figures Ilse is working on (a Hamadryad and a Young Shepherd), she contemplates Vanni's discomfort in tones which deepen as we recall Sharp's being behind the female mask:

Poor boy, he was so shy at having to pose as a model, though many of his fellow *contadini* do so. Herwegh laughed, and said he would soon get over that; but as yet it is quite pathetic to see how his large brown-black eyes wander with a strange apprehensive look from Herwegh's beautiful Venus Anadyomene and Lilith and his unfinished 'Sin' (a lovely and seductive female figure modelled with extraordinary grace and power, and with marvellous winsomeness of expression), to me, and then to the inchoate clay that is slowly taking shape under my hands, then again at me, then at Herwegh and his 'Sin,' and so over and over. Once, when Herwegh was out, for he does not allow a model to speak a word during a sitting, I asked Vanni if he were happy. 'No,' he said, with a kind of stern candour, 'I am chill sitting here like this, and my heart burns with anger when he, *il scultore tedesco*, makes me stand naked on yonder wooden block—before—before *you* and—and—these other women.' I could not help smiling at my being thus associated with Venus and Lilith. I do believe the boy thinks they are as much alive as I am! I tried to explain; but he turned his great eyes on me, and asked with a bewildering simplicity, 'Have you told Mary, the most pure and most blessed Mother of God, that you sit here daily and look at these shameless women, and that you take clay and make an image of me for—for—ah, Dio mio, I know not what!' and here the strange youth broke down with a momentary nervous sob, and crossed himself at least thrice.

(pp. 213-215)

The gender displacement here darkens the scene. On August 15, 1892, Sharp published the only issue of what he intended as a quarterly, *The Pagan Review*. The issue was extraordinary not just because all the contributions were written by Sharp under different pseudonyms,²⁵ but because its foreword addressed directly some of the tensions confronting English society (and Sharp):

... THE PAGAN REVIEW is frankly pagan: pagan in sentiment, pagan in convictions, pagan in outlook.... 'They', 'the gen-

eral public', care very little about the 'Muse' at all; and the one thing they never advocate or wish is that the 'Muse' should be so indiscreet as to really withdraw from life the approved veils of Convention.

.....
THE PAGAN REVIEW conveys, or is meant to convey, a good deal by its title. The new paganism is a potent leaven in the yeast of the 'younger generation', without as yet having gained due recognition, or even any sufficiently apt and modern name, any scientific designation.... A new epoch is about to be inaugurated, is, indeed, in many respects, already begun; a new epoch in civil law, in international comity, in what, vast and complex though the issues be, may be called Human Economy. ... THE PAGAN REVIEW, in a word, is to be a mouthpiece ... of the younger generation, of the new pagan sentiment, rather, of the younger generation. In its pages there will be found a free exposition of the myriad aspects of life. ... The pass-phrase of the new paganism is ours: *Sic transit gloria Grundi*. The supreme interest of Man is—Woman: and the most profound and fascinating problem to Woman is, Man. This being so, and quite unquestionably so with all the male and female pagans of our acquaintance, it is natural that literature dominated by the various forces of the sexual emotion should prevail. ... It is LIFE that we preach, if perforce we must be taken as preachers at all; Life to the full, in all its manifestations, in its heights and depths, precious to the uttermost moment, not to be bartered even when maimed and weary.²⁶

Sharp did not regret shutting down *The Pagan Review*, according to Elizabeth Sharp: "the one number had served its purpose, as far as he was concerned, for by means of it he had exhausted a transition phase that had passed to give way to the expression of his more permanent self" (*Memoir*, I, 329). That the transition centered on Sharp's sexual identity can be inferred from the turbulent sexual energies manifest throughout the issue.

Whether these energies are homoerotic is difficult to decide. Although Sharp's editorial statement links "the 'new paganism'" with "the modern epicureanism" as replacing "the religion of our forefathers," he says that

both appellations are "more or less misleading"; at the same time, he says, "with most of us, there is a fairly definite idea of what we signify thereby" (*The Pagan Review*, p. 2). Although his further elaboration is carefully heterosexual, emphasizing that the "'new paganism'" is "far from wishing to disintegrate, degrade, abolish marriage" (p. 2), his peroration nevertheless quotes Théophile Gautier after a distinctly Paterian evocation of the need for intensity in the face of the brevity of life: "For here, at any rate we are alive; and then, alas, after all,— 'how few Junes / Will heat our pulses quicker ... [sic]'" (p. 4). On the inside cover of the magazine, Sharp's designation of contributors is sex-specific (and all the pseudonyms he used in the issue are male): "It will publish nothing save by writers who theoretically and practically have identified, or are identifying themselves with 'the younger men'" (still, one anticipated contribution is to be by Mme. Rose Désirée Myrthil, a "revelation of a woman's life ... [displaying] both true paganism of spirit and modernity of temperament" [p. 64]).

The contents of *The Pagan Review* are forthrightly erotic, often unconventional in their appeal, as in the lush sado-masochism of "The Black Madonna":

*For we are thy slaves, O Mother of Life,
We are the dust of thy tired feet, O Mother of God!*

As the white-robed priests advance slowly towards the Black Madonna, the younger tear off their scarlet sashes, and seizing the five maidens, bind them together, left arm to right, and hand to hand. Therewith the victims move slowly forward till they pass through the ranks of the priests, and stand upon the lowest edge of the pedestal of the great statue. Towards each steppeth, and behind each standeth, a naked priest, each holding a narrow irregular sword of antique fashion.

(p. 7)

About as close to an evocation of homoeroticism as one can find in *The Pagan Review* is the quotation from Oscar Wilde used as one of the epigraphs to "The Pagans": "... lo! with a little rod / I did but touch the honey of romance— /

And must I lose a soul's inheritance?" (p. 20). But the story itself is the celebration of the free love between a writer and a painter which costs the couple most of the woman's inheritance. Even Sharp's notice of the death of Walt Whitman is carefully asexual; he accepts the designation of being one of the "Whitmaniacs" and salutes Whitman as "this great pioneer of a new literature," whom succeeding generations will see as "the Janitor [doorkeeper] of the New House Beautiful" (p. 61).

Several months after the demise of *The Pagan Review*, Sharp and his wife traveled through North Africa, a trip intended to benefit Elizabeth Sharp's health and financed by two adventure stories Sharp wrote for boys. Elizabeth Sharp emphasizes that "the weaving of sensational plots offered no difficulties to him ... [and that] he did not wish that particular kind of writing to be associated with his name" (*Memoir*, I, 336), a distancing that may take on significance in the light of Elaine Showalter's exploration of the homoerotics of boys' fiction: "an illusion of eternal masculine youth," "the 'boyish world' of male bonding," the warding off of "the woman reader, set up by popular journalism as the antagonist of the virile writer," and the accomplishment of "the male quest romance [whose stories] represent a yearning for escape from a confining society, rigidly structured in terms of gender, class, and race, to a mythologized place elsewhere where men can be freed from the constraints of Victorian morality" (pp. 80-81).

The African trip itself may be emblematic. Showalter explores the male quest romance as the exploration of "secret selves in an anarchic space which can be safely called the 'primitive,'" "a penetration into the imagined center of an exotic civilization usually Africa, the 'dark continent,' or a mysterious district of the East, a place inhabited by another and darker race" (p. 81). She then links this fictional world to the explorations, sexual as well as geographical, of such a Victorian adventurer as Sir Richard Burton. Showalter quotes Edward Said's statement in *Orientalism* that "the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe" and suggests that "such sexual experience might involve a blurring of sexual boundaries" (p. 81). Said argues that

virtually no European writer who wrote on or traveled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself or herself from this quest.... What they looked for often—correctly, I think—was a different type of sexuality, perhaps more libertine and less guilt-ridden.²⁷

Sharp published several articles based on his and his wife's travels, but there is little in them to document any literal exploration of what Showalter calls "the geography of a transgressive space he [Sir Richard Burton] called the 'Sotadic Zone' in which androgyny, pederasty, and perversion held sway" (p. 81). In Sharp's letters to an unidentified friend, the language is innocently rich in images of revelation, excitement, and penetration ("But though the country did not become less awful in this respect ["gaunt" and "ribbed"], it grew wilder and stranger as we neared Elkantara. I never saw scenery so *terrific*. The entrance to the last Gorge was very exciting, for beyond the narrow outlet lay the Sahara and all torrid Africa!" [*Memoir*, I, 339]). But when Sharp wrote from Constantine, February 12, 1893, to describe his "plunge into the Barbaric East," his prose is more lush, and more suggestive, as he explores "the strange haunts of the dancing girls:²⁸ the terrible street of the caged women—like wild beasts exposed for sale":

... one of my reckless fits came on, and I plunged right into the midst of the whole extraordinary vision—for a kind of visionary Inferno it seemed. From Haschisch-den to Haschisch-den I wandered, from strange vaulted rooms of the gorgeously jewelled and splendidly dressed prostitutes to the alcoves where lay or sat or moved to and fro, behind iron bars, the caged 'beauties' whom none could reach save by gold, and even then at risk; from there to the dark low rooms or open pillared places where semi-nude dancing girls moved to and fro to a wild barbaric music [sic] I wandered to and fro in that bewildering Moorish maze, til [sic] at last I could stand no more impressions.

(*Memoir*, I, 343, 344)

In 1898 (in an episode his wife, perhaps revealingly, does not mention in her *Memoir*), Sharp served on a "Free Press Defence Committee" made up of what Havelock Ellis called "the most variegated assortment of secularists, anarchists, radicals, and unconventional literary free-lances."²⁹ The Committee was formed to help defend Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Sexual Inversion* from prosecution for obscenity.

§

Sharp had created Fiona Macleod after encountering in Italy, late in 1890, a woman, Edith Wingate Rinder, who moved him to explore feelings in himself long nascent but long suppressed. William F. Halloran comments that

although Sharp had certainly met Mrs. Rinder in London, they became well-acquainted during her stay in Rome, and Sharp began to think of her as an embodiment of his ideal of feminine beauty. It was she who provided the 'new impetus' that produced *Sospiri di Roma* [1891]. She served as the inspiration of all the early Fiona Macleod writings and eventually became, in [Ernest] Rhys's words, the 'objective Fiona Macleod.'³⁰

The relationship among Mrs. Rinder, Sharp, and his wife can be inferred from the delicate phrasing in Elizabeth Sharp's account of how, in Rome, Sharp "had cut himself adrift for the time from the usual routine of our life, and touched a high point of health and exuberant spirits":

There, at last, he had found the desired incentive towards a true expression of himself, in the stimulus and sympathetic understanding of the friend to whom he dedicated the first of the books published under his pseudonym. This friendship began in Rome and lasted throughout the remainder of his life.

(*Memoir*, II, 5)³¹

In 1896, Sharp explained to his wife that it was to Mrs. Rinder that "I owe my development as "Fiona Macleod"

though, in a sense of course, that began long before I knew her, and indeed while I was still a child'" (*Memoir*, II, 5). In a dictated letter to Maud Gonne, January 14, 1907, William Butler Yeats recounts a revealing version of Sharp's discovery of Fiona Macleod through Mrs. Rinder:

I saw Mrs Sharpe [sic] the other day and know a great deal more about the Fiona MacLeod mystery. It is as I thought.³² Fiona MacLeod was so far as external perception could say a secondary personality induced in Sharpe by the presence of a very beautiful unknown woman whom he fell in love with. She, alas! has disappeared from everyone's sight, no one having set eyes on her except George Meredith who says she was the most beautiful woman he ever saw. Whether there was more than this I do not know but poor Mrs Sharpe, though generous and self-sacrificing as I can see does not want to enlarge that unknown woman's share. A great deal, however, which Sharp used to give in letters as an account of Fiona's doings were she insists a kind of semi-allegorical description of the adventures of his own secondary personality and its relation with the primary self. For instance in one letter to me he had said 'I will leave your letter where Fiona will find it when she wakes', and by this he meant that the secondary personality when it awoke in him would answer the letter which it certainly did in a much more impassioned way than that of the rest of the letter.³³ I don't think there would be much of all this in the official biography for when I said to Mrs Sharpe that she should tell the whole truth, she answered 'How can I! Other people are so much involved.' She never talked quite openly about things, except it being a secondary personality, but told things in a series of hints and yet, at the same time, quite clearly. I noticed that each time she said this personality was awakened in him by a beautiful person she would add as if to lessen the effect, 'and by beautiful scenery'. She was evidently very fond of him and has sent me his birth date and her own to find out how their horoscopes interlocked. I would be rather glad if you would keep this letter, for I am fresh from seeing Mrs Sharp (I saw her a week ago) and this will be a record. Put it in some safe place and I may ask you for it again some day for it is a fragment of history. She

told me that the morning William Sharp died she heard visionary music and indeed a good deal of one sort and another about the supernatural side of his talent.³⁴

The stories Sharp told of his discovering Fiona Macleod reveal the churning sexual and gender divisions within him. Yeats recounts one version related to Lord Killanin, that

he [Sharp] had been somewhere abroad when he saw the sidereal body of Fiona enter the room as a beautiful young man, and became aware that he³⁵ was a woman to the spiritual sight. She lay with him, he said, as a man with a woman, and for days afterwards his breasts swelled so that he had almost the physical likeness of a woman.³⁶

Another version connects the beautiful Mrs. Rinder and the beautiful landscape Elizabeth Sharp cited to Yeats; Sharp locates his initial vision of Fiona Macleod as occurring on the shores of Lake Nemi, not far from Rome, a lake known (aptly, for the doubling motif) as "the Mirror of Diana" and sacred to Diana's worship. Though Sharp's account to Ernest Rhys seems intended to support Fiona's actual existence, his portraying himself as Actæon implies his dividing himself, his being torn apart:³⁷

His first meeting with Fiona, so he said, was on the banks of Lake Nemi, when she was enjoying a sun-bath in what she deemed was a virgin solitude, after swimming the lake. 'That moment began,' he declared, 'my spiritual regeneration. I was a New Man, a mystic, where before I had been only a mechanic-in-art. Carried away by my passion, my pen wrote as if dipped in fire, and when I sat down to write prose, a spirit hand would seize the pen and guide it into inspired verse. We found we had many common friends: we traveled on thro' Italy, and went to Rome, and there wrote my haunting 'Sospiri di Roma.'

'You, amico mio, who have a Celtic strain, and a touch of the "sight," can understand how it was that Fiona, when we reached England, was seen by very few. I took her to see George Meredith, at his own earnest request;³⁸ and he was enchanted by her dark Highland beauty [sic] I had her

portrait taken afterwards, and here it is (showing me [Rhys] the photograph of a lovely young woman, dark, tall, with coils of black hair, and mysterious eyes). Ah, hers was the divine gift, beauty, and everything she wore expressed her; but her first emanation, clad only in the golden light of Nemi, was the loveliest.³⁹

Not long after his encounter with Mrs. Rinder, Sharp recorded in his diary for January 22, 1891, his reactions to an anthropological work by Elie Reclus:

In the evening read through Elihu Vedder's [sic] *Primitive Folk*. There is a definite law in the evolution of sexual morale, I am sure, if one could only get at it. The matter is worth going into, both for Fundamental and Contemporary and Problematical Ethics.

(*Memoir*, I, 284)

Though the comment seems vague and though Sharp had long been fascinated with the beliefs and practices of other cultures, the passage provides an important clue to his release of imaginative and sexual tensions in his creation of Fiona Macleod. Here he was probably stimulated by Reclus' description of how the Western Inuits dressed and raised comely sons as girls and sold them to wealthy men, and by his description of how the "pretty youths" ultimately took orders and became tribal priests.⁴⁰ Havelock Ellis strikingly draws attention to Reclus' 1885 linking of Eskimo homosexuality and priests and elaborates it in ways particularly germane to the mysticism Sharp was able to explore through Fiona Macleod:

there is an organic connection between the homosexual temperament and unusual psychic or divinatory powers.... Moreover, [Edward] Carpenter points out, persons in whom the masculine and feminine temperaments were combined would in many cases be persons of intuition and complex mind beyond their fellows, and so able to exercise divination and prophecy in a very real and natural sense.⁴¹

Surely Alaya is correct in her tentative observation that "Reclus' linking of transvestism with the occult or

prophetic personality may have played an extremely important part in assisting Sharp's sexually mixed self-image" (Alaya, p. 113).⁴²

After seeing Mrs. Rinder in Rome, Sharp seems to have withdrawn for some time, at Phenice Croft, Rudgwick, to a richly visioned state. Even as he continued his ordinary responsibilities and undertakings, he changed: "he was the dreamer—he was testing his new powers, living his new life, and delighting in the opportunity for psychic experimentation." But as charmed as he was with the place, his wife found it "'uncanny,' and to have a haunted atmosphere—created unquestionably by him—that I found difficult to live in, unless the sun was shining" (*Memoir*, II, 7). As Sharp worked on *Pharais*, the first work to be published by Fiona Macleod, and even before he had chosen to use a pseudonym, its creation was eerily associated with a death of masculinity:⁴³

I was writing in pencil in *Pharais* of death by the sea—and almost at my feet a drowned corpse was washed in by the tide and the slackening urgency of the previous night's gale. The body proves to be that of a man from the opposite Forfar coast. It had been five days in the water, and death had played havoc with his dignity of lifeless manhood.
(*Memoir*, II, 9–10)

As his biographers point out, the dualities and tensions in Sharp had been present from early in his life. Indeed, the years leading up to the writing of "Ariadne in Naxos" and "Beatrice" are well worth examining, for both works reflect the pressures in Sharp's life, pressures which were to grow and fester—his sense of having within him two personalities (one male, heroic, adventuresome, and self-ish, the other female, domestic, dreamy, and victimized) and his struggles against convention.

§

William Sharp was born in Paisley in 1855, the first child of David Galbreath Sharp and Katherine Brooks Sharp. His mother was to give birth to another seven children, five daughters and two sons. Sharp's father was a

successful merchant, "a partner in an old-established mercantile house" (*Memoir*, I, 5); Sharp's mother was Swedish in descent, the daughter of William Brooks, Swedish Vice Consul at Glasgow. Sharp's background, his wife notes (in expressively ambiguous words), "produced a double strain. He was, in the words of a friend, a Viking in build, a Scandinavian in cast of mind, a Celt in heart and spirit" (*Memoir*, I, 6). As a child and as a man, Sharp was handsome and robust in appearance, but delicate in health. Louise Chandler Moulton described his appeal in 1882: "He is tall and handsome; with dark brown hair, eyes of the deepest blue, and complexion of almost girlish fairness."⁴⁴

The family was well-to-do, and spent three or four months each summer in the West Highlands. Katherine Sharp was particularly interested in geology and David Sharp "had a keen love of the country" (*Memoir*, I, 5). As Sharp roamed the countryside and lochs and seaside of Scotland, he developed a deep love of nature. He also came into close contact with the country people of Scotland and began to absorb the Gaelic spirit and stories that particularly informed the sensibility and works of Fiona Macleod. His nurse, Barbara, a Highland woman, "told him stories of Faerie, crooned to him old Gaelic songs, and made his childish mind familiar with the heroes of the Celtic Sagas, with the daring exploits of the Viking rovers and Highland chieftains" (*Memoir*, I, 7). Elizabeth Amelia Sharp (1856–1932), Sharp's first cousin and wife (after a nine year engagement), knew Sharp when he was eight and emphasizes that from his "earliest years the distinctive characteristics of his markedly dual nature existed and swayed him." She notes his delight as a child "in being the adventurous warrior or marauding Viking" but also his propensity to balance "the restless adventure-loving side of him" with another side, that of "the poet dreamer" drawn to a small grove of pines on the shores of Loch Long. That was "an enchanted land to him, away from the everyday world, where human beings never came, but where he met his invisible playmates, visible to him" (*Memoir*, I, 7, 8–9).⁴⁵ Elizabeth Sharp is particularly insistent on the split in interests and values in Sharp as a child, and on the decision Sharp made early to keep the mystical

and spiritual side of himself protected from his family and companions:

He found, as have other imaginative psychic children, that he had an inner life, a curious power of vision unshared by any one about him; so that what he related was frequently discredited. But the psychic side of his nature was too intimately a part of himself to be killed by misunderstanding. He learned early to shut it away—keep it as a thing apart—a mystery of his own, a mystery to himself. This secrecy had two direct results: he needed from time to time to get away alone, from other people, so as again and again to get into touch with 'the Green Life,' as he called it, for spiritual refreshment; and there developed in him a love not only of mystery for its own sake, but of mystification also that became a marked characteristic and, eventually, one of the factors which in his literary work led to the adoption of the pseudonym.

(*Memoir*, I, 13)

Until the age of eight, Sharp was educated at home by a governess: "he was tractable, easily taught, and sunny-natured" (*Memoir*, I, 15). His formal schooling began at Blair Lodge, "one of the chief boarding-schools in Scotland ... beautifully situated.... I was much more of a credit to shepherd and fisher and gipsy friends than to my parents or schoolmasters" (*Memoir*, I, 15). In the memoir quoted by Elizabeth Sharp, Sharp emphasizes a Shelleyan motif, his rebellion against the schoolmasters, and his running away four times in "flight[s] for freedom" (*Memoir*, I, 16). When he was 12, Sharp's family moved to Glasgow, where Sharp was a day scholar at the Glasgow Academy. In his studies, Sharp appears not to have distinguished himself. His mother "watched over her son's work at college, and made facilities for him to follow his special pursuits at home," but he "was considered too delicate to be subjected to severe mental pressure; and he met with no encouragement from either parent in his wish to throw himself into the study of science or literature as a profession, for such a course seemed to them to offer no prospects for his future" (*Memoir*, I, 6). At the age of 16, recuperating from typhoid fever, Sharp spent a long

summer on a remote island where an old fisherman, Seumas Macleod, lived. Macleod stimulated Sharp's interest in the Gaelic culture (as well as later furnishing part of his pseudonym⁴⁶). From 15 to 18, Sharp "sailed up every loch, fjord, and inlet in the Western Highlands and islands," everywhere associating himself "with fishermen, sailors, shepherds, gamekeepers, poachers, gipsies, wandering pipers, and other musicians" (*Memoir*, I, 19). One summer, for two or three months, much to the distress of his family, Sharp joined a tribe of Gypsies and "wandered with them over many hills and straths of the West Highlands. To him, who at all times hated the restrictions and limitations of conventional life, to whom romance was a necessity, this free life 'on the heather' was the realisation of many dreams" (*Memoir*, I, 20). Upon being recaptured, Sharp agreed both to resume his course work at the University of Glasgow and to accept being "put into a lawyer's office, ostensibly to teach him business habits, but also the better to chain him to work, to the accepted conventions of life, and to remove him out of the way of dangerous temptations offered by the freer College life with its long vacations" (*Memoir*, I, 21).

Although Sharp attended the University of Glasgow only during the terms of 1871-1872 and 1872-1873 and did not take a degree, he prospered there intellectually, especially in his studies of English literature with Professor John Nichol, "whose valued friendship he retained for many years" (*Memoir*, I, 22).⁴⁷ He also devoured books in the University Library, being especially drawn to works on "not only the literature and philosophy of other European countries, but also the wonderful literatures and religions of the East" (*Memoir*, I, 23). Nichol's religious skepticism doubtless intensified Sharp's reading and it is little wonder that Sharp underwent the loss of faith so common to Victorians; he found himself replacing his Presbyterian beliefs, and indeed "all orthodox religious teachings," with "a belief in the unity of the great truths underlying all religions"; he felt "a sense of brotherhood with the acknowledged psychics and seers of other lands and other days" (*Memoir*, I, 23).

In 1874, Sharp began working full-time in a lawyer's office in Glasgow, for two frustrating years, placed there

by his father "with a view to finding out in what direction his son's capabilities lay" (*Memoir*, I, 23). Trying both to work and to continue his interests in his private studies, in literature, and in the theatre and opera, Sharp confined his sleep to four hours a night.

In September 1875, despite anticipating the objections of her family to their marriage (because of his lack of worldly prospects and their cousinship), Sharp and his cousin "were secretly plighted to one another" (*Memoir*, I, 43, 26). Sharp revealed to Elizabeth his desire to be a poet, "to write about Mother Nature and her inner mysteries" (*Memoir*, I, 26). Though dissatisfied with his early efforts, he was prevailed upon to share them with his cousin. When the two met (to avoid detection) in Dean Cemetery in Edinburgh, they "talked and talked—about his ambitions, his beliefs and visions, our hopeless prospects, the coming lonely months, my studies—and parted in deep dejection" (*Memoir*, I, 27). Sharp produced a poem, "a pantheistic dream," "In Dean Cemetery," "one of a series ... all very serious, for his mind was absorbed in psychic and metaphysical speculation" (*Memoir*, I, 27). He then shared with his future wife "three long poems written in 1873 under the influence of Shelley—then to him the poet of poets" (*Memoir*, I, 28). Another early effort reflecting Sharp's "eager study of comparative religions, their ethics and metaphysics" was "a projected Epic on Man, to be called *Upland, Woodland, Cloudland*. 'Amid the Uplands' only was finished, and consists of two thousand lines in blank verse" (*Memoir*, I, 29). Elizabeth Sharp quotes from these early works and mentions that in the beginning of 1875 Sharp tried his hand at rhymed verse, "serious in subject and stiff in handling"; later the same year "he wrote several little songs in a lighter vein and happier manner" (*Memoir*, I, 31–32).

In August 1876, Sharp and Elizabeth met once more at Dunoon where their families were staying in adjoining houses. Sharp and his father were both in ill health, his father especially so. Still, the young couple spent happy, rambling days "in talking over our very vague prospects, in reading and discussing his poems. Of these he had several more to show me, chief among them being an idyll 'Beatrice,' dedicated to me, and a lyrical drama 'Ariadne in

Naxos' which excited in me the greatest admiration and pride" (*Memoir*, I, 32). Stunned by the death of his father on August 20, Sharp saw his own health collapse, and was ordered on a voyage to Australia, which he undertook in September both to recuperate and to scout out career possibilities (*Memoir*, I, 34). In the account of his life quoted by Elizabeth, Sharp mentions both "Ariadne in Naxos" and "Beatrice" in a tone at once self-mocking and mysterious:

'So to Australia I went by sailing ship, relinquishing my idea of becoming a formidable rival to Swinburne (whose *Atalanta in Calydon* had inspired me to a lyrical drama named *Ariadne in Naxos*),⁴⁸ to Tennyson (whose example I had deigned to accept for an idyll called 'Beatrice'), and to the author of *Festus* [Philip James Bailey] whose example was responsible for a meditative epic named "Amid the Uplands." Alas! "subsequent events" make it unlikely that these masterpieces will ever see the light.'

(*Memoir*, I, 33)

What these "subsequent events" were is now impossible to discover.⁴⁹ In any case, these few words are the only references I know to the works presented here.

After his return from Australia (June 1877), Sharp could find no work in London, and went on to Scotland, where he wrote through the next winter (and doubtless transcribed "Ariadne in Naxos" and "Beatrice"). In the late spring of 1878, with the help of a friend of Elizabeth Sharp's family, Alexander Elder, Sharp was established (unhappily) as a clerk in a bank in London, trying also to advance his fortunes through writing and to keep secret his engagement to his cousin, at whose home he stayed on weekends. On his birthday in 1877, September 12, he received a gift from Alexander Elder's daughter Adelaide, a volume of the poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. That gift, he wrote her twenty-two years later, changed the course of his life, for it led first to his being dissuaded from leaving England for Turkey (and beyond), as he was thinking of doing, and then to his actually meeting Rossetti, whose impact on his life was beyond measure (*Memoir*, I, 53–54), determining his subsequent career.

The Manuscript

"Ariadne in Naxos" and "Beatrice" occupy a notebook of 92 leaves measuring 12.5 by 19.9 cm. Except for the last two leaves, the paper is laid and watermarked "Duncan Campbell & Son / An[tique] / Glasgow." The last two leaves are smoother than the others; similar ones at the front may once have existed, but they and the exterior cover are missing, with the signatures held together by glue and sewing raggedly exposed. When I acquired the notebook, a fragment of leather binding was still attached at the top of the spine. It remains with the book, a piece 9.8 by 2.0 cm, with gold-tooled lines and raised bands and with the title "Ariadne / in / Naxos" tooled into the leather. Above and below the title, separated by the raised bands, are tooled images of an acorn (perhaps to symbolize the great oaks still to grow).⁵⁰

The pages of the notebook containing significant text have been numbered by Sharp in an upper corner (except for the first page of the text of "Ariadne in Naxos," which has no number; the numbering begins on the next leaf with "2"). The first leaf of the notebook (blank), the dedication leaf, the title page (with the gift inscription), the argument leaf, the characters leaf, a title leaf for "Beatrice," and the last four leaves have not been numbered (I indicate those by letters, "a" through "j"). "Ariadne in Naxos" occupies the leaves to the one numbered page 74; the play is carefully written on the recto of each leaf (the "Argument" on leaf d continues onto the verso; Sharp's several notes to the play are written on the verso of the previous leaf on a level with their reference). After an unnumbered title leaf (leaf f), "Beatrice" occupies the remaining leaves of the notebook, pages numbered 75 through 90. Unlike "Ariadne in Naxos," "Beatrice" is written on both recto and verso (possibly because of the decreasing space left as "Ariadne in Naxos" filled the notebook).

At the front of the notebook, on the recto of leaf b, is a dedication ("Dedicated / With affectionate regard / to / J. N. / Admiringly / to / The Author of 'Hannibal.'") and, on the title page ("Ariadne in Naxos."), leaf c, is an inscription in

the upper right corner: "To my friend / Adelaide L. Elder / Xmas 1877. / W. S."

The Provenance

I acquired the notebook in January 1989 from an English dealer in autographs, Henry Bristow of Ringwood, trading at that time in Verwood, Dorset. The notebook was item 3 in Bristow's catalogue no. 297 and was somewhat wrongly described: "ARIADNE IN NAXOS: Manuscript so titled, being a long narrative poem—'Dedicated with affectionate regard to J. N. Admiringly to the Author of 'Hannibal';' and inscribed—'To my friend Adelaide L. Elder, Xmas. 1877 W. S.' 8vo. pp. 90, (lacking covers). dated at end, 1876. £30." When I later wrote Mr. Bristow seeking further information about the provenance of the notebook, he could tell me little, only that he had acquired it as "part of a bulk lot bought at auction." I bought the notebook because of my interest in Algernon Charles Swinburne, whose closest friend was John Nichol, the author of *Hannibal: A Historical Drama* (1873).

The only allusions to the manuscript that I have been able to find are the two already cited, 1) Elizabeth Sharp's recollection of meeting William Sharp in the first part of August 1876 and "reading and discussing" the two works and 2) William Sharp's own ambiguously deprecating comments on them (*Memoir*, I, 32, 33).

Elizabeth Sharp provides virtually all that I know about the person to whom Sharp presented the notebook at Christmas 1877, Adelaide Elder—that she was the sister of one of Elizabeth Sharp's friends, John Alexander Elder;⁵¹ that Adelaide Elder and Elizabeth Sharp's sister "had been my confidants during the preceding two years in the matter of our engagement, and I was naturally most wishful that she and my cousin [Sharp] should meet" upon his return from Australia in June 1877. Elizabeth Sharp notes that Adelaide Elder and she "had known each other from childhood—our parents were old friends—and we had read and studied together, often in a quiet part of Kensington Gardens, reading Tennyson, Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Fichte, etc." She was pleased to introduce Sharp not only to Adelaide Elder, but also to her other close friend, Mrs.

Mona Caird (née Alison; 1854–1932), the writer and feminist;⁵² the three women “were friends with many tastes and interests in common, not least being all questions relating to women. To my great satisfaction out of the meeting with my cousin there grew deeply attached friendships that lasted throughout his life” (*Memoir*, I, 38). Sharp’s presentation of a fair copy of “Ariadne in Naxos” to Adelaide Elder doubtless reflected the feminism both Sharp and she espoused.

The only other information I have about Adelaide Elder is what little can be gleaned from two inscribed volumes. One, in my collection, is a copy of Fiona Macleod’s *Where the Forest Murmurs: Nature Essays* (London: George Newnes, 1906). The inscription (from Elizabeth Sharp) and bookplate (that of Adelaide L. E. Hogg, dated 1916) indicate that she married, that the friendship with the Sharps continued, and that she outlived William Sharp. The inscription reads, “To Adelaide in memory of her old friend William Sharp the Author. From Elizabeth Oct. 1906.” The other volume, *Earth’s Voices, Transcripts from Nature, Sospitra, and Other Poems* (London: Elliot Stock, 1884), in the library of the University of Tampa, gives a date by which Elder had married. The inscription reads: “To my friend Adelaide L. Hogg William Sharp 1:5:84.”

The Text

As the Christmas 1877 inscription to Adelaide Elder suggests, the notebook containing “Ariadne in Naxos” and “Beatrice” was presented by Sharp as a gift. Indeed, all the evidence is that he meticulously transcribed both works as fair copies. Very few words are crossed out, and, when they are, the deletion is of a false start or wrong word. Ampersands occur but just as often “and” is spelled out. Other shortenings (e.g., “thro”) exist, but are few. Words inserted above the line are there not to replace some other word but simply to provide a word skipped in copying. The handwriting throughout is careful, precise, and formal. In short, the notebook contains a final text, copied from some other source or sources.

In presenting the works, I have honored Sharp’s apparent intention of providing a clear reading text, and

have simply extended his principles, expanding the ampersands, deleting false starts, and correcting several misspellings or mis-transcriptions. Where a change appears possibly to be substantive or to have some other interest, I record the original reading in a note. I have once or twice guessed at a word hard to read or at a word apparently left out; when I do so I indicate my resolution with square brackets and/or a note. Sharp usually sets off the name of each speaker with a dash beneath it; I have silently added dashes he overlooked.

William Halloran tells me that in his work on Sharp, he believes he recalls either a manuscript of “Ariadne in Naxos” or excerpts from it in journals. His readings, he says, would have been in 1963 in the National Library of Scotland. At the National Library, Dr. Hector Macdonald and Mr. Stanley Simpson have both looked through the Sharp papers there for me, but have found nothing relevant. If such a copy or excerpts appear, they obviously will be of importance to the present transcriptions.

The Classical Story of Ariadne in Naxos

Ariadne and her abandonment by Theseus have been so frequently represented by artists in all media⁵³ that to seek Sharp’s sources is to be entrapped within the Labyrinth itself. The tale’s ambiguities and many potentials are clear in a famous account, Plutarch’s essay on Theseus, the great hero of Athens and emulator of Hercules.⁵⁴ Plutarch recounts the story of the Cretan king Minos and the tribute exacted by him from the Athenians to end his “perpetual war” against them: “to send to Crete every nine years a tribute of seven young men and as many virgins.” These young people, according to “the most poetical story,” says Plutarch, were placed in the labyrinth Dædalus built for Minos and there “the Minotaur destroyed them.” When the time for the third tribute arrived, Theseus chose to “partake of the sufferings of his fellow-citizens” and sailed as one of the victims to Crete. The agreement between the Athenians and Minos was that “the young men that were to sail with him [Theseus] should carry no weapons of war; but that if the Minotaur was destroyed, the tribute should cease”:

When he arrived at Crete, as most of the ancient historians as well as poets tell us, having a clue of thread given him by Ariadne, who had fallen in love with him, and being instructed by her how to use it so as to conduct him through the windings of the labyrinth, he escaped out of it and slew the Minotaur, and sailed back, taking along with him Ariadne and the young Athenian captives.

In citing several variants of the story, Plutarch notes one by Philochorus, who says that at the yearly games organized by Minos, Theseus asked to combat a particularly odious warrior, Taurus: "And as it was a custom in Crete that the women also should be admitted to the sight of these games, Ariadne, being present, was struck with admiration of the manly beauty of Theseus, and the vigour and address which he showed in the combat, overcoming all that encountered with him." After elaborating still another version, Plutarch emphasizes the complexity of the accounts and mentions several that can be used to explain the background to Sharp's "Ariadne in Naxos":

There are yet many other traditions about these things, and as many concerning Ariadne, all inconsistent with each other. Some relate that she hung herself, being deserted by Theseus. Others that she was carried away by his sailors to the isle of Naxos, and married to Ænarus, priest of Bacchus; and that Theseus left her because he fell in love with another—

For Ægle's love was burning in his breast;

a verse which Hereas, the Megarian, says was formerly in the poet Hesiod's works, but put out by Pisistratus, in like manner as he added in Homer's Raising of the Dead, to gratify the Athenians, the line—

Theseus, Pirithous, mighty son of gods.

Others say Ariadne had sons also by Theseus, Ænopion and Staphylus; and among these is the poet Ion of Chios, who writes of his own native city—

Which once Ænopion, son of Theseus built.

But the more famous of the legendary stories everybody (as I may say) has in his mouth.

In Pæon, however, the Amathusian, there is a story given, differing from the rest. For he writes that Theseus, being driven by a storm upon the isle of Cyprus, and having aboard with him Ariadne, big with child, and extremely discomposed with the rolling of the sea, set her on shore, and left her there alone, to return himself and help the ship, when, on a sudden, a violent wind carried him again out to sea. That the women of the island received Ariadne very kindly, and did all they could to console and alleviate her distress at being left behind. That they counterfeited kind letters, and delivered them to her, as sent from Theseus, and, when she fell in labour, were diligent in performing to her every needful service; but that she died before she could be delivered, and was honourably interred. That soon after Theseus returned, and was greatly afflicted for her loss, and at his departure left a sum of money among the people of the island, ordering them to do sacrifice to Ariadne; and caused two little images to be made and dedicated to her, one of silver and the other of brass. Moreover, that on the second day of Gorpæus, which is sacred to Ariadne, they have this ceremony among their sacrifices, to have a youth lie down and with his voice and gesture represent the pains of a woman in travail [of labor]; and that the Amathusians call the grove in which they show her tomb, the grove of Venus Ariadne.

Plutarch further reports that some Naxians say there were two Ariadnes, one of whom "was carried off by Theseus, and, being afterwards deserted by him, retired to Naxos, with her nurse Corcyna, whose grave they yet show. That this Ariadne also died there, and was worshipped by the island, but in a ... manner ... attended with mourning and gloom."

Many other classical writers explore why Ariadne was abandoned by Theseus. In a number of accounts, Bacchus is involved, as lover or rapist or informer. Diodorus of Sicily casts Bacchus as faithful lover:

in making his way back to his native land he [Theseus] carried off Ariadnê and sailed out unobserved during the

night, after which he put in at the island which at that time was called Dia, but is now called Naxos.

At this same time, the myths relate, Dionysus showed himself on the island, and because of the beauty of Ariadnê he took the maiden away from Theseus and kept her as his lawful wife, loving her exceedingly.⁵⁵

One of Ovid's accounts is more elaborate, where a bitter Ariadne is finally happy, reunited with Bacchus and immortalized in the stars. Ovid emphasizes the faithlessness of Theseus in his story of Ariadne's first happiness at discovering Bacchus, only to think she is abandoned a second time by him, just before he returns (as Liber) to transform her into the constellation Libera:

It was through the fault of Theseus that Ariadne was made a goddess. Already had she happily exchanged a perjured spouse [Theseus] for Bacchus, she who gave to a thankless man a clue to gather up [in the Labyrinth]. Joying in her lot of love, 'Why like a rustic maiden did I weep?' quoth she; 'his faithlessness has been my gain.'⁵⁶

When she thinks herself again abandoned, by Bacchus, Ariadne laments bitterly.

His loving spouse wept, and pacing the winding shore with dishevelled locks she uttered these words: 'Lo, yet again, ye billows, list to my like complaint! Lo, yet again, ye sands, receive my tears! I used to say, I remember, "Forsworn and faithless Theseus!" He deserted me: now Bacchus does me the same wrong. Now again I will cry, "Let no woman trust a man!" My case has been repeated, only the name is changed. Would that my lot had ended where it first began! So at this moment had I been no more. Why, Liber, didst thou save me to die on desert sands? I might have ended my griefs once and for all.... Ah, where is plighted troth? Where are the oaths that thou wast wont to swear? Woe's me, how often must I speak these self-same words! Thou wast wont to blame Theseus; thou wast wont thyself to dub him deceiver; judged by thyself, thine is the fouler sin. Let no man know of this, and let me burn with pangs unuttered, lest they

should think that I deserve to be deceived so oft. Above all I would desire the thing were kept from Theseus, that he may not joy to know thee a partner in his guilt.'

(pp. 155, 157)

Some versions of the relationship between Dionysus and Ariadne are not gentle. Apollodorus notes bluntly in his "Epitome" that at Naxos, "Dionysus fell in love with Ariadne, and kidnapped her, taking her off to Lemnos, where he had sex with her."⁵⁷ And Homer says of Ariadne that Bacchus brought about her death for violating his temple:

Theseus her

From Crete toward the fruitful region bore
Of sacred Athens, but enjoy'd not there;
For first she perish'd by Diana's shafts
In Dia, Bacchus witnessing her crime.⁵⁸

The translator, William Cowper, explains in a note that the island of Dia (Naxos) was sacred to Bacchus, who, "therefore, accused her [Ariadne] to Diana of having received the embraces of Theseus in his temple there, and the Goddess punished her with death" (p. 310n).

In these versions, the motives or reactions of Theseus are largely to be inferred, though often implicit is a spell cast by the god to cause Theseus to forget Ariadne and his ties to her.⁵⁹

Among classical writers, Catullus and Ovid were the most responsible for setting the image of Ariadne as the archetypal abandoned woman. In "The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis," Catullus recounts Ariadne's story with full sympathy for her condition:

For, looking forth from the wave-sounding shores of Dia,
Ariadne sees Theseus departing with his swift craft,
nursing in her heart uncontrollable fury;
not as yet can she believe she beholds what she does behold:
no wonder, since then first she woke from treacherous sleep
and saw herself, poor thing, abandoned on a lonely strand.

But the youth fleeing unmindful of her beats the waters
with his oars, leaving his vain vows to the blustering
gale.⁶⁰

The full rehearsal by Catullus in 200 lines is intensified by Ovid in the tenth letter of the *Heroïdes*, Ariadne to Theseus, with its bitter anger:

I have found the whole race of wild beasts more merciful than thyself: to none could I have been more unsafely trusted than to thee. What thou art reading, I send thee, Theseus, from those shores, whence, without me, its sails bore thy bark; on which, both my sleep fatally betrayed me, and thou thyself, who shamefully didst watch the opportunity of my slumbers.

It was the season, at which the earth is first besprinkled with the glassy hoar frost, and the birds, concealed by the leaves, utter their complaints. Uncertain whether awake, and languid with sleep, half reclining, I moved my hands to clasp my Theseus. No *Theseus* was there; my hands I drew back, and again I stretched them forth: and along the couch did I move my arms; no one was there. Apprehensions dispelled sleep: alarmed, I arose; and my limbs were hurried from my deserted couch. Immediately, my breast resounded with the striking of my hands.⁶¹

The echoes through time from these and other classical citations do not so much fade as they strengthen,⁶² and I have found it all but impossible to isolate the debt Sharp might owe to each depiction. He doubtless knew the classical stories, but he surely knew later representations as well, e.g., Chaucer's in *The Legend of Good Women*, Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne" (1522) in England's National Gallery, Claudio Monteverdi's powerful "Lamento d'Arianna" (1608), George Romney's "Lady Hamilton as Ariadne,"⁶³ Leigh Hunt's "Bacchus and Ariadne" (1819), and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Paraphrases on Nonnus" (1862), "How Bacchus Finds Ariadne Sleeping" and "How Bacchus Comforts Ariadne." But, except in the scene of Ariadne's awakening, precise influences are difficult to disentangle.

Commentary on "Ariadne in Naxos"

To a young man in 1876 eager to rival Swinburne in writing a Greek tragedy, the subject of Ariadne in Naxos would have several attractions (including the ambiguities the myth kept open), not least the chance to go head to head in describing a boar hunt. The story is, of course, one of the great love stories between a hero and a maiden, and, like Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, allows a tragic exploration of a human emotion particularly intriguing to young men in love. But it is a story that, again as in *Atalanta in Calydon*, involves a number of tensions and dualities prominent not just in William Sharp but in Victorian culture as well. In Swinburne's play, for example, the restrictiveness of Victorian gender roles is prominent; Atalanta, "A woman armed ... / Unwomanlike, ... [who] treads down use and wont" necessarily provokes a reaction from Althea and her brothers, who caustically articulate their resistance to "laws torn up, / Violated rule and a new face of things" (ll. 477-478, 475-476).

On another level, *Ariadne in Naxos* takes up such a Tennysonian subject as the abandoned lover (cf. "Mariana," "Ænone") and such a Tennysonian theme as that of responsibility, especially a man's responsibility to the conventions constructed by his society for a man vis-à-vis his responsibilities to a woman he loves. Sharp thus picks up a cultural debate that underlies such poems as Tennyson's "Ulysses" and "The Lotus-Eaters," and the images, cadences, and themes of those poems are insistent within the play. If Tennyson's Ulysses is to be admired for his pursuit of heroic fulfillment and Ulysses' mariners condemned for their easy acceptance of solipsistic and selfish pleasure, Sharp's Theseus seems to partake of both; his heroism is selfish, for he drives to cultural eminence only by abandoning his pregnant wife.

The stories of Ariadne would have especially appealed to Sharp because they allowed him to grapple with the complexities of personality that led to his later split life.⁶⁴ "Ariadne in Naxos" articulates some of the psychological and sexual tensions between what his wife called "the critical, intellectual mood of William Sharp," that masculine side of him that was "of the intellectually observant,

reasoning mind—the actor,” and the feminine side of him, “the intuitively observant, spiritual mind—the dreamer,” i.e., Fiona Macleod (*Memoir*, II, 6). In writing to one of the few people who knew he was Macleod, Sharp offered a comment that the reader of “Ariadne in Naxos” must ponder: “All my work is so intimately wrought with my own experiences that I cannot tell you about *Pharais*, etc., without telling you my whole life” (*Memoir*, II, 13). In Theseus and in Ariadne we see the two sides of William Sharp, as his later theory of drama hints. According to Flavia Alaya, when Sharp turned to drama as Fiona Macleod, he was seeking a way to rejuvenate modern drama

in a new kind of symbolic tragedy that might, if it chose, exploit the permanence and universality of ancient myth. ‘In tragic drama,’ he asserted, ‘it is authenticity of emotion and not authenticity of episode that matters.’ What all heroic mythologies have in common, in other words, is emotional correspondence. ‘The tradition of accursed families is not the fantasy of one dramatist or of one country or of one time.’ It is rather a basic theme of the potency and fatality of blood in which ‘the names stand for the elemental passions.’

(p. 188)

Such intensity of inspired identification between poet and subject led Sharp to defend his controversial poem “Motherhood” even as it was circulating in manuscript before appearing in his first book of poetry, *The Human Inheritance, The New Hope, Motherhood* (1882). Writing to Violet Paget in March 1881, Sharp emphasized that “a poet who is really a poet does not as a rule choose his subject at all—his subject chooses him.” The theme of “Motherhood” obviously attracted Sharp powerfully: “the idea took hold of me, enthralled me with its beauty and significance, possessed me till I gave it forth again in artistic expression.”⁶⁵ The connections to Ariadne are not far to seek, for Ariadne became venerated as a goddess whose worship included a young man dressing as a woman and mimicking childbirth.⁶⁶

In an important way, then, “Ariadne in Naxos” represents the young Sharp, constraining in a single personal-

ity the tensions of both masculine and feminine.⁶⁷ When Ariadne woos Theseus with images of a harmony made up of the two of them joined, Sharp is at once echoing the images of unity and separation that permeate *Atalanta in Calydon* and others of Swinburne’s poems and rehearsing the goal of a conventionally unified personality: “Ah, Theseus, let us stay, here let us stay: / And love shall tune our twin lives into songs, / And these to one melodious wedded hymn” (21).⁶⁸ When Theseus responds, he does so ominously, and in terms that prefigure the pressures which, Sharp’s wife reports, “produced a tremendous strain on his [Sharp’s] physical and mental resources” and in 1897–1898 “threatened him with a complete nervous collapse” (*Memoir*, II, 6). Theseus dismisses the mere dreamer: “I am a man, what is the end of man? / A prince, and not a dreamer of sweet dreams.”⁶⁹ As he elaborates his point, Theseus reveals his motive for his later sudden abandonment of Ariadne. It is not just that the world is cold and malevolent, and dangerous to love (as in the Swinburneian universe the poem inherits),⁷⁰ but that the demands of masculine action and responsibility must, in the earnest Victorian age especially, take precedence over others:

I love the sound of song,
The luscious grape, and sweeter wine of it,
Pleasure, and the hush of slumberous rest,
And most of all mine own dear love, those hours
When thou art in mine arms, and thy breast
Heaves its soft tide against my beating heart,
And looking in these deep dark eyes I see
Strange perilous depths wherein my soul is steeped
In golden languors and the flames of love.
But, by immortal Zeus, I a King
To trifle all my days with things like these!
Nay, better than the very sweetest song
Which ever swelled in fluted syllables
From throbbing throat of nymph or naiad, or
Orpheus luring a Eurydicè,
Is the sweet music of the neighing of
A fiery war-souled horse, and the sharp clash
Of shodden hoofs, and clank of bridle-bit:

And nobler than the hush of rest is the
 Loud cry of heroes, and the tumult of
 Swords meeting, and the turbulent clarion,
 Yea, better than soft pleasure and sweet days
 Are toil and work, the agony of strife,
 And bliss of action.

(pp. 21-22)

Here, in language borrowed from Tennyson's "Ulysses" as well as from another poem by Swinburne about choosing between love and heroic duty, "Laus Veneris," Sharp puts aside the feminine aspects of his personality to take up the responsibilities thrust upon a young man by Victorian culture. Yet the sympathy engendered in "Ariadne in Naxos" is ultimately all directed at the plight of Ariadne, and her death is much lamented. In terms of Sharp's biography, indeed, Ariadne's death seems only temporary, more a suspension; when Fiona Macleod is born, the classical heroine is resurrected.⁷¹ The tension in the choice seems less resolved than postponed, less a healing than a concealing and a violation.

The theme of abandonment in "Ariadne in Naxos" is one Sharp developed in his later works, perhaps, as Alaya implies, a reflection ultimately of his father's dying and leaving behind a large family. In "Youth's Inheritance" (Part II of "The Human Inheritance"), for example, the ecstasy of Shelleyan love is blasted, the "bride of one sweet night" destroyed, and the youth must leave the lotus-land island to return to civilization:

He saw the island lessen to a speck
 In the fast gathering twilight. Soon his eyes
 No more beheld the earthly paradise
 Where he had tasted the sweet joy of love,
 Yet the same solemn moon that sailed above
 Had seen their passion bloom, a tropic flower,
 Through one delicious, lost, remember'd hour.⁷²

And in "Gaspara Stampa," Sharp works the theme in miniature, recounting the abandonment of "the Venetian Sappho" by the Count of Collalto, "one of the princeliest and most accomplished of the nobles of Venice."⁷³ Alaya

points out that in Sharp's novels of the 1880's, "the families ... are invariably broken." Even in a novel that seems an exception, *Silence Farm* (1899),⁷⁴ the pattern occurs of a father and brother, the Ruthvens, who in different ways abandon a woman, the unacknowledged daughter of the older man loved by his son: the son, who leaves for America, is "cruelly self-willed, and an almost entirely unsympathetic character. It is the daughter instead who is intended to attract and engage our respect, and she does not run. She stays, endures, and after her father's death, sustains all the dignity left to the Ruthven name" (Alaya, pp. 25-26). Margaret Gray, the protagonist, herself containing contrasting personalities, is but one woman of many in the book who are abandoned. In one of her laments, Margaret asks,

Were all men like this? Was love, man's love, only an eagerness to enjoy a fruit more or less difficult to get—a fruit they might break their necks trying to get, but that was no better than any other fruit, and, when got, was as often as not thrown away for a neighbour on the same branch, or perhaps taken home as a treasure and then left slowly to rot?

(p. 189)

She realizes later that "between them, Archibald and James Ruthven had killed the woman the one had loved secretly as daughter, the other secretly and disloyally as a lover" (p. 242).

Flavia Alaya skillfully draws the parallel to Sharp's own life in a comment whose application to "Ariadne in Naxos" is clear:

By the time of the completion of this novel, Sharp had already 'become' Fiona Macleod, a woman, and not a woman merely, but a Scot, restored to all the native ties to which Sharp had, in effect, made himself an alien. It was 'she,' of course, that private, imaginative self of William Sharp, who was indeed the 'illegitimate' child of Sharp's father, betrayed, despised, and humiliated, but eventually transcending her suffering. The story thence becomes a fable, delineating the entire course of Sharp's psychological life.

(Alaya, pp. 26-27)

Alaya plausibly suggests that Sharp's father and his encouragement of robust, outdoor activities and interests and his suspicion of the arts and literature as an appropriate career for his son in effect shaped his son's pattern of repression and expression:

The frail and sensitive boy, whose father encouraged him in every manly physical exercise and no doubt looked upon a literary career as smacking of the effete, may easily have repressed those impulses of sympathy for the suffering of women [i.e., especially his mother's, in frequent childbirth] together with the secret visions of his inner life. When those visions emerged, they emerged with a feminine cast upon them.

(Alaya, p. 27)

That "feminine cast" includes, of course, Sharp's extraordinary sensitivity, in his second self particularly, to "all forms of victimization" (Alaya, p. 136).

Another psychologically symbolic aspect of "Ariadne in Naxos" is one that Flavia Alaya has also identified in Sharp's later works—Sharp's "asserting the sanctity of nature, human or otherwise, and calling for the conservation of privacy, intuition, and personal values" in an age which "clamored for the sacrifices of these values ... a forcefully self-conscious national society, a configuration of moral and social prescriptions ... demanding conformity and service to a national purpose" (Alaya, p. 11). Theseus clearly embodies a number of these demands, so antithetical to the values of Ariadne. That Theseus is a national hero, of Athens, makes clear Sharp's implicit resistance to Victorian nationalism. Ariadne's desire is to establish a self-sufficient and self-contained society far removed from the ordinary world:

Herein have we all gifts that are for men,
Life, love, song, pleasure, wine and fruits, fair lands,
And desert tracts for sport, and bright blue waves
Whereon to voyage 'mongst the Cyclades,
But in the cities, in thine own fair town

Are envy, malice, spite, and troublous feuds
Dissensions with strange peoples and the wrath
Of gods neglected. In Naxos let us found
A kingdom by the sea, an island realm
Whereof we twain shall reign as king and queen,
And after us our children.

(p. 20)

This desire comports with Sharp's own despair of cities and with such longings for escape from contemporary civilization that Tennyson explored in "The Lotus-Eaters," "The Palace of Art," and "Locksley Hall," but it also anticipates Sharp's "rebellion against ... disciplining of the personality," "his frenzied movements—from Scotland, to Australia, to the South Seas, to London, France, Italy, Germany, America, Africa, Greece, and back to Scotland again ... his frenzied reduplication of pseudonyms and identities" (Alaya, pp. 13, 12-13).

Commentary on "Beatrice"

"Beatrice" derives from Tennyson (at his most Shelleyan and Keatsian) and, like "Ariadne in Naxos," explores love, though a love that is successful, to be consummated in a marriage on the morrow of the poem. Elizabeth Sharp says that the poem was dedicated to her (*Memoir*, I, 32), and though nothing in this fair copy substantiates that assertion, there is no reason to doubt her. Indeed, one can see in Beatrice (the name recalls Dante's beloved) the analogue of Elizabeth; the speaker's anticipation of a happy and prosperous marriage after the (lamented) death of an opposing father echoes the hopes and desires of the young William and Elizabeth as well as the opposition that they expected to their marriage.

Tennyson's poems on matrimonial, domestic, or rural matters lie behind "Beatrice," e.g., such of his "idyls" as "The Gardener's Daughter," "Dora," or "Edwin Morris," as well as his greater poems, "Locksley Hall" and "Maud," where families oppose the lovers' union. That Sharp's poem ends in such bliss is a strategic counter to the bleakness of Swinburne and Tennyson, and indeed to that of

"Ariadne in Naxos," a sensible gesture in a poem dedicated to his fiancée.

"Beatrice" is a foil to "Ariadne in Naxos" in several ways. The celebration of love is intensely Shelleyan, the paean at the start of the poem so much so that it could have been lifted from "Epipsychidion," though it escapes the mortality, materiality, and reality that Shelley's poem expires in. The affirmation of faith in "Beatrice" also sets it off from the bleak skepticism of the play, as if the experience of love is enough to bring Sharp into conformity with the ecstasy and bliss of Dantean belief.

In terms of gender and sexual identity, "Beatrice" asserts a resolution to the tensions not perhaps wholly resolved in "Ariadne in Naxos." If there Sharp symbolically abandons the feminine for the masculine, in "Beatrice" he anticipates his reward—marriage—his confusions supposedly behind him. The process seems, interestingly, to echo other Victorian poets as they anticipate marriage. Richard Dellamora, for example, explores some of the tensions in Tennyson:

Tennyson proffered Emily [Sellwood, his fiancée] this resolution [in *The Princess*] of his protagonist's (and implicitly of his own) difficulties before the pair renewed their compact. Moreover, before bringing the project of *In Memoriam* to completion, Tennyson 'solves' the problems of gender-construction in relation to intimacy between men in displaced fashion by revising the construction of masculinity in conventional marriage. In this sense, *The Princess* is part of the process by which Tennyson's experience with Hallam and the experience of composing *In Memoriam* is [sic] normalized to such an extent that he may complete, then publish, the poem and reap the rewards of a consolatory poem of large public address.⁷⁵

Such tensions before marriage (or contemplated marriage) are apparent too in the poems of sexual exploration and experimentation in *Poems and Ballads* (1866) that Swinburne wrote in the years before and after he dreamed of marrying Mary Gordon, his first cousin. That one of Sharp's characters in "Beatrice" is named Gwendolen suggests a linkage to another poem exploring sexual uncer-

tainty, William Morris's "Rapunzel," where the pressures of gender roles and sexuality are explored before Rapunzel becomes Guendolen and marries the finally virile Prince.

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Notes

¹*The Letters of George Meredith*, ed. C. L. Cline, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), III, 1554.

²"Fiona Macleod: Defence of Her Views and Her Identity," *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 7:12 (December 1960), 465.

³"Miss Fiona Macleod," *Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats*, ed. John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1975), II, 45. For some of the connections between Fiona Macleod and other authors of the Celtic Renaissance, see the introductions in *Deirdre et la Renaissance Celtique: Fiona Macleod, George Russell, W. B. Yeats*, by Godeleine Carpentier et al. (La Gacilly: Artus, 1990).

⁴Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970, pp. 3-4. In the sketch that follows, I depend heavily on this work (cited throughout as "Alaya").

⁵Elizabeth Sharp, *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod): A Memoir*, 2 vols. (New York: Duffield and Company, 1912), cited throughout as *Memoir*.

⁶Review of Linda Gertner Zatin, *Aubrey Beardsley and Victorian Sexual Politics*, *Victorian Studies*, 36:1 (Fall 1992), 79; Dellamora does not make the comment with Sharp in mind. Christine Lahey-Dolega argues against seeing homosexual inclinations in Sharp, seeing instead a "vast sympathy with the life of woman, which led him to an autopsychic identification with an imagined female self" ("Some Brief Observations on the Life and Work of William Sharp [Fiona Macleod]," *Ball State University Forum*, 21:4 [Autumn 1980], 20).

⁷*Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 195.

⁸"The Late-Victorian Stew of Sexuality," *Victorian Studies*, 35:4 (Summer 1992), 410-411.

⁹Henry James, "The Death of the Lion," *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, 26 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d.), The New York Edition, XV, 144.

¹⁰New York: Viking Penguin, 1990, p. 106. A helpful overview of the period is Karl Beckson, *London in the 1890's: A Cultural History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), which includes a chapter on "Love in Earnest: The Importance of Being Uranian."

¹¹Showalter, p. 9.

¹²*Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 9.

¹³Sedgwick's examination of J. M. Barrie's *Tommy and Grizel* [1900], incidentally, offers a model for reading Sharp's career as well.

¹⁴*Letters to W. B. Yeats*, ed. Richard J. Finneran et al., 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), I, 52. Although Sharp's phrase seems intended to refer to the spiritualist interests he shared with Yeats, it also reveals

and at once masks his alter ego. The extraordinary pressures on Sharp and his near collapse late in the 1890's are poignantly apparent in his letters to Yeats of April 30 and May 5, 1898 (I, 35-37).

¹⁵Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, 3 vols. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967-1969), II, 815n.

¹⁶*Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 441.

¹⁷"Some Personal Reminiscences of Walter Pater," *Atlantic Monthly*, 74 (December 1894), p. 802.

¹⁸Review of *Marius the Epicurean*, *Athenæum*, February 28, 1885, p. 271.

¹⁹John Stokes observes that "New Hedonists" was "frequently a term for homosexuals" (*In the Nineties* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989], p. 22) and defines "the 'New Hedonism'" as "a new homosexual sensibility" ("Wilde at Bay: The Diaries of George Ives," *English Literature in Transition*, 26:3 [1983], 175).

²⁰*Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. Lawrence Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 92.

²¹"Children of To-morrow: A Sharp Inspiration for Dorian Gray," *Durham University Journal*, n.s. 49:1 (December 1987), [69], 70.

²²London: Walter Scott, p. x.

²³"William Sharp as Bard and Craftsman," *Victorian Poetry*, 10:1 (Spring 1972), 63.

²⁴London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine and Company, 1892.

²⁵Sharp's adoption of eight different pseudonyms for this issue is intriguing in the light of what Jack Babuscio has observed, "that the homosexual experience of passing for straight leads to 'a heightened awareness and appreciation for disguise, impersonation, the projection of personality, and the distinctions to be made between instinctive and theatrical behaviour'" (from "Camp and the Gay Sensibility," in Richard Dyer, ed., *Gays and Film* [London: British Film Institute, 1977], p. 45, quoted in Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991], p. 311).

My colleague Tom Heacox suggests that the title of *The Pagan Review* might well have had a coded appeal at the time, allowing an understanding of "Greek," and thereby suggesting "homosexual." In support of this possibility, he has tracked "pagan" in contexts that encourage such an inference: Pater's reiteration of the term in his essay on Johann Joachim Winckelmann; Richard Burton's use of the word when he says that "in the pagan days of imperial Rome her literature makes no difference between boy and girl" (see Brian Reade, *Sexual Heretics: Male Homosexuality in English Literature from 1850 to 1900, An Anthology* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970], pp. 79, 81, 83, 88, 89, 98, 169); John Addington Symonds' use of "pagan" (see *Male Love: A Problem in Greek Ethics and Other Writings*, ed. John Lauritsen [New York: Pagan Press, 1983], pp. 61, 65, 73, 82); Edmund John's attraction to a boy acolyte: "Yea, but thy wide eyes burned / Like stars above a pagan shrine; / And in them shone a gleam of pagan things" (Timothy d'Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970], p. 180); the denunciation by *The Daily Telegraph* during Wilde's trial of the importation into England of "the pagan side of bygone times, with all its cynicism, scepticism, and animalism," what it calls a "French and Pagan plague" (April 6, 1895, quoted in Jonathan Goodman, *The Oscar Wilde File* [London: W. H. Allen and Company, 1989], p. 76); a letter-writer's denunciation in *The Star* at the same time (April 23, 1895) of "Pagan viciousness" (Goodman, p. 98); and comments such as Roger Austen's on Charles Warren Stod-

dard: "he took care to gloss over the pagan and homoerotic aspects" (*Genteel Pagan: The Double Life of Charles Warren Stoddard*, ed. John W. Crowley [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991], p. 140).

Brian Brewer has drawn my attention to Henry James' short story based on John Addington Symonds, "The Author of Beltraffio"; the repugnance the wife of Mark Ambient feels for her husband comes from her fear of "a subtle poison or a contagion—something that would rub off on his [their son's] tender sensibility when his father kisses him or holds him on his knee" (p. 38). Following a discussion of when the son should read Ambient's novels (Mrs. Ambient thinks "it might be very awkward when he was about fifteen"), the writer muses on his difference of outlook with his wife: "my wife would tell you it's the difference between Christian and Pagan. I may be a pagan, but I don't like the name; it sounds sectarian. She thinks me at any rate no better than an ancient Greek. It's the difference between making the most of life and making the least, so that you'll get another better one in some other time and place" (*The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, XVI, 45). Fred Kaplan quotes James' sensitivity to Symonds' tribulations as related to him by another man struggling to come to terms with homoerotic feelings, Edmund Gosse: "poor S.'s wife was in no sort of sympathy with what he wrote ... [sic] thinking his books immoral, pagan, hyper-aesthetic' ['a polite synonym for homoerotic,' notes Kaplan]" (*Henry James, The Imagination of Genius: A Biography* [New York: William Morrow and Company, 1992], p. 302).

Other evidence points in a similar direction. See for example the advice that Oscar Wilde offered, apparently in October 1892, to the homosexual activist George Ives (1867–1950)—that Ives should "set up a pagan monastery on some rocky Mediterranean island" (Stokes, "Wilde at Bay: The Diaries of George Ives," p. 177). In *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), Linda Dowling subtly explores the interconnections among Hellenic studies, English liberal thought, and the legitimizing of homosexuality. Her account of W. H. Mallock's assault in *The New Republic* (1877) on Benjamin

Jowett and Pater ("Mr. Rose") briefly indicates themes she develops in other places: Mallock "uses Mr. Rose's own fondness for specific classical allusions as a way of suggesting his pagan sexual preferences, a homoeroticism Mallock shows extending unmistakably to Mr. Rose's urgent present-day interest in 'a boy of eighteen—a youth of extraordinary promise, I think, whose education I may myself claim to have had some share in directing'" (pp. 107–108). Dowling quotes too a comment by one of Wilde's friends, expressing the perception that Wilde's trip to Greece in 1877 made others think him changed, "become Hellenized, somewhat Paganized" (p. 121n). Most interesting is Dowling's citation of one Oxford undergraduate's denunciation in 1877 of "Pater-paganism and Symonds-sophistry" for encouraging "the worst passions and most carnal inclinations of humanity" (p. 116).

Consider too E. M. Forster's observation in *Howards End* (1910) on the "business mind" of Mr. Wilcox as he is concerned with his daughter's wedding: "No Pagan he, who lives for the Now, and may be wiser than all philosophers" (New York: Vintage International, 1989; p. 260). And, perhaps even more telling, see Forster's 1922 description of the blond Christian missionary Mr. Pinmay just after his seduction of the chief Vithobai: "Here, after the cry [of love] had died away, a light was kindled. It shone upon the pagan limbs and the golden ruffled hair of a young man" ("The Life to Come," in *The Life to Come and Other Short Stories* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1972], p. 65).

A comment, however, by one of the few people who knew Sharp was Macleod shows how difficult it is to pin down "pagan." Thomas A. Janvier wrote Sharp on June 22, 1896 about the male characteristics Janvier thought he could detect in Macleod's work, but hailed the "strong new current [that] must have come into your life a radical change in your own soul": "The Pagan element is entirely subordinated to and controlled by the inner passions of the soul. In a word you have lifted your work from the flesh-level to the soul-level" (*Memoir*, II, 75). And Sharp himself uses the word with heterosexual overtones both in characterizing Samuel Pepys as the "famous chronicler and incurable old pagan" and in praising the beauty of women:

"there is always this conviction for loyal Pagans to fall back upon—in the words of George Meredith—'the visible fair form of a woman is hereditary queen of us'" ("Ecce Puella," in *Ecce Puella and Other Prose Imaginings* [London: Elkin Mathews, 1896], pp. 32, 9-10).

Alaya links *The Pagan Review* to Sharp's series of sensual poems about bathing and to his bohemian life in Rome where, she suggests, "pagan water activities" occurred (pp. 101-102).

²⁶*The Pagan Review*, August 15, 1892, pp. [1]-4.

²⁷Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 190.

²⁸Although Sharp's identification of the dancers' sex seems compelling, it is intriguing to note the claim by Louis Crompton that Islamic beliefs earlier in the century (and continuing on) in Constantinople proscribed "public performances by dancing girls ... as unthinkably indecent. Instead, transvestite boys performed in public places" (*Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985], pp. 143). Indeed, I am uncertain whether to trust Sharp's account or to regard it as fantasy. Although Elizabeth Sharp included it in her book, her own, contemporaneous description of that day in her unpublished travel diary suggests little beyond a full day of exploration—exotic neighborhoods, streets, shops, and costumes. Of an evening visit to the Place Negrier, chiefly a vegetable market (though including a draper's shop as well), she concludes, "Altogether it is the most bizarre and characteristic of all the native streets I have yet seen in Africa" (quoted with permission, William Sharp papers [72/90 c], The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley). She is silent about any more exotic explorations undertaken by Sharp.

²⁹*My Life: Autobiography of Havelock Ellis* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939), pp. 363-364.

³⁰"William Sharp as Bard and Craftsman," p. 67. Mrs. Rinder remains diaphanous. She was married to the exuberant art critic and writer on Scottish and other folklore Frank Rinder (1863-1937), but she is not mentioned in his obituary (*The Times*, March 9, 1937, p. 18c). The couple was among the regular visitors to the Sharps in South Hampstead in the late 1880's and in Rudgwick, Sussex during the spring and summer of 1893 (*Memoir*, I, 225, 347) and Frank Rinder, with whom Sharp corresponded, was one of those in on the secret of Fiona Macleod (*Memoir*, II, 72). The Rinders had a daughter, Esther Mona, whose godmother was Mona Caird (Margaret Morganroth Gullette, "Afterword," *The Daughters of Danaus*, by Mona Caird [New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1989], p. 522).

Halloran mentions that Mrs. Rinder "had come to Rome for the holidays with her husband's cousin, Mona Caird, a close friend of the Sharps" (p. 67). Her involvement with continental literature and folklore doubtless encouraged Sharp's own developing interests (see her translation *Mas-sacre of the Innocents and Other Tales by Belgian Writers* [Chicago: Stone and Kimball, 1895] and her collections *Poems and Lyrics of Nature* [London: W. Scott, 1894] and *Shadow of Arvor: Legendary Romances and Folk-Tales of Brittany* [Edinburgh: P. Geddes, 1896]). In 1934, Mrs. Rinder presented the manuscript (inscribed to her) of Macleod's *Pharais: A Romance of the Isles* (1894) to the British Library (Add. MSS. 43718) (see *The British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts: 1931-1935* [London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1967], p. 204). She lived at the time in St. John's Wood (*Index of Manuscripts in the British Library*, 10 vols. [Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1985], VIII, 353).

Mrs. Rinder's function vis-à-vis Sharp and the creation of Fiona Macleod may be as much mythological and psychological as actual and historical, possibly driven by something akin to the erotic triangles homosexuality may involve (see the chapter "Gender Asymmetry and Erotic Triangles" in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosexual Desire*, by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick [New York: Columbia University Press, 1985]). Though some might read

their relationship as an affair (see Alaya, who allows the relationship to be both passionate and platonic [pp. 124–135]), it seems more likely to have served to mask Sharp's explorations of his own newly realized sexual orientation.

³¹Some evidence of the relations between Sharp and his wife might be gleaned from his public call in 1892 in *The Pagan Review* for "a frank recognition of copartnery," a "new comradeship" with "sexual union ... the flower of human life. But, first, the rubbish must be cleared away; the anomalies must be replaced by just inter-relations" (p. 2). The Sharps' marriage was a childless one, perhaps a marriage of convenience as well as of love, allowing both partners to follow their professional interests. Elizabeth Sharp encourages reading Sharp's *Shelley* to see an identity of views on marriage at some time in the future

when man and woman, equally, shall know that to stultify or slay the spiritual inner life of another human being, through the radical misunderstanding between alien temperaments inevitably tied to one another, is one of the greatest crimes against humanity ... , ideas, which we at that time so eagerly discussed with a little group of intimate sympathetic friends.

(Memoir, I, 233–234)

³²That some estrangement came to the Sharps is clear from Sharp's letter to his wife of March 28, 1898. In it he denounces "the Tyranny of Love—the love which is forever demanding *as its due* [Sharp's emphasis] that which is wholly independent of bonds." He confides that he and his wife "have both learned and unlearned so much, and ... have come to see that we are wrought mysteriously by forces beyond ourselves"; and suggests that some "fine natures" will see "the falsity of those ideals which they had so cherished" and will learn "first strength to endure the transmutations, and then power to weld these to far nobler and finer uses and ends" (*Memoir*, II, 124, 123, 125). The language gives little away, though Elizabeth Sharp insists that these were "views we held in common" (*Memoir*, II, 123).

It is tempting too to read *Children of To-morrow* (1889) in biographical terms, an artist stultified in a loveless marriage whose being and genius are revived by an exotic, beautiful, and phantasmagoric woman similarly of an artistic temperament.

In a short story, "Frost" (*The Evergreen* [Part IV, Winter 1896–1897, (53)–60]), Elizabeth Sharp presents what appears to be a version of the 1890 trip to Rome: Janet, 22 years old and a would-be artist, travels with an aunt and a cousin from her pinched and straitened life in Scotland to Rome and experiences there the usual sensuous and aesthetic revival, only to have to return to the duties and responsibilities her familial situation thrusts on her at home:

the even tenour [sic] of her life had been abruptly confused by her visit to Rome. An angel had stepped into the quiet pool and had troubled it; but alas! the waters were gradually settling once more into stagnation.

(p. 59)

³²Whatever his suspicions, Yeats may not have known the identity of Fiona Macleod until he received a pregnantly phrased letter from Sharp delivered soon after Sharp's death:

You will think I have deceived you about Fiona Macleod. But, in absolute privacy, I tell you that I have not, howsoever in certain details I have (inevitably) misled you. Only, it is a mystery. Perhaps you will intuitively understand, or may come to understand. 'The rest is silence.' Farewell.

(Letters to W. B. Yeats, I, 158)

One particularly duplicitous deception by Sharp was his encouraging Yeats to think Fiona Macleod had shared one of Yeats' visions (see William F. Halloran, "W. B. Yeats and William Sharp: The Archer Vision," *English Language Notes*, 6 [June 1969], 273–280).

³³See Sharp's letter of May 5, 1898 (*Letters to W. B. Yeats*, I, 36).

³⁴*The Gonne-Yeats Letters, 1893-1938: Always Your Friend*, ed. Anna MacBride White and A. Norman Jeffares (London: Hutchinson, 1992), pp. 234-235. In his "Autobiography," Yeats recalls "the ceaseless presence of that fluidic life" in Sharp and refers to a "letter in appendix" that he neglected to include—probably this letter (*Memoirs: Autobiography—First Draft, Journal*, ed. Denis Donoghue [New York: Macmillan, 1973], p. 129).

³⁵I.e., the "beautiful young man" (I think), but the slippery pronouns in the account are telling.

³⁶*Memoirs*, p. 129.

³⁷In an especially insightful essay ("Wilfion and the Green Life: A Study of William Sharp and Fiona Macleod," in *Twenty-Seven to One*, ed. Bradford B. Broughton [Ogdensburg, New York: The Ryan Press, 1970]), Konrad Hopkins explores several of Sharp's descriptions in his poetry of his encounter with Mrs. Rinder and the classical myths they allude to:

These mingled poems and myths, in all their sexual ambiguity, present a paradigm of what was happening to William: he, the swimmer, attached to the glory of Celtic tradition, was undergoing a new birth, a transformation into Fiona, and she, the bathing nymph, the oracle uttering Divine Words from the depths, would like the Maenads discovering a man under his feminine disguise, tear and rend him asunder.

(p. 35)

Hopkins has emphasized to me his conviction that too exclusive a homoerotic approach might distort the complexity of Sharp's psychological suppressions and his rediscovery of his being in his creation of Fiona Macleod and in his development after 1899 of what Elizabeth Sharp called "Wilfion," "the inner and third Self that lay behind that dual expression" (*Memoir*, II, 333).

³⁸Sharp had to go to considerable trouble to keep his identity as Fiona Macleod obscured. His sister copied Macleod's letters in her own hand for mailing and appears to have impersonated (if that is the word) her on this visit to George Meredith (*The Letters of George Meredith*, III, 1268 and n).

³⁹Ernest Rhys, *Everyman Remembers* (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1931), pp. 82-83. Halloran sets the date as January 3, 1891 ("William Sharp as Bard and Craftsman," p. 68); Sharp's diary entry for the day is pedestrian by contrast to the account Rhys records (*Memoir*, I, 278-279).

⁴⁰*Primitive Folk: Studies in Comparative Ethnology*, new ed. (London: Walter Scott Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 68.

⁴¹*Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1942), I, Part IV: Sexual Inversion, p. 29.

⁴²Decades after Sharp's death, a leader in the *Times Literary Supplement* cited "epicene" elements in Sharp's writing and averred that his self-division represented "much more" than the usual "diversities of gifts in one person": "if report speaks true, the urge to 'be' Fiona took so strong a hold on him that the handsome bearded man would put on woman's clothes when Fiona was going to write." Evoking Whitman (as well as Gladstone and Sterne), the writer claimed that "William Sharp dressed as Fiona Macleod in obedience to a profounder and more masterful demand than any of these" (April 22, 1939; p. 233). In the next issue, Sharp's brother-in-law and cousin, R. Farquharson Sharp, denied the report as one new to him: "rather repulsive," "the sheerest nonsense and absolutely untrue." He suggested that Sharp created Fiona simply to get "a fair show" from unfriendly critics as he gave rein "to his heart's desire" (April 29, 1939; p. 250). The *TLS* refused further correspondence.

Mark Samuels Lasner has drawn my attention to what may have been the "report" the *TLS* cites, one published by E. V. Lucas in *Reading, Writing and Remembering: A*

Literary Record (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932): "I shall always remember his [W. P. Ker's] comment when I told him that William Sharp had confided to a friend of mine that whenever he was preparing to write as Fiona Macleod he dressed himself entirely in woman's clothes. 'Did he?' said W. P.—'the bitch!'" (p. 82).

⁴³Halloran draws attention to the repeated motif in Sharp's writings of a drowned man, and quotes a poem published by Sharp in 1892, "The Coves of Crail," which contrasts a male corpse and its "dreamless sleep" to a woman—"Afar away she laughs and sings" ("William Sharp as Bard and Craftsman," pp. 61, 64). The symmetrical relations of *Pharais* with "Ariadne in Naxos" deserve noting; the death of the feminine Ariadne in "Ariadne in Naxos" is mirrored in *Pharais* by the death of the masculine (and deeply troubled) Alastair Macleod, a figure resembling Sharp in a number of ways.

⁴⁴"A Rising English Poet," MS, in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. Printers' marks on the manuscript make me think the article was published, probably in a Boston newspaper, but I have not been able to find a printed version.

⁴⁵The ways in which the two sides of Sharp's personality correspond in places to the characters of Theseus and Ariadne in "Ariadne in Naxos" are examined more extensively in the commentary on the play later in this introduction.

⁴⁶"Fiona," explained Sharp to one in on his secret, was a name "very rare now. Most Highlanders would tell you it was extinct.... But it is not. It is an old Celtic name (meaning 'a fair maid') still occasionally to be found" (*Memoir*, II, 12-13).

⁴⁷John Nichol (1833-1894) was A. C. Swinburne's closest friend from their days at Oxford and no doubt instrumental in Sharp's study of *Atalanta in Calydon*. Even as Sharp commented that Nichol "never fulfilled the rare promise

of his Oxford days," he paid tribute to his "notable influence" at the University of Glasgow ("Algernon Charles Swinburne," *Papers Critical and Reminiscent*, ed. Mrs. William Sharp [London: William Heinemann, 1912], p. 292). Nichol's attitude towards Sharp may be inferred from a comment Nichol made to Swinburne in a letter of May 26, 1888, just after completing a book: "I have finished a book (for God's sake dont [sic] tell Sharp or he will put it in a penny magazine and fancy he is doing me a favour!" (British Library, Add. MSS. 70627).

⁴⁸Given the impact of *Atalanta in Calydon* on Sharp, his relation to Swinburne is worth exploring. On April 20, 1880, Sharp sent Swinburne an admiring letter and verses:

I would not have cared to send you them at all—they seem very poor indeed in my own eyes—but that my friend Philip Marston urged me to do so, saying he was sure you would be pleased. I cannot feel sure about this, but if you will not look to the verses *as* verses but to the meaning that gave them being I shall be content. It was because of the ever growing wonder and admiration which I had for your genius that I wrote them, and I wish that they could convey to you a tenth part of what I feel towards 'our greatest lyric poet since Shelley'. You are known and unknown to me. I have heard Rossetti speak of you, and Marston frequently, 'till I felt as if I also knew you personally; but after leaving them I had only the wish, and the knowledge that I did *not* know you. But then in the "poems [and Ballads]", in the "Songs [before Sunrise]", in "Atalanta", in "Erectheus", "Bothwell"—ah, I found you there. I think the feelings of all young poets towards you must be those of intense gratitude: you have so enriched the glorious garden of English Verse, and left such strong and beautiful seeding-fruits.

It is needless to say that I am looking forward eagerly to your forthcoming volume. Someday it may be my good fortune to meet you; but in any case I shall never regret having written to you, for I know that you will take it as it is meant. The fledgling cannot be blamed if it yearns to the full-throated lark far above it.

(British Library, Ashley 4001)

Although a poem by Sharp ("The Norland Wind") accompanies this letter in the British Library and is described in the *Index of Manuscripts in the British Library*, IX, 112) as having been enclosed with the letter, that poem was written much later, "for the *Evergreen*, 1895" (Elizabeth A. Sharp, "Bibliographical Note," *Songs and Poems Old and New*, by William Sharp [Fiona Macleod] [London: Elliot Stock, 1909], p. 233). The verses Sharp enclosed are those now housed at The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, and now first identified as being by Sharp:

To Mr. A. C. Swinburne

With knowledge, that my lays are as barren level plains,
Beside the mountain grandeur, of thy lofty strains,—
Still would I strike my half-strung lute,
And render tribute, at the Mountain foot.—

All hail and homage to thee—thou master mind
Thy will is strong to break the chains that bind
And crush the slaves of worthless monarch's will
Who, with honey'd speech would try to fill
Base ears with music, and with vain show
Of glittering pomp, would blind the slow
Dull, slavish clods of common clay
Who gaze in wonder on the pageant of a day[.]

Surely you may hear the faintly echoed sigh
Borne aloft to the Ruler on High
From those whose inmost souls do long
For power to resent the wrong
The fearful wrongs, to all mankind
So deeply sunk in wretchedness—halfblind[.]

All hail again, Thou Poet of the free
Let loving winds, bear lovingly to thee
The whisperings that disturb the Air
Low whisperings,—yet ominous & stern they bear
The glad tidings as chill winds that blow

Ere the bright dawning morn doth know

That *Darkness*—gloomy night—gives place
To light eternal, leaving no trace
Of all the dark deeds, basely cowering
Neath this friend of evil,—while lowering
In grandeur,— See the clouds descend
As if to swallow up or rend
This fair Earth,—till universal gloom
Had shrouded it in everlasting tomb
But still the bright sun, renewed to Youth
Rises again, triumphs again—Emblem of *truth*.—

Thus ever as the years come and go
Shall men feel the weight of woe
Ere the long night passes away
Until the dawning of the perfect day.

It is not known that Swinburne answered Sharp's letter, but two months later the blind poet Philip Bourke Marston (1850–1887) approached Swinburne on Sharp's behalf (Marston's letter of June 18, 1880, is in the Brotherton Collection, the University of Leeds):

Perhaps you have heard of Sharp, a friend of Rossetti's, (by whom we were brought together). Sharp and I are now dear friends. He has a nature ardent as summer, and pure as mountain air. He is doing some very good work in poetry. He is one of your most passionate admirers; and what I want to know is if I may bring him some day to see you—any day or hour which would best suit you? It would be to him a pleasure memorable in his life; but don't say yes if you would at all rather not. A review by him of your book will, I believe, appear in next month's number of 'Modern Thought' [Sharp's review of *Songs of the Springtides* appeared in the issue of August 1, 1880].

To judge from another letter from Marston to Swinburne (June 28, 1880; also in the Brotherton Collection), arrangements were soon under way for a meeting of Sharp with Swinburne: "Watts [Theodore Watts-Dunton (1832–

1914), Swinburne's housemate at Putney] writes me that you and he will suggest a day for my call with Sharp when you have returned from your outing."

Almost two years later, Marston and Sharp were among those invited by Swinburne to hear him read from "Tristram of Lyonesse" (*The Swinburne Letters*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang, 6 vols. [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959-1962], IV, 277n). At some point, Sharp is supposed to have helped Swinburne recover from being crushed beneath a fall of books in the British Museum (Rhys, p. 89). In *The Pagan Review* (1892), Sharp penned a critical review of Swinburne's *The Sisters* (pp. 59-60). In 1901, Sharp edited a Tauchnitz selection of Swinburne's *Lyrical Poems* (with an introduction especially admiring of *Atalanta in Calydon*) and published an article on Swinburne ("A Literary Friendship. Mr. A. C. Swinburne and Mr. Watts-Dunton at The Pines," *Pall Mall Magazine*, 25 [December 1901], 435-448), which Swinburne dismissed to his sister Isabel as "cattish, officious, & oblivious, of me" (see my "Further Swinburne Letters—II," *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 27:3 [June 1980], 224).

⁴⁹One complication may have been commercial. In 1882, Lady Ross of Balnagown (Rebecca Sophia Ross) published her verse-drama *Ariadne in Naxos* (London: Trübner), perhaps saturating the market for works on the subject.

⁵⁰Laid into the notebook is a thin blue ribbon edged in white and imprinted at intervals "Boots the Chemists"; the ribbon is folded twice near its midpoint, so as to hold two places. Since Boots was not founded until 1880, the ribbon became associated with the volume after that date.

⁵¹William Sharp's own admiration for John Elder is clear from his dedication to him of *The Human Inheritance, The New Hope, Motherhood* (London: Elliot Stock, 1882): "A truer friend and nobler spirit no man could know." Elder died in 1883, in his thirtieth year (*Memoir*, I, 45).

⁵²In her "Afterword" to Mona Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus*, Gullette captures the tone of the enlightened and

feminist circles the Sharps were moving in during the 1880's and 1890's, traces the continuing influence of Caird, and suggests (not entirely convincingly) that Sharp's adopting a woman's name in 1894 reflects "a kind of gender envy not unnatural in that crowd and in that year" (pp. 521-523; Gullette provides the correct date of Caird's birth [p. 519]).

⁵³Useful studies of Ariadne and Theseus and their representations through the centuries can be found in Jane Davidson Reid, *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and in the articles by André Peyronie in *Companion to Literary Myths, Heroes and Archetypes*, ed. Pierre Brunel, tr. Wendy Allatson et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 118-127, 1110-1123. Nina daVinci Nichols' *Ariadne's Lives* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995) appeared too late to be useful to my work, but is rich in its study of the "many nineteenth-century impostures" (p. 12) of Ariadne.

⁵⁴All citations from Plutarch are from *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, translated by John Dryden and revised by Arthur Hugh Clough (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1952), pp. 5-7, volume 14 of *Great Books of the Western World*.

⁵⁵*The Library of History of Diodorus of Sicily*, tr. C. H. Oldfather, 12 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1939), III, 11, 13 (Book IV, 61, 5-6).

⁵⁶*Ovid's Fasti*, tr. Sir James George Frazer (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1931), p. 155. Elsewhere, Ovid notes that Theseus "barbarously deserts his companion on those shores [Naxos]. Her, thus deserted and greatly lamenting, Liber embraces and aids" (Fable VI; *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, tr. Henry T. Riley [London: George Bell and Sons, 1905], pp. 269-270).

⁵⁷*The Library of Greek Mythology*, tr. Keith Aldrich (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1975), p. 90.

58 *The Odyssey of Homer Translated into English Blank Verse*, tr. William Cowper, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1809), I, 310.

59 H. J. Rose notes that the motive for the treachery of Theseus is clear only "in the original form of the tale," where "he forgot her [Ariadne], presumably owing to some charm, or the breaking of some tabu." Rose suggests that the tale is "a *märchen* of the Master-Maid type," the category that includes the story of Atalanta (*A Handbook of Greek Mythology Including Its Extension to Rome* [London: Methuen, 1965], pp. 265, 292).

60 *Catullus*, tr. G. P. Goold (London: Duckworth, 1983), p. 143.

61 *The Heroïdes or Epistles of the Heroines, the Amours, Art of Love, Remedy of Love, and Minor Works of Ovid*, tr. Henry T. Riley (London: George Bell and Sons, 1875), p. 95.

62 Peyronie, for example, notes that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "several dozen plays and operas" dealt with Theseus and Ariadne (Brunel, p. 1119). See too Jeanetta Boswell, *Past Ruined Ilion: A Bibliography of English and American Literature Based on Greco-Roman Mythology* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1982).

63 The portrait is reproduced with a comment by Sharp in his *Fair Women in Painting and Poetry*, new ed. (London: Seeley and Company, Limited, 1907), pp. 136, 153, where he also cites Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* (p. 195).

64 Lewis Leadbeater has directed my attention to the doubling that the very myth of Ariadne may involve. According to Charles Mills Gayley, Ariadne was in her origin apparently a goddess who married Bacchus, and that myth was "incorporated later with the Attic myth of Theseus." Ariadne, therefore, might be understood as the feminine reflection or counterpart of Bacchus, his "female sem-

blance" (*The Classic Myths in English Literature and Art*, rev. ed. [Boston: Ginn and Company, 1939], pp. 525-526).

65 Quoted in John J. Iorio, "A Victorian Controversy: William Sharp's Letters on 'Motherhood,'" *Colby Library Quarterly*, 4 (1957), 181, 182.

66 Alaya points out that as he began to develop the identity of Fiona Macleod, Sharp became extraordinarily expressive of an "overwhelming compassion for women represented [in his works] by the staggering number of repetitions of miscarriages and stillbirths, and of women suffering terrible agonies in labor, sometimes premature labor, and often dying as a result" (Alaya, p. 123).

67 The tension and ambivalence so apparent in Sharp's drama, it should be noted, occur elsewhere in Victorian literary history. The conflict between the masculine and the feminine in a patriarchal culture is one that poets before Sharp had faced. In an article, for example, on Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi," Herbert Sussman draws on a number of studies to suggest that a male poet in a commercial and utilitarian age, particularly earlier in the century, felt unusual tensions. The topic is a rich one, too far ranging to follow here, but the pressures on Tennyson (and, indeed, on Shelley) suggest the pressures poets faced. Sussman's description of the general plight can easily be applied to Sharp's dilemma as Sussman points out the "acute anxiety" created by society's valorizing "entrepreneurial manliness, with its emphasis on engagement in the male sphere of work, its valuing of strength and energy, and its criterion of success measured by support of a domestic establishment" ("Robert Browning's 'Fra Lippo Lippi' and the Problematic of a Male Poetic," *Victorian Studies*, 35:2 [Winter 1992], 186). The resulting bifurcation for the man drawn to aesthetic pursuits is clear in the opposition of values to choose between (represented in Sharp's play by his two main characters):

For this definition of male identity conflicted with the ideal of the poet based on a romantic model in

many ways constructed to oppose the new economic man. This romantic model valorized isolation from the commercial or male sphere, emotive openness and imaginative inwardness, passivity, and even the drive toward dissolution and death. These discontinuities in gender roles for the male poet are well summarized by Dorothy Mermin: 'For the Victorians, writing poetry seemed like woman's work, even though only men were supposed to do it Male Victorian poets worried that they might in effect be feminizing themselves by withdrawing into a private world.'

(p. 186)

Sussman is quoting Dorothy Mermin, "The Damsel, the Knight, and the Victorian Woman Poet," *Critical Inquiry*, 13:1 [1986], 67. He elaborates his argument in *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁶⁸Citations to "Ariadne in Naxos" are to the manuscript's pages.

⁶⁹We hear in these phrases also a repudiation of another presentation of the dreamy poet, that of William Morris, who wrote in the "Apology" to *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-1870) that he was "The idle singer of an empty day": "Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time, / Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?"

⁷⁰Alaya points out how frequently the unions of Sharp's lovers are riven by a "cosmos that is inimical to his ideal unions": "these are not partners divided by their own will or merely by circumstances, but by the nature of matter, the nature of reality, the very nature of the universe which Sharp had devised, whose simultaneous function it is to unite and divide" (p. 114). When Sharp's chorus ominously intrudes that "Love is cruel, love is bitter alas! / Fate and death thereof are the mockery" and "Love is a crystal stream, and Love is fresh, / But the sea, which is

the end thereof, is salt" (pp. 13, 14), he is recalling doctrines central to Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, "The Triumph of Time," and "The Garden of Proserpine," to name only a few texts which impressed themselves on "Ariadne in Naxos."

⁷¹In a story Yeats recounts about the few times Sharp drank too much is a suggestion that Ariadne and Fiona Macleod might be related and that the abandonment of the sensibilities they represented worried Sharp: "I have known him ... at the height of his intoxication when most men speak the truth, to attribute his state to remorse for having been unfaithful to Fiona Macleod" ("The Tragic Generation," in *Autobiographies: Reveries over Childhood and Youth and The Trembling of the Veil* [New York: Macmillan, 1927], p. 421).

⁷²*The Human Inheritance, The New Hope, Motherhood*, pp. 45, 48-49. The same device of lightning destroying incipient bliss forms the climax of *The Children of To-morrow* (1889).

⁷³*Earth's Voices, Transcripts from Nature, Sospitira and Other Poems* (London: Elliot Stock, 1884), p. [86].

⁷⁴London: Grant Richards.

⁷⁵*Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 41.